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Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the 2010-11 Bowl-bound College Football Teams - Academic Performance Improves but Race Still Matters

Orlando, FL...December 6, 2010 – Overall academic progress continued while the gap between white and African-American football student-athletes increased slightly for the 70 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools (formerly known as Division I-A schools) playing in this year's college football bowl games, according to a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida.

Richard Lapchick, director of TIDES and the primary author of the study, said, "The academic success of FBS football student-athletes continued to grow this year. The overall football student-athlete graduation success rate (GSR) improved from 65.5 percent to 67 percent. This year 91 percent of the schools (64 of the 70), the same as in the 2009 report, had at least a 50 percent graduation rate for their football teams. All but one of the teams (99 percent) received a score of higher than 925 on the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR) versus 90 percent in the 2009 report."

Lapchick added, "While the study showed that the graduation rates improved for both white and African-American football student-athletes, the study also showed that the disturbing gap between white and African-American football student-athletes grew even wider this year and remains a major issue. Among the 70 bowl-bound teams this year, the GSR for African-American football student-athletes is 60 percent, up from 58 percent in 2009. The GSR for white football student athletes went from 77 percent last year to 80 percent this year. Overall, this reflects a 20 percentage point gap, which is up one percentage point from last year."

Seventeen teams or 24 percent of the bowl-bound schools graduated less than half of their African-American football student-athletes, while only one school graduated less than half of its white football student-athletes.

The study was co-authored by Andrew Lilly and Michael Kuhn.

Lapchick noted, "It must be emphasized that African-American and white football players graduate at a higher rate than their male non-athletic peers in the student body. The graduation rate for African-American male students as a whole is only 38 percent, in comparison to the 62 percent graduation rate for white male students – an unacceptable and even larger 24 percentage point gap."

Among the disturbing news in the study is:

Among the bowl-bound teams, the following results were found:

- 63 schools (90 percent) had graduation success rates of 66 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was more than 2.7 times the number of schools with equivalent graduation success rates for African-American football student-athletes (23 schools or 33 percent).
- 17 schools (24 percent) graduated less than 50 percent of their African-American football student-athletes, while only one school graduated less than 50 percent of its white football student-athletes (Oklahoma).
- Five schools (7 percent) graduated less than 40 percent of their African-American football student-athletes, while **no** school graduated less than 40 percent of its white football student-athletes.

In addition, the percentage of the gap among some schools is alarming:

- 15 schools (21 percent) had graduation success rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at **least** 30 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.
- 35 schools (50 percent) had graduation success rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 20 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.

Five schools had graduation success rates for African-American football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes: Northwestern (one percentage point higher), Virginia Tech (three percentage points higher), Southern Mississippi (three percentage points higher), Notre Dame (four percentage points higher) and Troy (10 percentage points higher). That is up from four schools in the 2009-10 study.

Only Texas Tech had overall GSR rates for football players that were better than the overall student-athletes.

Lapchick said, "If there were a national championship for graduation success rates among bowl teams, Notre Dame and Northwestern would have played for the National Championship. Both teams graduated at least 95 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 95 percent of African-American football student-athletes. If there were a national championship for APR scores, Air Force and Northwestern would contend for the National Championship, with APR scores of 988 and 986 respectively."

One conference distinguished itself above all of the FBS conferences represented in the APR study. The Big Ten is represented by three teams in the list of top 10 APR schools. No other conference has more than one. Two independents, Notre Dame and Navy, were also included in the top ten. With the exception of the Sun Belt Conference, every conference is sending schools that have an APR greater than 925.

Three bowls have both teams with APRs higher than 970. The Sun Bowl has Miami and Notre Dame both with 978; the Liberty Bowl has UCF and Georgia with a 972 and 973, respectively, and the Outback Bowl has Penn State and Florida with a 974 and 971, respectively.

NCAA statistics were used in this study. The Institute reviewed data collected by the NCAA from member institutions for the graduation rate study. The Institute reviewed the six-year graduation rates of each school's freshman class that enrolled in 2003-04, and it then calculated a four-class average (freshmen classes of 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04).

The NCAA created the APR in 2004 as part of an academic reform package designed to more accurately measure student-athletes' academic success as well as improve graduation rates at member institutions. The APR holds each team accountable for the success of student-athletes in the classroom and their progression towards graduation. Individual teams are penalized if they fall below an APR score of 925, which is an expected graduation rate of 50 percent of its student-athletes. As of now, scholarship reductions are the only penalties: up to 10 percent of scholarships can be taken away. Over time, historical penalties will be put into place for schools who continue to fall below the 925 APR. This year, Florida International is the only bowl bound team with an APR below 925, but it is not subject to penalties by the NCAA.

The APR data does not include data from the 2009-10 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2008-09 school year.

