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2016 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA Division-I Basketball

“Lost in the *Madness*: NCAA Division-I Basketball Graduation Gaps Significantly Larger Since 2011”

- **Columbia, SC – April 6th, 2016...** In its sixth annual analysis of NCAA Division-I (D-I) basketball players’ graduation rates, the College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at the University of South Carolina’s reports both men’s and women’s NCAA Division I basketball players’ Adjusted Graduation Gaps (AGGs) are getting worse (larger). The AGG is especially large for Black male basketball players in major conferences (-36.4 percentage points). Though gradual, the negative trends are statistically significant. Compared to the initial report in 2011, the overall men’s AGG is 3.0 percentage points larger, while the women’s

AGG is 2.2 points larger. These results contrast sharply with the impression of improving athlete graduation rates created by various NCAA reports. The overall men's AGG is very large: -23.0 percentage points, while the overall women's AGG is sizable: -11.1 percentage points.

CSRI Research–Team Statement

The College Sport Research Institute's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) analysis of NCAA D-I basketball players' graduation rates reveals that overwhelmingly men's and women's basketball players do not graduate at rates comparable to other full-time students at their universities.

Study Highlights

(See tables and chart in Appendix)

Men's and Women's Trends:

- Both men's and women's AGGs show negative trends (i.e., the athlete-student body gaps are getting worse or larger).
- Though gradual, **the negative trends nevertheless are statistically significant.**
- The men's AGG is 3.0 percentage points larger now as compared to the initial 2011 report, while the women's AGG is 2.2 points larger.
- These results contrast sharply with the impressions of *improving* athlete graduation rate trends created by various NCAA reports.

Men's D-I Summary:

- The Atlantic Coast Conference, which had six teams in this year's Men's Sweet Sixteen, four in the Elite-Eight, two in the Final Four, and one team playing for the national championship has an AGG of -32.2 that places it 27th among the 31 D-I conferences (excluding the Ivy League).
- The major conference gap of -32.6 percentage points is much worse than the mid-major conference gap of -18.3 points.¹
- The overall D-I Black AGG is 9.3 percentage points worse than the White AGG: -26.7 and -17.4 respectively.
- Among major conferences, the best performers are Conference-USA (-25.2) and the Big East (-25.9), both worse than the overall DI average AGG of -23.0.
- Among all DI conferences, the best performers are the Southwestern (-0.2) and the Patriot (-4.5).
- Among all DI conferences, the worst performers are the American (-42.8) and the Mountain West (-42.7).
- All 31 DI conferences have negative AGGs: (i.e., all conference basketball graduation rates are less than the full-time male student body rates).

¹ The designations of major and mid-major follow those on collegeinsider.com.

² Technical details can be found in E. Woodrow Eckard, "NCAA Athlete Graduation Rates: Less

Women's D-I Summary:

- The overall DI women's AGG is sizable, at -11.1 percentage points.
- DI women's AGGs nevertheless are much better than the men's AGGs, overall and for all analyzed sub-groups.
- The major conference AGG of -17.1 percentage points is more than twice the mid-major AGG of -8.2 points.
- The D-I Black AGG is 3.3 percentage points worse than the White AGG, -13.8 vs. -10.4, although the difference is not statistically significant.
- Among major conferences, the best performers are the Southeastern (-8.5) and the Big East (-10.1).
- Only three D-I conferences, the Horizon, Metro-Atlantic and Southwestern, have positive AGGs: (i.e., their basketball graduation rates are higher than those of the general female student body).
- Among all DI conferences, the worst performer is the American with an AGG of -29.3.

CSRI Position on Graduation Rates

In 1990, Congress mandated full disclosure of graduation rates at schools that award athletically related aid and receive federal financial aid. The **Federal Graduation Rate (FGR)** reflects the percentage of students (athletes and non-athletes) who graduate within six years from the school where they initially enrolled as a full-time student. The FGR measures the extent to which colleges and universities retain and graduate recruited athletes, thus providing one measure of whether they are fulfilling the NCAA's mission of maintaining athletes as an integral part of their student body. The strength of the FGR is its focus on student retention.

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

The **Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG)** was developed to address FGR and GSR limitations. The FGR focuses on an institution's ability to retain students it admits, while the GSR attempts to account for athletes who leave a school that initially admitted them. The AGG compares an adjusted FGR for full-time students and the reported FGR for college athletes from the following NCAA Division-I sports: FBS football, D-I men's and women's basketball, and D-I softball and baseball. Reports regarding each sport are released at various times during the year.

Historically, standard evaluations of NCAA athlete graduation rates have involved comparisons with general student body rates presumed to pertain to full-time students. However, many schools' general student body rates include a significant number of part-time students. This is problematic because all NCAA athletes must be "full-time" and should therefore be compared with other full-time students. The downward "part-timer bias" in the student-body FGR distorts this comparison. Because part-time students take longer to graduate, this significantly reduces the measured general student-body FGR, making the relative rate of college athletes at many schools and conferences appear more favorable. CSRI's AGG methodology addresses this "part-timer bias" using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-time students enrolled at an institution. The adjustments also account for the aggregate influence of school-specific factors such as location and student demographics. These estimates are the basis for the AGG comparison.²

² Technical details can be found in E. Woodrow Eckard, "NCAA Athlete Graduation Rates: Less than Meets the Eye," *Journal of Sport Management*, January 2010, pp. 45-58.

CSRI

Founded in 2007, the College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina – Columbia. CSRI is dedicated to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college-sport issues.

Along with conducting and disseminating in-house research, CSRI holds the annual Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC. This conference provides college-sport scholars and intercollegiate athletics practitioners a forum to present research related to current college-sport issues and discuss possible solutions to these challenges. CSRI also publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal entitled: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, which provides an outlet for research related to college-sport issues.

