

## INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND ATHLETICS REPORTING

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### Abstract

To varying degrees, institutional research (IR) offices are involved in the collection and reporting of academic, financial, and gender equity data related to their student-athletes and athletic programs. However, many institutional researchers are not familiar with athletics data and/or reporting requirements. This article discusses the degree to which IR offices at 2- and 4-year institutions are involved in athletics reporting, and the level of interaction IR offices have with various campus administrative units regarding athletics across all athletics governing bodies. The article specifically highlights findings from the

Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey administered in 2010. This article serves as a reference for those in IR who are engaged in athletics reporting, as well as a primer for those not familiar with intercollegiate athletics.

### INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, ATHLETICS, AND THE INSTITUTION

The calls for more oversight and accountability of college athletics from constituents within and outside of higher education continue. Specifically, institutions are now more transparent concerning athletic program finances and the academic experiences of student-athletes (Hoffman, Sweitzer, & Horton, 2013). Regardless of athletic division, level, or affiliations, it is imperative in this data-driven environment for institutions to collect and make available data on student-athletes and athletics programs. Two New Directions for Institutional Research volumes focus on these and other related topics. The first, *Monitoring and Assessing Intercollegiate Athletics*, was edited by Mallette and Howard in 1992. In 2009

a subsequent volume, *Data-Driven Decision Making in Intercollegiate Athletics*, edited by Hoffman, Antony, and Alfaro, picked up where the 1992 volume had ended. These volumes illustrate the demand for athletics data and information from several constituents, including the federal government; institutional presidents, governing boards, and athletic governing bodies; media and journalists; and other external organizations (e.g., the Knight Commission). Institutional research (IR) offices can, and many do, help to satisfy the reporting requirements for athletics data.

The dual purpose of this article is to discuss the extent to which IR offices at 2- and 4-year institutions are involved in collecting and reporting athletics data via the results of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey administered in 2010, and to assist IR professionals in understanding other athletic reporting requirements not covered in the survey. We begin with a discussion of how the survey was developed, how it is distributed, who was sampled, and what it measures. We then provide a brief overview of athletic affiliations and the

implications for IR. Next, we outline the survey's limitations, and then discuss its findings. We then discuss other athletics data and reporting requirements not addressed in the survey, such as athletics software, Title IX, sport sponsorship, athletic scholarships, and the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA). We conclude with a discussion of the role IR plays in institutional control over athletics, and the evolving role of IR in athletics reporting. In addition to presenting the results of the AIR survey, it is our hope that this article will motivate a conversation among IR professionals about best practices and challenges associated with collecting athletics

data and working with athletics programs within their institutions.

## ATHLETICS REPORTING REQUIREMENTS SURVEY

To gauge the degree to which IR offices collect and report on athletics data, in 2010 AIR's Intercollegiate Athletics Special Interest Group (SIG) constructed the Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey on behalf of AIR, which administered the survey to AIR members. It was made available to all IR offices (at both 2-year and 4-year institutions) across the United States. AIR sent an invitation to participate,

along with a link to the survey via the AIR Listserv. In addition, two consecutive e-AIR monthly newsletters included notices about the survey.

A total of 613 IR offices responded, representing not only a wide range of institutional types and Carnegie categories, but also a wide range of athletics governing bodies and affiliations. Table 1 provides a summary of respondent characteristics.

IR offices from schools in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I–Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) had the greatest percentage of respondents to the AIR survey

**Table 1. Respondents to the AIR 2010 Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey**

<b>Athletics Governing Body</b>	<b>Number of schools in governing body</b>	<b>Number of schools responding to survey</b>	<b>Pct. of governing body responded</b>	<b>Pct. of total survey respondents</b>
NCAA Div I–FBS	120	74	61.7%	12.1%
NCAA Div I–FCS	118	51	43.2%	8.3%
NCAA Div I–No football	97	35	36.1%	5.7%
NCAA Div I (all subdivisions combined)	335	160	47.8%	26.1%
NCAA Div II	288	105	36.5%	17.1%
NCAA Div III	432	120	27.8%	19.6%
National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)	290	50	17.2%	8.2%
National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA)	96	9	9.4%	1.5%
United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA)	67	2	3.0%	0.3%
National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)	525	70	13.3%	11.4%
California Community College Athletic Association (CCCCAA)	104	22	21.2%	3.6%
Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC)	35	5	14.3%	0.8%
No athletics governing body for athletic teams	—	11	—	1.8%
Don't know / Other governing body	—	2	—	0.3%
No intercollegiate athletic teams	—	57	—	9.3%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,172</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Div = Division; FBS = Football Bowl Subdivision; FCS = Football Championship Subdivision.

compared to offices from schools in any other affiliation. It is likely no coincidence that while institutions belonging to the NCAA Division I–FBS are the most recognizable in college athletics, these institutions also tend to have the largest IR offices. IR offices from NCAA Division I as a whole (without regard to subdivision) represented the athletic affiliation with the greatest number of survey respondents. Almost half of all the IR offices from schools in NCAA Division I responded (48%), representing slightly over one quarter (26%) of all survey respondents.

