

NAAC | CORNER

The Future is Now!

We have all heard the phrase, “The Future is Now” at one time or another. I have seen the phrase in mission statements, vision statements and various written forms of communication. It was even NAAC’s theme at the 2009 NAAC Convention. A theme is an idea used to galvanize an organization or a concept we can all understand and rally behind.



Christian Spears

For NAAC, “The Future is Now” might represent even more. This is NAAC’s statement of arrival — NAAC’s announcement that compliance professionals are prepared for tomorrow’s challenges today. We have made decisions now that will place us in a position to better manage our future.



However the phrase is viewed, I hope it resonates, because NAAC is committed to providing compliance solutions on behalf of intercollegiate athletics ... now.

All About Education

Education is the foundation of compliance! It is one of the building blocks of everything we do as compliance professionals. Education is also an area where compliance professionals have an opportunity to showcase what we have to offer on our campus to our coaches, student-athletes and administrators. Through education, compliance professionals can make an impact and set ourselves apart as an integral member of the team. This is our time to shine.

The next questions are: “How does NAAC help you on your campus?” and “How does NAAC help you shine?”

That’s the best part. There is something for everyone at every level and division. NAAC is launching a new Web tool at www.NAACConnect.com where compliance professionals can share educational documents, tips and best practices.

NAAC’s Education and Professional Standards Committee identified some of the best practices and reached out to the membership to help in this information sharing. Last year our committee developed a couple of educational webinars designed to provide the membership with insight into how other senior compliance administrators monitor and manage some of the most important aspects of an intercollegiate athletics program.

Our first webinar dealt with understanding NCAA Progress-Toward-Degree (PTD) requirements and utilizing best practices developed at other institutions to monitor a student-athlete’s PTD. Our second webinar dealt with best practices for managing

the NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR). This webinar was sponsored by the NCAA and included several members of their staff in the Q&A. In addition, this webinar provided unique materials an institution could utilize to project future APR rates on their individual campuses. Both webinars provided information to more than 100 collegiate institutions and established a format for NAAC to produce and provide educational materials to the membership.

The committee has already begun planning this year’s webinars that will be a great addition to any compliance office, regardless of size or budget. Be on the lookout for webinar topics that will address managing the junior college transfer process and ensuring junior college transfers meet PTD; international amateurism issues; and guiding prospective student-athletes, coaches and high school guidance counselors through the initial-eligibility process. NAAC will continue to look for ways to share information and make our profession a better place to work. NAAC always encourages idea sharing, so if you have ideas or want to participate, reach out to us. NAAC is committed to providing you with the resources you need to be successful.

NAAC Knowledge

All of our efforts begin and end with the people affiliated with NAAC and the willingness to share practices and initiatives introduced on their own campuses. There is no better resource for the compliance professional than other compliance professionals. New or veteran, small institution or large, NAAC has something for everyone.

I encourage you to join NAAC if you have not, encourage another colleague to join NAAC if they have not, and utilize what NAAC has to offer. The people and resources NAAC has to offer will make you better and make your job easier. Utilizing a document someone else prepared frees you up to better serve your constituents. Sharing a document you prepared helps someone else do the same.

Ultimately, NAAC wants to help the membership better serve its coaches, student-athletes and institutions. What better way to do this than to identify some of the best models and ask the people who developed them to share their process in the hope that we all gain additional knowledge or discover simple ways to do something better? Get involved. Interact. Join NAAC. Go to www.naaccompliance.com and click “join now.” We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks for this article to Christian Spears, senior associate athletics director at Northern Illinois University and NAAC 3rd Vice President.

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