



TIDES

THE INSTITUTE FOR DIVERSITY AND ETHICS IN SPORT

MAKING WAVES OF CHANGE

Keeping Score When It Counts:

Assessing the Academic Records of the
2021-2022 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams

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Executive Summary

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The overall academic success of college football student-athletes increased this year and the gap between white and Black football student-athletes declined for the 43 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) bowl-bound schools. The results were reported in “Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2021-22 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams,” a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) which is in the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program 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 has improved this year. **The overall football student-athlete Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for bowl-bound teams is 81.3 percent, a substantial 3.3 percent increase from 78.0 percent in 2020.**

Lapchick added, “A positive trend that continued in 2021 is that every school participating in a bowl game had at least a 50 percent GSR for their football teams for the fourth time in five years. Even better, for the second year in a row, every bowl-bound football team in 2021 had a GSR of at least 60 percent.”

Lapchick stated, “While the gap between white and Black football student-athletes decreased this year, it continues to be a major issue. The gap this year is 11.7 percent, down from 16.3 percent last year. Among the 86

Overall Football Student-Athlete GSR

78.0%  **81.3%**
2020 2021

Average GSR for Black Football Student-Athletes

73.4%  **78.0%**
2020 2021

Average GSR for White Football Student-Athletes

89.7% **89.7%**
2020 2021

bowl-bound teams, the average GSR for Black student-athletes is 78.0 percent, up from 73.4 percent in 2021. The average GSR for white football student-athletes stayed the same from 2020 at 89.7 percent.

Lapchick noted, “It must be emphasized that Black and white football players graduate at a higher rate than their male non-athletic peers in the student body within D1 schools. The graduation rate for Black male students as a whole is only 42 percent, in comparison to the 67 percent graduation rate for white male students, according to the NCAA Education and Research Data as reported in the 2020-21 TIDES Bowl-Bound College Football Teams Report. That 25 percent gap for the general student population remains totally unacceptable for education in America. The problem goes back to the academic preparation some students get from elementary school through high school.”

Lapchick continued, “The University of Alabama, University of Cincinnati, University of Michigan and University of Georgia will contend in the College Football Playoff for the National Championship. Alabama, Cincinnati and Michigan had strong academic standings while Georgia lagged behind.”

The four schools graduated 86 percent, 86 percent, 96 percent, and 59 percent of all their football student-athletes, respectively. As for their Black football student-athletes, they graduated 84 percent, 84 percent, 94 percent, and 55 percent, respectively. Their white football student-athletes graduated at rates of 93 percent, 92 percent, 100 percent, and 78 percent, respectively. The substantial graduation rate gap between white and Black football student-athletes at a school competing for a national championship is disturbing.

All four schools did well with their Academic Progress Rates (APR). Alabama and Cincinnati’s APRs led the group with 990, respectively, while Michigan followed with a 980 and Georgia with a 969.

Troubling statistics in the study of the bowl-bound teams included:

- 84 schools (98 percent) had GSRs of 70 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was around 1.2 times the number of schools with equivalent GSRs for Black football student-athletes (70 schools or 80 percent).
- Louisiana State University had a GSR for Black football student-athletes that was 48 percentage points lower than their rate for white football student-athletes. In 2021 there were eight bowl bound teams that had a GSR for their Black football student-athletes at least 30 percentage points lower than that of their white football student-athletes.
- In 2021, 20.9 percent of bowl-bound schools (18 total) had GSRs for Black football student-athletes that were at least 20 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.

There were six schools that had a GSR for their Black football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes, one more than 2020. They were South Carolina State University, Brigham Young University, University of Wyoming, Boise State University, Kansas State University, and University of Maryland, College Park.

There were eight schools that had an overall GSR for football student-athletes that was better than the overall GSR for student-athletes of the school. Those schools were the University of Michigan, University of Pittsburgh, Middle Tennessee State University, South Carolina State University, University of Texas - San Antonio, University of Florida, University of Louisville, and Kansas State University.

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 2014-15, and it then calculated a four-class average for the Graduation

Success Rate (freshmen classes of 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15).

Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCAA canceled APR public release for 2021 and 2022. It is expected to resume in the Spring of 2023. In this year's study, all bowl-bound teams surpassed an APR of 930, as reported by the NCAA in 2020.