A noteworthy number of schools from the other NCAA divisions also responded. Over one third of NCAA Division II schools responded (36.5%), as did over one quarter (28%) of NCAA Division III schools. IR offices from smaller institutions in lesser-known athletics governing bodies were not as well represented among survey respondents. Nevertheless, IR offices from 171 institutions with athletics programs not in the NCAA responded to the survey, as did IR offices from 57 institutions with no athletics programs.

### Athletic Affiliations and Institutional Research

Most institutions of higher education with intercollegiate athletic teams are members of a national or regional athletics governing body that oversees, administers, and governs athletic competition between member institutions. Some examples include the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), the National Christian College

Athletic Association (NCCAA), and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA).

The NCAA is the most prominent governing body in college athletics, in terms of both visibility and data collection and reporting. However, NCAA-member institutions represent fewer than half (48%) of the total number of 2- and 4-year colleges and universities sponsoring intercollegiate athletics. The other 52% are represented by the other governing organizations (see Table 2). Data collected by the NCAA focus mostly on student-athlete participation, budget and finance issues, academic progress, gender equity, and student welfare. The collection and distribution of athletics data at non-NCAA-member institutions is modest in comparison to collection and distribution at NCAA-member schools. Nevertheless, institutions of

all shapes, sizes, and affiliations must be able to report on athletics data and student-athletes.

Most institutions not only belong to an athletics governing body, but also compete within an athletic conference (some in more than one conference, depending on the sports the institution offers). The athletics governing body and/or conference in which an institution competes can have meaning beyond simply who the school lines up against on the playing field (Sweitzer, 2009; Toma, 2003). Schools often wish to compete athletically against institutions that place a similar emphasis on athletics and that share similar institutional characteristics and academic missions.

The implications of these athletics affiliations can extend to IR. For example, the schools that an institution considers

**Table 2. Intercollegiate Athletics Governing Associations, 2013**

Governing Association	Acronym	Institution Type	Member Schools
National Collegiate Athletic Association	NCAA	4-year	1,066
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics	NAIA	4-year	256
National Christian College Athletic Association	NCCAA	4-year	113
United States Collegiate Athletic Association	USCAA	4-year	91
Association of Christian College Athletics	ACCA	4-year	24
National Junior College Athletic Association	NJCAA	2-year	517
California Community College Athletic Association	CCCCAA	2-year	107
Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges	NWAACC	2-year	34

its peers may be determined, in part, by the schools in its athletic conference (Knight, 2003). Indeed, institutions in a given athletic conference often find themselves competing against one another beyond sports, such as in academic rankings, student admissions, faculty recruitment, and even research grants. In fact, for many institutions the automatic peer group function in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) generates many of the schools in the same athletic conference.

In addition to implications for which schools a given institution considers its peers, athletics affiliations may also impact IR via the rules and regulations regarding athletics membership, especially in terms of reporting and student-athlete eligibility requirements. Several athletics governing bodies have bylaws specific to membership in their

organization. Likewise, most athletic conferences have rules and regulations specific to conference members. While it is critical that coaches and athletics administrators know these rules and guidelines, it is also important that other individuals who may work with athletics data be familiar with them. Although we focus on regulations of national governing bodies, it is important for administrators to keep in mind the rules and regulations specific to membership in a particular athletic conference as well. Some conferences have stricter guidelines than do national governing bodies, particularly regarding student-athlete academic eligibility.

### Limitations

A limitation to the analysis is in the response profile for the AIR survey. The numbers in Table 1 show the wide differences in the percentage

of institutions in a given athletics governing body/division that responded. Schools from the NCAA tended to respond at a higher rate than did schools from lesser-known 4-year and 2-year governing bodies. However, while there are not nearly as many respondents from the lesser-known athletics programs, the governing bodies to which they tend to belong do not have nearly as many reporting requirements as do institutions in the NCAA. Nevertheless, despite such a limitation, the responding IR offices are from the entire array of athletics governing bodies across the country.

Another limitation to the analysis is that respondents to the AIR survey might not have been fully aware of all the tasks for which their offices are responsible with regard to athletics reporting. Likewise, perhaps some institutions did not have the individual

### Notes for Table 3:

NCAA = National Collegiate Athletic Association

I-FBS = NCAA Division I–Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A)

I-FCS = NCAA Division I–Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA)

I-No FB = NCAA Division I with no football (formerly Division I-AAA)

D-II = NCAA Division II

D-III = NCAA Division III

NAIA = National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

NCCAA = National Christian College Athletic Association

NJCAA = National Junior College Athletic Association.

CCCAA = California Community College Athletic Association

The number of responses from institutions that are members of the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) or the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC) were too few to have significance. There were no respondents who indicated they are members of the Association of Christian College Athletics (ACCA).

\* The survey instrument asked respondents to mark this category only if their IR office tracks these items (graduation rates, grades, GPAs, course loads, etc.) for student-athletes beyond that which it does for all students.

# Responses to these items in this table include those who answered “at least once per week,” “at least once per month,” “at least once per semester,” or “at least once per year” on the survey.

