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Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the 2006-07 Bowl-bound College Football Teams; Graduation Rates Overall are High; Gap between African-American and White Student-athletes Persists

Orlando, FL...December 4, 2006 – Fifty-five (85.9) of the 64 Division I-A football teams playing in this year's college football bowl games graduated more than 50 percent of their student-athletes and 40 schools (62.5 percent) received a score of 925 or more on the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR) reported on February 27, 2006. The gap between the graduation rates of white and African-American student-athletes remains a concern. These findings were reported in a study released today by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida.

Richard Lapchick, the Director of the Institute and the primary author of the study "**Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the 2006-07 Bowl-bound College Football Teams,**" noted that, "This represents real progress and points to the success of Myles Brand's academic reform package. Having nearly 90 percent of the schools graduate at least 50 percent is a great development. It raises the bar. In last year's report, 41 percent of the total did not receive a score of more than 925 on the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR). The news augurs well for the future yet shows where there is room for improvement. In examining this year's teams, 24 schools or 37.5 percent did not receive a score of more than 925. While there is improvement, there is also room for further improvement."

Lapchick added that, "the study showed that the persistence of the gap between white and African-American student-athletes remains a major issue; 27 teams or 42.2 percent of the bowl-bound schools graduated less than half of their African-American football student-athletes, while only three teams or 4.7 percent graduated less than half of white football student-athletes."

The study was co-authored by Ryan Vandament and Marina Bustamante.

The NCAA created the APR in 2004 as part of an academic reform package designed to more accurately measure student-athlete's 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. Of the 24 teams below the 925 score this year, only five will be subject to contemporaneous penalties by the NCAA.

The APR data are preliminary and do not include the most recent year's academic performances of the teams in the study. The NCAA is generally treating the APR data as preliminary until it gets the full four years of data collected. This is the reason that the NCAA is applying the "squad-size adjustment" until it has the four-year cohort.

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 new Graduation Success Rates, developed in 2005, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.

In spite of all this progress with how graduation rates are calculated, a wide gap remains between white and African-American student-athletes' graduation rates. Lapchick said, "Each year the most disturbing point of the graduation rate study is the disparity between the graduation rates of African-American and white football student-athletes. While the graduation rates for African-American student-athletes has improved, the disparity has persisted for years."

"Overall at the 119 Division I-A schools, 62 percent of white football student-athletes graduated versus 49 percent of African-American football student-athletes. However, it must be noted 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 36 percent, in comparison to the 60 percent graduation rate for white male students – a scandalous 24 percent gap."

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

- 48 schools (75 percent) had graduation 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 rates for African-American football student-athletes (18 schools or 28.1 percent).
- Nearly 1.65 times as many schools graduated at least 50 percent of their white football student-athletes (61 schools or 95.3 percent) than African-American football student-athletes (37 schools or 57.8 percent).
- 12 schools (18.8 percent) graduated less than 40 percent of their African-American football student-athletes, while **no** school graduated less than 40 percent of their white football student-athletes.

Additional findings include the following:

- 13 schools (20.3 percent) had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 30 percent lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.
- 28 schools (43.8 percent) had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 20 percent lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.
- Only one school had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes: Troy (nine percent higher).

While there were teams that scored poorly, some schools were notable for their high football student-athlete GSR. Two schools had overall GSR rates for football players that were better than the overall student-athletes. (Nebraska and TCU).

Lapchick noted, "If there were a national championship for graduation rates among bowl teams, Navy and Boston College would have played for the National Championship. Both teams graduated at least 96 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 91 percent of African-American football student-athletes. If there were a national championship game based on APR rates, Navy and Boston College (986 and 982 respectively) would have played."

Three conferences distinguished themselves from all of the Division I-A football conferences represented in the APR study. The Southeastern Conference and Conference USA are represented by two teams each (Rice and Southern Miss in Conference USA, and Auburn and Florida in the Southeastern Conference), and the Atlantic Coast Conference (Boston College, Florida State, and Wake Forest) is represented by three teams in the top 10 APR schools. The Atlantic Coast Conference had all eight of its bowl-bound member institutions receive an APR score greater than 925.

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

- Of the 24 bowl-bound teams that received an APR score less than 925, 13 (54.2 percent) were members of BCS conferences.
- Seven members of the Atlantic Coast Conference were in the top 25 of APR bowl-bound school rankings.
- The Pacific-10 Conference on the other hand, had six schools chosen for bowl games, yet four (66.7 percent) received an APR score less than 925.

NCAA statistics were used in this study. The Institute reviewed data collected from member institutions for the academic years of 2004-05 and 2005-06. *Please note: The NCAA will begin to use data from a four-class average in the fall of 2007 to calculate the APR.* NCAA statistics were used for the graduation rate study. The Institute reviewed 1999-00 graduation (six-year) rates, with a four-class average (freshmen classes of 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-00).

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.

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