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## **2022-23 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA Division I Basketball**

***Men's Division I Basketball average AGG is -23.4***

***Women's Division I Basketball average AGG is -15.6***

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**Columbia, SC – March 1, 2023...** The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its thirteenth-annual National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I men's and women's basketball Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. For the thirteenth consecutive year, basketball player graduation rates continue to be significantly below adjusted full-time student body graduation rates. The overall AGG for DI men's basketball players is -23.4, indicating that the average AGG among DI conferences is 23.4 percentage points below the adjusted men's full-time student body rate.

Similarly, the overall AGG for DI women's basketball players is -15.6, or 15.6 percentage points below the DI women's full-time student rate. Among the 31 DI basketball conferences, all men's AGGs are negative, and only one DI women's basketball conference has a positive AGG (Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference [MEAC] +4.8). Additionally, Major Conferences continue to perform significantly worse than Mid-Major Conferences (See Tables 1 & 2).

While the AGG of DI Black men's basketball players had a modest year-to-year improvement of 0.9 and 0.8 percentage points among Major and Mid-Major Conferences, respectively, AGG trends continue to be especially troubling for Black DI men's basketball players (See Charts 5 & 6.). Of note, the gap between Black (-36.0) and White (-28.7) men's basketball players in Major Conferences has decreased 4.5 percentage points in the past year. This year's gap between Black and White DI men's basketball players is now only 7.3 percentage points, the smallest ever AGG gap. In addition, this year's AGG of Major Conference White men's basketball players increased 3.6 percentage points from last year to -28.7, this group's largest gap ever.

The gap between Black (-19.7) and White (-15.7) men's basketball players in Mid-Major Conferences increased for the first time in nine years. Unlike Major Conferences, the AGG of White men's basketball players in Mid-Major Conferences decreased by 4.4 percentage points from the previous year. Overall, men's basketball Mid-Major AGGs exhibited moderate improvement of 1.3 percentage points from the previous year.

Women's basketball Mid-Major AGG decreased by 1.4 percentage points while the AGG among Major Conferences decreased by only 0.1 points. The AGG of White Mid-Major women's basketball players decreased by 4.3 percentage points and is the smallest gap (-9.6) in the past five years. Black Mid-Major women's basketball players' AGG (-15.1) increased for the third consecutive year, nearly doubling since 2020. The AGG of Black women's basketball players in Major Conferences remained constant (-22.9), while the AGG of White players in Major Conferences improved by 1.0 percentage points (-20.3).

At one end of the AGG spectrum, among all DI conferences, the MEAC (a Historically Black College and University [HBCU] conference) continues to graduate both men's (-5.1) and women's (+4.8) basketball players at rates near those of full-time students attending MEAC

schools. Among Major Conferences, the Atlantic 10 Conference has the smallest men's basketball AGG (-24.0), while the Big East Conference women's basketball AGG (-14.8) is the smallest. Conversely, among DI basketball conferences, the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) has the largest overall men's (-42.1) and women's (-33.6) AGGs. Notably, the AGG of ACC women's basketball players increased for the fifth consecutive year.

It is worth noting the possible impact of both the global pandemic and transfer portal on graduation rates. The current 4-class cohort includes the post-pandemic 2020-2021 graduating class that may have been significantly impacted by pandemic disruptions within higher education and collegiate athletics. Additionally, the one-time transfer rule (enacted in 2021) and the transfer portal (created in 2018) has contributed to an influx of athletes being able to transfer since Fall 2018. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) retains transfers as part of a school's cohort and FGR is a variable in calculating AGG.

While the gap between DI men's and women's basketball players graduation rates and those of full-time male and female students has been consistently large in the thirteen-year history of the AGG, more research is needed to determine the effects of the transfer portal and pandemic disruptions on DI men's and women's basketball AGGs.

## **Study Highlights**

(See tables and charts in appendix for additional information.)

### **DI Women's Basketball AGG Summary**

- ❖ The overall DI women's basketball AGG remains sizable at -15.6 percentage points.
- ❖ DI women's basketball AGG is 7.8 points better than DI men's basketball AGG (-15.6 and -23.4, respectfully).
- ❖ The DI women's basketball Major Conferences AGG of -22.3 percentage points is 9.8 points worse than the Mid-Major AGG of -12.5 points.
- ❖ The 4.6-point gap between Black and White DI women's basketball players is nearly equivalent to the gap between Black and White DI men's basketball players (5.1).
- ❖ In consecutive years among DI women's basketball Major Conferences, the best performers (i.e., conferences with the smallest negative AGGs) are the Big East (-14.8) and Pacific-12 (-16.5).