**Table 3. Summary of AIR Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey**

Survey Item	NCAA					Non-NCAA Governing Bodies			
	I-FBS	I-FCS	I-No FB	D-II	D-III	NAIA	NCCAA	NJCAA	CCCAA
# of employees in your office/department doing IR-related work:1	2%	10%	26%	30%	46%	49%	67%	21%	42%
2-3	15%	28%	23%	46%	42%	36%	33%	57%	50%
4-5	32%	31%	32%	23%	9%	15%	0%	17%	8%
6-10	37%	28%	19%	1%	2%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Over 10	14%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Median FTE UG+Grad students (median FT + 1/3 median PT)	21960	10884	9361	4626	2205	1627	793	4439	10478
Communicate with athletics department at least once a year#	51%	55%	54%	49%	51%	28%	44%	39%	59%
Communicate with president/provost at least once a year re athletics#	32%	31%	29%	23%	23%	8%	22%	16%	32%
Communicate with registrar at least once a year re athletics#	27%	20%	11%	24%	23%	24%	0%	10%	14%
Communicate with financial aid at least once a year re athletics#	18%	27%	6%	25%	21%	16%	0%	11%	5%
Communicate with budget/finance at least once a year re athletics#	7%	10%	0%	13%	16%	10%	0%	14%	14%
Communicate with admissions at least once a year re athletics#	14%	14%	6%	13%	19%	16%	0%	3%	18%
Communicate with res life at least once a year re athletics#	4%	2%	0%	10%	5%	4%	0%	4%	5%
Communicate with student life at least once a year re athletics#	5%	4%	0%	11%	13%	12%	0%	9%	9%
Communicate with dean of stud at least once a year re athletics#	9%	2%	6%	11%	13%	18%	0%	4%	27%
Track graduation rates for student-athletes*	39%	47%	43%	82%	48%	34%	33%	26%	27%
Track grades/GPAs for student-athletes*	24%	20%	11%	24%	35%	26%	11%	13%	50%
Track course loads for student-athletes*	8%	4%	0%	9%	4%	2%	0%	4%	23%
Track course scheduling for student-athletes*	3%	2%	0%	4%	3%	2%	0%	3%	9%
Track freshman eligibility	7%	2%	3%	6%	3%	2%	0%	1%	5%
Track continuing eligibility and academic progress	12%	10%	9%	11%	6%	8%	0%	0%	18%
Submitting federal graduation rate to NCAA	61%	71%	69%	82%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Submitting NCAA Graduation Success Rate/ Academic Success Rate	62%	73%	74%	69%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Submitting NCAA Academic Performance Program/Academic Tracking System	27%	31%	34%	43%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Completes (or assists in) Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act	12%	18%	9%	20%	30%	18%	44%	24%	36%

best suited to respond to the survey do so. This may be particularly true for respondents from large IR offices.

It is also worth noting that the results of the AIR survey are more than 3 years old. However, in the few years since that survey, it is doubtful the responsibilities of IR professionals regarding athletics reporting have changed significantly. If anything, IR offices may have increased their athletics reporting, particularly due to the ever-increasing amount of data available and the heightened scrutiny that athletics programs receive. Thus, our analysis of IR's responsibilities regarding athletics reporting requirements may be even more pertinent than when the survey was administered.

## Survey Findings

The AIR Athletics Reporting Requirements Survey examined three broad areas regarding athletics data: communicating (e.g., with the athletics department, president, registrar), tracking (e.g., grades, GPAs, eligibility), and submitting (e.g., graduation rates). In this section, we discuss and analyze the survey findings in detail; Table 3 summarizes the results.

*IR Communication with the Athletics Department.* Findings from the AIR survey indicate that not all IR offices report on athletics or student-athletes. But for those that do, it is in the best interest of both the IR office and the athletics department to communicate about data obtained concerning athletics and student-athletes. For many institutions, such communication entails an IR representative interacting

directly with the athletics director. At some institutions, the athletics department has a compliance office, or at least one compliance director, monitoring the athletics program regarding its adherence to rules and regulations. Thus, the IR office communicating with athletics may mean an IR officer working with the athletics compliance office. At small institutions the entire athletics administration may consist of simply the athletics director. Likewise, at small schools the IR office may consist of one individual. Regardless of the size of the respective offices, these two entities should be in contact with each other regarding athletics reporting requirements if the IR office is involved in retrieving or reporting athletics data.

Findings from the AIR survey suggest approximately half of IR offices from institutions in the NCAA (across all divisions) communicate with the athletics department. More specifically, between 51% and 55% (depending on the subdivision) of IR offices in NCAA Division I interact with athletics, 49% in Division II, and 51% in Division III (see Table 3). Not nearly as many IR offices from institutions competing in non-NCAA governing bodies communicate with their athletics departments as often as those from NCAA-member institutions do. For example, only 28% of IR offices from NAIA schools and 44% from NCCAA schools do so. Among 2-year schools, there seems to be some disparity, as 39% of IR offices in the NJCAA communicate with their athletic departments, while 59% of those in the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCCAA) do. Across all the athletics governing bodies as a whole,

when IR offices communicate with the athletics department, graduation rates, GPAs, and athletics surveys are most often the topics.

