

# **Gender Equity Assessment**

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## I. Engagement

The NCAA engaged our Firm, Lewis Rice LLC, to assess its progress in implementing the recommendations set out in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP's ("Kaplan") Phase I External Gender Equity Review ("EGER") and Phase II EGER. In essence, the NCAA engaged us to assess – externally and independently – its progress in implementing Kaplan's recommendations as to 88 of the 90 championships the NCAA operates. The only championships outside our purview were Division I Men's and Women's Basketball.

## II. Our Approach

Kaplan's Phase I and Phase II EGERs identify gender equity issues at the 2021 NCAA's championships, and make recommendations to the NCAA to begin to address those issues. Kaplan's recommendations serve as a strategic guide, but they are not a detailed blueprint to build sustained gender equity at the championships. The blueprint to effect change and sustain equity is necessarily left to the NCAA.

Accordingly, in conducting this assessment, it was our role to assess and document any progress the NCAA has made in implementing Kaplan's recommendations. It also was our task to identify and help communicate the NCAA's blueprint to effect change and to achieve and sustain gender equity. In circumstances where Kaplan's recommendations have not been implemented at this point, our task was to explain the NCAA's rationale as to why not. We were not, however, engaged to identify or investigate equity issues beyond those identified in Kaplan's EGERs, or to make any additional or alternative recommendations to the NCAA.

To carry out our important work, we assembled a team of attorneys who are also former college athletes and athletics department administrators. Our lived experiences and practical understanding of college sports gave us a significant head-start in conducting this assessment. We also brought to bear a breadth of experience in Title IX compliance and litigation, higher education, external investigations and sports law. Our team also included a certified public accountant and attorneys with financial and data analysis capabilities.

From March 21, 2023 until July 31, 2023, our team gathered and reviewed thousands of documents from the NCAA and from publicly available sources and interviewed 41 NCAA staff members (including members of the Senior Management Team and President Baker) and 29 NCAA committee members. We met in-person with the Division I, II and III National Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, reviewed the results of student-athlete surveys and conducted site visits to 16 NCAA championships.

## A. Important Principles That Guided Our Approach

Providing an equitable experience does not mean providing an identical experience. We recognize that there are many factors that go into planning for, allocating resources to, and managing the various NCAA championships. Certain sports generate considerable revenue, provide greater exposure in the market, are more complex logistically to operate, and demand more time and attention. To assess the progress on Kaplan's recommendations and progress toward gender equity at the championships, we did not look for identical experiences, but rather assessed whether the student-athlete's participation experience was equitable across similarly situated championships without regard to gender. We recognized the NCAA's ultimate goal has been, and should continue to be, to provide the best possible student-athlete experience for all participants, regardless of sport, division or gender, across its 90 championships.

We further note that some of Kaplan's recommendations are well-defined and, thus, straight-forward to assess; in contrast, other recommendations are open-ended, allowing the NCAA greater flexibility in developing strategies to implement the recommendation. Moreover, the recommendations cannot be implemented in a vacuum or without acknowledging that certain factors (*e.g.*, finances, logistics, human capital, existing contractual obligations) limited the NCAA's ability to implement certain recommendations to the letter. Indeed, these factors, at times, required the NCAA to modify its approach to implementing a recommendation, and to identify, prevent and address disparities based on gender by a different means than Kaplan recommended. In instances where that was the case, we have strived to identify those prevailing or mitigating factors and endeavored to describe the NCAA's modified approach.

Throughout our engagement, we were steadfastly dedicated to ensuring the integrity and independence of our assessment. Collaboration, feedback and input from stakeholders, specifically from NCAA leadership, staff, committee members and student-athletes, were necessary to the integrity of our final work product, not an undue influence that jeopardized its independence. To that end, we conducted multiple interviews with various NCAA stakeholders and held regular meetings with key NCAA staff during the course of our assessment. We verified the facts that support the findings of this assessment before they were set out in this final report.

As Kaplan acknowledged in the Phase II EGER, it is not feasible over a three-month time period, to assess in detail 88 championships for which more than 500,000 student-athletes, across 24 sports and three divisions seek to qualify. (Phase II EGER, p. 4). Likewise, the NCAA did not retain us to conduct a real-time audit of 88 championships. Thus, we, like Kaplan, focused on a subset of championships (which Kaplan references as "case studies"), plus the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships, which are the sole focus of Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 from the Phase I EGER. (*See id.*). As a result of the timing of this assessment and consistent with Kaplan's identified "case studies," the championships on which we were able to conduct site visits and otherwise carry out a detailed assessment were Division I, II and III Baseball and Softball, Division I, II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse, Division II Men's and Women's Basketball and Division II Men's and Women's Golf. When we made comparisons, we did so

across like sports (for example, men’s lacrosse and women’s lacrosse), not across dissimilar sports or against all championships in the aggregate.

## B. Classification of Our Findings

In July 2022, the NCAA engaged an external assessor to conduct a Gender Equity Assessment that reviewed the NCAA’s progress in implementing Kaplan’s Phase I recommendations (except Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2, which are the subject of this assessment). In that July 2022 Assessment, the NCAA’s progress on each recommendation was classified in one of the following five categories.

**Addressed** – If the NCAA’s progress on a recommendation is classified as “addressed,” the NCAA has addressed the recommendation in a manner consistent with Kaplan’s recommendation. It is important to note that recommendations classified as “addressed” are not fully completed or fully implemented. Rather, recommendations classified as “addressed” should continue to be monitored, carried forward and improved. Equity is not a mark to be achieved at one moment in time, but rather a dynamic guiding principle.

**Modified** – In instances where the NCAA’s progress is defined as “modified,” the NCAA has taken steps to address the goal reflected in Kaplan’s recommendation, but has modified the approach specifically set out in the recommendation. In other words, the NCAA has taken steps to advance the spirit of the recommendation, but is not implementing the recommendation to the letter.

**In Progress** – Recommendations that are classified as “in progress” are recommendations that the NCAA is actively working to implement, with or without modification(s) from the letter of the recommendation Kaplan set out in the EGERs.

**Future Consideration** – Where a recommendation is classified as “future consideration,” the recommendation is under discussion or review by the NCAA with no firm plan to implement.

**Considered, but Not Implemented** – Recommendations classified as “considered, but not implemented” are recommendations the NCAA has reviewed and considered and either made a definitive decision not to implement or to significantly delay beyond the five-year assessment timeline.

In order to ensure continuity and consistency, and at the NCAA’s request, we have deployed the same categories and definitions to conduct our assessment of the recommendations within our purview.

## III. General Assessments

The NCAA has addressed, or is in progress of addressing, nearly all of Kaplan’s recommendations. Those that remain in progress or under consideration are those that were most exposed to and stymied by the remaining and persistent obstacles we outline below. We have attached hereto as [Appendix A](#) our Summary of Findings, which outlines and summarizes

our finding as to each recommendation and which is organized by classification (*i.e.*, “addressed,” “in progress”).

During this assessment, we observed that the NCAA National Office staff has a markedly heightened awareness of, and focus on ensuring, gender equity. This appears to be a shift in awareness and focus since the 2021 Kaplan EGERs. Staff were transparent and cooperative in our investigation and review. Interviewees repeatedly indicated that they welcomed the assessment and hoped to create tools to institutionalize this type of independent equity review— not just to serve gender equity, but equity more generally, and to improve the student-athlete experience in championships and beyond. We also repeatedly heard and sensed that the NCAA is committed to creating lasting and dynamic systems to identify, prevent and address gender disparities. Indeed, one NCAA senior leader told us that it was long overdue to “imprint gender equity on the NCAA’s DNA.”

The robust Gender Equity Assessment Tool that the NCAA developed and implemented over the last two years is a key driver of this increased awareness and focus, and a critical tool in systematically institutionalizing gender equity across championships. As discussed in more detail in this report, the NCAA worked to develop a set of more than 230 questions to evaluate and assess the student-athlete experience at each championship. It then developed a process by which to review and quantify annually each championship’s responses to the 230 questions, compare the data across championships and analyze the data to identify any divergent responses that might indicate a gender-based disparity in the student-athlete experience. If a statistically significant divergent response is identified, the Gender Equity Steering Committee (established to lead the Association’s efforts in response to the Kaplan EGERs) reviews, considers and develops a plan to redress or remediate the issue. While this Tool is not yet perfect and scalable (for example, the responses are gathered *after* the championship has occurred, not in the planning phase and each of the 230 questions, including some that seem only peripherally relevant to the student-athletes’ direct experience, are weighted equally), it is a centerpiece in the NCAA’s efforts to implement a number of Kaplan’s recommendations, including Recommendations 6.2, A.6 and C.1.

The Gender Equity Assessment Tool and the NCAA’s implementation of the Kaplan recommendations, more generally, motivated a more quantitative and sharpened focus on the student-athlete experience for all student-athletes across the 88 championships. Throughout our interviews, NCAA staff described questions and discussions that came through not just the Office of Inclusion, but from all areas of NCAA operations – Procurement, Travel, External Operations and beyond – that identified differences in aspects of like championships, sought a rationale for that difference and then worked to verify that any difference was not a gender-based disparity. In short, it seems that implementation of Kaplan’s EGERs has improved the student-athlete experience and has established greater equity between men’s and women’s championships, but also greater equity across divisions and sports, more broadly.

## IV. The Remaining and Persistent Obstacles

In the course of our work, we repeatedly heard that, historically, there has been “no ownership of gender equity” at the NCAA and that this deficiency persists today. This lack of ownership seems to have been proliferated and prolonged by significant turnover in the NCAA’s senior leadership over the last three years, including in the positions of NCAA President, Chief Financial Officer and the Senior Vice President over the Office of Inclusion. The NCAA’s divided governance structure – a National Office staff coupled with a robust member-run committee structure – also seems to have contributed to a lack of clarity over who “owns” gender equity.

This lack of leadership and highest-level accountability is an obstacle to complete implementation of Kaplan’s Phase II recommendations, in particular. In responding to Kaplan’s Phase I recommendations, ownership was clearer and simpler. There, the NCAA was dealing with two championships in like sports that were under a microscope. The needed changes were more defined and the authority to implement change was relatively centralized. The Phase II recommendations, on the other hand, have revealed this lack of ownership more starkly. Phase II puts 88 championships across three divisions and 24 sports at issue. As it did in Phase I, the Gender Equity Steering Committee, comprised of senior staff across functional divisions of the NCAA, continues to coordinate the NCAA’s work in implementing the Phase II recommendations. This Steering Committee, however, lacks clear authority to carry out the changes it identifies as necessary. Further, no one in the NCAA’s senior leadership structure has “owned” the Committee’s work, evaluated its results or been held accountable for progress on gender-equity issues. In addition, the Steering Committee meets less regularly now than it did in late 2021 and early 2022, which some staff connected to a slowed momentum in carrying out Phase II recommendations.

The lack of ownership of the Association’s gender equity work and, ultimately, its outcomes seems to be a direct consequence of the partitioned corporate structure of the NCAA National Office and the NCAA’s divided governance structure, which vests decision-making about critical aspects of championships with member-led committees. There is no lack of talent at the NCAA National Office or in the composition of its governing committees, but there is a lack of communication and coordination that, at times, has stood as an obstacle to implementing consistent and Association-wide changes in line with Kaplan’s recommendations. Indeed, even responsibility for achieving and enforcing the NCAA’s commitment to “diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators” remains fractured. (See [NCAA Inclusion Statement](#)).

The National Office has a dedicated Office of Inclusion, but we repeatedly heard that, historically, the Office of Inclusion’s mission was to serve the membership, not to monitor the NCAA’s management of its championships. The NCAA also has four Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committees as well as divisional bodies and the Board of Governors that have articulated authority and commitment to gender equity. This is all to say that there seems to be the proverbial problem of “too many cooks in the kitchen.” With regard to equity in the student-

athlete experience at the NCAA's championships, there are no clear lines of responsibility among or between the Office of Inclusion and these various committees. And, perhaps as a result, there has not been an institutionalized system to monitor and ensure that the championships, and the external operations that serve those championships, meet the NCAA's commitment to equity.

Moreover, there is no question that the venue and host organization of each championship significantly affect the student-athlete experience. Historically, it seems the NCAA has taken a reactive approach to selecting championship venues and hosts. It has not, for the most part, researched and identified optimal sites, marketed championships for purposes of increasing the bid pool or encouraged or incentivized qualified sites and host organizations to bid.

Likewise, the bid selection decision for each championship is left up to the respective sport committee. While NCAA staff have attempted to develop various criteria that would assist committee members in making the selection decision, staff have deferred to the committees and have not actively made recommendations or limited the pool of viable host venues. As several sport committee members have indicated, they are asked to select venues for championships years in advance without conducting detailed site visits or having a full understanding of a host city's capabilities. Perhaps NCAA staff, who have access to the information and the experience and dedicated time to evaluate potential sites, should have greater agency and influence in the site selection decision. In the present state, this entrenched, reactive approach to selecting championship venues at the sport committee level is an obstacle to achieving equitable championships between like sports and to maximizing the student-athlete experience at championships overall.

The NCAA's long-standing, contractual obligations to Turner/CBS (now, Warner Bros. Discovery) and ESPN, which encumber the NCAA's multi-media, marketing and digital rights, remain an obstacle to implementing Kaplan's Phase II recommendations, including Recommendations 2.3, 2.5, B.2 and C.2. For example, the NCAA's Digital Rights Agreement with Turner/CBS was executed in 2010 and remains in effect until 2032. Under this Agreement, the NCAA retains the right to maintain control of its own social media sites, however, its ability to sell sponsorships, advertisements or otherwise monetize those sites is restricted. This long-term restriction – which was bargained-for long before the proliferation and commercialization of social media – has severely hampered the NCAA's ability to realize the value of its championships and create a new revenue stream that could fund further investment in women's championships, among others.

Finally, as Kaplan noted, the NCAA's data collection, maintenance and analysis infrastructure and capabilities – including for data relating to championship amenities, host contributions to the championships, corporate partnership activations, and ticket sales – were deficient. (See Phase II EGER, p. 5). While the NCAA has made some strides in improving its data collection, maintenance and analysis (*e.g.*, building the Gender Equity Assessment Tool and the Resource Allocation Rubric), the lack of standardized data and data analysis remain persistent

obstacles for the NCAA. An Association-wide commitment to and significant investment in data collection, maintenance and analysis will improve the NCAA's ability to identify disparities between championships, assess the student-athlete experience year-over-year, and track its performance toward its participation, engagement and financial goals.

## V. Phase I (Recommendations 6.1 & 6.2) Progress

### Recommendation 6.1

*Establish regular communications between the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.*

#### Overview

As the Kaplan EGER indicates, "the gender disparities in Division I exist to a far lesser extent, if at all, in Division II and III." (Phase I EGER, p. 102). At both the Division II and III levels, the long-established Championships Committee is able to build consistency and moderate discussion and decision-making across individual sport committees, including Men's and Women's Basketball. Nevertheless, Kaplan pointed out that gender equity issues arise at times, "such as issues related to venues and site selection, [which] largely stem from lack of coordination and communication between the basketball staff and committees." (*Id.* at p. 105).

Kaplan further noted that the lack of coordination between the Men's and Women's Basketball Committees has led to decision-making based on a different set of priorities, specifically as it relates to the quality of the host venue set out in the bid and site selection process. This, in turn, creates a negative impact on equity across the championships. (*Id.*)

Since 2021, the NCAA has recommended that each sport committee host at least one joint committee meeting per year and coordinate other opportunities to collaborate whenever possible. This has improved communication across various committees, including the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Committees. The NCAA has addressed Recommendation 6.1.

#### Analysis

In order to analyze and determine improvements made in committee communication and coordination, we reviewed committee schedules, agendas, meeting minutes, joint committee meeting minutes, the current role of the championships committee, coordination on site selection and venue quality and the resulting effects therefrom, and conducted interviews with committee members and NCAA Championships Operations staff.

As noted above, in previous years, the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Committees did not actively collaborate in planning and preparations for the Division II and III

Men's and Women's Basketball Championships. Since 2021, however, the Committees have engaged in more frequent communication and collaboration. Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Committees held seven joint conferences from November 1, 2021 to July 1, 2023 and minutes from these joint committee meetings demonstrate collaboration. By way of example, at the joint committee meeting on April 19, 2022, the committees discussed and agreed to take different approaches to game times at the Division II Elite Eight based on the unique needs of each championship. (See Report of the NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Committee, April 19, 2022). Additionally, at the April 24, 2023 joint meeting, the committees collectively agreed on the start-time of the selection show for both championships and the recommendation to require a multiple camera shoot (at least two) for all preliminary round games. (See Report of the NCAA Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Committee, April 24, 2023). These shared decisions demonstrate improved collaboration between the committees.

We were not able to locate any record of joint committee meetings or conferences between the Division III Men's and Women's Basketball Committees. We did identify, however, at least some collaboration between the respective committees. In a meeting on June 1, 2022, the Division III Men's Basketball Committee discussed expanding the bench at the championship from 18 to 20 and indicated that it will "work with the Division III Women's Basketball Committee for universal adoption." (See Report of the NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Committee, June 1, 2022).

Further, interviews with NCAA staff confirmed an express commitment to increased coordination and collaboration. For example, members of the NCAA's Senior Management Team spoke about the improvements in collaborative discussion at the Division II and III levels, specifically centered around the basketball championships. One staff member noted that compositional and experiential differences between the committees add positively to the collaboration, and there is much more collaboration and communication now than in the previous years, especially prior to 2021.

The NCAA, however, continues to have the opportunity to foster even greater collaboration, particularly as it relates to inconsistencies that currently exist between bid specifications for the Men's and Women's Basketball Championships at both the Division II and Division III levels. By way of example, the existing bid specifications for the Division II Men's Basketball Championship for the 2022-2026 bid cycle require more volunteers and sideline workers as well as more accommodations for television and radio crews than the DII Women's Basketball Championship bid specifications. Likewise, the Division II Men's Basketball Championship bid specifications allocate more hotel blocks than the Division II Women's Basketball Championship bid specifications.

While there may be non-gender-based, operational reasons for these differences, our review could not identify any robust conversation or coordination between the committees to discuss the reason(s) for these disparities and how they may affect the student-athlete experience. At the time of our assessment, the NCAA has not yet finalized its specifications for the upcoming two-year (2027 and 2028) bid cycle. Accordingly, the opportunity for the NCAA to

foster increased coordination and communication with regard to those specifications between the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Committees and staff is imminent.

