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NCAA Academic Eligibility Standards for Competition in Division III

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NCAA Academic Eligibility Standards for Competition in Division III

by

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Treatise

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This Dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Norman and Frances Winkler, my children, Hannah and Daniel, and my loving wife, Mimi.

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NCAA Academic Eligibility Standards for Competition in Division III

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In NCAA Division I, academic eligibility standards are national in scope and are the same for all institutions. In NCAA Division III, there are no national standards; rather each member institution establishes its own academic eligibility standards. However, information on these standards has never been collected and published, leaving a significant hole in the research in this area. The problem addressed by this study was to collect this academic eligibility information on the members of one Division III conference.

A number of questions were addressed in the study. One was, how do Division III eligibility standards compare to Division I standards? Another was, how do eligibility standards in the Division III institutions studied compare to each other? Since differences were found, a final question addressed was, do the differences in academic eligibility standards between the Division III institutions lead to competitive equity issues.

Data on academic eligibility standards from 15 members of one Division III conference were collected through interviews of Compliance Officers at each institution. The data were compared to the NCAA national standards for Division I. The data were also analyzed for differences among the Division III institutions studied. A correlation

analysis was used to determine if a relationship existed between academic eligibility standards and competitive equity.

The findings of the study were that on most of the academic eligibility variables, the Division III institutions studied had lower standards than the national standards for Division I. In the comparison of Division III institutions to each other, differences were found for high school core course requirements, transfer and continuing student credit hour requirements, and exceptions to the rules. While the study found pronounced differences in competitive equity among the Division III institutions studied, there was no clear indication of any relationship between eligibility requirements and competitive equity.

This study provided some interesting information about the institutions in one Division III conference. However, the study raised as many questions as it answered. More work needs to be done to determine whether the policies followed by NCAA Division III institutions are truly different from those followed by Division I institutions.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Since its creation in 1906, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has faced many controversies. One of the most prevalent and consistent controversies concerns academic eligibility standards for competition for student-athletes. For many years, the NCAA offered minimal guidance on academic eligibility standards for student-athletes. Each university determined its own standards. Furthermore, the NCAA had no enforcement mechanism for forcing universities to follow rules. This led to significant controversy and the commonly held belief that many universities used players on their athletic teams who were not students.

In 1948, the NCAA adopted what would come to be called the Sanity Code (Zimbalist, 1999). The code was meant to give the NCAA more control over college athletics, including academic eligibility standards, and it included an enforcement mechanism. Penalties could include expelling an institution from the Association. Unfortunately for the NCAA, little changed in the abuse of the rules in college athletics as a result of the Sanity Code. Controversy over academics in college sports continued as athletic directors and coaches wielded the most influence in NCAA matters.

Beginning in the 1980's, university presidents attempted to take control of the NCAA. This led to increases in academic eligibility standards with the passage of propositions 48, 42, and 16 from the mid 1980's to 1992 (Covell & Barr, 2001). These propositions raised standardized test score (SAT, ACT) and high school grade point average requirements and began requiring successful completion of specific high school

core courses. Unfortunately, these propositions did not end the controversy over competition involving academically unqualified student-athletes. There continued to be charges of academic abuse by student-athletes and on behalf of student-athletes throughout college sport. Student-athletes and athletic departments were charged with cheating, student-athletes graduated at low rates, and student-athletes performed at significantly lower academic levels than non student-athletes. Since then, little has changed. Academic problems in college athletics are still a significant issue.

Statement of the Problem

The NCAA states as one of its fundamental policies and its basic purpose the following: "The competitive athletics programs of member institutions are designed to be a vital part of the educational system. A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports" (NCAA Division III Manual, 2008, p.1).

There are three membership levels in the NCAA, Divisions I, II, and III. In Division I, institutions may award athletic aid to student-athletes, and many Division I athletic programs generate significant income from some of their sport teams (primarily football and men's basketball). Division I programs with football are divided into the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), formerly Division I-A and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), formerly Division I-AA. FBS football programs are very elaborate and must meet minimum attendance requirements. FCS programs are less involved and

do not have attendance requirements. In Division II, institutions may award athletic aid to student-athletes, but few, if any, athletic departments generate more money than they spend. Division II athletic programs are financed through the institution's budget like other departments. In Division III, the awarding of athletic aid is not allowed. Few, if any, Division III athletic departments generate more money than they spend. As with Division II, Division III athletic programs are financed through the institution's budget like other departments (The Differences Between Divisions I, II, and III, 2008, p.3).

The NCAA Division III Philosophy Statement includes the following statement: "Colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience" (About the NCAA, 2008, p.3).

In NCAA Division I, national academic standards for eligibility are established for all universities for freshmen, transfer, and continuing students. This is an area of significant controversy as research has demonstrated that these standards are well below those for non student-athletes. It would be very unusual for a university to set its own academic eligibility standards at a higher level than those set by the NCAA since that could lead to a competitive disadvantage for that institution. In Division III, the NCAA does not establish national academic eligibility standards. Rather, each institution establishes its own academic eligibility standards. However, information on these

standards has never been collected and published, leaving a significant hole in the research in this area.

Questions to be Addressed

The lack of data about academic eligibility standards for student-athletes in Division III leads to a number of questions. How do Division III academic eligibility standards compare to Division I standards? Are the Division III standards more demanding, less demanding, or about the same? How do academic eligibility standards in Division III colleges and universities compare to each other? Are some Division III institutions more demanding than others? If there are differences between Division III institutions in academic eligibility standards, do these differences lead to competitive equity issues? Answers to these questions would help clarify the academic eligibility situation in NCAA Division III.

Need for the Study

While much has been written about NCAA Division I academic eligibility standards, and the NCAA annually publishes these standards, there is a serious lack of knowledge about academic eligibility standards in NCAA Division III. A comprehensive search of the literature found no published articles on academic eligibility standards in Division III. Since each institution establishes its own standards, there could be significant differences in standards. Furthermore, Division III standards might vary considerably from Division I standards. If there are substantial differences in academic eligibility standards between Division III universities, this could have an impact on competitive equity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data on academic eligibility standards for competition for student-athletes in Division III colleges and universities in one athletic conference. Data on standards were collected and analyzed for freshmen, transfers, and continuing students. The data were analyzed to compare Division III standards with those used in Division I, and to identify differences among Division III institutions. Differences were found among Division III institutions and the differences were analyzed to see if they had an impact on competitive equity.

Rationale for the Study

Intercollegiate athletics in NCAA Division III colleges and universities are supposed to be different from programs in Division I institutions. Division III colleges and universities are supposed to emphasize the student aspect of student-athlete. The Division III philosophy statement includes the following, "colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience…" (About the NCAA, 2008, p.3). In Division III, student-athletes are to be indistinguishable from the rest of the student population. However, since information about academic eligibility standards for Division III institutions has not been collected or analyzed, there is currently no way of knowing whether Division III institutions are more academically stringent than Division I institutions in the area of academic eligibility standards for student-athletes.

Furthermore, since the data on academic eligibility requirements for Division III institutions are not currently available, it is not known whether differences exist among

Division III institutions, and if they do exist, whether those differences have an impact on competitive equity. One of the core principles of the NCAA is the Principle of Competitive Equity. This principle states that, "the structure and programs of the NCAA and the activities of its members shall promote opportunity for equity in competition to assure that individual student-athletes and institutions will not be unfairly prevented from achieving the benefits inherent in participation in intercollegiate athletics" (NCAA Division I Manual, 2008, p.5). In other words, the principle of competitive equity is designed to prevent a small number of individuals or teams from winning all the time. In Division I, everyone plays by the same academic eligibility standards. Whether that is true in Division III is unknown.

Limitations of the Study

There are 56 Division III conferences and 442 Division III member institutions in the NCAA. This study was limited to one of these conferences with its 15 member institutions. It is not possible to generalize the study's findings and conclusions to other Division III conferences and institutions. Most of the data were collected through telephone interviews with the NCAA compliance officer at each conference institution. Since these were telephone interviews the interviewer was not able to read body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues from the respondents. This was not a significant limitation as the data collected were not of a sensitive nature. The data were collected during one academic year only, 2006-2007. Data from other years could be different, but it is unlikely that such differences would be significant. In the comparison of academic eligibility standards between Division I and the Division III

institutions studied, one notable difference between the Divisions is that the standards in Division III apply to all students equally. There are not separate standards for student-athletes. This is not the case in Division I. In Division I, eligibility standards for student-athletes are often lower than for non-student-athletes. For the competitive equity analysis, the only sports analyzed were men's and women's basketball, men's and women's tennis, baseball and softball. Since the institutions in this conference also offer other sports, not all sports were analyzed. However, the sports chosen were offered by at least 14 of the 15 conference members. Most other sports had lower participation rates. Performance data for the sports studied were collected from the 2000-2001 academic year through the 2006-2007 academic year and included total conference championships won and total win/loss records.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made concerning the conduct of this study:

1. All compliance officers interviewed provided accurate and honest information.
2. The conference standings and win/loss records provided by the conference office and used for the competitive equity part of the study were accurate and complete.

Summary

Academic eligibility standards for competition have been a major issue in the NCAA for many years. In Division I, the standards are controversial, but they are clearly stated, published yearly, and apply to all members evenly. This is not the case in Division

III, where the standards are set by each institution. This study aimed to fill that knowledge gap, at least partially, by collecting data on such standards, comparing them with those established for Division I institutions, and those of various Division III institutions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

There is a significant body of literature on many aspects of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Much of this literature focuses on academic issues, and most of that focus is on Division I institutions. This literature review includes the history of academic eligibility standards including how they originated, how they have changed over the years--including propositions 42, 16, and 48; and the issue of presidential control. There is much debate on the adequacy of academic standards in Division I, and this aspect of the literature will be explored. Intercollegiate athletics have been called American higher education's "peculiar institution." Their presence is pervasive, yet their proper balance with academics remains puzzling (Thelin, 1994). The area of student-athlete academic performance during college is also prominent in the literature, and this will be reviewed also. Grade point averages and graduation rates of student-athletes have been examined frequently. This is definitely a controversial area. Paul "Bear" Bryant, former football coach at the University of Alabama, once said:

> I used to go along with the idea that football players on scholarships were "student-athletes," which is what the NCAA calls them, meaning a student first and an athlete second. We were kidding ourselves, trying to make it more palatable to the academicians. We don't have to say that and we shouldn't. At the level we play, the boy is really an athlete first and a student second. (Zingg, 1983, p. 9)

There have also been many academic scandals in athletics, and these show up frequently in the literature. The issue of race and socioeconomic status is one of the most highly debated topics in the area of academic eligibility standards for student-athletes. There is much controversy as well as passion in the literature in this area.

While much has been written about Division I institutions, there is little in the literature on Division III colleges and universities. What has been written will be reviewed, and the focus will be on some of the same issues that exist for Division I institutions. These issues include academic performance of student-athletes after enrollment, grade point averages, graduation rates, and overall academic performance compared to non student-athletes and to the predicted academic performance of student-athletes.

Historical Look at Academic Eligibility Standards

Since the first intercollegiate football game in 1869 when Rutgers beat Princeton with the help of ten freshmen, three of whom were failing algebra, academic eligibility standards for student-athletes have been an issue for higher education (Zimbalist, 1999). In response to the violence in college football, President Theodore Roosevelt summoned college representatives to the White House in 1905. The result was the formation of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) which would later be renamed the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA was charged with reforming college sports, including addressing academic issues (Thelin, 1994). At the 1918 NCAA Convention, it was resolved "that in every college and university, the Department of Physical Training and Athletics should be recognized as a department of

collegiate instruction, directly responsible to the college or university administration" (Covell & Barr, 2001, p.419). The expectation was put forth early that student-athletes were meant to be integrated into the academic fabric of an institution.

However, there was no national effort to enforce such principles because the NCAA had no enforcement authority. In 1938, the NCAA attempted to change this when it voted to establish eligibility rules for National Collegiate Championships, placing in the hands of the Association's Eligibility Committee the authority to rule on the eligibility of student-athletes participating in NCAA meets and tournaments. The eligibility rules stated that a student-athlete must be admitted to the institution under the published admission rules applicable to all students and that he must, at the time of competition, be registered for at least a minimum full-time program of studies as defined by the institution (NCAA News, 1980).

Sanity Code

In spite of these early efforts by the NCAA, there continued to be widespread abuses. The NCAA attempted to correct these problems at its 1948 convention with the adoption of the "Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics," called the "Sanity Code." This name was given to the "Principles" because many believed they were necessary to restore "Sanity" to college sports. The "Principles" included that athletic programs would operate based on sound academic standards (Zimbalist, 1999). However, the only penalty the NCAA could impose on schools that failed to comply with the standards was expulsion from the association (Covell & Barr, 2001). The "Sanity Code" was challenged by many colleges and universities and at the 1951 NCAA

convention, several of its provisions were overturned, including the enforcement powers that had been given to the NCAA compliance committee (Thelin, 1994).