It is the responsibility of the athletics compliance officer (or the athletics administration) to know the rules and regulations for their respective conference and governing body, and the accompanying forms and reports that the institution should complete and submit each term and annually. Given the spotlight on athletics and student-athlete academic progress in recent years, it is recommended that this process not be done solely by the athletics department to avoid any conflicts of interest, such as calculating student-athlete academic eligibility and graduation rates.

*IR Communication with the President/Provost.* Survey results in Table 3 suggest that presidents and provosts may look to IR offices for data regarding their athletics programs and/or student-athletes. Almost one third of IR offices at the NCAA Division I level (32% of Division I–FBS, 31% of Division I–Football Championship Subdivision [FCS], 29% of Division I no football) communicate with either the president's or the provost's office about athletics, as do almost one quarter (23%) of IR offices at NCAA Division II and Division III schools. At institutions in the non-NCAA organizations, only 8% of IR offices in the NAIA communicate with their president's or provost's offices about athletics, while 22% in the NCCAA do so. At 2-year institutions, there is a vast difference between the number of CCAA- and NJCAA-member institutions that

communicate with their president's or provost's office regarding athletics: 32% of CCCAA-member institutions reported they communicate with their president's and provost's office at least once a year, compared to 16% of NJCAA-member institutions. The topics IR professionals seem to discuss most often with the president's or provost's office include graduation rates, GPAs, and Graduation Success Rate (GSR)/ Academic Success Rate (ASR) (for NCAA schools).

*IR Communication with the Registrar's Office.* Our survey's results suggest that across all levels of athletics some IR offices communicate with their registrar's office specifically about athletics (see Table 3). For most institutions, the registrar's office (or office with a similar function) is likely the most appropriate entity to determine student-athlete academic eligibility (i.e., credits earned, grades, GPA requirements), and may be the most appropriate office on campus to calculate graduation rates as well. However, the IR office may be the entity best equipped to retrieve these data and report on them (Bers, 2008; Volkwein, 2008). It is no coincidence that there are consistencies between the number of IR offices that communicate with the registrar's office about athletics and the number that track grades and GPAs for student-athletes beyond that which they do for all students.

In IR offices at NCAA Division I–FBS institutions, 24% track student-athlete grades and GPAs, while 27% communicate with the registrar about athletics. These percentages are equal

for institutions in NCAA Division I–FCS (20%), NCAA Division I with no football (11%), and NCAA Division II (24%). In NCAA Division III schools, 35% of IR offices track student-athlete grades and GPAs, while only 23% communicate with the registrar about athletics, suggesting some IR offices at such institutions track student-athlete grades, but do not communicate with the registrar's office about them. For NAIA-member institutions, 26% of IR offices track student-athlete grades and 24% communicate with the registrar about athletics, while at NCCAA institutions 11% of IR offices track student-athlete grades, but none communicates with the registrar about them. At 2-year institutions, there is a disparity between the two governing bodies for which we had survey respondents. At NJCAA schools, 13% of IR offices track student-athlete grades and GPAs and 10% communicate with the registrar about athletics. In the CCCAA, however, half of IR offices track student-athlete grades and GPAs, while only 14% communicate with the registrar about athletics.

*Tracking and Submitting Grades, Graduation Rates, and Academic Progress.* The importance and emphasis placed on student-athlete academic outcomes have intensified in the past two decades (Petr & Paskus, 2009). Accordingly, reporting requirements regarding athletics and student-athletes have increased, and IR offices will often be involved in such reporting (or in the data collection efforts). Findings from this survey suggest that a greater percentage of IR offices at NCAA-member institutions track graduation rates for student-athletes

(beyond that which they do for all students) than those at non-NCAA schools (see Table 3). Furthermore, it appears that a much greater percentage of IR offices at NCAA Division II schools (82%) track athlete graduation rates versus schools in other NCAA divisions (39% Division I–FBS, 47% Division I–FCS, 43% Division I–no football, 48% Division III). At non-NCAA 4-year institutions, roughly one third of IR offices track student-athlete graduation rates (34% in NAIA and 33% in NCCAA schools). Fewer IR offices at 2-year institutions (26% in NJCAA and 27% in CCCAA) than IR offices at 4-year schools specifically track student-athlete graduation rates.

Beyond simply tracking graduation rates, the NCAA requires Divisions I and II institutions to annually submit the most recent 6-year federal graduation rate for both the student body and for their student-athletes who receive athletically related financial aid (see NCAA Bylaw 18.4.2.2, NCAA, 2013a, 2013b). Though there are exceptions, most NCAA Division III institutions are not required to report NCAA federal graduation rates for their student-athletes since they do not receive athletically related financial aid. However, institutions competing at the Division III level with at least one Division I sport in which athletes receive athletics aid are required to provide graduation rates for student-athletes in that sport. Additionally, institutions transitioning to Division III from Division I or II or from the NAIA may still offer athletics aid to the athletes who had scholarships prior to the transition. NCAA Division I and II institutions not offering athletics aid

are not required to submit a federal graduation rate for their student-athletes. Beyond the NCAA, none of the other athletics governing bodies requires member institutions to submit student-athlete graduation rates.

