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## **THE PATRIOT LEAGUE**

### **Who We Are, What We Believe, What We Do**

#### **Who We Are**

The Patriot League is a unique collection of highly selective colleges and universities linked by a number of common values. Our institutions do not exceed 6,000 students in size and focus on providing the highest quality education to their undergraduate students. We believe athletics can play an important role in the overall educational experience, and we are committed to athletics at the highest level of competition, NCAA Division I.

We are determined to admit and graduate scholar-athletes who succeed in the classroom as well as on the field. The Patriot League's full-member institutions, individually and collectively, consistently rank among the top Division I programs in the NCAA Graduation Rates Report. Patriot League teams compete at the highest levels of NCAA competition and numerous Patriot League scholar-athletes are recognized annually as All-Americans and Academic All-Americans.

The Patriot League began as a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS, formerly Division I-AA football) conference in 1986 and became an all-sport conference in 1990. Full League members include American, Army, Bucknell, Colgate, Holy Cross, Lafayette, Lehigh and Navy. Associate members include Fordham and Georgetown in the sport of football. These member institutions are among the oldest and most prestigious in the nation. Alumni from Patriot League colleges and universities significantly contribute to their communities and society in general and have played a leadership role in shaping our country.

#### **What We Believe**

Patriot League institutions value athletic competition because we know it builds leadership, teamwork, decision-making skills and sportsmanship. These characteristics are critical to another of our shared goals: producing graduates who will make strong contributions to the moral and civic fabric of their communities and their nation. For two of our member institutions, teaching such skills is critical to the future success of America's armed forces.

Our primary focus is on the personal development and academic success of individual scholar-athletes. Athletic competition can enhance the physical, intellectual, ethical and social development of the entire higher education community—participants and spectators alike. In addition, Patriot League institutions recognize that highly competitive athletics help sustain strong bonds with alumni by engaging them with their college or university for many years after they graduate.

At a time when the direction of collegiate athletics is under increasing critical scrutiny, Patriot League institutions believe as strongly as ever that those academic and athletic values can be – and indeed must be – compatible. For us, there is no contradiction between the concepts of high achievement in the classroom and in athletics. We acknowledge that reaching this ideal is a constant challenge, even a struggle, between conflicting forces and needs. But that does not lessen its importance.

We believe that athletic programs should be integrated into an institution's campus life and governance structure, and operate with integrity and under presidential control. The Patriot League model includes oversight of our policies at both the League and campus level while remaining focused on the individual development of all students.

Patriot League members believe that colleges and universities need to be faithful to their values and need to keep their promises to students. For our members, that means that college athletics derive legitimacy and special meaning only within the context of sound academic values and with the goal of graduating well-rounded students.

### **What We Do**

- ✓ Patriot League institutions only admit athletes who we believe will succeed academically and graduate from our institutions. An academic index is calculated for all student-athletes to ensure that all academic credentials are reflective of their institution's general student body.
- ✓ All admissions decisions in the Patriot League are made by admissions professionals, not by athletic department personnel.
- ✓ Patriot League institutions strive to maintain the same academic standards and values for all students, including athletes, and for all programs, including athletics.
- ✓ Academics play a primary role in the lives of Patriot League athletes, who receive no special academic privileges or consideration.
- ✓ There is an expectation that Patriot League athletes will proceed to an academic degree in four years. Athletic "redshirting" (i.e., holding a student out of competition for the purpose of saving a year of NCAA eligibility for a fifth year of enrollment) is specifically forbidden in the Patriot League.
- ✓ The primary focus of Patriot League athletic programs is on the personal development and academic success of individual scholar-athletes. Athletes graduate from their institutions well-equipped to become leaders in their personal and professional endeavors.
- ✓ In the Patriot League governance structure, each member institution is accountable to the others for admission decisions and academic policies involving athletes, and participates in annual reviews.
- ✓ Control of athletic budgets and priorities is held by the president of each Patriot League institution.