

Athletics Certification Committee Analysis Report

Western Michigan University

1.2 Rules Compliance

- 1 NCAA Operating Principle 1.2 requires an institution to have a clear and unambiguous commitment to rules compliance as a central element in personnel matters for all individuals involved with the intercollegiate athletics program. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, all individuals inside the athletics department must have a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance in all of the following documents: contracts or letters of appointment, performance evaluations and job descriptions. After reviewing Page Nos. 27 and 33 of your institution's self-study report, the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification (hereafter referred to as "committee") noted that statements regarding the importance of rules compliance are contained within all full-time head coaches and assistant coaches contracts. Further, the committee noted that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance is contained in all coaches performance evaluations and job descriptions. However, the committee noted that statements regarding the importance of rules compliance are not included in the contracts or letters of appointment for part-time assistant coaches or volunteer coaches. The committee noted your institution has created a plan for improvement to address this issue by October 2007. Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that it has completed its plan to include a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance in the contracts or letters of appointment for part-time assistant or volunteer coaches.

- 2 Operating Principle 1.2 requires an institution to have a clear and unambiguous commitment to rules compliance as a central element in personnel matters for all individuals involved with the intercollegiate athletics program. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, all individuals inside the athletics department must have a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance in all of the following documents: contracts or letters of appointment, performance evaluations and job descriptions. After reviewing Page No. 27 of your institution's self-study report, the committee noted that statements regarding the importance of rules compliance are contained within all athletics staff members' job descriptions. However, the committee is unclear whether a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance is currently included in contracts or letters of appointment for individuals inside the athletics department. Further, the committee noted on Page No. 27 of your institution's self-study report that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance will be included in the performance evaluations of individuals inside the athletics department during the 2007-08 performance management cycle. Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance has been included in contracts or letters of appointment and performance evaluations for all individuals inside the athletics department by December 14, 2007.

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3 Operating Principle 1.2 stipulates that a clear and unambiguous commitment to rules compliance must be a central element in all personnel matters for individuals involved with the intercollegiate athletics program. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must provide evidence that all individuals outside the athletics department who are involved in or associated with athletics have statements regarding the importance of rules compliance in all contracts or letters of appointment, performance evaluations and job descriptions. After reviewing Page No. 28 of your institution's self-study report, the committee noted that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance is included in job descriptions for individuals outside the athletics department who are involved in or associated with athletics. However, the committee is unclear whether a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance is currently included in contracts or letters of appointment for individuals outside the athletics department who are involved or associated with athletics. Further, the committee noted on Page No. 27 of your institution's self-study report that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance will be included in the performance evaluations of individuals outside the athletics department who are involved in or associated with athletics during the 2007-08 performance management cycle. Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that a statement regarding the importance of rules compliance has been included in contracts or letters of appointment and performance evaluations for all individuals outside the athletics department who are involved in or associated with athletics by December 14, 2007.

2.1 Academic Standards

1 Operating Principle 2.1 requires institutions to report on the implementation of all plans for improvement developed by the institution during its first-cycle certification process as they relate to the operating principle. After reviewing Page No. 37 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted your institution did not fully implement its plan for improvement from the first-cycle certification process in the preparation of a goal statement by the president regarding graduation rates and a plan for achieving the stated goals. The failure to implement your first-cycle certification plan causes the committee concern. Therefore, your institution must provide evidence that the institution has fully implemented its plan from the first-cycle or provide an explanation for partial or noncompletion regarding the preparation of a goal statement for graduation rates and a plan to achieve the stated goals.

2 Operating Principle 2.1 requires an institution's academic standards and policies applicable to student-athletes to be consistent with those adopted by the institution for the student body in general or the NCAA's standards, whichever are higher. In addition, if the academic profile of entering student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup, is significantly lower than that of other student-athletes or comparable student-body groups, the contrast shall be analyzed and explained by appropriate institutional authorities. The committee reviewed Page No. 63 of your institution's self-study report and noted the significant percentages of student-athletes who were admitted through special admissions review in football. Further, Page Nos. 38 and 39 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, provide only a limited explanation regarding these differences. Therefore, your institution must analyze, further explain and, if necessary, address through specific plans for improvement the disproportionate percentages of student-athletes in the sport of football who are admitted through special admissions review.