Institutions report the federal graduation rate calculation for the NCAA by gender and by race/ethnicity. Institutions are required to report specifically for selected sport categories, including football, men's basketball, baseball, men's track/cross country, men's other sports and mixed (coeducational) sports, women's basketball, women's track/cross country, and women's other sports. In addition, institutions report the rate for all sports as a whole.

The AIR survey results indicate that at a majority of NCAA-member institutions it is the IR office (not the athletics department and not the registrar) that submits the federal graduation rates to the NCAA (61% in Division I–FBS schools, 71% in Division I–FCS, 69% in Division I without football, and 82% in Division II). Institutions must report student-athlete graduation rates to the NCAA by June 1, which is well after the IPEDS spring collection deadline in mid-April for reporting federal graduation rates for all students. Institutions failing to do so by this deadline are not eligible to enter a team or an individual student-athlete in a NCAA championship or postseason event (see NCAA Division I Bylaw 18.4.2.2, NCAA, 2013a, 2013b).

The NCAA also requires its member institutions, regardless of division, to submit their student body enrollment

for the current academic year using numbers reported to IPEDS. Both the federal graduation rate and the enrollments are reported online under the NCAA's single-source sign-on system. The institution's administrator grants users access to the system; users have their own individual login. Prior to submission, schools can view their data. Schools can also view their data from prior years. Upon data submission, reports are available for schools to verify what was reported. The institution can view reports within the data collection site.

In 1995 the NCAA developed the GSR and ASR as an alternative to the federal graduation rate methodology. The GSR is specifically for NCAA Division I institutions (and those Division II and III institutions offering a Division I sport), while the ASR is for Division II schools. Similar to the graduation rates, Table 3 suggests that at NCAA-member institutions IR offices tend to be responsible for submitting the GSR or ASR to the NCAA (62% in Division I–FBS schools, 73% in Division I–FCS, 74% in Division I without football, and 69% in Division II). These percentages are similar to those in the above section regarding submitting graduation rates. It is likely that in most IR offices the same individual responsible for calculating and submitting the graduation rate is also responsible for the GSR/ASR.

The GSR/ASR student population consists of:

- first-time, full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking freshmen receiving athletics aid and entering in the fall term;

- first-time, full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking freshmen receiving athletics aid and entering mid-year; and
- student-athletes receiving athletics aid who transfer into the institution and are placed in the cohort based on initial full-time enrollment at a college or university.

The GSR/ASR and federal methodologies also differ in that the GSR/ASR subtracts student-athletes who leave an institution prior to graduation (as long as the students left in good academic standing).

The Division I GSR differs from the Division II ASR in that the ASR includes recruited freshmen who did not receive athletics aid, as well as nonrecruited students who were on the team's roster on or after the first date of competition. To determine in which sport to count a student-athlete who is receiving athletics aid in more than one sport, the NCAA uses the same hierarchy as does the U.S. Department of Education (ED): football, basketball, baseball, track/cross country, other sports.

Reporting categories for the GSR/ASR calculation include:

- number enrolled as full-time baccalaureate-seeking students;
- number graduated;
- number of allowable exclusions, which are the same as in federal reporting (students who died or left school to join the military, a church mission, or foreign organization; pregnancy is not an exclusion); and
- number of students who left school who would have been academically eligible to compete the following season.



The GSR/ASR calculation adds the number of allowable exclusions to the number who left school while eligible for competition. The calculation then subtracts this number from the number enrolled to get the new cohort, and then divides the number of graduates by the new cohort.

According to Maria DeJulio, NCAA research contractor, the most common issue, beyond miscellaneous data entry, regarding the GSR/ASR data collection is remembering to report all NCAA-sponsored sports, even if a team is not used to meet NCAA sport-sponsorship requirements (DeJulio, 2008).

NCAA-member institutions are required to submit to the NCAA the raw data needed to calculate the federal graduation rate and the GSR or ASR, aggregated at the level of race/ethnicity for each sport category, via the same Web application for submission of the federal graduation rate (NCAA, n.d.a). The application asks for data, broken down by race/ethnicity, on five groups of student-athletes: (1) federal cohort, (2) 2-year transfers, (3) 4-year transfers, (4) mid-year enrollees, and (5) non-scholarship student-athletes. Once schools have submitted the data, the NCAA checks for outliers and missing data, and contacts institutions to resolve any issues. An institution's president or chancellor must sign a form confirming data accuracy. The NCAA will then create a set of public reports for each school; these reports are available on the NCAA Web site (NCAA, n.d.b). The due date is June 1 for submitting the Division I GSR and Division II ASR to the NCAA, which is the same deadline for

submitting the federal graduation rate to the NCAA.