This year 13 of the 43 (30.2 percent) bowl games have APRs higher or equal to 970. This is compared to 6 of 28 (21.4 percent) bowl games in 2020 and 14 of 39 (35.9 percent) bowl games in 2019. The Cotton Bowl has the University of Alabama and the University of Cincinnati both with APRs of 990. The Sugar Bowl has Baylor University and the University of Mississippi with APRs of 974 and 997, respectively. The Rose Bowl has The Ohio State University and the University of Utah with APRs of 985 and 988, respectively. The Fiesta Bowl has Oklahoma State and the University of Notre Dame with APRs of 979 and 970, respectively. The University of Toledo and Middle Tennessee State University, playing in the Bahamas Bowl, have APRs of 983 and 985, respectively. The Armed Forces Bowl has The United States Military Academy and the University of Missouri, Columbia with APRs of 975 and 973, respectively. The University of Florida and the University of Central Florida will face off in the Gasparilla Bowl. They have APRs of 974 and 981, respectively. The First Responder Bowl has the University of Louisville and the U.S. Air Force Academy with APRs of 984 and 995 respectively. The University of Virginia and Southern Methodist University will compete in the Fenway Bowl. They have APRs of 972 and 974, respectively. The Cheez-It Bowl has Iowa State University and Clemson University with APRs of 979 and 993, respectively. Arizona State University and the University of Wisconsin – Madison will play in the Las Vegas Bowl. They have APRs of 978 and 986, respectively. The Arizona Bowl has Boise State University and Central Michigan University with APRs of 981 and 972, respectively. The Citrus Bowl has the University of Kentucky and the University of Iowa, both with APRs of 971.

Keeping Score at a Glance

42% **78%**
 VS.
Black Male Student **Black Football**
Body Graduation Rate **Student-Athlete GSR**

67% **90%**
 VS.
White Male Student **White Football**
Body Graduation Rate **Student-Athlete GSR**

Gap in Average GSRs between White and Black Football Student-Athletes

16.3%  **11.7%**
 -2020- -2021-

"This year, every school participating in a bowl game had at least a 50 percent GSR for their football teams for the fourth time in five years."

The NCAA created the APR in 2003 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 930, which is an expected graduation rate of 50 percent of its student-athletes. Up to 10 percent of scholarships can be taken away. Teams can also be subject to historical penalties for poor academic performance over time.

According to the NCAA, the APR is calculated as follows:

- Each student-athlete receiving athletically related financial aid earns one point for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible.
- A team's total points are divided by points possible and then multiplied by 1,000 to equal the team's Academic Progress Rate.
- In addition to a team's current-year APR, its rolling four-year APR is also used to determine accountability.

The new postseason eligibility structure took effect in the 2012-13 academic year, with a three-year implementation window, which moved the benchmark from 900 to 930. For access to postseason competition in 2020-2021, teams must achieve a 930 four-year average APR or a 940 average over the most recent two years to participate in championships.

Bowl-bound FBS schools in "Power Five" conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, and Southeastern Conference) averaged 34.1 more points in APR with a score of 972.2 than bowl-bound schools in "Group of Five" conferences (American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, and Sun Belt Conference) with an average score 938.1. Bowl-bound schools in the Atlantic Coast Conference had the highest APR among all FBS conferences and the Big Ten Conference had the highest GSR for Black football student-athletes with multiple schools represented.

The APR data does not include data from the 2021-22 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2018-19 school year. This is the most updated data available on the NCAA website and provided by the NCAA.

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 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 GSR, developed in 2002, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport ("TIDES" or the "Institute") serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate, and professional sport. The Institute researches and publishes a variety of studies, including annual studies of student-athlete graduation rates and racial attitudes in sport as well as the internationally recognized Racial and Gender Report Card, an assessment of hiring practices in professional and college sport. 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 social issues in sport.