- ❖ Among all of DI basketball, women's basketball players in the MEAC (+4.8) have the only positive conference AGG.

### **DI Women's Basketball AGG Trends**

- ❖ The DI women's basketball AGGs exhibited moderate improvement (+1.4) from the previous year but the gaps between athletes and the full-time student body are still large.

### **DI Men's Basketball AGG Summary**

- ❖ The overall DI men's basketball AGG remains large at -23.4 percentage points (i.e., the men's basketball graduation rate is 23.4 points below the adjusted general male student body rate).
- ❖ The DI men's basketball Major Conferences AGG of -33.1 percentage points is much larger than the Mid-Major Conferences AGG of -18.7 points.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ The DI men's basketball Major Conference Black AGG of -36.0 percentage points is 7.3 points worse than the White AGG of -28.7. The Mid-Major Black-White gap is 4.0 points.
- ❖ Among DI men's basketball Major Conferences, the best performers are the Atlantic 10 (-24.0) and the Big 12 (-29.5).
- ❖ Among all DI men's basketball conferences, the best performers are the MEAC (-5.1) and the Patriot League (-11.0).
- ❖ For the tenth consecutive year, none of the 31 DI men's basketball conferences have a positive AGG.
- ❖ Among all DI men's basketball conferences, the worst performers are the American Athletic Conference (AAC) (-42.1) and ACC (-38.0).
- ❖ For the Power-5 Conferences, the average men's basketball AGG of -33.1 is much greater than the football AGG of -19.2, a difference of 13.9 percentage points.<sup>2</sup>

### **DI Men's Basketball AGG Trends**

- ❖ DI men's basketball AGGs continue to show a gradual but statistically significant negative trend over the thirteen-years of the AGG Report (i.e., the gaps between DI men's basketball and the full-time student body graduation rates remain large).

## **CSRI Position on Graduation Rates**

In 1990, Congress mandated full disclosure of graduation rates at schools that award athletically related aid and receive federal financial aid. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR)

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<sup>1</sup> Major and Mid-Major designations follow those on [collegeinsider.com](https://collegeinsider.com).

<sup>2</sup> See the 2022-2023 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: [NCAA FBS Football](#).

reflects the percentage of students (athletes and non-athletes) who graduate within six years from the school where they initially enrolled as a full-time student. The FGR measures the extent to which colleges and universities retain and graduate recruited athletes, thus providing one measure of whether they are fulfilling the NCAA's mission of maintaining athletes as an integral part of their student body. The strength of the FGR is its focus on student retention.

Another useful graduation rate measure, created by the NCAA to track athletes, is called the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). The GSR excludes from its calculation athletes—including transfers—who leave a particular school prior to graduating (i.e., early), while in good academic standing. The NCAA methodology also includes athletes who transfer into an institution in a program's GSR. The GSR recognizes college athletes may take a different path to graduation than other full-time students. However, a limitation of the GSR is that currently no comparable graduation rate exists for the general student body. In other words, the GSR and FGR measures are not comparable.

The NCAA created the GSR to correct the FGR's tendency to underestimate graduation rates by treating all college transfers as non-graduate dropouts. Unfortunately, the GSR correction causes it to *overestimate* athlete graduation rates. In effect, it treats all athletes meeting minimal eligibility requirements who leave college before graduation as transfers who graduate, ignoring that many departing athletes drop out and never graduate.

The AGG was developed to partly address FGR and GSR limitations. The AGG compares an adjusted FGR for full-time students and the reported FGR for college athletes. Reports for each sport are released at various times during the year.

CSRI believes in the full disclosure of all measures pertaining to college athlete graduation, including the FGR, GSR, and AGG since one measure is not "better" or somehow "fairer" than the others as each measure different things. The FGR focuses on an institution's ability to retain and graduate students it admits, while the GSR attempts to account for athletes who leave a school that initially admitted them.