1.6 Rule

At its 1966 convention, the NCAA passed the association's first-ever minimum academic standards for awarding athletically related financial aid. The "1.6 rule" required that member institutions could not offer athletically related financial aid to student-athletes who had a predicted grade-point average (GPA) of less than 1.6 on a 4.0 scale in the student-athletes' sixth, seventh, or eighth semesters in high school. The 1.6 predicted GPA was based on high school GPA, class rank, and standardized test scores (SAT or ACT). Furthermore, in order to maintain eligibility, the student-athlete had to maintain a minimum 1.6 GPA each year while in college (Covell & Barr, 2001).

2.0 Rule

At the 1973 NCAA convention, the membership voted to repeal the "1.6 rule." It was replaced with the "2.0 rule." The new rule required student-athletes to have a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA (again based on a 4.0 scale) in the sixth, seventh, or eighth semesters in high school. Class rank and standardized test scores were no longer factors in determining eligibility (NCAA News, 1980). Many considered this to be a significant weakening of academic standards which could lead to abuse of student-athletes.

Proposition 48

Following the repeal of the "1.6 rule" and the implementation of the "2.0 rule," the NCAA did not address national academic eligibility standards until 1983. At the 1983 convention, the NCAA membership passed Proposition 48 to strengthen eligibility

standards. It required that a 2.0 GPA be earned in 11 high school core courses, including at least three in English, two in math, two in social science, and two in the natural or physical sciences, including at least one lab course. It also required a minimum combined SAT score of 700 or a minimum ACT score of 15 (Covell & Barr, 2001). Proposition 48 included a category called "partial qualifier," which referred to a student who met one but not both of the standards. "Partial qualifiers" could receive athletic scholarships but were not eligible to practice or compete during their first year in college (Zimbalist, 1999). Even though many believed these standards were minimal at best, they were controversial.

Proposition 42

Eligibility standards were next addressed at the 1989 NCAA convention. The membership passed Proposition 42 which eliminated the "partial qualifier" category. Student-athletes failing to meet all the standards would no longer be eligible for athletic scholarships. Passage of Proposition 42 was highly controversial. In fact, it led to so much protest that it was changed at the 1990 NCAA convention. At that convention, the membership voted that "partial qualifiers" could still receive financial aid as long as it was not an athletics department grant (Byers, 1995).

Proposition 16

At the 1992 NCAA convention, the membership strengthened academic eligibility standards with the passage of Proposition 16, which increased the number of core courses the student-athlete had to complete in high school from 11 to 13. One of the new courses had to be an English class and students were also required to take algebra and geometry.

The new rule also introduced a sliding scale for test scores and high school GPA. A student with the minimum high school GPA of 2.0 would need a score of 900 on the SAT or 21 on the ACT. A student with the minimum test score of 700 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT would need a high school GPA of 2.5 to be eligible (Diegmueller, 1995). At the 1995 NCAA convention, Proposition 16 was amended to allow "partial qualifiers" to practice with their teams and receive athletic scholarships (Zimbalist, 1999).

Clearinghouse

The next significant change in academic eligibility standards was the establishment of the NCAA Clearinghouse. At the 1993 NCAA convention, delegates voted to establish a national clearinghouse to certify the initial eligibility of all potential NCAA Division I and II student-athletes. Up to this point, individual colleges and universities collected academic records from incoming freshmen and determined eligibility on a case-by-case basis. The establishment of the Clearinghouse made eligibility decisions consistent nationwide (Worsnop, 1994).

Presidential Control

In 1983, the NCAA formed a presidents' commission to help guide decision making on NCAA policy. This move was at least partly in response to a group of university presidents who, through the American Council on Education (ACE), had attempted to take control of an athletics structure that was perceived as having complete disregard for academic standards (Shulman & Bowen, 2001). Prior to 1983, it was widely thought that the NCAA was controlled by coaches and athletic directors. The establishment of the presidents' commission began to change that. Presidents began to

make some progress on academic issues with the passage of propositions 48, 42, and 16 as described earlier. At the 1992 NCAA convention the NCAA Constitution was amended to require presidential approval of conference-sponsored legislative initiatives, thereby giving presidents even more control over athletics. In 1997, the NCAA restructured, giving presidents full authority over the governance of intercollegiate athletics at the national level. The Association's top body, the Executive Committee, is comprised entirely of CEO's, and the three divisions are led by presidential groups (Knight Commission Report, 2001). These changes provided the potential for presidents to take the lead in bringing about significant reform in college athletics.

However, not everyone believed the presidents could bring about significant change. Some believed that too many presidents were committed to the commercialization of athletics and bringing in as much money as the marketplace would allow (Byers, 1995). There was also the challenge of turn over among college presidents. Presidents changed jobs so frequently that they did not have enough time to accomplish significant change, such as improved academic performance and graduation rates, decreasing the number of rules violations and stemming the incredible amounts of spending on athletics (Zimbalist, 1999).

The NCAA has a colorful and controversial history. It has always struggled with the appropriate balance between academics and athletics. Academic eligibility standards have undergone significant change over the years. However, the changes have not ended the controversy. In fact, often the changes created even more controversy.

The Adequacy of NCAA Academic Eligibility Standards

The *NCAA Manual*, 2008, states that intercollegiate athletic programs shall be maintained as a vital component of the educational program at an institution, and student-athletes shall be an integral part of the student body. The admission, academic standing and academic progress of the student-athletes shall be consistent with the policies and standards adopted by the institution for the student body in general. However, there is significant debate within higher education as to whether this occurs. A former college football coach in Utah said the following:

> I'd love to have players who're great athletes and great students. But it boils down to this: a coach can't always get kids that qualify as both. So I adopted this formula: sprinkle in as many brilliant students as possible who can play a respectable brand of football. Then go out and find the guys who don't give a damn about academics but want to make football their meat. Let the geniuses play a little bit. Let the All-America dummies play a lot. Then every time a genius does something brilliant on the field, play it up four times as much as what the dummy did. The college world and professors eat that sort of thing right up. (Underwood, 1980, p. 42)

This quote highlights the dilemma of college athletics: are student-athletes really students as compared to the general student population?

Academic Preparation for College

The issue of student-athletes being athletes but not students is as old as college sports. Coach Amos Alonso Stagg of the University of Chicago in the late 1800's was

purported to have used ineligible players on his football team and persuaded the university to create the Division of Physical Culture and Athletics which many faculty believed existed solely to support the football program and lacked intellectual rigor and academic ancestry (Lawson & Ingham, 1980). More recent examinations of the academic credentials of student-athletes lend support to the charge that student-athletes are not like their non student-athlete counterparts.

Information gathered by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2001, found that at some Division I universities, no football or men's basketball players met the university's regular admission standards. At half of all FBS institutions, 20 percent or more of football and basketball players were "special admits," i.e., admitted with special consideration. That rate was about 10 times as high as the rate for the total student body. A study by Kaplan Educational Centers found that the average athlete on a top college football or men's basketball team enters college in the bottom quarter of his class (Naughton, 1997).

In a 1982 study of student-athletes at Colorado State University, Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufnagel, found that athletes were consistently less prepared for college than students from the general student population, as shown by lower high school grade point average, high school rank, and SAT and ACT scores. The study further found that student-athletes receiving full athletic scholarships were less prepared for college than student-athletes on partial athletic scholarships or non-scholarship student-athletes.

In a 1985 study of college football players, Stuart also found that student-athletes were less prepared for college than non student-athletes. The student-athletes had lower

mean high school GPAs, had completed fewer high school mathematics courses, and had lower mean ACT scores. Maloney and McCormick (1993) found that, on average, the SAT scores of student-athletes were 150 points below those of non student-athletes. They also found the average high school rank of student-athletes to be 20 percentage points below that of non student-athletes.

In 1998, the average SAT score of a freshman non student-athlete at Duke University was 1390 but the average score of Duke basketball players was 949 (Dowling, 1999). Sperber reported in 2000 that at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, regular undergraduates scored on average 1220 on the SAT while men's basketball players scored on average 905.

A study conducted by Owings and McMillen for the National Center for Education Statistics in 1995 found mixed results on student-athlete preparation for college. Over 83 percent of all 1992 college-bound high school student-athletes met the requirements of NCAA Proposition 48. However, just under half of black college-bound high school student-athletes met the requirements; and only 42 percent of college-bound high school student-athletes from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) met the requirements. This suggests that for middle and upper SES Anglo high school student-athletes, the academic eligibility requirements might be too low, but for minority and low SES high school student-athletes, the requirements might be too high.

Academic Support Centers

The presence on Division I campuses of elaborate academic support centers for student-athletes is an indication that many of them are not prepared for college level

work. In the 1996-1997 academic year, the University of Southern California (USC) spent around $800,000 on academic support to accommodate the needs of 600 student-athletes. One year later the University of Kentucky spent $1 million on academic support for student-athletes and employed up to 140 tutors (Zimbalist, 1999). Spigner (1993) asserts that the prevalence of academic support centers for student-athletes may in fact actually serve to reinforce sports interests over educational pursuits. Too often the focus of the support center is on keeping the student-athlete eligible rather than on academic achievement.

Coaches' Attitudes

Cullen, Latessa, and Byrne (1990) surveyed head football coaches at Division I-A and Division I-AA universities. They found that a clear majority of coaches opposed more stringent freshman academic eligibility requirements. They also found that coaches believed that one of the primary reasons student-athletes do not graduate is that they lack the basic skills to do academic work. These findings represent the confusion surrounding academics and athletics. While the coaches believed that many student-athletes lacked the skills for college level work, they did not support stricter academic eligibility requirements which might bring in more academically qualified student-athletes.

Satisfactory Progress Requirements and Student-Athlete Academic Performance

After enrolling in college, student-athletes must meet certain academic requirements to remain eligible to participate in their respective sports. At the beginning of the sophomore year, the student must have earned 24 semester hours of which 18 must have been earned during the regular academic year. The cumulative GPA must be at least

1.8. At the beginning of the junior year, the student must have earned 48 credit hours, including at least six hours per semester during the regular academic year with a cumulative GPA of at least 1.9. At the beginning of the senior year, the student must have earned 72 hours including at least six per semester during the regular academic year with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. At the beginning of the fifth year (known as a "redshirt" year), the student must have earned 96 hours with at least six hours per semester during the regular academic year with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. All credit hours earned beginning with the junior year must be in course work in a declared major (NCAA Division I Manual, 2008). For student-athletes meeting the minimum requirements, it will take at least five years to graduate.

These requirements for continuing academic eligibility for student-athletes have been controversial. Many believe they are less than minimal and do not emphasize academics enough. Since they do not require a student-athlete to complete all coursework toward a bachelor's degree in four years, and since most athletic scholarships last only for four years, many student-athletes find it difficult to stay enrolled for a fifth year and graduate.

Research in this area has focused on two primary criteria for measuring academic success: the college GPA and graduation rates for student-athletes. Gurney and Stuart (1987) found that student-athletes enrolled under special admission policies did not perform as well academically as student-athletes meeting normal institutional entrance requirements. The specially admitted student-athletes had significantly lower GPA's, 2.02 versus 2.38 for regularly admitted student-athletes, and fewer credit hours passed. In

a 1985 study of basketball players in a major college program, Adler and Adler found that student-athletes had lower GPA's and higher attrition rates than other students. They also found a gap between the academic abilities of many student-athletes and the university's normal academic expectations. The Adler's study found a negative relationship between athletic participation and academic performance. Figler (1984) found that student-athletes' grades and credit hours earned were often artificially inflated by enrollment in easy courses such as intercollegiate competition, coaching, and physical activity. While enrolling in and passing these types of courses helps keep student-athletes eligible, these courses do not help them graduate.

Blann (1985) found that freshmen and sophomore male student-athletes did not formulate mature educational and career plans to as great an extent as did freshman and sophomore non-athletes. Athletes are often preoccupied with training for and playing sports, making it difficult to give adequate attention to educational and career plans. Sowa and Gressard (1983) found that student-athletes had difficulty in formulating well-defined educational goals and gaining personal satisfaction from educational experiences. In a 1988 study of academic performance by student-athletes, Kiger and Lorentzen found that student-athletes performed at a lower level than non student-athletes. Student-athletes had lower GPA's and were more likely to be placed on academic probation. Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, and Terenzini (1995) found that football and male basketball players experienced net declines in reading comprehension and mathematics during their freshman years. In a follow-up study in 1999, Pascarella et al. found that football and men's basketball players showed lower levels of writing, reading comprehension, and

critical thinking skills than student-athletes in non-revenue producing sports. On the other side of this issue, Smith and Dizney (1966) found no academic differences between football players and non-athletes at Kent State University during the 1964-65 academic year. Also, Pascarella and Smart (1991) found a modest positive net effect on college academic achievement from athletic participation.

