

NCAA Gender Identity and Student-Athlete Participation Summit Meeting Summary October 5-6, 2020

Purpose. The purpose of the summit was to solicit feedback toward the creation of a consensus framework that might inform policy and practice development in the area of gender identity and participation in collegiate sport, more specifically through the lenses of inclusion, fairness, student-athlete well-being, health, and safety.

Outcomes and Deliverables. The summit focused on the following outcomes and deliverables:

1. Develop a consensus framework, composed of foundational statements that may inform education, policy and practice development, including any recommendations that may be provided to the NCAA Board of Governors.
2. Identify potential updates for NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes (2011) based on evolving and emerging data and principles of inclusion and fairness.
3. Identify potential educational opportunities for key stakeholders within the NCAA membership (e.g., student-athletes, administrators, coaches).
4. Identify other potential gaps in stakeholder knowledge, resources and support infrastructure and possible pathways for addressing these gaps.

Participants. The summit convened representatives from the NCAA membership and external industry and subject matter experts with emphasis on collegiate student-athletes, the broader higher education community, medical and scientific organizations, and external diversity, equity, and inclusion experts and scholars. (See Appendix)

Overview of consensus methodology. A modified Delphi process with an exploration phase and an evaluation phase¹ was used to produce useful and feasible recommendations. The overarching goal of the *exploration phase* was to ensure that participants who would be involved in generating and rating recommendations had an understanding of the issues that was broadly informed and emphatic. This phase was completed during the two-day Summit. Presentations from content area experts reviewed and discussed strengths and limitations of current evidence. TGNB athletes shared their lived experiences in a pre-Summit focus group, with key themes presented to Summit attendees. Breakout groups provided an opportunity for participants to synthesize information, ask questions, and further learn from others' lived experiences. After the Summit, documentation from participants (focus group notes, and anonymous open-ended suggestions elicited at the end of both days) were reviewed, grouped by theme, and used to generate preliminary recommendations. These recommendations were worded to be actionable by an organization (i.e., athletic department or NCAA), useful, and feasible (based on Summit documentation). The *evaluation phase* was completed in a several month period following the Summit. Summit participants (excluding NCAA staff) were emailed a link to an anonymous online survey hosted on the Qualtrics platform and asked to rate each recommendation in terms of its utility and feasibility. Utility was defined as whether, if implemented with fidelity, it would positively impact inclusion and/or mental health for student-athletes. Feasibility was defined as how possible it would be for it to be implemented by the relevant organization (i.e., athletic departments, NCAA). Response options for each dimension were on a 1 to 9 scale, where higher scores indicated the statement was more useful/feasible. When participants rated a statement 6 or lower they were asked to provide open-ended written feedback about their rationale. Summary statistics

were calculated for each statement for utility and feasibility. Modeled on prior similar consensus processes,^{2,3} utility and feasibility means of ≥ 7.00 were established a priori as thresholds for consensus. We also inspected the distribution of responses by calculating the percentage of statements with a score of ≥ 7.00 , with a target of 75% or more. For statements not reaching these thresholds, the internal working group reviewed the open-ended participant feedback to identify emergent reasons for lack of consensus utility or feasibility. Where possible, statements were modified based on this feedback. Modified statements, along with the results of the first round of ratings, were sent back to Summit participants. They were asked to follow the same rating and open-ended feedback as before on this limited sub-set of recommendations. Statements reaching consensus thresholds at the end of these two rounds of review were included in the final set of institutional recommendations.

Summit detail (exploration phase):

Welcome and Introductions. Mark Emmert, NCAA president, Brian Hainline, NCAA chief medical officer and Derrick Gragg, NCAA chief diversity and inclusion officer, provided opening remarks.

Co-chair welcome. Stephanie Chu, summit steering committee co-chair, welcomed participants and guests.

Meeting overview. LaGwyn Durden, NCAA director of sports medicine and Amy Wilson, NCAA managing director of inclusion, provided an overview of the summit.

Background. To provide context and common understanding of key issues, several key leaders in the fields of endocrinology, sports medicine, sociology and gender diversity in sport were invited to provide brief updates.