Historically, standard evaluations of NCAA athlete graduation rates have involved comparisons with general student body rates presumed to pertain to full-time students. However, many schools' general student body rates include a significant number of part-time students. This is problematic because all NCAA athletes must be "full-time" and should therefore be compared with other full-time students. The downward "part-timer bias" in the student-body FGR distorts this comparison. Because part-time students take longer to graduate, this significantly reduces the measured general student-body FGR, making the relative rate of college athletes at many schools and conferences appear more favorable. CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap methodology addresses this "part-timer bias" using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-time students enrolled at an institution.<sup>3</sup> The adjustments also account for the aggregate influence of school-specific factors such as location and student demographics. These estimates then become the basis for the AGG comparison.

## **CSRI**

The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Department of Sport & Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina – Columbia. CSRI is dedicated to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college sport issues.

Along with conducting and disseminating in-house research on college athletes' graduation rates, post-athletic transition issues, oscillating migration patterns, and college-sport broadcast content, CSRI hosts the annual CSRI Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC, which provides a forum for dissemination of research on current college-sport issues and possible solutions to these challenges. CSRI also publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal entitled: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, which provides an additional outlet for research related to college-sport issues.

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<sup>3</sup> For details, see Eckard, E. W. (2010). NCAA athlete graduation rates: Less than meets the eye. *Journal of Sport Management*, 24(1), 45-59.

This is the thirteenth-annual installment of the CSRI's DI basketball AGG Report. We hope this information encourages continuing research and discussion regarding both graduation rates and the quality and type of educational opportunities offered college athletes.

## **CSRI Research Team**

**Dr. Chris Corr** – Research Associate: CSRI and Assistant Professor, School of Hospitality, Sport, & Tourism Management at Troy University.

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**Dr. E. Woodrow Eckard** – Research Associate Emeritus: CSRI and Professor of Economics Emeritus, Business School, University of Colorado – Denver.

# Appendix

**Table 1 – 2023 NCAA DI Major and Mid-Major (MM) Summary**

**Women: Major vs. Mid-Major**

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
All DI	-15.6	-17.6	-13.0
Major	-22.3	-22.9	-20.3
MM	-12.5	-15.1	-9.6
Major - MM =	-9.8	-7.8	-10.8

**Women: Black vs. White**

	All DI	Major Mean	MM Mean
Black AGG Mean	-17.6	-22.9	-15.1
White AGG Mean	-13.0	-20.3	-9.6
Black – White =	-4.6	-2.6	-5.6

**Men: Major vs. Mid-Major**

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
All DI	-23.4	-25.0	-19.9
Major	-33.1	-36.0	-28.7
MM	-18.7	-19.7	-15.7
Major - MM =	-14.5	-16.3	-13.0

**Men: Black vs. White**

	All DI	Major Mean	MM Mean
Black AGG Mean	-25.0	-36.0	-19.7
White AGG Mean	-19.9	-28.7	-15.7
Black - White =	-5.1	-7.3	-4.0

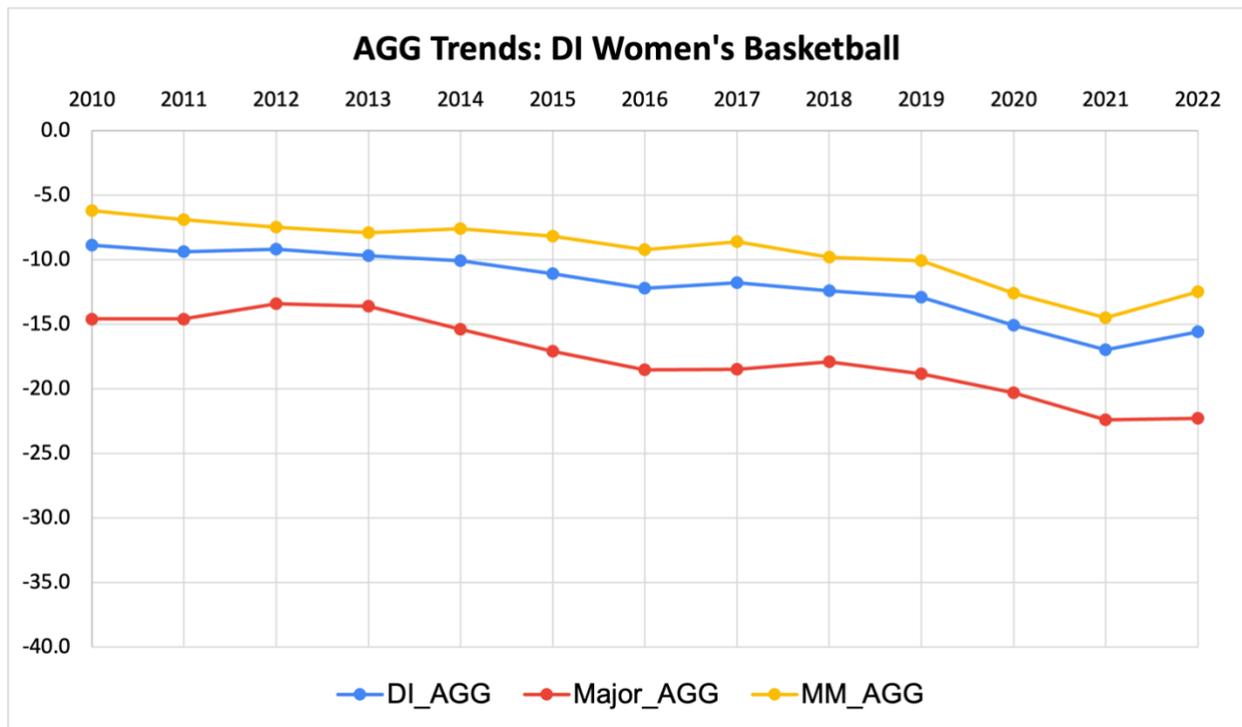
**Table 2 – 2023 NCAA DI Conference Average AGGs**

