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Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2013-2014 Bowl-bound College Football Teams

By Richard Lapchick with Andrew Donovan and Vince Pierson

Orlando, FL...December 9, 2013 – The overall academic progress of college football student-athletes continued while the substantial gap between white and African-American football student-athletes remained large for the 70 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) eligible schools. The results were reported in **“Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2013-2014 Bowl-bound College Football Teams,”** a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida.

Richard Lapchick, director of TIDES and the primary author of the study, said, “The academic success of FBS football student-athletes continued to grow this year. The overall football student-athlete Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for bowl-bound teams improved from 69 to 72 percent.”

Lapchick added, “This year, every school participating in a bowl game had at least a 50 percent Graduation Success Rate for their football teams, an increase from 96 percent in the 2012 study. In addition, 97 percent of the schools (68 of the 70) received a score higher than 925 on the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate (APR), the same as last year. Both APR and GSR figures are encouraging.”

Lapchick stated, “However, the gap between white and African-American football student-athletes continues to be a major issue standing at 19 percent this year. Among the 70 bowl-bound teams, the average GSR for African-American student-athletes is 65 percent, up from 62 percent in 2012. The average GSR for white football student-athletes went from 82 percent last year to 84 percent this year. In addition, 13 percent of the bowl eligible schools (9 out of 70) graduated less than half of their African-American football student-athletes, while no team graduated less than half of its white football student-athletes.”

Lapchick noted, “It must be emphasized that African-American and white football players graduate at a higher rate than their male non-athletic peers in the student body. The graduation rate for African-American male students as a whole is only 45 percent, in comparison to the 67 percent graduation rate for white male students, according to the NCAA Education and Research

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Data. That 22 percent gap for the general student population remains scandalous and totally unacceptable for education in America. The problem goes back to the academic preparation students get before they ever get to college.”

Additional troubling statistics in the study are:

Among the bowl-bound teams:

- 69 schools (99 percent) had GSRs of 66 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was more than 2.6 times the number of schools with equivalent GSRs for African-American football student-athletes (26 schools or 37 percent). This disturbing statistic has increased slightly since last year.
- All 70 schools of the schools graduated 50 percent or higher of their white football student-athletes while 61 of the 70 bowl-bound schools (87 percent) graduated 50 percent or higher of their African-American football student-athletes.
- There were no schools that graduated less than 40 percent of their white or African-American football student-athletes. This is an improvement from last year.

In addition, the size of the gap among some schools is alarming:

- 16 schools (23 percent) had GSRs for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 30 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes, which is a slight decrease from 24 percent in the 2012 study.
- 33 schools (47 percent) had GSRs for African-American football student-athletes that were at least 20 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes decreasing from 51 percent last year.

Georgia (nine percentage points higher), Notre Dame (eight percentage points higher), Rice (five percentage points higher), Duke (three percentage points higher), and Utah State (two percentage points higher) had Graduation Success Rates for their African-American football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes. There were three schools with this distinction last year.

Only Boise State (12 percentage points higher) and Rice (two percentage points higher) had overall GSR rates for football student-athletes that were better than the overall student-athletes. Northern Illinois and Utah State had overall GSR rates for football student-athletes that were the same for overall student-athletes.

Lapchick said, “Rice and Boston College/Notre Dame (tie) would have played for the National Championship if there was a national championship game based on Graduation Success Rates among bowl teams. All three teams graduated at least 94 percent of all football student-athletes and at least 93 percent of African-American football student-athletes. Rice graduated 100 percent of their African-American football student-athletes.”

“Florida State and Auburn, which will contend for the National Championship, both had good

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academic records. Florida State's APR stood at 954, while Auburn posted an APR of 950. They graduated 58 percent and 70 percent of all their football student-athletes, 50 percent and 63 percent of their African-American and 100 percent and 89 percent of their white football student-athletes, respectively.

The top 15 APR schools are represented in multiple conferences. The Atlantic Coast Conference had five schools in the top 15. Three conferences (Big 10, Southeastern Conference, and the American Athletic Conference) each had two teams in the top 15 and four conferences (Conference-USA, Mid-American Conference, Pacific-12 and the Mountain West Conference) had one team.

Both teams in two bowls have APRs higher or equal to 970 in 2013. Clemson and Ohio State in the Discover Orange Bowl have APRs of 985 and 982, respectively. The New Era Pinstripe Bowl has Rutgers and Notre Dame with 978 and 973, respectively.

NCAA statistics were used in this study. The Institute reviewed data collected by the NCAA from member institutions for the graduation rate study. The Institute reviewed the six-year graduation rates of each school's freshman class that enrolled in 2006-07, and it then calculated a four-class average (freshmen classes of 2003-2004, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007).

The NCAA created the APR in 2004 as part of an academic reform package designed to more accurately measure student-athletes' academic success as well as improve graduation rates at member institutions. The APR holds each team accountable for the success of student-athletes in the classroom and their progression towards graduation. Individual teams are penalized if they fall below an APR score of 925, which is an expected graduation rate of 50 percent of its student-athletes. As of now, scholarship reductions are the only penalties: up to 10 percent of scholarships can be taken away. Historical penalties will be imposed on schools who continue to fall below the 925 APR.

The new postseason eligibility structure will take effect in the 2012-13 academic year, with a two-year implementation window before the benchmark moves from 900 to 930. For access to postseason competition in 2012-13 and 2013-14, teams must achieve a 900 multi-year APR or a 930 average over the most recent two years to be eligible.

