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## 2016 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA FBS Football

*Adjusted Graduation Gaps of Power 5 Black Players nearly 5 times greater than White Players*

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**Columbia, SC – October 19, 2016...** The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its seventh-annual NCAA Division-I Football Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. The report provides an overview of the AGGs of Black and White National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) football players as well as a longitudinal view of “All AGGs” for FBS conferences sub-divided into “Power 5” and “Group of 5” categories.

The 2016 Power 5 Conference AGG mean is -18.4, while the Group of 5’s AGG average is -11.9. Both of these figures were slightly improved from 2015 (Power 5 =

-19.3 and Group of 5/Other FBS = -12.7), but still indicate significant discrepancies between FBS football players' graduation rates and those of full-time male students. Given the increasing economic exploitation of NCAA FBS players, several additional findings were concerning.

Of particular interest, the Power 5 Black players' AGG (-25.2) was nearly 5 times larger than that of White players (-5.1).

## **CSRI Research – Team Statement**

The College Sport Research Institute's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) analysis of NCAA FBS football players' graduation rates reveals that historically and systematically NCAA *FBS football players*<sup>1</sup> do not graduate at rates comparable to other full-time students at their universities.

## **Study Highlights**

(See tables and chart in Appendix)

- ❖ Power 5 Conference Black player AGGs average a very large -25.2 , an alarming -20.1 points greater than the White player average of -5.1.
- ❖ Group of 5 Conference Black player AGGs are smaller, but still sizable at -17.4. The Group of 5 Black-White difference is also smaller, at -13.1.
- ❖ Over the last two years the all-player FBS Conference AGG has decreased from -17.3 to -15.2, a statistically significant +2.1 improvement. However, this was due mainly to a +2.7 improvement among Group of 5 Conferences whose average all-player AGG decreased from -14.6 to -11.9. The Power 5 all-player AGG improved from -20.0 to -18.4.
- ❖ For the fifth straight year, among Power 5 conferences, the Big 12 has the smallest AGG at -13.5 percentage points, while the Pac-12 has the largest at -21.5 points.

## **CSRI Position on Graduation Rates**

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<sup>1</sup> Our data includes both *profit athletes* and *loss athletes*. Profit athletes are college athletes whose market value exceeds the value of their grant-in-aid (GIA). The value of a loss athlete's GIA exceeds the athlete's athletic market

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 useful graduation rate measure, created by the NCAA to track 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. 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 AGG was developed to address FGR and GSR limitations. It is not intended to replace either metric. 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 (who must all be full-time students) 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 throughout 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 includes a significant number of part-time students. Since all NCAA athletes must be "full-time" it is appropriate that their reported federal graduation rates should be compared to a full-time student graduation rate. The downward "part-timer bias" in unadjusted student-body FGRs distort this comparison. Part-time students take longer to graduate and "drop out" more often than full-time

students. Consequently, a school's FGR is highly correlated to the percent of part-time students. The more part-time students, the lower a school's FGR. CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap methodology addresses this "part-timer bias" using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-time students enrolled at an institution.<sup>2</sup> This allows for an "apples to apples" comparison of full-time student and FBS football player graduation rates.

## **CSRI**

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 hosts the annual CSRI Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC. This conference provides a forum for disseminating research of current college-sport issues and 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 seventh annual installment of the CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) FBS Football Report. We hope this information 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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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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## **Appendix**

### **2016 NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gap Tables**

**TABLE 1- 2016 FOOTBALL BOWL SUB-DIVISION (FBS) “POWER 5” AND “GROUP OF 5” AGGs**

Power 5				
2016 Conference	B+W Mean	Black Mean	White Mean	
Atlantic Coast	-18.4	-23.3	-7.8	
Big 12	-13.5	-21.4	0.8	
Big Ten	-20.9	-29.9	-8.9	
PAC-12	-21.5	-27.8	-7.7	
Southeastern	-17.7	-23.5	-2.0	
Average	-18.4	-25.2	-5.1	

Group of 5				
2016 Conference	B+W Mean	Black Mean	White Mean	
American	-17.6	-20.6	-11.2	
Conference-USA	-10.3	-14.1	-3.6	
Mid-American	-10.7	-21.7	2.2	
Mountain West	-10.3	-14.2	-7.5	
Sun Belt	-10.7	-16.4	-1.3	
Average	-11.9	-17.4	-4.3	

**NOTES:**

❖ **POWER FIVE-**

- **NOTRE DAME & BYU EXCLUDED- INDEPENDENT IN FOOTBALL**

❖ **OTHER FBS-**

- **AIR FORCE, ARMY, AND NAVY EXCLUDED- DATA NOT COMPARABLE TO CIVILIAN SCHOOLS**
- **OLD DOMINION, UTSA, COASTAL CAROLINA, GEORGIA STATE, AND UNC-CHARLOTTE EXCLUDED- NO FOOTBALL FGRS REPORTED, OR COMPETES AT FCS LEVEL**
- **UAB (DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD) DROPPED FOOTBALL**

**TABLE 2 – SEVEN-YEAR AVERAGE OF FBS “POWER FIVE” AGGs**

<b>Conference</b>	<b>2010 AGG</b>	<b>2011 AGG</b>	<b>2012 AGG</b>	<b>2013 AGG</b>	<b>2014 AGG</b>	<b>2015 AGG</b>	<b>2016 AGG</b>	<b>7-year Average</b>
Big XII	-16	-18	-14	-16	-18	-15	-14	-16
SEC	-19	-18	-18	-18	-18	-19	-18	-18
ACC	-20	-20	-22	-21	-21	-20	-18	-20
Big Ten	-23	-21	-20	-21	-21	-20	-21	-21
Pac-12	-30	-26	-27	-28	-23	-22	-22	-25
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-20</b>

❖ Yearly conference realignment may affect these numbers. Conference means for each year are based on conference membership for that year.

**TABLE 3 – SEVEN-YEAR AVERAGE OF “GROUP OF 5” AGGs**

<b>Conference</b>	<b>2010 AGG</b>	<b>2011 AGG</b>	<b>2012 AGG</b>	<b>2013 AGG</b>	<b>2014 AGG</b>	<b>2015 AGG</b>	<b>2016 AGG</b>	<b>7-year Average</b>
MWC	-26	-15	-13	-12	-11	-10	-10	-14
C-USA	-15	-14	-13	-15	-14	-11	-10	-13
Sun Belt	-15	-15	-15	-13	-14	-12	-11	-14
MAC	-10	-14	-14	-15	-15	-12	-11	-13
Big East/ AAC	-12	-14	-15	-17	-19	-18	-18	-16
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-12</b>	<b>-14</b>

❖ Yearly conference realignment may affect these numbers. Conference means for each year are based on conference membership for that year.



**CHART 1- SEVEN-YEAR TREND-LINES: “POWER FIVE” AND “GROUP OF 5” AGGs**

