

## **Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, Steering Committee**

### **INCREASING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT IN A DEREGULATED ATHLETICS CONTEXT**

**February 2013**

The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, an alliance of Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) faculty senates, appreciates the initiative taken by the NCAA to consult on issues related to the imminent decentralization and deregulation of many areas of college sports. The proposed deregulation includes a shift from a centrally administered rules-based system that enforces competitive equity to a local, values-based system; the reduction of the scope of NCAA enforcement; and replacement of the NCAA's ten-year recertification process with an annual Institutional Performance Program (IPP). The result is that schools will have to adhere to standards of fair competition that to a significant degree they themselves define and implement. For the athletics enterprise to retain integrity over time, schools will need to monitor and enforce campus adherence to the core values of the NCAA Collegiate Model.

Faculty engagement in athletics governance must play a critical role in this new deregulated world. Faculty maintain a unique commitment to academic standards that will support values adherence, and the institution of tenure, on campuses where it is granted, allows faculty to speak with independence not practically available to others. These factors are strong institutional bases for seeking an increased faculty role in a less regulated environment.

The NCAA's new decentralized structure requires increased institutional commitment to the values of the Collegiate Model through stronger checks and balances among campus groups who share responsibility for the academic mission and for the enhancement that athletics can bring to that mission. This will mean a change in the status quo on many campuses, and it will not happen without the support of administrations and governing boards, and the active participation of athletics department leaders, FARs, and faculty.

- Because these issues are not ones that the NCAA can fully legislate top-down, we strongly recommend that the NCAA seek to convene a broader summit of Presidents, Athletics Directors, FARs, and COIA representatives to discuss the design of a more sustainable system for athletics governance. We offer our ideas here as an initial contribution to such a discussion, focusing on the particular issue of more productively engaging faculty.

The model proposed in this document is based on COIA's belief that if the faculty contribution to athletics governance is to be effective, it must be present on three levels: campus, national, and conference. What follows is a model for how faculty engagement can be constructively enhanced at each level. This model is strictly conceptual: the specific operational forms will vary according to the diverse systems and traditions among the 125 campuses and eight conferences of the FBS.

#### **1. Campus level faculty engagement in athletics governance**

There are three current athletic governance components at the local institutional level in which faculty play a role:

- The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). By NCAA legislation, all FBS campuses have an institutionalized faculty presence in athletics governance in the form of the FAR. The FAR is an indispensable component of good governance, and must remain the key element of any strengthened governance structure.
- The Faculty Governance Body (FGB). Approximately ninety-five percent of FBS campuses organize the governance functions of the campus-level faculty through some form of FGB, such as a faculty senate or a university senate with predominant faculty membership. The form of the FGB varies greatly across campuses; however, its near-universality makes it an available and essential tool to incorporate the faculty perspective on athletics governance under a less regulated regime.
- The Campus Athletic Board (CAB). Most campuses also have a CAB with a degree of faculty presence. Like the FGB, the CAB is different on every campus; however, where it performs a serious oversight role, it can be important part of effective local athletic governance.

The FAR, FGB, and CAB function with varied degrees of effectiveness on FBS campuses.\* On individual campuses there may be a need to improve the capacity and performance of some of these components, but any approach to developing a strong system of balanced athletics governance at the campus level should begin with these existing tools.

#### **New Local Components:**

#### **The Academic Integrity Group (AIG) & Senate Athletic Representative (SAR)**

Deregulation creates the need for individual campuses to set and monitor athletic policies in new areas, including those bearing on academic integrity, which is the responsibility of campus faculties at most or all institutions. For campus faculty to perform this function constructively and consistent with the faculty's historic independence and commitment to academic integrity, a fourth component is needed: a new committee or subcommittee that we will call here the Academic Integrity Group (AIG), chaired by a tenured faculty member whom we will here call the Senate Athletics Representative (SAR).

The charge of the AIG would be to set new policy concerning athletics matters that bear on academic integrity, to monitor the campus implementation of all such policies, to report on a regular basis to the FGB, and to provide the NCAA with an annual report confirming the due diligence of the AIG and its ability to perform its assigned role. Although the specific form of the AIG would be determined by each campus, each AIG should share these features:

- Voting members shall be tenured faculty without administrative appointments
- Voting members shall be appointed by the FGB for multi-year terms
- Voting members shall not receive any form of athletics perquisite