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- 3** Operating Principle 2.1 states that if the academic profile of entering student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup, is significantly lower than that of other student-athletes or comparable student-body groups, the contrast shall be analyzed and explained by appropriate institutional authorities. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must compare and explain any differences in the admissions profiles of freshmen student-athletes and student-athlete subgroups compared with students generally. After reviewing Page No. 38 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by the institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted your institution provided comparisons in academic profiles but did not thoroughly explain the differences. Therefore, your institution must provide further explanation regarding the differences in admission profiles for student-athlete subgroups (i.e., gender, sport group) when compared to students generally. If the admission profiles for any student-athlete subgroups (i.e., gender, sport group) are significantly lower than that of other student-athletes or comparable student-body groups, your institution will be expected to explain and, if necessary, address through specific plans for improvement such disparities.
- 4** Operating Principle 2.1 states that written policies related to scheduling must be established in all sports to minimize student-athletes' conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to participation in intercollegiate athletics consistent with the provisions of NCAA Constitution 3.2.4.14. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, these policies must be clearly communicated to student-athletes and staff (e.g., published in the institution's student-athlete handbook, published in the athletics department manual and discussed during team meetings). After reviewing Page No. 42 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted that efforts are made to schedule classes around practice times. However, the committee is unclear if your institution has established written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition to minimize student-athletes' conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Further, the committee is unclear if the scheduling policies are clearly communicated to student-athletes and staff (e.g., published in the institution's student-athlete handbook, published in the athletics department manual and discussed during team meetings). Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that established written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition exist to minimize student-athletes' conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Further, your institution must provide written evidence that these policies are clearly communicated to student-athletes and staff (e.g., published in the institution's student-athlete handbook, published in the athletics department manual and discussed during team meetings.)
- 5** Operating Principle 2.1 requires institutions to demonstrate that written policies are established in all sports to minimize student-athlete's conflict with class time and/or final examination periods due to participation in intercollegiate athletics. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must analyze, explain and address missed class time that has been determined to be significant or excessive for any sport(s). After reviewing Page No. 43 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted your institution stated that missed class time has not been deemed excessive by the institution. However, your institution failed to provide an analysis or explanation of how your institution determined that missed class time was not significant or excessive for any sport. Therefore, your institution must provide further analysis and explanation of how it determined missed class time to not be significant or excessive for any sport.

2.2 Academic Support

1 Operating Principle 2.2 requires institutions to demonstrate that their academic support services are reviewed and approved periodically by academic authorities outside the department of intercollegiate athletics. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must demonstrate that academic support services for student-athletes are subject to a comprehensive review at least once every three years by academic authorities outside of athletics who do not have day-to-day responsibilities in the academic support services area. After reviewing Page No. 57 of your institution's self-study report, the committee noted that the associate athletics director presented an overview of the athletics academic services program areas to the Athletics Academic Services Oversight Committee in June 2006. However, the committee is unclear as to whether the academic support services are reviewed at least once every three years by appropriate academic authorities outside the department of intercollegiate athletics who do not have day-to-day responsibilities in the academic support services area. Further, after reviewing Page Nos. 48 through 57 of your institution's self-study report, it is not clear whether these services have been approved by academic authorities outside the department of intercollegiate athletics (e.g., athletics board). Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that your academic support services for student-athletes have been subject to a comprehensive review and approval at least once every three years by academic authorities outside the department of intercollegiate athletics who do not have day-to-day responsibilities in the academic support services area. Further, your institution must ensure that this review will occur at least once every three years in the future. Finally, your institution must conduct this review not later than December 14, 2007.

3.1 Gender Issues

1 Operating Principle 3.1 requires an institution to demonstrate a commitment to, and the progression toward, the fair and equitable treatment of both male and female student-athletes and athletics department personnel. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must conduct an evaluation of all 13-specified program areas for gender issues by:

- a. Describing how the institution has ensured a complete study of each of the areas;
- b. Providing data demonstrating the institution's status/commitment across each of the areas;
- c. Identifying areas of deficiency and commenting on any trends; and
- d. Explaining how the institution's future plan for gender equity addresses each of the areas.

After reviewing Page No. 79 of your institution's self-study report, the committee is unclear how your institution ensured a complete study of the accommodation of interests and abilities area. Therefore, your institution must provide a written description detailing how it has ensured a complete study of the accommodation of interests and abilities area for purposes of the self-study.

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2 Operating Principle 3.1 requires an institution to develop and implement an institutional plan to address gender issues in the intercollegiate athletics program. Acceptable gender-equity plans must address all 13-specified program areas and contain the eight-required elements for institutional plans for improvement. After reviewing Page Nos. 95 through 98 of your institution's self-study report, the committee noted all 13-specified program areas are addressed within your gender-equity plan. However, the committee noted that the measurable goals and the steps to achieve the measurable goals stated in your gender-equity plan lack specificity. Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence demonstrating the revision of your gender-equity plan to ensure that all gender issues identified have specific measurable goals and specific steps to achieve those goals. In addition, your institution must demonstrate broad-based participation is used in the conduct of the evaluation and development of a revised gender-equity plan. Finally, your institution must demonstrate that its revised gender-equity plan has received formal institutional approval, extends at least five-years into the future and is active at all times.

