

I. Conference Purpose, Philosophy and Attributes

1. Conference Philosophy. Does the conference have a conference-wide philosophy? What is it?

The Guiding Principles of the Liberty League as indicated in the official Policies and Procedures are as follows:

“The member institutions of the Liberty League place highest priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of its student-athletes' academic programs. As proposed in the NCAA Division III philosophy statement, the member institutions seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the educational experience. Member institutions also seek to establish and maintain an environment, which promotes and adheres to the principles of cultural diversity and gender equity among their athletes and athletics staff. Working within the framework of the Division III athletic philosophy, member institutions should maximize the number and variety of athletic opportunities available to student-athletes consistent with their resources.”

2. Institutional Missions. What are the academic missions of the conference's member institutions? How do the missions affect the implementation of the conference philosophy, conference policies and the administration of the conference?

Although the specific academic missions of the member institutions within the league are diverse, there are some prevailing themes common to all. Foremost among the common elements is the emphasis placed by member institutions on a well-rounded, highly interactive educational experience, both within the classroom and beyond. Curricular education at member institutions includes extensive laboratory, research, and studio experience and also often includes time away from campus in international or occupational settings. Community service is also a central theme of institutional missions as civic engagement within the campus communities and beyond is strongly encouraged. Within these philosophies, Intercollegiate athletics is a valued and integral part of the educational experience. In keeping with these academic missions, conference policies and administration aim to emphasize the educational element of intercollegiate athletics while ensuring that student-athletes are able to be as engaged in other campus activities as are other students. Specifically conference policies are designed to minimize the time spent away from campus while engaged in athletic competition so that time may be devoted to other aspects of the academic missions.

3. Academic Profile of Member Institutions. What are the academic profiles of the conference's member institutions? How do the profiles affect the implementation of the conference philosophy, conference policies and the administration of the conference?

The members of the Liberty League all have highly selective admissions criteria and are able to attract and admit students who have exhibited qualities consistent with the stated academic missions. The selective nature of the admissions processes produces student-athletes who have demonstrated the ability to balance academics, athletics, and other commitments and are thus well-equipped to

engage in the broad educational experience. Student-Athletes consistently record higher grade-point averages than the student body as a whole on many member campuses. This allows intercollegiate athletics and competition within the Liberty League to be valued by all campus constituents as something that contributes to the academic mission rather than something that detracts from it.

4. Geographic Proximity. What role does geographic proximity play related to conference membership and policy? How does the conference account for geographic proximity in scheduling events (e.g., contests, conference meetings)?

Geographic proximity is important to conference membership and policy so that travel time is minimized, as described above. Within the league, all full members are located within New York State and the longest travel distances are approximately 300 miles. Associate members in the sport of football are located in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and the metropolitan New York area. Geographic proximity is utilized whenever possible in scheduling of contests to further minimize travel time, as the league uses a “travel-partner” system when scheduling team sports in which two contests may be played in a weekend. Conference meetings are held in central locations whenever possible to facilitate attendance and minimize travel time for constituents.

5. Athletics Profile of Member Institutions (e.g., sports programs; resource allocations). How similar or different are the athletics programs of member institutions and how does this affect conference policy and administration?

Liberty League members sponsor broad-based athletics programs, consistent with the guiding principles as indicated above. Sport sponsorship at most member institutions is significantly higher than the Division III average. The league recognizes 26 sport champions each academic year, as many or more than any other Division III conference. This broad-based philosophy of athletic programming applies to conference policies as the league strives to provide a consistent level of resources to each sport and provide experiences and opportunities that are consistent for all student-athletes within the league.

6. Institutional Profile of Member Institutions (e.g., private, religious). How similar or different are the institutional profiles of member institutions and how does this affect conference policy and administration?

Liberty League members are required to be privately funded institutions per conference policy. The similar nature of the institutional profiles leads to conference policies that can be evaluated by their desirability and feasibility as determined by the membership, and are not subject to additional regulation as may be the case with a membership consisting of or including public institutions.

