



A project of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
www.knightcommission.org

FACT SHEET

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics is an independent group with a legacy of promoting reforms that support and strengthen the educational mission of college sports. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation formed the Commission in October 1989 to recommend a reform agenda in response to highly visible athletics scandals and low graduation rates for college football and men's basketball players that threatened the integrity of higher education.

The Commission is composed of current and former university presidents and chancellors, university trustees and former college athletes, as well as nationally-regarded thought leaders from organizations with ties to or involvement in higher education or college sports.

William C. Friday and Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, two icons in higher education, were the founding co-chairmen and provided leadership for the Commission's 1991 seminal report, *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*. This report provided a roadmap for reform and was quickly embraced by higher education leaders. It proposed a new "one-plus-three" model for governing intercollegiate athletics: presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification. By the late 1990s, the NCAA had enacted a majority of the Commission's recommendations to strengthen academic standards and improve athletics governance.

Subsequent reports and recommendations continue to influence and contribute to positive change. Among the Commission's recommendations that led to policy changes: requiring teams to be on track to graduate at least 50 percent of their players to be eligible for NCAA postseason championships and bowl games; including academic incentives in the NCAA's revenue distribution plan; reducing athletics time demands on college athletes; and requiring coaches to disclose outside income from shoe and apparel companies.

The Knight Commission has long had an impact on the governance of college sports – from our successful push for presidential leadership in the 1990s, to recently persuading the NCAA to add independent directors to its highest governing board, in response to a wide-ranging college basketball scandal.

The Commission's meetings provide a public platform for thoughtful discussion of the most pressing issues facing college sports. Other efforts and supported research have helped shape public and internal discussion about the principles and policies guiding college sports.

The Commission's interactive Athletic and Academic Spending Database for Division I (spendingdatabase.knightcommission.org) is a user-friendly tool designed to improve financial transparency and the long-term financial health of college sports.

All reports, news releases, studies and white papers can be accessed on www.knightcommission.org and you can follow us on Twitter at [@KnightAthletics](https://twitter.com/KnightAthletics).