<b>Women's DI Conferences</b>			
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>Black Mean</b>	<b>White Mean</b>
<b>MAJOR</b>			
Big East	-14.8	-12.5	-15.5
Pac-12	-16.5	-22.7	-13.6
Southeastern	-18.1	-23.8	-9.9
Big 12	-18.7	-17.2	-15.7
Atlantic 10	-18.8	-24.8	-6.6
Big Ten	-22.8	-26.6	-22.5
Conference USA	-25.2	-23.9	-22.6
Mountain West	-25.7	-20.1	-27.8
American Athletic	-28.4	-24.3	-46.4
Atlantic Coast	-33.6	-33.4	-22.5
<b>MAJOR AVERAGE</b>	<b>-22.3</b>	<b>-22.9</b>	<b>-20.3</b>
<b>MID-MAJOR</b>			
Mid-Eastern Athletic	4.8	7.7	0.0
Patriot League	-1.8	1.0	3.8
Southwestern Athletic	-4.0	-0.6	0.0
Metro Atlantic Athletic	-5.6	-7.3	-0.4
Big South	-7.5	-1.9	-8.2
Mid-American	-7.9	1.9	-10.9
Northeast	-9.3	-13.5	-6.0
West Coast	-9.5	0.8	-9.2
Horizon League	-10.1	-15.5	-8.7
Southern	-12.9	-18.1	-8.3
Sun Belt	-15.4	-10.4	-6.4
Big West	-15.8	-26.3	-25.7
Missouri Valley	-15.9	-34.8	-13.1
Southland	-16.2	-23.3	2.4
ASUN	-16.7	-20.2	-9.1
Big Sky	-17.0	-42.3	-17.1
Western Athletic	-18.5	-29.4	-1.6
Colonial Athletic Association	-18.8	-13.7	-22.7
America East	-20.3	-24.0	-13.9
Summit League	-20.9	-27.1	-18.9
Ohio Valley	-22.6	-20.6	-26.7
<b>MID-MAJOR AVERAGE</b>	<b>-12.5</b>	<b>-15.1</b>	<b>-9.6</b>
<b>DIVISION I AVERAGE</b>	<b>-15.6</b>	<b>-17.6</b>	<b>-13.0</b>