The Academic Performance Program (APP) and Academic Tracking System (ATS) were developed as a way to track the academic progress of NCAA Divisions I and II student-athletes longitudinally. The APP and ATS collect data on credits attempted and earned, GPA, and eligibility and retention status for each term. The NCAA requires every Division I and II institution to submit these data annually for each program; Table 3 suggests that some IR offices do this for their campus. In NCAA Division I-FBS schools, 27% of responding IR offices submit the APP data. At Division I-FCS institutions, 31% of IR offices submit APP data, and at NCAA Division I schools without football, 34% of IR offices do so. Finally, 43% of IR offices at NCAA Division II schools submit the ATS.

The NCAA uses the Division I APP to calculate the Academic Progress Rate (APR), and collects the data for both the Division I APP and Division II ATS through a Web application that has the ability to interface with the NCAA Compliance Assistant software. The NCAA collects the data for each individual student-athlete, and then aggregates data for Division I schools by team to calculate a team APR. The NCAA sends notifications regarding all collections electronically to each institution's athletics director and other institutional staff, including the compliance coordinator. Division I schools receive the memo in the spring, while Division II schools receive it in late summer.

The Division I APR calculation includes two measures for each academic term for each student-athlete: academic eligibility (via NCAA, conference, and institutional eligibility standards) and retention status. Thus, every student-athlete can earn zero, one, or two points. To calculate a team's APR, the NCAA sums all of the eligibility and retention points a team has earned, divides that number by the total possible eligibility and retention points, and multiplies the resulting proportion by 1,000 to arrive at the APR score. A team's APR is equal to the term-by-term calculations over the past 4 years on a rolling average. Institutions underperforming are subject to penalties. The Division II ATS does not award points, nor does it penalize underperforming institutions. The ATS is strictly a tracking system.

The due date for Division I APP data is 6 weeks after the institution's first day of classes for the fall term or regular academic year, and 12 weeks for the Division II ATS. Division I institutions failing to meet the deadline are not eligible to enter a team or individual student-athlete in a NCAA championship or postseason event (see Bylaw 23.01.3.1 in NCAA 2013a). Division II institutions failing to submit data by the deadline could forfeit institutional enhancement funds for the following academic year (see Bylaw 3.2.4.11 in NCAA 2013b).

*Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act.* Table 3 suggests that although some IR offices become involved in EADA data submission, not nearly as many do compared with the number of IR offices that submit other athletics data.

At institutions with larger athletics departments, and that likewise offer athletics scholarships, a smaller percentage of IR offices complete the EADA. It is likely that the athletics departments at these institutions submit their EADA report. Indeed, the survey results show that 12% of IR offices in NCAA Division I–FBS, 18% in Division I–FCS, 9% in Division I with no football, and 20% in NCAA Division II schools complete the EADA survey. At NCAA Division III schools (no athletics aid), 30% of IR offices indicated they either complete or assist in completing their institution’s EADA survey. Likewise, a slightly greater percentage of IR offices not at NCAA institutions complete the EADA, which, again, should not be a surprise given the smaller size of most athletics offices at such institutions. More specifically, 44% of IR offices at the responding NCCAA-member schools complete the EADA survey, as do 36% and 24% at CCCAA and NJCAA member institutions, respectively.

The EADA allows for prospective students to assess a college’s or university’s commitment to providing equitable athletics opportunities for men and women (ED, 2009). All coeducational institutions of higher education receiving Title IV funding and sponsoring an athletics program (both 2-year and 4-year institutions) must prepare an EADA report by October 30. Institutions must report their data to the ED via an online survey; the data are then migrated to the Office of Postsecondary Education’s public Web site (ED, 2013). The EADA data entry Web site estimates the average time required to complete the

data collection at 5.5 hours, including reviewing instructions, gathering data, and completing and reviewing the information collected.

In addition to submitting EADA-related data to the ED, NCAA-member institutions are required to submit this information to the NCAA. It should be noted that no other athletics governing body currently requires its member institutions to submit EADA data. NCAA schools submit these data via an online application known as the NCAA/EADA Financial Reporting System (FRS) (NCAA, n.d.c). The NCAA’s Web site provides an Excel-based version as a tool to assist in data collection. (Note that institutions must still submit EADA data via the FRS.) The FRS offers output reports that are formatted for input to the ED’s Web site by October 30. The NCAA does not release information submitted by individual institutions, and reports only aggregate results by NCAA division. Note that the NCAA may change passwords for the FRS each year. IR offices charged with completing such data submissions should be aware that the NCAA emails the new passwords to the current CEO and athletics director on file in the membership services database, as well as to the CFO and primary contact on file from the previous year’s FRS.

## **OTHER ATHLETICS DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

There are additional athletics data reporting requirements beyond those addressed in the survey, as well as other related issues that IR offices may

need to understand. Examples include sport sponsorship and scholarships (related to Title IX). Specific to NCAA institutions, IR offices may also work with the NCAA dashboard indicators, Institutional Performance Program (IPP), and institutional self-studies. We begin this section with a discussion of specific software related to athletics reporting.

