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# Black Male Student-Athletes and Racial Inequities in NCAA Division I Revenue-Generating College Sports

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# Black Male Student-Athletes

and Racial Inequities in NCAA Division I College Sports

BY SHAUN R. HARPER, COLLIN D. WILLIAMS JR., AND HORATIO W. BLACKMAN

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The report is also available in .PDF for free download at [www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/sports](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/sports)

# Executive Summary

Transparency, not shock value, is the primary aim of this report. In fact, statistics presented herein concerning the overrepresentation of Black male student-athletes are unlikely to surprise anyone who has watched a college football or men's basketball game over the past 20 years. Likewise, scholars who study race in intercollegiate athletics will probably deem unsurprising our findings on racial inequities in six-year graduation rates. What we find shocking is that these trends are so pervasive, yet institutional leaders, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and athletics conference commissioners have not done more in response to them. Also astonishing to us is that it seems the American public (including former Black student-athletes, sports enthusiasts, journalists, and leaders in Black communities) has accepted as normal the widespread inequities that are cyclically reproduced in most revenue-generating college sports programs.

Perhaps more outrage and calls for accountability would ensue if there were greater awareness of the *actual* extent to which college sports persistently disadvantage Black male student-athletes. Hence, the purpose of this report is to make transparent racial inequities in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big East Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pac 12 Conference, and the Southeastern Conference (SEC). Data from the NCAA and the U.S. Department of Education are presented for the 76 institutional members of these six athletic conferences. Specifically, we offer a four-year analysis of Black men's representation on football and basketball teams versus their representation in the undergraduate student body on each campus. We also compare Black male student-athletes' six-year graduation rates (across four cohorts) to student-athletes overall, undergraduate students overall, and Black undergraduate men overall at each institution.

*Thank you for taking time to read our report; feel free to pass it along to others who may find it interesting and useful. Please direct questions, feedback, and reactions to us via e-mail at [sharper1@upenn.edu](mailto:sharper1@upenn.edu), [cold@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:cold@gse.upenn.edu), and [horatiob@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:horatiob@gse.upenn.edu). We hope this document heightens public awareness and ignites serious action in response to one of the most vexing racial equity issues in U.S. higher education.*

Major results of our study include:

- Between 2007 and 2010, Black men were 2.8% of full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students, but 57.1% of football teams and 64.3% of basketball teams.
- Across four cohorts, 50.2% of Black male student-athletes graduated within six years, compared to 66.9% of student-athletes overall, 72.8% of undergraduate students overall, and 55.5% of Black undergraduate men overall.
- 96.1% of these NCAA Division I colleges and universities graduated Black male student-athletes at rates lower than student-athletes overall.
- 97.4% of institutions graduated Black male student-athletes at rates lower than undergraduate students overall. On no campus were rates exactly comparable for these two comparison groups.
- At one university, Black male student-athletes graduated at a comparable rate to Black undergraduate men overall. On 72.4% of the other campuses, graduation rates for Black male student-athletes were lower than rates for Black undergraduate men overall.

In the pages that follow, we summarize previously published studies on Black male student-athletes and provide more details about our research methods. We then present lists of high- and low-performing institutions. Statistics are also furnished for each individual college/university in the six athletic conferences. The report concludes with implications for college and university presidents, athletics directors, commissioners of the six major sports conferences, the NCAA, journalists, and Black male student-athletes and their families.

*“Perhaps nowhere in higher education is the disenfranchisement of Black male students more insidious than in college athletics”*

– (Harper, 2006, p. 6)



A close-up photograph of a person's hand resting on a brown football with white and blue stripes. The hand is positioned on top of the ball, which is lying on a green grass field. The background is dark, making the hand and ball stand out. On the left side of the image, there is a vertical grey bar with white decorative circles and a text box.

## Dead Ball

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Though many aspire to play professional sports after college, the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) will draft fewer than 2% of student-athletes each year.

**SOURCE:** Martin (2009)

# Message from Kenneth L. Shropshire

One quandary scholars and policymakers have sought to unravel is the proper role of sports in our society. Intercollegiate athletics is one sector that has received much scrutiny.

Policy decisions are often based on belief rather than facts. In the African American community the reference is often to “mother wit,” a *feeling* that something is right or wrong. People often adhere to long held beliefs when making policy recommendations rather than looking at evidence and cutting-edge research.

My old pastor once began a sermon with the query, “which is correct: two heads are better than one, or too many cooks spoil the broth?” He stared into the congregation and asked, “they can’t both be right, can they?” His point was that we should not rely on lyrical beliefs that have been handed down to us, as they are often contradictory. He was guiding us to look to the Bible for answers. That was not a bad suggestion. Another recommendation for social issues and educational inequities is to look to statistics. That is where Professor Harper and his co-authors lead us in this report.

The percentage of Black men that composes the ranks of student-athletes gives us reason to pause and incentive to look further. While representing only 2.8% of full-time undergraduate students, they constitute 58.4% of the football and men’s basketball teams at colleges and universities in the six major NCAA Division I sports conferences. Intercollegiate athletics provide college opportunity to young Black men and take them off the streets, or major sports programs take advantage of these students without serious care for their personal and academic success. They can’t both be right, can they?

What can we learn about racial inequities in higher education by examining six-year graduation rates? At all but three institutions in this study, Black male student-athletes graduated at rates lower than teammates from other racial groups. Are these racial inequities in college completion best explained by Black men’s fascination with playing for the NFL and NBA, or is it that coaches only care if these students are academically eligible for athletic

competition but are considerably less concerned about rates at which they graduate? Which is right, which is wrong?