Using graduation rates for student-athletes as a measure of academic success has proven to be confusing and controversial. Some research indicates that student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than students from the general student population. In a review of studies conducted from 1903 to 1932, Davis and Cooper (1934) found that student-athletes graduated at a higher rate than non student-athletes. In a 1991 study, Long and Caudill found that both male and female student-athletes who attended college in the early 1970's had higher graduation rates than other students. Pascarella and Smart (1991) found that student-athletes were significantly more likely than non-athletes to complete a bachelor's degree. Research conducted on graduation rates of student-athletes comparing pre-Proposition 48 rates with post-Proposition 48 rates found increases for student-athletes in the second period. Benson (1993) found that the 5-year graduation rate for student-athletes increased after Proposition 48 was implemented. The NCAA has conducted research which it claims shows a direct link between the requirements of Proposition 48 and improved graduation rates for student-athletes (Suggs, 1999). Among the findings, the graduation rates for black student-athletes increased seven percentage points in the year after Proposition 48 standards went into effect (Farrell, 1997). In a 2006 study of graduation rates of Division I-A football student-athletes, Heck and

Takahashi found that graduation rates improved after the implementation of Proposition 48, but have declined in recent years.

While some research indicates that student-athletes graduate at higher rates than their non-athlete peers and that rates have increased since the passage of Proposition 48, other research indicates that: 1) student-athletes graduate at lower rates than their non-athlete peers, or 2) the results are mixed and confusing. In a study of athletes at Colorado State University during the 1970's, Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufnagel (1982) found that scholarship athletes graduated at lower rates than partial scholarship or non-scholarship athletes. Weistart (1987) reported graduation rates for student-athletes as low as four percent at the University of Georgia, nine percent at one Big Ten school, and during one ten-year period Memphis State graduated no black basketball players at all. In its 1991 report, "Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete," the Knight Commission stated that at the typical Division I institution, only 33 percent of basketball players and 37.5 percent of football players graduate within five years. Maloney and McCormick (1993) studied student-athletes at a large university in the southeast and found graduation rates for athletes to be ten percentage points lower than those for non-athletes. Suggs reported in 2001 that at 82 of the 298 colleges that competed in Division I men's basketball, the graduation rate for men's basketball players was more than 20 percent below that of other students. Also, only half of the 50 football teams that played in FBS bowl games in 2000 had graduated at least half of their players over the previous four years. In 2005, Wolverton reported that almost half of the FBS football bowl teams failed to graduate 50 percent of their athletes within six years. In its 2001 report, "A Call to Action," the

Knight Commission bemoaned the fact that graduation rates for student-athletes were still low with only 48 percent of football players at FBS institutions and 34 percent of men's basketball players graduating within six years. Ferris, Finster and McDonald (2004) examined NCAA FBS graduation rates for the period 1992-2002 and found that overall, student-athletes graduated at a rate 1.1 percent lower than other students. However, they also pointed out the limitations of the NCAA graduation report available at that time: the measure did not include non-scholarship athletes, the small size of the student-athlete population for any one-year cohort, the reports did not provide "real-time" feedback, and the reports did not account for transfer students and those who took longer than six years to graduate. So, the data on graduation rates for student-athletes is mixed and confusing.

In 2005, the NCAA instituted a new measure of academic success for student-athletes called the Academic Progress Rate (APR). With the APR, every student-athlete can earn up to two points per semester, one for being enrolled and one for being on track to graduate. Also, a one-time bonus point is earned when a student-athlete graduates. If a team's score is below what would equate to a 60 percent graduation rate, penalties are possible. The penalties could include loss of scholarships, restrictions on recruiting, reduction of schedules, and bans on participation in postseason contests (Lipka, 2006). It remains to be seen whether the APR requirement will increase graduation rates. However, it will almost certainly lead to more controversy.

Race and Income

Since the NCAA established national academic eligibility standards for student-athletes, there have been charges that the standards have a disparate impact on minority

and low income student-athletes. Given the racial disparity in test scores, the long history of racial, cultural, and economic biases in standardized tests, and the absoluteness of the SAT/ACT cutoff scores, it seems apparent that black student-athletes will be disparately impacted (Williams, 1983). Charges of racial discrimination in the NCAA academic standards go as far back as the 1970's when many opposed the 1.6 rule because of its greater negative impact on black students. This opposition helped overturn the 1.6 rule at the 1973 NCAA convention (Covell & Barr, 2001). NCAA Proposition 48 has also been a popular target of those charging that minorities are affected unfairly hard by the standards. A 1986 study by Baumann and Henschen found that the ACT score was not a good predictor of academic success for non-Caucasians. An NCAA study conducted in the 1980's on student-athletes who enrolled in college prior to passage of Proposition 48 found that many black student-athletes who would not have qualified under Proposition 48 rules went on to graduate (Farrell, 1984). In 1997, Farrell reported that 47 percent of black student-athletes who started college before Proposition 48 went into effect, and who graduated, would have been ineligible under Proposition 48. In 1987, 65% of partial qualifiers were black (Lederman, 1988). After Proposition 48 went into effect, the number of black freshmen on Division I teams fell 18 percent (Suggs, 1999). A 1995 study by Owings, McMillen & Daniel found that only 46.4 percent of black and 54.1 percent of Hispanic college bound seniors would meet the higher academic standards of Proposition 16, but that 67 percent of white college bound seniors would meet them. Graduation rates for black football and men's and women's basketball players have fallen since the passage of Propositions 48 and 16 (Suggs, 1999, 2001). So there appears to be a

significant amount of information that academic eligibility standards have had a disparate negative impact on minority student-athletes.

However, not everyone was in agreement with this. Perkins (1983) stated that attacking minimal academic standards on racial grounds was in itself racist. Such an opinion expressed the view that blacks were incapable of meeting the standards. Perkins believed blacks would meet the challenge of the new standards and benefit in the long run. Atwell (1983) stated that Proposition 48 was in the academic interest of black students. Harry Edwards (1984) maintained that not only were the standards not too high, they were too low. They were so low as to not indicate a likely opportunity to graduate for those just barely meeting them. Moreover, NCAA research also showed that graduation rates for black athletes increased after Proposition 48 was passed. Among the freshmen who entered the year Proposition 48 went into effect, black football players in Division I-A and black male basketball players in Division I showed higher graduation rates compared to pre-Proposition 48 rates (Worsnop, 1994). Farrell (1997) reported a seven point increase in graduation rates for black student-athletes post-Proposition 48, and Suggs (1999) reported a twelve percent increase in graduation rates for black student-athletes who entered college in 1991, compared to the graduation rates prior to Proposition 48. Also, NCAA research indicates that with each year since the passage of Proposition 16, which further strengthened academic requirements, the number of black athletes in Division I institutions has increased (Suggs, 1999). These numbers seem to indicate an improved situation for black student-athletes as a result of increased academic eligibility standards.

Socioeconomic status is another factor to consider in the area of academic eligibility standards. Edwards (1984) reported that the NCAA's standards discriminate principally along socio-economic, not race lines. Miller (1995) and Owings, McMillen and Daniel (1995) found that students from low-income families were the least likely of all groups to qualify under Proposition 16 guidelines. A study conducted by the NCAA in 1997 found that 22.2 percent of freshmen athletes whose families earned less than $30,000 a year did not meet Proposition 16 eligibility requirements in 1996, compared with 14.7 percent in 1995, the year before Proposition 16 was enacted (Basinger, 1997). Of course, the socioeconomic and race factors are at least somewhat correlated since minorities are overrepresented in lower socioeconomic groups. Perhaps the most striking feature about the literature on socioeconomic status and eligibility standards is how little research there is. While there is no shortage of attention given to race and eligibility standards, the relationship with socioeconomic status tends to be overlooked.

The information on race and income and academic eligibility standards is mixed. Some believe the standards hurt minorities while others believe the standards help them. While there seems to be agreement that the standards have had a negative impact on students from the lowest income level, there has been little written about this.

NCAA Division III

There is general agreement that academic problems exist in Division I athletic programs. This is often attributed to the pressure to win in order for programs to reap the enormous financial rewards associated with athletic success. However, it has been assumed that these academic problems do not exist in Division III. Division III

institutions do not award athletic scholarships and commit themselves to assuring that athletes are not treated differently from other members of the student body (Naughton, 1997). Due to this lack of athletic emphasis, Division III institutions are less likely to enroll student-athletes who are not serious students.

One of the striking features of the literature in this area is that there is so little of it. Division III athletics has simply not been a focus of much study. Because of this lack of focus, little is known about the academic standing of Division III student-athletes. However, a few studies conducted on Division III student-athletes provide some preliminary insight.

Kline (1997) studied Division III student-athletes at Connecticut College. He examined potential differences in academic achievement between athletes (a student who participated on at least one varsity sport team for a total of four years), partial athletes (a student who participated on at least one varsity sport team for no less than one year but no more than three years), and non-athletes (no varsity sports team participation). He found that both male and female athletes performed at a lower academic level than partial athletes and non-athletes, but the differences between the groups, based on grade point average, were not statistically significant. Richards and Aries (1999) studied Division III student-athletes at a small, northeastern university. They found that student-athletes reported significantly more difficulties than non-athletes in being taken seriously by professors. However, they found no significant differences between the two groups in GPA. A 2000 study by Robst and Keil of student-athletes at the Division III State University of New York at Binghamton focused on grades and graduation rates. The

study found that student-athletes had higher GPA's and graduation rates than non-athletes.

Two of the most extensive studies on Division III student-athletes were conducted by Shulman and Bowen (2001) and Bowen and Levin (2003). Both of these studies examined student-athlete academic performance at prestigious Division III universities. Shulman and Bowen found that student-athletes had considerably lower SAT scores than non-athletes, and they underperformed academically compared to non-athletes. The authors found these differences to hold for all sports and for females as well as males. Bowen and Levin's study included more Division III universities but their findings were virtually identical to Shulman and Bowen's. Student-athletes had substantially lower SAT scores than non-athletes and earned far lower grades. Furthermore, student-athletes earned substantially lower grades than what might have been expected on the basis of their incoming academic credentials and demographic characteristics. So while the assumption might be that student-athletes at Division III institutions do not have the same academic problems as those at Division I institutions, the limited amount of research provides mixed results, with the most recent and extensive research contradicting the assumption.

Summary

This research review has revealed that there have been and continue to be academic challenges in collegiate athletic programs. These problems are most noticeable in programs at Division I colleges and universities, especially in revenue-producing sports like football and men's basketball. While not nearly as much attention has been

paid to programs in Division III institutions, what has been done is inconclusive, but the most extensive studies indicate that programs at Division III institutions have many of the same problems as those in Division I institutions. More research is needed in this area to gain a better understanding of the student-athlete academic experience in Division III institutions and what this means for Division III institutions and higher education in general.

Chapter 3

Methodology

For as long as there have been intercollegiate sports on college campuses, academic eligibility standards for student-athletes have been a contentious issue. Standards have frequently changed over the years, but the controversy has not stopped. Some argue the standards are too low and do not require athletes to be genuine students. Others argue the standards are too arbitrary and discriminate against minority students and students from the lowest income levels. In spite of these debates, one thing is certain about NCAA academic eligibility standards for Division I institutions: the standards are clearly stated, published yearly, and apply to all members evenly.

This is not the case in Division III. In Division III, the NCAA allows each member institution to determine its own specific academic eligibility standards. However, information on these standards has never been collected and published, leaving a significant hole in the research in this area. These are the questions that were addressed by this study. How do Division III academic eligibility standards compare to Division I standards? Are the Division III standards more demanding, less demanding, or about the same? How do academic eligibility standards in Division III colleges and universities compare across institutions? Are some Division III institutions more demanding than others? If there are differences between Division III institutions in academic eligibility standards, do these differences lead to competitive equity issues? The purpose of the study was to collect and analyze data to determine whether differences exist and, if they do, what this says about academic eligibility standards in Division III. The rationale for

the study was based on the belief that Division III is supposed to be different from Division I. Division III student-athletes do not receive athletic scholarships and are to be indistinguishable from non student-athletes. However, since data on academic eligibility standards has never been collected, it is not known if eligibility standards for Division III are different from those used in Division I. Also, it is not known whether differences exist among Division III institutions that might lead to competitive equity issues.

Subjects

The units of analysis for the study were 15 institutions in one Division III athletic conference. Conference members range from small, private, liberal arts universities to medium size state universities. The conference is one of the largest in Division III with institutions from several states. The group's mission is that the conference be comprised of institutions with similar educational and athletic philosophies. The conference philosophy states that sports programs should provide learning opportunities and that member institutions should create an athletics environment that supports teaching and learning.