II. Institutional Personnel Involvement

How are the following constituents involved in conference governance and administration? Do these constituents play an active role in conference governance? Are these constituents involved in determining conference policies?

1. Chancellor or President.

The Presidents of Liberty League member institutions are all actively involved in oversight of athletics on their respective campuses. Involvement in conference governance is achieved by communication with Senior Administrators with Athletics Oversight and/or Athletic Directors who are directly responsible for governance administration of conference policies.

2. Senior Administrator with Athletics Oversight.

In several cases within the Liberty League, the Director of Athletics reports directly to the President. In those cases where a Senior Administrator maintains oversight of Athletics the communication between the Athletic Director and the Senior Administrator provides guidance to the Athletic Director who is directly responsible for governance and administration of conference policies.

3. Director of Athletics.

The Directors of Athletics are the primary governing body within the Liberty League. The Directors meet regularly (at least three times annually, with additional meetings as needed) to conduct league business and develop league policies and procedures. Communication among Directors and between Directors and the league Commissioner occurs frequently via phone and e-mail. Additionally, three Directors serve (on a rotating basis) as a league executive committee to develop agendas for league meetings and provide additional oversight and assistance to the Commissioner in conducting regular league business.

4. Senior Woman Administrator.

Currently the Liberty League has four member institutions which have a woman serving as the Director of Athletics. In all other cases the Senior Woman Administrator attends league meetings with the Director and is actively involved in development and administration of league policies. Additionally, many Senior Woman Administrators serve as sport liaisons with Coaching groups and assist in communicating sport-specific concerns between the Coaches and Directors.

5. Faculty Athletics Representative.

The Faculty Athletics Representatives at member institutions communicate regularly with the Director of Athletics, Senior Administrator with Athletics Oversight, and the President on issues concerning athletics and its impact on academics. These discussions impact decision-making when the Directors of Athletics meet to discuss league policies, most particularly scheduling as all efforts are made to minimize the amount of missed class time incurred by student-athletes.

6. Coaches, Sports Medicine and Sports Information Staff.

Coaches meet at least annually (more frequently as needed) to discuss sport-specific concerns and propose action items to the Directors for consideration. Each group is assigned an administrator that serves as a sport liaison to facilitate communication of sport concerns between the Coaches and

Directors. Sports Medicine and Sports Information Staff also meet at least annually to discuss concerns and confirm expectations and procedures for league competition.

III. Conference Organization and Operation

1. Conference Office Structure. How is the conference office structured? What type of organizational structure is in place? What resources are provided for the conference office operation? What are the core responsibilities of the conference office?

The Liberty League has recently moved to a full-time Commissioner to oversee league operations. The Commissioner is currently the only league employee and has all the resources needed (internet, digital phone, mobile PDA) to conduct league business from his home office or on the road. The responsibilities of the conference office include scheduling, administration of all league programs (awards, media relations, marketing), and communication with the NCAA.

2. Governance Structure. What groups are formally represented in the conference governance structure? How are issues discussed? Does a conference operation or organizational chart exist? How often does the governance structure meet (e.g., presidents and chancellors)?

The Liberty League is primarily governed by the Directors of Athletics, who meet at three regularly scheduled meetings per year with additional meetings called as needed. Consistent with the Division III philosophy, "The member institution's chief executive officers have the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the conference and the actions of the athletic directors." as indicated in the league's policies and procedures. A formal conference operation or organizational chart is not currently in place.

3. Membership Process. What is the conference policy and process when an institution joins the conference and the policy and process when leaving the conference?

The Liberty League has not recently undergone the addition of any institution to its ranks as a full member. In the past several years, a number of institutions have expressed interest in joining the league. In all cases the potential new member was evaluated by existing members via institutional discussions among Athletic Directors, Presidents, Faculty Athletic Representatives, and Senior Administrators. In only one recent case was a formal request for membership received and acted upon. In the history of the league no full member has left the conference. The league has within the past six years experienced the addition of several associate members as well as the withdrawal of one associate member. In those cases the potential new members were evaluated by campus constituents, including the member campuses that do not participate in the affected sport (Football).