## Findings

Based on our review, the NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation 6.1.

## Recommendation 6.2

*Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships are gender-equitable.*

## Overview

In its Phase I EGER, Kaplan did not conduct a comprehensive review of the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships, as it did with the Division I Basketball Championships. As our review revealed, and as Kaplan identified in its Phase II EGER, revenue and exposure often drive decision-making, most significantly at the Division I championships. (See Phase II EGER, p. 37). In most cases, championships at the Division II and III levels are not presently revenue-producing and, therefore, are not under the same constraints nor viewed under the same microscope as championships at the Division I and National Collegiate (NC) levels. (See Phase I EGER, p. 101). As confirmed in our interviews with the NCAA Governance staff, generally, Divisions II and III promote and prioritize gender equity across their championship structure, which has resulted in the “student-athlete experience in Division II and III championships [being] more equitable across the board than in Division I and NC championships.” (See Phase II EGER, p. 10).

Nevertheless, in Recommendation 6.2, Kaplan indicated (as it did with respect to the Division I Basketball Championships in its Recommendation 3.2) that the NCAA should develop a defined set of items directly impacting the student-athlete experience and ensure that those items “are substantially the same” at the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. (See Phase I EGER, pp. 89, 106). Kaplan explained that “substantially the same” means “any differences in quality and/or quantity of the items should be reasonable based on the structure of the championship, the size of the audience, and the location of the events.” (*Id.* at p. 89).

The NCAA has taken substantial steps to implement Recommendation 6.2. It has developed the Gender Equity Checklist and Gender Equity Assessment Tool in which it has identified the items that directly impact the student-athlete experience. The Checklist and Tool allow NCAA Championship staff to assess each championship and, specifically, evaluate and compare the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. Moreover, through its “Sport Leader Program,” the NCAA increased and incentivized coordination between staff members charged with the planning and execution of the men’s and women’s

championships. This, in turn, has led to increased communication about items that impact the student-athlete experience and improved gender equity.

Our review, however, identified some remaining differences in items that impact the student-athlete experience at the championships. While some of these differences may be operationally motivated or the consequence of differences in host site and venue (which were selected before 2021), differences persist and those differences, at times, appeared to provide a less favorable experience to the student-athletes participating in the women's championships.

## Analysis

In order to analyze the NCAA's progress toward implementing Recommendation 6.2, our team reviewed and considered the Gender Equity Checklist, the Gender Equity Assessment Tool, student-athlete surveys, the NCAA's site selection process, NCAA policies and procedures and other relevant documents. We also conducted site visits to the Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Elite Eight and Final Four, and interviewed the men's and women's basketball staff and basketball committee members.

Since 2021, the NCAA directed its Championships Managers – who are designated to plan and execute their respectively assigned championships – to improve coordination between the Men's and Women's Basketball Championships with regard to any item that affects the student-athlete experience. In fact, the NCAA staff implemented a "Sport Leader Program" with the purpose of improving internal communication and collaboration among the Championships Managers across all three divisions. "Sport Leaders" for each championship set a regular joint meeting schedule (usually once per month) with the Championships Managers for Division I, II and III to discuss opportunities to create consistency in the overall production of the championships. According to the NCAA staff we interviewed, there is a commitment to creating an equitable experience among participants in each division.

Further, NCAA staff – including staff from Championships Operations, Business Performance Management, and the Office of Inclusion – have developed and implemented the Gender Equity Checklist and the Gender Equity Assessment Tool, which provide a mechanism to compare items that affect the student-athlete experience across sports, divisions and gender. We discuss the Gender Equity Assessment Tool in greater detail herein beginning with Recommendation A.1. Using these tools, the Championships Operations team, in conjunction with the basketball staff, conduct a comprehensive, post-event review of the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships to determine where equity issues may exist, and subsequently work to develop strategies to mitigate any identified issues before the following year's championships.

In our interviews, the NCAA's Division II and III Governance staff identified multiple equity-related adjustments that were made to the Women's Basketball Championships since 2021. For instance, prior to 2021, the Division III Women's Basketball Championship Game was

the only basketball championship game across all three divisions that was not broadcast on linear television. This was remedied for the 2022 Championship at a cost of approximately \$80,000. Further, we gathered information and documents that showed that the NCAA staff has increased its coordination and emphasis on equitable branding, event marketing and television production for the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships.

Further, in its Phase I EGER, Kaplan specifically pointed to a remaining “notable disparity” between the competition venues for the Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. (Phase I EGER, p. 103). Kaplan explained that “[t]he venues used for the Division II and III women’s tournaments are consistently smaller, and of a lesser caliber, than the men’s venues. Men’s basketball often uses larger, off-campus facilities with more amenities, whereas women’s basketball, particularly in Division III, often relies on campus facilities. In addition, men’s basketball in Division II and III more often uses the same venues for several years in a row, which helps to grow the fan base and ensure that an already proven venue is hosting the championship.” (*Id.*).

This notable disparity persists. The NCAA hosted the Division II Men’s Basketball Championship at the Ford Center in Evansville, Indiana in 2014, 2015, 2019, and 2023, and the Championship will return there in 2024 and 2025. The Division II Women’s Basketball Championship, on the other hand, does not have such an arrangement but, instead, has been more nomadic. We note, however, that the Division II Women’s Basketball Championship will be held in St. Joseph, Missouri (the site of its Elite Eight and Final Four rounds in 2023) in both 2024 and 2025, which could lead to more consistency and stability in the operations and the “look and feel” of the Championship.

There also remains a notable disparity between the competition venues for the Division III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. The Men’s Championship has a multi-year agreement with the City of Fort Wayne, Indiana while the Women’s Championship moves from one campus site to another each year. We note, however, that the Women’s Championship will achieve some level of stability beginning in 2025 when it will be played on the campus of Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia in back-to-back years.

As we outlined in the “Remaining and Persistent Obstacles” above, and as discussed further in our analysis of Recommendation C.2, the NCAA’s bid process by which basketball championship venues are selected is generally reactive. The NCAA hosts a bid symposium and NCAA staff liaises with convention and visitors’ bureaus and sports commissions to promote the bid process generally, but the NCAA does not proactively and strategically seek sites and venues that may serve as optimal hosts for specific championships. Thus, the NCAA’s options in selecting a championship host are, in some cases, limited to venues with less than ideal features. Further, in certain instances, the NCAA has entered into long-term arrangements with such championship hosts. This reactive approach to site selection manifested some of the gender equity issues that Kaplan identified, and has limited the NCAA’s ability to address competition venue disparities

since Kaplan's EGERs. Indeed, our site visits to the Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Championships revealed differences in the student-athlete experience that seemed largely dictated by the venues and host sites.

From a financial perspective, the 2022 Division II Women's Basketball Championship slightly outpaced the Division II Men's Basketball Championship in budget allocation – \$2,116,242 for the Women's compared to \$1,773,050 for the Men's. However, the Division II Men's Basketball Championship actual spend was slightly greater than the Women's (\$2,195,041 to \$1,965,716). Comparatively, the 2023 Division II Women's Basketball Championship again outpaced the Division II Men's Basketball Championship with a budget allocation of \$2,277,592 compared to \$2,085,492. The actual spend for the 2023 Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Championships has not been fully reconciled as of the date of this report.

With regard to Division III Men's and Women's Basketball, the 2022 Division III Women's Basketball Championship had a slightly greater budget allocation than the Division III Men's Basketball Championship – \$1,398,179 for the Women's compared to \$1,258,296 for the Men's. The actual spend for the Division III Women's Basketball Championship was practically equal to that of the Men's (\$1,355,182 for the Men's compared to \$1,343,632 for the Women's). Comparatively, the 2023 Division III Women's Basketball Championship had a greater budget allocation than the Division III Men's Basketball Championship with \$1,882,652 budgeted for the Women's compared to \$1,630,937 for the Men's. Again, actual spend for the 2023 Division III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships has not been fully reconciled as of the date of this report.

### Site Visits to the Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Championships

In order to assess the NCAA's progress toward implementing Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2, our team conducted site visits to the Elite Eight and Final Four locations for the Division II Men's Basketball (Evansville, Indiana) and Women's Basketball (St. Joseph, Missouri) Championships. We were not able to complete similar site visits to the Division III Men's and Women's Basketball Championship as a consequence of the start date of our engagement with the NCAA.

Divisions I, II and III women's basketball participated in a combined final event this year. The Division II and III Women's Basketball Championship Games were held in Dallas, Texas on the Saturday between the Division I Final Four and Championship Game. At the final event, the NCAA provided the Division II and III student-athletes with an experience – competition venue, accommodations, food, practice facilities, mementos, etc. – in line with the Division I student-athlete experience. Because this combined basketball championship across divisions happens infrequently (approximately twice every ten years), we focused our review for purposes of this assessment on the quarter-final and semi-final round experiences of the Division II men's and women's basketball student-athletes.

Our review and analysis during our site visits were focused on and guided by the items that Kaplan outlined as impacting the student-athlete championship experience, specifically: 1) health and safety; 2) practice facilities and locker rooms (including competition venue); 3) travel and accommodations; 4) gifts, mementos, and other amenities; 5) signage, marketing, promotional efforts, and branding; and, 6) entertainment. (See Phase I EGER, pp. 89-90).

## Health and Safety

Across the board, NCAA staff, the Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Committees, and championship hosts provided athletic training rooms and various materials and equipment as well as medical support to each of the championship events on an indistinguishable basis. Materials and equipment provided included training tables, medical tape, pre-wrap, heating pads, stim machines, crutches, a wheelchair, an AED and ice bags, as well as local athletic trainers, doctors and on-site emergency response vehicles. Accordingly, items affecting student-athlete health and safety at the respective championships were substantially the same.

## Practice Facilities and Locker Rooms

### *Competition Venue*

While the Civic Arena in St. Joseph, Missouri, the host site for the Division II Women's Basketball Elite Eight and Final Four, is a historic venue, it seemed outdated when compared to the Ford Center in Evansville, Indiana, the host site for the Division II Men's Basketball Championship. The Ford Center had five, operational concession stands and used a videoboard to show replays from the game at halftime, interact with fans and present real-time statistics for each player on the court. In comparison, the videoboard at the Civic Arena lacked those same capabilities and could not provide a similar level of digital content and interaction. In addition, the Civic Arena had only two concession stands, only one of which was open throughout the duration of the games. This created a back-up of attendees in the concourse and detracted from the fan experience. Additionally, based on visual inspection prior to and during the games, the lighting at the Civic Arena caused a significant glare for players and fans at the venue (there was a noticeable glare on the court). We note that the venue size at the Civic Arena and Ford Center seemed reasonable for the respective championships, given the total number of fans in attendance. The appropriately-scaled venues contributed to the atmosphere and energy at the games.

### *Practice Facility*

The quality of, and access to, the practice facilities for the Elite Eight and Final Four rounds were comparable and appropriate as all teams used the competition court for their scheduled practice times and shoot-arounds. We did not find any material differences between the men's and women's championship.

### *Locker Room*

The locker rooms at the men's and women's competition sites, respectively, served an equal number of student-athletes. The locker room facilities at the women's championship site, the Civic Arena, however, had only one bathroom stall and one open shower stall per locker room. This was noticeably deficient when compared to the facilities at the Ford Center for the men's championship, which had at least three bathroom stalls and three open shower stalls per locker room. Both venues (the Ford Center and Civic Arena) had four total locker rooms to serve the eight participating teams.

### Travel and Accommodations

We did not identify any disparity between championships in the application of the NCAA's policies on air and ground travel. The per diem rate was equal for the men's and women's basketball teams, and the NCAA determined travel to and from campus (flight versus bus) uniformly based on the participating institution's distance from the competition venue.

Although the distances between the team hotels and venue were not the same at each site (*i.e.*, the hotel in Evansville is connected by a walkway to the venue, whereas the hotels in St. Joseph ranged from 3.4 to 9.7 miles away from the venue), the accommodations were sufficiently close to their respective venues so as to consider the experience substantially the same.

We did observe, however, marked differences in the quality of the student-athlete accommodations at the Division II Men's and Women's Basketball Elite Eight and Final Four. The eight men's teams stayed at one property that maintained a full array of services and sufficient meeting and entertainment spaces. The hotel had in-house food and beverage capabilities and a full complement of meeting rooms and audio/visual support. On the other hand, the eight women's teams were spread out between three properties in St. Joseph, only one of which is considered full-service (*i.e.*, in-house food and beverage, appropriate meeting and entertainment spaces). In fact, one of the hotels for the women's championship did not have any meeting rooms for the teams and, therefore, created a make-shift meeting space in an existing hotel room with the beds removed and chairs positioned for the student-athletes. We were not able to determine whether other hotels in St. Joseph – more comparable to the men's accommodations in Evansville – were available when the Elite Eight and Final Four were planned.

### Gifts, Mementos, and Other Amenities

Student-athletes competing in both the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships were given equal access to an online gift suite. The gift suite allows the student-athletes to select from an array of gifts, such as hoodies, quarter zips, wireless earbuds, sunglasses, a smart speaker and a wireless charger (among many other items). In addition, student-athletes competing at the Division II Men's and Women's Elite Eight received towels and backpacks as additional gifts. Our interviews and site visits revealed that the NCAA has made a

concerted effort to offer substantially the same gifts and mementos to participants in the Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships.

## Signage, Marketing, Promotional Efforts, and Branding

### *Signage and Branding*

With regard to signage and branding, we understand that the NCAA does not dedicate additional staff from its Championships Engagement team to its Division II championships. Thus, the Division II Championships Managers deploy a template (*i.e.*, detailed style guide and branding strategy) to design and create signage in and around the competition venues. We did not observe any material differences in signage and branding at the Division II Men's and Women's Elite Eight and Final Four.

### *Marketing and Promotional Efforts*

Our team did not note any significant differences in the NCAA's marketing and promotional efforts surrounding the men's and women's Division II basketball events. The NCAA does not have dedicated staff on-site to manage the marketing and promotions at either the Division II Men's or Women's Elite Eight or Final Four. All of the marketing and promotional activity runs through, and is coordinated by, the Championships Operations team.

The Division II Men's and Women's Final Four and Championship games were broadcast on linear television. The preliminary rounds for both championships were streamed on NCAA.com. Additionally, this year, the Division II Men's and Women's Final Four games were aired on CBS Sports Network. However, CBS broadcasted the Division II Men's Basketball Championship Game while the Division II Women's Basketball Championship Game remained on CBS Sports Network. As Kaplan recognized, size of the audience for an event is a reasonable consideration in decision-making, and could lead to a determination that the broadcasts of the championship games, while not identical, were substantially the same. We do not, however, have access to the viewership, ratings or other market data that may have resulted in this difference, but note that the NCAA should continue to assess if it is equitable for the Division II Men's and Women's Championship Games to be aired on separate networks.

### *Branding and Social Media*

Similar to its approach to event marketing, the NCAA does not have dedicated staff to manage social media activity for Division II men's and women's basketball during the regular season or at the championships. The Division II Governance staff, through the official Division II social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram), manages all updates at, and surrounding, the championships. Our team observed substantial similarity in the quality and frequency of social media content at the Division II Men's and Women's Elite Eight, Final Four, and Championship games. As one NCAA staff member noted, output-to-output in social media activity was consistent between championships.

## Entertainment

### *Fan Engagement*

We noted material differences with regard to in-game fan engagement at the Division II Women's Elite Eight and Final Four games as compared to the Men's. The Women's Elite Eight venue provided limited technology to create a championship environment (*i.e.*, small videoboard with minimal capabilities). On the other hand, the Division II Men's Elite Eight venue had more robust technology that included in-game music, fan-cams, and in-game replays. It seemed the women's venue did not have the technology to support fan-cams and in-game replays to create a similar atmosphere. Again, this disparity was based solely on venue capabilities, which should have been identifiable in the bid process.

Neither the Division II Men's nor Women's Elite Eight and Final Four events included fan festivals pre-game.

### *Student-Athlete Entertainment & Recreation*

Each championship hosted a tournament banquet with the content and structure of that banquet determined by the respective sport committees in consultation with NCAA staff. The women's championship had a formal event at a local country club. The men's championship hosted its banquet at the site of competition (the Ford Center). The women's teams wore country club attire to the event whereas the men's teams wore team-issued apparel such as team warm-ups. Neither the men's nor the women's championship provided any other entertainment or recreational activities for the student-athletes. Despite the noted differences in the "look and feel" of the banquets, we found no material differences in the entertainment and recreation provided to student-athletes.

### *Community Engagement*

According to the NCAA, community engagement at the championships is intended to allow institutions and student-athletes to "actively engage with the community, helping to drive attendance at athletics contests and connect student-athletes with community members in a more shared civic experience. Community engagement also strengthens the bond among teammates and fosters individual and personal growth." (See [Our Division II Priorities](#), last visited July 19, 2023). While the NCAA has indicated community engagement should take place at all championships, it seems that no uniform requirement has been implemented. The opportunity to engage with the community certainly could enhance the student-athlete experience, but where engagement is required only at the women's championship, but not at the men's, it gives the appearance of requiring more, and providing less down-time in the schedule, of the women participating in the championship.

At the championships we visited, Division II women's basketball teams in the Elite Eight were required to participate in community service activities. On the other hand, there was not a

similar requirement, or even scheduled time for, the Division II men’s basketball teams to participate in such an activity.

The Division II Men’s Basketball Championship hosted the Reese’s College All-Star Game the night prior to the championship game, which was in a sense, an opportunity to further engage the Evansville community with an additional event. Because the women’s final game was played as part of the combined Division I, II and III Women’s Basketball Championships, there was no opportunity in St. Joseph to host such an event as only the semi-final game took place at the site.

## Findings

The NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation 6.2 in that it has taken substantial steps to ensure that staff for Division II and III men’s and women’s basketball are coordinating to ensure that items that impact the student-athlete experience are equitable. As noted, however, our site visits to the Division II Men’s and Women’s Basketball Elite Eight and Final Four revealed continued opportunity for progress in delivering an equitable experience to the student-athletes who participated in the championships.

## VI. Phase II Progress

In its Phase II EGER, Kaplan noted that “the lack of NCAA infrastructure to effectively monitor and assess gender equity, as well as the NCAA’s financial structure and its related pressures and incentives” affect all NCAA championships, not just basketball. (See Phase II EGER, pp. 10-11). Accordingly, Kaplan explicitly incorporated certain recommendations from its Phase I EGER into its Phase II EGER relating to championships other than basketball, and noted that these recommendations were intended to address “structural issues across the organization” not just the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. (*Id.* at p. 11).

