

SECTION I GOVERNANCE AND COMMITMENT TO RULES COMPLIANCE

Previous Certification Self-Study

- 1. List all “corrective actions,” “conditions for certification” or “strategies for improvement” imposed by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics in its first-cycle certification decision (if any) as they relate to governance and commitment to rules compliance issues. In each case, provide: (a) the original “corrective action,” “condition,” or “strategy” imposed; (b) the action(s) taken by the institution and the date(s) of those action(s); and (c) an explanation for any partial or non-completion of such required actions. Please note, the institution is not required to respond to recommendations for required actions developed by the peer-review team unless those same recommendations were adopted by the Committee on Athletics Certification.**

Mercer University was found to be in compliance during its 1994 first-cycle certification process. No "corrective actions," "conditions for certification," or "strategies for improvement" were imposed by the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification. Therefore, Mercer has no follow-up items on which to report.

- 2. List all actions the institution has completed or progress it has made regarding all plans for improvement/recommendations developed by the institution during its first-cycle certification process in the governance and commitment to rules compliance area. Specifically, include: (a) the original plan; (b) the actions(s) taken by the institution; (c) the date(s) of the action(s); (d) actions not taken or not completed; and (e) explanations for partial completion. Please note, the institution will not be required to fulfill an element of a first-cycle plan if the element does not affect conformity with an operating principle.**

No plans for improvement/recommendations were developed by the institution during the first-cycle certification process in the governance and commitment to rules compliance area.

- 3. Describe any additional plans for improvement/recommendations in the area of governance and commitment to rules compliance developed by the institution since the first-cycle certification decision was rendered by the Committee on Athletics Certification.**

No additional plans for improvement/recommendations were developed by the institution since the first-cycle certification decision in the governance and commitment to rules compliance area.

- 4. List all actions the institution has completed or progress it has made regarding required actions identified by the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification during the institution’s interim report process (if applicable) as they relate to governance and**

commitment to rules compliance. Specifically, include for each: (a) the required action, (b) the action(s) taken by the institution, (c) the date(s) of these actions(s), (d) action(s) not taken or completed, and (e) explanation(s) for partial completion of such required actions.

There were no required actions identified by the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification during the institution's interim report process.

Operating Principle

1.1 Mission of the Athletics Program and the Institution. Maintaining intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program is a basic purpose of the Association. Consistent with this fundamental policy

- a) The institution shall demonstrate that the mission and goals of the athletics program:
 - 1) Relate clearly to the mission and goals of the institution;**
 - 2) Support the educational objectives, academic progress and general welfare of student-athletes;**
 - 3) Support equitable opportunities for all students and staff, including women and minorities;**
 - 4) Embrace the Association's principles of sportsmanship and ethical conduct;**
 - 5) Are widely circulated among the institution's internal and external constituencies.****
- b) The institution shall demonstrate that the actual practices of the institution's athletics program are consistent with the athletics program mission and goals.**

Self-Study Items

1. Please provide mission statements of the institution and athletics program and indicate the date of formal approval of the latest revisions.

Mercer University's mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 1982, and was enhanced by the President to include a statement of purpose in February 1993. The mission statement is as follows:

Mercer University is a church-related institution of higher learning that seeks to achieve excellence and scholarly discipline in the fields of liberal learning and professional knowledge. The University is guided by the historic principles of religious and intellectual freedom, while affirming religious and moral values that arise from the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world.

The purposes of Mercer University are:

- To offer undergraduate, graduate and professional programs based upon a strong liberal arts foundation.*

- *To support a highly qualified faculty that is student and teaching oriented and is engaged in scholarly, research and professional activities.*
- *To foster independent and critical thinking and a continuing interest in learning.*
- *To foster intellectual and spiritual freedom in an environment that encourages tolerance, compassion, understanding and responsibility.*
- *To offer a variety of intellectual, cultural, recreational and spiritual activities designed to enlarge capacity for improved judgment and moral, ethical and spiritual growth.*
- *To encourage the enrollment of qualified persons from diverse backgrounds and situations.*
- *To contribute campus resources in partnership with other institutions and agencies to improve the educational, social and economic development of the community.*
- *To maintain efficient and effective administrative services to support the university's instructional, research, and public service programs.*

The mission statement of the intercollegiate athletics program is reviewed periodically and was updated during the writing of the 2000 NCAA interim report in order to be more concise and to better articulate the department's focus on the welfare of student-athletes. It was revised in November 2002 to reflect the University's commitment to sportsmanship and diversity. The athletics mission statement as approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2003, is as follows:

The mission of the Mercer University Athletic Department is to develop well-rounded student-athletes academically, athletically and socially. The program is committed to integrity, sportsmanship and equal opportunity for all students and staff.

2. Explain how the mission of the athletics program relates to that of the institution as a whole.

The intercollegiate athletics program furthers the University mission and purposes by offering competitive recreational activities that foster student growth and encourage sportsmanship, ethical conduct, tolerance, compassion, understanding, and responsibility. Scholarly achievement is the program's highest priority. To foster this goal, the University has adopted policies for continuing participation in intercollegiate athletic competition that are more stringent than those of the NCAA or the Atlantic Sun Conference.

