

# In The SAAC

Volume V Issue I Winter 2007

## The Voice of the D-I National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

Off the Seat of the Chair  
-Anna Chappell, Pacific-10  
Conference

### From Text'n to Transfers, the latest news from Division I...

**A Look Back At 2006 :** The DI National SAAC was very busy in 2006 promoting student-athlete opportunities on and off the playing field. Last year was jam-packed with legislation regarding insurance issues for student-athletes, skill instruction time concerns, and the use of student-athletes in promotional activities.

**Controll'n Text'n:** The latest and greatest way to recruit a prospective student-athlete in 2007 seems to be text messaging. The Wall Street Journal cited a student-athlete receiving text messages at 5:45 a.m. by a coach as one of the reasons he felt compelled to sign with the program. Currently, the Division I SAAC is in support of the complete elimination of text messaging in the recruiting process for a laundry list of reasons: cost, lack of professionalism and intrusive-

ness. The concept of complete elimination (Division I Proposal No. 2006-40) will be voted on during the April Board of Directors meeting.

**Male Practice Players:** To use or not to use? That seems to be the question. There has been a lot of speculation over whether the use of male practice players by NCAA women's programs is taking away opportunities from female student-athletes. In the coming months your campus will be asked to participate in a survey intended to gauge the institution's and student-athlete's true feelings on the use of male practice players. Please make sure to participate in this survey!

**Ending with an Override:** During the 2007 NCAA convention in Orlando, Fla., the NCAA membership voted to

override proposal 2005-54—which permitted graduating student-athletes who had eligibility remaining the opportunity to transfer to another institution and be immediately eligible to compete as a graduate student. The DI SAAC was very much in support of maintaining this opportunity (which was initially adopted by the Board in April 2006). Unfortunately the membership voted against this legislation. Much of the concern centers around whether this legislation would create an open-market environment where institutions recruit student-athletes away from other institutions (which is impermissible). The DI SAAC feels that the opportunity to reach the next level of education is the most important aspect in this case and will continue to take a

(see *Chair Continued on page 5*)

"The National SAAC representatives play a very important role through their representation on the various committees and cabinets in the governance structure as well as at the Management Council level...."

Kate Hickey, Management Council Chair



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Photo Year in Review



DI SAAC takes time to work with Habitat-for-Humanity at the 2007 NCAA Convention in Orlando. Activities such as these help foster growth between student-athletes and their community.

Photo Courtesy of Aidah Rasheed



NSAAC member Corey Steven, Horizon League, gets to know some of her northeast region peers and their concerns while in the Big Apple for the Regional Leadership Conference.

Photo Courtesy of Curtis Hollomon, NCAA



Former DI Chair Mike Piscetelli, discusses leadership strategies and ways to effectively communicate student-athlete concerns in October at the Northeast Regional Leadership Conference.

Photo Courtesy of Curtis Holloman, NCAA



Division I National SAAC after defeating DIII in the annual July kickball tournament. Making DI athletes proud.

Photo courtesy of Cassandra Ersel



Student-Athletes at the National Leadership Conference learn about developing action plans to make positive change on campus from NSAAC Chair Anna Chappell.

Photo Courtesy of Anna Chappell

Corrections

There were no corrections from previous issue of "In The SAAC." If additions or subtractions need to be made, please contact the editor via e-mail. For any errors the editor sincerely apologizes. Please forward your concerns to Beth Waggoner at Flyhigh11@hotmail.com

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Runners and mascots prepare for the 2006 Pigskin Pass Football game between University of Delaware and Towson University. In its first year the Pigskin Pass raised \$13,000 for the Special Olympics.

Photo Courtesy of Tyler Kupper

### SAAC Spotlight-

*Each issue we will feature a campus SAAC that is making waves in their athletic department, on campus, and / or in the community. These are real students, real lives that are making a positive difference for others. If you have a great SAAC that you would like featured in the next issue or would like further information regarding the programs in this piece, please send an email to: Tyler Kupper at [Tkupper@udel.edu](mailto:Tkupper@udel.edu)*

-Tyler Kupper, Colonial Athletic Association

**E**ach year 380,000 student-athletes are given the opportunity to compete in NCAA-sanctioned athletics. Each day they come to their respective playing surfaces and are tested. They are given the opportunity to reap personal and athletic success from their participation. Knowing the indelible impact participation in NCAA sports can have, many feel it is important to support the same opportunities for others—so that they too may gain the benefits of sport.

Over the years, The University of Delaware and Towson University have been close rivals, due in part to the close geographic proximity of the two schools. Community service and 'giving back' plays a large part in the UD student-athlete's college experience, so The University of Delaware SAAC looked to breakdown on-field rivalries and partner with Towson University in an "athletes for athletes" event benefiting the Special Olympics.