Kaplan’s Phase II EGER explicitly incorporates Recommendations 1.9, 1.10, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 from its Phase I EGER. We note that these structural issues across the organization were reviewed as part of the July 2022 external assessment on the NCAA’s progress toward implementing Kaplan’s Phase I recommendations. Because, however, the Phase II EGER expressly incorporates these recommendations, we review them again here, succinctly, as part of this assessment of the NCAA’s progress toward implementing the recommendations designed to achieve the goal of ensuring gender equity in championships other than basketball.

### Recommendation 1.9

*Evaluate and review performance for contributions to gender equity.*

#### Overview

Kaplan recommended that the NCAA “begin evaluating and rewarding staff performance for contributions to gender equity,” emphasizing that “[a]chieving gender equity is the

responsibility of all NCAA leadership, and working towards gender equity goals is something that should be expected, evaluated and rewarded as part of the NCAA's internal performance review process for all NCAA leadership and staff." (See Phase II EGER, p. 23). The NCAA has considered, but not implemented, this recommendation.

## Analysis

There is little question that, since Kaplan's Phase I and Phase II EGERs in 2021, NCAA leadership and staff have had a heightened focus on working toward the Association's gender equity goals. Each of the senior leaders and staff with whom we met described a heightened awareness of, investment of resources in, and focus on avoiding and addressing gender equity issues at the championships. For example, a member of the senior management team relayed that it is time "to imprint gender equity in the DNA" of the Association.

To date, however, the NCAA has not incorporated a metric to evaluate its staff for contributions to gender equity in its internal performance review process, nor has it created a separate program to reward staff for contributions to gender equity. We note the NCAA presently has an "Exceptional Performance Bonus" program that could be deployed to reward such contributions. The program allows NCAA leadership to award a bonus "to reward individual staff members and teams for making exceptional contributions to specific projects, programs and initiatives in a manner that consistently demonstrates one or more of the five national office beliefs of leadership, inclusion, communication, collaboration and accountability." (*NCAA 2021-22 Exceptional Performance Bonus Program Administrative Guidelines*, dated July 1, 2022). None of our interviewees, however, could identify a staff member who has received such a bonus as a result of his/her/their contributions to advancing gender equity at the NCAA championships.

It seems there are two significant obstacles that have prevented the NCAA from implementing this recommendation. The Association has struggled to define what a "contribution to equity" would include and how it should or could be measured – separate and apart from other staff contributions to a championship that improve the student-athlete experience overall. Further, as noted in other sections of this assessment, there continues to be a lack of "ownership" of gender equity work at the NCAA. Thus, there is no management-level employee who understands that he/she/they has the authority or incentive to identify explicit gender equity goals across the operations of the NCAA, to reward staff members who make material contributions toward achieving those goals, or to hold them accountable for deficiencies or a lack of progress toward those goals.

While these obstacles have stymied the NCAA's progress in implementing this recommendation, we have reason to believe that, in the short term, the NCAA has and intends to pursue the opportunity to make significant progress toward achieving the purpose or spirit of Recommendation 1.9. First, senior leaders in the Office of Inclusion and Human Resources mentioned increased coordination between departments in an effort to advance the NCAA's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Notably, the senior leaders in each of these functions have

changed since Kaplan’s Phase II EGER, with the current Managing Director of Human Resources hired in January 2022 and the current Senior Vice President of Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement named in March 2022.

Moreover, leadership in Human Resources has identified a short-term strategic goal to overhaul the Association’s staff performance evaluation and performance management process. Presently, the NCAA’s performance evaluation process is fragmented. Each group leader sets performance goals for his/her/their respective staff, and there is little coordination throughout the organization as to performance goals and measures of achievements. As a corollary, there presently are no metrics to capture collaboration between operational groups. For example, a procurement staff member’s work with the Office of Inclusion to address a question about a disparity in championship spending is not explicitly incentivized by performance goals or captured on a performance evaluation.

Human Resources leadership described a “future state” in which the Association would set overarching strategic goals that would include diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Those strategic goals then would cascade down to the division level and, from there, result in individual staff member’s goals. The divisional and staff member’s goals would then lead to a set of specific key performance indicators (KPIs) for each division and each staff member. Those KPIs would include a metric for coordination across divisions and efforts to advance the Association’s goal of “diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators.” (See [NCAA Inclusion Statement](#)).

Second, the Gender Equity Assessment Tool gives that Championships Operations team specific feedback on the student-athlete experience at each championship and provides a lens through which to identify gender equity issues. The Tool provides the ability to compare data across all championships, sports, divisions and genders, and to identify alignment, consistencies, inconsistencies and differences among championships. The NCAA’s Business Performance Management group is committed to assisting managers in using this data to achieve real impact in attaining gender equity. And, at least one senior leader in the Championships Operations team identified an opportunity to use the results of the Tool to build-out measurable goals for Championships Managers, in particular, to improve the student-athlete experience and to continue to identify and redress any gender-based disparities.

## Findings

To date, the NCAA has **CONSIDERED/NOT IMPLEMENTED** Recommendation 1.9 to evaluate and reward performance for contributions to gender equity.

## Recommendation 1.10

*Increase staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity.*

### Overview

Kaplan recommended that the NCAA add full-time employees, including in the Office of Inclusion, to assist with performing gender equity tasks. Kaplan recommended that these individuals have experience in Title IX and “gender equity issues” generally. (See Phase II EGER, p. 23). The NCAA has addressed this recommendation.

### Analysis

In FY2021-22, the NCAA added nine positions, and reclassified and elevated another position, in response to Kaplan’s recommendations and its operational needs. Specifically, the NCAA added three new full-time positions in its Women’s Basketball Administration – two Coordinators and an Assistant Director of Championships, Alliances and Fan Engagement.

The NCAA also added five positions in its Championships Operations – a Managing Director, two Assistant Directors, an Associate Director and an Assistant Coordinator. The Managing Director position description expressly requires the Managing Director to “[l]ead [a] small team to develop framework to monitor performance on gender equity expectations for championships delivery.” The Managing Director also must “establish a system to collect and maintain standardized data across the championships, including data related to gender equity monitoring.” The position descriptions for the other new positions in Championships Operations, however, do not explicitly mention gender equity responsibilities or require Title IX or gender equity experience.

The Office of Inclusion also added a position – its third full-time Director, which allowed one Director to devote full-time to gender equity and women’s initiatives. The new Director position requires five years’ experience in directing equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. The experience of the employee who presently holds the position exceeds this requirement.

In addition to the nine added positions, the NCAA’s Business Performance Management group reclassified and elevated a position from Director to Managing Director in response to Kaplan’s recommendation. The reclassified position description explicitly requires the now-elevated and cross-functional Managing Director to:

*Provide strategic direction, leadership and planning for championship data and analytics needs. Working in collaboration with the SVP of championships and the MD of championships, lead championships’ staff in identifying data and reporting needs that assist in establishment metrics for championship outcomes. Partner and collaborate with championships and inclusion in identifying gender equity data needs, maintaining a*

*process of evaluation and decision making on championships gender equity issues and outcomes.*

The NCAA also made the Managing Director a member of the Championships' senior leadership team and required the Managing Director to report to the Senior Vice President of Championships on gender equity in championships.

We do note, however, the NCAA has not yet fully leveraged this expertise to improve gender equity awareness organization-wide. While the Office of Inclusion recently provided a training session for Championships Managers on gender equity issues, the NCAA has not yet implemented staff on-boarding or a regular training program or protocol designed to increase existing staff's awareness of, and ability to address, any gender equity issues.

## Findings

The NCAA has **ADDRESSED** this Recommendation 1.10 in that it added positions tasked with gender equity oversight and hired staff into those positions with expertise in and commitment to gender equity issues.

## Recommendation 2.3

*Negotiate for a new tier of corporate sponsors for all NCAA championships.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommended that the NCAA "negotiate a new tier of corporate sponsors for the Division I Women's Championship and all other NCAA championships." Kaplan surmised that "[t]his new tier of sponsorship would allow for customized sponsorship opportunities that attract corporate sponsors to other championships, thereby maximizing growth and revenue for other sports." (Phase II EGER, p. 35).

In making this recommendation, Kaplan certainly was aware of the NCAA's existing, long-term multi-media arrangements and, perhaps as a result, did not recommend that the NCAA immediately "establish" this new tier, but rather used the term "negotiate" a new tier. Indeed, Kaplan did not put an explicit timeline on when the new tier should be negotiated, and left it open-ended as to whether the negotiation should occur as the existing agreement sunset or begin immediately.

## Analysis

With only a very limited exception, Turner/CBS (now Warner Bros. Discovery) has the exclusive right to manage the NCAA Corporate Partner Program and to solicit and contract with corporate partners for all 90 NCAA championships. The Amended and Restated Multi-Media Agreement that gives Turner/CBS this exclusive right is in effect until August 31, 2032. This long-term, exclusive arrangement is a significant obstacle to implementing Kaplan Recommendation 2.3. In essence, if the NCAA were to implement this recommendation immediately, it would have

to negotiate a claw-back or otherwise amend its existing agreement with Turner/CBS and recapture some ability to create a new tier of corporate sponsorship so as not to breach its existing obligations.

In our interviews, NCAA staff identified additional barriers to the NCAA's entry into creating and managing a separate and third tier of corporate sponsorship. Even if the NCAA had the right to create another tier of sponsorships or unbundle the corporate sponsorship rights to championships other than Division I Men's Basketball (which it presently does not), the NCAA would have to make an investment in staff and other resources to be able to sell, manage and serve the corporate partnerships. NCAA staff with significant experience in managing the NCAA-side of the Turner/CBS Corporate Partners Program questions whether such an investment would be worth the return, and wonders if investing in the infrastructure necessary to create a new tier would be a case of diminishing returns.

Additionally, some staff expressed a concern that the creation of a new tier of sponsorship risks devaluing the return on the significant investments that the existing twenty Corporate Partners presently make. NCAA staff repeatedly described the Corporate Partners Program as a "rising tide that lifts all boats." Interviewees often expressed an understanding, in concept, to the benefit of creating an independent, unbundled right to sponsorship of the Division I Women's Basketball Championship (as Kaplan recommended in its Phase I report), but questioned the Phase II analysis that creation of a new tier of sponsorship would benefit *all* championships. NCAA staff pointed out that presently all championships – from Division I Women's Basketball to Division III Field Hockey – benefit from the commitment of a prominent Corporate Partner that provides sideline sponsorship, for example, and presence at all championships (at a significant cost to the sponsor). NCAA staff expressed concern that, if there is a new and unbundled tier of sponsorship available, sponsors might choose to only sponsor the Division I Basketball Championships, for example, and opt out of any support for stand-alone Division II and III championships. The consequent absence of a nationally recognized brand as a sponsor for such championships would then diminish the "look and feel" of those championships and could create further disparities in the student-athlete experience.

Nevertheless, the NCAA is continuing to explore the possibility of re-vamping and expanding its efforts to secure corporate sponsorships, including understanding what a restructured and more flexible arrangement with Turner/CBS might look like in the short term or upon expiration of the current agreement. In fact, the NCAA recently conducted a top-to-bottom business review with the assistance of an external strategic consulting firm. Much of the work in that business review has been carried out simultaneously with our engagement. We confirmed, however, that the business review included a fulsome strategic analysis of the NCAA's corporate sponsorship opportunities and that, as a result of the review, the NCAA intends to pursue certain identified opportunities.

The NCAA's current efforts to move forward with achieving the spirit of Recommendation 2.3 include a review of its currently existing rights to attract more local support for its championships. The current arrangement with Turner/CBS allows the NCAA a limited right to "sell limited sponsorship packages with respect to any NCAA Championship other than the Basketball Championship to any Person that has not been disclosed to the NCAA as a potential Corporate Partner or that is not a material competitor of a then-existing Corporate Partner in the exclusive product category licensed to such Corporate Partner." Although the NCAA has only limited human resources dedicated to this effort and limited unencumbered assets to sell, we understand it is exploring a strategy by which it could focus its efforts to market championships more locally, especially for championships that have more long-term host site arrangements (for example, the Women's College World Series).

## Findings

Based on our review and analysis, the NCAA's work on implementing Recommendation 2.3 is **IN PROGRESS**.

## Recommendation 2.4

*Create a new senior position of Chief Business Officer to implement a strategy in the marketing, promotion, and sponsorship of the championships that both prioritizes gender equity and ensures the long-term sustainability of the NCAA.*

## Overview

To market and enhance gender equity in all NCAA championships, Kaplan recommended that the NCAA create a new senior position, which Kaplan deemed "Chief Business Officer." (See Phase II EGER, p. 35). This single point of contact would replace what Kaplan identified as divided responsibilities between the Senior Vice President of Basketball and the Senior Vice President of Championships, and would be charged with oversight of marketing, promotion and sponsorship of championships, including media partnerships, corporate sponsorships, social media and digital, branding and marketing. (*Id.*). Implementation of this Recommendation 2.4 is for future consideration.

## Analysis

In March 2022, former NCAA President Mark Emmert proposed adding a new Senior Vice President of Strategic Partnerships to the NCAA's senior management team. This new Senior Vice President would help lead the Championships and Strategic Partnerships groups and would report directly to the President. The new Senior Vice President would be charged with oversight of the following functional areas: Broadcasting; Corporate Relationships; Digital & Social Media; Licensing, and Marketing & Ticketing.

This new organizational structure and senior position were reflected on a March 8, 2022 organizational chart that was published at an all staff meeting. The following month, however,

President Emmert announced his retirement and a leadership change became imminent. As a result, the NCAA chose to put the newly proposed senior-level hire and restructure of marketing, sponsorship and media responsibilities on hold.

Charlie Baker assumed the role of NCAA President on March 1, 2023. Under President Baker's new leadership, the NCAA recently conducted a full business review of the organization, with the assistance of an external strategic consulting firm. This business review is taking place contemporaneously with our work, but multiple interviewees confirmed that it analyzed and will provide recommendations as to the NCAA's strategy relating to the marketing, promotion and sponsorship of championships, including whether the business and revenue-generating aspects of the championships should be centralized.

## Findings

As noted above, Recommendation 2.4 is slated for **FUTURE CONSIDERATION**.

## Recommendation 2.5

*Implement an overall strategy to realize the value of all NCAA championships.*

## Overview

Kaplan deployed sweeping language in its Recommendation 2.5, but its focus seems to be on increasing the value the NCAA realizes vis-a-vis its media rights and digital rights agreements. (See Phase I EGER, p. 81) ("the NCAA, led by its new CBO, should implement a strategy to realize the significant value of Division I women's basketball (and other sports) by (1) working within the current broadcast contracts to seek increased flexibility and accommodations in order to increase gender equity, and (2) ultimately negotiating future contracts that are structured to maximize benefits across the NCAA championships").

## Analysis

Because of its breadth and vague terms, we found Recommendation 2.5 to be one of the most challenging recommendations to assess. There is no question that the NCAA has taken steps since 2021 to develop a strategic plan for its championships, which explicitly includes a focus on media and digital rights and strategies to maximize the value they deliver. As discussed further herein (see Recommendation B.1), the NCAA has engaged Endeavor's Karen Brodtkin and Hillary Mandel to conduct a media rights review. (See <https://www.endeavorco.com/>). This review is being carried out contemporaneously with our work, but we understand its results likely will include analysis and recommendations as to whether the NCAA should "unbundle" the media rights to championships, including the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, that are presently bundled with media partner ESPN.

Moreover, as mentioned above, the NCAA also recently has carried out a top-to-bottom business review, which includes a focus on maximizing the value of the championships, which are

indisputably the NCAA's central revenue-generating assets. The business review, like Endeavor's work, is happening contemporaneously with our assessment.

It is also worth noting here that, in late 2021, the NCAA worked with a third-party creative services consultant to conduct a branding study across championships. NCAA staff indicated that its work provided the "strategic framework for our brand." The NCAA, with the assistance of the creative services consultant, developed a branding strategy that NCAA staff indicate prioritized sport, particularly creating "shared identity across the sport" regardless of gender. NCAA staff describe a new branding focus on celebrating belonging, inclusion, the journey, and the "personality" of each championship. Further, NCAA staff in Championships Engagement have proposed developing an integrated marketing plan for all championships that builds on the NCAA's branding work with a third-party consultant.

More generally, since 2021, NCAA staff have built and implemented tools to begin to assess the value the championships deliver to student-athletes and to improve the efficiency of the resources the NCAA invests in each championship in a way that maximizes the experience and value. These tools are bringing the NCAA closer to an "overall strategy" to realize the value of the championships.

## Findings

Based on the foregoing, the NCAA's work on Recommendation 2.5 is **IN PROGRESS** (and may be, and perhaps always should be, work that is in progress).

## Recommendation 2.6

*Establish a system for tracking sponsorship activations across all NCAA championships.*

## Overview

To enable the NCAA "to better track revenue sources and evaluate potential sponsorship opportunities," Kaplan recommended that the NCAA develop a system for tracking corporate sponsorship activations across all championships. (See Phase II EGER, p. 35). Kaplan explained that the system should track where, how and for how much corporate sponsors have been and are activating, both historically and in real time. (*Id.*).

## Analysis

In response to this recommendation, the NCAA's Championships Corporate Relations team has developed a system to track corporate sponsors' activations at each championship. These activations tracking spreadsheets are updated in real time and completed and retained after each championship happens. The tracking sheets identify the corporate sponsor that activated, the details of where the activation occurred and provide a description of the nature of the activation. By way of example, the NCAA's system now tracks that a corporate sponsor activated and sponsored "Title IX Trivia" presented on the videoboard at the Division I Women's

Volleyball Championship in Fall 2022, and that another sponsor activated and sponsored a trophy photo opportunity in the concourse at the Wrestling Championship in Winter 2023.

The NCAA's tracking system presently does not include, however, an amount paid for the activation nor has there been a historical analysis of corporate activations before 2021 across the 88 championships that are involved in this assessment (we did not pursue this information with regard to the Division I Basketball Championships). NCAA staff explained that, pursuant to the NCAA's current corporate sponsorship arrangement, each corporate partner negotiates a separate deal with Turner/CBS (now Warner Bros. Discovery). In those deals, the sponsor makes a base commitment in exchange for a bundle of licensing rights across all championships, including March Madness. The sponsor then makes the decision as to whether and which rights to "activate" at each championship, and those activations all fall within the base fee.