Data Collection

Data were collected on three areas of academic eligibility: 1) initial eligibility standards for freshmen student-athletes, 2) eligibility standards for transfer student-athletes, and 3) continuing eligibility standards for student-athletes after their first semester of enrollment at an institution. For Division I, this information is published in the Division I Rules and Bylaws Manual and on the ncaa.org web site (see Appendix A). For the Division III institutions in this study, the data were collected through interviews

with Institutional Compliance Officers at each institution. The NCAA requires that each member institution have a designated Compliance Officer for its athletic program. This person is the university expert on academic eligibility standards.

The data collected on the eligibility standards included:

Table 1
Eligibility Standards

First Time Freshmen	Transfer Students	Continuing Students
High School GPA	Transfer GPA	Cumulative GPA
SAT, ACT Score	Credit Hour Reqs.	Credit Hour Reqs.
Core Course Requirements		

Note. For all student-athletes: Any exceptions to the published rules. Frequency of certification.

The interviews of the Compliance Officers were conducted by telephone using a questionnaire developed by the researcher (see Appendix B). Approximately two weeks prior to the date of the telephone interview, a letter of introduction (see Appendix C) and a sample questionnaire were mailed to each Compliance Officer. The letter explained the study and the sample questionnaire allowed the Compliance Officers time to begin collecting data before the telephone interview. The letter also provided a thorough statement that the identity of individuals, institutions, and the conference would be protected. A follow-up telephone interview was done for each institution to collect data missed or unavailable during the first interview. Since the data collected revealed differences among the Division III institutions with regard to academic eligibility standards, a comparison of competitive equity was done. The data on competitive equity were collected from conference records as compiled by the conference office. For the purpose of this study, competitive equity was defined as winning a conference

championship and total win/loss record in men's and women's basketball, men's and women's tennis, baseball and softball. Data were collected for the academic years from 2000-2001 through 2006-2007.

Analysis of Data

A descriptive analysis was carried out on the data collected. This analysis identified the eligibility standards for each category of students for each institution in the study.

A comparative analysis was also performed. The eligibility data from the Division III institutions were compared to the national eligibility data in Division I. Numerical averages were calculated for high school GPA and test scores (SAT, ACT) for the Division III institutions. Also, the eligibility data from the various Division III institutions were compared to determine if there were differences. T-tests were used (in comparing Division I to Division III standards) to determine whether any differences found were statistically significant. In comparing Division III institutions to each other, z scores were calculated to determine if any institutions were more than two standard deviations away from the sample mean--the level necessary for statistical significance. Differences in academic eligibility standards were found among the Division III institutions. Therefore, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between academic eligibility standards and competitive equity. The overall win/loss percentage in men's and women's basketball, men's and women's tennis, baseball, and softball for the years 2000-2001 through 2006-2007 was used as the measure of athletic success. This was correlated with the institution's academic eligibility rank, which was

determined by rank ordering the 15 Division III institutions on the following eligibility variables: high school, transfer, and continuing GPA, and SAT and ACT scores.

Summary

The interviews with the 15 compliance officers were all completed and all questions were answered. The data collected revealed differences in academic eligibility standards between Division I and the Division III institutions in this study. The data also revealed differences among the Division III institutions. An analysis of the data also revealed the possibility of competitive equity differences between the institutions in this conference. The next chapter fully explores these differences.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

Intercollegiate athletics in NCAA Division III colleges and universities are supposed to be different from programs in Division I institutions. The purpose of athletic programs at Division III institutions is to emphasize the student aspect of the student-athlete. The Division III philosophy statement includes the following, "colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience…" (The Differences Between Division I, II, and III, 2008, p.3). In Division III, student-athletes are to be indistinguishable from the rest of the student population. However, since information about academic eligibility standards for Division III institutions has not been collected or analyzed, there is currently no way of knowing whether Division III institutions are more academically stringent than Division I institutions in the area of academic eligibility standards for student-athletes.

It is also not known if differences in academic eligibility standards for student-athletes exist among Division III institutions, and if they do exist, whether those differences have an impact on competitive equity. The NCAA Principle of Competitive Equity states that, "the structure and programs of the NCAA and the activities of its members shall promote opportunity for equity in competition to assure that individual student-athletes and institutions will not be unfairly prevented from achieving the benefits inherent in participation in intercollegiate athletics" (NCAA Division I Manual, 2008, p.5). This principle is designed to prevent a small number of individuals or teams

from winning all the time. In Division I, everyone plays by the same academic eligibility standards. Whether this is true in Division III is unknown.

This study collected and analyzed data on academic eligibility standards for student-athletes at selected Division III institutions. The data for Division III were compared to Division I standards and the Division III institutions were compared to each other. Differences among Division III institutions were analyzed to see whether the differences had an impact on competitive equity. Academic eligibility standards were examined in three categories: initial eligibility standards for freshmen, initial eligibility standards for transfer students, and continuing eligibility standards for students after their first semester of enrollment.

All 15 institutions in one Division III athletic conference participated in the study. Data were collected through telephone interviews with institutional compliance officers at each institution. All compliance officers participated and provided complete information, answering all questions. Institutions and employees of those institutions were guaranteed anonymity. Therefore, the 15 institutions in the study were randomly assigned a letter of the alphabet, A through O. Data about the institutions are reported using these letter designations in this chapter. For the competitive equity part of the study, conference champion records and win/loss records for all institutions in men's and women's basketball, men's and women's tennis, baseball, and softball for the academic years 2000-2001 through 2006-2007 were collected from the conference web site and the conference office.

Comparison of Division III Eligibility Standards to Division I Standards

First-time freshmen--high school grade point average (GPA). Freshmen attending NCAA institutions must meet minimum high school academic standards to be eligible to compete in NCAA athletics. A minimum high school GPA is normally one of these requirements. The range for minimum high school GPA standards at the Division III institutions in this study was 2.0 to 3.25 on a four point scale. Eight of the 15 Division III institutions had no minimum high school GPA requirement. Institution H had the lowest requirement at 2.0. Institution A had the highest high school GPA requirement at 3.25. The average high school GPA requirement for the seven institutions with a minimum requirement was 2.6 (see Table 2).

Table 2
Minimum High School GPA Requirement

Institution Code	HS GPA
H	2.0
G	2.5
E	2.5
K	2.5
O	2.7
L	3.0
A	3.25
F	None
N	None
D	None
M	None
B	None
I	None
C	None
J	None

The Division I minimum high school GPA requirement is 2.0. However, Division I uses a sliding scale of high school GPA and standardized test scores (SAT, ACT) to

determine freshman eligibility (Appendix A). Division III does not use a scale. The midpoint high school GPA for Division I on this scale is 2.75. So, for high school GPA, the midpoint for Division I is .15 points higher than the average for the Division III institutions in this study. A p value <.05 was used throughout the study to test for statistical significance. Using the t-test to analyze the difference between the minimum mid-point GPA's for the two divisions resulted in a score of -.75, which was not statistically significant (see Table 3). So the midpoint high school GPA calculated for the Division III institutions in this study that had required minimums was not significantly different from the Division I requirement.

Table 3
t Test Results-High School GPA Comparison

	Division I	Division III	Standard Deviation	t Statistic	P Value
			0.4	-0.75	.466
Means	2.75	2.6			

Note. p<.05 required for statistical significance

Another difference between Divisions I and III on the high school GPA requirement is that Division I allows no exceptions to the minimum requirement, but the Division III institutions in this study did. In Division I, a student must meet the high school GPA requirement in order to be eligible to compete. A student who fails to meet the minimum requirement is a non-qualifier and cannot compete in NCAA athletics.

All 15 Division III institutions in this study allowed exceptions to the minimum high school GPA requirement. There was no absolute minimum standard for high school GPA at any of the institutions. The minimum standard was subjective and decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. At 13 of the 15 institutions, a committee made these

decisions. At two of the institutions, individuals made them. At institution C, the Director of Special Programs made the decision. At institution E, the Vice President of Academic Affairs made them.

In summary, it was easier for athletes to be eligible at the Division III institutions in this study than those at Division I programs in at least two ways. The average minimum high school GPA for Division I was .15 points higher than the average for the Division III institutions in this study. Furthermore, eight of the institutions had no minimum high school GPA standard at all. Also, Division I allowed no exceptions to the minimum standard, while all 15 of the Division III institutions in this study allowed exceptions.

First-time freshmen--standardized test score (SAT, ACT). Another academic standard students must meet to compete at NCAA institutions is a minimum SAT or ACT score. Of the 15 Division III institutions in the study, 14 had minimum test score requirements (see Table 4). The range for the SAT was 800 to 1025. Two institutions, H and D, used two scores based on the student's high school class rank, and one institution, J, used four scores based on his/her class rank. For these three institutions, minimum SAT score requirements depended on a student's high school class rank. The higher the class rank of the student, the lower the SAT score required. The scores listed in Table 4 are the averages for these three institutions. The average SAT score for institution H was 870; the average SAT score for institution D was 970; and the average SAT score for institution J was 1025. The average minimum SAT score for all 14 Division III

institutions was 909. Institution C was the only Division III institution without a minimum SAT test score requirement.

Table 4
Minimum SAT Score Requirements

Code	SAT Score
O	800
K	820
M	850
F	860
H	870
A	900
L	910
B	920
N	950
E	950
I	950
G	960
D	970
J	1025

Division I uses a sliding scale for test score requirements (see Appendix A). The minimum SAT score on the scale is 400, and a student must have a high school GPA of 3.55 or above for a score of 400 to count. The mid-range score on the Division I scale is 710, which requires a 2.775 high school GPA. The lowest SAT score minimum for the institutions in this study was 800, 90 points above the Division I mid-range score of 710. As shown in table 5, the average minimum SAT score for the Division III institutions in this study was significantly higher than the Division I minimum. There was a strong, statistically significant difference in SAT score requirements between the two divisions.

Table 5
t Statistic-SAT Score Comparison

	Division I	Division III	Standard Deviation	t Statistic	P Value
			63.38	11.7	.00
Means	710	909			

Note. p<.05 required for statistical significance.

Fourteen of the 15 Division III institutions in this study used a minimum ACT test score requirement as shown in Table 6. The range was 16 to 21.5. As was the case with minimum SAT score, two institutions (D and H) used two scores based on a student's class rank, and one institution (J) used four scores based on a student's class rank. The average for institution D was 20.5, the average for institution H was 19 and the average for institution J was 21.5. The average minimum ACT score required by the 14 institutions was 19. Institution C was the only Division III institution without a minimum ACT test score requirement.

Table 6
ACT Score Requirement

Code	ACT Score
M	16
F	18
K	18
L	19
H	19
A	19
G	20
N	20
E	20
O	20
B	20
I	20
D	20.5
J	21.5

As with SAT scores, Division I uses a sliding scale for ACT scores (see Appendix A). The minimum ACT score on the scale is 12, and a student must have a high school GPA of 3.55 or higher for an ACT score of 12 to count. The mid-range ACT score for Division I is 19. The average score for the Division III institutions in this study was 19, the same as the mid-range score for Division I.

As with the minimum high school GPA requirement, no exceptions to the minimum test score requirements are allowed in Division I. If a student meets the minimum academic requirements, the student can compete. If the student does not meet the minimum requirements, the student cannot compete. All 15 Division III institutions in this study allowed exceptions to the minimum test score requirement. Three institutions had absolute minimums beyond which further exceptions were not allowed. The absolute minimum test score requirements for institution J were 860 for the SAT and 18 for the ACT; for institution L the minimums were 780 for the SAT and 16 for the ACT; and institution F used an ACT minimum of 15 if the student was in the top half of his/her class. At the other 12 institutions, there was no absolute minimum test score requirement. Eligibility decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. At 13 of the institutions, decisions were made by a committee. At two they were made by individuals. At institution E, the Vice President of Academic Affairs made the decisions. At institution C, the Director of Special Programs made them.

In summary, the differences in the area of standardized test scores between Division I standards and those at the Division III institutions in this study were inconsistent. The Division III institutions in this study had higher SAT requirements, an

800 average score versus a Division I mid-range score of 710. For ACT scores, the average score for the Division III institutions in this study was 19, the same as the Division I mid-range score. The big difference between the Divisions was in the area of exceptions to the minimum test score standards. Division I does not allow them at all, and all 15 of the Division III institutions studied did. For the three Division III institutions that established minimum scores for exceptions, the SAT score was still higher (780 and 860) than the Division I mid-range score. However, the ACT absolute minimum scores (18,16,15) at those same institutions were lower than the Division I mid-range score of 19. Moreover, 12 of the 15 Division III institutions in this study had no absolute minimum test score requirement. In the area of exceptions to standardized test score minimums, it was easier to be eligible in the Division III institutions studied than in Division I.

