

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY NCAA CERTIFICATION WRITTEN PLAN

Objectives Related to Self-Study

Goals

American University is a Division I member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and as such it is participating in the required certification process. As an institution that historically has placed a high value on integrity, principles, and fairness, American University's objectives for its athletics program reflect those ideals. Our program goals of both athletic achievement and academic excellence were driving forces behind AU's decision last year to join the Patriot League, which is the Division I conference we considered the best match for our institution's profile for academics and athletics. Furthermore, we appreciate and value the important role of a successful athletic program in the life of a university and as a source of pride among students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Through our second self-study (the first one was approved by the NCAA in 1996), we aspire to ensure that we achieve:

- Awareness -- The affairs of our athletic program are open to the university community and the public, which we will demonstrate by involving a cross section of the campus as committee members in data gathering, writing, and reviewing the report section, and by inviting a team of peer reviewers from other institutions and conferences to assess and evaluate our program;
- Compliance – We comply with standards for operating our Division I program by evaluating the prescribed four basic areas – governance and commitment to rules compliance; academic integrity; fiscal integrity; and equity, welfare, and sportsmanship;
- Improvement – That we assess our current operations with an eye to refinements and improvements where necessary;
- Affirmation – That American University's operates its athletics program with integrity, and the University is willing to publicly demonstrate that through the selfstudy.

First Cycle Institutional Plans for Improvement

During its April 17-18, 1996 meeting, the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification reviewed written materials related to the self-study of athletics completed by American University and the campus evaluation visit conducted by the peer review team members on December 4-7, 1995. Based on the information submitted, the committee determined that the institution should be certified, and notified the university in a document dated May 6, 1996. The “strategies for improvement” section included four “required actions” that the university should take:

1. Develop and implement a systematic approach to educating its athletics boosters regarding NCAA rules.
2. Develop a formalized budget process for athletics, with input from all units in the athletics department that are affected by its outcome.
3. Establish official operating procedures for the handling of funds raised through boosters.
4. Establish formal procedures for expenditure review that link the compliance coordinator and the athletics business manager.

The May 6, 1996 Summary of Actions went on to say: “The committee also considered materials submitted by the institution following the peer review team’s visit regarding the institution’s plan for addressing minority opportunities in its intercollegiate athletics program and concluded that concerns in this area have been addressed appropriately.” The committee asked that the university submit to the committee the institution’s revised plan for addressing minority opportunities in the intercollegiate athletics program . . . “as soon as practicable but no later than March 30, 1997.” On March 28, 1997, President Ladner responded to that request to demonstrate AU’s ongoing commitment.

American University President Benjamin Ladner was notified in a May 9, 1997 letter from R. Gerald Turner, Chair of the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification, that the March 28 document “satisfies the remaining requirements.”

In launching American University's second self-study, the appendix to this report includes from the first self-study, AU's own recommendations for changes in each of the four areas (*Secondary Recommendations from the First Self-Study*).

Major Components of Self-Study

Steering Committee Chair

American University President Benjamin Ladner has appointed his Chief of Staff, David Taylor, to chair the steering committee and lead the process. Mr. Taylor consults daily with the President; participates in the President's weekly meetings with his senior leadership that includes the University Provost and five Vice Presidents; and he works closely with both AU's senior management officials and off campus groups as the President's liaison. Mr. Taylor was co-chair of the first certification self-study.

Appointment of Steering Committee and Subcommittee

The steering committee and subcommittee membership is attached. The membership reflects a cross-campus composition, and includes faculty, staff, students, student athletes, alumni, and trustees, and represents the major university divisions – Enrollment Services, Student Services, Finance, Development, Alumni Affairs, Academic Affairs, Athletics, Human Resources, and the individual schools responsible for undergraduate education (arts & sciences, business, communication, international service, and public affairs). The cross campus composition of the committees will ensure that individuals knowledgeable of pertinent university data are part of the process, ask the right questions, and have access to information. While athletics is represented on each of the five committees, the majority of committee members come from outside of athletics to ensure a fresh perspective.