- Richard Budgett, medical and scientific director of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) summarized the IOC's considerations of transgender athlete participation in Olympic competition.
- Jean Merrill, director of inclusion, provided historical and foundational information about the NCAA's policy on transgender student-athlete participation.
- Kelsey Gurganus, assistant director of research provided an overview of the American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment survey on trans-spectrum student-athlete participation in sport, mental health, substance use, perceptions of safety and violence victimization.
- Bradley Anawalt, chief of medicine at the University of Washington Medical Center, presented on foundational medical/natural science considerations.
- Travers, professor of sociology at Simon Fraser University, presented on foundational social science and inclusion considerations.
- Mac Brown and Chris Mosier summarized a focus group discussion of transgender and non-binary student-athletes (and summit participants) regarding their athletic experiences and perspectives about the NCAA transgender student-athlete participation policy. Two student-athletes from the focus group also shared their personal experiences.

Day 1 Breakout Group Sessions. Participants were provided an overview of the modified Delphi process that will be used to develop a consensus framework. As a first step in this process, participants then met in breakout groups to discuss key issues and considerations related current policy elements through the lenses inclusion, competitive equity, and physical and mental health and safety. Discussion groups reported back to the full group. At the conclusion of Day 1, participants were invited to complete an anonymous open-ended survey in which they rated each current policy element in terms of how well it addresses inclusion, competitive equity, and physical and mental health and safety. The feedback from the breakout group discussions and participant ratings informed the consensus-building portion of the Day Two agenda.

Day 2 Breakout Group Sessions. On Day Two, participants joined breakout session discussions related to the following topics that were identified as a result of Day One feedback: physical and mental care for student-athletes who are gender transitioning; competitive equity and inclusion. Within each breakout group discussion, key topics to address were current barriers and opportunities/ways forward. At the end of Day 2, participants were invited to submit anonymous open-ended written feedback with their recommendations and/or additional thoughts.

Results

The exploration phase generated 34 preliminary statements, targeted at athletic departments and the NCAA, and grouped broadly across categories. Thirty-four stakeholders participated in the first round of statement ratings. All of the 17 statements targeted to athletic departments met a priori consensus thresholds for utility, and 14 of the 17 met thresholds for feasibility. NCAA-focused statements were only rated on utility, given governance feasibility considerations that were outside of the purview/expertise of stakeholders involved in the consensus process. All NCAA-focused statements met consensus thresholds to utility. Revisions to athletic department-focused statements were made based on themes emergent from open-ended participant feedback. Three modified statements were rated in the second round. Of these, all met thresholds for utility, and two were marginally below thresholds for feasibility. The final set of recommendations are provided below.

Summary of Preliminary Foundational Statements

Authorized NCAA governance groups may choose to leverage these preliminary statements in support of intermediate education, research and policy initiatives to assist the membership in addressing the matters of inclusion, fairness, student-athlete well-being, health, and safety related to athletics participation by transgender and non-binary student-athletes. Below is a summary of the preliminary foundational statements put forth by the summit participants for consideration by applicable NCAA governance groups.

Institutional actions to improve inclusion and/or wellbeing for TGNB student-athletes

Healthcare

- **Patient-centered care:** Encourage and incentivize healthcare providers who work with student-athletes to participate in ongoing continuing education about patient-centered healthcare, and to apply these practices to the care of all student-athletes, including transgender and non-binary (TGNB) student-athletes. Note that key elements of patient-centered care include understanding and respecting student-athlete identity, goals, and values, and having this guide a collaborative decision-making process.

- **Culturally sensitive care:**
 - Identify at least one licensed mental health provider to provide culturally sensitive care to TGNB athletes.
 - Share with student-athletes and staff a list of licensed mental health professionals within athletics, campus partners or the greater community available to provide culturally-sensitive care to TGNB student-athletes.

Education

- **Stakeholders:** Provide education specific to TGNB inclusion on a regular basis to stakeholder groups including coaches, athletic department staff, sports medicine staff, and student-athletes.
- **Education content:**
 - Addresses the myths and misperceptions about TGNB athletes and various transition processes.
 - Addresses the existence and impact of explicit and implicit biases.
 - Emphasizes shared humanity across gender identities.
 - Shares concrete strategies for individuals to enhance TGNB inclusion (e.g., inclusive communication).
 - Includes a non-judgmental opportunity for participants to ask questions.
 - Is tailored for specific stakeholder roles and responsibilities (i.e., coaches, athletic department staff, sports medicine staff, student-athletes).
- **Burden on TGNB athletes:** Regularly review educational methods/modalities to confirm that primary responsibility for educating others about TGNB issues is not being placed on TGNB student-athletes.