The athletic program at Mercer is committed to attracting students who are interested in their own personal, physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. The University is focused on being a community of care and learning. In support of this concept, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is critical to the sense of community at the University. Mercer believes it has a "family-style" culture that exists in the context of our mission and is "guided by the historic principles of religious and intellectual freedom, while affirming religious and

moral values that arise from the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world.” One of the critical elements holding this "family" together is pride in our intercollegiate teams.

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics cares about the student-athlete as a whole person. Mercer and its athletics program are supportive of women and minorities in its practices for students, faculty, and staff. Our athletics department takes seriously the responsibility to "play by the rules" and to be seen as honorable participants in all our endeavors. Additionally, the University cares about our students as athletes. We have numerous guidelines and procedures in place to assist these students with physical health issues. Our trainers are well educated and versed in proper health and care giving.

3. Describe how and to whom the athletics program's mission statement is circulated.

The athletics program's mission statement is printed in the department's policy manual, in the *Student-Athlete Handbook*, and in the *BearBacker News* (newsletter of the athletics booster organization). The department's policy manual is provided to all staff of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and reviewed as a part of new staff orientation and at the department's fall staff retreat. The department's policy manual is also provided to the Mercer Athletic Council. The *Student-Athlete Handbook* is issued to all student-athletes and discussed during fall team meetings. The *BearBacker News*, published monthly during the academic year, is circulated to the membership of approximately 1200 alumni, faculty, administrators, parents, and friends of the program.

As a result of the self-study process, the mission statement has been added to the Web page for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, to the *Handbook for Undergraduate Advisors*, the *University Bulletin* (catalog), athletic event programs, and media guides.

4. Please provide specific examples demonstrating how the athletics program's mission and goals are or are not supported by the actual practices of the athletics program.

The mission statement of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is not just a summary of philosophy, but also a guide by which we measure our actions and decisions. The following is a summary of the department's philosophy, and how it has been applied.

- *Scholastic Ability:* We recruit only those prospects that show potential for academic success; student-athletes meet the same entrance requirements as other students. Graduation rates for our student-athletes compare favorably with the student body as a whole. The average six-year graduation rate for student-athletes in the 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96 cohorts was 58%, compared to 51% for all students.
- *Academic Support:* We support the academic and intellectual life of our student-athletes through the Office of Student Athlete Support Services (SASS). SASS provides counseling on a variety of academic issues, produces individual student-athlete academic progress reports, monitors competition schedules, travel schedules and practices for each student-athlete to ensure class absences do not exceed University policy, and operates a required student-athlete study hall.

- *Student Leadership:* The University believes that it is crucial that our student-athletes are integrated with the student body as a whole. Student-athletes are involved in all aspects of the University. Our student-athletes are involved in Greek Life, the Student Government Association, and religious clubs. The University has a strong chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.
- *Housing:* The University has consciously chosen to integrate student-athletes throughout the University housing system so that they are engaged with other members of the Mercer community.
- *Civic Engagement:* Our students are engaged in the broader community. One is likely to find student-athletes serving as mentors and tutors at Mercer's adopted school, Brookdale Elementary, or participating in the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign, or helping to run numerous camps and clinics for Macon area youth. As a group, student-athletes are encouraged to work in the community to help fulfill the mission's goal of developing students socially.
- *Sportsmanship:* Each coach is expected to operate according to the rules of the NCAA and Mercer University; failure to do so is grounds for dismissal. Effective methods for on-going rules education for our coaches have been implemented and detailed information about rules is distributed to our student-athletes. Our system of education and notice of rules compliance deters violations. While we have reported occasional secondary or inadvertent violations to the NCAA, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has never committed a major violation.
- *Success on the Field:* Mercer's athletic teams are competitive within the Atlantic Sun Conference. Men's soccer has been the most successful program over the last three years with two conference championships and two NCAA post-season appearances. Mercer has produced "all conference" performers in virtually all sports. In 2001-2002, Mercer was awarded conference titles of "men's soccer player of the year," "women's freshman volleyball player of the year" and "women's basketball coach of the year." The men's basketball team won the conference championship in 2002-03 and head coach Mark Slonaker was the recipient of the first Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year award and was named the Atlantic Sun Conference coach of the year.

Mercer University student-athletes excel not only in their various athletic venues but also in the classroom. Teams have consistently had an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better.

- *Pride:* Our program is dedicated to creating not only winning records, but pride in the accomplishments of the student-athletes and coaches, on and off the field, for the University community.
- *Campus Leadership:* The athletic program is visible in a number of areas on campus. Most notably, the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics is a member of the Undergraduate Council, the President's Executive Group, and the University Planning Council. The Undergraduate Council is comprised of members of the Office of the Provost, Deans, and

Student Support Services. The President's Executive Group is comprised of senior University administrators as well as a student and faculty representative. The University Planning Council is comprised of faculty, staff, and students.