The steering committee membership includes President Ladner; Faculty Athletics Representative Robert Karch; Director of Athletics Tom George; and Senior Woman Administrator Athena Argyropoulous. Subcommittee chairs are members of the steering committee but are not athletics department members. The sub-committee chairs are: Academic Integrity – Kay Mussell,

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance – Bernard Ross, Professor of Public Administration, School of Public Affairs; Equity, Welfare, and Sportsmanship – Grace Karmioli, Director of Human Resources Policies and Regulatory Affairs; Fiscal Integrity – Douglas Kudravetz, Assistant Vice President of Finance.

The steering committee and four sub-committees are empowered by the University President to obtain and analyze the data required for the self-study, and are encouraged to be forthright in analyzing all information that could lead to improvements or positive change.

Responsibilities of Steering Committee & Subcommittees

The steering committee will be responsible for:

- (a) Collecting and organizing pertinent data. This has been facilitated by the appointment of individuals appropriate to each topic to serve on the various subcommittees.
- (b) Coordinating activities of the subcommittees, monitoring the self-study's progress, and facilitating involvement of appropriate campus constituent groups.
- (c) Reviewing reports of the institution, peer-review team, and Committee on Athletics Certification in relation to the institution's previous self-study. This will help in monitoring the university's progress and will serve as a logical departure point for American University's second self-study.
- (d) Reviewing reports of the steering committee and various subcommittees while keeping the process flowing in a timely and thorough manner.
- (e) Maintaining a written record of:
 - dates on which subcommittee and steering committee meetings were conducted and the individuals in attendance;
 - individuals responsible for writing each section of the report;
 - invitations extended to subcommittee and steering committee members to comment on draft reports and the dates of these invitations.

This will document that AU's self-study will be both comprehensive and public.

- (f) Producing and distributing the final self-study report as an indication of the openness of the athletics operations.

Institution Liaison

Mark Huey, Assistant to the President, will serve as the campus liaison with the NCAA during this self-study. He is a member of the steering committee, and he works daily and closely with President Ladner and steering committee chair David Taylor. Among his duties, as the liaison Mr. Huey will keep the self-study on track and ensure deadlines are met; convey information about the self-study to university personnel; field questions and respond to the campus public; link with the NCAA for interpretation or elaboration as required; make preparations for the evaluation visit; assist the chair in collecting and organizing basic data; assist campus news media in their communications to the university and larger public; provide evaluative comments from the community to the committees regarding their work; organize follow up reports and data collection as needed.

Conference Assistance

The Patriot League has been informed of American University's self-study and the general timeline, and league Executive Director Carolyn Femovich has appointed Associate Executive Director Grace Calhoun as a liaison to assist AU during the launch of the self-study. The league has promised whatever assistance and guidance necessary and appropriate for this important effort. Beyond the conference assistance, American University does not intend to use outside consultants for conducting the self-study.

Outline and Schedule

American University's second self-study was originally scheduled for academic year 2000-2001. However, because of significant transitions in AU athletics around that time (which included moving to the Patriot League from the Colonial Athletics Association, and hiring a new Director of Athletics), American University asked for and received a delay until this year. During fall

2001, a number of events occurred that laid the groundwork for launching AU's self-study. In October, President Ladner appointed David Taylor as Steering Committee chair and Mark Huey as institutional liaison for the self-study; Tom George was appointed as the new Director of Athletics and formally began in November 2001. Robert Karch, Professor of Health and Fitness in the College of Arts and Sciences, was appointed Faculty Athletics Representative in December 2001.

Members of the steering committee and four subcommittees were appointed in November, with the first meetings scheduled prior to the formal orientation visit in December. At the first meeting, we will:

- distribute handbooks and self-study instruments;
- discuss the self-study objectives;
- review the expectations, responsibilities, and projected timeline;
- become familiar with the results and recommendations from the 1996 self-study;
- establish meeting times, dates, and locations for future meetings.