The Institute has taken the position that Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) gives an unfair depiction of a school because it does not account for transfer students. A student-athlete who transfers in good standing and graduates at another institution counts as a non-graduate at the initial school. The FGR also does not count a junior college student who transfers into a four-year college and graduates as a graduate or a former student-athlete who returns and graduates more than six years after original enrollment. The Institute supports the NCAA's use of the Graduation Success Rates (GSR), developed in 2005, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate and professional sports. The Institute researches and publishes a variety of studies, including annual studies of student-athlete graduation rates and racial attitudes in sports, as well as the nationally recognized Racial and Gender Report Card, an assessment of hiring practices in coaching and sport management. Additionally, The Institute conducts diversity management training in conjunction with the National Consortium for Academics and Sports. The Institute also will monitor some of the critical ethical issues in college and professional sport, including the potential for the exploitation of student-athletes, gambling, performance-enhancing drugs and violence in sport.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport is part of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program in the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration. This landmark program focuses on business skills necessary for graduates to conduct successful careers in the rapidly changing and dynamic sports industry while also emphasizing diversity, community service and sport and social issues.

Academic Rates for Teams in the 2010 - 2011 NCAA Division Bowl Games

Academic Rates for Teams in the 2010-2011 NCAA Bowl Games						
Bowl Name	Participants	APR	Graduation Success Rates (GSR)			
			Overall Football Student-Athlete	African-American Football Student-Athlete	White Football Student-Athlete	Overall Student-Athlete
BCS National Championship	Oregon	942	54	41	76	76
	Auburn	935	63	49	100	77
Allstate Sugar Bowl	Arkansas	930	55	45	79	72
	Ohio State	975	63	54	77	79
Discover Orange Bowl	Virginia Tech	940	79	79	76	89
	Stanford	976	86	71	97	94
Tostitos Fiesta Bowl	Oklahoma	962	44	43	45	69
	Connecticut	949	77	74	87	83
Rose Bowl Game Presented by Vizio	Wisconsin	968	65	51	79	81
	TCU	968	71	63	85	81
Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl	Boston College	967	90	86	94	96
	Nevada	946	66	54	81	75
BBVA Compass Bowl	Pittsburgh	950	69	63	79	81
	Kentucky	951	63	58	71	74
AT&T Cotton Bowl	Texas A&M	934	57	45	82	72
	LSU	965	67	62	76	74
GoDaddy.com Bowl	Miami (OH)	970	79	71	83	86
	Middle Tennessee	967	55	56	56	76
Gator Bowl	Michigan	936	72	70	77	79
	Mississippi State	939	64	58	78	80
Capital One Bowl	Michigan State	941	55	45	74	80
	Alabama	957	67	60	89	81
Outack Bowl	Penn State	974	84	86	86	90
	Florida	971	67	64	81	82
TicketCity Bowl	Northwestern	986	95	95	94	97
	Texas Tech	944	69	60	82	67
Chick-fil-a Bowl	Florida State	927	64	56	92	79
	South Carolina	938	57	48	88	74
Autozone Liberty Bowl	UCF	972	70	64	86	80
	Georgia	973	68	65	72	77
Hyundai Sun Bowl	Miami	978	81	71	100	86
	Notre Dame	978	96	97	93	99
Meineke Car Care Bowl	Clemson	967	60	55	89	83
	South Florida	930	46	37	67	71
Bridgepoint Education Holiday Bowl	Nebraska	950	68	62	77	73
	Washington	948	82	77	83	87
Franklin American Mortgage	North Carolina	957	75	69	89	87
	Tennessee	944	53	54	60	74
New Era Pinstripe Bowl	Syracuse	947	76	69	91	83
	Kansas State	934	69	59	80	81

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Bell Helicopter Armed Force	SMU	947	76	72	81	86
	Army	964	85	77	88	90
Valero Alamo	Oklahoma State	945	59	49	74	76
	Arizona	940	48	38	62	65
Texas Bowl	Baylor	945	64	63	68	78
	Illinois	951	76	67	83	86
Military Bowl Presented by N	Maryland	929	64	62	70	80
	East Carolina	941	63	50	91	74
Insight Bowl	Iowa	945	79	68	94	84
	Missouri	958	71	66	84	80
Champs Sports Bowl	NC State	937	56	45	89	72
	West Virginia	952	72	65	78	76
AdvoCare V100 Independence Bowl	Georgia Tech	967	49	43	75	75
	Air Force	988	86	81	87	90
Little Caesars Bowl	Toledo	934	65	57	71	79
	Florida International	906	46	30	59	57
Sheraton Hawaii Bowl	Tulsa	939	66	52	80	80
	Hawaii	950	46	29	63	69
S.D. County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl	San Diego State	931	55	58	73	67
	Navy	973	92	78	97	96
Maaco Las Vegas Bowl	Utah	949	62	43	81	79
	Boise State	974	65	60	64	71
Beef o' Brady's St. Petersburg Bowl	Louisville	926	63	61	76	80
	Southern Miss	938	84	84	81	85
R+L Carriers New Orleans B	Ohio	953	71	57	90	83
	Troy	940	75	78	68	75
uDrove Humanitarian Bowl	Northern Illinois	975	67	70	75	81
	Fresno State	946	52	36	75	64
New Mexico Bowl	BYU	940	62	53	70	78
	UTEP	928	57	46	71	69
			Overall Football Student-Athlete	African-American Football Student-Athlete	White Football Student-Athlete	Overall Student-Athlete
	2010-11 Averages	APR	67.4	60.3	79.6	79.3
		951.4				