- *Campus Representatives:* The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics takes seriously its role as a visible public relations arm of the University. Our program strives to choose and develop student-athletes who embody the spirit of Mercer University. These students are active in the community and demonstrate the importance of a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

Operating Principle

- 1.2 Institutional Control, Presidential Authority and Shared Responsibilities. The Association's principle of institutional control vests in the institution the responsibility for the conduct of its athletics program, including the actions of its staff members and representatives of its athletics interests. In fulfilling this principle, the institution shall demonstrate that:**
- a. The institution's governing board provides oversight and broad policy formulation for inter-collegiate athletics in a manner consistent with other units of the institution.**
 - b. The chief executive officer is assigned ultimate responsibility and authority for the operation and personnel of the athletics program.**
 - c. Appropriate campus constituencies have the opportunity, under the purview of the chief executive officer, to provide input into the formulation of policies relating to the conduct of the athletics program and to review periodically the implementation of such policies.**

Self-Study Items

- 1. Based upon the institution's experience in the last three years, list the decisions related to intercollegiate athletics in which the institution's governing board or individual board members have been significantly involved (if any).**

In the last three years, the Board of Trustees has formally approved the University's annual operating budget, including funding for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

The Board of Trustees approved construction of a 230,000 square foot University Center. Approximately half of the University Center is dedicated to intercollegiate athletics. Anticipated opening of the University Center is spring 2004.

- 2. Based upon the institution's experience in the last three years, list the decisions related to intercollegiate athletics in which the institution's chief executive officer has been significantly involved.**

The President recommends annual operating budgets for all University programs including the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to the Board of Trustees and approves all key personnel decisions and fund raising strategies for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. He also determines or approves Mercer's stance on NCAA legislation and Atlantic Sun Conference legislation.

Specific actions or decisions by the President during the past three years, include:

- a. Approval of the appointment of two head women's basketball coaches, one head women's soccer coach, one head women's softball coach, one head cross/country coach, one head golf coach, one head volleyball coach, one head tennis coach, and an additional trainer.
- b. Elevated part-time head coaches in tennis, golf, and softball to full-time status. Of the fourteen sports Mercer sponsors, thirteen have full-time head coaches. Air rifle is the only team with a part-time coach.
- c. Commissioned a committee to investigate the viability of expanding the athletic programs to include intercollegiate football.
- d. Named the Senior Woman Administrator to the position of Assistant Athletic Director.
- e. Renovation of soccer field; addition of lights and new bleacher seating.
- f. Renovation of racquetball courts to become indoor batting cages for softball and baseball.
- g. Purchase of 48-passenger coach bus and three 8-passenger vans.
- h. Upgraded Compliance Coordinator to a full-time position.
- i. Construction of a 230,000 square foot University Center. Approximately half of the University Center is dedicated to intercollegiate athletics. Anticipated opening of the University Center is spring 2004.

The President has the following operational responsibilities:

- a. Recommends annual budget for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to the Board of Trustees.
- b. Directly oversees the work of the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics.
- c. Meets regularly with the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics on matters regarding athletics and on all athletic policy matters.
- d. Approves the department's gender and minority equity plans.
- e. Appoints and directs the Faculty Athletic Representative.

Additionally, the President is involved with athletics by:

- a. Actively participating in fundraisers.
- b. Actively participating in the President's Council of the Atlantic Sun Conference, where he was influential in the changing of the conference name from Trans American Athletic Conference to the Atlantic Sun Conference.
- c. Hosting a "Welcome Back" dinner for all student-athletes each fall.
- e. Reviewing the NCAA secondary violation reports and confirming measure taken for corrective action or reprimand.
- f. Attending athletic events.

- 3. Describe the process by which the institution makes major decisions regarding intercollegiate athletics. In so doing, describe the role and authority of the institution's governing board, the chief executive officer, the athletics board or committee (if one exists), the Faculty Athletic Representative(s), the director of athletics, and any other appropriate campus constituencies (e.g., faculty, students, institutional personnel involved in rules-compliance activities) in this process. Please provide the composition of the athletics board or committee (including titles and positions).**

Major decisions regarding intercollegiate athletics are made by the President and/or the Board of Trustees, depending upon the nature and magnitude of the issue, with broad input from the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Faculty Athletic Representative, the Mercer Athletic Council, the Faculty House of Delegates, the Student Athletic Advisory Committee, and other interested or affected constituencies.

President

The President is assigned the ultimate responsibility and authority for the operation and personnel of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. The President recommends annual operating budgets for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to the Board of Trustees, approves all key strategic and personnel decisions, and approves all fund raising strategies for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. He also determines or approves Mercer's stance on NCAA and Atlantic Sun Conference legislation. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Faculty Athletic Representative report directly to the President.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provides oversight and broad policy formulation for intercollegiate athletics in the same manner it does for other units of the University. The Board of Trustees has a Committee on University Athletics which investigates major issues related to the University's intercollegiate athletics program. The bylaws of the Board of Trustees establishing the Committee on University Athletics read as follows:

ARTICLE X – Committee on University Athletics

Sec. 1. The committee shall consist of the *ex officio* members and not less than four (4) additional members from the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 2. The Committee, in cooperation with the President, shall study and appraise the athletic programs of the University, with particular emphasis on intercollegiate athletics. It shall periodically review and when necessary make recommendations concerning the role and status of intercollegiate athletics and other athletic programs within the University, including their costs and benefits, their overall quality and their contribution to the mission of the University.