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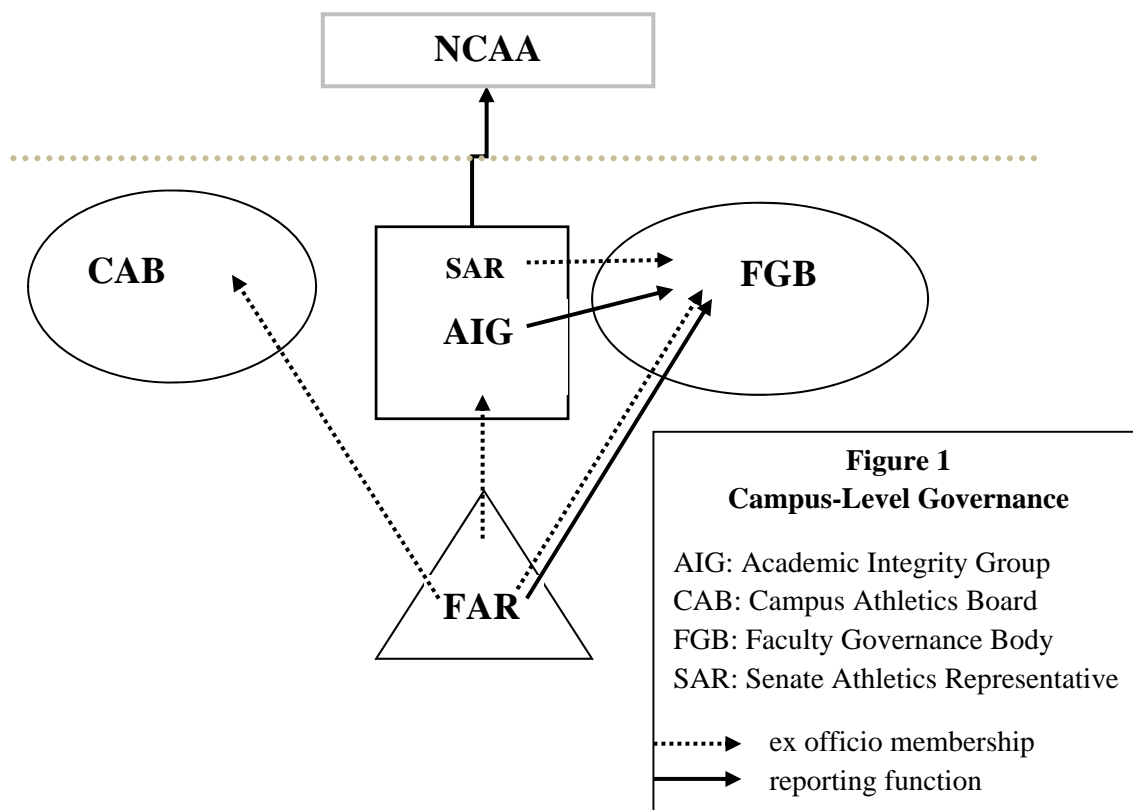
\* COIA has developed detailed best practice guides concerning the structure and operation of all three ([“Campus Athletics Governance: The Faculty Role”](#) [2004]). These best practice standards can help form the basis for a “tool kit” to strengthening capacity in these critical components, where necessary.

- The SAR shall be appointed by the FGB for a term exceeding that of other AIG members
- The FAR shall serve as a non-voting ex officio member

We also recommend that the SAR and FAR serve as non-voting ex officio members of the FGB. For both practical and principled reasons, the goals of this model cannot be accomplished by fusing the roles of SAR and FAR in a single individual. The functions of the two roles are distinct in terms of developing and implementing policy; moreover, the SAR's role in enabling the independent perspective of the faculty to serve as an institutional balance under a deregulated system requires a principal reporting line to the FGB, while the FAR is and should continue to be a Presidential appointee.

We envision the AIG as a faculty governance committee whose focus and competence will encourage university administrations to provide full transparency with regard to information necessary to the proper function of the AIG, including data that will allow it to effectively monitor for potential cases of academic fraud on campus. In this regard, it will be critical that the AIG, along with the FAR, participate in preparing materials for the NCAA IPP, and that the IPP report from the NCAA be shared with the AIG and the FGB to enable the AIG to be successful. We also envision the SAR as a key component of a strengthened faculty role beyond the campus, as will be discussed in the following sections.

The following diagram is a schematic outline of the relations among these four campus elements, as envisioned in this document (the AIG, pictured separately here, could on many campuses be an all-faculty subcommittee of the CAB):



This structural scheme depends on regular communication between all local components, including the FAR, FGB, CAB and AIG. We wish to emphasize that the Athletic Director and University President must also be regular contributors to these interactions.

## **2. National level faculty engagement in athletics governance**

Strengthening the FBS FAR Organization. For COIA, the national level means the FBS, as organized through the NCAA. The keys to effective faculty engagement at this level include the continued strengthening of the FBS FAR Association, which is an established and effective forum for information sharing and a faculty voice at the national level.

Senate Athletic Representative (SAR) Reports and Orientation. From the national perspective, one major change we propose in campus-based governance is the addition of an FGB-appointed Senate Athletics Representative, and in this respect we have two proposals. One is that the annual certifications and reports sent by SARs to the NCAA on faculty due diligence and the state of governance from the faculty perspective, be reviewed by an NCAA committee of FARs, appointed by the FBS FAR Association to address such academic integrity issues.

We also propose that the NCAA provide orientation seminars for new SARs, similar to its current orientation for newly appointed FARs. Our goal here goes beyond education: in the same way that college presidents, athletics directors, and FARs escape the insularity of single-campus perspectives through regional and national meetings, SARs, as the chief representatives of campus faculty governance in athletics oversight, need opportunities to share experiences and build social networks essential to escaping campus particularism. This orientation will help faculties develop the capacity to contribute to their campuses from a broader perspective.