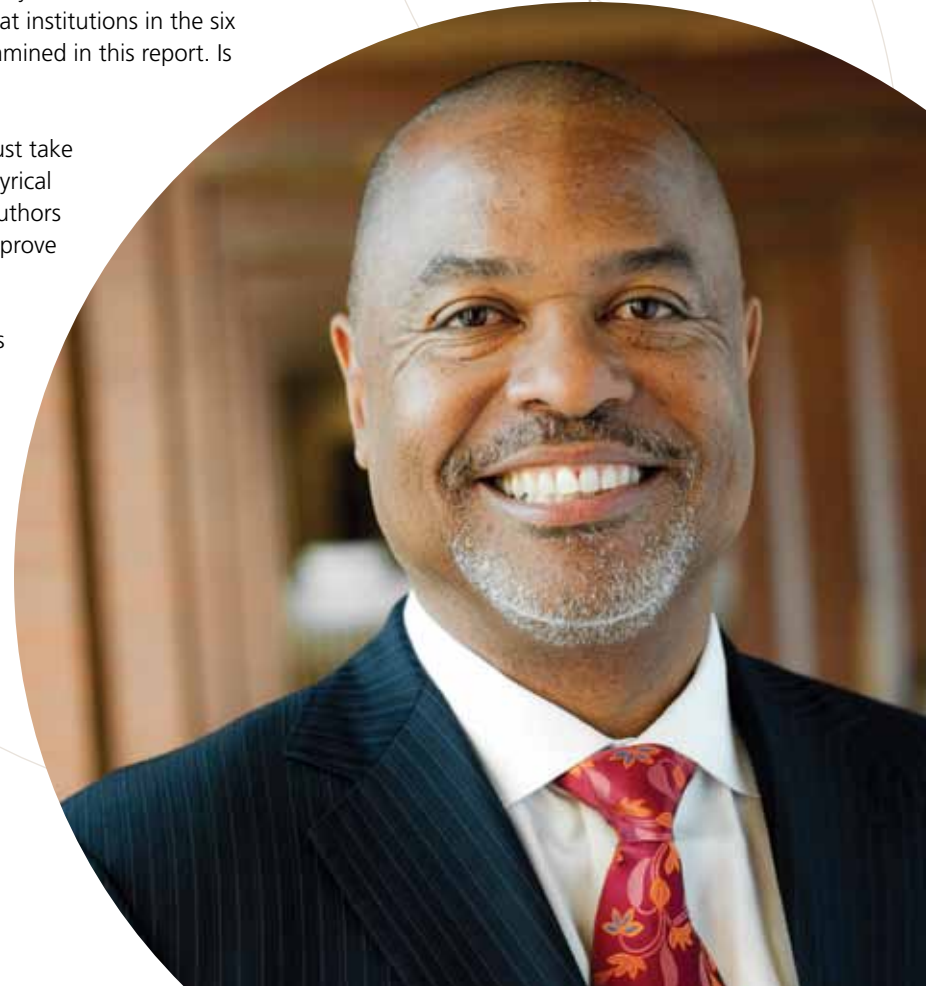
Do Black men on college sports teams graduate at higher rates than do their same-race male peers who do not participate in athletics? Yes at about one quarter of the institutions in this study, no at the overwhelming majority of others. The NCAA maintains that student-athletes graduate at higher rates because they are better at maximizing limited study time bounded by hours of practice, travel, and competition. This lyrical belief seems to not apply to Black male student-athletes at institutions in the six championship sports conferences examined in this report. Is the broth spoiled?

This study represents the path we must take to distinguish right from wrong and lyrical beliefs from statistical realities. The authors provide data that are necessary to improve student-athlete success and develop policies that address longstanding racial inequities in college sports. This study provides statistical insights into problems that are in need of accountability and policy response. Mother wit has its place, but data do a better job of making transparent what is *actually* right and wrong.

Warmest Regards,

Kenneth L. Shropshire, J.D.  
David W. Hauck Professor of Legal  
Studies and Business Ethics  
Director, Wharton Sports Business  
Initiative  
University of Pennsylvania

*Professor Shropshire is a faculty affiliate in the Penn GSE Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education. His 11 books include “Agents of Opportunity: Sports Agents and Corruption in Collegiate Sports.”*



*Every Heisman  
Trophy winner  
over the past 21  
years attended  
one of the  
universities  
analyzed in  
this report.*

# Background and Research Methods

This report builds on Harper's (2006) analysis of Black male student-athletes' representation on revenue-generating sports teams (football and basketball), as well as racial differences in six-year graduation rates, at 50 public flagship universities. Black men were 2.8% of undergraduates, but 54.6% of football players and 60.8% of basketball team members at institutions in the report. Across four cohorts of student-athletes, 47% of Black men graduated within six years, compared to 60% of White males and 62% of student-athletes overall in the 2006 study.

In this report, we provide data on representation trends and six-year graduation rates at 76 colleges and universities that comprise six major sports conferences: the ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac 12, and SEC. These conferences were chosen for our analysis because every NCAA Division I football champion since 1989 and each Division I men's basketball championship team since 1991 has come from them. They were also selected because their football conference champions receive automatic bids to the Bowl Championship Series (BCS), a post-season series of five nationally televised football contests. According to the BCS website, "Each conference whose team qualifies automatically for the BCS receives approximately \$22 million in net revenue. A second team qualifying brings an additional \$6 million to its conference" ([www.bcsfootball.org](http://www.bcsfootball.org)). Millions are also paid to conferences when men's basketball teams at member institutions advance to the NCAA Division I Final Four championship. Above all, we are focusing on colleges and universities in these six conferences because they are likely sites at which trends reported in published research on Black male student-athletes are most problematic.

## **Black Male Student-Athletes: A Research Overview**

Much has been written over the past four decades about Black male student participation in intercollegiate athletics. Numerous studies highlight a range of inequities at Division I institutions, the NCAA's highest and most financially lucrative competition level. Most emphasis in the literature has been on members of revenue-generating sports teams, namely football and men's basketball. Harper (2006) explains that these are the two sports that garner the most media attention (which also generates television contracts and corporate sponsorships), attract the most fans (who pay to attend games), and yield the most revenue from merchandise sales (e.g., jerseys and other apparel).

Scholars have recently examined how Black men are socialized to value sports over academics at a young age (e.g., Beamon & Bell, 2006; Benson,

2000); the ways in which colleges and universities reap enormous financial benefits at the expense of Black male student-athlete success (e.g., Beamon, 2008; Donnor, 2005; Harper, 2009a); and the long-term effects of sports participation on Black men's psychological wellness and post-college career transitions (e.g., Beamon & Bell, 2011; Harrison & Lawrence, 2003). Considerable effort has also been devoted to exploring racial differences between Black men and their White male teammates. For example, Harrison, Comeaux, and Plecha (2006) found disparities in the academic preparation of Black and White student-athletes. Specifically, Blacks were recruited from less prestigious high schools with insufficient resources, which likely underprepared them for the rigors of college-level academic work.

Nearly 30 years ago, renowned scholar-activist Harry Edwards wrote, "They must contend, of course, with the connotations and social reverberations of the traditional 'dumb jock' caricature. But Black student-athletes are burdened also with the insidiously racist implications of the myth of 'innate Black athletic superiority,' and the more blatantly racist stereotype of the 'dumb Negro' condemned by racial heritage to intellectual inferiority" (1984, p. 8). This caricature and other racial stereotypes continue to plague Black male student-athletes at many predominantly white colleges and universities (Hodge, Burden, Robinson, & Bennett, 2008; Hughes, Satterfield, & Giles, 2007; Oseguera, 2010). Because Black men are so overrepresented in college athletics, Harper (2009b) contends the myth also negatively affects those who are not student-athletes, as their White peers and others (e.g., faculty, alumni, and administrators) often erroneously presume they are members of intercollegiate sports teams and stereotype them accordingly.