Mercer Athletics Council

The Mercer Athletics Council is appointed by the President to advise the President on matters of significance pertaining to the intercollegiate athletic program. The Council addresses the mission and related issues and recommends strategies for enhancing academic effectiveness.

The Council is comprised of faculty and students. Composition, including titles and positions, for 2002-03:

Dr. Guerry Backer, Chair	Associate Dean, School of Engineering
Dr. Andrew Deile	Associate Professor, School of Business & Economics
Wesley Duke	Student-Athlete
Dr. Robert Moon	Associate Dean, School of Medicine
Kenyada Morton	Student Government Association
Christopher Pace	Student Government Association
Bobby Pope	Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
Theresa Preuit	Associate Director, Library
Andrea Shipley	Student-Athlete
Mary Jo Vaughan	Faculty Athletic Representative
Jerry Winfield	Professor, College of Liberal Arts

The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics (a non-voting member) and the Faculty Athletic Representative (a voting member) are ex officio members of the Council.

Faculty Athletic Representative and Compliance Coordinator

The Faculty Athletic Representative is appointed by and reports to the President. The Compliance Coordinator is appointed by and reports to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with direct access to the President. Both work directly with the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, advising the Director in the formulation of strategies and plans.

Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics reports directly to the President and counsels the President on all matters related to intercollegiate athletics. He also serves as an ex officio member of all committees with a primary or substantive focus on athletic issues. The President delegates responsibility for operational decisions regarding the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. The Director routinely advises the President regarding operations and operational decisions.

Ad Hoc Committees

Input for major decisions affecting intercollegiate athletics is solicited from ad hoc and specially appointed University committees. The specific composition of special committees depends on the issue under consideration. Most recently, a special committee was formed to make inquiries about the addition of a non-scholarship football program. The committee reported directly to the President.

4. Please attach an institutional organizational chart and an athletics department organizational chart.

See Appendix I-A.

Operating Principle

- 1.3 Rules Compliance. Membership in the Association places the responsibility on each institution to assure that its staff, student-athletes, and other individuals and groups representing the institution's athletics interests comply with the applicable Association rules and regulations. Consistent with this responsibility, the institution shall demonstrate that:**
- a. It has in place a set of written policies and procedures that assign specific responsibilities in the areas of rules compliance, including assignment of direct accountability for rules compliance to the individual the chief executive officer assigns overall responsibility for the athletics program.**
 - b. In critical and sensitive areas, institutional compliance procedures provide for the regular participation of persons outside of the athletics department.**
 - c. Rules compliance is the subject of an ongoing educational effort.**
 - d. A clear and unambiguous commitment to rules compliance is a central element in all personnel matters for individuals involved in the intercollegiate athletics program.**
 - e. At least once every three years, its rules-compliance program is the subject of evaluation by an authority outside of the athletics department. [Note: The effective date of this requirement is January 1998.]**

Self-Study Items

- 1. Describe how the activities of the institution's athletics booster groups, support groups and other representatives of the institution's athletics interests are maintained under the clear control of the institution, including whether institutional personnel serve on booster-club, support group or foundation boards.**

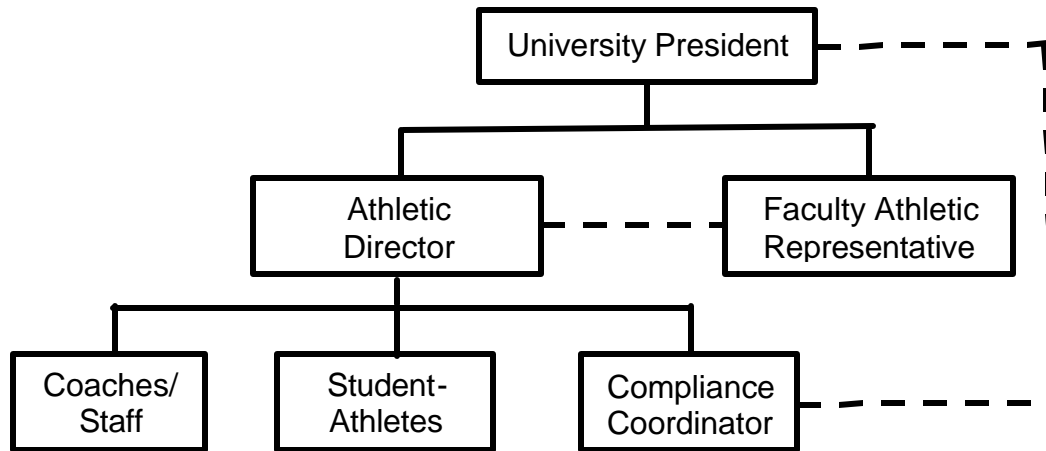
The Mercer BearBacker organization serves as the official booster club for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. The BearBackers officers, according to their incorporating by-laws, consist of a president, vice president and secretary/treasurer. However, in recent years no one has offered to serve in the role of vice president. The BearBackers have recently re-organized and a new vice president has been elected.

