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Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2016-2017 Bowl-bound College Football Teams

By Richard Lapchick with Saahil Marfatia, Tynelle Taylor-Chase, Tais Cotta, and Evin Morrison

Orlando, FL... December 5, 2016– The overall academic progress of college football student-athletes continued while the substantial gap between white and African-American football student-athletes remained large for the 80 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) eligible schools. The results were reported in **“Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2016-2017 Bowl-bound College Football Teams,”** a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) 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 to grow this year. The overall football student-athlete Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for bowl-bound teams is 75 percent, up from 73 percent in 2015.”

Lapchick added, “This year, 99 percent of the schools (79 of the 80) * participating in a bowl game had at least a 50 percent Graduation Success Rate for their football teams compared to last year when 100 percent of the schools with a 50 percent GSR. In addition, one school received a score lower than 930 on the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate (APR) compared to last year when 100 percent of the schools were able to reach this mark. Both APR and GSR figures remained relatively consistent compared to years past.

Lapchick stated, “However, the gap between white and African-American football student-athletes continues to be a major issue standing at 19 percent this year. Among the 80 bowl-bound teams, the average GSR for African-American student-athletes is 68 percent, up from 66 percent in 2015. The average GSR for white football student-athletes is 87 percent, up from 85 percent in 2015. In addition, 5 percent of the bowl eligible schools (4 out of 80) * graduated less than half of their

African-American football student-athletes, while 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. The graduation rate for African-American male students as a whole is only 41 percent, in comparison to the 65 percent graduation rate for white male students, according to the NCAA Education and Research Data. That 24 percent gap for the general student population remains scandalous and totally unacceptable for education in America. The problem goes back to the academic preparation students get before they ever get to college.”

Lapchick said, “Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, and the University of Washington, which will contend in the college football playoff for the National Championship, all had good academic records. Alabama’s APR stood at 979, Clemson’s APR is 983, Ohio State’s APR is 971, and University of Washington’s APR is 974. They graduated 80 percent, 84 percent, 74 percent, and 78 percent of all their football student-athletes, respectively. As for their African-American student-athletes, they graduated, 74 percent, 81 percent, 64 percent, and 71 percent, respectively. Their white football student-athletes graduated at rates of 95 percent, 94 percent, 84 percent, and 89 percent, respectively.

Stanford, South Carolina, Northwestern, UCF and Wake Forest would have played for the National Championship if there was a college football playoff based on Graduation Success Rates among bowl teams with UCF and Wake Forest achieving the same GSR. All teams graduated at least 91 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 83 percent of African-American football student-athletes. Stanford, Northwestern, and South Carolina graduated 95 percent of their African-American football student-athletes.”

There were additional troubling statistics in the study:

Among the bowl-bound teams:

- 75 schools (94 percent) * had GSRs of 66 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was more than 1.7 times the number of schools with equivalent GSRs for African-American football student-athletes (45 schools or 56 percent). *
- All bowl-bound schools graduated 50 percent or higher of their white football student-athletes while 4 of the 80* bowl-bound schools (5 percent) graduated 50 percent or less of their African-American football student-athletes.

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

- 12 schools (15 percent) * had GSRs for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 30 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes, which is a decrease from 18 percent in the 2015 study.
- 29 schools (36 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 decrease from 44 percent in the 2014 study.

Four schools had Graduation Success Rates for their African-American football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes, down from five schools in 2015. They were South Carolina (2 percentage points higher), Air Force (3 percentage points higher), Southern Mississippi (4 percentage points higher) and San Diego State (1 percentage point higher). Louisville had the same GSR for African-American and white football student-athletes.

Four bowl-bound schools had overall GSRs for football student-athletes that were better than for the overall student-athletes of the school. They were Boise State (four percentage points higher), South Carolina (four percentage points higher), University of Texas at San Antonio (eleven percentage points higher) and Stanford (one percentage point higher).

The top 15 APR schools are represented in several conferences. The Big 10 had four schools while the Atlantic Coast Conference had three schools in the top 15. The American Athletic Conference, the Mountain West Conference, and the Southeastern Conference had two schools while Conference USA had one school. In addition, there was one Independent school.

This year there will be eight bowl games in which both teams have APRs higher or equal to 970. The Outback Bowl has Florida and Iowa with APRs of 979 and 971, respectively. The Fiesta Bowl has Ohio State and Clemson with APRs of 971 and 983, respectively. The Peach Bowl has Washington and Alabama with APRs of 974 and 979, respectively. The Foster Farms Bowl has Indiana and Utah with APRs 979 and 983, respectively. The Pinstripe Bowl has Pittsburgh and Northwestern with APRs 970 and 992, respectively. The Heart of Dallas Bowl has Army and North Texas with APRs 989 and 984, respectively. The Quick Lane Bowl has Maryland and Boston College with APRs 977 and 981, respectively. The Hawai'i Bowl has Hawai'i and Middle Tennessee with APRs 971 and 974, 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 2009-10, and it then calculated a four-class average (freshmen classes of 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10).