The importance of engaging student-athletes in educationally purposeful activities and enriching educational experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, has been well established in the literature (Comeaux, Speer, Taustine, & Harrison, 2011; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Martin, 2009). Notwithstanding, Black male student-athletes rarely accrue benefits and developmental outcomes associated with high levels of purposeful engagement beyond athletics. This has serious implications for faculty-student interaction, an important form of engagement. Comeaux and Harrison (2007) found that engagement with faculty was essential to academic achievement for Black and White male student-athletes, yet professors spent significantly more out-of-class time with Whites. Furthermore, high-achieving Black male student-athletes in Martin, Harrison, and Bukstein's (2010) study reported that coaches prioritized athletic accomplishment over academic engagement and discouraged participation in activities beyond their sport.

Studies cited in this section illuminate problems that are both longstanding and pervasive, especially in big-time college sports programs. They advance a sociocultural understanding of the status of Black male student-athletes, one of the most stereotyped populations on college campuses. Our report complements the literature by furnishing a statistical portrait of these students and highlighting racial inequities that disadvantage them in the six conferences that routinely win NCAA Division I football and men's basketball championships.

### Data Sources and Analysis

This report is based on quantitative data from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the NCAA Federal Graduation Rates Database. We used IPEDS to calculate Black men's share of undergraduate student enrollments across four cohort years at each of the 76 colleges and universities in this study. These percentages were juxtaposed with Black men's share of scholarship student-athletes; numbers of Black male students on football and basketball teams at each institution were retrieved from the NCAA database. These statistics reflect the 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 academic school terms. Five institutions (DePaul University, Marquette University, Providence College, Seton Hall University, and St. John's University) do not have NCAA Division I intercollegiate football teams; only Black men's representation on basketball teams was calculated for them.

We also analyzed each institution's NCAA graduation rates report and compared Black male student-athletes to three groups: [1] student-athletes overall, [2] undergraduate students overall, and [3] Black undergraduate men overall. These graduation rates were averages across four cohorts, as opposed to a single year. These undergraduate students entered college in 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 and graduated by 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. Complete data were available for every institution except the University of Utah. Rates reported herein are for Black male scholarship athletes on all sports teams, not just football and basketball.

### Limitations

This study has two noteworthy limitations. First, the NCAA database is inclusive of only scholarship student-athletes. It is possible (but not likely) that a team had significantly more or substantially fewer Black male members who were not athletic scholarship recipients. Second, graduation rates do not account for undergraduates who transferred from one institution to another. Transfer students are counted as dropouts. Notwithstanding this limitation, no published evidence or anecdotal reports suggest that Black male student-athletes are any more or less likely than other racial groups to transfer.

## Advisory Committee

A dozen athletics administrators, former college and current professional athletes, and experts on intercollegiate athletics were consulted for advice and feedback on this report:

**James Soto Antony, Ph.D.**  
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**Chansi Stuckey**  
NFL Athlete





# Racial Equity: Winners and Losers

## 25 Universities at which Black Male Student-Athletes are Most Overrepresented

RANK	UNIVERSITY	BLACK MEN VS. BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES' (% DIFFERENCE)
1	Marquette University <sup>2</sup>	77.0%
2	University of Mississippi	73.0%
3	University of Miami	72.4%
4	Florida State University	71.5%
5	Providence College <sup>2</sup>	70.6%
6	Mississippi State University	70.3%
7	University of Georgia	69.6%
8	University of Illinois	67.6%
9	University of South Carolina	67.4%
10	University of Alabama	67.1%
11	University of Tennessee	66.9%
12	University of North Carolina	66.4%
13	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	66.2%
14	University of Texas	66.0%
14	Georgia Institute of Technology	66.0%
16	Oklahoma State University	65.1%
17	University of Louisville	64.7%
18	University of Kentucky	64.3%
19	University of South Florida	64.1%
20	Seton Hall University <sup>2</sup>	64.0%
21	Texas A&M University	63.7%
22	Louisiana State University	63.4%
22	Auburn University	63.4%
24	Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	63.3%
25	University of Maryland	63.1%

<sup>1</sup> Numbers represent percent differences between Black men's representation in the undergraduate student body versus their representation on revenue-generating sports teams. For example, Black men were 5.1% of undergraduates at the University of Mississippi, but comprised 78.1% of football and men's basketball teams (thus, the percent difference is 73.0).

<sup>2</sup> These three institutions do not have NCAA Division I intercollegiate football teams.

## 10 Universities with Highest Black Male Student-Athlete Graduation Rates

RANK	UNIVERSITY	GRAD RATE <sup>3</sup>
1	Northwestern University	83%
2	University of Notre Dame	81%
3	Villanova University	78%
3	Pennsylvania State University	78%
5	Vanderbilt University	74%
6	Duke University	73%
7	Wake Forest University	70%
7	Georgetown University	70%
9	Boston College	68%
9	Stanford University	68%

<sup>3</sup> Across four cohorts

Highlighted in this section are colleges and universities with exceptionally high and low statistical indicators of equity for Black male student-athletes.

Winners are institutions that graduate Black male student-athletes at the highest rates, as well as those at which these students graduate at rates equal to or higher than the three comparison groups. On the one hand, we think it is important to call attention to universities that outperform others on benchmarks chosen for this study, hence the rank-ordered lists on these two pages. But on the other hand, we deem it problematic to offer kudos to institutions that sustain any version of inequity. Put differently, just because a university performs well *in comparison to others* of similar size or schools within the same athletic conference, does not necessarily render it a national model that is exempt from recommendations offered at the end of this report. For example, Northwestern University is ranked first on our list of institutions with the highest graduation rates for Black male student-athletes. But it is important to note that this rate is 11 points lower than the University's six-year rate for all undergraduates. While they deserve praise for graduating 83% of Black men on intercollegiate sports teams, administrators and coaches at Northwestern must assume greater responsibility for closing this 11-point gap.

Losers are institutions in the six NCAA Division I championship conferences

that graduate Black male student-athletes at the absolute lowest rates, as well as those at which these students are most overrepresented on revenue-generating sports teams. Regarding the latter, our concern is not that there are so many Black men on football and basketball teams. Nowhere in this report (including the recommendations section) do we suggest that athletics departments should award fewer scholarships to talented Black male student-athletes. What we deem troubling, however, is the disgracefully small number of Black male students in the undergraduate population versus their large representation on revenue-generating sports teams. These are campuses on which admissions officers and others often maintain that academically qualified Black men cannot be found; yet their football and basketball teams are overwhelmingly comprised of Black male student-athletes.

