

**1A FAR STATEMENT**  
*on*  
**THE FBS FOOTBALL POST SEASON**

The 1A FAR is aware that the FBS conference commissioners currently are evaluating the FBS football post season with the purpose of recommending to the BCS Presidential Oversight Committee the scope and contours of the FBS football post season moving forward. FBS FARs have various positions on the FBS post season, including preferences for returning to the bowl system that predated the Bowl Coalition; returning to the system under the Bowl Coalition which left the bowl system intact except for pairing #1 and #2 in a national championship bowl game; the BCS system as currently configured or with modifications that have no additional detrimental impact on student-athlete well-being (elimination of automatic qualifier conferences, for example); and implementing a four-team playoff. That said, we know of no FBS faculty support for a playoff that entails more than four teams. Whatever the configuration of the FBS football post season, what must be front and center for all of us in governance positions in intercollegiate athletics is the academic, health, and overall well-being of our football student-athletes.

- We know that football student-athlete academic performance is adversely affected by their practice/competition schedules in season. [E.g., 1 Journal of Intercollegiate Sports 2002 (2008).]
- We know that football student-athletes recognize that their athletics commitments detract from the time they can spend on their academic work. [E.g., National Study of Student-Athletes Regarding Their Experiences as College Students.]
- We know that football teams have the second lowest academic performance as calculated by the NCAA academic performance rate metric (men's basketball teams are lower). [E.g., 1 Journal of Intercollegiate Sports 2002 (2008).]
- We know that football student-athletes have by far the most competition injuries per player of any collegiate sport. [E.g., 2011-12 NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook.]
- We know that football student-athletes are second only to wrestling in practice injuries. [E.g., 2011-12 NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook.]

These data converge to affirm that the well-being of football student-athletes is directly related to the total number of games they play, the time between games, and the length of the competitive season. These data call into question the number of games currently played and the current post season schedule. Therefore, any post season model must not:

1. Increase the number of games over those currently played (12 for teams that do not participate in a bowl game; 14 for the two teams in each conference that compete in a conference championship game and a bowl game; and 13 for all the rest).
2. Extend any further into the second term beyond the current January 9 (we urge contraction so that the post season ends on January 1 and certainly no later than the Saturday following January 1 each year).
3. Interfere with classes and exam schedules.

A Bowl system (with or without the Bowl Coalition national championship game) and the current BCS system appear to us to lend themselves most easily to a configuration that meets the

first two criteria. Because these two systems leave entry into particular bowls to conference and institutional choice, these systems also make it easier to assure that the third criterion is met.

A four-team playoff seemingly could be configured to meet all three criteria (although even a four-team playoff likely means an additional, 15th, game, for two teams and upwards of 200 football student-athletes). Given the multiplicity of exam schedules at the 120 FBS institutions, and the varying term end and start dates, we are very doubtful that any playoff model that entails more than four teams could meet the third criterion.

Although there is support for, and probably no substantial FBS FAR opposition to, a four-team playoff that meets the above three criteria, such a four-team playoff is a game changer. We are worried about the slippery slope consequences over time to moving to a playoff model and the degree to which the present can control the future, no matter the good intentions of, and a clear statement of principles by, those implementing a playoff. The history of playoffs in all professional and college sports is an ever-increasing number of participating teams and games played and an increasingly lengthy time frame in which a playoff occurs. In that respect we point to the trajectory of the Division I Men's Basketball Tournament, which began as a tournament of eight teams and, through incremental change over time, now encompasses 68 teams.

We know that this concern is shared by all of us, including university presidents and chancellors; conference commissioners; and directors of athletics. We also know that all of us are concerned with the academic, health, and overall well-being of our football student-athletes. We therefore urge that a critical component in evaluating different post season models should be what research tells us regarding the factors that most negatively impact student-athlete academic performance and that most contribute to football student-athlete injuries and serious injuries.

The 1A FAR is comprised of Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs) from Division I FBS institutions. NCAA bylaws require that each institution designate a faculty member as FAR; the FAR is part of the membership governance structure in athletics conferences and the NCAA.