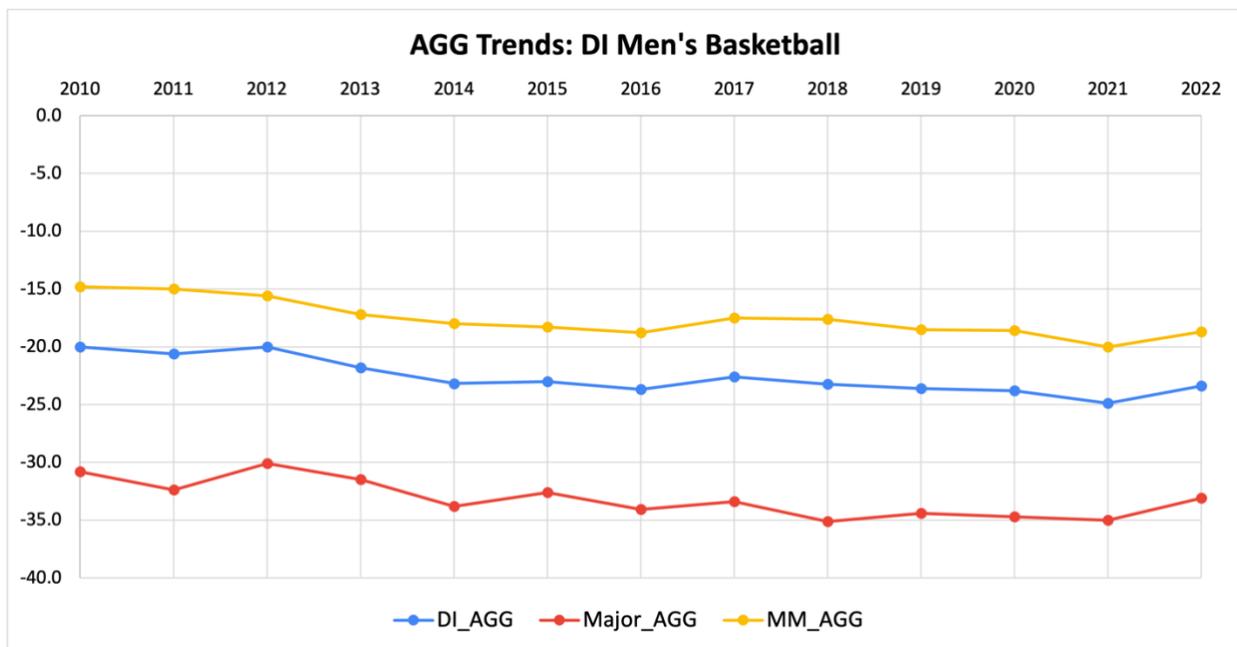
## Men's DI Conferences

	Overall Mean	Black Mean	White AGG
<b>MAJOR</b>			
Atlantic 10	-24.0	-22.2	-39.6
Big 12	-29.5	-31.0	-25.5
Big Ten	-30.6	-33.3	-23.3
Pac-12	-32.4	-37.5	-13.5
Conference USA	-32.6	-43.9	-28.9
Big East	-32.6	-36.1	-18.7
Mountain West	-34.8	-40.2	-33.5
Southeastern	-35.0	-36.0	-6.9
Atlantic Coast	-38.0	-39.8	-41.1
American Athletic	-42.1	-40.2	-55.9
<b>MAJOR AVERAGE</b>	<b>-33.1</b>	<b>-36.0</b>	<b>-28.7</b>
<b>MID-MAJOR</b>			
Mid-Eastern Athletic	-5.1	-7.9	0.0
Patriot League	-11.0	-11.9	-10.1
Missouri Valley	-11.6	-11.3	-12.5
Southwestern Athletic	-12.7	-12.3	0.0
Big South	-12.7	-12.1	-5.9
Mid-American	-14.3	-12.8	2.2
Southern	-14.5	-7.6	-26.1
Colonial Athletic Association	-14.7	-16.4	3.1
Southland	-15.8	-16.9	-33.2
Western Athletic	-15.9	-16.2	-13.8
Sun Belt	-18.6	-18.6	-17.6
Metro Atlantic Athletic	-19.4	-16.3	-2.3
Big Sky	-19.9	-21.3	-20.2
Northeast	-21.7	-26.8	-23.8
ASUN	-22.0	-17.7	-15.2
America East	-22.9	-29.1	-14.1
West Coast	-23.3	-26.3	-22.3
Horizon League	-24.0	-33.2	-3.8
Summit League	-27.3	-37.4	-24.8
Ohio Valley	-31.5	-27.9	-51.5
Big West	-33.6	-33.5	-38.4
<b>MID-MAJOR AVERAGE</b>	<b>-18.7</b>	<b>-19.7</b>	<b>-15.7</b>
<b>DIVISION I AVERAGE</b>	<b>-23.4</b>	<b>-25.0</b>	<b>-19.9</b>