Data presented on the lowest graduation rates list, as well as statistics presented on the individual conference pages that follow, do not signal victory for the NCAA. The Association has a television commercial in which it claims that Black male student-athletes at Division I institutions graduate at rates higher than do Black men in the general student body. This is true across the entire division, but not for the six conferences whose member institutions routinely win football and basketball championships, play in multimillion-dollar bowl games and the annual basketball championship tournament, and produce the largest share of Heisman trophy winners. *Across these 76 colleges and universities*, Black male student-athletes graduate at 5.3 percentage points lower than their same-race male peers who are not on intercollegiate sports teams. That an average of 49.8% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses do not graduate within six years is a major loss.

### 10 Universities with Lowest Black Male Student-Athlete Graduation Rates

RANK	UNIVERSITY	GRAD RATE <sup>4</sup>
1	Iowa State University	30%
2	University of South Florida	31%
2	University of Arizona	31%
2	University of Arkansas	31%
5	Florida State University	34%
5	University of Florida	34%
7	Indiana University	36%
7	Arizona State University	36%
7	Mississippi State University	36%
10	University of Minnesota	37%

<sup>4</sup> Across four cohorts

### Institutions at Which Black Male Student-Athlete Graduation Rates are Equal to or Higher than Comparison Groups

COMPARISON GROUP	EQUAL TO	HIGHER THAN	% HIGHER
All Student-Athletes	Texas Christian University	St. John's University (New York) <sup>5</sup>	1%
	Vanderbilt University		
All Undergraduates	None	Seton Hall University <sup>5</sup>	1%
		St. John's University (New York) <sup>5</sup>	1%
All Black Men	Auburn University	Arizona State University	1%
		Kansas State University	21%
		Oklahoma State University	1%
		Oregon State University	11%
		Pennsylvania State University	13%
		Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	4%
		Seton Hall University <sup>5</sup>	11%
		St. John's University (New York) <sup>5</sup>	11%
		Texas Christian University	8%
		Texas Tech University	11%
		University of Alabama	10%
		University of Cincinnati	20%
		University of Iowa	6%
University of Kentucky	14%		
University of Louisville	11%		
University of Mississippi	7%		
University of Nebraska	5%		
University of Oregon	3%		
University of Tennessee	3%		
Washington State University	2%		
West Virginia University	13%		

<sup>5</sup> These two universities do not have NCAA Division I intercollegiate football teams.

A photograph of several track athletes in starting blocks on a red track at dusk. The athlete in the foreground is wearing a dark blue and red uniform. The background shows a sunset sky with clouds. A semi-transparent white box with circular patterns is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## Tracking Race

Black men comprised over one quarter (26%) of scholarship student-athletes on cross country/track and field teams at member institutions in the six NCAA Division I championship conferences during the 2011-12 school year.

# Atlantic Coast Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
Boston College	2.2	45.0	-42.8
Clemson University	3.5	52.8	-49.3
Duke University	3.8	50.3	-46.5
Florida State University	3.9	75.4	-71.5
Georgia Institute of Technology	4.1	70.1	-66.0
University of Maryland	5.3	68.4	-63.1
University of Miami	3.3	75.7	-72.4
University of North Carolina	3.5	69.9	-66.4
North Carolina State University	4.1	66.4	-62.3
University of Virginia	3.0	57.0	-53.9
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	2.3	68.5	-66.2
Wake Forest University	3.4	53.0	-49.6

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
Boston College	68	91	-23
Clemson University	39	78	-39
Duke University	73	94	-21
Florida State University	34	71	-37
Georgia Institute of Technology	45	79	-34
University of Maryland	58	81	-23
University of Miami	66	78	-12
University of North Carolina	51	85	-34
North Carolina State University	43	71	-28
University of Virginia	56	93	-37
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	53	79	-26
Wake Forest University	70	89	-19

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES%	% DIFFERENCE
Boston College	68	85	-17
Clemson University	39	61	-22
Duke University	73	85	-12
Florida State University	34	57	-23
Georgia Institute of Technology	45	62	-17
University of Maryland	58	72	-14
University of Miami	66	67	-1
University of North Carolina	51	74	-23
North Carolina State University	43	56	-13
University of Virginia	56	76	-20
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	53	72	-19
Wake Forest University	70	79	-9

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
Boston College	68	78	-10
Clemson University	39	55	-16
Duke University	73	86	-13
Florida State University	34	63	-29
Georgia Institute of Technology	45	65	-20
University of Maryland	58	63	-5
University of Miami	66	69	-3
University of North Carolina	51	67	-16
North Carolina State University	43	53	-10
University of Virginia	56	77	-21
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University	53	60	-7
Wake Forest University	70	77	-7

# Big East Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
University of Cincinnati	4.0	57.7	-53.6
University of Connecticut	2.3	53.7	-51.3
DePaul University	2.4	54.9	-52.5
Georgetown University <sup>6</sup>	2.6	49.0	-46.4
University of Louisville	4.7	69.4	-64.7
Marquette University	1.9	78.8	-77.0
University of Notre Dame <sup>6</sup>	1.8	45.6	-43.8
University of Pittsburgh	3.1	57.7	-54.6
Providence College	1.1	71.6	-70.6
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	3.3	66.6	-63.3
Seton Hall University	4.2	68.2	-64.0
St. John's University (New York)	6.7	43.0	-36.2
Syracuse University	3.1	58.4	-55.2
Temple University	5.0	61.8	-56.8
University of South Florida	4.2	68.4	-64.1
Villanova University <sup>6</sup>	2.0	57.9	-55.9

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Cincinnati	53	55	-2
University of Connecticut	49	77	-28
DePaul University	46	64	-18
Georgetown University <sup>6</sup>	70	93	-23
University of Louisville	44	47	-3
Marquette University	40	78	-38
University of Notre Dame <sup>6</sup>	81	96	-15
University of Pittsburgh	50	77	-27
Providence College	40	87	-47
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	67	75	-8
Seton Hall University	62	61	1
St. John's University (New York)	60	59	1
Syracuse University	61	82	-21
Temple University	46	63	-17
University of South Florida	31	49	-18
Villanova University <sup>6</sup>	78	88	-10

