



TIDES

THE INSTITUTE FOR DIVERSITY AND ETHICS IN SPORT

MAKING WAVES OF CHANGE

Keeping Score When It Counts:

Assessing the Academic Records of the 2019-2020 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams

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Executive Summary

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The overall academic success of college football student-athletes continued while the substantial gap between white and African-American football student-athletes narrowed slightly for the 78 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) bowl-bound schools. The results were reported in “**Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2019-2020 Bowl-bound College Football Teams**,” a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (“TIDES” or “The Institute”) 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 continued this year. The overall football student-athlete Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for bowl-bound teams is **79.1 percent**, the same score achieved in 2018.”

Lapchick added, “This year, every school participating in a bowl game had at least a 50 percent GSR for their football teams for the second time in three years. Both APR and GSR figures are showing signs of slow progress.”

Lapchick stated, “However, while the gap between white and African-American football student-athletes continues to be a major issue standing at 15.6 percent this year, it was down from 16.5 percent last year. Among the 78 bowl-bound teams, the average GSR for African-American student-athletes is 73.8 percent, up slightly from 73.4 percent in 2018. The average GSR for white football student-athletes is 89.4 percent, down from 89.9 percent in 2018. Three teams graduated less

Overall Football Student-Athlete GSR

78.8%  79.1%
2018 2019

Average GSR for African-American Football Student-Athletes

73.4%  73.8%
2018 2019

Average GSR for White Football Student-Athletes

89.9%  89.4%
2018 2019

than half of their African-American football student-athletes, which is two more than in 2018. No team graduated less than half of its white football student-athletes.”

Lapchick noted, “It must be emphasized that African-American 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 African-American male students as a whole is only 41 percent, in comparison to the 66 percent graduation rate for white male students, according to the NCAA Education and Research Data. That 25 percent gap for the general student population remains totally unacceptable for education in America. The problem goes back to the academic preparation students get before they ever get to college.”

Lapchick said, “Louisiana State University, The Ohio State University, Clemson University, and The University of Oklahoma will contend in the College Football Playoff for the National Championship. Ohio State and Clemson had stronger academic standing than Louisiana State and Oklahoma. Clemson’s and Ohio State’s APRs led the pack at 992 and 987, respectively, ranking them among the top 10 out of the 78 bowl-bound teams. Oklahoma followed with a 966 and finally Louisiana State with 951. They graduated 81 percent, 63 percent, 73 percent, and 71 percent of all their football student-athletes, respectively. As for their African-American student-athletes, they graduated 74 percent, 56 percent, 52 percent, and 59 percent, respectively. Their white football student-athletes graduated at rates of 100 percent, 83 percent, 92 percent, and 92 percent, respectively. The substantial graduation rate gaps between white and African-American football student-athletes at these schools is disturbing.”

Air Force, Clemson, Washington, and Navy would have played for the National Championship if there was a college football playoff based on GSR among bowl teams. All of these teams graduated at least 80 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 74 percent of African-American football student-athletes. Utah, Louisville, Minnesota, Boise State, Navy and Temple graduated at least 90 percent of their African-American football student-athletes.”

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

- 75 schools (96 percent) had GSRs of 70 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which

was more than 1.3 times the number of schools with equivalent GSRs for African-American football student-athletes (56 schools or 72 percent).

- All bowl-bound schools graduated 50 percent or higher of their white football student-athletes while three of the 78 bowl-bound schools graduated less than 50 percent of their African-American football student-athletes.

In addition, the size of the gap among some schools is alarming:

- Three schools had GSRs for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 40 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes, which is an increase from two in the 2018 study. These schools included Kent State, Louisiana Tech, and Oklahoma.
- 32 schools (41 percent) had GSRs for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 20 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes, which is a significant increase from 36 percent in the 2018 study.

Six schools had a GSR for their African-American football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes, up from three schools in 2018. They were Georgia Southern, Navy, Temple, Liberty, Boise State, and Eastern Michigan.

There were no schools that had an overall GSR for football student-athletes that was better than for the overall student-athletes of the school, down from one last year.