For example, a sponsor may activate a video board promotion at the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship, which would be part of its base licensing fee and would not generate a separate or additional fee. NCAA staff reports that there is no available "breakdown" of the portion of the base fee that the sponsor assigns to a particular activation or sponsorship right. In short, with the current contractual arrangements in place in the Corporate Partner Program, there is no means available to the NCAA to answer the "for how much" question on an activation-by-activation basis.

## Findings

While Recommendation 2.6 has been **ADDRESSED**, there is still room for the NCAA to build a more robust tracking system.

### Recommendation A.1

*Develop clear criteria for making decisions about resource allocation among championships that integrate gender equity principles and transparency in the process.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommended that, no later than the Fall of 2022, the NCAA should develop a set of clear criteria to deploy when it makes decisions about how to allocate financial and staffing resources among the 90 championships. (Phase II EGER, p. 24). Kaplan advised that, while criteria may be developed and weighed differently, gender equity should be one of the criteria. (*Id.*). Kaplan then advised that the NCAA should establish a clear process for application of the criteria and ensure the criteria and process are updated annually and made available to NCAA staff, committee members and membership institutions. (*Id.*). Kaplan advised that the criteria and processes should be developed by NCAA staff with expertise in championships, finance, broadcast, marketing, and corporate partnerships as well as Title IX and gender equity issues. (*Id.*).

The NCAA has made significant progress in meeting Recommendation A.1. First, the Gender Equity Assessment Tool (the “Tool”), developed by the Managing Director of Business Performance Management, allows the NCAA to review and evaluate progress on gender equity for each championship and reflects how resources (monetary and non-monetary) are allocated. This Tool was engineered based on the Gender Equity Checklist (the “GEC”) developed by the Managing Director of Inclusion with input and approval from the NCAA Gender Equity Steering Committee. The Tool is designed to analyze and identify potential disparities amongst the same or similar sports within the same division, that may be attributable to gender, based on the clear criteria set forth in the GEC. This Tool is then used by the NCAA to make decisions about resource allocation among championships each year and, thus, integrates gender equity principles and transparency in the process.

In addition, the NCAA is in the process of creating a new platform to help determine the appropriate means to allocate resources consistently among the championships. This new platform identifies “key drivers” that are the variables that dictate the operational needs of each championship. Each championship then receives a score as to each “driver,” and the championships that receive the highest score based on these “drivers” then receive the highest allocation of resources. The NCAA advised that measurements for financial and human resources, along with an application of the championship metrics, will be completed by the end of the third quarter of 2023. This new platform will provide more transparency as to how resources are allocated among the championships, which is consistent with gender equity principles.

Finally, the budgets for the various championships are reviewed in advance of their approval each year to address potential gender equity issues (based, again, on the clear criteria set forth in the GEC incorporated by reference in the Tool). We also understand from our interviews that the NCAA’s overall budgetary process likely may be streamlined in the near future to further improve integration of gender equity principles and transparency in the process for allocating resources to the various championships.

## Analysis

Our team conducted interviews of NCAA personnel and reviewed various documentation, including championship budgets, financial projections, financial statements, the Tool, and other documents, which allowed us to assess whether the NCAA has addressed, or is otherwise in the process of addressing, Recommendation A.1.

### ***Gender Equity Assessment Tool***

The Managing Director of Business Performance Management, in collaboration with staff from the Office of Inclusion, created and designed the Tool to provide a mechanism to operationalize, track and implement the GEC. The Managing Director of Inclusion developed the GEC, with direction from the Gender Equity Steering Committee, in response to the prior review

of gender equity in the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships in 2021. The GEC sets out “items,” as Kaplan described, to be considered when analyzing the overall student-athlete experience in each championship. For example, the GEC takes into account travel, transportation, championship format and timing, lodging, food, student-athlete training and medical services, venue, competition equipment, officiating, locker room accommodations, practice facilities, branding, marketing, publicity, and media coverage.

The Tool converts the various items set out in the GEC into a series of detailed questions posed to each of the various stakeholders for each of the NCAA’s 90 championships across 24 sports and three divisions. The Tool’s questions are designed to be answered either “yes” or “no.”

By way of example, the questions include:

- Is the championship conducted at a campus site?
- Is the championship conducted in a commercial or professional sports venue?
- Does the NCAA provide food outside the per diem allowance?
- Is there a student-athlete lounge at the hotels?
- Is the championship broadcast on linear TV?
- Is the quality of the hotels above average for the location?
- Is down-time entertainment provided?

Each year, the various stakeholders associated with each Championship (*e.g.*, Championships Managers, the NCAA’s Office of Inclusion, and/or other leadership in Championships) review and respond to these questions for their respective championships. The Tool then provides results that allow for objective comparison across sports or amongst the same or similar sports within the same or across divisions. Differences or disparities that are either division-based or sport-based are considered acceptable. If there are differences or disparities amongst the same or similar sports in the same division, however, those outcomes are analyzed further to determine if there is a non-discriminatory reason for the difference. In other words, scored differences, as identified in the Tool, are not considered good, bad or indifferent until they are analyzed to determine if there is a legitimate, business-based reason for the difference. After this review is completed each year, the results from the Tool can then be used as a guide to make adjustments on how resources should be allocated to the championships in the coming years to promote gender equity.

The results from the Tool for the most recent year assessed (the 2021-22 championship season) showed strong gender equity achievement across the championships, with 92% of the responses to the various questions showing non-gender based divergence or no divergence. It

appears only about 5% of the responses required follow-up to investigate whether any divergence may have been the result of potential gender-based differences.

While the Tool provides the NCAA with a critical means to track the achievement of gender equity across the various championships, which in turn may facilitate the allocation of resources using clear criteria, the Tool does have some limitations. First, most of the criteria used in the Tool are objective and clear, but some of the criteria could be seen as subjective. By way of example, for most questions, the answers are objective (*e.g.*, “Are swag bags given?” “Are meals given to officials?”). For others, the questions are subject to interpretation (*e.g.*, “Is the venue available soon and long enough to prepare for the competition adequately?” “Do locker rooms provide amenities for student-athletes?” “Do teams have the same types of rooms at each site?”).

Second, the Tool treats all components, or items, of the GEC equally when assessing equity across the various championships. For example, whether a championship provides gifts to officials is given the same weight as factors that arguably have a more direct impact on the student-athlete experience, such as the championship venue or student-athlete lodging and accommodations. Thus, adjustments to the Tool could be considered to give greater weight to factors with more direct or significant impact on the student-athlete experience. This weighting would allow the NCAA to focus its efforts on those factors when evaluating any disparate outcomes.

Third, the Tool is a post-facto review mechanism to report results each year, as opposed to a real-time tracking tool. It also takes an extensive amount of time and human resources each year to work with stakeholders to input their responses for each applicable question and to track, report, and further analyze their responses to improve resource allocation. There may be an opportunity in the future for the NCAA to improve this process by investing in technology to either: (i) update existing systems; or (ii) develop a database or other systems to operationalize the GEC more seamlessly in real-time (such as building a system to allow stakeholders to provide input on the various gender equity criteria in real-time as part of their request for resources). This could be the next step to further improve resource allocation decisions to integrate gender equity principles, consistent with Kaplan Recommendation A.1 and the GEC.

Finally, the Tool relies extensively on the institutional knowledge of its creators. Investing in technology to improve this Tool, as set forth above, as well as training other NCAA personnel on the management of this Tool, could be considered to mitigate the risk of loss of institutional knowledge and progress in this area.

### ***New Platform to Allocate Resources Among the Championships***

Based on the information gathered and interviews of NCAA personnel, we also learned that the NCAA is developing a new platform to determine the appropriate means to allocate resources consistently among its championships. This effort is being led by the Senior Vice President of Championships, Managing Director of Business Performance Management, the Managing Directors of Championships, the Director of Championships and Alliances

(Broadcasting), the Director of Championships Engagement and the Managing Director of Men's Basketball Championships. Notably, this leadership team is comprised of all women.

The NCAA is evaluating and finalizing approximately twenty-five (25) key “drivers” to improve resource allocation across the various championships based on objective criteria. The platform will focus on the labor and expenses associated with the various key drivers of each championship to improve resource allocation. These drivers appear to be based on clear criteria, such as the expenses necessary to broadcast certain sports. Under this new platform, the championship that scores the highest with respect to these particular drivers should receive the highest allocation of resources. The new platform would replace the NCAA's former process for allocating resources based on the “tiering” of championships, which was the subject of some criticism in Kaplan's EGERs. The objective is to replace the current system with a continuum or scale that is more dynamic. The new platform is expected to be completed by the end of the third quarter of 2023, and should further facilitate implementation of this Recommendation A.1.

### ***Budget Review and Updated Budget Process***

Budgets for each of the various NCAA sports and championships are submitted each year by the applicable sports committees in consultation with Championships Finance staff. We understand that the budgeting process is more efficient for Division II and Division III championships. Each of those Divisions has a simpler budgeting process in which the Division is allocated a certain amount each year, which is then distributed amongst the various sports in each respective Division. The budgets for the various sports for Division I, by contrast, require approval and input among various committees and NCAA directors. The Managing Director of Business Performance Management reviews each of the budgets and provides recommendations before sending them to the Chief Financial Officer for review and approval. Thus, given the Managing Director of Business Performance Management's explicit focus on gender equity principles through her management of the Tool, her role in reviewing the proposed budgets and collaboration with NCAA personnel on those budgets before final submission also facilitates resource allocation decisions among the championships to better integrate gender equity principles and transparency in the process.

We reviewed numerous budgets and financial information relating to the various championships, including financial documents comparing budgets to actual expenditures. While there are monetary disparities across certain sports and championships, it is not possible to conclude based on the financial data that any such disparities are due to gender, as opposed to other operational factors. As the Tool has shown, virtually all differences in outcomes of the various factors associated with the GEC are based on differences attributable to sports or divisions, as opposed to gender.

That said, the NCAA conducts regular reviews of its budgets and tracks the differences between actual performance (*i.e.*, actual expenditures) versus budgets. The Director of Championships Finance, who reports to the Controller and then up to the Chief Financial Officer,

reviews monthly reports to scrutinize such expenditures, and manages a team of three (3) financial personnel who spend approximately 90% of their time on budgetary issues. The Director of Championships Finance and his team also track the expenses tied to the Gender Equity Improvement Fund, which represents \$3 million in recurring budget dollars for specific gender equity-related enhancements.

In our interviews, we also learned that the NCAA is in the process of exploring changes to its budgeting process, which also could facilitate further improved decision-making to allocate resources to improve gender equity across the various championships. Currently, the NCAA prepares a 10-year budget every year to establish a “total” budget prior to each sports’ annual budget request, which then is reconciled after the fact in subsequent months for the various sports and championships. Generally, this reconciliation is done each year in the period between February and May after individual budgets are completed for each sport in advance of the next season. This current budgeting process appears to be inefficient and may make it more difficult to allocate resources efficiently, including to enhance aspects of championships to improve gender equity. We understand that the NCAA is considering an adjustment to this budgeting process so that, among other efficiencies, resource allocation requests can be made each year in advance of the formal budgetary process.

## Findings

Based on our review, the NCAA is **IN PROGRESS** and moving toward addressing Recommendation A.1.

## Recommendation A.2

*Establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across the NCAA’s 90 championships that will facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits.*

## Overview

Kaplan noted that, “[t]o facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits,” the NCAA should establish “systematic practices for collecting and maintaining information in a more standardized way” for all championships. (Phase II EGER, p. 24). Kaplan pointed out that the NCAA should improve its process for collecting and maintaining financial and non-financial data in a way that would facilitate a more comprehensive comparison between like-sports or across the organization. (*Id.*). Kaplan suggested the NCAA should “propose a new system for maintaining relevant data by the fall of 2022.” (*Id.* at p. 25). The NCAA has made progress in meeting Recommendation A.2.

The Gender Equity Assessment Tool (the “Tool”), which is discussed in further detail in our analysis of Recommendation A.1, provides a system to collect and maintain standardized non-financial data to promote gender equity across the championships. This Tool collects and maintains data each year from the various stakeholders charged with organizing and managing

the various championships to assess whether each championship has satisfied the various criteria under the Gender Equity Checklist (the “GEC”). The GEC and the Tool provide a system for collecting and maintaining this standardized data across all championships that will be used, and is currently being used, for gender equity reviews on a regular basis. Thus, based on the Tool alone, the NCAA is making progress toward addressing Recommendation A.2.

While the Tool provides a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data relating to gender equity issues across the various championships, it is not a robust database. Nor does it collect and maintain all of the data the NCAA currently has across its various systems, which data would be needed to fully evaluate gender equity issues. Notably, financial, licensing, broadcast, corporate sponsor engagement, fan engagement and other revenue-related data are not integrated into the Tool. The NCAA recognizes this and is assessing several additional strategies to improve its systems for collecting and maintaining standardized data. Such strategies, of course, appear to require a significant, organization-wide investment.

## Analysis

Our team conducted interviews of NCAA personnel, worked extensively with the GEC and the Tool and reviewed other, relevant documents. This allowed us to assess whether the NCAA has addressed, or is otherwise in the process of addressing, Recommendation A.2.

The NCAA has taken significant steps toward data analysis, collection, and maintenance to monitor and improve gender equity. The NCAA re-structured the Managing Director of Business Performance Management’s position to explicitly include in the position description the responsibility to improve data analysis on gender equity across all championships. As a result of the NCAA’s investment in this restructured position, among other investments, the Tool and other programs and platforms have been developed and implemented to assess and track progress on gender equity issues across the NCAA’s various championships. The Tool, as described in more detail in Recommendation A.1, is a system to collect and maintain standardized data to track gender equity across all of the championships. The data is collected each year from the various stakeholders (*e.g.*, Championships Managing Directors, Championships Managers, the NCAA’s Office of Inclusion, and/or other personnel) and is standardized because it is based on the criteria from the GEC for assessing gender equity. Thus, the NCAA is making progress toward Recommendation A.2 based on this use of personnel to focus on data analysis and the creation of the Tool to assist in the collection, maintenance, and review of standardized data to analyze gender equity issues.

That said, the Tool does not contain all data of the NCAA relating to gender equity, as it only collects and stores the specific responses to the various questions that track the criteria in the GEC. The Tool is also not a robust database for collecting and storing data. The NCAA continues to maintain data in various platforms and systems across its various departments, which makes the data difficult to capture and catalogue. Thus, there continues to be a need for a data warehouse or other management system to further capture and standardize data so that

the data is consistent and easier to analyze. A data warehouse or other data management system would enable and support business intelligence and analytics. A data warehouse or management system also could centralize and consolidate large amounts of data from the different organizational and third-party sources in which the NCAA's data currently remains fragmented.

We understand that the NCAA is, therefore, considering the development of a data acquisition and reporting system which will serve to collect and maintain data across multiple platforms. The system could be used to more seamlessly capture, maintain, and analyze the data for the Tool, as well as other types of data, including financial data, to improve decision making on gender equity issues and facilitate future gender equity studies to satisfy this Recommendation A.2. It appears that there is consensus among the key decision-makers in the NCAA to make a significant investment in IT infrastructure, including data collection, maintenance and analysis, in the relatively near term. We also understand the NCAA is exploring whether there is need for additional leadership and talent in this area, such as through the potential hiring of a Chief Data Officer or additional personnel who specialize in data analysis.

Thus, while the Tool has provided a good foundation on which to make progress toward satisfaction of Recommendation A.2, the NCAA must make significant further investments to standardize the gathering, maintenance and analysis of data to fully realize the goals of this recommendation.

## Findings

Based on our review, the NCAA is **IN PROGRESS** and moving toward addressing Recommendation A.2.

## Recommendation A.3

*Complete a gender equity impact statement in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championships planning process.*

## Overview

In Recommendation A.3, Kaplan referred to and incorporated its Phase I analysis and Recommendation 1.8, and reiterated that the NCAA should develop a gender equity impact statement template and associated submission and review process to be applied to all championships. (Phase II EGER, p. 25). Kaplan explained that this process should be designed by "NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues" and should "seek to ensure that decision-makers identify possible negative consequences of a proposed action on gender equity and preemptively develop mitigation strategies." (Phase I EGER, pp. 65-66).

The NCAA has made strides in implementing Recommendation A.3 and, in its implementation, the scope of the review process has been modified and expanded. Thus, the NCAA's work remains in progress.

After the Phase I EGER issued in August 2021, the NCAA almost immediately began addressing this recommendation by, among other things, creating a gender equity impact statement template form and designing an evaluative process to assess equity in the decision-making process for significant actions throughout the organization – including in legislation and policy, which seem to meet (or even exceed) the scope of “actions” identified by Kaplan. Further, the NCAA intends to pursue this gender equity review process by implementing a broader view of equity and one that requires the NCAA National Office and membership to view equity through an intersectional lens that includes core identities such as race, ethnicity and gender. Presently, the NCAA’s DEI Committees tasked with this recommendation, in collaboration with their NCAA staff liaisons in the Office of Inclusion, have robust working drafts of several documents, including an equity evaluation form, definitions to govern the review process and the process flow chart, and are poised to implement this review process.

## Analysis

In Phase I, Kaplan found that the very organizational structure of the NCAA seemed to create tension between the competing, or perceived to be competing, goals of gender equity and maximizing revenue. The understandable focus on Division I Men’s Basketball as, by far, the largest source of revenue-generation for the NCAA, creates certain challenges with respect to budgets, staffing, and other aspects of the NCAA. In addition, Kaplan noted that there seemed to be no one specifically tasked with ensuring gender equity throughout the organization. Indeed, although the NCAA has various offices and committees that are generally tasked with advancing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, Kaplan found that the focus of these offices and committees seems to be external rather internal.

In order to advance gender equity on an organizational level, Kaplan recommended that the NCAA complete a “gender equity impact statement” in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championships planning process. Kaplan indicated that the “statement” would be designed to “ensure that decision-makers identify possible negative consequences” of their proposed decisions and mitigate those negative consequences. (Phase I EGER, p. 66). Kaplan indicated that work on this recommendation should begin no later than Fall 2022. (*Id.* at p. 65).