BOWL GAMES										
Bowl Name	School Name	Conference	APR	Overall Football Student-Athletes (%)	Black Football Student Athletes (%)	White Football Student-Athletes (%)	Overall Student-Athletes (%)	Overall Football and Student Athlete Diff (%)	White and Black Diff (%)	
National Championship										
Cotton Bowl (CFP Semi)	University of Alabama	Southeastern Conference	990	86%	84%	93%	93%	7%	9%	
	University of Cincinnati	American Athletic Conference	990	86%	84%	92%	93%	7%	8%	
Orange Bowl (CFP Semi)	University of Michigan	Big Ten Conference	980	96%	94%	100%	95%	-1%	6%	
	University of Georgia	Southeastern Conference	969	59%	55%	78%	86%	27%	23%	
Sugar Bowl	University of Mississippi	Southeastern Conference	997	73%	70%	100%	87%	14%	30%	
	Baylor University	Big 12 Conference	974	91%	87%	100%	94%	3%	13%	
Rose Bowl	The Ohio State University	Big Ten Conference	985	81%	74%	92%	90%	9%	18%	
	University of Utah	Pac-12 Conference	988	90%	92%	100%	93%	3%	8%	
Fiesta Bowl	Oklahoma State University	Big 12 Conference	979	74%	74%	90%	85%	11%	16%	
	University of Notre Dame	Independent	970	91%	86%	92%	97%	6%	6%	
Peach Bowl	Michigan State University	Big Ten Conference	952	84%	74%	96%	92%	8%	22%	
	University of Pittsburgh	Atlantic Coast Conference	988	93%	89%	96%	91%	-2%	7%	
Bahamas Bowl	University of Toledo	Mid-American Conference	983	87%	84%	92%	92%	5%	8%	
	Middle Tennessee State University	Conference USA	985	95%	95%	100%	93%	-2%	5%	
Cure Bowl	Northern Illinois University	Mid-American Conference	962	82%	78%	95%	88%	6%	17%	
	Coastal Carolina University	Sun Belt Conference	956	81%	81%	82%	86%	5%	1%	
Boca Raton Bowl	Western Kentucky University	Conference USA	962	74%	71%	88%	87%	13%	17%	
	Appalachian State University	Sun Belt Conference	955	78%	69%	100%	87%	9%	31%	
Celebration Bowl	South Carolina State University	Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	940	80%	87%	0%	77%	-3%	-87%	
	Jackson State University	Southwestern Atlantic Conference	973	84%	85%	100%	88%	4%	15%	
New Mexico Bowl	California State University-Fresno	Mountain West Conference	954	69%	56%	84%	79%	10%	28%	
	The University of Texas at El Paso	Conference USA	941	85%	84%	100%	86%	1%	16%	
Independence Bowl	Brigham Young University	Independent	946	80%	92%	85%	83%	3%	-7%	
	University of Alabama at Birmingham	Conference USA	942	69%	70%	80%	91%	22%	10%	
LendingTree Bowl	Eastern Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	976	73%	70%	74%	86%	13%	4%	
	Liberty University	Independent	957	67%	67%	68%	88%	21%	1%	
LA Bowl	Utah State University	Mountain West Conference	964	89%	86%	89%	93%	4%	3%	
	Oregon State University	Pac-12 Conference	975	82%	80%	88%	85%	3%	8%	
New Orleans Bowl	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Sun Belt Conference	956	74%	73%	86%	80%	6%	13%	
	Marshall University	Conference USA	951	81%	76%	89%	90%	9%	13%	
Myrtle Beach Bowl	Old Dominion University	Conference USA	961	70%	72%	83%	87%	17%	11%	
	University of Tulsa	American Athletic Conference	945	69%	68%	77%	85%	16%	9%	
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl	Kent State University	Mid-American Conference	974	81%	74%	88%	89%	8%	14%	
	University of Wyoming	Mountain West Conference	969	87%	93%	84%	91%	4%	-9%	
Frisco Bowl	San Diego State University	Mountain West Conference	969	84%	80%	87%	86%	2%	7%	
	The University of Texas at San Antonio	Conference USA	961	83%	79%	88%	82%	-1%	9%	
Armed Forces Bowl	United States Military Academy	Independent	975	71%	58%	92%	91%	20%	34%	
	University of Missouri, Columbia	Southeastern Conference	973	77%	69%	94%	85%	8%	25%	
Frisco Football Classic	Miami University (OH)	Mid-American Conference	973	92%	91%	92%	96%	4%	1%	
	University of North Texas	Conference USA	961	83%	79%	94%	87%	4%	15%	
Gasparilla Bowl	University of Florida	Southeastern Conference	974	93%	89%	100%	92%	-1%	11%	
	University of Central Florida	American Athletic Conference	981	82%	81%	89%	87%	5%	8%	