This year there will be 14 games in which both teams have APRs higher or equal to 970. The Fiesta Bowl has **Ohio State** and **Clemson** with APRs of **987** and **992**, respectively. The Cotton Bowl has **Penn State** and **Memphis** with APRs of **979** and **976**, respectively. The Famous Idaho Potato Bowl has **Ohio** and **Nevada** with APRs of **981** and **989**, respectively. The TaxSlayer Gator Bowl has **Tennessee** and **Indiana** with APRs **970** and **972**, respectively. The Birmingham Bowl has **Boston College** and **Cincinnati** with APRs **989** and **983**, respectively. The Outback Bowl has **Auburn** and **Minnesota** with APRs **982** and **978**, respectively. The Citrus Bowl has **Alabama** and **Michigan** with APRs **984** and **982**, respectively. The

Liberty Bowl has **Kansas State** and **Navy** with APRs **985** and **991**, respectively. The Alamo Bowl has **Texas** and **Utah** with APRs **972** and **989**, respectively. The Redbox Bowl has **Illinois** and **California** with APRs **982** and **979**, respectively. The Music City Bowl has **Louisville** and **Mississippi State** with APRs **984** and **976**, respectively. The Holiday Bowl has **Iowa** and **Southern California** with APRs **973** and **972**, respectively. The Quick Lane Bowl has **Pittsburgh** and **Eastern Michigan** with APRs of **984** and **970**, respectively. The Las Vegas Bowl has **Washington** and **Boise State** with APRs of **991** and **979**, respectively.

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 2012-13, and it then calculated a four-class average (freshmen classes of 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13).

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. 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. As of now, scholarship reductions are the only penalties: up to 10 percent of scholarships can be taken away. Historical penalties will be imposed on schools who continue to fall below the 930 APR.

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 2018-19, teams must achieve a 930 four-year average APR or a 940 average over the most recent two years to participate in championships.

In this year's study, all bowl-bound teams surpassed an APR of 930.

Interestingly, bowl-bound FBS schools in "Power Five" conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, and Southeastern Conference) averaged eight more points in APR with 975 points than bowl-bound schools in "Group of Five" conferences (American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, and Sun Belt

Keeping Score at a Glance

41% VS. **74%**
African-American Male Student Body Graduation Rate VS. **African-American Football Student-Athlete GSR**

66% VS. **89%**
White Male Student Body Graduation Rate VS. **White Football Student-Athlete GSR**

Gap in Average GSRs between White and African-American Football Student-Athletes

16.5% ↓ **15.6%**
-2018- **-2019-**

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

Conference) with 967 points. However, bowl-bound schools in the American Athletic Conference had both the highest APR among all FBS conferences and the highest GSR for African-American football student-athletes.

The APR data does not include data from the 2019-20 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2017-18 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) 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 use of the GSR, developed in 2005, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.