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES%	% DIFFERENCE
University of Cincinnati	53	66	-13
University of Connecticut	49	64	-15
DePaul University	46	82	-36
Georgetown University <sup>6</sup>	70	84	-14
University of Louisville	44	60	-16
Marquette University	40	75	-35
University of Notre Dame <sup>6</sup>	81	91	-10
University of Pittsburgh	50	65	-15
Providence College	40	78	-38
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	67	71	-4
Seton Hall University	62	73	-11
St. John's University (New York)	60	59	1
Syracuse University	61	72	-11
Temple University	46	72	-26
University of South Florida	31	54	-23
Villanova University <sup>6</sup>	78	83	-5

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Cincinnati	53	33	20
University of Connecticut	49	57	-8
DePaul University	46	47	-1
Georgetown University <sup>6</sup>	70	80	-10
University of Louisville	44	33	11
Marquette University	40	58	-18
University of Notre Dame <sup>6</sup>	81	86	-5
University of Pittsburgh	50	56	-6
Providence College	40	70	-30
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	67	63	4
Seton Hall University	62	51	11
St. John's University (New York)	60	49	11
Syracuse University	61	66	-5
Temple University	46	53	-7
University of South Florida	31	39	-8
Villanova University <sup>6</sup>	78	83	-5

<sup>6</sup> Football teams at these universities are not members of the Big East Conference.

# Big Ten Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
University of Illinois	2.5	70.1	-67.6
Indiana University	1.9	53.4	-51.5
University of Iowa	1.1	39.2	-38.1
University of Michigan	2.4	58.1	-55.7
Michigan State University	2.9	54.4	-51.5
University of Minnesota	2.2	50.4	-48.2
University of Nebraska	1.3	53.2	-51.9
Northwestern University	1.9	34.8	-32.9
The Ohio State University	2.7	52.9	-50.2
Pennsylvania State University	1.7	52.6	-50.8
Purdue University	1.8	53.7	-51.9
University of Wisconsin	1.1	47.6	-46.5

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Illinois	60	83	-23
Indiana University	36	72	-36
University of Iowa	50	67	-17
University of Michigan	54	89	-35
Michigan State University	45	76	-31
University of Minnesota	37	67	-30
University of Nebraska	45	64	-19
Northwestern University	83	94	-11
The Ohio State University	38	74	-36
Pennsylvania State University	78	85	-7
Purdue University	45	69	-24
University of Wisconsin	40	81	-41

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES%	% DIFFERENCE
University of Illinois	60	74	-14
Indiana University	36	63	-27
University of Iowa	50	68	-18
University of Michigan	54	76	-22
Michigan State University	45	68	-23
University of Minnesota	37	66	-29
University of Nebraska	45	54	-9
Northwestern University	83	88	-5
The Ohio State University	38	71	-33
Pennsylvania State University	78	79	-1
Purdue University	45	68	-23
University of Wisconsin	40	68	-28

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Illinois	60	64	-4
Indiana University	36	49	-13
University of Iowa	50	44	6
University of Michigan	54	67	-13
Michigan State University	45	55	-10
University of Minnesota	37	43	-6
University of Nebraska	45	40	5
Northwestern University	83	85	-2
The Ohio State University	38	51	-13
Pennsylvania State University	78	65	13
Purdue University	45	52	-7
University of Wisconsin	40	51	-11

# Big 12 Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
Baylor University	2.6	63.3	-60.6
Iowa State University	1.5	53.0	-51.5
University of Kansas	1.7	57.8	-56.0
Kansas State University	2.0	50.8	-48.8
University of Oklahoma	2.3	61.5	-59.2
Oklahoma State University	2.1	67.3	-65.1
Texas Christian University	2.3	54.0	-51.7
University of Texas	1.8	67.9	-66.0
Texas Tech University	2.7	59.3	-56.6
West Virginia University	1.9	58.4	-56.5

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
Baylor University	44	72	-28
Iowa State University	30	68	-38
University of Kansas	38	60	-22
Kansas State University	48	60	-12
University of Oklahoma	38	63	-25
Oklahoma State University	46	59	-13
Texas Christian University	65	72	-7
University of Texas	43	79	-36
Texas Tech University	57	59	-2
West Virginia University	50	57	-7

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES %	% DIFFERENCE
Baylor University	44	58	-14
Iowa State University	30	65	-35
University of Kansas	38	64	-26
Kansas State University	48	64	-16
University of Oklahoma	38	54	-16
Oklahoma State University	46	57	-11
Texas Christian University	65	65	0
University of Texas	43	62	-19
Texas Tech University	57	58	-1
West Virginia University	50	60	-10

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
Baylor University	44	57	-13
Iowa State University	30	47	-17
University of Kansas	38	41	-3
Kansas State University	48	27	21
University of Oklahoma	38	47	-9
Oklahoma State University	46	45	1
Texas Christian University	65	57	8
University of Texas	43	60	-17
Texas Tech University	57	46	11
West Virginia University	50	37	13

# Pac 12 Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
University of Arizona	1.4	54.0	-52.5
Arizona State University	2.1	54.5	-52.4
University of California, Berkeley	1.2	50.6	-49.3
University of California, Los Angeles	1.4	48.8	-47.4
University of Colorado	0.9	44.7	-43.8
University of Oregon	1.1	54.5	-53.4
Oregon State University	0.8	41.8	-40.9
Stanford University	4.6	35.2	-30.7
University of Southern California	2.2	56.2	-54.0
University of Utah	0.7	33.4	-32.7
University of Washington	1.5	55.8	-54.2
Washington State University	1.3	40.2	-38.9

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Arizona	31	58	-27
Arizona State University	36	57	-21
University of California, Berkeley	40	90	-50
University of California, Los Angeles	46	90	-44
University of Colorado	44	67	-23
University of Oregon	58	67	-9
Oregon State University	43	61	-18
Stanford University	68	95	-27
University of Southern California	43	87	-44
University of Utah	#	55	#
University of Washington	59	78	-19
Washington State University	55	67	-12

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES%	% DIFFERENCE
University of Arizona	31	52	-21
Arizona State University	36	61	-25
University of California, Berkeley	40	72	-32
University of California, Los Angeles	46	71	-25
University of Colorado	44	54	-10
University of Oregon	58	67	-9
Oregon State University	43	61	-18
Stanford University	68	90	-22
University of Southern California	43	67	-24
University of Utah	#	55	#
University of Washington	59	73	-14
Washington State University	55	66	-11

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Arizona	31	43	-12
Arizona State University	36	35	1
University of California, Berkeley	40	63	-23
University of California, Los Angeles	46	66	-20
University of Colorado	44	49	-5
University of Oregon	58	55	3
Oregon State University	43	32	11
Stanford University	68	88	-20
University of Southern California	43	72	-29
University of Utah	#	32	#
University of Washington	59	62	-3
Washington State University	55	53	2