First-time freshmen--high school core courses. To be initially eligible for NCAA athletics in Division I at the time of this study, a freshman must pass 14 core high school courses. Those core courses are: four years of English, two years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher), two years of natural/physical science (one year with a lab if offered by the high school), one year of additional English, mathematics, or natural/physical science, two years of social science, and three years of additional courses (from any area listed, foreign language or non-doctrinal religion or philosophy). The core course requirement increased to 16 courses for students entering a Division I institution on or after August 1, 2008 (NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete, 2008).

Of the 15 Division III institutions in this study, seven had a high school core course requirement as shown in Table 7. Eight did not require core courses.

Table 7
High School Core Course Requirements

Code	High School Core Courses
N	3-English, 2-Math, 2-Social Science, 2-Science, 7-Electives
J	4-English, 3-Science including Chemistry or Physics, 2-Foreign Language, 3 Math including Algebra I or higher, 3 Social Studies
C	4-English, 3.5 Math, 3 Science, 3 Social Science, 2 Foreign Language, .5 Fine Arts, 2 Electives
D	4-English, 3-Math, 3.5 Social Studies, 3 Science, 2 Foreign Language
H	4-English, 3-Math, 3-Science, 3-Social Studies
M	English, History, Math, Foreign Language
B	If not in top 10 %, 4-English, 3-Math, 2-Science, 2-History, .5-Government, .5-Economics, 1.5-Physical Education, .5-Health
G	None
F	None
L	None
E	None
K	None
A	None
I	None
O	None

As with the previously examined eligibility requirements, there are no exceptions to the core course requirement in Division I. In the Division III institutions in this study, the seven that had core course requirements all allowed exceptions. At six of the seven

institutions, a committee made the decisions on exceptions. At institution C, the Director of Special Programs made the decisions.

In the area of core course requirements, it was overall easier to be eligible to compete in the Division III institutions in this study than at Division I institutions. This was especially true in light of the fact that 8 of the 15 Division III institutions had no core course requirements at all. As was the case in other eligibility standards for first time freshmen athletes, all of the Division III institutions studied allowed exceptions to the high school core course requirement.

Transfer student GPA. Students transferring to NCAA institutions must meet minimum academic requirements to be eligible for athletic competition. A minimum transfer GPA is one of these requirements. In Division I, the minimum transfer GPA is based on the transfer category of the student. A student transferring from a two-year institution to a four-year institution must have a minimum 2.0 transfer GPA to be eligible to compete. A student transferring from a four-year institution to a two-year institution and then transferring to another four-year institution must also have a 2.0 minimum transfer GPA to be eligible to compete. A student transferring from a four-year institution to a four-year institution must have the following minimum GPA to be eligible to compete: after one year of attendance-1.8, after two years of attendance-1.9, after three years of attendance-2.0 (NCAA Eligibility Guide, 2008).

At the Division III institutions in this study, the minimum transfer GPA requirement ranged from 1.6 to 3.0, depending on circumstances (see Table 8).

Table 8
Minimum Transfer GPA Requirements

Code	Transfer GPA
A	2.0
B	2.0
C	Less than 54 credits earned-3.0, 54 or more credits earned-2.5
D	2.0
E	2.0
F	2.0
G	2.0
H	2.0
I	2.5
J	2.0
K	2.0
L	Less than 30 earned credits-1.6, 31-60 credits-1.8, 60 or more credits-2.0
M	2.0
N	2.0 if at least 24 earned credits, if less than 24, no minimum transfer GPA
O	2.0

The average minimum transfer GPA for all 15 Division III institutions was 2.07. The average minimum transfer GPA for all Division I categories is 1.94, .13 points lower. As shown in Table 9, these two average minimums were not significantly different. The t test showed no statistically significant difference between the two divisions on transfer GPA requirements.

Table 9
t Statistic-Transfer GPA Comparison

	Division I	Division III	Standard Deviation	t Statistic	P Value
			0.24	2.14	.051
Means	1.94	2.07			

Note. $p<.05$ required for statistical significance

As with other areas of eligibility, there are no exceptions in Division I to the minimum transfer GPA requirements. This was not the case at the Division III

institutions studied. Twelve of the 15 institutions allowed exceptions. At 10 of those 12, the exceptions were made on a case-by-case basis. At institution D, a transfer student could have a transfer GPA as low as 1.5 and still be eligible to compete but only for a one-semester trial basis. At the end of the one-semester trial, the student needs to meet the minimum continuing GPA requirement (see Table 10). Institution K required a student essay if the student did not meet the minimum transfer GPA requirement. At 10 of the 12 institutions that allowed exceptions, a committee made the decisions. At institution J, the Dean of Enrollment Management made the decisions and at institution C, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education made them.

In summary, in the area of minimum transfer GPA requirements, the results were mixed when Division I standards were compared with the requirements at the Division III institutions studied. The average minimum transfer GPA requirement at the Division III institutions studied was .13 points higher than the average for all Division I categories (2.07 versus 1.94). However, exceptions were made at the Division III institutions studied, whereas they are not allowed at Division I institutions. Depending on how exceptions are handled at these Division III institutions, it could be easier for transfer students to be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics than at Division I institutions.

Transfer student credit hours. In Division I, the number of required transfer credit hours depends on the type of institution from which the student transfers. For a student transferring from a two-year institution to a four-year institution, the student must have earned 12 transfer credit hours for each semester of attendance. If the student transfers

from a four-year institution to a four-year institution, he/she must have earned 24 transfer credits for each year of attendance, with at least 18 of the credits earned in the fall and spring semesters (i.e. no more than six credits earned during the summer). For a student who starts at a four-year institution and then transfers to a two-year institution and then transfers to another four-year institution, he/she must have a minimum of 24 transfer credit hours, must graduate from the two-year institution, and one year must have elapsed since leaving the first four-year institution. In Division I, no exceptions are allowed to these transfer rules (NCAA Eligibility Guide, 2008).

Eleven of the 15 Division III institutions studied had no transfer credit hour requirement. Students transferring to these institutions did not have to transfer in a certain number of credit hours in order to be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics. Of the four that had transfer credit hour requirements, institutions G and D required an average of 12 transfer credit hours per semester of attendance. So, a student who had attended another institution for at least three semesters would need to transfer at least 36 credit hours. Institution O required an average of 24 transfer credit hours per year. Institution L required nine transfer credit hours per semester after the first year of attendance at another institution, 12 transfer credit hours per semester after the second and third years, and 15 transfer credit hours per semester after the fourth year and beyond.

Three of the four Division III institutions in this study that had a transfer credit hour requirement allowed exceptions. There was no absolute minimum number of

transfer credit hours established at any of the three. Decisions on exceptions were made by a committee.

Based on the transfer credit hour requirements of the Division III institutions studied, it appears to be easier for a student to be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics in Division III than in Division I. Only one Division III institution required more transfer credit hours than Division I standards, and that requirement affected only students who had been in attendance for four years before transferring. Also, 11 of the 15 Division III institutions studied had no minimum transfer credit hour requirements. In theory, a transfer student with very few transfer credit hours could be eligible to compete.

Continuing student GPA requirements. After one semester of attendance at an institution, a student becomes a continuing student and must meet continuing academic standards to be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics. The minimum continuing GPA requirement at the 15 Division III institutions studied ranged from 1.5 to 2.0. No institution had a minimum continuing GPA requirement above 2.0. Institution O had the lowest requirement at 1.5. Several institutions--A, B, C, G, J, and M--had a 2.0 minimum requirement. The remaining institutions used ranges based on total credit hours earned as detailed in Table 10.

Table 10

Minimum Continuing Student GPA Requirements

Code	Hours Earned/GPA
O	1.5
F	0-29 hours earned-1.5, 30-59 hours-1.75, 60 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.75
E	0-19 hours earned-1.5, 20-30 hours-1.6, 31-45 hours-1.7, 46-60 hours-1.8, 61-75 hours-1.9, 76 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.75
H	0-25 hours earned-1.5, 26-59 hours-1.75, 60 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.75
D	0-29 hours earned-1.5, 30-59 hours-1.7, 60-89 hours-1.9, 90 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.77
K	0-30 hours earned-1.5, 30-59 hours-1.75, 60 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.75
N	0-32 hours earned-1.6, 33-48 hours-1.8, 49 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.8
L	0-29 hours earned-1.6, 30-59 hours-1.8, 60 hours or more-2.0 for an average of 1.8
I	0-26 hours earned-1.8, 27 hours or more 2.0 for an average of 1.9
G	2.0
M	2.0
A	2.0
B	2.0
C	2.0
J	2.0

The overall average minimum continuing GPA for the Division III institutions studied was 1.85.

In Division I, the minimum continuing GPA requirement is a range based on years of attendance. After one year of attendance, the minimum required GPA is 1.8; after two years of attendance, the minimum is a 1.9; and after three years of attendance, the minimum is a 2.0 (NCAA Eligibility Guide, 2008). These average to a 1.9. The minimum GPA requirement for continuing students was slightly lower in the Division III institutions in this study, at 1.85, as compared with Division I, at 1.9. As shown in Table 11, this difference was not statistically significant. The t test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two divisions in continuing GPA requirements.

Table 11
t Statistic-Continuing GPA Comparison

	Division I	Division III	Standard Deviation	t Statistic	P Value
			0.15	-1.29	.218
Means	1.9	1.85			

Note. p<.05 required for statistical significance

No exceptions are allowed in the minimum required GPA for continuing students in Division I. Students either meet the minimum standard or they are not allowed to compete in intercollegiate athletics. Only two of the 15 Division III institutions in this study allowed exceptions for this group of student-athletes. Institution D allowed students who did not meet the minimum GPA requirement a one-semester grace period in which they could continue to compete. Institution B allowed students who did not meet the minimum requirement an opportunity to appeal their standing. An appeals committee made the decisions.

In summary then, it was slightly easier for continuing students at the Division III institutions in this study to be eligible to compete in intercollegiate athletics than at

Division I institutions. The average minimum GPA requirement was .05 points lower than the Division I standard. Also, two of the 15 Division III institutions studied allowed exceptions to the minimum requirement, while no exceptions are allowed in Division I.

Continuing student credit hour requirements. After a student has completed a semester at an institution, he/she is normally required to earn a certain number of credit hours per semester or academic year to remain eligible to compete in NCAA athletics. Nine of the Division III institutions studied had such a requirement and six did not (see Table 12).

Table 12
Continuing Credit Hour Requirements

Code	Credit Hours
K	Earn 65% of hours attempted until 60 credits are earned and 75% of hours attempted after 60 credits are earned. At 12 hours per semester (minimum for full-time status), this equates to 7.8 hours per semester until 60 credits have been earned and 9 hours per semester after 60 credits have been earned.
A	12 hours per semester in the first year of attendance, 13 hours per semester beginning in the second year of attendance.
G	12 hours per semester average
L	9 hours per semester in first year, 12 per semester in years two and three, 15 per semester beginning with the fourth year.
I	18 hours per year
N	21 hours per year
H	24 hours per year
C	24 hours per year
B	24 hours per year of eligibility used (If athletic eligibility is not used, the credit hour requirement does not apply)
F	None
E	None
D	None
O	None
M	None
J	None

For institutions A, G, and L, the per semester credit hour requirement was an average. A student could use a surplus of credit hours from one semester to make up for a deficit in another semester.

In Division I, a student must earn 24 credits per academic year with at least 18 earned over the fall and spring semesters combined, and at least six credits in each semester. A maximum of six credits may be earned in the summer to satisfy the credit hour requirement. Upon entering the third year of enrollment, the student must have earned 48 credits in his/her specific degree program and upon entering the fourth year of enrollment the student must have earned 72 credits in the degree program. Finally, upon entering the fifth year of collegiate enrollment, the student must have earned 96 credits in the degree program (NCAA Eligibility Guide, 2008). As with other eligibility requirements in Division I, there are no exceptions to these continuing credit hour requirements.

However, there were some exceptions in the Division III institutions in this study. Institution B allowed students who failed to meet the continuing credit hour requirement the opportunity to appeal to a committee. This was the same committee that heard appeals from students who failed to meet the institution's freshman and transfer eligibility requirements. Institution D allowed a one semester grace period if a student did not meet the continuing credit hour requirement. The remaining 13 Division III institutions studied did not allow exceptions to the continuing credit hour requirement.

In summary, in comparing the credit hour requirements for continuing athletic eligibility at the Division III institutions in this study with Division I standards, the results were mixed. A few of the Division III institutions--A, B, C, G, H, and L—had requirements that were virtually identical to the Division I standard. Their requirements averaged 12 credits per semester (see Table 12), as in Division I. Institutions I, K, and N

required fewer credits per semester than the Division I standard. The remaining six Division III institutions had no specific minimum continuing credit hour requirements. Also, while Division I allows no exceptions to the continuing credit hour requirement, two of the Division III institutions studied did. Finally, Division I places a limit on the number of credit hours that can be earned in the summer in order to satisfy the minimum continuing credit hour requirement. No Division III institution in this study that had a credit hour requirement limited the number of summer credits that could be earned to satisfy the requirement. When considering all factors in the area of continuing credit hour requirements, it was easier to be eligible at the Division III institutions in this study than in Division I.