Institutional control of the BearBackers is assured by the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics serving as the ex officio secretary/treasurer of the organization. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics is responsible for channeling all monies raised by the BearBackers (approximately \$20,000 annually) through the University Advancement Office and for approving all expenditures from the account so funded. Funds contributed by the BearBackers are normally targeted to the intercollegiate athletic program's annual fund, student-athlete banquets, monthly club gatherings, the BearBacker newsletter, and unbudgeted equipment items. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, in his capacity as secretary/treasurer of the BearBackers, produces the newsletter, *BearBacker News*, and distributes it to the membership of approximately 1200 alumni, faculty, administrators, parents, and friends.

All BearBacker funds are under the supervision of the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and are administered by the Mercer University Finance Office. At the end of each fiscal year, these and all other department accounts are audited by an independent external auditor reporting to the Board of Trustees.

2. Identify, using an organizational or flow chart, how the institution has organized itself to maintain compliance with NCAA rules. Specify the individual (other than the institution's compliance officer/coordinator) who the CEO designates as being responsible for the institution's rules compliance. Also, include a description of the reporting lines for and responsibilities assigned to the Faculty Athletic Representative, director of athletics, compliance coordinator (if any), coaches, and other key individuals inside and outside athletics (e.g., registrar, financial aid officer, admissions director, internal auditor) who are responsible for documenting and monitoring compliance with NCAA rules including but not limited to eligibility certification, investigation and self-reporting of violations and monitoring of financial aid.

Compliance Organizational Chart:



Bobby Pope, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, has been designated by the President as the individual responsible for the University's rules compliance.

Mercer employs a Compliance Coordinator, who reports to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and has direct access to the President, to assist the athletic coaches and staff in complying with the Atlantic Sun Conference (A-Sun) and NCAA rules and regulations. The Compliance Coordinator directs continuing rules education at monthly staff meetings and annual workshops. During these meetings, the Compliance Coordinator reviews written policies and procedures of the University, A-Sun, and the NCAA with coaches and staff members. The Compliance Coordinator is responsible for keeping coaches and staff up-to-date on any legislation or proposals for regulation/deregulation that may be pertinent. In order to be fully aware of changes and updates to rules, the Compliance Coordinator attends annual NCAA and A-Sun compliance seminars. Additionally, the Compliance Coordinator

is in close contact with the A-Sun office, assisting the A-Sun Compliance Coordinator in conducting compliance reviews and in implementing recommendations from that audit. The Compliance Coordinator is also responsible for monitoring NCAA compliance, interpreting compliance questions from coaches, and seeking clarification of compliance issues with the NCAA as needed. The Compliance Coordinator advises the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics on an on-going basis. In 2003 the Compliance Coordinator position was upgraded to a full-time position with exclusive compliance-related duties.

The Faculty Athletic Representative is appointed by and reports directly to the President and represents the President in academic-related athletic issues. The Faculty Athletic Representative is an advocate for the academic integrity of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and for the academic welfare of Mercer's student-athletes. The Faculty Athletic Representative plays an active role in the process of certification of eligibility of student-athletes, is an ex officio voting member of the Mercer Athletic Council, administers the student-athlete exit interview program, and determines the timing and selection of student-athletes for random drug testing. The Faculty Athletic Representative represents the University at all A-Sun meetings and NCAA conventions.

The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics is appointed by and reports to the President. The Director is responsible for the administration and management of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in a manner consistent with the philosophy and purpose of the University and with NCAA rules. The Director establishes administrative policies and procedures, provides leadership on compliance and policy issues, prepares annual budget requests, monitors departmental budgets and approves expenditures, supervises and evaluates coaches and staff, promotes athletics events and programs, coordinates fund-raising activities, approves athletic schedules, and recommends issues to be considered by the Mercer Athletics Council.

The Eligibility Coordinator is appointed by and reports to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. The position is responsible for coordinating the collection of all information required to prepare eligibility and squad lists, monitoring the academic and financial aid status of each student-athlete, maintaining permanent copies of student records, and keeping the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and coaches advised of NCAA and A-Sun eligibility and compliance issues.

The head coach of each sport is directly responsible to the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and is appointed by the Director with the approval of the President. Coaches are required to be knowledgeable of and adhere to NCAA, A-Sun, and institutional rules. Head coaches are responsible for recruiting student-athletes, conducting practice schedules, recommending game schedules and equipment purchases, establishing training rules, and advising the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics of any infraction of NCAA, A-Sun, or institutional policy.

Officers in Student Financial Planning, Admissions, Registrar, and Internal Auditing are specifically designated to manage issues in their respective areas of responsibility related to

athletic programs and student-athletes. Officers in the offices of Admissions, Registrar and Student Financial Planning play active roles in eligibility certification and monitoring of financial aid. Officers in these areas report through their regular chain of command. Each summer a committee of representatives from the offices of the Registrar, Student Financial Planning, and Undergraduate Admissions, meet to discuss rules compliance. Additionally, staff members from these support offices are afforded opportunities to attend NCAA and/or Atlantic Sun Conference seminars and conferences. Staff members also have access to Internet sites and updates on rules compliance.

