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Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Success and Academic Progress Rates for the 2015 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament Teams

Graduation Rate Study of NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament Teams Reveals Improvement in Overall Graduation Rates and APR Performance but Continuing Large Disparities between the Academic Success of white and African-American Student-Athletes

Orlando, FL...March 16, 2015 – The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida (UCF) released its annual study, **“Keeping Score When It Counts: Graduation Success and Academic Progress Rates for the 2015 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament Teams.”** This study provides the most comprehensive analysis of the academic performance of student-athletes on teams participating in the 2015 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament.

The study examined the Graduation Success Rates (GSR) and Academic Progress Rates (APR) for tournament teams as reported by the NCAA. This study also compared the graduation rate data of white and African-American male basketball student-athletes.

Dr. Richard Lapchick, the primary author of the study, is the director of TIDES and Chair of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program at UCF. This study was co-authored by Evanna Howell and Maclin Simpson.

Richard Lapchick said, “There is good news to report as almost every category examined got better. The GSR numbers for white male basketball student-athletes increased from 89 percent in 2014 to 93 percent in 2015. The GSR for African-American male basketball student-athletes increased from 65 in 2014 to 69 percent in 2015.

However, the enormous gap between the graduation rates of white and African-American student-athletes in 2015 remained the same as 2014 at a terrible 24 percent.

The APR standard had been elevated to 930 and one tournament team fell below 930. Last year eight tournament teams fell below the 930 standard.

Lapchick added, “While there is positive news, the most troubling statistic in our study is the continuing large disparity between the GSR of white basketball student-athletes and African-American basketball student-athletes. The gap remained the same from 2014, a staggering 24 percent in 2015.”

Lapchick commented on two other alarming statistics. “It is simply not acceptable that in 2015, 41 percent of the men’s teams had a GSR disparity of greater than 30 percent between white student-athletes and African-American student-athletes, and 28 percent had a GSR disparity of greater than 40 percent.”

All three categories examined for GSR improved:

- 93 percent (63 teams) of the 68 tournament teams graduated 50 percent or more of their men’s basketball student-athletes in 2015, up from 87 percent (59 teams) in 2014.
- 79 percent (54 teams) of the 68 tournament teams graduated 60 percent or more of their men’s basketball student-athletes in 2015, up from 78 percent (53 teams) in 2014.
- 65 percent (44 teams) of the 68 tournament teams graduated 70 percent or more of their men’s basketball student-athletes in 2015, up from 53 percent (36 teams) in 2014.

The number of teams (two teams) with GSRs below 40 percent in 2015 remained the same as in 2014. Lapchick emphasized that, “The academic reforms have led to positive change since their passage more than a decade ago. We need to raise the bar and move toward 60 percent being the acceptable standard for the APR. This year 79 percent of the teams in the men’s tournament are already there. The NCAA started to do this by raising the APR minimum score to 930. This year 76.5 percent of the teams have a score of 950 or more. The reforms are working and will have even a greater effect if we raise the bar further”

The APR, developed in 2004, is a four-year average of academic performance that rewards student-athletes for remaining eligible as well as continuing their education at the same school. The NCAA voted to institute stricter policies with regards to APR performance and postseason athletic participation by raising the score from 925 to 930, equivalent to a 50 percent graduation rate, to qualify for postseason participation the following year. The current system provides that teams scoring below a 930 APR can lose up to 10 percent of their scholarships. Teams can also be subject to historical penalties for poor academic performance over time.

The percentage of teams with an APR greater than 950 slightly increased to 76.5 percent in 2015, from 74 percent in 2014.

In the 2015 men's tournament field, Coastal Carolina University was the only team below the 930 APR standard compared to eight teams in 2014.

Lapchick noted, "Race remains a continuing academic issue, not only in college sports, but also in higher education in general. The 24 percentage point gap between graduation rates for white and African-American male basketball student-athletes demonstrates that. However, it must be emphasized that African-American male basketball student-athletes graduate at a much higher rate than African-American males who are not student-athletes. The graduation rate for African-American male college students as a whole is only 41 percent, a full 27 percentage points lower than for African-American male basketball student-athletes."

Lapchick noted, "that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan got involved as an outspoken critic of poor graduation rates and that has helped move the academic reforms forward. The Secretary's push to improve urban high schools is also crucial. Many of our African-American student-athletes graduate from underfunded and underequipped schools. Some arrive on too many of our predominantly white campuses and do not feel fully welcomed whether or not they are athletes. We have to find new ways to narrow this gap."

"There are schools pave that path. In 2015, the following 13 men's teams had an overall GSR rate of 100 percent: Belmont University, Butler University, Davidson College, Duke University, Harvard University, Northeastern University, University of Dayton, University of Iowa, University of Kansas, University of Maryland – College Park, University of Notre Dame, University of Texas – Austin, and Villanova University.

The following schools had an APR rate 970 or above:

Belmont University, Butler University, Davidson College, Duke University, Georgetown University, Gonzaga University, Indiana University -- Bloomington, Lafayette College, Michigan State University, Northeastern University, Purdue University, Texas Southern University, The Ohio State University, University of Alabama – Birmingham, University of Arizona, University of Dayton, University of Georgia, University of Iowa, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, University of Mississippi, University of Northern Iowa, University of Notre Dame, University of Texas – Austin, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Valparaiso University, Villanova University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and West Virginia University.