Our team reviewed the steps the NCAA has taken to address this recommendation and found that the NCAA has made significant strides. Almost immediately after Kaplan issued its Phase I report, the NCAA’s four diversity, equity and inclusion committees – the Committee on Women’s Athletics, Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, Gender Equity Task Force, and Minority Opportunities and Interest Committee (herein, collectively, the “DEI Committees”) – began collaborating to specifically address this recommendation. The DEI Committees decided to make certain modifications to the letter of Kaplan’s recommendation in that the NCAA will refer to the resulting document/process as an “Equity Evaluation Process,” not as a “gender equity impact statement.” It seems the NCAA believes that assessing equity throughout the organization should be a collaborative and evaluative process, not a statement

or snapshot in time. Moreover, the DEI Committees stated that equity should also be considered by the National Office and the membership through an intersectional lens that includes core identities such as race, ethnicity and gender.

Thus, the DEI Committees – in collaboration with NCAA staff in the Office of Inclusion – set out to design and implement an evaluative process that decision-makers will use in assessing gender equity throughout the organization. In this regard, the DEI Committees have designed and nearly finalized the “Equity Evaluation Process.” This Process includes clear guidance on how and when a gender equity request is submitted, how and by whom it is evaluated, and what the possible outcomes or resolution of the request may be. The Process provides a framework for evaluating gender equity in operations beyond championships, including legislation, policy, and other aspects of operations that have an impact on student-athlete participation, the student-athlete experience and resource allocation, such as marketing and corporate relationships. As such, the current Process is designed with a broader scope than Kaplan contemplated in Recommendation A.3.

The DEI Committee members who designed the Process have significant experience in Title IX and gender equity issues. For example, several members of the DEI Committees have served as diversity officers, and their current or former titles include Chief Diversity Officer, Diversity Director, Director of Equal Opportunity in Sport, Inaugural Vice Chancellor Diversity and Inclusion, Senior Woman Administrator, and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America. In these and other roles, Committee members have created, implemented, and led their respective institutions’ diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, including implementing Title IX and gender equity programs. Additionally, several DEI Committee members are current or former professors whose research includes areas of race, identity, and sports diplomacy.

Moreover, the NCAA staff liaison working with the DEI Committees to develop this Process is the Managing Director of the Office of Inclusion. The Managing Director is an expert on gender equity and Title IX and has authored multiple national reports on Title IX. Since 2005, she has worked closely with nationally recognized Title IX expert Dr. Christine Grant on equity issues in intercollegiate athletics and has given numerous presentations on Title IX, gender equity, and inclusion on both the national and international levels. The Office of Legal Affairs also has advised the DEI Committees.

Presently, the NCAA has developed the Process template, and is working on finalizing working definitions to guide the Process, the administrative features of the Process and on automating the Process itself.

## Findings

We consider this recommendation **MODIFIED** and **IN PROGRESS**.

## Recommendation A.4

*Increase the number of senior staff in the NCAA's Championships structure to improve oversight of gender equity.*

### Overview

In Recommendation A.4, Kaplan found that, in FY2020-21, the two managing directors for operations within Championships each oversaw 42 Championships. (Phase II EGER, p. 25). In order to better ensure oversight of gender equity with respect to these 84 championships, Kaplan recommended that the NCAA “increase the number of managing directors for operations reporting to the SVP of Championships by at least one.” (*Id.*). Kaplan also recommended that the NCAA distribute responsibilities for the 84 championships among the managing directors in a way that will maximize their ability to monitor for, identify, and promptly address any gender equity issues or concerns as they arise within a sport. (*Id.*).

### Analysis

Prior to the pandemic, the Senior Vice President of Championships had three managing directors who reported directly to her – two Managing Directors of Championships, Operations and one Managing Director of Championships, External Operations. Each Managing Director of Championships, Operations was responsible for overseeing 42 championships. The Managing Director of Championships, External Operations was responsible for overseeing licensing, statistics and media, coordination, ticketing and marketing, and social media and digital. Until 2020, all three of these Managing Director positions were filled; however, in 2020, one of the Managing Directors retired, and the role was not filled at the time of Kaplan’s Phase II EGER. Thus, two Managing Directors managed the 84 championships carried out in 2021.

In response to Kaplan’s recommendation, the NCAA added a fourth Managing Director position and its third Managing Director of Championships, Operations. As recommended by Kaplan, this fourth Managing Director position has responsibilities directly related to overseeing gender equity issues. The job description for this newly-created position specifically provides that, “[t]he managing director shall establish a system to collect and maintain standardized data across the championships, including data related to gender equity monitoring, and systematically track and make available the data on an ongoing basis for decision-making.” Additionally, the newly created Managing Director of Championships, Operations is tasked with “[l]ead[ing] [a] small team to develop [a] framework to monitor performance on gender equity expectations for championships delivery.” It was reported that the employee who filled this new managing director role spends approximately 25% to 30% of his time addressing gender equity issues. All four Managing Director positions are presently staffed.

In addition to the Managing Director of Championships, Operations position, the NCAA added four other positions in FY2021-22 in Championships Operations — three Assistant

Directors and one Associate Director. Moreover, the NCAA’s Business Performance Management group reclassified and elevated a position from Director to Managing Director in response to Kaplan’s recommendation. The reclassified position description explicitly requires the now-elevated and cross-functional Managing Director to “[p]artner and collaborate with championships and inclusion in identifying gender equity data needs, maintaining a process of evaluation and decision making on championships gender equity issues and outcomes.” This newly re-structured Managing Director position is a member of the Championships’ senior leadership team.

By adding and hiring a third Managing Director of Championships, Operations with explicit gender equity responsibilities, the NCAA has allowed for increased oversight of gender equity at the highest levels of its operations. Now that there are three Managing Directors (instead of two as in 2021) with operational roles, and the responsibilities for the 84 championships are spread among them, NCAA staff report that Managing Directors and their respective teams have increased time and bandwidth to monitor and address any gender equity related concern as it arises.

## Findings

We consider Recommendation A.4 to be **ADDRESSED**.

## Recommendation A.5

*Over the next five years, conduct a “zero-based” budget for each championship to ensure that any gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommended that the NCAA “undergo a budget reset” that would allow the NCAA “not only to ensure gender equitable budgets, but to create efficiencies across budgets and maximize the impact of spending.” (Phase II EGER, p. 26). Kaplan suggested “zero-based budgeting for all NCAA championships” as the means to accomplish this goal. (*Id.*) Kaplan recognized that this budgetary reset would take “some time” and advised the NCAA should begin with Division I and National Collegiate championship budgets and then determine an order of priority to address the Division II and Division III championships, as well. (*Id.*)

Based on our interviews with various NCAA personnel, including the Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Championships Finance, the NCAA’s view, which appears to be unanimous, is that zero-based budgeting is not feasible because it is inefficient and time-consuming, and does not yield the stated goals of Recommendation A.5 (*i.e.*, budgets to ensure that gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable).

While the NCAA is not implementing zero-based budgeting, a \$3 million gender equity enhancement fund was previously added to the NCAA’s annual budget to address specific

recommendations in Kaplan’s Phase II EGER at the direction of the National Office’s Gender Equity Steering Committee, and additional similar budget increases have been proposed going forward.

Therefore, because the NCAA determined not to implement a zero-based budgeting approach, we note the progress toward this recommendation as considered, but not implemented.

## Analysis

Zero-based budgeting is a method of budgeting in which all expenses must be justified for each and every new period. Thus, zero-based budgeting starts from a “zero base,” and every function within the organization is analyzed for its needs and costs. The budgets are then built around what is needed for the upcoming period, regardless of whether each budget is higher or lower than the previous one.

There is little dispute that zero-based budgeting is a time-intensive process since it requires that the budgeting process starts from scratch each year. For an organization like the NCAA with budgets for 90 championships across 24 sports and three divisions, zero-based budgeting each year seems impracticable. In addition, even with zero-based budgeting, prior year budgets are necessarily used as a benchmark and starting point, so it was very difficult to achieve true zero-based budgets.

Based on the information we reviewed, including interviews with the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Championships Finance, the NCAA decided to forego attempting to conduct a “zero-based” budget for each of the 88 championships under the purview of our assessment. The NCAA advised that it attempted to utilize this type of budgeting in the past, but it was not efficient and generally ineffective. Most importantly, there is no evidence that zero-based budgeting would in any way promote the stated objective in this recommendation: to “ensure that any gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.” (See Phase II EGER, p. 26).

While the NCAA is not implementing zero-based budgeting, there have been specific budget increases of approximately \$3 million annually to date for the non-basketball championships to address specific gender equity-related enhancements. These enhancements have been recommended and implemented by the Championships Operations group in collaboration and consultation with Finance and the Office of Inclusion and, in most instances, have been shared with the National Office’s Gender Equity Steering Committee. The expenditures have been denoted explicitly as “Gender Equity Enhancements” and tracked by the Director of Championships Finance and his team. The “Gender Equity Enhancements” funded through this mechanism include the purchase of radio coverage for the Division I Women’s Lacrosse, Volleyball and Frozen Four semi-final and final games, enhancement of the in-venue game presentation capabilities at the Women’s College World Series, and an increase in the

officiating fee paid to officials at the Division I Women’s Lacrosse Championship, among others. There also has been a proposal to include a \$2 million gender equity enhancement fund in the annual budget going forward, which, if implemented, will further support implementation of the various recommendations and advance gender equity.

## Findings

Because the NCAA has chosen not to implement a zero-based budgeting approach, this recommendation was **CONSIDERED/NOT IMPLEMENTED**.

## Recommendation A.6

*Perform a real-time gender equity audit for all men’s and women’s championships and prepare an annual report on the results.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommended that “the NCAA should begin implementing a real-time gender equity review protocol for all championships” and that “[t]he review protocol should be standard across all championships, and should be developed and implemented by NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues . . . .” (See Phase II EGER, pp. 26-27). While the descriptive title of Recommendation A.6 refers to an “audit,” the narrative of the recommendation describes an “internal gender equity review” and a “review protocol” developed and implemented by the NCAA, not an external auditor. (*Id.*). Kaplan noted that each year this protocol should yield a report of all championships that took place that year and that the report should be shared with the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II Presidents Council, the Division III Presidents Council, and the NCAA President and Senior Management Team. (*Id.* at p. 27).

The NCAA has addressed Recommendation A.6 through its development and deployment of the Gender Equity Assessment Tool and its engagement of external assessors in each fiscal year following the Kaplan report.

## Analysis

The Gender Equity Assessment Tool, described in detail in our analyses of Recommendations A.1 and A.2 above, is the review protocol developed by NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity issues, including the Managing Director of the Office of Inclusion and the Managing Director of Business Performance Management and Championships. The Tool is designed to be used annually, and it includes a detailed analysis of the “items” set forth in Recommendation C.1, namely health and safety, practice facilities and locker rooms, travel and accommodations, awards, gifts and mementos, signage and promotional efforts, and entertainment.

The Gender Equity Assessment Tool has been put into practice over the past fiscal years (FY2021-22, FY2022-23), and NCAA staff continue to optimize and automate it. The Gender Equity Assessment Tool has the capability to produce various, standardized reports. At this early stage, however, those reports have not yet been shared with various stakeholders Kaplan identified, but we understand that such a reporting procedure is under consideration.

Presently, we understand that the NCAA has determined that, given its staffing resources and complexity of planning and managing the logistics of 90 championships spread across the United States, it is not feasible to conduct an annual real-time audit during each of the championships. Rather, through the Gender Equity Assessment Tool, the NCAA staff review each championship in totality following its completion and then will course correct for the following year if an equity issue is discovered. We note, nevertheless, that our NCAA staff interviews repeatedly confirmed that staff are encouraged to identify, review and remedy any gender equity concern that may arise in real-time, including during the championship planning phase or amid its execution. The Office of Inclusion mentioned at least three examples of adjustments that occurred in real-time.

Moreover, the NCAA engaged an independent firm to conduct an assessment of its progress on the Phase I Division I Basketball Championship-related recommendations. This assessment was completed in July 2022 and included site visits and real-time review of the 2022 Division I Basketball Championships. The NCAA then engaged our Firm in March 2023 to conduct this assessment of its progress in implementing Kaplan’s Phase I Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 and Phase II Recommendations. As noted, we conducted 16 site visits that evaluated the “items” set forth in Recommendation C.1 for each of the sites we visited. Both the July 2022 assessment and our assessment resulted in comprehensive reports shared with the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II Presidents Council, the Division III Presidents Council, the NCAA President and Senior Management Team, and beyond.

## Findings

The NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation A.6.

## Recommendation A.7

*Conduct an external gender equity assessment of all championships in five years.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommends that the NCAA conduct an external assessment of its 88 championships to ensure gender equity is achieved. It seems Kaplan recommended this external assessment take place five (5) years after the date of the Phase II Report, in 2026, and serve as a

companion five-year audit to the one conducted for the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. (See Phase II EGER, p. 27).

Our interviews and review of NCAA documents indicate that the NCAA is in the position to address Recommendation A.7 within this five-year timeline.

## Analysis

Per the NCAA’s March 2023 update, “an external gender equity assessment will be outlined and scheduled to meet the five-year recommendation, though specific timing for this assessment has not yet been determined.” Our instant assessment as to the implementation of each of the Phase II recommendations two years after the initial Phase II EGER was conducted is an important foundational step that puts the NCAA in a strong position to complete the slated five-year review. We also understand that the NCAA is positioned to devote financial resources over the next two fiscal years to continuing its annual gender equity assessment program reviews. These regular, annual reviews move the NCAA forward and position it to satisfy the five-year recommended assessment described in Recommendation A.7.

## Findings

Pursuant to the NCAA’s update referenced above, Recommendation A.7 is **IN PROGRESS**.

## Recommendation B.1

*Consider commissioning an independent valuation of the media rights of other championships or championship “packages.”*

## Overview

In its Phase I EGER, Kaplan engaged an independent media expert who opined that, “if the NCAA opens the bidding rights to the Division I Women’s Basketball Championship, it would unlock considerable value and attract far more bidders than keeping it combined with 28 other NCAA Championships.” (Phase II EGER, pp. 35-36, quoting the Desser Report, Section 1.10). Kaplan’s retained media expert also concluded that, if the NCAA were to unbundle the rights to the 28 other championships that ESPN currently contracts to broadcast, it could “unlock” further value. (*Id.* at p. 36). Based on its expert’s opinion, Kaplan recommended that the NCAA consider commissioning its own independent valuation of media rights for the other (non-basketball) championships and explore marketing championships in “smaller packages,” such as the Men’s and Women’s College World Series. (*Id.*).

In February 2023, the NCAA engaged Endeavor Operating Company, LLC d/b/a Endeavor (“Endeavor”), specifically, Karen Brodtkin and Hillary Mandel, to conduct an independent review and valuation of media rights as to all 29 championships that ESPN currently has the right to broadcast. NCAA staff indicated that Endeavor’s work is being carried out contemporaneously with our engagement, with results to be reported to the Board of Governors in August 2023. Accordingly, Recommendation B.1 has been addressed.

## Analysis

The NCAA and ESPN entered into an agreement in 2011 by which ESPN now controls the broadcast media rights to 29 NCAA championships, with the notable exception of the Division I Men's Basketball Championship (which is controlled by Turner/CBS now Warner Bros. Discovery). ESPN pays the NCAA close to \$40 million annually for these rights. The ESPN agreement is set to expire in August 2024.

In connection with the impending expiration of the term of the ESPN agreement, the NCAA engaged Endeavor in February 2023 to conduct an independent review and analysis of the value of the broadcast media rights. We understand that Endeavor's Karen Brodtkin and Hillary Mandel have been working with the NCAA on this engagement. Public reports indicate Brodtkin and Mandel have significant experience in professional and college sports media, including consulting with the Big 12 and Big Ten Conferences as well as the National Women's Soccer League on their respective media rights arrangements.

NCAA staff reported that, with the guidance of Endeavor, it is exploring whether it will "unbundle" championships that have, to date, been included in ESPN's package. We understand that, in addition to the Division I Women's Basketball Championship, the NCAA is also considering whether other championships might be "unbundled," including the Division I Women's Volleyball Championship, the Men's Frozen Four, and the Men's and Women's College World Series.

NCAA staff indicated that this forthcoming analysis must consider and evaluate the risks that "unbundling" the championships and marketing "smaller packages" pose. We repeatedly heard a concern that removing higher-profile championships from the package might significantly devalue the remaining package of broadcast media rights. There is some concern that championships for sports like swimming and diving, bowling and fencing would be unable to glean any meaningful national broadcast exposure if championships like the Division I Women's Basketball Championship or the Men's and Women's College World Series were removed from the package and marketed independently.

We understand that Endeavor's work is on-going and that its results and recommendations are slated to be shared with the Board of Governors in August 2023. It is worth noting that we have not reviewed and analyzed the engagement letter or agreement that sets out the terms of the NCAA's engagement with Endeavor. Thus, we are not able to comment on the express details of the engagement.

## Findings

The NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation B.1 through an engagement with Endeavor to conduct a review of media rights in preparation for the impending expiration of the ESPN agreement.

## Recommendation B.2

*Ensure equitable branding for all championships, including but not limited to gender modifiers in championship titles.*

### Overview

In its Phase II EGER, Kaplan acknowledged that the NCAA had made progress in implementing equitable branding for its men's and women's championships in similar sports, but recommended that the NCAA ensure that it continue to address any gender-based disparities. (Phase II EGER, p. 36). Specifically, Kaplan identified consistent use of gender modifiers in reference to each championship and social media branding as areas in which the NCAA should continue to consider gender equity in the type and quality of branding and logos being used. (*Id.*). In furtherance of Recommendation B.2, Kaplan noted that the NCAA already "commissioned a branding and marketing study to determine how best to maximize each sport's brand and logo," and noted that the NCAA should ensure the study addressed any gender-based disparities. (*See id.*).

The branding and marketing study the NCAA completed in Winter 2021, in collaboration with a third-party consultant, demonstrates a focus on ensuring that NCAA logos and branding are deployed equitably across championships. Further, interviews with NCAA staff confirmed an increasingly intentional effort to create more consistency in the use of logos and gender modifiers to describe the championships in like sports across all mediums (*i.e.*, in-venue, social media, TV, etc.) and to monitor media partners and other vendors and suppliers to ensure compliance with this expectation of consistency. We note, however, that in the course of our site visits, our team identified some disparities in the signage and branding associated with similarly situated men's and women's championships, which we further discuss in our analysis of Recommendation C.1.

Additionally, since the Phase II EGER, the NCAA's social media team reviewed and amplified its efforts "to equalize championship branding" and to ensure equitable handles, hashtags and links from its NCAA-controlled social media accounts to the respective men's and women's NCAA webpages. (*See Phase II EGER*, p. 36). Our review of social media connected with the championships that we visited demonstrated that the NCAA has made progress in creating a more unified brand and consistency in deploying gender modifiers across its various social media platforms.