3.3 Student-Athlete Well-Being

1 Operating Principle 3.3 requires institutions to report on the implementation of all plans for improvement developed by the institution during its first-cycle certification process as they relate to the operating principle. After reviewing Page No. 122 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted your institution did not fully implement its plan for improvement from the first-cycle certification process to establish procedures for completion of exit interview surveys for those student-athletes who are leaving a sport. The failure to implement your first-cycle plan causes the committee concern regarding your institution's commitment to student-athlete well-being. Therefore, your institution must provide evidence that the institution has fully implemented its plan from the first-cycle certification process or provide an explanation for partial or noncompletion regarding the establishment of procedures for completion of exit interview surveys by student-athletes who are leaving a sport.

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- 2** Operating Principle 3.3 requires an institution to provide evidence that the well-being of student-athletes and the fairness of their treatment is monitored, evaluated and addressed on a continuing basis. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must demonstrate that it conducts exit interviews via in-person meetings and/or conference calls in each sport with a sample of student-athletes (as determined by the institution) whose eligibility has expired in accordance with Constitution 6.3.2. In addition, the institution's instrument used to conduct student-athlete exit interviews must contain questions related to the institution's commitment to the academic success of its student-athletes and questions to measure the effectiveness of the institution's mechanisms (e.g., exit interview process) to monitor the well-being of its student-athletes. After reviewing Page No. 124 of your institution's self-study report, the committee noted that your institution has an exit interview process for student-athletes, including procedures for arranging an in-person interview should the student-athlete request one. However, your institution did not specify whether student-athlete exit interviews are conducted via in-person meetings and/or conference calls and whether the exit interview survey contains questions related to your institution's commitment to the academic success of your student-athletes and questions to measure the effectiveness of your institution's mechanisms (e.g., exit interview process) to monitor the well-being of your student-athletes. Therefore, your institution must provide written evidence that it conducts student-athlete exit interviews via in-person meetings and/or conference calls with a sample of student-athletes. Further, your institution must provide written evidence that the instrument used to conduct student-athlete exit interviews contains questions related to your institution's commitment to the academic success of student-athletes and questions to measure the effectiveness of the mechanisms to monitor the well-being of your student-athletes.
- 3** Operating Principle 3.3 requires each institution to have established grievance and/or appeal procedures available to student-athletes in appropriate areas. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must have written grievance and/or appeal procedures in the areas required by NCAA legislation (i.e., transfers, financial aid). Further, written grievance and/or appeal procedures must be communicated to student-athletes and staff. After reviewing Page No. 125 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by your institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted that transfer appeal procedures are forwarded to the specific student-athlete in writing in cases where permission to contact other institutions has been denied. However, the committee is unclear if your institution has established written grievance and/or appeal procedures in the area of transfer releases and how those procedures are communicated to all of your student-athletes. Further, your institution noted that athletics department staff members are apprised of their responsibilities in specific appeal procedures related to transfer releases and cancellation or reduction of financial aid by the athletics department administration. However, the committee is unclear how the grievance and/or appeals procedures in the area of transfer releases and cancellation or reduction of financial aid are communicated to all athletics department staff. Therefore, your institution must provide evidence that written grievance and/or appeal procedures related to transfer releases exist and are communicated to all student-athletes. Further, your institution must provide evidence that written procedures in the areas of cancellation or reduction of financial aid and transfer releases are communicated to all athletics department staff (e.g., posted on athletics department Web site, printed in athletics department policies and procedures manual).

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4 Operating Principle 3.3 stipulates that an institution must have in place programs that protect the health of, and provide a safe environment for, each of its student-athletes. In order to demonstrate conformity with this operating principle, an institution must review its travel policies (e.g., passenger vans, buses, permissible drivers, length of trips) as they relate to student-athletes to ensure those policies protect their health and provide a safe environment. Further, an institution is required to ensure such policies are communicated to athletics department staff and student-athletes. After reviewing Page Nos. 126 and 127 of your institution's self-study report and additional materials submitted by the institution June 5, 2007, the committee noted that travel policies are not currently provided to student-athletes in writing, but your institution has created a plan for improvement to include travel policies in the 2007-08 student-athlete handbook. However, the committee noted that your institution's plan for improvement did not contain all required elements for a plan for improvement. Therefore, your institution must provide evidence that it has implemented its plan in this area or revise its plan for improvement to ensure it contains all of the required elements. Please note, acceptable plans for improvement must include the following required elements:

- a. Identification of issues or problems;
- b. Measurable goals the institution intends to achieve;
- c. Steps to achieve the goals;
- d. Specific timetables;
- e. Individuals/offices responsible for carrying out the specific actions; and
- f. Institutional approval.