The 2006 Pigskin Pass—the result of UD and Towson's collaborative efforts to enhance sportsmanship between their institutions and extend athletic opportunities to others—brought together 225 student-athletes from both school in order to accomplish a common goal. They ran a two-day, 58-mile relay run between Baltimore, Maryland and Newark, Delaware to raise funds for the local Special Olympics. The run started at the 50-yard-line of Towson's Johnny Unitas Stadium, Friday October 27, 2006 at Noon and Towson student-athletes ran the ceremonial ball 28 miles to the halfway point at Aberdeen Park. Delaware student-athletes resumed the run at 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning from Aberdeen in the darkness of a torrential downpour and relayed the ball up to Newark. The 2006 Pigskin Pass concluded in front of Delaware Stadium in time for the 1:00 p.m. kickoff of the annual UD v. Towson football game.

Special Olympics is an incredible organization that embodies and encourages the spirit of athletics through the participation of over 550,000 athletes across the United States. Special Olympics, "gives people with intellectual disabilities the chance to strengthen their character, develop their physical skills, display their talents and fulfill their human potential." ( [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)) The inaugural Pigskin Pass raised over \$13,000 for the athletes of Special Olympics Delaware & Maryland and it is the hope of UD and Towson student-athletes that many more Special Olympic athletes will benefit in the future from the event.

SAAC

Adapting to a Foreign Concept:

A Look at the College Transition for the International Student-Athlete

-Kerry Kenny, Patriot League

**T**hink back to the summer before your first semester of college, when the words anxious and apprehensive did not even begin to describe your feelings. You were probably one of the most recognizable faces at your high school and a successful athlete. But like most high school graduates headed to college, you moved on to a school where only a handful of people knew your name and were immersed in an environment unlike any you had previously experienced.

Now, imagine that in addition to such overwhelming changes, you were also faced with the challenge of being an international student-athlete. For international student-athletes, the transition into American collegiate athletics can become very complicated due to a number of factors—the most obvious being a possible language barrier—including the adjustment to the American-style of play and the heightened expectations of the American higher-education system.

The main challenge that exists in evaluating internationally educated student-athletes comes with the academic transcript. For domestic student-athletes, this is easily acquired and evaluated by member institutions and the NCAA. However, an international student-athlete must provide additional proof to the NCAA's Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse that he or she has graduated and also that the NCAA core-curriculum course requirements have been fulfilled.

Upon arrival, an international student-athlete must provide a document that is placed into one of four categories, each of which describes a different level of accomplishment and determines their eligibility status. A category-one student-athlete meets all Division I initial-eligibility requirements and does not require further evaluation by the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

"The biggest difference between here and Sweden is the grading," said Jesper Andersson, a freshman basketball student-athlete at Lafayette College. "In Sweden, you may not need a high percentage to get a good grade, you just have to be able to answer hard questions. Here it is all about the percentage."

While the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse deals with the academic side of a prospective student-athlete's credentials, the NCAA's new Amateurism Clearinghouse will examine their prior athletic record. This new entity will begin evaluations with prospects for the 2007-2008 academic year and will inspect the amateur status of student-athletes. The Amateurism Clearinghouse will look specifically at whether a prospective student-athlete has ever participated on a professional team—one where they or other members of the team received payment in addition to actual and necessary expenses.

"College education in Poland is completely different than the college system here," said Marek Koltun, a freshman Lafayette College basketball student-athlete from Poland. "Most of the students live at home and go to school only to go to class, and we are not able to choose which courses we want to take because it all depends on which major you choose. The biggest difference is that we do not have college sports. Instead, an athlete has to join a professional team that is not connected to any school."

For international student-athletes, the opportunity to advance in both educational and athletic settings with the NCAA can be hard to pass up. Since international student-athletes are likely to have already been exposed to tough competition levels, their ability to excel in NCAA athletics only adds to the benefits of participating in American collegiate athletics.

"My transition has been pretty smooth since I could speak English pretty well before I came here," said Andersson. "It was also smooth because I'm used to playing basketball at a high level after competing on the Under-20 Swedish national team."

In an article posted on the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators Website, the number of international student-athletes competing in NCAA Division I Men's Basketball in 2003-04 was a staggering 695 student-athletes, up from 401 in the 1995-96 academic year. In Division I Men's Soccer, those numbers increased from 531 in '95-'96 to 726 in 2003-04. Explanations for the rise in international student-athletes participating in NCAA athletics include increased standards and better infrastructure in the international secondary school system—which has responded to the needs of international student-athletes wishing to compete in the NCAA.

The college experience for a student-athlete, international or domestic, is one that takes some getting used to. For the international student-athlete, however, that adjustment period is further complicated by the fact that there is an international border between their school and their home. Despite the challenges, culture shock has not been enough to deter an increasing number of international student-athletes from entering the NCAA, and as a result, contributing to its success. <sup>SAAC</sup>

## Q&A In the SAAC

-Corey Steven, Horizon League

**Q** : Recently I have been feeling that student-athletes on my campus are perceived to perform below average academically compared to other students. Is this true? If not, is there any available information that I can present to prove this idea is incorrect?