# Southeastern Conference

## Representation

Black Men on Revenue-Generating Sports Teams vs. Black Men in Undergraduate Student Body

INSTITUTION	% OF UNDERGRADUATES	% OF BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL TEAMS	% DIFFERENCE
University of Alabama	4.5	71.6	-67.1
University of Arkansas	2.4	63.0	-60.6
Auburn University	3.6	67.0	-63.4
University of Florida	3.6	66.6	-63.0
University of Georgia	2.2	71.8	-69.6
University of Kentucky	2.9	67.2	-64.3
Louisiana State University	3.6	67.0	-63.4
University of Mississippi	5.1	78.1	-73.0
Mississippi State University	8.8	79.1	-70.3
University of Missouri	2.7	62.6	-59.9
University of South Carolina	4.2	71.7	-67.4
University of Tennessee	3.4	70.3	-66.9
Texas A&M University	1.5	65.2	-63.7
Vanderbilt University	3.2	43.3	-40.1

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Undergraduates

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL UNDERGRADUATES %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Alabama	56	66	-10
University of Arkansas	31	58	-27
Auburn University	38	65	-27
University of Florida	34	82	-48
University of Georgia	53	79	-26
University of Kentucky	52	59	-7
Louisiana State University	41	59	-18
University of Mississippi	47	57	-10
Mississippi State University	36	59	-23
University of Missouri	48	68	-20
University of South Carolina	40	67	-27
University of Tennessee	48	60	-12
Texas A&M University	38	79	-41
Vanderbilt University	74	90	-16

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Student-Athletes

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES%	% DIFFERENCE
University of Alabama	56	66	-10
University of Arkansas	31	52	-21
Auburn University	38	60	-22
University of Florida	34	61	-27
University of Georgia	53	62	-9
University of Kentucky	52	58	-6
Louisiana State University	41	54	-13
University of Mississippi	47	57	-10
Mississippi State University	36	57	-21
University of Missouri	48	64	-16
University of South Carolina	40	61	-21
University of Tennessee	48	62	-14
Texas A&M University	38	64	-26
Vanderbilt University	74	74	0

## Graduation Rates

Black Male Student-Athletes vs. All Black Undergraduate Men

INSTITUTION	BLACK MALE STUDENT-ATHLETES %	ALL BLACK MEN %	% DIFFERENCE
University of Alabama	56	46	10
University of Arkansas	31	40	-9
Auburn University	38	38	0
University of Florida	34	64	-30
University of Georgia	53	66	-13
University of Kentucky	52	38	14
Louisiana State University	41	44	-3
University of Mississippi	47	40	7
Mississippi State University	36	39	-3
University of Missouri	48	49	-1
University of South Carolina	40	55	-15
University of Tennessee	48	45	3
Texas A&M University	38	55	-17
Vanderbilt University	74	80	-6



## Goaltending?

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In 2010, Black men comprised just 6.6% of head coaches in NCAA Division I. Only 7.4% of athletics directors at Division I colleges and universities were Black. Each of the six championship conferences highlighted throughout this report has a White male commissioner.

**SOURCE:** Lapchick, Hoff, and Kaiser (2010)

*Teams that sustain racial inequities should not be rewarded with opportunities to play for NCAA championships.*

# Recommendations for Improving Racial Equity in College Sports

Problems as pervasive as the underrepresentation of Black men in the undergraduate student population at predominantly white colleges and universities, their overrepresentation on revenue-generating NCAA Division I sports teams, and their comparatively lower six-year graduation rates warrant a multidimensional response from various stakeholders. In this section we provide recommendations for five groups, including Black male student-athletes and their families.

## **The NCAA and Sports Conference Commissioners**

The NCAA Federal Graduation Rates Database was one of two data sources used for this study. We commend the Association for gathering and making publicly available these data. A necessary next step would be to produce a series of NCAA research reports that disaggregate data by race, sex, sport, division, and particular subsets of institutions within a division (for example, the six conferences that routinely win Division I football and men's basketball championships). Data in the aggregate allows the NCAA to make claims such as "Black male student-athletes at Division I institutions graduate at higher rates than Black men who do not play college sports." While this may be true across the entire Division I, it is not the case at the overwhelming majority of colleges and universities in the six championship conferences.

We also recommend that the NCAA establishes a commission on racial equity that routinely calls for and responds to disaggregated data reports, raises consciousness within and beyond the Association about the persistence and pervasiveness of racial inequities, and partners with athletic conferences and institutions to develop policies and programs that help narrow racial gaps. Each athletic conference should create its own commission that is charged with overseeing racial equity at member institutions.

In March 2010, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan suggested that any sports team failing to graduate at least 40% of its players should be ineligible for participation in post-season play and championship contests. We support this recommendation. A policy intervention such as this is important and should be racialized. That is, the NCAA and conference leaders must pay attention not only to overall team rates, but also racial trends within teams. For instance, the overall graduation rate for a football team may be 49% – but Black men, the population that comprises two-thirds of that team, may graduate at a rate far below 40%. One response from the NCAA to the Duncan

proposal is that it is unfair to punish current student-athletes for graduation rates based on previous cohorts. We do not see the difference here between this and other sanctions imposed by the NCAA. Ohio State University and Penn State University, for example, were ineligible for post-season play in 2012 because of policy violations (and in the case of PSU, felony crimes) committed several years prior. Furthermore, while the release of data from the federal government and the NCAA tends to lag by 2-3 years, our four-cohort analysis of six-year graduation rates showed very little variation from one year to the next. Teams that sustain racial inequities should not be rewarded with opportunities to play for NCAA championships.

We believe conferences should commit a portion of proceeds earned from championships and other revenue sources back to member institutions for programming and other interventions that aim to improve racial equity within and beyond sports. For example, admissions offices typically do not have enough staff to do what we propose in the next section – money from athletic conferences would help. These funds also could be used to support the work of the commissions on racial equity that we proposed earlier.

## **College and University Leaders**

Accountability is practically impossible in the absence of transparency. Thus, college and university presidents, trustees, provosts, and faculty senate committees that oversee athletics must demand disaggregated data reports from athletics departments and offices of institutional research. These reports should include analyses of racial composition on individual sports teams in comparison to racial demographics within the undergraduate student body, as well as inequities in graduation rates. Furthermore, campus leaders should pay more careful attention to racial differences in student-athletes' grade point averages (GPAs), classroom experiences, course enrollment and major selection patterns, participation in enriching educational experiences beyond athletics (e.g., study abroad, summer internships, service learning, and research opportunities with faculty), and post-college pathways (graduate school, employment in one's major field of study, etc.). Presidents must hold themselves and athletics directors and coaches accountable for narrowing racial gaps documented in these reports.