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 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 (%)	African-American Football Student Athletes	White Football Student-Athletes (%)	Overall Student-Athletes (%)	Overall Football and Student Athlete Diff	White and African-American Diff (%)
National Championship									
Peach Bowl (CFP Semi)	Louisiana State University	Southeastern Conference	951	71	59	92	89	18	33
	University of Oklahoma	Big 12 Conference	966	73	52	92	84	11	40
Fiesta Bowl (CFP Semi)	The Ohio State University	Big Ten Conference	987	63	56	83	86	23	27
	Clemson University	Atlantic Coast Conference	992	81	74	100	91	10	26
Sugar Bowl	Baylor University	Big 12 Conference	976	90	83	100	91	1	17
	University of Georgia	Southeastern Conference	963	64	60	74	84	20	14
Rose Bowl	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Big Ten Conference	979	90	88	91	90	0	3
	University of Oregon	Pac-12 Conference	968	77	72	76	86	9	4
Cotton Bowl	Pennsylvania State University	Big Ten Conference	979	86	80	92	91	5	12
	University of Memphis	American Athletic Conference	976	82	78	100	92	10	22
Orange Bowl	University of Virginia	Atlantic Coast Conference	969	86	80	100	94	8	20
	University of Florida	Southeastern Conference	975	79	70	100	88	9	30
Lending Tree Bowl	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Sun Belt Conference	952	74	70	93	76	2	23
	Miami University (OH)	Mid-American Conference	974	89	85	93	93	4	8
Armed Forces Bowl	Tulane University	American Athletic Conference	956	89	88	90	95	6	2
	The University of Southern Mississippi	Conference USA	941	72	71	80	84	12	9
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl	Ohio University	Mid-American Conference	981	86	73	96	89	3	23
	University of Nevada, Reno	Mountain West Conference	989	73	66	87	85	12	21
TaxSlayer Gator Bowl	University of Tennessee, Knoxville	Southeastern Conference	970	74	69	94	87	13	25
	Indiana University, Bloomington	Big Ten Conference	972	87	82	94	91	4	12
Birmingham Bowl	Boston College	Atlantic Coast Conference	989	90	74	97	94	4	23
	University of Cincinnati	American Athletic Conference	983	85	82	95	92	7	13
Outback Bowl	Auburn University	Southeastern Conference	982	76	76	82	89	13	6
	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Big Ten Conference	978	91	91	92	94	3	1
Citrus Bowl	University of Alabama	Southeastern Conference	984	85	78	100	91	6	22
	University of Michigan	Big Ten Conference	982	91	87	100	93	2	13
Arizona Bowl	Georgia State University	Sun Belt Conference	961	74	75	79	82	8	4
	University of Wyoming	Mountain West Conference	961	85	70	96	87	2	26
Liberty Bowl	Kansas State	Big 12 Conference	985	85	81	90	88	3	9
	U.S. Naval Academy	American Athletic Conference	991	83	91	86	93	10	-5
Sun Bowl	Florida State University	Atlantic Coast Conference	936	60	52	79	82	22	27
	Arizona State University	Pac-12 Conference	980	75	74	94	88	13	20
Belk Bowl	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Atlantic Coast Conference	953	87	83	90	91	4	7
	University of Kentucky	Southeastern Conference	969	77	71	94	91	14	23
Alamo Bowl	University of Texas at Austin	Big 12 Conference	972	76	76	85	88	12	9
	University of Utah	Pac-12 Conference	989	93	96	100	94	1	4
Redbox Bowl	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Big Ten Conference	982	87	78	100	92	5	22
	University of California, Berkeley	Pac-12 Conference	979	75	68	93	85	10	25
Music City Bowl	University of Louisville	Atlantic Coast Conference	984	91	91	93	91	0	2
	Mississippi State University	Southeastern Conference	976	78	75	100	88	10	25
First Responder Bowl	Western Kentucky University	Conference USA	965	71	66	88	85	14	22
	Western Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	961	80	76	85	85	5	9
Camping World Bowl	Iowa State University	Big 12 Conference	978	87	82	96	91	4	14
	University of Notre Dame	Independent	966	92	82	97	98	6	15
Cheez It Bowl	U.S. Air Force Academy	Mountain West Conference	997	80	74	81	85	5	7
	Washington State University	Pac-12 Conference	960	80	75	94	86	6	19
Holiday Bowl	University of Iowa	Big Ten Conference	973	85	81	85	90	5	4
	University of Southern California	Pac-12 Conference	972	82	79	87	90	8	8
Texas Bowl	Oklahoma State University	Big 12 Conference	982	54	48	81	76	22	33
	Texas A&M University, College Station	Southeastern Conference	967	73	65	90	82	9	25
Pinstripe Bowl	Wake Forest University	Atlantic Coast Conference	989	86	75	100	95	9	25
	Michigan State University	Big Ten Conference	948	90	85	100	91	1	15
Military Bowl	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	Atlantic Coast Conference	964	70	63	90	86	16	27
	Temple University	American Athletic Conference	983	88	90	85	90	2	-5
Quick Lane Bowl	University of Pittsburgh	Atlantic Coast Conference	984	78	79	85	89	11	6
	Eastern Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	970	69	69	68	84	15	-1
Independence Bowl	University of Miami (Florida)	Atlantic Coast Conference	970	81	71	100	92	11	29
	Louisiana Tech University	Conference USA	954	63	49	95	77	14	46
Hawa'i Bowl	University of Hawai'i, Manoa	Mountain West Conference	952	77	72	85	86	9	13
	Brigham Young University	Independent	946	64	60	71	80	16	11
New Orleans Bowl	Appalachian State University	Sun Belt Conference	955	75	71	79	84	9	8
	University of Alabama at Birmingham	Conference USA	-	71	68	82	85	14	14
Gasparilla Bowl	University of Central Florida	American Athletic Conference	987	84	84	87	89	5	2
	Marshall University	Conference USA	954	80	74	94	87	7	20
Las Vegas Bowl	University of Washington	Pac-12 Conference	991	90	79	93	91	1	14
	Boise State University	Mountain West Conference	979	87	91	88	90	3	-3
Boca Raton Bowl	Florida Atlantic University	Conference USA	971	70	64	89	82	12	25
	Southern Methodist University	American Athletic Conference	967	72	65	84	84	12	19
Camellia Bowl	Arkansas State University	Sun Belt Conference	964	80	75	90	83	3	15
	Florida International University	Conference USA	959	69	67	80	83	14	13
New Mexico Bowl	San Diego State University	Mountain West Conference	964	78	68	88	83	5	20
	Central Michigan University	Mid-American Conference	979	77	75	86	85	8	11
Cure Bowl	Georgia Southern University	Sun Belt Conference	948	67	70	63	83	16	-7
	Liberty University	Independent	955	67	68	64	88	21	-4
Frisco Bowl	Kent State University	Mid-American Conference	977	73	43	88	85	12	45
	Utah State University	Mountain West Conference	963	92	85	100	94	2	15
Bahamas Bowl	University of Buffalo, the State University of New York	Mid-American Conference	968	79	71	93	88	9	22
	University of North Carolina at Charlotte	Conference USA	945	80	75	-	88	8	-
Averages			971	79	74	89	88	9	16