### **Athletics-Specific Software**

It is important for institutions to monitor student-athlete academic eligibility and graduation rates, regardless of the athletics governing body of which an institution is a member. For NCAA-member institutions in all divisions, the NCAA has Compliance Assistant software, which is a tool to aid administrators in determining if their athletics department and student-athletes are in compliance with NCAA rules and regulations. The tool assists in monitoring compliance in areas such as financial aid, eligibility, and recruiting, and also serves as a data collection system in which users have the ability to generate NCAA forms. The Compliance Assistant software program, documentation, and technical support are available free to NCAA-member institutions. The NAIA has similar software, known as Eligibility Certification Processing Software, for its member institutions (NAIA, n.d.). The athletics compliance software packages are utilized mostly by athletics administration at most NCAA- and NAIA-member institutions. However, IR professionals at these institutions who are responsible for monitoring student-athlete eligibility

should be aware of the software and communicate with their athletics department about its utilization.

### **Title IX, Sport Sponsorship, Athletics Scholarships**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity, including intercollegiate athletics. At least one of three tests must be met for an institution to be considered providing equitable sport participation opportunities. The first test is proportionality: the percentage of male to female student-athletes should be in proportion to that of the student body. The second test is opportunity: the school must show a history and continuing practice of expanding opportunities for the underrepresented sex. The third test is accommodation: the school must accommodate the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.

IR offices may get involved in evaluating compliance on any of these three tests—the third test in particular. Prior to 2005, compliance with the third test required an analysis of multiple factors. In 2005 the ED allowed schools to rely solely on a survey, asking members of the underrepresented sex if the school's current sports offerings were meeting their interests and abilities. In 2010 the ED reversed the 2005 decision. Institutions can still conduct surveys, but they can no longer rely solely on a survey to assess compliance with Title IX. Furthermore, the 2010 ruling does not allow an institution to interpret nonresponses to a survey as lack of interest or ability.

The 2010 ruling also provides for technical assistance to institutions in designing a nondiscriminatory survey as one of several assessment methods. Refer to Ali (2010) for the letter from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights announcing the 2010 policy.

*Sport Sponsorship and Athletics Scholarships.* Meeting Title IX requirements in terms of equitable sport participation opportunities for males and females are linked to the number of sports an institution offers. The NCAA requires an institution to sponsor a minimum number of sports specific to its designated division (NCAA, 2013a, p. 354; NCAA, 2013b, p. 276; NCAA, 2013c, p. 187). Gender equity in athletics financial aid requires the awarding of athletics scholarships (if the school awards athletics aid) that are substantially proportionate to student-athlete participation rates. Institutions should be aware of scholarship limitations for any given sport depending on their athletics governing body and athletic conference affiliation.

Sections of the EADA survey include specific varsity sports teams at the institution, number of student-athletes per sport, number of coaches per sport, coaches' salaries, athletically related student aid, recruiting expenses, operating expenses, total expenses, and total revenues. Institutions (IR offices in particular) interested in comparing themselves to their competitors may do so via a government Web site known as the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool (ED, n.d.). The search tool

can create customized reports on equity data, allowing comparisons within or across groups (e.g., by state, by NCAA division, or by conference). Federal EADA information can be found online for every institution, regardless of membership in any particular athletics governing body or division.

### **Reporting Financial Data: NCAA Dashboard Indicators**

Amid concerns that the increase in spending by athletics departments was exceeding that of institutions as a whole, the NCAA initiated the Dashboard Indicators program to provide better financial data for decision making in athletics (Brown, 2007). The program was initiated in 2006 after the Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Athletics recommended creation of a dashboard indicator program to give institutions a common set of measures by which to compare financial information. NCAA Division II and III institutions now use dashboard indicators as well. In contrast to EADA financial data, the dashboard indicator data create reference points, making the data more useful for decision making (Brown, 2007).

Dashboards are graphic representations of data points, and in this case they allow for institutional comparisons of athletics data based on peer groups, and provide common reporting definitions for data collection and distinctions in revenue sources. Institutions annually report revenue and expense information to the NCAA. The NCAA provides access to a Web site where presidents, athletics directors, and others approved by the institution can retrieve their own institutional

dashboard indicators and aggregate peer data in late spring of each year. Although many IR professionals may not have access to the dashboards, institution officials may ask IR offices to gather the data used for the dashboards. Some presidents and athletics directors may, in fact, provide their IR office with the password in order to conduct peer comparisons, and IR administrators should most likely be well equipped to do such analyses.

The dashboard indicators have the potential to help presidents moderate spending at the institutional level as opposed to legislative measures that would contain costs. To date, however, it is not clear if the improvements in accounting and reporting available with this program have informed decision making. One critique of the dashboard program is that better data will actually accelerate spending, with institutions at the lower levels of NCAA Division I allocating additional resources in order to compete with the more established programs (Brown, 2007). Indeed, financial decisions are among the most dominant issues in intercollegiate athletics. IR professionals are well positioned to work closely with university presidents, CFOs, athletics directors, and athletics business officers to make the best use of financial data in athletics decision making.