The underrepresentation of Black male undergraduates is an issue that many campus leaders (especially admissions officers) view as difficult to address.

Perceivably, there are too few young Black men who meet admissions standards and are sufficiently prepared for the rigors of college-level academic work. Despite these arguments, colleges and universities somehow manage to find academically qualified Black male student-athletes to play on revenue-generating sports teams. Perhaps admissions officers can learn from some practices that coaches employ. For instance, a coach does not wait for high school students to express interest in playing for the university – he and his staff scout talent, establish collaborative partnerships with high school coaches, spend time cultivating one-on-one relationships with recruits, visit homes to talk with parents and families, host special visit days for student-athletes whom they wish to recruit, and search far and wide for the most talented prospects (as opposed to recruiting from a small number of high schools). We are convinced that if admissions officers expended as much effort as coaches, they would successfully recruit more Black male students who are not athletes. Some would likely argue that affirmative action policies might not permit such targeted recruitment of one specific racial group. Somehow, there is considerably less institutional anxiety about potential affirmative action backlash when coaches do all that is necessary to recruit Black men for participation on revenue-generating sports teams.

Black undergraduate men elsewhere on campus could benefit from the centralized resources and institutionalized support offered to student-athletes. If targeted academic advising, tutoring, clubs and activities, life skills development resources, structured study spaces, alumni networks, and committed institutional agents were made available to Black men who are not student-

athletes, their academic success and college completion rates would improve. Likewise, Black undergraduate men who receive scholarships comparable to those awarded to student-athletes are far more likely to persist through baccalaureate degree attainment than are those who encounter financial stressors or work more than 20 hours each week to support themselves. Post-secondary administrators should commit more financial and human resources to replicating the best features of athletics departments for populations that graduate at the lowest rates. This would surely include Black undergraduate men.

Racism and routine encounters with racial stereotypes are among many factors that undermine Black students' persistence rates and sense of belonging on predominantly white campuses. Several scholars (e.g., Edwards, 1984; Hodge et al., 2008; Hughes, Satterfield, & Giles, 2007; Oseguera, 2010) have noted that Black male student-athletes are often stereotyped as dumb jocks. "One could easily summarize their status as Niggers with balls who enroll to advance their sports careers and generate considerable revenue for the institution without learning much or seriously endeavoring to earn their college degrees" (Harper, 2009b, p. 701). Any effort to improve rates of completion and academic success among Black male student-athletes must include some emphasis on their confrontations with low expectations and stereotypes in classrooms and elsewhere on campus. Provosts, deans, and department chairs should engage faculty colleagues in substantive conversations and developmental exercises that raise consciousness about stereotypes and racist/sexist assumptions they possess about students of color and student-athletes in general, and Black men in particular.

## Spectating Equity in the Conferences of Champions

### A Call for Greater Transparency

Every winner of the NCAA Division I football national championship over the past 23 years came from one of the six athletic conferences highlighted in this report; the same is true for each men's basketball national championship team since 1991. Black men comprised 67% of football teams at the four institutions that most recently won championships: University of Alabama, Auburn University, University of Florida, and Louisiana State University. On average, 42% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses graduated within six years. Black men comprised 66% of basketball teams at the four institutions that most recently won championships: University of Kentucky, University of Connecticut, Duke University, and University of North Carolina. On average, 56% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses graduated within six years. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida releases an annual report series, *Keeping Score When it Counts*, that highlights racial differences in academic progress among teams selected for participation in the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournaments (women's and men's) as well as football post-season bowl games (the BCS and others). These reports are available on the TIDES website: [www.tidesport.org](http://www.tidesport.org). The Institute also publishes timely reports that highlight demographic trends in college coaching and administration. More published analyses, such as these, that make racial inequities transparent, are needed across all NCAA divisions.



## Coaches and Athletics Departments

In preparation for athletic competitions, coaches develop strategies for defeating the opposing teams. This usually entails watching their opponents' films, making necessary adjustments to the playbook, strategizing with the coaching staff, and a range of other preparatory activities. This same degree of strategy and intentionality is necessary for tackling racial inequities in intercollegiate athletics. The director of athletics must collaborate with coaches and other staff in the department to devise a strategy for narrowing racial gaps in graduation rates, academic success indicators (e.g., GPAs and timely progress toward degree completion), and other student-athlete outcomes. In the absence of a comprehensive and actionable strategy document, inequities are likely to persist or worsen over time. The plan must be constructed in response to data that are disaggregated by race, sex, and sport. Racial equity goals, efforts that will enable the department to actualize those goals, key persons who will be chiefly responsible for particular dimensions of the strategy, and methods of assessment should be included in the plan. The implementation of any strategy is unlikely to be successful without compliance from coaches. Hence, they must be involved in all phases of the process and view themselves as departmental agents who are rewarded for winning games and achieving equity in student-athlete success. Black male student-athletes should also be involved in this strategic planning process.

Similar to our first recommendation for the NCAA and the six athletic conferences, we also recommend that athletics departments create internal committees or task forces that focus on racial equity. This group should be comprised

of stakeholders within and beyond the athletics department, including administrators from academic and student affairs, current and former Black male student-athletes, and professors who study and write about race and/or sports. Commission members could engage colleagues from their respective areas of the institution in the athletics department's strategic efforts to improve racial equity. For instance, professors could help their colleagues understand how they are complicit in conveying low expectations and racial stereotypes to Black male student-athletes who take their courses. Moreover, these particular faculty members could assume leadership for crafting an institutional strategy to disrupt classroom practices that sustain racial inequities for student-athletes and other students of color.

Martin, Harrison, and Bukstein (2010) studied Black male student-athletes who had good grades, records of athletic accomplishment, and impressive résumés that included leadership roles within and beyond athletics. More student-athletes like these can be found at colleges and universities across the country. Athletics departments that wish to improve Black male student-athletes' academic success can learn much from Black male student-athletes who are academically successful. There are Black men on NCAA Division I football and basketball teams who graduate with higher than average GPAs and transition into rewarding careers and productive post-college lives that no longer include participation in organized sports. Understanding how these men managed to succeed in college would be useful to coaches and others who endeavor to help lower-performing student-athletes thrive personally, academically, and athletically.