Hawai'i Bowl	University of Memphis	American Athletic Conference	980	90%	87%	100%	94%	4%	13%	
	University of Hawaii, Manoa	Mountain West Conference	949	73%	76%	83%	86%	13%	7%	
Camellia Bowl	Ball State University	Mid-American Conference	969	82%	81%	89%	90%	8%	8%	
	Georgia State University	Sun Belt Conference	958	81%	78%	90%	86%	5%	12%	
Quick Lane Bowl	University of Nevada, Reno	Mountain West Conference	987	84%	79%	80%	89%	5%	1%	
	Western Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	948	74%	69%	79%	85%	11%	10%	
Military Bowl	East Carolina University	American Athletic Conference	938	72%	63%	100%	85%	13%	37%	
	Boston College	Atlantic Coast Conference	989	92%	86%	97%	95%	3%	11%	
Birmingham Bowl	Auburn University	Southeastern Conference	980	80%	77%	92%	93%	13%	15%	
	University of Houston	American Athletic Conference	961	68%	65%	92%	79%	11%	27%	
First Responder Bowl	U.S. Air Force Academy	Mountain West Conference	995	89%	80%	92%	80%	0%	12%	
	University of Louisville	Atlantic Coast Conference	984	93%	93%	100%	91%	-2%	7%	
Liberty Bowl	Texas Tech University	Big 12 Conference	949	76%	72%	82%	83%	7%	10%	
	Mississippi State University	Southeastern Conference	984	74%	75%	80%	87%	13%	5%	
Holiday Bowl	University of California, Los Angeles	Pac-12 Conference	944	71%	66%	88%	89%	18%	22%	
	North Carolina State University	Atlantic Coast Conference	962	74%	73%	88%	89%	15%	15%	
Guaranteed Rate Bowl	West Virginia University	Big 12 Conference	960	74%	66%	100%	86%	12%	34%	
	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Big Ten Conference	980	96%	93%	100%	96%	0%	7%	
Fenway Bowl	University of Virginia	Atlantic Coast Conference	972	86%	79%	100%	95%	9%	21%	
	Southern Methodist University	American Athletic Conference	974	82%	81%	87%	89%	7%	6%	
Pinstripe Bowl	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Atlantic Coast Conference	958	80%	78%	81%	90%	10%	3%	
	University of Maryland, College Park	Big Ten Conference	956	83%	82%	75%	88%	5%	-7%	
Cheez-It Bowl	Iowa State University	Big 12 Conference	979	88%	87%	96%	93%	5%	9%	
	Clemson University	Atlantic Coast Conference	993	88%	83%	100%	95%	7%	17%	
Alamo Bowl	University of Oklahoma	Big 12 Conference	965	73%	66%	92%	89%	16%	26%	
	University of Oregon	Pac-12 Conference	968	73%	60%	90%	83%	10%	30%	
Duke's Mayo Bowl	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Atlantic Coast Conference	959	66%	60%	82%	88%	22%	22%	
	University of South Carolina at Columbia	Southeastern Conference	967	89%	90%	93%	96%	7%	3%	
Music City Bowl	Purdue University	Big Ten Conference	954	82%	74%	88%	89%	7%	14%	
	University of Tennessee at Knoxville	Southeastern Conference	967	84%	79%	94%	91%	7%	15%	
Las Vegas Bowl	Arizona State University	Pac-12 Conference	978	86%	83%	100%	92%	6%	17%	
	University of Wisconsin- Madison	Big Ten Conference	986	90%	88%	91%	91%	1%	3%	
Gator Bowl	Wake Forest University	Atlantic Coast Conference	990	89%	85%	95%	96%	7%	10%	
	Texas A&M University, College Station	Southeastern Conference	965	74%	70%	92%	84%	10%	22%	
Sun Bowl	Washington State University	Pac-12 Conference	963	85%	79%	91%	90%	5%	12%	
	University of Miami	Atlantic Coast Conference	973	78%	70%	100%	91%	13%	30%	
Arizona Bowl	Boise State University	Mountain West Conference	981	88%	87%	85%	91%	3%	-2%	
	Central Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	972	81%	80%	87%	86%	5%	7%	
Outback Bowl	University of Arkansas, Fayetteville	Southeastern Conference	962	84%	75%	100%	85%	1%	25%	
	Pennsylvania State University	Big Ten Conference	982	87%	84%	90%	92%	5%	6%	
Citrus Bowl	University of Kentucky	Southeastern Conference	971	86%	84%	93%	92%	6%	9%	
	University of Iowa	Big Ten Conference	971	87%	77%	92%	89%	2%	15%	
Texas Bowl	Kansas State University	Big 12 Conference	978	93%	100%	95%	92%	-1%	-5%	
	Louisiana State University	Southeastern Conference	952	61%	52%	100%	89%	28%	48%	
Averages			968.7	81.3%	78.0%	89.7%	89.0%	7.7%	11.7%	