### Analysis

As referenced in Kaplan's Phase II EGER, the NCAA engaged a third-party consultant and conducted a branding and marketing study. (Phase II EGER, p. 34). The study was ongoing at the time of Kaplan's work, but was completed in the fourth quarter of 2021. As one NCAA staff member described, the branding and marketing study provided the "strategic framework" for the NCAA brand. An ultimate output and now-guiding brand strategy is that the NCAA should

continue to work to create a “shared identity across sport,” incorporating both the men’s and women’s championships, and sharpen its focus on celebrating the journey and unique personality of each championship.

### ***Gender Modifiers/Brand Consistency***

Since the branding and marketing study was completed, and beginning with the 2022-23 championships season, the NCAA staff reports that there is a commitment to implement a consistent approach to the NCAA’s use of gender modifiers in marketing and branding its championships. NCAA staff summarized the approach as follows: If there is a reference specifically to an event, the modifier “Men’s” or “Women’s” will be deployed (for example, the Men’s College World Series or the Women’s College World Series). On the other hand, if the marketing or branding effort is focused on a theme or tag line, the gender modifier is not deployed (for example, “March Madness” or “Greatest Show on Dirt”, not “Women’s Greatest Show on Dirt” or “Men’s Greatest Show on Dirt”).

At the Division II and III championships, the NCAA staff has developed “turnkey tools” that can be used at the championship venues. These tools are designed to supply the Championships Managers at each championship with basic brand identities and, from there, the Championships Managers are then responsible for creating and displaying signage (with additional assistance from the venue or local organizing committees). The “turnkey tools” for the men’s and women’s championships are substantially the same.

### ***Social Media***

Since 2021, the NCAA has dedicated additional human and financial resources to implement significant changes to the various social media sites that it controls (including its Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts) in an effort to create better alignment, “level the brands” across sports and ensure gender equity.

From our interviews and review of the various social media channels, the NCAA team has edited accounts, combined accounts and adjusted or removed hashtags since 2021. For instance, the Twitter account for Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse is now combined into one singular account – @NCAALAX – with hashtags that distinguish the sports (#NCAAWLAX and #NCAAMLAX). This is consistent across Facebook and Instagram as well. The same is now true for ice hockey where @NCAAIceHockey provides coverage for both men’s and women’s competitions during the regular season and championships with similar hashtags and references. There are certain sports that maintain separate accounts for the men’s and women’s competitions, such as baseball, softball and volleyball, which we understand is based primarily on the sports’ fan-following. As evidence of the on-going need to monitor these adjustments, we documented one inconsistency on the NCAA Lacrosse Facebook page. In the introductory section, the Facebook page states the following: “The official account of the NCAA DI Men’s and

Women’s Lacrosse Championships, Join us with #NCAAMLAX.” It appears that “#NCAAWLAX” was left off the introduction section.

We also note that, in the course of our assessment, the NCAA identified on-going challenges to its efforts to monitor and leverage effectively its social media assets. NCAA staff relayed that the social media team consists of only five staff members. To help provide additional resources in the short-run, the NCAA has invested in “contract labor” at the approximate cost of \$500,000 to assist with content management (primarily to manage the NCAA’s Division I Women’s Basketball Championship post-season account). In fact, NCAA staff reports that, at times, limited staff bandwidth hampers the NCAA’s ability to tell an effective story or monitor and create original content for its social media accounts.

Perhaps as a result of these staffing challenges, there currently are several Division I sports that do not have a social media presence during the regular season, and post-season coverage is provided only under the NCAA’s primary social media account (rather than having a stand-alone and dedicated account). These sports include swimming & diving, skiing, rifle, gymnastics, bowling, fencing, water polo, and field hockey. Divisions II and III do not have individual sport accounts controlled and managed by the NCAA for the regular season or post-season. Rather, the NCAA Governance staff manages championship updates for each sport through their primary Division II and III social media accounts.

Finally, as we discussed at length in Recommendation 2.3, as part of the Turner/CBS (now Warner Bros. Discovery) agreement, there is a strict prohibition on the NCAA’s ability to monetize the social media accounts that remain under the NCAA’s control. This prohibition further limits the NCAA’s financial resources to invest in the development and expansion of its social media presence.

## Findings

Recommendation B.2 has been **ADDRESSED**.

### Recommendation C.1

*Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at all championships are gender-equitable.*

## Overview

Mirroring its recommendations in Phase I with regard to the Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships, Kaplan also suggests that, for all championships, the NCAA “should develop a defined set of items directly impacting the student-athlete championship experience that should be substantially the same at championships going forward.” (Phase II EGER, p. 48). This list of items impacting the student-athlete experience should be developed by staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity in consultation with the staff who plan and execute the championships, and it should include at least items such as health and safety, practice facilities,

locker rooms, travel, accommodations, awards, gifts, mementos, other amenities, signage, marketing, promotional efforts, branding and entertainment. (*Id.* at pp. 48-49). The list then should be reviewed, modified and updated regularly, and shared with the Competition Oversight Committee, the Division II and III Championships Committees, and the sports committees to use in the planning and administering of the championships each year. (*Id.* at p. 49).

Further, Kaplan recommended that the list of items be used to conduct any real-time or after-the-fact audits to ensure that the men’s and women’s championships for each sport are equitable. (Phase II EGER, p. 49). Kaplan recognized that “substantially the same” does not mean identical, but rather that “any differences in quality and/or quantity of the items should be reasonable based on the structure of the championship, the size of the audience, and the location of the events.” (Phase I EGER, p. 89).

The NCAA, under the leadership of the Gender Equity Steering Committee, developed the Gender Equity Checklist and Gender Equity Assessment Tool to implement Recommendation C.1. These tools were developed with participation from Championships Operations staff and the Office of Inclusion and include the principles and items that Kaplan identified. NCAA staff uses the Gender Equity Checklist in the planning and execution of the championships. Further, the Gender Equity Assessment Tool has been deployed to conduct an after-the-fact review of the championships at the conclusion of each championship cycle.

To further assess the NCAA’s progress towards meeting Recommendation C.1, our team conducted various site visits to spring championships. These site visits reviewed the items outlined specifically in Kaplan’s EGERs that have an impact on the student-athlete experience at each championship. While ongoing equity analyses and assessments must continue, the NCAA has been effective in improving the overall student-athlete experience and more systematically ensuring that equity exists at the men’s and women’s championships for each sport.

## Analysis

The NCAA formed the Gender Equity Steering Committee to lead its response to the Kaplan EGERs. The Steering Committee is comprised of NCAA staff in leadership positions in various operational divisions of the National Office, including Championships, Business Performance Management, the Office of Inclusion, the Office of Legal Affairs, Finance, Governance, and Communications. The Steering Committee’s composition was intended to foster collaboration across divisions and units. The NCAA reported that the goal of the Steering Committee was first to evaluate and identify aspects of the championships that could raise the specter of gender inequity and address them efficiently and effectively, and then to move forward with consideration of Kaplan’s recommendations.

The Gender Equity Checklist was developed under the leadership of the Gender Equity Steering Committee, and the NCAA’s Managing Director of Inclusion principally designed the Checklist (with material input from other Gender Equity Steering Committee members). It identifies items that impact the student-athlete experience and allows NCAA Championships staff

to analyze and compare those items across championships to ensure gender equity in the planning process. The Checklist includes the six items that Kaplan identified as those that should be evaluated to assess the student-athlete experience. Further, the Checklist guides the NCAA staff's real-time equity review based on a "substantially the same" reasonableness standard, as Kaplan contemplated (*i.e.*, including guidance as to "what needs to be the same?" versus "what needs to be comparable?" versus "when is it OK to be different?").

As discussed at length in earlier analyses in this report, NCAA staff also created and developed the Gender Equity Assessment Tool, which enhances the breadth and depth of the Gender Equity Checklist. The Gender Equity Assessment Tool deploys a set of 233 questions that are designed to analyze items that impact the student-athlete experience (either directly or indirectly) and that track the categories of items set forth in the Gender Equity Checklist. The Tool's championship-by-championship results allow NCAA staff to identify, investigate and analyze discrepancies between similarly situated championships to ensure any differences meet the "substantially the same" standard, or are division- or sport-based, for example, not gender-based.

Our interviews identified instances in which discrepancies between similarly situated championships were identified – either proactively during the planning process or through a post-event review utilizing the Gender Equity Assessment Tool – and then addressed to improve equity at the championships. In sum, both the Gender Equity Checklist and Gender Equity Assessment Tool are foundational elements in the NCAA's efforts to address Recommendation C.1.

## Site Visit Review

The timeline of our engagement resulted in a focus primarily on the spring championships. We conducted site visits to the following championships, which are closely aligned with the sports as to which Kaplan conducted "case studies" in its Phase II EGER:

- Division II Women's Golf Championship, May 16-20, Fox Run Golf Club, Eureka, Missouri
- Division II Women's Lacrosse Final Four and Championship Game, May 19-21, Key Stadium, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Division II Men's Golf Championship, May 22-26, Avalon Lakes Country Club, Warren, Ohio
- Division II Softball Championship, May 25-31, Frost Stadium at Warner Park, Chattanooga, Tennessee
- Division I Women's Lacrosse Final Four and Championship Game, May 26-28, WakeMed Soccer Park, Cary, North Carolina
- Division III Women's Lacrosse Final Four and Championship Game, May 26-28, Kerr Stadium, Salem, Virginia

- Division I Men’s Lacrosse Final Four and Championship Game, May 27-29, Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Division II and III Men’s Lacrosse Championship Game, May 28, Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Division III Softball Championship, June 1-7, Taylor Field, Marshall, Texas
- Division I Softball – Women’s College World Series, June 1-8, USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Division III Baseball Championship, June 2-8, Perfect Game Field at Veterans Memorial Stadium, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Division II Baseball Championship, June 3-10, USA Baseball National Training Complex, Cary, North Carolina
- Division I Baseball – Men’s College World Series, June 16-26, Charles Schwab Field, Omaha, Nebraska

Our site-visit team was comprised of five former college student-athletes who have participated in NCAA championships and a former college athletics administrator who has experience across NCAA divisions and committees. We focused our site visits on the six items that Kaplan identified as having an impact on the student-athlete experience, which include the following: health and safety; practice facilities and locker rooms; travel and accommodations; awards, gifts, mementos, and other amenities; signage, marketing, promotional efforts and branding; and, entertainment. (See Phase II EGER, pp. 48-49). In addition to evaluating the identified items, our team approached each visit with an eye toward the overall look, feel and experience of the championships to assess the NCAA’s progress in implementing Recommendation C.1.

### Health and Safety

The health and safety-related services and equipment the NCAA provided were substantially the same across all championship sites we visited. The NCAA and host institutions provided athletic training rooms of comparable size and various training materials as well as medical support to each of the championship events on a materially indistinguishable basis. Materials and support provided included training tables, medical tape, pre-wrap, and ice bags, as well as local athletic trainers, doctors, and emergency response services (on-site or on-call).

### Practice Facilities and Locker Rooms

#### *Practice Facilities*

Practice facilities at the championships we visited were similar with any noted differences being the result of the location and structure of the competition venue and championship. For instance, the Women’s College World Series had three practice fields on-site and a well-equipped indoor hitting complex that was approximately 15 minutes from the stadium. Comparatively, the

Men's College World Series did not have a practice facility on-site and used the game field for practice and warm-ups. The participating baseball teams had access to two local universities within a five to ten-minute drive from the competition venue that offered indoor training facilities in case of inclement weather.

By way of further example, at the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship, student-athletes were able to practice on the stadium field the day prior to the semi-final games, but were required to practice at a local university the day before their championship game. Unlike the competition site, the local university field was turf, not grass. On the other hand, the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship participants used practice fields on the outside perimeter of the stadium for practice and warm-up, if needed, the day before games and on scheduled practice days. It seems the venue at the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship provided for a more efficient practice and warm-up space compared to the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship venue at which the student-athletes were required to practice off-site on a critical practice day due to the Division II and III Men's Lacrosse Championship Games.

In sum, we concluded that the practice facilities at the championships we visited were substantially the same in that differences we noted were reasonable based on the size and structure of the championship venue.

#### *Locker Rooms*

Similarly, the locker room facilities were substantially the same across most of the championships we visited. The locker rooms at the championship sites provided individual space to dress and prepare for games or matches, as well as sufficient bathroom stalls and shower heads to accommodate the teams. However, there was a noted discrepancy between the locker rooms for the Men's and Women's College World Series. The Men's College World Series had shower facilities on site. In contrast, student-athletes at the Women's College World Series do not have accessible showers on site and, thus, must shower at their respective hotels after a practice or game. NCAA staff noted that the student-athletes at the Men's College World Series rarely use the showers, but the disparity still exists between the respective locker room facilities.

#### Travel and Accommodations

The NCAA maintains and applies a consistent policy for mode of team travel to and from its championships. Pursuant to this policy, the mode of travel is determined, principally, by distance of the participating institution from the championship site. The NCAA also pays an equal per diem to participating travel parties in similarly situated sports. The NCAA reported that it applied its travel and per diem policies consistently in connection with the championships that we visited. It was beyond our scope of work to conduct a participant-by-participant audit of team travel arrangements and per diem expenses paid to members of the travel parties.

Second, while several factors contributed to differences in the quality and amenities available at the championships' team hotels (such as the size and location of the host city), the

accommodations provided to the participating teams at the championship sites we visited were substantially the same (with the exception of Division II Men’s and Women’s Basketball as noted in Recommendation 6.2).

With regard to the Men’s and Women’s College World Series, the eight competing teams stayed in multiple hotels located across the respective host cities. There was a distinct difference in the quality of the hotels at each respective championship. For instance, at the Women’s College World Series, one team stayed at a hotel with a publicly advertised regular rate of approximately \$250 per night while another team stayed at a hotel with a publicly advertised regular rate of approximately \$100 per night (note, these rates are not the discounted rates the NCAA negotiated and paid during the championship, but those that are publicly advertised during non-peak periods). There were similar disparities in the Men’s College World Series team accommodations. While this is not a gender equity issue, the variance may have an impact on the overall student-athlete experience for those participating, especially if the student-athletes are comparing experiences at the same championship. Importantly, while there were differences in the quality and overall “star” rating of the properties, the hotels we visited, including those referenced above, provided suitable accommodations (*i.e.*, a clean and quiet bedroom, team meeting rooms, access to food and drink, and a location within the general vicinity of the other team hotels and the competition venue).

### Awards, Gifts, Mementos, and Other Amenities

The awards, gifts and mementos the NCAA offered and distributed were substantially the same for comparable championships. The awards given to the winning team at the championships we visited were substantially the same. For example, each winning team received an NCAA-issued trophy that appeared to be of the same quality and design as well as a championship t-shirt and hat.

We identified and reviewed the gifts available to participating student-athletes, which included various apparel, earbuds, sunglasses, smart speakers, wireless chargers, and kitchen accessories and appliances. All Division I student-athletes who competed in the championships were offered the same or similar gifts from an online gift suite in which the allotted amount for each participant to “spend” was comparable across championships. The Division II and III championship participants received the same or substantially similar gifts across all sports, but did not receive gifts of the same dollar value when compared to their Division I counterparts (likely as a consequence of the material differences in the Division I versus Divisions II and III championship funding).

In addition to the items offered from the online gift suite, the NCAA gave various NCAA mementos to participating student-athletes, such as slides, draw string bags, backpacks, necklaces, and towels. For example, the Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Championship Committees decided to forgo their banquets for the 2023 championships and, in lieu of the

banquets, provided an additional gift to each student-athlete who participated in the championships.

Further, we reviewed data illustrating the number of gifts provided to student-athletes at each championship across all three divisions. While some discrepancies exist, those differences appear to be based on squad size rather than gender. For instance, baseball's approved travel roster is slightly larger than softball's – softball is allowed to travel 22 student-athletes for the Women's College World Series while baseball is permitted to travel 27 student-athletes for the Men's College World Series, which, in turn, requires a greater spend on gifts and mementos.

Overall, we found the awards, gifts, mementos, and other amenities given to student-athletes at the men's and women's championship sites we visited to be substantially the same.

## Signage, Marketing, Promotional Efforts, and Branding

### *Signage and Branding*

As we noted above in Recommendation B.2, due to staffing limitations, the NCAA Championships Engagement team provides onsite support to only a subset of championships (e.g., Division I Men's and Women's Basketball, Men's and Women's College World Series). The signage and branding at nearly all championships are implemented by the assigned Championships Manager. While there were observable differences in signage at the Men's and Women's College World Series, as discussed below, the same NCAA staff member has primary responsibility for the design and placement of signage at both championships.

At the Women's College World Series, there was no observable signage promoting the event in the downtown Oklahoma City area, where many of the team hotels were situated. In contrast, at the Men's College World Series, we understand that the City of Omaha and its local organizing committee invested in and placed signage around the City, including around the venue and in the area of the team hotels. Generally, while not entirely within the NCAA's control, we observed greater contributions from the City of Omaha to the signage and branding of the Men's College World Series, which has the ability to create a perceived equity issue between the championships.

Another example, although not as disparate, was the signage and branding of the Division I Lacrosse Championships – the Division I Men's Lacrosse Championship had ample signage around downtown Philadelphia, contrasted with the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship which had signage in the hotels and near or around the competition venue, but not prominently in the surrounding area of the City of Cary. While the noted disparities in signage and host-city-wide promotion primarily are attributable to the local organizing committees' efforts and not the NCAA's, the disparity could affect the student-athlete experience at the championships. In addition, Championships Managers and sport committees maintain discretion as to how to spend the monies the NCAA budgets for signage. This discretion also may result in apparent differences between signage and the overall look and feel at the championships.

We also observed a material difference in signage at the team hotels at the Men's and Women's College World Series. According to the NCAA Championships and Championships Engagement staff, it is, at times, difficult for the NCAA to reach and enforce an agreement with the selected hotels to display all desired signage. The NCAA attempts to include the obligation to post signage in its contractual agreements with the hotels, but such an obligation is not always articulated; the primary concern of the Championships Managers seems to be securing the appropriate number of hotel rooms and meeting space. In addition, certain teams have provided feedback to the NCAA asking to restrict hotel signage in order to improve security around the hotel, which may also factor into an observable difference in the signage displayed at a hotel.