We understand that the decentralization and deregulation on the national level is an experiment, the success of which is to be reviewed after a period of two years. We urge the NCAA to include faculty governance representatives meaningfully in the assessment of deregulation and in the design of any further deregulatory steps.

## **3. Conference level faculty engagement in athletics governance**

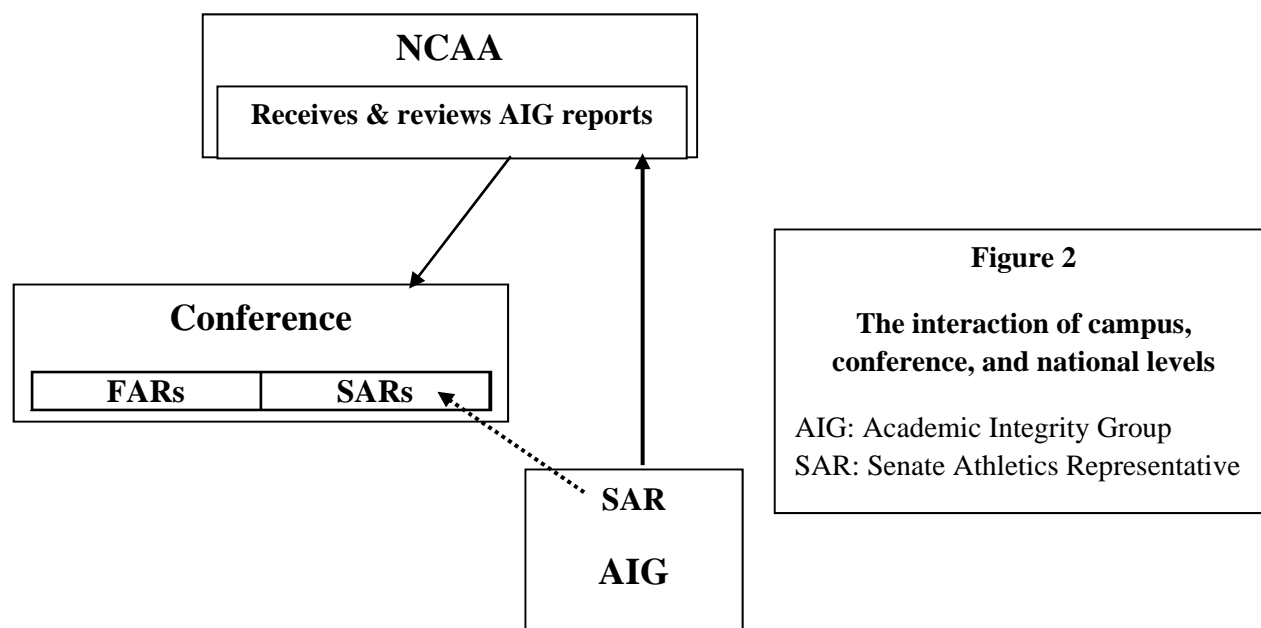
Conferences perform certain types of regulatory functions as a product of specific agreements among their member schools. These functions are likely now to become far more critical. With the NCAA shift to a fair competition standard, the conference will become the sole level with a critical stake in level-playing-field criteria and the power to sanction deviations from accepted conference norms if campus-level governance fails to enforce them.

Information Sharing at the Conference Level. We recommend, therefore, that the NCAA, which receives annual reports from AIGs on conference school policies and implementation, provide these reports to the conferences. As conference FARs typically meet on a regular basis and have input into conference-regulated aspects of athletics, so should SARs meet to review the work of their policy making committees on matters concerning academic integrity. SAR groups will be charged with reviewing policy initiatives by campus AIGs, both in response to initial NCAA deregulation and then ongoing, and with developing and maintaining best practice guidelines that

express conference norms from the standpoints of both fairness in competition and competitive equity.

Conference SARs, meeting periodically as a multi-campus faculty group, will benefit in escaping the parochial perspective of a single campus in ways described earlier regarding national gatherings. They will be able to convey these more broadly based views to their campus FGBs, just as FARs currently inform CABs on many campuses.

The following diagram represents the concept we propose at the conference level:



COIA recognizes current and long-term issues of stability at the conference level, and the strength of the economic forces that have led to accelerating realignment. It is likely that these forces will continue to destabilize conferences. However, the growing role of conferences, which are not themselves based on an academic mission, is itself an argument for strengthening conference-based cohorts of academically committed faculty concerned with issues of academic integrity.

### **Summary**

The proposals developed here are designed to increase faculty engagement in intercollegiate athletics at the campus, conference, and national levels. Only a set of checks and balances that actively engages the commitment and independence of faculty can adequately respond to the new deregulatory environment. The models we propose make use of existing structures with only a small number of new features. The changes are modest, but depend on a change in attitudes on many campuses on the part of administrators and faculty alike. COIA representatives look forward to discussing these and other approaches with FAR colleagues, members of the NCAA administration, and with the presidents and athletics directors at our institutions.