The Mercer Athletic Council, comprised of faculty and students, reports directly to the President and is charged with addressing critical and sensitive areas of athletics that arise outside the normal reporting line outlined above. The Council addresses the mission and related issues and recommends strategies for enhancing academic effectiveness to the President.

3. Describe the institution's rules-education efforts for all individuals associated with the athletics department, including student-athletes, athletics department staff members (including coaches), other institutional staff members and representatives of the institution's athletics interests.

The University publishes a *Student-Athlete Handbook* and distributes it to each student-athlete. The handbook outlines general NCAA guidelines, the University's commitment to the student-athlete, and the student-athletes' obligations to the University, including explicit information on NCAA rules. The Compliance Coordinator reviews rules and regulations for all student-athletes at the first team meeting. Student-athletes are encouraged to utilize their coach and/or Mercer's Compliance Coordinator to obtain answers to specific rules questions. Written copies of the Compliance Coordinator's response to the rules interpretation are shared with the coaches and student-athletes. The Head Athletic Trainer coordinates seminars for student-athletes on drug education, wellness, nutrition, and other topics.

Rules education for athletic coaches and staff is accomplished in a number of ways. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Eligibility Coordinator, and the Compliance Coordinator meet individually with all new coaches to review the policies and procedures that are in place regarding rules compliance. Other rules-education activities conducted on a regular basis include:

- The *Athletics Department Policy Manual* is reviewed annually. *The Athletics Department Policy Manual* provides guidance on reporting rules violations and athletically related injuries, eligibility certification, financial aid administration, recruiting, playing and practice seasons, illegal benefits, and sponsoring sports camps and clinics. The department staff, including the Compliance Coordinator and the Faculty Athletic Representative, review and discuss the entire manual during a staff retreat each academic year. Topics for the retreat are solicited from the intercollegiate athletics staff, the President, faculty committees, and various administrators, including those from Admissions, Purchasing, Student Financial Planning, and the Registrar's Office.

- During monthly meetings of athletic coaches and staff, areas of rules interpretation or ambiguity are discussed, and the Compliance Coordinator conducts a rules education session featuring a different rule each month.
- Annually, the athletics department staff, the Compliance Coordinator, the Faculty Athletic Representative, and representatives from Admissions, Purchasing, Student Financial Planning, and the Registrar's Office meet to discuss various topics related to rules education and compliance.
- Each summer a Certification Committee made up of representatives from the offices of the Registrar, Student Financial Planning, and Undergraduate Admissions, meet to discuss rules compliance. Additionally, staff members from these support offices attended the 2002 Atlantic Sun Conference seminar on rules compliance. Staff members also have access to Internet sites and updates on rules compliance.
- Copies of the response to all interpretations made by the Compliance Coordinator and issues addressed in the *BearBacker News* are disseminated to all of the coaches and staff.
- The Compliance Coordinator, Associate Commissioner for Compliance for the Atlantic Sun Conference, the coaches, and staff of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics hold a meeting every August to conduct a general session on rules education and to review any current issues that may affect the programs.
- Each year all coaches and the Compliance Coordinator are required to take and pass a coach's certification test. The Faculty Athletic Representative administers this test. The test is required and provided by the NCAA and the Atlantic Sun Conference.

Rules education for the BearBacker booster organization, and Mercer faculty and staff, is accomplished primarily through a column entitled "Compliance Corner" in every *BearBacker News*. The purpose of the column is to inform and educate readers on NCAA, Atlantic Sun, and institutional rules and regulations. The newsletter is distributed to all boosters, and all Mercer faculty and staff members.

To enhance rules education efforts, the Compliance Coordinator position was upgraded to a full-time position with exclusive compliance related duties in 2003. The position was filled July 1, 2003.

- 4. Describe, using specific examples, how the institution ensures that rules compliance is a central element in personnel matters. Also, please provide the following items for individuals inside and outside the athletics department who are involved in rules-compliance activities: (a) descriptions, (b) contracts or letters of appointment, (c) personnel evaluation criteria, and (d) philosophy statements and other applicable sections of policy manuals.**

Rules compliance is an essential part of personnel administration. Through job descriptions, contracts, letters of appointment, personnel evaluations, and annual staff meetings, all personnel are made keenly aware that rules compliance is an essential aspect of employment in Mercer's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. (In 1995, the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, with full support of the President, dismissed a coach who flagrantly violated rules regarding extra benefits.) All secondary violations are reported, and copies of the violation report are placed in personnel files. Additionally, the Compliance Coordinator ensures that there are rules compliance safeguards, such as monitoring practice hours and call logs.

Pertinent job descriptions can be found in the *Athletics Department Policy Manual* in Appendix III-F. Sample appointment letters and personnel evaluation criteria can be found in Appendix IB. As a result of the self-study process, expectations regarding rules compliance are now addressed in all coaching contracts, appointment letters, and performance evaluations.

