



**THE DRAKE GROUP
EDUCATION FUND**

Realizing The Promise
Of College Athletics

The Drake Group Education Fund

**THE GRADUATION ISSUE
BEING HIGHLIGHTED**

by the

***2023 The Allen Sack National Symposium –
Realizing the Promise of Graduation***

The Graduation Issue
2023 Quick Facts, Statistics, and Solutions

What are we doing?

Educate the public and attempt to remediate the failure of college athletics to provide educational support to those revenue sport scholarship athletes who never finish college and are not picked-up by the pros.

Why are we doing this?

The Drake Group Education Fund’s fact-based position papers -- [A Continuing Disgrace: Intercollegiate Athletics Race Issues](#) and [Why the NCAA Academic Progress rate \(APR\) and the Graduation Success Rate \(GSR\) should be Abandoned and Replaced with More Effective Academic Metrics](#) – and regularly published Federal Graduation Rate statistics demonstrate that the NCAA has failed its athletics governance responsibilities and our institutions of higher education have not fulfilled the promise of a college education to thousands of college athletes who are being exploited for their value in producing winning football and basketball teams and athletics department revenues.

The Facts:

- **52% of all NCAA Division-I men’s basketball players; 38% of all Division-I football players, and 38% of all Division -I women’s basketball players who were full scholarship recipients and required to be full-time students did not graduate** -- *Average Federal Graduation Rate, 2018-21*¹
 - **NCAA PLACES COMMERCIAL SUCCESS ABOVE ATHLETE GRADUATION OUTCOMES:** The NCAA’s Division I athletics enterprise generates \$15.8 billion in annual revenues of which only \$2.9 billion --18.2 percent-- is returned to athletes in the form of athletics scholarships and only 1 percent is spent on medical treatment and insurance protections compared to 35% spent on administrative and coach compensation and 18% on lavish facilities.
 - [15-Year Trends in Division I Athletics Finances](#)²
 - **NCAA CONTINUES TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC:** Headlines such as “College athletes continue to graduate at record highs: DI rate holds steady at 90%; DII and DIII rates rise” reflect a consistent effort to use aggregated graduation results over all NCAA sports and its own invented Graduation Success Rate to mislead the public by deflecting attention from Division I graduation failures in revenue-driver football and men’s and women’s basketball programs.

	<u>NCAA Graduation Success Rate</u>	<u>Federal Graduation Rate</u>
All Division I Sports	91%	70%
Division I Football, M&W Basketball	82%	59%

-- NCAA Division I Graduation Rates Database
(Select “4-Class Rate,” for overall D-I and “4-Class Rates by Sport”
for FB, M&W BB see “D-I subdivision,” select “Rate”=GRS or FGR)

¹ [NCAA Division I Graduation Rates Database](#) – Based on 2018-2021 Federal Graduation Rate (average of 2011-14 entering six-year cohorts) – Select “Four-Class Rate by Sport”, Select Rate=Federal Graduation Rate and subtract from 100 percent.

² This NCAA Report: [15-Year Trends in Division I Athletics Finances](#) is based on 2018-19 pre-pandemic data because 2019-20 and 2020-21 were outlier years for both revenues and expenses.

- **NCAA USES AN INVALID GRADUATION METRIC:** The NCAA developed its own invalid graduation metric, the Graduation Success Rate (GSR)³, to replace the mandated Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) in order to inflate and hide the embarrassing truth of Division I football and men’s and women’s basketball graduation rates.