Frequency of certification. Each NCAA institution must certify that all student-athletes are academically eligible to compete. In Division I, cumulative GPA is not checked until the end of the first year of attendance, and then it is checked every semester. The number of credit hours earned by student-athletes is checked every semester at Division I institutions; they must have earned at least 6 the previous term (NCAA Eligibility Guide, 2008). In the Division III institutions in this study, 12 of the 15 institutions certified student-athletes every semester. Institutions H and M certified them once a year. Institution L certified them once a year unless a particular student was on academic suspension and then the institution certified every semester. Certifying every semester in the Division III conference studied was primarily a GPA issue since six of the institutions did not have credit hour requirements, six of the institutions had a yearly, rather than a semester credit hour requirement, and two that did have a semester credit

hour requirement allowed averaging. With averaging, a student could use a surplus of hours earned in one semester to make up for a deficit from a previous semester. Only institution K had a semester credit hour requirement and did not allow averaging. Table 13 summarizes the policies for the various institutions.

Table 13
Frequency of Certification

Institution Code	Frequency of Certification
A	Each Semester-GPA and Credit Hours, Averaging Allowed
B	Each Semester (GPA) Yearly (Credit Hours)
C	Each Semester (GPA) Yearly (Credit Hours)
D	Each Semester-GPA only
E	Each Semester-GPA only
F	Each Semester-GPA only
G	Each Semester-GPA and Credit Hours, Averaging Allowed
H	Once a year-GPA and Credit Hours
I	Each Semester (GPA) Yearly (Credit Hours)
J	Each Semester-GPA only
K	Each Semester-GPA and Credit Hours
L	Once a year unless on Academic Suspension, then every semester-GPA and Credit Hours, Averaging Allowed
M	Once a year-GPA only
N	Each Semester (GPA) Yearly (Credit Hours), Averaging Allowed
O	Each Semester-GPA only

In summary, the Division III institutions in this study used policies that were very similar to the standards used by Division I institutions. Institutions in both Divisions check GPA each semester, with those in Division I not starting until the third semester of attendance. For certification of credit hours, it was easier for student-athletes to be eligible at the Division III institutions studied than in Division I. The standard in Division I is to check credit hours each semester, but only one of the Division III institutions in this study checked each semester without allowing averaging across the prior semester.

Comparison of Division III Institutions to Each Other

This comparison of eligibility standards across the Division III institutions in this study looked at three areas of eligibility. Initial eligibility for freshmen, eligibility requirements for transfer students, and continuing eligibility standards for student-athletes after their first semester of enrollment at the institution were examined. The comparison included for first-time freshmen—high school GPA, standardized test score (SAT, ACT), and core course requirements; for transfers—transfer GPA and transfer credit hour requirements; for continuing students—cumulative GPA and credit hour requirements; and for all student-athletes—any exceptions to the published rules.

First-time freshmen--high school GPA. The range for minimum high school GPA requirements at the Division III institutions in this study that actually had such a requirement was 2.0-3.25, a difference of 1.25 points as shown in Table 14.

Table 14
Minimum High School GPA Requirements

Code	HS GPA
H	2.0
G	2.5
E	2.5
K	2.5
O	2.7
L	3.0
A	3.25
F	None
N	None
D	None
M	None
B	None
I	None
C	None
J	None

As shown in Table 15, there were no scores that were more than two standard deviations away from the sample mean. A z score of +/- 1.96 would have been required. That is the level required when the criterion of $p<.05$ is used for testing statistically significant differences as was the case in this study.

Table 15
z Score Results High School GPA Comparison

Code	HS GPA	z- scores
H	2	-1.7
G	2.5	-0.36
E	2.5	-0.36
K	2.5	-0.36
O	2.7	0.17
L	3	0.98
A	3.25	1.65
F	None	
N	None	
D	None	
M	None	
B	None	
I	None	
C	None	
J	None	
Average	2.63	
SD	0.37	

Quite possibly the most interesting aspect of the comparison of high school GPA requirements across the Division III institutions studied was that eight of the 15 institutions (B, C, D, F, I, J, M, N) had no minimum high school GPA requirement at all. This allowed for the possibility that student-athletes with very low high school GPA's could be allowed to compete at those institutions.

First-time freshmen--minimum SAT scores. The range for minimum SAT scores required at the Division III institutions studied was 800 to 1025, a difference of 225 points as shown in Table 16.

Table 16
Minimum SAT Score Requirements

Code	SAT
O	800
K	820
M	850
F	860
H	870
A	900
L	910
B	920
N	950
E	950
I	950
G	960
D	970
J	1025

(Institution C did not have a minimum SAT requirement for athletic eligibility). Three institutions, H, D, and J, used multiple scores based on the student's class rank. The scores listed in Table 16 are the averages for these institutions.

As shown in Table 17, the mean minimum SAT requirement among the institutions was 910. The z scores for each institution show that none had an SAT minimum requirement that was more than two standard deviations different from the sample mean. So none of the required minimums was significantly above or below that level.

Table 17
z Score Results-SAT Score Comparison

Code	SAT	z- Scores
O	800	-1.8
K	820	-1.47
M	850	-0.98
F	860	-0.81
H	870	-0.65
A	900	-0.16
L	910	0.01
B	920	0.17
N	950	0.66
E	950	0.66
I	950	0.66
G	960	0.82
D	970	0.99
J	1025	1.89
Average	909.64	
SD	61.07	

First-time freshmen--minimum ACT scores. The range for minimum ACT scores required at the Division III institutions studied was 16 to 21.5 (see Table 18).

Table 18
Minimum ACT Score Requirements

Code	ACT
M	16
F	18
K	18
L	19
H	19
A	19
G	20
N	20
E	20
O	20
B	20
I	20
D	20.5
J	21.5

Institution J had the most demanding ACT requirement, given that its requirement for students who graduated in the bottom quarter of their high school class was the highest score used by any of the Division III institutions studied. The requirements at J were: students who graduated in the top quarter of their high school class were required to have an ACT score of 20; if they graduated in the second quarter an ACT score of 21 was required; for the third quarter-22; and for the bottom quarter-23. Institution H used an ACT score of 20, or 18 if the student was in the top half of his/her class. Institution D used a score of 21, or 20 if the student graduated in the top half of the class. Institution C did not use the ACT.

As shown in Table 19, the minimum ACT score used at institution M (16) was significantly lower than those used by the other institutions. It was the only score that was more than two standard deviations away from the mean minimum score of 19.

Table 19
z Score Results-ACT Score Comparison

Code	ACT	z-Scores
M	16	-2.58
F	18	-1.04
K	18	-1.04
L	19	-0.27
H	19	-0.27
A	19	-0.27
G	20	0.49
N	20	0.49
E	20	0.49
O	20	0.49
B	20	0.49
I	20	0.49
D	20.5	0.88
J	21.5	1.65
Average	19.35	
SD	1.30	

First-time freshmen--high school core courses. Of the 15 Division III institutions in the study, seven used high school core course requirements as shown in Table 20.

Table 20
High School Core Course Requirements

Code	High School Core Courses
N	3-English, 2-Math, 2-Social Science, 2-Science, 7-Electives
J	4-English, 3-Science including Chemistry or Physics, 2-Foreign Language, 3 Math including Algebra I or higher, 3 Social Studies
C	4-English, 3.5 Math, 3 Science, 3 Social Science, 2 Foreign Language, .5 Fine Arts, 2 Electives
D	4-English, 3-Math, 3.5 Social Studies, 3 Science, 2 Foreign Language
H	4-English, 3-Math, 3-Science, 3-Social Studies
M	English, History, Math, Foreign Language
B	If not in top 10 %, 4-English, 3-Math, 2-Science, 2-History, .5-Government, .5-Economics, 1.5-Physical Education, .5-Health
G	None
F	None
L	None
E	None
K	None
A	None
I	None
O	None

At institution M, consideration was given to core courses in English, math, history, and foreign language but specific numbers of units were not required. At institution B specific courses were required along with specific numbers of units in those courses if the student was not in the top 10% of his/her high school graduating class. Of the Division III institutions with a core course requirement, institution C was the most demanding requiring 3.5 units of math; this was .5 unit higher than the other institutions. Institution J required a similar number of units as other institutions, but it was the only

institution that specifically required either chemistry or physics and algebra I or higher. The greatest difference in core courses across the Division III institutions studied was that eight of the institutions had no core course requirements for athletic eligibility at all.

Exceptions to high school eligibility requirements. As previously mentioned, all 15 Division III institutions studied allowed exceptions to their minimum high school academic eligibility requirements as detailed in Table 21. For five of the institutions, the criteria for consideration of an exception were reasonably specific.

Table 21
Exceptions to High School Eligibility Requirements

Code	Exceptions
J	Allowed test scores as low as-18 ACT, 860 SAT
O	Letter of appeal from student and 3 references required for consideration
L	Allowed test scores as low as 3.0 high school GPA and 16 ACT, 780 SAT
K	Essay from the student required for consideration
F	If student in top half of high school class, an ACT Score as low as 15 was allowed
G	Subjective
N	Subjective
E	Subjective
H	Subjective
D	Subjective
M	Subjective
A	Subjective
B	Subjective
I	Subjective
C	Subjective

Ten of the Division III institutions allowed exceptions, but no specific parameters were reported. At eight of the 10, committees made the decisions on whether to grant exceptions. At institution C the Director of Special Programs made the decisions and at institution E the Vice President of Academic Affairs made them.

Transfer student GPA. The range for minimum transfer GPA requirements at the Division III institutions in this study was 1.6 to 3.0 based on the total number of credit hours earned at the student's previous institution. Table 22 shows the minimum Transfer GPA requirement at each institution in the study. However, at several institutions, the GPA requirement depended on the number of credit hours earned at a previous institution or institutions. In these cases, the average minimum requirement is shown.

Table 22
Minimum Transfer GPA Requirements

Code	Transfer GPA
L	1.8
A	2.0
B	2.0
D	2.0
E	2.0
F	2.0
G	2.0
H	2.0
J	2.0
K	2.0
M	2.0
N	2.0
O	2.0
I	2.5
C	2.75

Institution L had the lowest requirement of 1.6 for students with fewer than 30 credit hours. If the student had between 31 and 60 credit hours, the minimum GPA requirement was 1.8; if the student had earned more than 60 credit hours, the minimum transfer GPA requirement was 2.0. In Table 22, the average for institution L, 1.8, is listed.

Institution N required a 2.0 transfer GPA if the student had earned 24 or more credit hours. For students with fewer than 24 hours, the institution used the student's standardized test scores taken during high school. Institution I required a 2.5 minimum transfer GPA. Institution C required a 3.0 minimum transfer GPA if the student had fewer than 54 credit hours and a 2.5 if the student had 54 or more credit hours. The average for institution C is listed in Table 22. The remaining 11 Division III institutions required a 2.0 minimum transfer GPA. As shown in Table 23, the average minimum required GPA was 2.07. The z score for institution C indicated that the average minimum calculated during this analysis was significantly higher than the minimums at the other institutions studied. It was the only score that was more than two standard deviations away from the mean.

Table 23
z Score Results-Minimum Transfer GPA Requirements

Code	Transfer GPA	z-Scores
L	1.8	-1.18
G	2.0	-0.31
F	2.0	-0.31
N	2.0	-0.31
E	2.0	-0.31
H	2.0	-0.31
D	2.0	-0.31
O	2.0	-0.31
M	2.0	-0.31
K	2.0	-0.31
A	2.0	-0.31
B	2.0	-0.31
J	2.0	-0.31
I	2.5	1.89
C	2.75	2.98
Average	2.07	
SD	0.22	

Transfer student credit hours earned. Only four of the 15 Division III institutions had transfer credit hour requirements (see Table 24).

Table 24
Minimum Transfer Credit Hour Requirements

Code	Credit Hours
G	12 per semester average
D	12 per semester average
O	24 per year
L	9 per semester- first year, 12 per semester-second and third years, 15 per semester-fourth year and after
F	None
N	None
E	None
H	None
M	None
K	None
A	None
B	None
I	None
C	None
J	None

The four institutions with transfer credit hour requirements differed markedly from the 11 that had no such requirement. In terms of student-athletes being eligible to compete, the 11 institutions that did not have a transfer credit hour requirement drew from a larger pool of students than the four institutions that had a requirement. Ironically, institution L had the lowest transfer GPA requirement, but one of the more demanding transfer credit hour requirements.