This year, one bowl bound team (Louisville) had an APR below 925, which is a decrease from two in the 2012 study.

The APR data does not include data from the 2012-13 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2011-12 school year. This is the most updated data available on the NCAA website.

The study was co-authored by Andrew Donovan and Vince Pierson

The Institute has taken the position that Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) gives an unfair depiction of a school because it does not account for transfer students. A student-athlete who transfers in good standing and graduates at another institution counts as a non-graduate at the

initial school. The FGR also does not count a junior college student who transfers into a four-year college and graduates as a graduate or a former student-athlete who returns and graduates more than six years after original enrollment. The Institute supports the NCAA's use of the Graduation Success Rates (GSR), developed in 2005, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport ("TIDES" or the "Institute") serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate and professional sport. The Institute researches and publishes a variety of studies, including annual studies of student-athlete graduation rates and racial attitudes in sport as well as the internationally recognized Racial and Gender Report Card, an assessment of hiring practices in professional and college sport. The Institute also monitors some of the critical ethical issues in college and professional sport, including the potential for exploitation of student-athletes, gambling, performance-enhancing drugs and violence in sport.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport is part of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program in the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration. This landmark program focuses on business skills necessary for graduates to conduct successful careers in the rapidly changing and dynamic sports industry while also emphasizing diversity, community service and social issues in sport.

Academic Rates for teams in the 2013-2014 NCAA

Bowl Name	Participants	APR	Graduation Success Rates (GSR)			
			Overall Football Student-Athlete	African-American Football Student-Athlete	White Football Student-Athlete	Overall Student-Athlete
VIZIO BCS National Championship Game	Florida State	954	58	50	100	81
	Auburn	950	70	63	89	75
Tostitos Fiesta	UCF	975	83	75	90	89
	Baylor	962	67	63	79	86
Allstate Sugar	Oklahoma	960	51	43	65	76
	Alabama	978	73	61	96	86
Discover Orange	Clemson	985	77	74	93	87
	The Ohio State University	982	75	63	95	89
Rose Bowl Game presented by VIZIO	Stanford	978	93	85	94	97
	Michigan State	955	70	61	83	87
GoDaddy	Arkansas State	938	68	63	78	70
	Ball State	948	60	50	74	67
BBVA Compass	Vanderbilt	973	82	77	86	91
	Houston	937	57	48	71	63
AT&T Cotton	Oklahoma State	926	56	52	76	74
	Missouri	982	74	67	86	84
Capital One	Wisconsin	985	72	58	92	85
	South Carolina	966	65	57	82	82
Outback	Iowa	961	81	57	97	88
	LSU	944	74	71	83	81
Heart of Dallas	UNLV	932	64	59	67	78
	North Texas	951	65	57	79	75
TaxSlayer.com Gator	Nebraska	972	76	78	79	80
	Georgia	968	82	84	75	83
Chick-fil-A	Duke	989	92	93	90	98
	Texas A&M	954	74	65	96	77
AutoZone Liberty	Rice	979	96	100	95	94
	Mississippi State	967	59	54	100	79
Hyundai Sun	Virginia Tech	970	78	72	100	90
	UCLA	966	82	76	93	87
Franklin American Mortgage Music City	Ole Miss	944	55	47	90	75
	Georgia Tech	983	63	57	75	79
Buffalo Wild Wings	Michigan	951	66	50	85	88
	Kansas State	948	59	51	70	77
Valero Alamo	Oregon	951	72	59	81	81
	Texas	936	56	44	90	80
Fight Hunger	Brigham Young University	931	57	47	75	73
	Washington	954	74	70	78	81
New Era Pinstripe	Rutgers	978	85	85	88	88
	Notre Dame	973	94	97	89	99
Bell Helicopter Armed Forces	Middle Tennessee	972	73	73	74	82
	Navy	968	84	80	87	90
Texas	Syracuse	958	77	71	93	87
	Minnesota	955	75	54	90	86
Russell Athletic	Miami (Florida)	977	86	84	100	92
	Louisville	924	67	59	89	81
AdvoCare 1000	Arizona	956	60	55	74	73
	Boston College	982	94	93	93	96
National University Holiday	Arizona State	937	67	72	81	82
	Texas Tech	941	72	64	88	77
Belk	Cincinnati	943	65	47	88	79
	North Carolina	934	65	55	88	86
Military Bowl presented by Northrop Grumman	Marshall	948	66	64	68	74
	Maryland	937	73	70	75	86
Little Caesars Pizza	Pittsburgh	962	68	60	81	77
	Bowling Green State University	963	70	56	90	83
Sheraton Hawaii	Boise State University	993	91	88	92	79
	Oregon State	957	66	58	73	79
Royal Purple Las Vegas	Fresno State	950	70	55	84	72
	USC	945	53	48	67	77
R + L Carriers New Orleans	Tulane University	960	82	78	93	87
	University of Louisiana - Lafayette	956	65	58	76	74
Beef 'O'Brady's St. Petersburg	East Carolina University	945	66	61	79	77
	Ohio University	945	72	59	91	73
S.D. County Credit Union Poinsettia	Utah State University	967	84	86	84	84
	Northern Illinois	974	85	81	94	85
Famous Idaho Potato	Buffalo	925	59	49	68	78
	San Diego State University	956	68	64	67	75
Gildan New Mexico	Washington State	942	57	45	73	78
	Colorado State University	947	79	60	89	83