



Patrick Summers

NEWMAC

Executive Director
DIIIICA President

With the 2022-23 academic year fully under way, the Division III Commissioners Association continues its focus on the future of Division III. The impact of COVID and the revised Constitution continues to impact our student-athletes, programs and communities. A greater focus on student-athlete well-being, work/life balance and process directly correlates to the changes we have endured the last two years.

But, every January at the NCAA Convention, the membership both Association-wide and divisionally have opportunities to affect change based on experiences and different perspectives. This year in San Antonio, Division

III is focusing on several legislative proposals that have the potential to address areas within our structure that the membership believes requires attention and for the first time in a long time, we will have competing proposals from the membership and the governance structure.

The proposals range from committee composition changes to greater flexibility in our playing and practice regulations. The latter we heard extensively from the membership that status quo needs change, simplification and modernization. We have legislation that will propose the addition of an emerging sport as well as considerations for acclimatization guardrails. The Division III National SAAC is seeking a greater voice at Convention and there is talk about loosening up some social media restrictions when interacting with PSAs.

Regardless of where you stand on the proposed legislation, we need to hear from the membership during our Divisional Issues Forum and on the floor during our Division III Business Session. Engagement is integral and there is no better time or greater need for conversations

and collaboration than now. As I look to attend my 26th Convention, I hope and encourage the membership to participate in every possible opportunity to educate and prepare for our vote on January 14.

As my term concludes at this year's Convention, it has been a privilege to serve as the President of the Division III Commissioners Association the past two years. We have tackled a pandemic, have taken small yet significant steps toward addressing the officiating crisis, voiced concerns and perspectives around the NCAA Constitution and have fully engaged the membership and the NCAA Division III Governance Committees on the future of Division III. Evolution and change are necessary, and I am eager to see where we go and what we prioritize next.



Chris Robinson

UAPB

Director of Athletics

We begin each day with the end in mind while enjoying the journey.

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) has continued to serve as the flagship of the Arkansas Delta region for more than 145 years. Its mission is to promote and sustain excellent academic programs that integrate quality instruction, research, and student learning experiences responsive to the needs of a racially, culturally and economically diverse student population.

UAPB is currently considered an NCAA limited-resource institution. As director of athletics at UAPB, our goal is to provide the best

services available within our resources. We strive to ensure our student-athletes are provided the tools necessary to successfully navigate the pressures of being a collegiate student-athlete while preparing to be productive after graduation. With this in mind, it is vital that we make efficient and effective decisions. The university continues to implement new technological tools to facilitate academic and professional success for our student-athletes.

The athletics department invested in a state-of-the-art Academic Center for Student-Athletes which includes offices for academic staff, a meeting room with a smart board, private study cubicles, 27 desktop computers and Apple laptops for student-athletes during travel. Over the last few years, we have seen a significant increase in individual and team GPAs, as well as increases in our graduation success rates. We have set a goal to have a minimum Academic Progress Rate of 950 across all sports, although limited-resource institutions must meet a minimum of 930.

A large part of this success is due to Student-Athlete Academic Services staff members and the usage of GradesFirst. We

utilize GradesFirst as a one-stop shop to log and monitor study hall attendance, send and receive progress reports, communicate with professors about at-risk student-athletes, send travel excuses and student-athlete attendance to our coaching staff. This has also provided us with a user-friendly source that students, faculty and staff can utilize. We also use GradesFirst to facilitate our Academic Tutoring Program.

Obtaining championships is a driving force in FCS Division I athletics. Winning a championship is unpredictable, ensuring every UAPB student-athlete will be a champion in life is our main goal.