Note: The percentages for this report were calculated as follows:

1. *Overall rates were based on 68 teams*
2. *Rates for African-American student-athletes were based on 66 teams due to Davidson College and University of Wisconsin – Madison had no African-American basketball student-athletes in the period recorded.*
3. *Rates for white student-athletes were based on 56 teams because Georgetown University, Georgia State University, Hampton University, Indiana University -- Bloomington, New Mexico State University, St John's University (New York), Texas Southern University, University of Alabama -- Birmingham, University of Cincinnati, University of Louisville, University of Mississippi, and Virginia Commonwealth University had no white basketball student-athletes in the period recorded.*
4. *The disparity figures for the gap in graduation rates for white and African-American student-athletes were based on 54 teams due to the fact that the 14 teams listed above either had no white basketball student-athletes or African-American basketball student-athletes in the period reported.*

NCAA statistics were used in the study. The institute reviewed the six-year graduation rates of each school's freshmen class that enrolled in 2007-08, and then it calculated a four-year class average (freshmen classes of 2004-05, 2005-06 2006-07, 2007-08). The APR data does not include data from the 2013-14 academic performances of the teams in the study, but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2012-13 school year. This is the most updated data available on the NCAA website.

The GSR was developed in 2005 in response to the demand for a more accurate measure of graduation performance of NCAA athletics programs. In order to calculate the GSR, the NCAA tracks student-athletes for six years following their entrance to an NCAA member institution to monitor the graduation rates of member institutions and their athletic programs. The GSR is used by the NCAA as a measuring device to signal performance of NCAA athletic programs while the APR is used to determine penalties for academically underperforming athletic programs.

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 coaching and sport management 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.

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The Institute 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 sport business and entertainment management industry while also emphasizing diversity, community service, and social issues in sport.

Graduation Rates for 2015 Men's Teams in the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament					
School	APR	Overall Men's Basketball Student-Athlete	African-American Basketball Student-Athlete	White Basketball Student-Athlete	Overall Student-Athlete
Baylor University	954	92	90	100	88
Belmont University	1000	100	100	100	96
Boise State University	941	69	58	100	79
Brigham Young University	956	82	100	75	73
Butler University	985	100	100	100	87
Coastal Carolina University	910	80	75	80	83
Davidson College	990	100	---	100	98
Duke University	995	100	100	100	97
Eastern Washington University	958	73	67	100	68
Georgetown University	973	70	70	---	95
Georgia State University	950	77	77	---	86
Gonzaga University	979	91	100	100	97
Hampton University	948	67	64	---	64
Harvard University	963	100	100	100	98
Indiana University, Bloomington	1000	42	50	---	84
Iowa State University	948	64	20	100	77
Lafayette College	994	90	50	100	97
Louisiana State University	955	50	38	100	81
Manhattan College	956	73	73	100	91
Michigan State University	980	73	40	100	86
New Mexico State University	961	13	20	---	73
North Carolina State University	959	80	83	67	81
North Dakota State University	956	85	67	90	82
Northeastern University	984	100	100	100	91
Oklahoma State University	948	22	13	100	70
Providence College	947	67	67	50	90
Purdue University	985	73	57	100	82
Robert Morris University	938	54	44	100	77
San Diego State University	939	63	50	100	77
Southern Methodist University	939	75	57	100	82
St. John's University (New York)	942	83	83	---	89
Stephen F. Austin University	965	53	40	100	62
Texas Southern University	970	52	44	---	48
The Ohio State University	977	53	38	80	89
University at Albany	965	80	63	100	80
University at Buffalo	947	64	33	100	77
University of Alabama at Birmingham	983	53	50	---	75
University of Arizona	984	82	67	100	75
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville	937	55	50	100	76
University of California, Irvine	958	82	80	67	85
University of California, Los Angeles	969	60	67	67	87
University of Cincinnati	958	43	42	---	79
University of Dayton	985	100	100	100	95
University of Georgia	986	71	67	100	84
University of Iowa	971	100	100	100	89
University of Kansas	1000	100	100	100	85
University of Kentucky	989	89	83	100	81
University of Louisville	1000	58	50	---	80
University of Maryland, College Park	953	100	100	100	86
University of Mississippi (Ole Miss)	974	75	75	---	79
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	938	88	83	100	86
University of North Florida	959	56	40	75	80
University of Northern Iowa	995	60	33	67	82
University of Notre Dame	995	100	100	100	99
University of Oklahoma	960	77	80	100	80
University of Oregon	945	73	71	100	82
University of Texas at Austin	1000	100	100	100	83
University of Utah	979	88	100	67	81
University of Virginia	945	82	83	100	86
University of Wisconsin, Madison	975	40	-	67	84
University of Wyoming	941	64	40	100	77
Valparaiso University	980	90	100	100	89
Villanova University	983	100	100	100	96
Virginia Commonwealth University	970	87	82	---	76
West Virginia University	974	89	80	100	83
Wichita State University	961	64	67	67	83
Wofford College	961	91	83	100	94
Xavier University	958	89	88	100	94
Average	967	75	69	93	83

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