### **NCAA Division I Institutional Performance Program, and Division II and III Self-Study**

The NCAA no longer requires Division I institutions to participate in a certification process; rather, the NCAA

is scheduled to begin using the IPP in fall 2014. The bulk of data for the IPP will come from what institutions are required to send the NCAA via other systems, such as the GSR and the dashboard indicators, and institutions will separately generate the remainder of the data (NCAA, 2014). The IPP focuses on four areas for review: (1) academics, (2) student-athlete experience, (3) fiscal management, and (4) inclusion (gender and ethnicity). (See Table 4 for a description of each area.) It would be quite helpful to athletics departments for IR offices in NCAA Division I schools to gather and analyze data for the IPP.

NCAA Division II and III institutions conduct a self-study of their intercollegiate athletics program once every 5 years. The purpose of

the Division II self-study program is to address topics in the areas of (1) institutional purpose and athletics philosophy; (2) the authority of the CEO in personnel and financial affairs; (3) athletics organization and administration; (4) finances, personnel, sports programs, recruiting, admissions, eligibility policies; and (5) services for and a profile of student-athletes (NCAA, 2013d).

The Division III self-study is conducted by conferences in conjunction with individual member institutions. Each conference assesses the overall operation of the conference in accordance with Division III philosophy in seven broad areas: (1) conference philosophy, (2) institutional personnel involvement, (3) conference organization and operation, (4)

**Table 4. NCAA Division I Institutional Performance Program Focus Areas**

<p><b>Academics</b>  <i>—Analysis and review of data already being collected (APR, GSR)</i>  <i>—Academic support available</i>  <i>—Eligibility certification</i>  <i>—Entering academic profiles</i></p>
<p><b>Student-athlete experience</b>  <i>—Student-athlete survey administered by NCAA national office</i>  <i>—Metrics and current resources available</i>  <i>—Centerpiece of new program</i></p>
<p><b>Fiscal management</b>  <i>—Financial information currently provided as part of NCAA financial dashboards</i>  <i>—Analyze metrics and current resources available</i></p>
<p><b>Inclusion (gender and ethnicity)</b>  <i>—Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act data</i>  <i>—Campus diversity information</i>  <i>—Analyze metrics and current resources available</i></p>

Source: NCAA (2014).

conference accountability and control, (5) NCAA involvement, (6) sportsmanship, and (7) student-athlete inclusion. Part of the AIR survey results not appearing in Table 3 show that 36% of IR offices in NCAA Division II institutions and 34% of those in NCAA Division III institutions are either directly responsible for or assist in the NCAA self-study.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL (DOES IR PLAY A ROLE?)

Regardless of the athletics governing body and/or conference to which an institution belongs, compliance with the organization's rules and regulations is critical. Institutional control is the precept under which all organizational bylaws and regulations can be summarized. Institutional control in athletics not only underlies the idea that a school's athletics program is in compliance with the governing body's rules, but also underlies the fact that college and university presidents are ultimately responsible for the supervision and oversight of their athletics program.

Most national and regional governing bodies mention the principle of institutional control in their bylaws. In terms of the NCAA's bylaws, institutional control is highlighted in all three NCAA manuals (Divisions I, II, and III), and all three manuals give the exact same wording regarding both the responsibility and scope of institutional control. See Article 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 in any of the three NCAA manuals

(NCAA, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). Similarly, the specific wording on institutional control for NAIA institutions is in Article III Section B of the NAIA manual (NAIA, 2013). The NCCAA mentions the principle of institutional control in Article X of its constitution (NCCAA, 2013). Two-year college athletics governing bodies place the responsibility for compliance with their bylaws on member colleges and their respective athletic conference. For an example, see article 7.4.5.1 of the CCCAA constitution and bylaws (CCCAA, 2013).

## THE EVOLVING ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN ATHLETICS REPORTING

Taken collectively, findings from the AIR survey reveal that at many institutions athletics reporting is not left solely to athletics departments. However, one issue regarding IR's involvement may be information sharing with athletics departments. Thus, this study brings two main questions to the forefront: Who has oversight of student-athlete data at the campus level? And should such data be centralized in the athletics department or decentralized across campus? IR offices are well equipped and well trained to collect, analyze, and disseminate institutional and campus data to a wide range of constituents. As such, IR offices are well positioned to offer solutions to the challenges many athletics departments face concerning data collection that will provide the most comprehensive understanding of the student-athlete experience. Institutional researchers can also

develop assessments and measures of student-athlete experiences that they can compare across institutions.

Athletics are not immune from the continued push for assessment and accountability in higher education. Athletics programs have been measured by more than simply wins and losses for several years, led by the push from the NCAA. Such an increase in assessment and accountability in athletics is precisely why IR professionals will continue to play an increasingly important role in the relationship between athletics and the institution.

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## Resources

Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool: <http://ope.ed.gov/athletics>.

Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA): <http://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/athletics/eada.html>.

For assistance with the EADA, contact the EADA help desk: 888-233-5421.

For assistance with NCAA submittals, contact Maria DeJulio, Contractor, NCAA, at 913-397-7668, or [mdejulio@ncaa.org](mailto:mdejulio@ncaa.org).

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