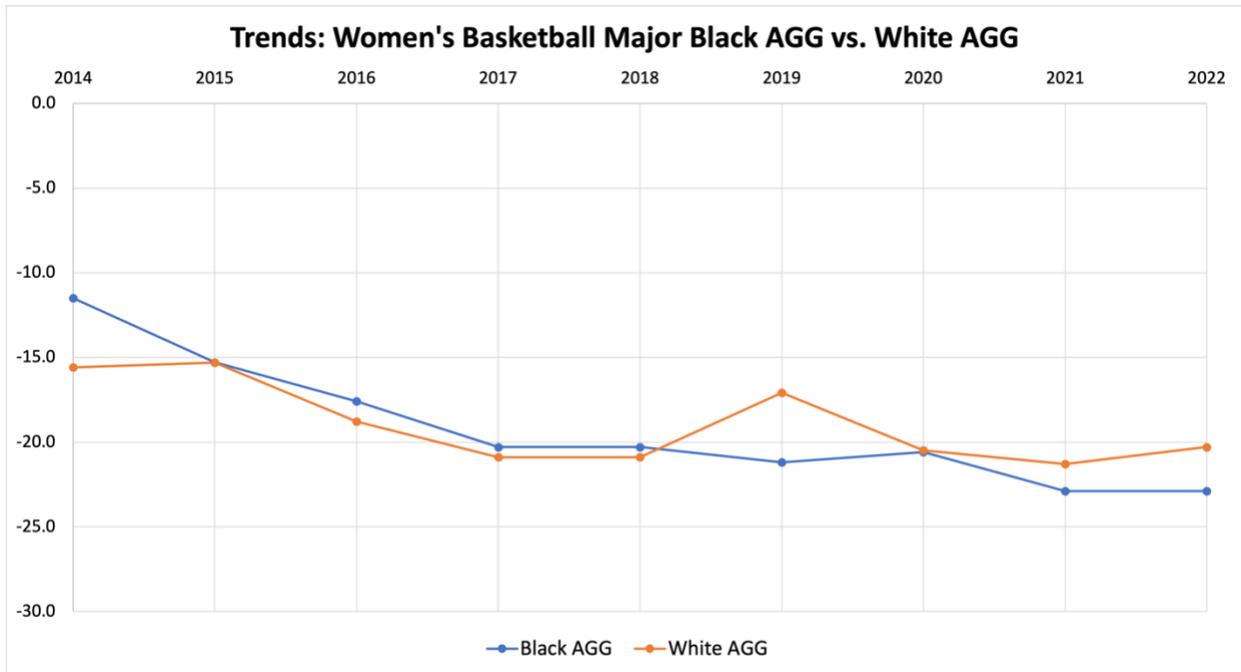
**Chart 1 – AGG Trends: DI Women’s Basketball**



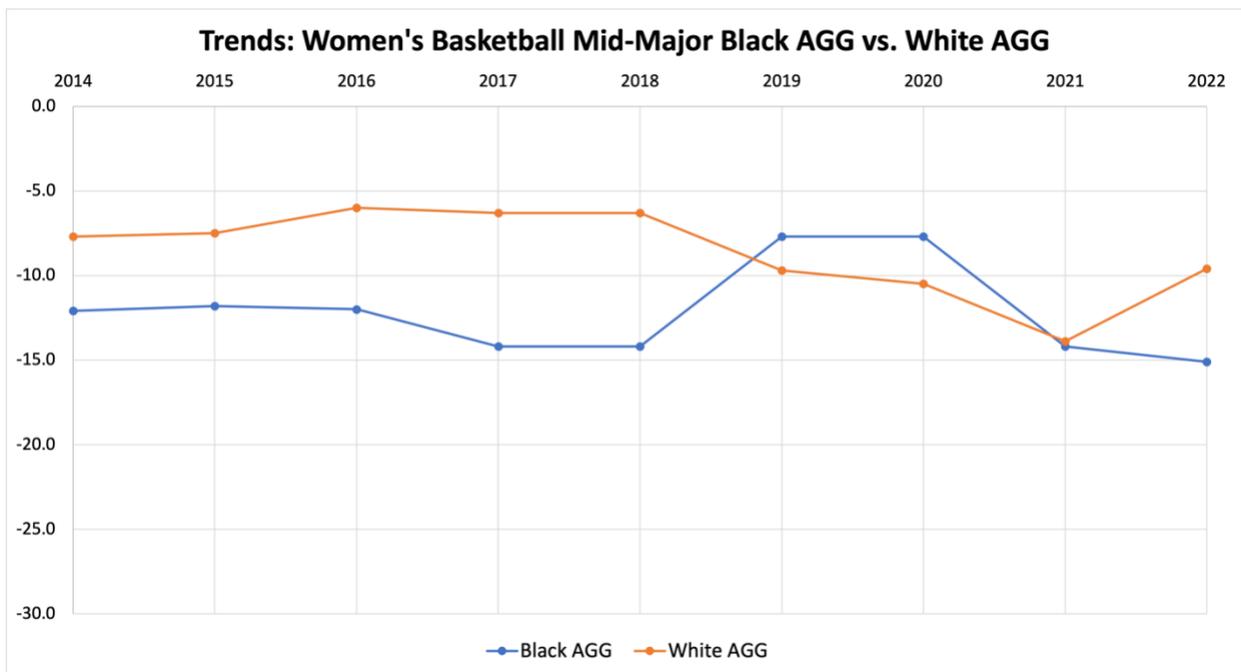
**Chart 2 – AGG Trends: DI Men’s Basketball**