The formal timeline will begin with the December 13, 2001 orientation visit by our NCAA membership services representative. We will meet a November 2002 deadline for submitting the final report to the NCAA for distribution to the peer review team, and conclude with the campus visit by a peer review team in February 2003.

Starting in January 2002, the steering committee and each sub-committee will meet at least monthly, or more frequently as required, to ensure that data is collected, information reviewed, draft reports compiled, comment obtained, and the final report written. The sub-committee chairs will deliver drafts to the steering committee as they are developed. We will pursue the ideal that a final report draft will be available for campus review and response in early October 2002, which should allow sufficient time for final edits and changes to be made for the final report to be submitted to the NCAA in November 2002. Periodic updates will be sent to the campus news media throughout the process to ensure the broad campus community is informed throughout the self-study. The Board of Trustees will be kept informed throughout the cycle.

Exact meeting dates and times are now being scheduled; in early December, steering and sub-committee members were asked to provide their schedules for spring semester so that meeting times can be arranged with minimal conflict and to ensure the greatest participation possible. Specific points along the way will include:

- Review the last self-study -- including the NCAA required actions as well as American University's own secondary recommendations, and evaluating progress made and the status of each (January/February/March);
- Gather data – requested in the survey instrument (January/February/March);
- Answer questions – listed in the survey instrument (January/February/March);
- Evaluate responses -- in the context of the operating principles (April/May);
- Develop plans for improvement – including responsible units, officials, and timelines (May/June);
- Subcommittee final drafts -- sent to Steering Committee (July/August);
- Steering committee edits made – draft report forwarded to President and President's cabinet for review (August/September);
- President and cabinet review complete – draft report available for campus review and comment (September/October);
- Final edits and changes to document – following campus review and President and cabinet response (November);
- Final report -- sent to NCAA (November).

Self Study Report

The chief report writer will be Assistant to the President Mark Huey, who also serves on the steering committee and is the institutional liaison. Mr. Huey will have the full support and authority of the President's office in gathering data, working with the subcommittees, assembling the selfstudy's

components and writing the final document. A principal adjunct in this effort is Shawn Schwartz, Projects Coordinator in the President's office.

Mr. Huey will ensure that the report follows the recommended guidelines for standardization, and will make the report content clear, straightforward, and easy to read and understand. Institutional responses will be thorough but concise; responses to the self-study items will be in the same order as listed in the self-study instrument; the number and text of each item of the self-study will serve as an introduction to each response; responses to each specific self-study item will be formatted so they are read individually, rather than as part of a general narrative; and documentation will be provided as necessary. Our goal is to submit a report with reasonable conclusions based on available and reliable data and records; and that existing concerns will be identified and improvement plans established to address those issues.

The report format will be organized in the same manner and follow the same order as the self-study instrument – introduction, responses to self-study items, evaluations, and plans for improvement. The report will be presented in four sections, consistent with the certification program's four basic, top areas. Information in each section will be divided into the following parts:

- (a) AU's responses to self-study items and requests for information to be made available;
- (b) AU's conclusions regarding conformity with each element of the operating principle and with the operating principle as a whole. Plans for improvement related to operating principles will include:
 - strategies for improving the athletics program;
 - remedial or corrective actions for areas of concern.

Following the creation of the five committees and prior to the orientation visit from the NCAA, the AU campus and Washington community will be notified of the launch of American University's selfstudy. The university's Media Relations office will coordinate with the Sports Information office to inform the primary campus news outlets and will notify the off-campus news media for dissemination to the general public. In addition to articles in the campus news media (*American Weekly*, *The Eagle*, [Today@AU](#)),

announcing the start of the self-study and ongoing updates, the draft report available in fall 2002 will be available for campus review. In addition to hard copies available for review and in the library, a copy can be posted on an appropriate University web-page and an e-mailbox can be created to facilitate comment and reaction.