## Black Women Ballers

### Equity and Experiences in NCAA Division I Women's Sports

Although this report is specific to Black male student-athletes on revenue-generating sports teams, it is important to acknowledge the *experiences* of their same-race female peers. During the 2011-12 school year, Black women comprised 3.7% of undergraduate student enrollments across the 76 colleges and universities in the six NCAA Division I championship conferences – they were 59.4% of women's basketball teams on those campuses. Despite their overrepresentation, good news about Black female student-athletes can be found in the Southeastern Conference. Their average six-year graduation rate (across four cohorts) was 74.6%, compared to 72.9% for White female student-athletes and 68.5% for all undergraduate students attending the 14 SEC member institutions. Coaches of men's athletics teams can learn much from their colleagues who coach women's sports. While statistics may suggest that Black women are doing better – they attend college in higher numbers, earn higher GPAs, are more engaged, and graduate at higher rates than do their same-race male counterparts – they too are confronted with stereotypes, academic and personal challenges, and institutionalized threats to achievement and sense of belonging on predominantly white campuses. In comparison to Black men, much less has been written and a lot less is known about the *experiences* of Black female participants in intercollegiate athletics. College administrators, the American public, and others who are concerned about racial and gender equity in sports must recognize how racism and sexism converge *differently* for Black women and Black men.

Similarly, athletics departments can learn from other NCAA Division I institutions at which Black male student-athletes graduate at rates comparable to or higher than student-athletes overall, undergraduate students overall, and Black undergraduate men overall. What is it about these institutions that enable them to achieve racial equity? Inspiration can be derived from effective programs and practices implemented elsewhere to improve Black male student-athlete success. One example is the University of Wisconsin's Beyond the Game initiative, which prepares Black male student-athletes for post-college options beyond professional sports. The initiative is led by a cross-sector team that includes senior administrators from the athletics department as well as Black male student-athletes, graduate students, alumni, full-time professionals from the UW Career Services Office, tenured faculty, and a vice provost.

While an athletics department may genuinely care about academic success and the healthy development of student-athletes, players often receive contradictory messages from coaches who are expected to win, advance to bowl games and the NCAA basketball tournament, and fill stadiums with excited fans who buy tickets and make donations to the university. These pressures explain, at least in part, why coaches discourage student-athlete engagement in activities and experiences beyond athletics that lead to academic and personal success (Martin, Harrison, & Bukstein, 2010).

Most Division I institutions offer centralized resources and support services for student-athletes, which we think is praiseworthy. However, we agree with other scholars (e.g., Comeaux et al., 2011; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Martin, 2009) that coaches and staff in athletics departments should encourage student engagement with faculty outside the classroom, a diverse cadre of peers who are not members of sports teams, and professionals in other offices on campus (the counseling center, career services office, etc.). Moreover, student leadership skills can be enhanced through campus clubs beyond athletics; perspectives can be broadened through spending a semester overseas; and essential knowledge that is necessary for admission to graduate school or success in one's future career can be gained through doing research with professors or an internship related to one's field of study. Student-athletes are unlikely to be engaged in these ways unless their coaches are supportive; coaches are unlikely to be supportive of anything that threatens their own career stability. If racial equity and student-athlete engagement are to improve, college presidents and athletics directors must expand the reward structure for coaches to include metrics related to student-athlete engagement.

### **Journalists and Sports Media**

Young Black men's aspirations to play professional sports are shaped largely, though not entirely, by television and other forms of media (Benson, 2000). We believe it important for journalists to highlight other aspects of Black male student-athletes beyond their athletic prowess. More reporting must be done

on those who simultaneously perform well in classrooms and on the field or court, similar to participants in Martin, Harrison, and Bukstein's (2010) study. An ESPN film or some other documentary on former Black male student-athletes who attended college, achieved academic and athletic success, were engaged campus leaders within and beyond athletics, graduated in 4-6 years, and took divergent post-college pathways (meaning, some enrolled in graduate school, some began full-time jobs in their fields of study, and others embarked on professional sports careers) would advance a more complete understanding and realistic depiction of this population. The film could highlight strategies these men employed to balance academic commitments and sports, as well as how some crafted post-college aspirations beyond playing for the NBA or NFL. Stories such as these also can be told through newspaper articles and sports magazine features. We deem irresponsible (and racist) journalistic practices that continually yield single narrative, one-sided portrayals of Black male student-athletes.

### **Black Male Student-Athletes and Their Families**

As noted on Page 2 of this report, the NFL and NBA draft fewer than two percent of college student-athletes each year (Martin, 2009). Put differently, over 98% of these students will be required to pursue other options. Given this, we advise Black male student-athletes and their families to resist the seductive lure of choosing a university because it appears to be a promising gateway to careers in professional sports. It can be for a very small number of student-athletes, but not for the overwhelming majority. In addition to asking "how many of your former players have gone to the league," it is important for prospective student-athletes and those who support them to pose a more expansive set of questions to coaches during the college recruitment process: What is the graduation rate for Black men on your team? Besides the few who got drafted, what are recent Black male graduates doing? Will you support my interest in spending a semester abroad and doing a summer internship in my field? How many players on your team studied abroad or did internships in their fields this past school year? What will happen to me if I don't get drafted? How prepared will I be for a career in my field? Give me specific examples of ways you encourage academic success and the holistic development of your players.

Students who are highly engaged inside and outside the classroom are considerably more likely than are their disengaged peers to graduate from college and compete successfully for highly-coveted jobs and admission to graduate school. They also learn more, earn higher GPAs, and develop a wider array of skills that will be useful in their lives and careers after college. Thus, we strongly encourage Black male student-athletes to take advantage of clubs, activities, and experiences outside of sports. Spending all one's time in the athletics department and on team-related activities is unlikely to yield a résumé and portfolio of enriching educational experiences that render him competitive for rewarding post-college options beyond the NFL or NBA.

*We advise Black male student-athletes and their families to resist the seductive lure of choosing a university because it appears to be a promising gateway to careers in professional sports.*

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# About the Center

The Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education unites University of Pennsylvania scholars who do research on race, racism, racial climates, and important topics pertaining to equity in education. Center staff and affiliates collaborate on funded research projects, environmental assessment activities, and the production of timely research reports. The Center's strength resides in its interdisciplinarity – professors from various departments in the School of Arts and Sciences (Sociology, History, Political Science, Anthropology, English, and Asian American Studies), the Perelman School of Medicine, the School of Social Policy and Practice, the Wharton School of Business, Penn Law School, and the School of Nursing join Penn GSE faculty as affiliates. Principally, the Center aims to publish cutting-edge implications for education policy and practice, with an explicit focus on improving equity in P-12 schools, colleges and universities, and social contexts that influence educational outcomes.

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