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Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Rates for 2010 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament Teams

Graduation Rate Study of Division I NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament Teams Reveals Marked Improvement in Overall Graduation Rates But Large Continuing Disparities of the Success of White and African-American Student-Athletes

Orlando, FL...March 15, 2010 – The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida released its annual study, “Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Rates for 2010 NCAA Men’s Division I Basketball Tournament Teams” which is the most comprehensive analysis to date of the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament-bound teams. The study examines the Graduation Success Rates (GSR) and Academic Progress Rates (APR) for the tournament teams as reported by the NCAA. The study also compares the performance in the classroom for African-American and white basketball student-athletes. Dr. Richard Lapchick, the primary author of the study, is director of The Institute and Chair of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program at UCF. The study was co-authored this year by Christopher Kaiser and Brian Hoff.

Lapchick noted that “There is again positive academic news for the tournament teams when we examine the GSR and the APR. There was a two percentage point increase for all male student-athletes to 64 percent. Eighty-four percent of white and 56 percent of African-American men’s Division I basketball student-athletes graduate, increasing six percentage points for white basketball student-athletes and by two percentage points for African-American basketball student-athletes compared to last year’s study.”

Based on the GSR, 44 teams or 69 percent of the total graduated at least 50 percent of their basketball student-athletes (up from 63 percent in 2009). In addition, 37 teams (58 percent, a 10 percentage point increase from 2009) graduated at least 60 percent and 29 teams (45 percent, also a 10 percentage point increase from 2009) graduated at least 70 percent. Only 12 teams (19 percent, down from 24 percent in 2009) graduated less than 40 percent.

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Lapchick went on to say, “Nonetheless, the continuing significant disparity between the academic success of African-American and white men’s basketball student-athletes is deeply troubling. In fact, the already large gap increased by four percentage points. One of higher education’s greatest failures is the persistent gap between African-American and white students in general. This is also true for white and African-American basketball student-athletes in particular. The gaps continue to widen, even though the actual graduation rates of African-American basketball student-athletes are increasing.”

Lapchick emphasized that “the GSR, developed in late 2005, provides a more accurate picture of the success student-athletes have in the classroom at NCAA member institutions. The GSR tells us far more than the Federal Graduation Ratesⁱ did in the past. Also, by utilizing four years of Academic Progress Rates (APR) data, a far better depiction of the academic performance of student-athletes is illustrated. Thus the APR rates have been included in this study.”

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 by providing sanctions in the form of lost scholarships when teams fail to meet the NCAA standard for academic performance. Teams that score below a 925, which is equivalent to an NCAA GSR rate of approximately 60 percent, can lose up to 10 percent of their scholarships. Teams can also be subject to historical penalties for poor academic performance over time. Starting this year, teams that receive three straight years of historical penalties (below 900 APR or approximately a 45 percent GSR) face the potential of restrictions on postseason competition for the team, in addition to scholarship and practice restrictions.

In this year’s men’s Division I basketball tournament, 19 teams have APR scores below 925. Seven of these teams will be subject to contemporaneous penalties by the NCAA, including New Mexico State, UC Santa Barbara, Morgan State, Purdue, Ohio State, Georgia Tech, and Tennessee. This is a slight improvement from 21 teams in 2009 and a significant improvement from 35 men’s teams below the 925 score in 2008. Also, there were 28 teams (43 percent) with an APR of 950 or above, 22 teams (34 percent) with an APR of 960 or above and 15 teams (23 percent) with an APR of 970 or above.

Based on Graduation Success Rate data, problems emerging from the study include the following:

- **79 percent** (45 teams) of the men’s tournament teams graduated 70 percent or more of their white basketball student-athletes, while **only 31 percent** (20 teams) graduated 70 percent or more of their African-American basketball student-athletes **creating a 48 percent gap**. This significantly increased on a 26 percent gap from last year’s study.
- **86 percent** (49 teams) of the men’s tournament teams graduated 60 percent or more of their white basketball student-athletes, **while only 45 percent** of schools (29 teams) graduated 60 percent or more of their African-American basketball student-athletes **resulting in a 41 percent gap**. This is another large increase of 18 percent from last year’s study, which showed a gap of 23 percent.

- **91 percent** (52 teams) graduated 50 percent or more of their white basketball student-athletes, but **only 56 percent** (36 teams) graduated 50 percent or more of their African-American basketball student-athletes **creating a 35 percent gap** which is actually smaller than the 38 percent gap in last year's study.

Lapchick continued, "Race remains a continuing academic issue. While a few gaps are closing, there are too many remaining substantial gaps between graduation rates for white and African-American student-athletes shown above and in the sections that will follow here. White men's Division I basketball student-athletes graduate at a rate of 84 percent while 56 percent of African-American men's Division I basketball student-athletes graduate. This 28 percent difference is four percentage points larger than last year. It is clear that this issue remains a major concern that must be addressed.

"However, it is equally important to note that African-American basketball players graduate at a higher rate than African-American males who are not student-athletes. The graduation rate for African-American male students as a whole is only 38 percent, a full 18 percent lower than for African-American basketball student-athletes. Presently, too many of our predominantly white campuses are not welcoming places for students of color, whether or not they are athletes. There are lessons that our campuses could learn from athletics."