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 2016-17, teams must achieve a 930 four-year average APR or a 940 average over the most recent two years to participate in championships.

This year, only the University of Idaho had an APR below 930. In last year's study, all bowl bound teams had surpassed an APR of 930.

The APR data does not include data from the 2015-16 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2013-14 school year. This is the most updated data available on the NCAA website.

The study was co-authored by Saahil Marfatia, Tynelle Taylor-Chase, Tais Cotta, and Evin Morrison.

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 Graduation Success Rates (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 ("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.

Academic Rates for teams in the 2016-2017 NCAA

Bowl Name	Participants	APR	Overall Football Student-Athletes (%)	African-American Football Student Athletes (%)	White Football Student-Athletes (%)	Overall Student-Athletes (%)
Sugar Bowl	Auburn	982	69	62	87	80
	Oklahoma	955	76	70	89	85
Rose Bowl	USC	959	67	53	94	83
	Penn State	960	80	71	96	89
Cotton Bowl	Western Michigan	964	69	62	78	83
	Wisconsin	992	73	62	82	86
Outback Bowl	Florida	979	80	70	100	83
	Iowa	971	74	56	85	90
Fiesta Bowl	Ohio State	971	74	64	84	87
	Clemson	983	84	81	94	91
Peach Bowl	Washington	974	78	71	89	86
	Alabama	979	80	74	95	89
TaxSlayer Bowl	Georgia Tech	987	78	75	92	87
	Kentucky	950	70	64	82	82
Citrus Bowl	LSU	941	73	61	94	88
	Louisville	982	69	68	68	83
Orange Bowl	Michigan	989	79	80	89	90
	Florida State	945	77	71	100	87
Arizona Bowl	South Alabama	947	58	51	80	73
	Air Force	987	82	82	79	87
Music City Bowl	Nebraska	981	86	79	96	88
	Tennessee	956	58	54	90	83
Sun Bowl	Stanford	983	99	95	100	98
	North Carolina	952	59	40	100	82
Liberty Bowl	Georgia	961	60	53	78	82
	TCU	935	79	72	91	87
Alamo Bowl	Oklahoma State	947	50	49	53	68
	Colorado	968	74	71	90	86
Belk Bowl	Arkansas	952	57	52	60	78
	Virginia Tech	969	89	83	100	92
Birmingham Bowl	South Florida	958	82	79	91	86
	South Carolina	972	95	95	93	91

Texas Bowl	Texas A&M	967	73	60	96	81
	Kansas State	975	76	63	96	82
Foster Farms Bowl	Indiana	979	79	73	84	88
	Utah	983	78	77	80	87
Russell Athletic Bowl	West Virginia	945	67	61	81	83
	Miami	965	86	86	93	90
Pinstripe Bowl	Pittsburgh	970	71	68	83	84
	Northwestern	992	97	96	97	97
Cactus Bowl	Boise State	982	85	83	89	81
	Baylor	969	78	75	89	87
Holiday Bowl	Minnesota	992	71	69	75	90
	Washington State	965	70	55	93	78
Military Bowl	Temple	971	86	81	100	88
	Wake Forest	968	91	83	100	92
Heart of Dallas Bowl	Army	989	84	81	91	90
	North Texas	984	71	63	82	82
Independence Bowl	NC State	969	70	67	100	74
	Vanderbilt	990	84	81	83	93
Quick Lane Bowl	Maryland	977	78	73	94	85
	Boston College	981	90	81	96	95
St. Petersburg Bowl	Miami(Ohio)	969	76	61	93	85
	Mississippi State	971	75	71	92	86
Hawai'i Bowl	Hawai'i	971	81	77	92	83
	Middle Tennessee	974	83	80	94	87
Dollar General Bowl	Ohio	964	73	58	93	86
	Troy	937	65	57	93	80
Armed Forces Bowl	Louisiana Tech	934	72	69	95	82
	Navy	982	80	72	85	90
Bahamas Bowl	Eastern Michigan	948	62	48	84	81
	Old Dominion	953	73	65	90	82
Idaho Potato Bowl	Idaho	904	53	50	63	74
	Colorado State	954	72	64	77	85
Poinsettia Bowl	BYU	953	48	44	79	76
	Wyoming	960	73	57	83	80
Boca Raton Bowl	Memphis	968	71	67	86	85
	Western Kentucky	950	81	71	100	83
Miami Beach Bowl	Central Michigan	967	67	53	84	80
	Tulsa	944	71	60	84	87
New Orleans Bowl	Southern Mississippi	955	79	80	76	84

	Louisiana-Lafayette	950	80	73	95	80
Cure Bowl	UCF	983	91	88	95	93
	Arkansas State	950	71	68	75	79
Camellia Bowl	Appalachian State	955	83	80	88	85
	Toledo	974	77	70	91	83
Las Vegas Bowl	Houston	944	58	57	58	69
	San Diego State	962	70	74	73	76
New Mexico Bowl	New Mexico	951	65	56	80	80
	Texas at San Antonio	956	86	60	100	75