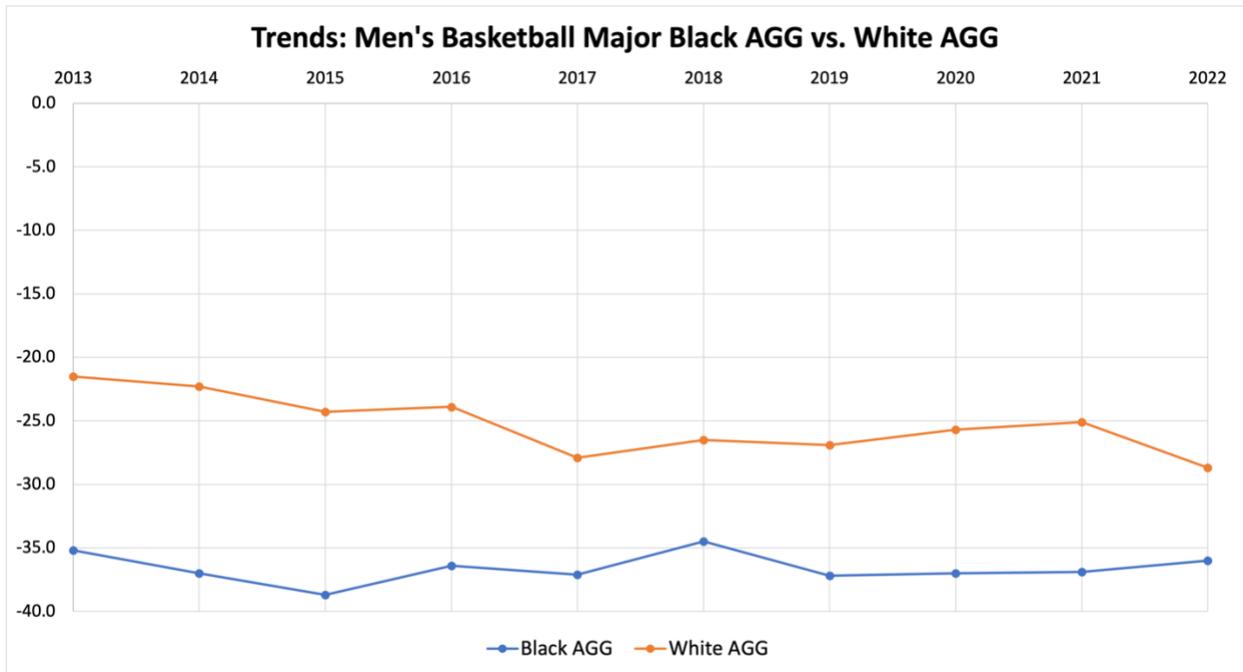
**Chart 3 – AGG Trends: Women’s Basketball Major Black AGG vs. White AGG**



**Chart 4 – AGG Trends: Women’s Basketball Mid-Major Black AGG vs. White AGG**



**Chart 5 – AGG Trends: Men’s Basketball Major Black AGG vs. White AGG**



**Chart 6 – AGG Trends: Men’s Basketball Mid-Major Black AGG vs. White AGG**