Administration

- **Pronouns:**
 - Establish institutional processes for student-athletes to select and update their pronouns by which to be referred.
 - Communicate expectations that staff and others will openly use and support the use of selected pronouns in communications and record keeping.
 - Establish institutional protocols that support awareness and appropriate use of student-athlete and staff pronouns by PA announcers/media broadcasters.
- **Quality improvement:** Engage in regular quality improvement processes, guided by collection of feedback from TGNB student-athletes about TGNB resource availability, utilization, barriers to utilization, and unmet needs.

NCAA (committee and governance) actions to improve inclusion and/or wellbeing for TGNB student-athletes

Waivers

- Include TGNB concerns as part of the mitigation that may qualify a student-athlete for relief of NCAA eligibility restrictions (e.g. transfer, uniforms).
- Include gender transition as part of the mitigation that may support a medical hardship waiver request and additional eligibility.

Policy review

- Engage in regular review of NCAA TGNB policies and materials, and relevant research specific to TGNB participation in sport, by applicable NCAA committees and subcommittees for purposes of recommending updates that uphold NCAA core values around student-athlete inclusion, wellbeing, and fairness.
- Identify a multidisciplinary group of experts comprising, among others, student-athletes, industry experts, physicians and licensed mental health professionals with experience related to TGNB student-athlete support that may serve as an advisory body to NCAA governance groups, as they review association policies, materials and requests for input on TGNB topics and issues.
- Consider competitive equity in women's sport as part of all policy reviews and updates.
- Acknowledge gender identities that are neither male nor female (e.g., non-binary, nonconforming, genderqueer) in policies and practices related to TGNB athletes.

Resource development and dissemination

- Develop membership "tool kit" and/or "checklist" that provides athletics department personnel with relevant guidance, strategies and/or best practices related to supporting TGNB student-athlete wellbeing.
- Establish a process through which the membership "tool kit" and/or checklist will be updated regularly and made available to member institutions.
- Make available TGNB inclusion resources to support institutions in their outreach efforts to various stakeholders about TGNB inclusion (e.g., to media, parents, high schools).
- Provide guidance, strategies and/or best practices related to TGNB inclusion as part of Championship event procedures and materials (e.g., use of preferred names/pronouns, gender safe facilities).

Visibility and support

- Identify and promote opportunities designed to enhance peer support among TGNB student-athletes across campuses.
- Identify and promote opportunities designed to increase positive visibility of TGNB student-athletes.

Research needs

- TGNB student-athlete wellbeing: mental health; physical health; psychosocial experiences (e.g., team acceptance, isolation, experiences of discrimination).
- Competitive success of TGNB athletes across all levels of sport (i.e., high school, collegiate, international).
- Experiences and perspectives of all student-athletes about gender identity and student-athlete participation.
- Myths/misperceptions about TGNB student-athletes across all stakeholder groups.
- TGNB student-athlete feedback about TGNB resource availability, utilization, barriers to utilization, and felt needs.

References

1. Adler M, Ziglio E. *Gazing Into the Oracle: The Delphi Method and Its Application to Social Policy and Public Health*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers; 1996.
2. Kroshus E, Cameron KL, Coatsworth JD, et al. Improving concussion education: consensus from the NCAA-Department of Defense Mind Matters Research & Education Grand Challenge. *Br J Sports Med*. Published online September 10, 2020:bjsports-2020-102185. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2020-102185
3. Kroshus E, Wagner J, Wyrick D, et al. Wake up call for collegiate athlete sleep: narrative



