NCAA Division I
Academic Hot Topics
Shauna Cobb, NCAA
Bill Regan, NCAA

Overview

- Academic misconduct: The current state.
- Academic misconduct: The future.
- Open dialogue.

Academic Misconduct: The current state
**Academic Misconduct**

- New NCAA Division I Official Interpretation issued April 15, 2014.
- Reviewed and approved by NCAA Division I Legislative Council.
- Educational column published with interpretation.

**Main points:**

- Institutions determine whether academic misconduct occurred.
- Violation reported if institutional staff member, prospective student-athlete or student-athlete involved in arranging fraudulent academic credit or false transcripts.
- Violation reported if misconduct results in an erroneous declaration of eligibility and student-athlete subsequently competes for the institution.
- All other academic offenses are handled by the institution – no violation reported.

**Diagram:**

1. Institution determines if academic misconduct occurred. If yes:
   - Did institutional staff member, prospective student-athlete or student-athlete arrange fraudulent academic credit or false transcripts?
     - If yes, report violation.
     - If no, no violation reported. Handle pursuant to institutional policy.
   - Did academic misconduct result in an erroneous declaration of eligibility and student-athlete subsequently competes for the institution?
     - If yes, report violation.
     - If no, no violation reported. Handle pursuant to institutional policy.
Academic Misconduct

• Step 1: Institution determines if academic misconduct occurred.
  • Follow institutional academic process and definitions applicable to all students.
  • Includes, but not limited to: academic honesty and integrity, academic fraud, academic offense, violations of academic honor code.
  • Extra benefit and preferential legislation still applicable.

Academic Misconduct

• Step 2: Arranging fraudulent academic credit or false transcripts.
  • Always a violation regardless of eligibility certification.
  • Who: Institutional staff member (any individual, including student-workers, regular or volunteer staff members) and student-athletes.
  • Examples:
    • Altering transcripts.
    • Receiving credit for a course the prospective student-athlete or student-athlete did not enroll in or complete.
    • Changing or adding something to the final transcript that should not be there (altering the final grade).

Academic Misconduct

• Step 3: All other misconduct.
  • Did misconduct result in erroneous declaration of eligibility and did the student-athlete compete?
  • If both occur, report violation.
**Academic Misconduct**

- Process and possible extra benefit.
  - Institutions must follow process established for all students.
  - Deviations may result in violation.
- Examples:
  - Delaying process.
  - Using a more flexible standard.
  - Handling outside of institutional process.

---

**Case Study**

- Athletic department tutor assisted a student-athlete in completing a take-home exam.
- Student-athlete received an “A” on exam and a “C” for the course.
- Without the “A”, the student would have received a “D” for the course and credit would not be degree applicable.
- The course was needed to meet progress-toward-degree requirements.
- Student-athlete competed based on erroneous certification.
- Institution determines that NO academic misconduct occurred.

---

**Case Study**

Did a violation occur?

No. The determination of whether there was academic misconduct is left to the institution based on its definition of academic misconduct for all students.
Case Study

• Student-athlete’s coach asks professor to change a student-athlete’s final grade for a course from a “D” to a “C” after the semester ends.

  • The student-athlete is unaware of the coach’s actions.
  
  • The grade change results in student-athlete being declared eligible, but student-athlete never competes.
  
  • The institution finds academic misconduct occurred.

Case Study

Did a violation occur?

Yes. The coach arranged for the student-athlete’s final grade to be changed. This is tantamount to falsifying the transcript.

Case Study

• Student-athlete enrolled in course and must pass an exam to pass class.

  • Coach arranges to have another student take the exam for the student-athlete.
  
  • The student-athlete is aware of the arrangement.
  
  • The institution determined that academic misconduct did occur.
  
  • The student-athlete subsequently injures herself and does not compete.
Case Study

No. The student-athlete did not compete.

Case Study

• Student-athlete is said to have submitted, as his own work, a paper previously submitted by former student for a course taken in the fall.

• The institution follows its processes for determining whether academic misconduct occurred.

• There is no resolution at the conclusion of the academic year.

Case Study

Maybe. The process is not complete.

• Need to consider extra benefit legislation.

• Yes, if there is a determination of academic misconduct and the student-athlete competed.
Academic Misconduct: The future
Are we headed in the right direction?

What are your thoughts?
What if my campus determines that academic misconduct did not occur, should a violation be reported?

What are your thoughts?
Should we defer to institutional definitions of academic fraud, misconduct, etc. given the diversity among Division I campuses?
What are your thoughts?
Should it be considered a violation any time a coach is involved in academic misconduct?

What are your thoughts?
Should all institutional staff members be considered culpable when academic misconduct occurs?

What are your thoughts?
Should it be considered a violation only if there is an erroneous certification AND competition?
What are your thoughts?
Should it be considered a violation if the institution’s process is not followed (e.g., there are undue delays)?

Open Dialogue
• What is on your mind?
• What are your big issues?
• How can AMA help?