- 5. Please attach written policies and step-by-step procedures that include assignment of specific responsibilities pertaining to the areas of rules compliance, including, but not limited to, eligibility certification, investigation and self-reporting of rules violations, monitoring financial aid and monitoring recruiting (if not included elsewhere in the report). [Note: The institution may use elements of its response to self-study items Nos. 4 and 5 under Operating Principle 2.1 (Academic Standards) when preparing the response to this self-study item.]**

Written policies and procedures pertaining to rules compliance are outlined in the *Athletics Department Policy Manual*. Step-by-step procedures are outlined below.

Eligibility certification:

1. Initial eligibility for potential freshmen student-athletes:
 - a. All students interested in participating in intercollegiate athletics are encouraged to register with the Clearinghouse their senior year of high school.
 - b. At the end of that year, the high school submits a final transcript showing proof of graduation.
 - c. All coaches provide a list of the students they are recruiting to the Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator. Those names are submitted to the Clearinghouse and placed on an Institutional Request List.
 - d. Once all of the required information has been received from the high school, the student is certified to compete in Division I and the institution is notified of the decision.
2. Initial eligibility for transfer student-athletes:
 - a. A release form from the previous institution must be obtained for students transferring from a four year institution.
 - b. A Historical Account Form is requested.
 - c. Transcripts are submitted to the Registrar's Office for evaluation.
 - d. Contingent on the transfer hours accepted relative to applicable NCAA regulations, the student-athlete's eligibility is determined.

- e. The Associate Vice President for Admissions for transfer students accepts the student-athlete under the same standards set forth for the general transfer student. In many cases, the student is accepted to the University before being identified as a student-athlete.
 - f. The Registrar (Paul Schnepf) certifies that the information on the Eligibility and Squad List is accurate; the Registrar is the final authority for certifying initial eligibility.
 - g. The Associate Commissioner for Compliance for the Atlantic Sun Conference certifies that the correct NCAA rules have been used to establish eligibility.
3. Continuing eligibility:
Once a student-athlete is admitted, he/she is tracked during the semester, at the end of each semester and annually to make sure they meet NCAA requirements for satisfactory progress, progress towards a degree, and satisfactory grade point averages.

Eligibility for participation in activities as stated in the *University Bulletin* is strictly adhered to:

"Except where required as a part of class work in a course, a student on academic probation may not participate in any extra-curricular activities that represent Mercer University. Representative activities include: intercollegiate sports; staff work on campus publications; debate; musical performances; dramatics; cheerleading, theater stage work and acting."

The sequence of actions taken to certify continuing eligibility is as follows:

- a. The Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator records grades each semester after receiving them from the Registrar's Office.
- b. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics advises coaches of any student-athlete who is ineligible for competition due to probation.
- c. The Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator checks to assure that duplications are not made on previously earned hours.
- d. The Faculty Athletic Representative checks to assure the Student Athlete Statement and Drug Testing Consent Form are complete.
- e. The Registrar (Paul Schnepf) certifies that relevant information on the Eligibility and Squad List is accurate and is the final authority for certifying continuing eligibility.
- f. The Atlantic Sun Conference Associate Commissioner for Compliance certifies that the student-athlete has met NCAA requirements as indicated on the Eligibility and Squad List.

Starting fall 2003, the NCAA Compliance Assistant software program will be utilized in certifying continuing eligibility.

Monitoring recruiting:

- a. Monitoring of recruiting begins with educating coaches regarding the rules. If coaches understand the number of contacts and evaluations, phone calls, letters, and other means of contact that are appropriate, then compliance with the rules is easier.

- b. Each coach is required to maintain a log of contacts, including the above mentioned. The Compliance Coordinator, spot checks these logs on a random basis to determine compliance. If there is inappropriate or excessive contact, then a secondary violation is reported.

Investigation and Self-Reporting of Rules Violations

1. Investigation
 - a. The violation occurs.
 - b. There is a report of the violation to a coach, the Compliance Coordinator or the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics.
 - c. If not contacted initially about the violation, the Compliance Coordinator is contacted and given the information on the violation.
 - d. The Compliance Coordinator conducts an investigation on the violation.
 - e. If there is a violation, the Compliance Coordinator files a report with the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and recommends a sanction (such as educational or social development or missing of games) based on accepted precedents.
 - f. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics approves the report from the Compliance Coordinator and imposes the sanction.
 - g. The report is sent to the Atlantic Sun Associate Commissioner for Compliance; the Commissioner for Compliance sends the report to the NCAA if the matter cannot be handled at the conference level.
2. Self-Reporting
 - a. If an alleged secondary violation is reported by a coach, booster or the Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, the Compliance Coordinator conducts an investigation.
 - b. It is first determined whether the act reported actually violates an NCAA rule. If the act does violate a rule, then further investigation is warranted. Individuals with knowledge of the act are questioned.
 - c. It may be necessary at this point to declare a particular student-athlete ineligible to compete. All pertinent documentation is reviewed.
 - d. Once the matter is fully investigated, a level of sanction is determined and imposed.
 - e. If appropriate, there may be a request to the NCAA for reinstatement of the student-athlete.
 - f. Finally, a rules education session is conducted for all involved.

