



UCF Study Looks at Graduation Rates for 2004-05 Bowl-bound College Teams

Large Gap Between African-American and White Student-athletes Persists

ORLANDO, FL...December 7, 2004 – Of the 56 teams playing in this year's crop of college football bowl games, 27 schools graduated less than half of their football student-athletes, according to a study released today by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida. Furthermore, *Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Graduation Rates of the 2004-05 Bowl-bound College Football Teams*, revealed that 39 of the schools graduated less than half of their African-American football student-athletes, a disparity that has persisted for years.

Richard Lapchick, who authored the study as director of the Institute, also is Eminent Scholar Chair of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program at UCF.

The poor graduation rates were more bad news for African-Americans in Division IA college football. In the past two weeks, three of the five African-American Division IA head football coaches were released, leaving only two African-American head coaches out of 117 Division IA schools.

Among the 56 schools in bowl games this year, two are led by African-American coaches (UCLA and Notre Dame) and one by a Latino coach (Wisconsin). Five schools (USC, Virginia, Georgia, Arizona State and Hawaii) have African-American athletics directors (there are only six African-American athletics directors in Division IA) and three (UCLA, Wisconsin, and New Mexico) have Latino athletics directors (these are the only three Latino athletics directors in Division IA).

The issue of graduation rates remains an area of controversy in college football. This year the NCAA reported that 54 percent of all football student-athletes graduated, up three percent from last year's rate, which was one of the best in many years. The continued improvement is promising but much work remains.

Among the bowl teams, 51 of 55 teams (93 percent) graduated at least 40 percent of their white football student-athletes, yet only 30 schools (60 percent) had graduation rates of at least 40 percent for African-American football student-athletes. *Note: Navy does not report graduation rates for student-athletes.*

Lapchick said, "Race remains a persistent academic issue, reflected in the continuing gap between graduation rates for white and African-American student-athletes. Although graduation rates for both groups improved, the significant gap between rates for white and African-American football players grew slightly wider.

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“Overall at the 117 Division 1A schools, 63 percent of white football student-athletes graduated versus only 47 percent of African-American football student-athletes. However, it should be noted that both 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 40 percent, in comparison to the 61 percent graduation rate for white male students – this gap is a scandalous 21 percent.”

Lapchick maintained, “One of the benefits of examining graduation rates is that it focuses attention on the fact that too many of our predominantly white campuses are not welcoming places for students of color, regardless of whether they are athletes.”

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

Of the bowl-bound schools, 16 (29 percent) had graduation rates of 66 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was more than triple the number of schools with equivalent graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes (five schools or nine percent). Looking at schools with graduation rates of 50 percent or higher, more than three times as many met this benchmark for white football student-athletes (46 schools or 84 percent) than for African-American football student-athletes (16 schools or 29 percent). More than six times as many schools (26 schools or 47 percent) graduated 40 percent or less of their African-American football student-athletes, while four schools graduated 40 percent or less of their white football student-athletes. Eight schools (16 percent) had graduation rates of 30 percent or less for African-American football student-athletes, while none of the 55 bowl teams graduated so few white football student-athletes.

Additional findings include the following:

Nine schools (16 percent) had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 30 percent lower than the rates for white football student-athletes. Thirty schools (55 percent) had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 20 percent lower than the rates for white football student-athletes. Forty-one schools (75 percent) had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 10 percent lower than the rates for white football student-athletes. Only six schools had graduation rates for African-American football student-athletes that exceeded the rates for white football student-athletes: Cincinnati (19 percent higher); Hawaii (12 percent higher); Fresno State and UTEP (each four 4 percent higher); Southern Mississippi (three percent higher); and Troy (one percent higher).

While there were teams that scored poorly, some schools were notable for their high football student-athlete graduation rates. Thirteen schools had graduation rates for football players that were better than for overall students, and ten schools had graduation rates for football players that were better than for overall student-athletes.

Lapchick noted, “If there were a Top Ten ranking for graduation rates among bowl teams, Notre Dame and Boston College would have played for the National Championship. Both teams graduated at least 77 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 74 percent of African-American football student-athletes. Syracuse (with a 78 percent overall football graduation rate, the highest among all bowl-bound teams), Virginia, Southern Mississippi, Purdue, Toledo, Cincinnati, Texas Tech, Virginia Tech, Southern California, Marshall and Iowa (the latter four were tied with graduation rates of 58 percent) – all with football student-athlete graduation rates of 58 percent or higher – would also have made the Top Ten.”

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NCAA statistics were used in the study. The Institute reviewed 1997-98 graduation (six-year) rates, with a four-class average (freshmen classes of 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98). *Please note: The Institute believes that the way graduation rates are currently compiled unfairly penalizes a school when a student-athlete transfers in good standing and receives a degree at another institution. We support the NCAA's current initiative to redefine how graduation rates are calculated.*

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 Sport. 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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News release and table are available at:

www.bus.ucf.edu/sport/ides/2004-05bowlteamsstudy

Attachment: Table – Graduation Rates for 2004-05 Bowl-bound Teams