This is the sixth annual installment of the CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) Report. We hope this report encourages continuing research and discussion regarding college athlete graduation rates, as well as a focus on the quality and type of educational opportunities offered to college athletes.

CSRI Research Team & Co-Authors

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Appendix

TABLE 1- 2016 NCAA D-I MAJOR AND MID-MAJOR (MM) SUMMARIES

Men: Major vs. Mid-Major

	AGG	B_AGG	W_AGG
All D-I	-23.0	-26.7	-17.4
Major	-32.6	-36.4	-23.9
Mid-Major	-18.3	-22.1	-14.0
Major-MM =	-14.3	-14.4	-9.9

Men: Black vs. White

	All D-I	Major	Mid-Major
B_AGG	-26.7	-36.4	-22.1
W_AGG	-17.4	-23.9	-14.0
Black - White =	-9.3	-12.5	-8.1

Women: Major vs. Mid-Major

	AGG	B_AGG	W_AGG
All DI	-11.1	-13.8	-10.4
Major	-17.1	-17.6	-18.8
Mid-Major	-8.2	-12.0	-6.0
Major - MM =	-8.9	-5.6	-12.8

Women: Black vs. White

	All DI	Major	Mid-Major
B_AGG	-13.8	-17.6	-12.0
W_AGG	-10.4	-18.8	-6.0
Black - White =	-3.3	1.2	-6.0

Men vs. Women

	AGG	B_AGG	W_AGG	Major AGG	Mid-Major AGG
Men	-23.0	-26.7	-17.4	-32.6	-18.3
Women	-11.1	-13.8	-10.4	-17.1	-8.2

Men - Women = -11.9 -12.9 -7.0 -15.5 -10.1

TABLE 2 – 2016 NCAA D-I CONFERENCE AVERAGE AGGS

MEN'S

	AGG	B_AGG	W_AGG
MAJOR			
Conference-USA	-25.2	-19.3	-38.9
Big East	-25.9	-27.4	-25.1
Southeastern	-27.1	-33.0	-16.9
Atlantic 10	-27.6	-32.8	-24.0
Big 12	-31.4	-42.0	5.7
Big Ten	-31.8	-36.5	-13.1
Atlantic Coast	-32.2	-32.4	-24.8
PAC-12	-39.7	-43.4	-40.4
Mountain West	-42.7	-51.0	-24.5
American	-42.8	-46.4	-36.7
MAJOR AVG.	-32.6	-36.4	-23.9
MID-MAJOR			
SWAC	-0.2	0.3	
Patriot	-4.5	-9.4	-6.8
Northeast	-4.7	-5.9	-5.1
Mid-Eastern	-6.4	-5.8	
Big South	-12.2	-14.8	-12.9
Southland	-12.5	-15.8	-14.9
Southern	-15.0	-13.9	-14.0
Metro Atlantic	-15.8	-18.1	-14.0
Summit	-16.5	-20.1	-1.1
America East	-16.7	-38.6	3.0
WAC	-20.1	-19.2	-5.0
Colonial Athletic	-20.1	-23.1	-13.5
Ohio Valley	-20.9	-25.0	-23.3
Missouri Valley	-21.4	-32.3	-9.8
Mid-American	-21.4	-36.1	2.3
Sun Belt	-23.8	-20.9	-34.4
Horizon	-27.9	-25.7	-4.4
Atlantic Sun	-28.2	-29.6	-29.3
West Coast	-28.8	-30.8	-20.8
Big Sky	-30.0	-42.2	-14.9
Big West	-38.2	-36.1	-46.5

MID-MAJOR AVG.	-18.3	-22.1	-14.0
DIVISION-I AVG.	-23.0	-26.7	-17.4

WOMEN'S

	AGG	B_AGG	W_AGG
MAJOR			
Southeastern	-8.5	-10.8	-9.7
Big East	-10.1	-6.9	-15.1
Big Ten	-12.7	-18.7	-11.3
Atlantic 10	-13.0	-16.6	-13.5
Big 12	-14.7	-10.5	-13.3
Mountain West	-19.3	-22.2	-26.6
Atlantic Coast	-20.9	-21.3	-22.3
Conference-USA	-21.1	-23.1	-17.4
PAC-12	-21.3	-17.0	-21.5
American	-29.3	-28.6	-37.3
MAJOR AVG.	-17.1	-17.6	-18.8
MID-MAJOR			
Horizon	2.6	2.5	-8.1
SWAC	0.7	-0.6	
Metro Atlantic	0.7	-5.0	0.8
Mid-Eastern	-3.2	-2.5	
West Coast	-3.4	-18.4	6.7
Summit	-4.2	-11.6	-2.4
Southern	-5.0	-14.3	3.4
Patriot	-5.4	0.7	-6.4
America East	-6.1	-20.6	0.2
Big South	-6.5	-3.2	-5.7
Missouri Valley	-6.9	-2.0	-7.9
WAC	-6.9	-12.8	-7.8
Big Sky	-10.8	-8.2	-6.1
Southland	-10.9	-12.3	-12.5
Colonial Athletic	-12.3	-14.9	-4.5
Mid-American	-12.5	-26.4	-4.2
Northeast	-14.5	-6.3	-14.4
Big West	-15.5	-31.1	-0.6
Ohio Valley	-16.6	-23.8	-11.6
Sun Belt	-16.6	-17.0	-16.3
Atlantic Sun	-19.2	-23.6	-16.9

MID-MAJOR AVG.	-8.2	-12.0	-6.0
DIVISION-I AVG.	-11.1	-13.8	-10.4

CHART 1- SIX-YEAR AGG TREND-LINES