Monitoring financial aid:

1. For new students:
 - a. A prospective student is sent a grant-in-aid and national letter of intent during his/her signing period.
 - b. The Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator prepares the letter.
 - c. The letter is sent to the Associate Director of Financial Planning who signs the grant-in-aid.
 - d. The letter is sent to the prospective student-athlete, who in turn signs and returns the national letter of intent and the grant-in-aid to the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

- e. A copy of the signed grant-in-aid is sent to the Associate Director of Financial Planning.
2. For returning students:
 - a. Each team coach awards student-athletes scholarships in the spring, prior to the next academic year.
 - b. The coach then notifies the Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator.
 - c. The Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator prepares the letter of renewal and financial aid agreement and forwards them to the Office of Student Financial Planning.
 - d. The Associate Director for Financial Planning reviews and issues the financial aid agreement to the student-athlete.
 - e. The student is required to sign and return the letter of acceptance.
 - f. At the beginning of the academic year, the Administrative/Eligibility Coordinator prepares an Eligibility and Squad List for each sport. The Eligibility and Squad List includes the financial aid award.
 - g. The Associate Director for Financial Planning approves the Eligibility and Squad List before it is sent to Atlantic Sun Conference office.
- 6. Please attach documentation related to the evaluation of the institution's rules-compliance program by an authority outside of athletics at least once every three years. The authority may not have day-to-day compliance responsibilities for the institution's athletics department and must be knowledgeable in NCAA legislation and rules-compliance practices. The evaluation must consist of a review to determine that the compliance practices are engaged and functioning and must include, at a minimum, the following areas:**
- a. Initial-eligibility certification.**
 - b. Continuing-eligibility certification.**
 - c. Transfer-eligibility certification.**
 - d. Financial aid administration, including individual and team limits.**
 - e. Recruiting (e.g., official visits, etc.)**
 - f. Camps and clinics.**
 - g. Investigations and self-reporting of rules violations.**
 - h. Rules education.**
 - i. Extra benefits (compliance with Bylaw 16, e.g., per diem, student host reimbursement, equipment retrieval, etc.)**
 - j. Playing and practice seasons (compliance with Bylaw 17, e.g., out-of-season activities, voluntary activities, hours per week during season, etc.)**
 - k. Student-athlete employment.**

See Appendix I-C.

Evaluation

1.1 Mission of the Athletics Program and the Institution

	Currently Yes	Found on Page(s)	Currently No	If Currently No, if deficiencies exist, or if an enhancement has been identified, indicate Plan for Improvement Number
a. Does the institution demonstrate that the mission and goals of the athletics program:				
(1) Relate clearly to the mission and goals of the institution?	X	I 3-4		
(2) Support the educational objectives, academic progress and general welfare of student-athletes?	X	I-3		
(3) Support equitable opportunity for all students and staff, including women?	X	I-3		
(4) Support equitable opportunity for all students and staff who are minorities?	X	I-3		
(5) Embrace the Association's principles of sportsmanship and ethical conduct?	X	I-3		
(6) Are widely circulated among the institution's internal and external constituencies?	X	I-4		
b. Does the institution demonstrate that the actual practices of the institution's athletics program are consistent with the athletics program mission and goals?	X	I 4-6		

On the basis of the yes/no answers above and the plans for correcting deficiencies below, is the institution in substantial conformity with Operating Principle 1.1? X Yes No

1.2 Institutional Control, Presidential Authority and Shared Responsibility

	Currently Yes	Found of Page(s)	Currently No	If Currently No, if deficiencies exist, or if an enhancement has been identified, indicate Plan for Improvement Number
Does the institution demonstrate that:				
a. The institution's governing board provides oversight and broad policy formulation for intercollegiate athletics in a manner consistent with other units of the institution?	X	I-8		
b. The chief executive officer is assigned ultimate responsibility and authority for the operation and personnel of the athletics program?	X	I-8		
c. Appropriate campus constituencies have the opportunity, under the purview of the chief executive officer, to provide input into the formulation of policies relating to the conduct of the athletics program and to review periodically the implementation of such policies?	X	I-8		

On the basis of the yes/no answers above, is the institution in substantial conformity with Operating Principle 1.2? X Yes No

1.3 Rules Compliance

	Currently Yes	Found of Page(s)	Currently No	If Currently No, if deficiencies exist, or if an enhancement has been identified, indicate Plan for Improvement Number
Does the institution demonstrate that:				
a. It has in place a set of written policies and procedures that assign specific responsibilities in the areas of rules compliance, including assignment of direct accountability for rules compliance to the individual the chief executive officer assigns overall responsibility for the athletics program?	X	I 11-13		
b. In critical and sensitive areas, institutional compliance procedures provide for the regular participation of persons outside of the athletics department?	X	I 15-18		
c. Rules compliance is the subject of an ongoing educational effort?	X	I 13-14		
d. A clear and unambiguous commitment to rules compliance is a central element in all personnel matters for individuals involved in the intercollegiate athletics program?	X	I-15		
e. At least once every three years, its rules-compliance program is the subject of evaluation by an authority outside of the athletics department?	X	I-18		

On the basis of the yes/no answers above, is the institution in substantial conformity with Operating Principle 1.3? X Yes No

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