Exceptions to transfer student eligibility requirements. Only three of the 15 Division III institutions--F, H, and L--did not allow exceptions to transfer eligibility requirements. Of the 12 institutions allowing exceptions, 10 used subjective criteria in making decisions. Institution K required the student to write an essay to be considered for an exception. Institution D allowed transfer students with a transfer GPA as low as 1.5 to

be eligible on a one semester trial basis. Of the 12 Division III institutions that allowed exceptions, 10 used committees to make decisions. At institution C, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education made the decisions, and at institution J, the Dean of Enrollment Management had that responsibility.

Continuing student GPA requirements. The range of GPA requirements for continuing students at the Division III institutions in this study was 1.5 to 2.0 as shown in Table 25.

Table 25
Minimum Continuing GPA Requirements

Code	Continuing GPA
O	1.5
F	1.75
E	1.75
H	1.75
D	1.75
K	1.75
N	1.8
L	1.8
I	1.9
G	2.0
M	2.0
A	2.0
B	2.0
C	2.0
J	2.0

Institutions D, E, F, H, I, K, L and N differentiated based on the number of credit hours earned with a higher GPA required as the student earned more credit hours. The highest GPA required at these institutions was 2.0. The GPA listed in Table 25 for these institutions was the average for all earned credit hour categories. As shown in Table 26,

the GPA requirement for institution O was significantly lower than the other institutions studied. It was the only institution that had a GPA requirement that was more than two standard deviations away from the mean of 1.85.

Table 26
z Score Results-Minimum Continuing GPA Requirements

Code	Continuing GPA	z-Scores
O	1.5	-2.42
F	1.75	-0.69
E	1.75	-0.69
H	1.75	-0.69
D	1.75	-0.69
K	1.75	-0.69
N	1.8	-0.35
L	1.8	-0.35
I	1.9	0.35
G	2.0	1.04
M	2.0	1.04
A	2.0	1.04
B	2.0	1.04
C	2.0	1.04
J	2.0	1.04
Average	1.85	
SD	0.14	

Credit hours earned by continuing students. There was substantial variety among the Division III institutions studied in continuing credit hour requirements. Institution G required an average of 12 credit hours per semester. Institution A required an average of 12 credit hours per semester in the first year and 13 credit hours per semester in subsequent years. Institution I required 18 credit hours per academic year. Institution N required 21 hours per academic year. Institutions H and C both required 24 hours per

academic year. Institution B required 24 credits per academic year per year of eligibility used. If a student did not compete in athletics in a given academic year, then no credit hour requirement applied. Institution L required 9 hours per semester in the first year, 12 hours per semester in the second and third years, and 15 hours per semester in the fourth year and beyond. Institution K required that student-athletes earn 65% of the hours they attempted until they had earned 60 hours and 75% thereafter. Institutions D, E, F, J, M, and O had no minimum continuing credit hour requirements. These differences were displayed in Table 12.

Exceptions to continuing student requirements. Only two of the 15 Division III institutions studied allowed exceptions to continuing eligibility requirements. Institution C allowed students who earned fewer than 24 credits in the first academic year a one-year grace period. If 24 credits were not earned in the second year, the student was deemed ineligible. Institution B allowed exceptions that were subjective. A committee made all decisions on exceptions.

Frequency of certification. Of the 15 Division III institutions studied, 12 certified student-athletes each semester. Institutions H and M certified once a year. Institution L certified student-athletes once a year unless the student was on academic suspension; then it was done each semester.

Academic Eligibility Standards and Competitive Equity

One of the questions explored in this study was whether differences in academic eligibility standards among Division III institutions led to competitive equity issues. One of the core principles of the NCAA is the Principle of Competitive Equity. This principle

states that, “the structure and programs of the NCAA and the activities of its members shall promote opportunity for equity in competition to assure that individual student-athletes and institutions will not be unfairly prevented from achieving the benefits inherent in participation in intercollegiate athletics” (NCAA Division I Manual, 2008, p.5). In other words, the principle of competitive equity is designed to prevent a small number of individuals or teams from winning all the time. In Division I, everyone plays by the same academic eligibility standards. This study indicated that this was not the case in the Division III conference that was examined.

Competitive equity in this study was defined as winning conference championships and total win/loss record in men’s and women’s basketball, men’s and women’s tennis, baseball, and softball. Data were collected for the academic years 2000-2001through 2006-2007.

Differences in Competitive Equity

Differences in competitive equity were found among the Division III institutions in this study. The total number of conference championships that could have been won during the time period covered by the study was 42 (6 sports times 7 years).

Table 27
Total Conference Championships Won

Code	Conference Championships	% of Total	Cumulative %
N	17	40.5 %	40.5 %
M	7	16.7 %	57.2 %
F	5	11.9 %	69.1 %
O	5	11.9 %	81 %
I	2	4.8 %	85.8 %
G	1	2.4 %	88.2 %
L	1	2.4 %	90.6 %
H	1	2.4 %	93.0 %
A	1	2.4 %	95.4 %
B	1	2.4 %	97.8 %
C	1	2.4 %	100 %
E	0	0 %	100 %
D	0	0 %	100 %
K	0	0 %	100 %
J	0	0 %	100 %

As shown in Table 27, four institutions--N, M, F, and O--accounted for 81% of the championships won. Conversely, four institutions--D, E, J, and K--won no conference championships during the 7-year period. Six institutions--A, B, C, G, H, and L--each won one conference championship during the period. Institution I won two conference championships. The data on conference championships showed a definite difference in competitive equity between the four institutions at the top and the other 11 institutions.

A second measure of competitive equity used in this study was winning percentage in the six sports over the 7-year time period (see Table 28).

Table 28
Total Winning Percentage

Code	Winning Percentage
N	77.0
M	75.8
J	72.9
D	61.3
F	60.5
L	60.1
O	59.5
I	51.6
C	49.7
H	40.1
K	38.3
G	32.5
A	31.6
B	27.0
E	25.4

The winning percentage analysis also showed definite differences between the institutions at the top--N, M, and J--with winning percentages from 72.9% to 77%, and the institutions at the bottom--G, A, B, and E--with winning percentages ranging from 25.4% to 32.5%. As shown in Table 29, no institution had a z score that was more than two standard deviations away from the mean winning percentage of 51%.

Table 29
z Score Results-Winning Percentage

Code	Winning Percentage	z Scores
N	77.0	1.53
M	75.8	1.46
J	72.9	1.29
D	61.3	.611
F	60.5	.564
L	60.1	.540
O	59.5	.505
I	51.6	.041
C	49.7	-.069
H	40.1	-.633
K	38.3	-.738
G	32.5	-1.08
A	31.6	-1.13
B	27.0	-1.40
E	25.4	-1.49
Average	50.89	
SD	17.04	

Whether using conference championships or winning percentage, institutions N and M were at the top and institutions G, A, E, and B were at the bottom in terms of competitive equity. There was some inconsistency in the middle. Institution J ranked high in winning percentage but low in the number of conference championships won. Institutions F and O were in third position in conference championships, but ranked fifth and seventh respectively in winning percentage. The differences in competitive equity were pronounced enough to warrant an examination of whether there was a relationship with academic eligibility requirements.

Correlation of Competitive Equity to Academic Eligibility Requirements

For the correlation analysis, winning percentage and an academic eligibility composite score for each institution were used. The academic eligibility composite score was determined by ordering the 15 Division III institutions on the following eligibility variables: high school, transfer, and continuing GPA, SAT and ACT minimum scores and transfer and continuing credit hours. The institution with the lowest standard was given one point and the institution with the next lowest standard was given two points. This pattern was followed for all 15 institutions with the institution with the highest standard receiving the most points. With all the variables, there were ties, so institutions received the same number of points in those cases. For example, 12 of the institutions had the same transfer GPA requirement of 2.0, which was the second lowest standard. Therefore all 12 institutions were given two points on this variable. Since these eligibility variables were continuous, they provided a reasonable academic eligibility composite order among the Division III institutions. Table 29 shows the composite scores for each institution on each eligibility variable. Institution F ranked the lowest with 14 points and institution C ranked the highest with 33 points. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine if the differences in academic eligibility composite were correlated to competitive equity.

Table 30
Academic Eligibility Scores and Final Academic Rank

Code	HS GPA	SAT	ACT	TR GPA	TR CRED HRS	CON GPA	CON CR HRS	Total Points
F	1	4	3	2	1	2	1	14
M	1	3	2	2	1	5	1	15
K	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	15
O	4	1	5	2	2	1	1	16
E	3	9	5	2	1	2	1	23
H	2	5	4	2	1	2	8	24
D	1	11	6	2	3	2	1	26
N	1	9	5	2	1	3	6	27
L	5	7	4	1	4	3	3	27
A	6	6	4	2	1	5	4	28
I	1	9	5	3	1	4	5	28
B	1	8	5	2	1	5	7	29
J	1	12	7	2	1	5	1	29
G	3	10	5	2	3	5	3	31
C	1	13	1	4	1	5	8	33

The correlation was -.22, showing a weak, statistically insignificant correlation, as shown in Table 31.

Table 31
Correlation-Winning Percentage and Academic Rank

Pearson's R	P Value	t Statistic
-0.222	0.43	0.81

Note. p<.05 required for statistical significance

While the correlation was in the direction of lower academic eligibility standards being associated with higher winning percentages, the correlation was so weak it did not provide significant insight into explaining the competitive equity issues in this conference. As shown earlier, institutions M and N had the most competitive success during the study period. However, as Table 29 shows, although institution M had

comparatively weak eligibility standards for athletes, institution N's standards were in the middle of the conference. Likewise, for those institutions that had comparatively little athletic success, Table 29 shows no similar groupings that would help to explain these low levels of competitiveness. While the specific focus of this study--academic eligibility standards for first-time freshmen, transfer, and continuing students--did not provide a definite answer for the competitive equity discrepancies, this does not mean academics were not an issue. One academic area that could provide answers to the competitive equity issue might be the exceptions to the rules that all the institutions in the study allowed in some fashion. This area needs further study.

Summary

In the comparison of Division I academic standards to the standards of the Division III institutions studied, on most variables, the Division III institutions had lower standards. This was especially true for exceptions to the rules, where Division I allowed no exceptions, and all 15 Division III institutions allowed some exceptions.

In the comparison of the Division III institutions to each other, there were no significant differences found for high school GPA and SAT requirements. For ACT requirements and transfer and continuing student GPA requirements, only one institution was found to have significantly different criteria. For high school core course requirements, transfer and continuing student credit hours, and exceptions to the rules, there were more pronounced differences between the institutions.

The study found pronounced differences in competitive equity among the Division III institutions studied. However, a correlation analysis gave no clear indication

of any relationship between eligibility requirements and competitive equity. All of these findings will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

This study examined data on academic eligibility standards for student-athletes at selected Division III institutions. The standards for the Division III institutions in the study were compared to Division I standards and the Division III institutions were compared to each other. Differences among Division III institutions were further analyzed to see whether the differences were related to competitive equity.

Division I versus Division III comparison. On most variables, the Division III institutions in the study, on average, had lower standards than Division I. For the Division III institutions studied, the average minimum high school GPA requirement was .15 points lower than the Division I standard; the minimum transfer GPA requirement was .13 points lower that the Division I standard; and, the continuing minimum GPA requirement was .05 points lower than the Division I standard. However, none of these differences was statistically significant.

For the minimum credit hour requirement for eligibility (transfer and continuing), the Division III institutions studied, on average, had lower standards than Division I. Eleven of the 15 Division III institutions had no transfer credit hour requirement and six had no continuing credit hour requirement. Of those Division III institutions in the study with credit hour requirements, the requirements were either the same as or lower than the Division I standard.

In Division I, student-athletes must successfully pass a specific list of core courses while in high school to be eligible for competition in their freshman year in college. Only seven of the 15 Division III institutions studied had a high school core course requirement. This is another area where it was easier for athletes to be eligible in the Division III institutions studied than in Division I.

In the area of frequency of certification of satisfactory progress toward degree completion, the Division III institutions studied had lower requirements than Division I. In Division I, student-athletes must be certified for eligibility each semester for GPA and credit hours. For the Division III institutions studied, 12 required GPA certification each semester and three required it once a year. However, in the area of credit hour certification for the Division III institutions studied, only three certified every semester, six certified once a year, and six had no minimum credit hour requirement at all.