Signage and branding at the eight team hotels at the Women's College World Series was divergent, resulting in a different look and feel at each hotel. Some properties displayed championship signage throughout the interior and exterior of their facilities while others had the Women's College World Series logo on the front door and only minimal signage throughout the interior of the hotels. In contrast, the Men's College World Series appeared to have consistent branding and signage from hotel-to-hotel. While a variance between championships is reasonable at times, there is not a structural factor (e.g., structure of championship, size of audience and/or location of the event) that would justify the difference between signage and branding at the championship hotels we visited.

While we noted some material differences in signage at hotels, the signage at each competition venue was fairly consistent. The NCAA budgeted the 2023 Men's College World Series \$30,000 more to spend on signage than the Women's College World Series. As of this report, we did not have access to a fully reconciled budget-to-actual report for the 2023 championships. Our review of the actual expenditures from the 2022 championships, however, demonstrated that the actual expenditures on signage at the Men's and Women's College World Series were substantially the same. NCAA staff shared with our team that the NCAA is currently reviewing the budget allocation for signage for the Women's College World Series in FY2023-24 to bring it more in line with the actual expenses. We understand that the disparity in budgeted expenses as to signage likely is a result of the difference in the size of the competition venues. Charles Schwab Field that hosts the Men's College World Series is larger and requires more signage than USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium that hosts the Women's College World Series.

#### *Marketing and Promotional Efforts*

For the spring championship sites we visited, the NCAA provides support in event marketing and promotions for Division I baseball, Division I softball, and Division I men's and women's lacrosse. For these championships, the level and quality of support the NCAA provided appeared substantially the same. Our observations confirmed that most of the promotional activities for each championship are the result of activations of corporate partnerships in or around the venue, either pre-game, in-game or post-game. Many of these corporate sponsorship activities included fan engagement and interaction (see Fan Engagement and Festivals below for

further detail). Our team did not conduct an audit of promotions at each championship site, but based on our visual inspection, quantity seemed comparable site-to-site.

Additionally, at the Men’s College World Series, each hotel had an official merchandise stand prominently set up in the lobby and staffed regularly by volunteers. Hotels at the Women’s College World Series did not have championship merchandise stands of any sort. We were unable to identify any structural factor that would justify this difference.

Since 2021, the NCAA has taken steps to improve the overall consistency of its social media marketing and coverage at championships, which we describe in greater detail in our analysis of Recommendation B.2. For all Division II and III championships, the NCAA Governance staff manages the social media accounts across the various platforms and provides regular championship updates for all championships. For Division I championships, dedicated NCAA social media staff or contracted partners manage the NCAA-controlled social media accounts. For the championship sites we visited, there was no material difference in social media content or coverage noted. As outlined above, we documented one inconsistency on the NCAA’s combined Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Facebook page in which it appears that “#NCAAWLAX” was left off the introduction section of the page.

All championship events that we visited were streamed, at a minimum, on NCAA.com. In addition, the Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Championships’ semi-final matches were broadcast on ESPN or ESPN2, and their final events were broadcast on ESPN. Similarly, the Division I Baseball and Softball Championships were broadcast, in their entirety, on the ESPN family of networks.

## Entertainment

### *Fan Engagement and Festivals*

Any divergence in fan engagement at the championships we visited seemed to be based principally on differences across divisions (Division I championships warranted more engagement than Division II or III championships) and sports. We did not observe material differences in fan engagement at similarly situated men’s and women’s championships we visited (with the exception of the Division II Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships, noted in Recommendation 6.2). By way of example, the Division II Softball and Baseball, Division II Men’s and Women’s Golf, Division III Women’s Lacrosse, and Division III Baseball Championships had little to no in-game fan engagement, which seemed to be driven by a lack of digital displays and corporate activations to sponsor promotional contests of any kind.

By contrast, the Division I Men’s and Women’s College World Series and Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Championships featured significant in-game fan engagement, including, but not limited to, hype videos, video replays, and in-game entertainment during breaks in the competition. Fan engagement at each of the aforementioned four Division I championships we visited also benefited from NCAA-hosted Fan Festivals with games, music, entertainment, food

and drink options, and interactive exhibits. Our site visits did not identify any material difference in the Fan Festivals at the men's versus the women's championships.

### *Student-Athlete Entertainment*

The championships that we reviewed did not provide entertainment or recreation opportunities for student-athletes outside of a championship banquet. We understand that decisions regarding the critical features of the banquets are based primarily on student-athletes and coaches' input and feedback. Thus, some sports and championships have moved away from the formal banquet structure, and have chosen to host a more casual event with interactive games and other forms of entertainment. Other sports have elected to forego the championship banquet entirely – for example, Division I, II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse chose not to host a banquet this year, but rather provided additional gifts to the student-athletes. Accordingly, there is little consistency as to the venue, content and structure of the banquets, making them challenging to compare.

By way of example, the Division I Men's and Women's College World Series each hosted a casual team event, which were very similar in structure and content. We determined that, in previous years, the Men's College World Series hosted an outdoor cookout at the competition venue with evening fireworks for participants and fans. Student-athletes and coaches provided feedback in their post-event survey indicating that such an outdoor event was too long and taxing for the student-athletes, especially as they prepared to play their opening games the following day. Thus, this year, the sport committee and NCAA moved the Men's College World Series pre-championship event to an indoor venue. This change resulted in banquet events for baseball and softball that were substantially the same this year; both events provided similar entertainment, a strolling buffet, and a very brief program honoring award winners.

### *Community Engagement*

Divisions II and III, as part of their divisional priorities, have articulated a commitment to supporting student-athlete participation in community engagement during their championships. The rationale for such engagement seems to be that it enriches the student-athlete experience, builds fan bases and supports the communities in which they compete (specifically, the local youth). Division I does not appear to have articulated such an express commitment vis-à-vis its championship events. Although community engagement appears to be a required element for Division II and III championship events, we observed instances in which the requirement was not consistently applied.

By way of example, Division III softball teams participating in the championship were required to participate in community service events on the first day of practice at the site of competition. Division III baseball teams participating in the championship, however, did not have this same requirement to participate in such an activity (in fact, the schedule did not include a community engagement activity). Division II baseball and softball teams both participated in

community engagement activities prior to each team’s first game in the championship. We recognize that a community engagement activity certainly could be an experience that enriches the student-athlete experience at a championship, a value-add so to speak; however, the inclusion of such an event in the Division III Women’s Softball Championship schedule, but not in the Division III Men’s Baseball Championship schedule, gives the appearance of a gender-based disparity.

## Findings

The NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation C.1. However, it must continue to monitor and assess items that impact the student-athlete experience and redress any material discrepancies to ensure a gender-equitable experience across its championships.

### Recommendation C.2

*Create a transparent process for reviewing proposals to increase the size of a championship’s bracket/field, squad, bench, or travel party size that takes gender equity into account.*

## Overview

In Recommendation C.2, Kaplan suggested that the Division I Competition Oversight Committee develop a “process for holistically considering and approving requests from sport committees” regarding championship structure to ensure equity is considered. (See Phase II EGER, p. 50). Divisions II and III are not specifically referenced in this recommendation. As Kaplan further noted, there was some momentum toward establishing “principles and process [as] recommended by the Division I Championships Finance Review Working Group,” but no transparent process was in place when the Phase II EGER issued and, at the time of the writing of this report, such a process remains for future consideration. (See Phase II EGER, p. 50).

## Analysis

According to the NCAA’s March 2023 update, “[t]he Division I Competition Oversight Committee and DII and DIII Championships Committee each have a process of evaluation and detailed information to determine whether increases are appropriate based on gender equity.” (See NCAA’s update from March 2023 on the current status of work in Phase II of the Kaplan EGER). However, based on interviews with NCAA staff, the organization has worked toward creating a process for reviewing proposals, but there is no established and consistent process in place at this time.

At its meeting in October 2020, the Division I Council, the high-level group responsible for the day-to-day decision-making for Division I, “approved the following policy recommendations from the Championships Finance Review Working Group regarding championships administration...(3) Establish a process to manage future requests to modify squad, travel party or bench size; (4) Establish principles to guide future decisions regarding squad, travel party or

bench size; and (5) Establish principles to guide future decisions regarding championship bracket/field size.” (See Report of the NCAA Division I Council, October 13-14, 2020). However, since April 2022, there has been no reference in the Council’s meeting minutes to the Working Group’s efforts to establish and implement a set process. This leads us to conclude that its work is currently dormant. The interviews we conducted confirmed that there is not an established process to date.

Rather, each division continues to be governed by a set of “guiding principles” when considering policy and procedural changes. These considerations create a framework for the overall review and determination of proposals. For the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, all new proposals and/or adjustments are examined with regard to the impact on the following set of considerations: student-athlete experience; equity, diversity and inclusion; competitive fairness; student-athlete health and well-being; and fiscal planning.

The Division I Competition Oversight Committee met in January 2022 to discuss squad size for championships in order to provide additional opportunities for student-athletes to participate and experience the NCAA championship. At that meeting, the Committee noted “the overarching principles of the squad size review considered participation opportunities across like sports, the number of student-athletes necessary for competition, including substitutions, along with any meaningful ways a sport has changed (e.g., new position player, playing rule change, etc.) as recommended by sport committees . . . To adhere to the Championships Finance Review Working Group’s suggestion to evaluate travel party/squad/bench size every other year, the Competition Oversight Committee will next review these limits in January 2024.” (See Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee, January 18, 2022). Thus, there is evidence that the Division I Competition Oversight Committee continues to deploy these holistic principles and priorities to guide its decision-making.

In addition, the Division I Competition Oversight Committee discussed and developed “decision-making” priorities when considering policy changes or additional budget allocations with a primary focus on bracket integrity. Other areas of consideration include “quality of competition, ensuring equitable experiences (e.g., per diem, travel, lodging) and funding those experiences as fully as possible to reduce the financial burden on the membership, championship formats, access and participation (sport sponsorship, Automatic Qualifiers), and exposure and broadcast opportunities.” (See Report of the NCAA Division I Competition Oversight Committee, June 13-14, 2022). Committee members relayed that there is not one set of rules to statically apply to a proposal, but rather a holistic review that considers many factors.

Our interviews with NCAA staff and the Division I Competition Oversight Committee further revealed that stakeholders believe that there is a level of subjectivity in each proposal that would be lost in a completely standardized process across all championships. NCAA staff and committee members repeatedly expressed the following: Essentially, each sport and

championship is unique, and it would be very difficult to establish a fair and standard approach across sports and genders.

We also gathered in our interviews that, in order to implement a consistent, accurate and transparent evaluation and review process, the committees would need access to standardized data across the championships (as outlined in Recommendation A.2). Because the NCAA's current data management system has limited capabilities and creates a significant challenge to sort and analyze useable data, this currently stands as an obstacle to comparing data across championships.

## Findings

Based on our review, while there are guiding principles and priorities that are considered when assessing proposals for changes to current championship structure, there is not a clear process for reviewing these proposals. Thus, Recommendation C.2 is under **FUTURE CONSIDERATION**.

### Recommendation D.1

*Conduct an assessment and develop a plan for combining or co-locating men's and women's championships where appropriate.*

## Overview

Kaplan recommends that the NCAA consider "combining or co-locating" certain championships. It reasons that "[s]uch 'combined' championships present a highly effective way to immediately address some of the key drivers of a gender-inequitable student-athlete experience, including, among other things, differences in venues, facilities, signage, sponsorship, and fan festivals and entertainment." (See Phase II EGER, p. 57). Several sports have successfully combined their championships into a singular championship event (e.g., Division I Men's and Women's Track and Field) or co-located championships that occur on staggered dates at the same venue (e.g., Division I Men's and Women's Golf); however, as Kaplan acknowledges, it may not be logistically feasible to combine or co-locate certain championships as a result of facility constraints, housing limitations or other site or sport-driven variables. (*Id.* at pp. 57-58).

The NCAA has taken steps to assess and explore opportunities to increase the planning and execution of combined or co-located men's and women's championships in similar sports. In our interviews, it became clear that the sport and oversight committees have a dispositive role in the combining/co-location decisions, and several committees have actively considered co-location/combination since 2021. Moreover, in certain instances, co-location and combination have been viewed as an obstacle to, not a driver of, gender equity. Indeed, as discussed below, some women's sport committees have indicated a preference to host a separate championship in a different location in order to showcase their sport and engage their specific fan-base – separate and apart from the men's championship.

## Analysis

By March 2023, the NCAA Championships Operations staff had conducted and reported on an analysis in furtherance of Recommendation D.1. Specifically, the NCAA noted that “[m]any championships are currently hosted in a combined or co-located manner, based on previous recommendations from sport committees. Other sport committees are currently working on proposals self-generated or submitted from sources including the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, coaches’ associations and national governing bodies.” (See NCAA’s update from March 2023 on the current status of work in Phase II of the Kaplan EGER).

As a summary, the following sports currently host a combined or co-located championship, all of which were formed prior to 2021:

- Division I Men’s and Women’s Cross Country
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Cross Country
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Cross Country
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Golf
- Divisions I, II, and III Men’s Lacrosse
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Soccer
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Soccer
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Tennis
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Tennis
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Tennis
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Indoor Track and Field
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Indoor Track and Field
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Indoor Track and Field
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field
- Division II Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field
- Division III Men’s and Women’s Outdoor Track and Field

The following is a list of additional combined or co-located championships that have occurred, and will continue to occur, but not on an annual basis:

- Divisions I, II, and III Men’s Basketball
- Divisions I, II, and III Women’s Basketball
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Soccer
- Division I Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving
- Divisions I, II and III Men’s and Women’s Tennis
- Championships included in the Division II National Championship Festivals

Currently, in addition to the championships that are listed above, there has been significant discussion and analysis of a co-located Division I, II and III Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Championship. To a lesser extent, there has been discussion regarding a combined

Division I Men's and Women's Soccer Championship and National Collegiate Men's and Women's Gymnastics Championship, but the conversations have not yet resulted in consensus or arrived at a decision as to whether a combined championship may be planned.

We also note that, in our meetings with the Division I, II and III Student-Athlete Advisory Committees (SAAC), some committee members shared the view that combined or co-located championships might result in increased equity in certain aspects of the championship experience, particularly those dictated by the competition venue. SAAC members also noted "the immediate gender equity accountability effect" similarly situated men's and women's championships would experience if co-located or combined. Committee members, however, also expressed concerns – including a lack of access to the championship field/venue for practice time, insufficient accommodations for fans, a concern about prime game times and fan attention given to the men's championship over the women's championship – if championships were combined or co-located. One committee member also adamantly insisted during our meeting that her sport's championship not be combined or co-located with the men's championship of a similar sport.

***Challenges in Combining or Co-locating: Close Review of Considerations in the Division I, II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championships***

We conducted interviews with Championships Managers for the lacrosse championships and Division I, II and III Lacrosse Committee leadership. We also reviewed sport committee meeting minutes along with proposed timelines and tentative schedules of events for a combined Division I, II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse Championship.

By way of background, during the 2022-26 NCAA championships bid cycle, a bid was submitted to host all six lacrosse championships at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. This proposal was not accepted collectively by all six lacrosse sport committees due to concerns related to scheduling conflicts and inclement weather disruptions. Instead, Gillette Stadium was selected to host the 2025 and 2026 Division I, II and III Men's Lacrosse Championships as well as the Division I Women's Lacrosse Championship. The 2025 and 2026 Division II and III Women's Lacrosse Championships were set to be hosted by institutions in the Boston area, and the participating Division II and III women's teams would have the opportunity to participate in several different activities surrounding the "festival style" event, including the banquet at Gillette Stadium.

However, because of the separation of the Division II and III Women's Lacrosse Championships from the other four lacrosse championships, an equity concern was noted by the Division II and III membership and sport committees, which was then brought forward to the NCAA staff for consideration and review. In an effort to resolve this concern, in November 2022, the six lacrosse sport committee chairs met to discuss opportunities and challenges associated with having all six championships conducted at the same site. In this meeting, the chairs noted the following five points of concern:

“(1) Hosting all six championships at Gillette Stadium would provide less flexibility if there are weather and/or travel delays. All committees would need to be aware of and agree to a plan regarding schedule adjustments. Notably, broadcast partners will have considerable influence in the [Division] I schedule. For the other divisions, this could result in championship games being moved and/or the designated practice on the competition field being eliminated; (2) The schedule must account for an appropriate amount of time after the conclusion of each championship game to allow for celebration and clean up time; (3) Consideration must be given to whether hosting all six championships at Gillette Stadium creates any unintended negative student-athlete experiences (e.g., very early/late practices, delayed games, distance from hotels); (4) [Division] I Women’s lacrosse has been very pleased with the success of their recent championships and has a desire to see continued growth of their championship, potentially as a standalone championship; and (5) [Division] II and [Division] III Men’s lacrosse only bring two teams to the final site, whereas [Division] II and [Division] III Women’s lacrosse bring four teams.”

In February 2023, the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Committees were asked to provide feedback and responses to those five points of concern. On March 2, 2023, the feedback provided from the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Committees was used to develop schedule options to share with the Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Committees.

In April 2023, the Division I Men’s and Women’s Lacrosse Committees reviewed schedule options and provided feedback. Their feedback identified various concerns including that the scheduling options did not adequately address certain “non-negotiables” brought forward by the respective sport committees, logistical challenges remained due to a lack of flexibility with broadcast partners, the weather back-up plan was insufficient, and the playing surface at a singular facility would be significantly taxed by hosting six championships, which ultimately would lead to a negative student-athlete experience.

In May 2023, NCAA staff discussed these various concerns and planned to map out next steps. Since May, there have been additional concerns brought forward by the Division I, II and III Women’s Lacrosse Committees. Our interviews confirmed that there is a sense that the Women’s Lacrosse Committees would prefer a separate and distinct event in order to highlight the women’s championships. More specifically, as it relates to Division II and III, those committee members further indicated that there remains discontentment over being left out of the primary competition venue (Gillette Stadium) initially selected to host the combined championship.

At the time of this writing, the 2025 and 2026 combined lacrosse championship remains in flux. During our interviews with both NCAA staff and committee members, it has been noted that a Division I, II and III combined Women’s Championship similar to the men’s combined structure seems to be the most favored approach, but logistical challenges to execution

remain. The on-going consideration and contemplation of the future of the 2025 and 2026 lacrosse championships demonstrate the complexity of decision-making regarding co-location/combination of championships, and further suggest that co-location and combination do not serve – uniformly or in a rote fashion – the interests of gender equity at all NCAA championships.