**Summit on Gender Identity
and Student-Athlete Participation**
Participants

Summit Steering Committee	
Role	Representative
Co-chair	Dr. Stephanie Chu, DO, Team Physician, University of Colorado, Boulder, NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport
Co-chair	Dr. Mark Lombardi, PhD, President, Maryville University of Saint Louis, NCAA Board of Governors Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity
Steering Committee	Dr. Kathryn Ackerman, MD, MPH, FACSM, Harvard Medical School, Endocrinology and Sports Medicine, Director – Female Athlete Program, Boston Children’s Hospital Sports Medicine
Steering Committee	Dr. Mac Brown, Psy.D, LP, CMPC, Assistant Director, Training Coordinator for the Psychological Health and Performance Team, University of Colorado, Boulder Athletic Department
Steering Committee	Dr. Pat Griffin, EdD, Professor Emerita, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Steering Committee	Dr. Jeremy Henrichs, MD, CAQSM, Carle Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Team Physician, University of Illinois, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
Steering Committee	Chris Mosier, MA, Founder of Transathlete.com

National and International Organizations	
Organization	Representative
American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine	Dr. Benjamin Ma
American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine	Dr. Jeffrey Bytowski
American Physical Therapy Association	Dr. Erik Meira
American Psychological Association Division 47	Dr. Doug Hanks
Athlete Ally	Hudson Taylor
Athlete Ally	Anne Lieberman
Clinical & Counseling Sport Psychology Association	Dr. Chris Bader
College Athletic Trainers Society	Elizabeth Zanolli
College Football Parents 24/7	Mya Hinton
Endocrine Society	Dr. Brad Anawalt

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Faculty Athletics Representatives Association	James Crawley
Higher Education Mental Health Alliance	Dr. Leigh White
International Olympic Committee	Dr. Richard Budgett
International Society for Sports Psychiatry	Dr. Todd Stull
Lambda Legal	Carl Charles
National Athletic Trainers Association	Dr. Rebecca Lopez
National Center for Lesbian Rights	Helen Carroll
National Center for Lesbian Rights	Shannon Minter
National Center for Transgender Equality	Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen
The Inclusion Playbook	Ashland Johnson
The Trevor Project	Casey Pick
United States Department of Defense	Dr. Donald Shell
United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee	Dr. Jonathan Finnoff
WeCOACH	Megan Kahn
Women's Sports Foundation	Sarah Axelson

NCAA Membership	
Membership Affiliation	Representative
NCAA Board of Governors Student-Athlete Engagement Committee	Bryce Choate
Big Sky Conference, Senior Associate Commissioner	Jayne Nadolski
Brandeis University, Athletics Director	Lauren Haynie
NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports	Dr. James Houle
NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports	Kim Terrell
NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics	Renee Bostic
NCAA Division III LGTBQ Working Group	Mika Costello
NCAA Division III LGTBQ Working Group	Emet Marwell
NCAA Division III LGTBQ Working Group	Neil Virtue
NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee	John Etheridge
NCAA Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee	Madeleine McKenna
NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee	Carlie Hansen
NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee	Mercy Ogutu
NCAA Cross Country Student-Athlete	Jordan Dawson
NCAA Swimming Student-Athlete	Dani Wheeler
Former NCAA Cross Country Student-Athlete	Juniper Eastwood
Former NCAA Swimming Student-Athlete	Natalie Fahey
Former NCAA Lacrosse Student-Athlete	Grayson Russo

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Former NCAA Track & Field Student-Athlete	Linnea Saltz
NCAA Gender Equity Task Force	Judy Sweet
Franklin Pierce University, Associate Athletic Director and Senior Woman Administrator	Jeannette McKillop
NCAA Division I Governance	Noreen Morris
NCAA Division II Governance	Julie Ruppert
NCAA Division III Governance	Michelle Walsh
Houghton College, National Director of Athletics Engagement	Skip Lord
Minority Opportunities and Interests Association	Stan Johnson
NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee	Marquetta Dickens
Missouri Valley Conference, Senior Associate Commissioner and Senior Woman Administrator	Patty Viverito
Penn State University, Professor of Kinesiology	Dr. Jaime Schultz
Simon Fraser University, Professor of Sociology, co-editor of Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport (2017)	Dr. Ann Travers
SUNY New Paltz, Head Cross Country Coach	Aislinn Ryan

NCAA Consultants	
Counselor	Dr. Janie Black
NCAA Consultant	Dallas Hack
NCAA Consultant	Dr. Emily Kroshus
Former NCAA Director of Inclusion	Karen Morrison