The greatest difference in eligibility standards between Division I and the Division III institutions in the study was in the area of exceptions to the eligibility rules. In Division I, no exceptions are allowed. If a student-athlete does not meet one of the eligibility requirements, the student is not eligible to compete in NCAA athletics. In the Division III institutions studied, exceptions to the eligibility rules were common. All 15 institutions studied allowed exceptions to the high school GPA requirements. The seven Division III institutions with a high school core course requirement all allowed exceptions. Twelve of the Division III institutions allowed exceptions to the transfer GPA requirement and three of the four institutions that had a transfer credit hour requirement allowed exceptions. Only in the areas of continuing GPA and credit hours were very few

exceptions allowed with only two institutions permitting exceptions. Furthermore, at most Division III institutions that allowed exceptions to the eligibility rules, the exceptions were subjective and decided on a case-by-case basis.

Athletics programs in Division III institutions are supposed to be different from programs in Division I institutions with Division III institutions emphasizing the "student" aspect of student-athlete. One would expect that Division III institutions would be more academically stringent than Division I in regard to academic eligibility standards. This study found just the opposite. In virtually every eligibility category, it was easier for a student-athlete to be eligible for competition in the Division III institutions studied than in Division I.

Comparison of Division III institutions to each other. On some variables—minimum high school GPA and SAT scores--there were no statistically significant differences among the institutions in the study. With some variables—minimum ACT score, transfer and continuing GPA--one institution in each case had a requirement that was significantly different from the group mean. The primary differences among the institutions studied were high school core course requirements, transfer and continuing credit hour standards, and exceptions to eligibility standards. With high school core courses, eight of the 15 institutions had no requirements. With transfer credit hours, 11 of the 15 institutions had no requirements. With continuing credit hours, six of the 15 institutions had no requirements. Having no minimum requirements on an eligibility variable could give an institution a considerable advantage over institutions with

minimum requirements. Theoretically, the potential pool of student-athletes eligible to compete is much larger for these institutions.

Granting exceptions to eligibility requirements is another area where there were significant differences among the Division III institutions studied. In the area of eligibility variables for first-time freshmen, all 15 institutions studied allowed exceptions with 10 of the 15 giving no absolute minimum standard that had to be met. For transfer eligibility requirements, 12 of the 15 institutions allowed exceptions and 10 of those 12 had no absolute minimum standard that had to be met. For continuing eligibility requirements, only two institutions allowed exceptions and one of those had no absolute minimum standard that had to be met. Institutions that allowed exceptions to eligibility rules, especially those that had no absolute minimum standards, could have significant advantages over those that did not allow exceptions. Theoretically, depending on how the exceptions are handled, the pool of potentially eligible student-athletes could be much larger at the institutions that allowed exceptions compared to those that did not.

Two of the institutions studied certified student-athletes for eligibility once a year, on both GPA and credit hours, as opposed to every semester. By certifying once a year, these two institutions could have more student-athletes eligible in the spring semester than those institutions that certified student-athletes every semester. This could give these two institutions an advantage in sports that compete in the spring semester.

Competitive equity analysis. The competitive equity part of the study found substantial differences in athletic success among the institutions. Whether using winning percentage or conference championships won, two institutions, N and M, were at the top

and four institutions, A, B, E, and G, were at, or close to, the bottom. Institutions N and M won almost 60% of the conference championships during the period studied, 2000-2007. Conversely, four institutions, D, E, J, and K, won no conference championships during the period studied. However, the analysis found only a weak and statistically insignificant correlation between academic eligibility standards and competitive equity. The correlation was negative, indicating a slight relationship between weaker academic standards and greater athletic success, but it was not strong. Additional study is needed to determine why a small number of institutions consistently dominated the conference in athletic success.

Discussion

The NCAA Division III Philosophy Statement states that, "colleges and universities in Division III place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs and they seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience" (The Differences Between Divisions I, II, and III, 2008, p. 3). The discussion in Division III often focuses on how Division III institutions are different from those in Division I. In Division III, no athletic scholarships are awarded, there are no multi-billion dollar television contracts and no coaches have million dollar salaries. This can lead to the perception that academic eligibility standards for competition in Division III must also be different than those in Division I, that is, the standards must be higher in Division III. In other words, a student-athlete who would be academically eligible in Division I

might very well not be academically eligible in Division III. However, since there are no national eligibility standards for Division III, and since the eligibility data has never been collected, there was no way of knowing whether Division III institutions had higher academic eligibility standards. This study revealed that in at least one Division III conference, the academic standards were not higher. In fact, overall, it was easier to be academically eligible in these Division III institutions than in Division I. This finding does not fit well with the image of Division III, that is, that Division III institutions are the last outposts where student-athletes are truly students first and athletes second. The findings of this study raise doubts about that image.

One of the core principles of the NCAA is the Principle of Competitive Equity. This principle states that, "the structure and programs of the NCAA and the activities of its members shall promote opportunity for equity in competition to assure that individual student-athletes and institutions will not be unfairly prevented from achieving the benefits inherent in participation in intercollegiate athletics" (NCAA Division I Manual, 2008, p.5). In other words, the principle of competitive equity is designed to prevent a small number of individuals or teams from winning all the time. The competitive equity part of this study found that a small number of the institutions in the Division III conference studied were winning most of the time. Two of the institutions studied consistently won most of the conference championships and had the highest winning percentages. The study found that academic eligibility standards were inversely related to athletic success, but this relationship was not strong enough to be considered statistically valid. It could be that non-academic factors have an effect on this imbalance, either by

themselves or in combination with academic factors. It could also be that academic standards are a factor in the imbalance, but they need to be analyzed in a fashion that was beyond the scope of this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

NCAA Division III is supposed to be fundamentally different from Division I. In many ways it is, and there are data to support these distinctions. In other areas, there are no, or very limited data, to support the contention that Division III is fundamentally different from Division I. The following recommendations result from information gained by conducting this study, and demonstrate the need for steps to be taken for Division III to live up to its philosophy.

- A more comprehensive study of academic eligibility standards in Division III is needed. This study examined approximately 3% of the total Division III membership. A more comprehensive study would help determine if the results of this study are representative of Division III.
- In Division III, institutions are given autonomy in setting academic eligibility standards. In the absence of national eligibility standards, it is not known how different the standards might be among the Division III institutions. Since so much subjectivity could be involved in how institutions set these standards, a study of the process involved in setting academic eligibility standards is needed.
- This study revealed that allowing exceptions to academic eligibility standards is one significant difference between Division I and the Division

III institutions studied. This is an area that needs further study. Some questions to be explored include: are student-athletes granted more exceptions to academic standards than non-athletes; how often are exceptions granted; who is making the decisions on exceptions; does the athletic department exert influence on these decisions; how far below the standards do institutions go?

- Are student-athletes in Division III graduating at rates similar to non-athletes? Division III institutions are not required to report student-athlete graduation rates since no athletic scholarships are awarded in Division III. The minimum academic eligibility requirements at the Division III institutions studied do not encourage student-athletes to graduate. The minimum continuing GPA requirement of 2.0 is lower than the minimum GPA required for most majors at most institutions (2.25). Also, a student-athlete meeting just the minimum requirement for continuing credit hours at the institutions studied would need five years to graduate. Often, a student-athlete exhausts his/her athletic eligibility in the first four years. Knowing what happens to Division III student-athletes in this situation would be beneficial.
- Many of the Division III institutions studied had no continuing student credit hour requirement. Additional study is needed to determine how this can meet the NCAA requirement that institutions insure that student-athletes are making satisfactory progress towards a degree.

- At the Division III institutions studied, some had no minimum requirements for some of the academic variables (i.e. high school core courses). Additional study is needed in this area. Questions to be addressed include: is this in keeping with the Division III philosophy; how do institutions with requirements compare to institutions without requirements (are their student-athletes similar academically, are there differences in competitive equity)?
- This study did not find a significant relationship between academic eligibility standards and competitive equity. Additional study is needed to determine what factors do account for the competitive equity issues in this conference.

Conclusion

Athletic programs/student-athletes at Division III institutions are supposed to be different from their counterparts in Division I. However, nobody knows whether or not this is true. This study has provided some interesting information about the institutions in one Division III conference. However, the study raised as many questions as it answered, so the primary question of Division III being different from Division I remains unanswered. The question is an important one as intercollegiate athletics are an important part of higher education—perhaps too important. Division I receives most of the attention from the media and fans. But, are programs in Division III that much different? More needs to be done to answer this important question.

Appendix A

NCAA Division I Academic Eligibility Standards

Fall 2008

Freshman Eligibility Standards

Core Course Requirement

16 Core Courses
4 years of English
3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered)
1 year of additional English, mathematics, or natural/physical science
2 years of social science
4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy)

GPA/Test Score Requirements

Core GPA	SAT(math/verbal)	ACT(sum score)
3.550 & above	400	37
3.525	410	38
3.500	420	39
3.475	430	40
3.450	440	41
3.425	450	41
3.400	460	42
3.375	470	42
3.350	480	43
3.325	490	44
3.300	500	44
3.275	510	45
3.250	520	46
3.225	530	46
3.200	540	47
3.175	550	47
3.150	560	48
3.125	570	49
3.100	580	49
3.075	590	50
3.050	600	50

3.025	610	51
3.000	620	52
2.975	630	52
2.950	640	53
2.925	650	53
Core GPA	SAT (math/verbal)	ACT (sum score)
2.900	660	54
2.875	670	55
2.850	680	56
2.825	690	56
2.800	700	57
2.775	710	58
2.750	720	59
2.725	730	59
2.700	730	60
2.675	740-750	61
2.650	760	62
2.625	770	63
2.600	780	64
2.575	790	65
2.550	800	66
2.525	810	67
2.500	820	68
2.475	830	69
2.450	840-850	70
2.425	860	70
2.400	860	71
2.375	870	72
2.350	880	73
2.325	890	74
2.300	900	75
2.275	910	76
2.250	920	77
2.225	930	78
2.200	940	79
2.175	950	80
2.150	960	80
2.125	960	81
2.100	970	82
2.075	980	83
2.050	990	84
2.025	1000	85
2.000	1010	86

Continuing Student Eligibility Requirements

	Credit Hours Earned	Cumulative GPA
After first year	24	1.8
After second year	48	1.9
After third year	72	2.0
After fourth year	96	2.0

Transfer Student Eligibility Requirements

Student transferring from a two year college to a four year college:

An average of 12 transferable degree credits for each semester of full-time enrollment.

A cumulative GPA of at least 2.0

Student transferring from a four year college to a four year college:

Must have met the continuing student eligibility requirements at the institution he is leaving as detailed above.

Appendix B

Questionnaire-Division III Eligibility Standards for Competition

University_____

Compliance Officer_____

Position Supervising Compliance Officer_____

Eligibility Standards for Freshmen:

- High School GPA_____
- Test Score
  - SAT_____
  - ACT_____
- High School Course Requirement
- Exceptions to these Standards?
- What are they?
- Who makes decisions on the exceptions?

Eligibility Standards for Transfer Students:

- Has Not Previously Participated in College Athletics:
  - Transfer GPA_____
  - Credit Hours Earned_____
  - Exceptions to these Standards?
  - If yes, what are they?
  - Who makes decisions on exceptions?
- Has Previously Participated in College Athletics:
  - Transfer GPA_____
  - Credit Hours Earned_____
  - Exceptions to these Standards?
  - If yes, what are they?
  - Who makes decisions on exceptions?

Eligibility Standards for Continuing Students:

- GPA_____
- Credit Hours Earned_____ Must they earn a specific number each semester or is it an average per semester? What are the actual numbers? Are there limits on the total number of hours that can be earned in the summer? If so, what is the limit?
- Exceptions to these Standards?
- If yes, what are they?
- Who makes decisions on exceptions?

Frequency of Certification for Competition:

- Do you certify student-athletes for competition at the beginning of the spring semester as well as the beginning of the fall semester?

Appendix C

July 10, 2007

Dear Compliance Officer,

My name is Chris Winkler and I am a graduate student in the EdD program in Higher Education Administration at the University of Texas at Austin. I am also the NCAA Compliance Officer at a Division III institution.

My dissertation is on academic eligibility standards in Division III institutions. The purpose of this letter is to introduce the study to you and invite your participation. My plan is to conduct telephone interviews with all the Compliance Officers in a Division III Conference. The data I want to collect is detailed in the attachment. The attachment is not to be completed and returned to me. Rather, it is to serve as a guide for the information I want to collect during the telephone interview.

My plan is to make the telephone calls the weeks of July 23rd and July 30th. The telephone interview will go much faster and be more productive if you might have time to collect the data prior to the week of July 23rd. The interviews should last no more than 30 minutes.

Please be assured that anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality will be protected. At no time during the study or in writings based on the study will the identity of an individual, a university, or the conference ever be revealed. The records of this study will be stored securely. Authorized persons from UT Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study now or in the future, please contact me at the number or e-mail address listed below. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop participation at any time.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at 512/232-2685, or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at 512/471-8871, or e-mail: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

A decision not to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the University of Texas at Austin.

Thank you for considering participation in this study and helping me complete my doctoral program.

Sincerely,

Chris Winkler
512/486-1197

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