Middle Atlantic Conferences Philosophy and Principles

The Middle Atlantic Conferences is a voluntary association of independent colleges and universities whose purpose is to support athletic competition under the principles of NCAA Division III. The presidents of the member institutions actively govern the Conferences to advance its well-being and to ensure fulfillment of and accountability to the values and principles set forth in this document. The presidents also work to foster productive educational collaboration among the members in areas other than athletics.

Member institutions are diverse in character, program and constituencies, but all share important features. As relatively small, residential, geographically close institutions that appreciate and abide by a common philosophy and principles, they place high value and strong emphasis on excellence in undergraduate baccalaureate education, with particular expectations that students will be actively involved in campus life. All of them center their baccalaureate programs on strong liberal arts offerings and are committed to educating the whole person. Their programs of study are rigorous and lead to productive educational outcomes. All sponsor at least 16 intercollegiate sports.

Consistent with the Division III philosophy, the member institutions are committed to the primacy of educational mission and values, viewing athletic participation as one complement to their educational programs. Among student-athletes, the “student” component is primary, and athletic participation is seen as a means for further educational development of students’ intellectual, moral, civic and physical capacities. Member schools demonstrate the integration of athletics with the academic enterprise of their institutions, and coaches are considered active participants in the educational process.

In the same manner that institutions assess educational outcomes in academic programs, MAC institutions assess the educational outcomes of athletics for student-athletes, and the athletic directors provide regular reports on those outcomes. Faculty Athletic Representatives in member schools are active participants in the formulation and monitoring of the educational integrity and value of athletics, making regular reports to their faculties and president and participating in the work of the Conferences. The Conferences also actively involve students in the ongoing assessment of institutional and Conference programs. Further, the Conferences are committed to the primacy of educational values in expenditures as well as in programs, so that instructional expenditures per FTE student and athletic expenditures per FTE athlete clearly demonstrate that philosophy.

To ensure the most complete educational experience for athletes, MAC institutions are committed to nurturing and advancing ethnic and racial diversity, as well as full gender equity, both in their overall institutional development and in the conduct of their athletic programs. MAC schools adopt high standards of sportsmanship and conduct for coaches, athletes, and fans. The presidents actively ensure that those standards are upheld in all athletic competition.

Consistent with educational primacy and success, the MAC will seek to model the best practices in Division III. Eligibility for athletic competition is monitored by the Conferences annually for each institution by sport and gender. The retention, academic achievement, and graduation rates of student-athletes should be comparable to those of non-athletes. In addition, financial aid is not awarded for athletic achievement or promise; student-athlete awards are comparable to those awarded to non-athletes, consistent with NCAA standards. The data in these areas are shared with the presidents and athletic directors of all conference institutions.

The member presidents establish measures and reporting mechanisms to gather data on the commitments in this document. The presidents also establish appropriate thresholds and ranges for success in these areas, along with mechanisms to support member institutions in meeting the expectations of the conferences. In cases of substantial and sustained failure to meet such expectations, a member institution may be dismissed from the Conferences, following a grace period, as provided in the by-laws.

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