The following results from 2009 continue to be alarming. The GSR data shows:

- **28 men's tournament teams** (49 percent, an increase from 36 percent in 2009) have a 30 percentage point or greater gap between the graduation rates of white and African-American basketball student-athletes.
- **37 men's tournament teams** (65 percent, an increase from 45 percent in 2009) have a 20 percentage point or greater gap between the graduation rates of white and African-American basketball student-athletes.

Lapchick concluded, "As always, there are schools that win big enough to be here in March *and* graduate their student-athletes. If we were to choose a Top Ten for Graduation Success Rates, these schools would be there: BYU, Marquette, Notre Dame, Utah State, Wake Forest, Wofford, Duke, Lehigh, Vermont, and Villanova. All of these teams had GSR greater than 90 percent. Six teams achieved a 100 percent GSR: BYU, Marquette, Notre Dame, Utah State, and Wake Forest."

NCAA statistics were used in the study. The Institute reviewed 2002-03 graduation (six-year) rates, with a four class average (freshman classes of, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03). The APR data in this study does not include data from the 2008-09 academic performances of the teams, but instead uses the four-year data from the 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 academic years. This is the second year without the squad-size adjustment for most teams that was in place until teams accumulated four years of APR data.

Note: The men's percentages were calculated as follows:

1. *Overall rates were based on 64 teams (Cornell, like other Ivy League Schools, does not report graduation rates).*
2. *Rates for African-American student-athletes were based on 64 teams as well.*
3. *Rates for white student-athletes were based on 57 teams (In addition to Cornell not reporting graduation rates, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Houston, Louisville, Temple, Villanova, Winthrop, and Xavier had no white basketball student-athletes in the graduating class in the period under review).*
4. *The disparity figures are based on 57 teams because Cornell does not report graduation rates. In addition, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Houston, Louisville, Temple, Villanova, Winthrop, and Xavier had no white basketball student-athletes in the graduating class in the period under review.*

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 internationally recognized Racial and Gender Report Card, an assessment of hiring practices in coaching and sport management in professional and college sport. Additionally, The Institute conducts diversity management training in conjunction with the National Consortium for Academics and Sports. The Institute also monitors some of the critical ethical issues in college and professional sport, including the potential for 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.

Graduation Rates for 2010 Men's Teams in the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament					
School	APR	Overall Student-Athlete	African-American Basketball Student-Athlete	White Basketball Student-Athlete	Overall Basketball Student-Athlete
Arkansas Pine Bluff	907	57	29	-	29
Baylor	989	77	29	100	36
Brigham Young	991	82	100	100	100
Butler	964	86	75	100	90
California	944	80	0	0	20
UC Santa Barbara	872	82	50	100	82
Clemson	929	82	31	100	37
Cornell	977				
Duke	989	97	89	100	92
East Tennessee State	941	69	58	67	61
Florida	950	85	50	100	60
Florida State	933	79	71	100	80
Georgetown	942	95	78	100	82
Georgia Tech	914	71	44	0	38
Gonzaga	975	91	50	100	78
Houston	900	71	42	-	42
Kansas	1000	74	67	75	73
Kansas State	900	77	38	100	62
Kentucky	979	73	18	100	31
Ohio	948	84	75	100	85
Lehigh	994	90	75	100	92
Louisville	965	77	40	-	38
Marquette	970	92	100	100	100
Maryland	912	76	0	33	8
Michigan State	985	80	44	100	58
Minnesota	930	76	43	100	44
Missouri	959	75	25	100	36
Montana	950	71	40	100	67
Morgan State	888	56	36	100	42
Murray State	919	71	60	100	73
UNLV	920	68	13	100	46
New Mexico	909	72	44	50	43
New Mexico State	848	68	25	100	36
North Texas	923	66	62	100	60
Northern Iowa	942	76	75	80	78
Notre Dame	982	99	100	100	100

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School	APR	Overall Student-Athlete	African-American Basketball Student-Athlete	White Basketball Student-Athlete	Overall Basketball Student-Athlete
Oakland	946	82	83	75	82
Ohio State	911	78	50	100	60
Oklahoma State	967	76	75	100	82
Old Dominion	952	71	44	50	53
Pittsburgh	965	83	67	100	75
Purdue	900	77	57	83	64
Richmond	936	93	60	100	85
Robert Morris	918	91	40	100	67
St. Mary's	931	87	40	63	57
Sam Houston State	933	66	33	100	50
San Diego State	916	68	67	100	58
Siena College	935	95	67	100	86
Syracuse	932	86	43	75	55
Temple	938	70	43	-	43
Tennessee	924	76	38	0	30
Texas	979	70	29	60	47
Texas A&M	953	71	56	50	56
UTEP	924	69	60	100	71
Utah State	922	85	100	100	100
Vanderbilt	975	94	100	80	85
Vermont	964	91	100	100	92
Villanova	985	96	91	-	92
Wake Forest	963	93	100	100	100
Washington	956	84	20	0	29
West Virginia	960	69	30	60	44
Winthrop	986	85	80	-	75
Wisconsin	933	80	60	100	78
Wofford	944	97	100	100	100
Xavier	976	94	88	-	89

ⁱ The Institute has taken the position that Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) give 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 or a former student-athlete who returns and graduates more than six years after original enrollment. The Institute supports the NCAA's new Graduation Success Rates, developed in 2005, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.