## Findings

The NCAA is **IN PROGRESS** of addressing Recommendation D.1. The NCAA, at a minimum, has identified a subset of championships that could be combined or co-located in the future, and has indicated it will continue to assess the feasibility of combining or co-locating those championships.

## Recommendation D.2

*For non-joint committees, establish regular communications between the men’s and women’s sport committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.*

## Overview

In Recommendation D.2, Kaplan suggested that the NCAA establish regular coordination and collaboration between non-joint sport committees and create “open and functional lines of communication between [the] men’s and women’s sport committees.” (See Phase II EGER, p. 59). Kaplan indicated that “improved communication and collaboration between the men’s and women’s committees for a given sport will promote joint decision-making and management and help ensure gender equity in championships.” (*Id.*).

To implement this recommendation, Kaplan suggested that the NCAA “require that for non-joint committees, the chairs of the men’s and women’s committees for each sport regularly communicate with their counterparts in order to coordinate on strategic decisions and to work together on achieving gender equity.” (*Id.*). This is distinct from Recommendation 6.1 in which Kaplan recommended that the Division II and III Men’s and Women’s Basketball Committees should meet jointly, not just the chairs, to enhance communication and collaboration. (See Phase I EGER, p. 105). Kaplan also noted that “both committees should regularly consider and discuss how best to ensure that the student-athletes have equitable championship experiences.” (See Phase II EGER, p. 59).

Since 2021, the NCAA has taken steps to attempt to ensure greater communication and coordination across all non-joint sport committees.

## Analysis

Our interviews with NCAA staff indicated that the non-joint sport committee liaisons are required to work with their respective committee chairs to schedule at least one combined

meeting per year between similarly situated men's and women's sport committees. The NCAA's approach exceeds the expectation of Recommendation D.2, which required the chairs of the committees to meet jointly and collaborate.

We note that there are 59 sports across all divisions that have separate and distinct men's and women's sport committees. A review of those committees' meeting schedules indicates that non-joint sport committees have met (or in some cases exceeded) the framework established by the NCAA staff to engage in regular communications with one another by meeting jointly at a minimum of once a year, if not more. Since Fall 2021, our review determined that the Committees for Division II Baseball and Softball, National Collegiate Gymnastics, Division I Ice Hockey, Division II Golf, Division I Soccer, Division II Soccer, Division III Soccer, and Water Polo have met one time per year. The Committees for Division I Baseball and Softball, Division III Baseball and Softball, Division I Golf, Division III Golf, Division III Ice Hockey, Division I Volleyball, and Division III Volleyball have met twice per year. The Committees for Division III Tennis have met monthly. In reviewing the limited meeting minutes, there is not much that we can glean regarding specific examples of coordination and collaboration between non-joint committees other than the fact that the committees are meeting and engaging in discussion around championships and other areas impacting their sports.

Our interviews with sport committee members provided further details on combined committee sessions, but revealed inconsistency in the frequency of and level of substance explored during these combined sessions. While the NCAA has suggested a combined meeting occur at least once per year (which is beyond the Kaplan recommendation *per se*), this does not appear to be a requirement that is uniformly implemented across all committees. In fact, some sports have yet to carry out a combined meeting of all members. For instance, the six chairs of the Division I, II and III Men's and Women's Lacrosse Committees had one meeting in November 2022 to discuss the 2024 and 2025 combined championships, which ostensibly meets the requirements of Recommendation D.2, but falls short of the NCAA's desire for a combined committee meeting at least once per year.

In addition, as Kaplan recommended, the sport committees should continue to focus their joint discussions on how to ensure student-athletes have an equitable experience at the championships. (See Phase II EGER, p. 59). Thus, in order to make sure combined committee meetings are focused on the equitable championship experience, the NCAA has created a template meeting agenda focused on student-athlete experience talking points. This template provides background on Kaplan's EGERs, explains the NCAA's gender equity progress to date, and lists potential gender equity issues that are currently open for discussion between the sport committees. By creating this template, and encouraging the non-joint sport committees to rely on the template in setting the meeting agenda, the NCAA has created a framework to encourage progress toward Recommendation D.2.

While the NCAA has communicated an expectation and created an effective template to encourage combined meetings between non-joint committees, there remains significant

opportunity to improve communication and coordination. The challenges that persist in the consistency, content and meaningful output of combined committee meetings may be, in part, a consequence of the regular turnover in committee members and liaisons. Nevertheless, the NCAA should continue to encourage and foster regular communications and coordination on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity.

## Findings

Based on our review, the NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation D.2.

## Recommendation E

*For the next five years, conduct an annual public assessment of the NCAA’s progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report and the Phase I report.*

## Overview

Phase I and Phase II of the Kaplan EGER recommended that the NCAA perform an annual public assessment for the next five years to assess the NCAA’s progress in implementing the gender equity recommendations. (Phase II EGER, p. 121). Kaplan indicated that this annual assessment should be designed to “keep the college sports community informed and engaged in this process” and to seize on “this opportunity to make changes at the NCAA.” (*Id.*). The assessment should be made public and shared with key NCAA stakeholders, including the Board of Governors, the Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Division I Board of Directors, the Division II and Division III Presidents Councils, the Men’s and Women’s Basketball Committees (all divisions), the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, and the Division II and Division III Championship Committees.

As outlined in the analysis below, the NCAA, to date, has addressed Recommendation E.

## Analysis

In 2022, the NCAA engaged an external, independent assessor to review its progress on Kaplan’s Phase I recommendations as to the Division I Men’s and Women’s Basketball Championships. This assessment was made public and shared with key stakeholders and the relevant committees in July 2022. See [Gender Equity Assessment](#) (last visited June 24, 2023).

The NCAA then engaged our Firm to assess the NCAA’s progress as to implementation of Kaplan’s Phase I Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2 and Phase II recommendations. This report is slated to be published and communicated to the various NCAA stakeholders as Kaplan contemplated. Moreover, during the course of our engagement, we met with committee members from the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Division I Competition Oversight Committee, the Division II and III Championship Committees, the Student-Athlete Experience Committee, various Division I, II and III sport committees, and the national Student-Athlete

Advisory Committees, among others, not only to communicate the results of our assessment, but to understand and elicit their input on the progress the NCAA has made toward implementing Kaplan's recommendations. Finally, we understand that the NCAA has earmarked funds over at least the next two fiscal years to continue these annual assessments.

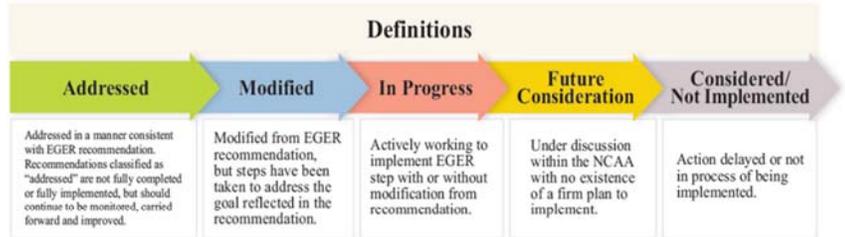
## Findings

To date, the NCAA has **ADDRESSED** Recommendation E.

# IX. Appendices

## A. Summary of Findings

In the July 2022 Gender Equity Assessment in which an external assessor reviewed the NCAA's progress in implementing Kaplan's Phase I recommendations (except Recommendations 6.1 and 6.2, which are the subject of this assessment), the NCAA's progress on each recommendation was classified in one of five categories. In order to ensure continuity and consistency, and at the NCAA's request, we have deployed the same categories and definitions in our assessment.



### Progress Against EGER Recommendation

6.1	Establish regular communication between the Men's and Women's Basketball Committees that focuses on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.	1.10	Increase NCAA staff with expertise in Title IX and gender equity.	2.5	Implement an overall strategy to realize the value of all championships.
6.2	Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at the NCAA Division II and III Men's and Women's Basketball Championships are gender-equitable.	2.6	Establish a system for tracking sponsorship activations across all championships.	D.1	Conduct an assessment and develop a plan for combining or co-locating men's and women's championships where appropriate.
A.4	Increase the number of senior staff in the NCAA's Championships structure to improve oversight of gender equity.	E	For the next five years, conduct an annual public assessment of the NCAA's progress in implementing the recommendations set forth in this report and the Phase I report.	2.4	Create a new senior position of Chief Business Officer to implement a strategy in the marketing, promotion, and sponsorship of the championships that both prioritizes gender equity and ensures the long-term sustainability of the NCAA.
A.6	Perform a real-time gender equity audit for all men's and women's championships and prepare an annual report on the results.	A.3	Complete a gender equity impact statement in connection with significant actions taken outside of the annual championships planning process.	C.2	Create a transparent process for reviewing proposals to increase the size of a championship's bracket/field, squad, bench, or travel party size that takes gender equity into account.
B.1	Consider commissioning an independent valuation of the media rights of other championships or championship "packages".	A.1	Develop clear criteria for making decisions about resource allocation among championships that integrate gender equity principles and transparency into the process.	1.9	Evaluate and reward performance for contributions to gender equity.
B.2	Ensure equitable branding for all championships, including but not limited to gender modifiers in championship titles.	A.2	Establish a system for collecting and maintaining standardized data across the NCAA's 90 championships that will facilitate future gender equity reviews and audits.	A.5	Over the next five years, conduct a "zero-based" budget for each championship to ensure that gender differences are necessary, appropriate, and equitable.
C.1	Ensure that items impacting the student-athlete experience at all championships are gender-equitable.	A.7	Conduct an external gender equity assessment of all championships in five years.		
D.2	For non-joint committees, establish regular communications between the men's and women's sport committees that focus on coordinating on strategic decisions and achieving gender equity in the student-athlete experience.	2.3	Negotiate for a new tier of corporate sponsorship for all championships.		

## B. NCAA Staff Interviews Conducted

Name	Position
<b><u>Division I/II/III Governance &amp; Administration</u></b>	
Charlie Baker	President
Zandria Conyers	Deputy Legal Counsel & Managing Director of Legal Affairs
Jenn Fraser	Managing Director of Division I
Terri Steeb Gronau	Vice President of Division II
Clint Hangebrauck	Managing Director of Enterprise Risk Management
Maritza Jones	Managing Director of Division II
Kevin Lennon	Vice President of Division I
Louise McCleary	Vice President of Division III
Mario Morris	Senior Vice President of Administration/CFO
Jeff O'Barr	Director of Championships Finance
Stephanie Quigg	Managing Director of Governance & Policy
Bill Reagan	Managing Director of Division III
Juanita Sheely	Director of Purchasing and Procurement
<b><u>Championships Operations</u></b>	
Nathan Arkins	Associate Director of Branding, Event Marketing and Events
John Baldwin	Managing Director of Championships & Alliances, Operations
Joni Comstock	Senior Vice President of Championships
Kristin Fasbender	Director of Championships & Alliances
Karen Kirsch	Director of Championships & Alliances
Ellen Lucey	Director of Championships Engagement
Tiffany Martin	Associate Director of Corporate Relationships
Leigh Ann Price	Managing Director of Business Performance Management
Liz Suscha	Managing Director of Championships & Alliances
<b><u>Men's Basketball</u></b>	
Dan Gavitt	Senior Vice President of Basketball
JoAn Scott	Managing Director of Men's Basketball Championships
<b><u>Women's Basketball</u></b>	
Lynn Holzman	Vice President of Women's Basketball
Amy Reis	Director of Women's Basketball
<b><u>Inclusion</u></b>	
Felicia Martin	Senior Vice President of Inclusion, Education & Community Engagement
Gretchen Miron	Director of Inclusion
Dr. Amy Wilson	Managing Director of Inclusion

Name	Position
<b><u>Communicatons &amp; Broadcasting</u></b>	
Gail Dent	Associate Director of Communications
Meghan Durham	Associate Director of Communications
Julie Kimmons	Director of Championships & Alliances (Broadcast Services)
Gina Lehe	Vice President of Communications
Stacy Preston	Director of Communications
Dana Thomas	Director of Communications (Creative & Digital)
<b><u>Human Resources</u></b>	
Kim Oren	Vice President of Human Resources
<b><u>External Operations</u></b>	
David Clendenin	Associate Director of External Operations and Licensing
Nate Flannery	Director of Championships & Alliances (Digital and Social Media)
Chris Termini	Managing Director of Championships & Alliances, External Operations
<b><u>Travel</u></b>	
Tiffany Howard	Associate Director of Travel, Meetings & Events
Melissa Piening	Director of Travel, Meetings & Events

## C. NCAA Committee Interviews Conducted

Name	Position	University	Division	Committee
Kelly Gatwood	Assistant Commissioner for Sport Services	Conference USA	I	Softball Committee
Jeremy Gibson	Director of Athletics	Merrimack College	NC	Women's Ice Hockey Committee
Kirby Hocutt	Director of Athletics	Texas Tech University	I	Baseball Committee
Michael Kelly	Vice President/Director of Athletics	University of South Florida	I	Competition & Oversight Committee (Vice-Chair)
Debbie Kirch	Sr. Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Northern Kentucky University	I	Student-Athlete Experience Committee (Vice Chair)
Jordan Skolnick	Deputy Athletics Director	University of Delaware	I	Men's Lacrosse Committee
Amy Strickland	Associate Athletics Director/SWA	Central Connecticut State University	I	Women's Lacrosse Committee
Tonya Vogel	Director of Athletics	George Washington University	I	Men's Soccer Committee
Jackie Wallgren	Senior Associate Athletics Director/SWA	University of Akron	I	Women's Soccer Committee
Reid Amos	Commissioner	Mountain East Conference	II	Championships Committee (Chair)
Kristy Bayer	Director of Athletics	Rockhurst University	II	Championships Committee
Rachel Burleson	Director of Athletics	Franklin Pierce University	II	Men's Lacrosse Committee
Miles Gallagher	Director of Athletics	Millersville University	II	Baseball Committee
Lori Hopkins	Deputy Athletics Director/SWA	Northwest Missouri State University	II	Women's Basketball Committee
Erin Lind	Commissioner	Northern Sun Intercollegiate Athletics Conference	II	Planning & Finance
Michael McBroom	Director of Athletics	West Texas A&M	II	Men's Basketball Committee
Kendall Rainey	Director of Athletics	University of Virginia-Wise	II	Softball Committee
Jennifer Rushton	Director of Athletics	Young Harris College	II	Division II Women's Lacrosse Committee
Suzanne Strudwick	Associate Athletic Director/SWA	Carson-Newman University	II	Women's Golf Committee
Nick Bursick	Director of Athletics	University of Wisconsin-Superior	III	Baseball Committee
Bradley Duckworth	Director of Athletics	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point	III	Softball Committee
MK Geratowski	Head Women's Lacrosse Coach, Assistant AD & SWA	Randolph-Macon College	III	Women's Lacrosse Committee
Danielle Harris	Commissioner	Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference	III	Men's Ice Hockey Committee
Maureen Harty	Commissioner	College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin	III	Championships Committee
Ryan Kane	Director of Athletics	Carthage College	III	Men's Basketball Committee
Wendy McManus	Assistant Vice President/Director of Athletics	SUNY-Oswego	III	Division III Women's Ice Hockey Committee
Scott McVean	Senior Associate Athletics Director	Rochester Institute of Technology	III	Men's Lacrosse Committee
Chuck Mitrano	Commissioner	Empire 8 Conference	III	Championships Committee (Chair)
Dr. Marion Terenzio	President	SUNY-Cobleskill	III	Committee on Women's Athletics (Div. I/II/III)
Megan Wilson	Associate Dean for Student Engagement and Athletics	University of Dubuque	III	Women's Basketball Committee

## D. Championship Site Visit Rubric

### PART 1 – LOGISTICS & PLANNING

	Standards and Criteria	Men's	Women's
<b>1.</b>	<b>Budget (Actual \$\$\$)</b>		
1.A.	Total Spend		
1.B.	Transportation		
1.C.	Lodging		
1.D.	Meals		
1.E.	Swag and Mementos		
1.F.	Entertainment		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Venue/Site Selection</b>		
2.A.	Venue Location		
2.B.	Venue Capacity		
2.C.	Practice Facilities & Access		
2.D.	Host Contribution (if any)		
2.E.	Distance from Airport & Hotel		
2.F.	Banquet Setup & Location		
2.G.	Hospitality Setup & Location		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Participation &amp; Selection</b>		
3.A.	Committee Structure (Size)		
3.B.	Joint Sessions (Y/N)		
3.C.	Consistent Selection Process (Y/N)		
3.D.	Bracket Size (Include # Eligible)		
3.E.	Selection Show/Announcement		
3.F.	Participation Manual		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Pre-Championship Marketing</b>		
4.A.	Logo Design and Usage		
4.B.	Social Media Exposure		
4.C.	Championship Game Program		
4.D.	Ticket Sales		
4.E.	Corporate Sponsorship		
4.F.	Mobile App		

## PART 2 – CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

*Scorecard: 4-Excellent; 3-Good; 2-Average; 1-Poor*

	Standards and Criteria	Men's	Women's
<b>1.</b>	<b>Lodging, Transportation and Food Service</b>		
1.A.	Lodging		
	*Quality		
	*Distance from Venue		
1.B.	Mode of Transportation		
1.C.	Food Service		
	*Quality		
	*Quantity		
	*Flexibility of Choice		
<b>2.</b>	<b>Student-Athlete Entertainment and Activities</b>		
2.A.	Pre-Championship Banquet		
2.B.	SWAG/Gifts		
	*Selection/Online Gift Suite		
	*Amount Per Student-Athlete		
2.D.	Community Engagement		
2.D.	Entertainment/Recreation		
2.E.	Media Availability and Coverage		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Venue &amp; Competition</b>		
3.A.	Quality/Amenities		
3.B.	Size (in proportion to demand)		
3.C.	Location		
3.D.	NCAA Staffing Allocation (# of FTE)		
3.E.	Locker Room Facilities		
3.F.	Practice Availability		
3.G.	Strength and Conditioning		
3.H.	Athletic Training/Medical		
3.I.	Game Schedule		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Marketing, Branding and In-Game Entertainment</b>		
4.A.	Signage		
4.B.	Championship Atmosphere		
4.C.	Fan Festival & Pre-Game Experience		
4.D.	Press Coverage & Access		
4.E.	TV vs. Streaming (Quality/Access)		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Awards and Celebration</b>		
5.A.	Championship Recognition		
5.B.	Awards & Mementos		