Division I	NCAA Graduation Success Rate	Federal Graduation Rate
Football	80%	62%
Men’s Basketball	84%	48%
Women’s Basketball	92%	62%

-- NCAA Division I Graduation Rates Database
(Select “4-Class Rate by Sport” and select “Rate”= GRS or FGR)

- **Division I football and men’s and women’s basketball athletes comprise 22 percent of all Division I athletes. An overwhelming majority are students of color who are underrepresented in almost all other NCAA sports and adversely affected by failure to graduate.**

<u>Division I</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Other Athletes Of Color*</u>	<u>Unknown**</u>
Football	37%	47%	12%	3%
Men’s Basketball	23%	55%	10%	12%
Women’s Basketball	31%	43%	14%	11%

* Includes Hispanic/Latino, Two or More Races, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

** Includes International and Unknown

- [NCAA Demographics Database](#)

(Select “Table View: Coach and Student-Athlete Demographics by Sport,” select Sport, Div. I, see “2021” data)

Football/Basketball Combined	34%	48%	12%	6%
All Other NCAA Sports	62%	13%	15%	11%

- [NCAA Demographics Database](#)

(Select “Table View: Coach and Student-Athlete Demographics by Sport,” select “Division I”, subtract football and M&W basketball from 2021 data and compute percentages)

- **Fewer than four percent of NCAA Division I draft eligible football and basketball players are selected each year in the NFL NBA, or WNBA drafts.⁴ Even without a college degree, they may**

³ The [Drake Group’s research report on NCAA academic metrics](#) provides a detailed explanation of why the NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) inflates graduation rates and fails to account for drop-outs who do not enroll at another institution. It should also be noted that the NCAA’s GSR does not allow a comparison between athlete and non-athlete students while the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) does.

⁴ These are NCAA estimates of the percentage of NCAA Division I athletes who were drafted by the NBA, WNBA, or NFL in 2019: 52 (4.2%) of 1,224 draft eligible athletes were selected in the NBA draft, 249 (3.8%) of 6,490 in the NFL draft, and 31 (2.8%) of 1,120 in the WNBA draft. The WNBA players all played in the WNBA. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2013/12/17/probability-of-competing-beyond-high-school.aspx>. However, the Division I football and men’s basketball numbers are over estimates because some may have never made it to opening day and because the NCAA methodology does not account for the fact that college players can go into the NBA draft after one year and into the NFL draft three years after the graduation of their high school class.

be in a financial position to take care of themselves and their families; 96% of their teammates will not be as fortunate.

- **Almost all of these Division I football and basketball players were recruited with the promise a college degree and a better chance to become an NFL, NBA or WNBA pro athlete. The reality of recruiting underprepared high school athletes and keeping them eligible to compete for their college or university is very different as Drake leaders and others explain in the following video excerpts:**
 - [Drake Group members explain the elements of academic fraud](#) responsible for poor graduation outcomes
 - [University provosts fail to confront academic fraud](#) and TDGEF Advisory Board members and members of The Drake Group Board of directors explain the dilemma of failure to police academic corruption.
 - Mary Willingham, TDGEF Advisory Board member, discusses [the documentation of academic fraud in “CHEATED”](#).
 - Drake leaders explain [how lack of athletics activities time limit policies affects college athlete academic outcomes](#).
 - [HBO’s “Real Sports”](#) investigates the mechanisms that enabled student-athletes with elementary school reading skills to play football for UNC.

Possible Solutions:

- **Division I athletic programs must significantly increase their investment in athlete education and medical expense benefits from the current 19.2 percent to at least 50 percent of all generated revenues.⁵**
- **All athletes admitted through waivers of normal academic admissions standards must be tested for learning disabilities and deficiencies in reading, writing, and math and provided with sufficient academic support to remedy such deficiencies.**
- **Athletic programs that place athletes in less challenging courses and academic majors for the purpose of maintaining athletics eligibility instead of completing bona fide coursework applicable toward a degree should be penalized.**
- **Tenured faculty oversight of the advising and academic support programs provided to specially admitted athletes and athletes’ progress toward the degree should be required of all NCAA member institutions.**
- **All academic support programs for athletes should be under the jurisdiction of the provost or other academic authorities and not the athletic department.**

⁵ Over 98 percent of all athletics programs do not pay for themselves. In any given year, no more than 20 to 25 programs generate revenues in excess of expenses. Institutional subsidies supporting deficit athletics programs are primarily derived from non-athlete student tuition and mandatory activity fees. See Zimbalist, The Economics of College Sports, Retrieve from: <https://www.thedrakegrouppeducationfund.org/2022/06/16/the-economics-of-college-sport/>