**A:** You're in luck. This is actually a false perception about student-athletes that many people outside athletics believe to be true. In a recent NCAA survey entitled the Study of College Outcomes and Recent Experiences (SCORE) and the Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations and Learning of Students in college (GOALS), research conducted on past and present student-athletes showed that Division I student-athletes often achieve greater academic success through graduation rates than the general student body of their institutions. The study looks not only at the student-athlete experience at an institution, but the future occupational success of student-athletes compared with the general student body and the effect of participating in specific sports on GPA.

This subject is a nationwide concern and although there has not been research in the past to refute the claim that student-athletes are not as academically successful or focused as the general student body, the SCORE/GOALS study shows that student-athletes often perform better academically and graduate at higher rates in comparison to the whole of an institution.

The entire SCORE/GOALS survey will be released in the fall of 2007. Look for it on the NCAA website: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

**Q:** I am a minority student-athlete on my campus and sometimes feel as if I am being isolated and discriminated against because of my ethnicity. Does the NCAA have any programs to protect the rights of minorities? If so, what resources are available?

**A:** I am sorry to hear about your situation and that you feel discrimination from within your team and institution. The NCAA has a department called the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and it is responsible for leading the Association in the development and implementation of strategies, policies and programs that promote diversity and inclusion throughout intercollegiate athletics.

The NCAA conducts annual diversity education workshops on campuses and at conference offices to provide opportunities for student-athletes to enhance their understanding of and respect for diversity and inclusion. The NCAA also offers internships at the national office where minorities are strongly encouraged to apply. There are many other minority leadership opportunities available through your campus and the NCAA that your Life Skills coordinator can provide more information on. Many times it simply takes one person speaking up about discrimination to create awareness and action on a campus. <sup>SAAC</sup>

Here are some helpful websites that you can look to for further information:

Black Coaches Association  
[www.bcasports.org](http://www.bcasports.org)

Center for the Study of Sport in Society  
[www.sportinsociety.org](http://www.sportinsociety.org)

NCAA, Diversity  
[www2.ncaa.org/portal/about\\_ncaa/diversity/](http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/about_ncaa/diversity/)

It Takes a Team  
[www.ittakesateam.org](http://www.ittakesateam.org)

*(CHAIR Continued from page 1)*

stand on academic concerns that arise in the future.

Looking Ahead to 2007: While we cannot truly see into the future, DI SAAC is looking to continue promoting the well-being of student-athletes and voicing your views on current issues. We are working to build stronger relationships with administrators and conferences in order to ensure your opinions are reaching all levels of the association.

From the seat of the Chair, I would encourage all of you to maintain communication with your campus SAAC chairs, in addition to your campus administrators. The only way to enact progress and communicate areas in need of improvement is to be an agent of change.

So long.... Anna Chappell <sup>SAAC</sup>



Anna Chappell, Division I  
NSAAC Chair  
Photo Courtesy of The University of Arizona

## Solving Equity Issues In The Training Room

-Katie Street, Western Athletic Conference

**S**tudent-athlete injuries are unfortunately a common occurrence in intercollegiate athletics. Counteracting the inherent dangers of athletic participation for their student-athletes is what drives institutions to have certified athletic training programs in place on campus. However, because the level of facilities and the quality of staff are left to the discretion of each institution, a large variance now exists within Division I regarding the treatment and care student-athletes receive while participating in NCAA athletics.

Depending on the school, the spectrum of an athletic training staff runs anywhere from one trainer for the entire athletic program to multiple trainers for each sport sponsored by the institution. Some athletic departments require a trainer on-site for each practice of every sport. Others provide training staff only for competitions or those sports designated as "injury-prone." Institutions that offer athletic training as a degree (undergraduate and/or graduate level) have additional opportunities to utilize student trainers in their day-to-day work with student-athletes without the financial burden of salaries and payment.

The financial burden is cited as the source of the gap among NCAA Division I schools and their athletic training programs. Although it is argued that money is the reason for most divides in Division I, is it an acceptable explanation for differences in the safety of our student-athletes? How many injuries might be prevented with additional certified and skilled trainers available to assist teams and coaches? Is the safety of student-athletes worth the cost? Some feel that it is and there are ideas circulating about setting a Division I

minimum standard for the number, type, and skill level of trainers needed on a campus and the availability of facilities and supplies.

Another dilemma in athletic training is the treatment among teams within the same institution. Squads with higher profiles are often given priority in the training room and have more trainers on-site at practices and competitions. When it comes to the safety and well-being of student-athletes, it should not matter who is being treated. All student-athletes should feel equal and comfortable in the training room.

Our task, as student-athletes who deserve adequate treatment and care, is to raise the issue of inequality in athletic training treatment at our campus SAAC meetings, consult fellow athletes about their training room experiences and ask for suggestions as to how the situation can be improved. The bottom line is that athletic training for student-athletes needs to be readily available, professionally provided and fairly distributed. <sup>SAAC</sup>



**Student-athletes are heard every day on the official NCAA Blog. Are you one of them?**

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