4. Professional Development. Do conference office personnel attend professional development opportunities sponsored by national associations (e.g., NCAA, NACWAA, NACDA, COSIDA)? Do conference office personnel attend the NCAA Regional Rules Seminar? How is professional development funded?

The conference commissioner regularly attends professional development opportunities such as

NCAA Rules Seminars, ECAC-SIDA, and DIICA. Attendance is supported by conference funds as well as NCAA Strategic Grant Initiative funding.

5. Technology. How does the conference address technology? Does it implement technology advancements to enhance communication and improve services with its conference member institutions and the NCAA?

The Liberty League attempts to use technology whenever possible to promote efficiencies in league procedures as well as to reduce the impact on the environment. Nearly all league communications occur electronically, including nominations, voting, and selections for weekly and post-season awards as well as other communications among athletic directors and from the commissioner. The league is also actively pursuing electronic methods for game exchange procedures in an effort to further provide enhanced services to the membership.

6. Media Relations. Does the conference promote its events and activities to maximize exposure and interest? What is the conference philosophy regarding event promotion? Does the conference actively promote the Division III identity?

The league primarily relies on the member institutions to promote its events, with particular reliance on the host institutions as league events take place. Member institutions are well-equipped to promote events on their campuses and within the greater campus communities and have consistently been the most effective at doing so. Member institutions and the league do actively promote the Division III identity, including the “Be Loud, Be Proud, Be Positive” sportsmanship initiative.

7. NCAA Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program. Has the conference developed a policy for allocating the strategic initiative grants that has broad constituent involvement? Are the conference policies for access and distribution of funds reviewed on an ongoing basis? How does the conference determine and administer educational programs and services to best meet its needs and support the goals of the Division III strategic plan?

The Liberty League makes NCAA Strategic Initiative Grant Funding available to all member institutions on an annual basis. Every institution is entitled to a full member share of the allocated funds in Tier I and Tier II should it choose to utilize them. When institutions do not use their available shares they are redistributed among participating institutions. The conference has also conducted league-wide initiatives to support elements of the Division III Strategic Plan such as the “Be Loud, Be Proud, Be Positive” sportsmanship program.

8. Scheduling. Do you have a conference scheduling policy? If yes, does the policy ensure that your member institutions are following membership and championship selection criteria? Are scheduling policies equitable for men’s and women’s sports?

As indicated above conference scheduling is conducted in such a way as to minimize travel and missed class time. Scheduling is equitable for men’s and women’s sports with many events taking place simultaneously (i.e. track & field) and other events operating on a mirror schedule (i.e. when the School ‘A’ men are at School ‘B’ then the School ‘B’ women are at School ‘A’). Scheduling of

non-league events is not governed by league policy and is determined by each member institution.

9. **Officiating.** Do you have a designated officiating assigner for the conference? Is there a conference official that has the authority to oversee the assignment of officials and evaluate their performance? Are officiating assigners equitable for men's and women's sports?

The Liberty League is not directly involved with officiating within the league as each member institution is responsible for obtaining officiating services for competition conducted on its campus. In many cases these services are provided by the ECAC officiating bureau which maintains oversight of assigners and conducts officials evaluations.

10. **Championship Oversight.** Are you conducting conference championships? How do you ensure that student-athletes are given the opportunity to compete in a conference championship that provides them with an overall rewarding championship experience?

The league conducts 24 conference championship events each year and is constantly striving to ensure an overall rewarding championship experience. Communication with coaches groups occurs prior to and following each event to review procedures and suggest ways to enhance the events. Recently the league has instituted traveling plaques that are presented to the champions at each event and retained by that institution until the championship in the same event the following year. The league has also instituted a championship merchandising program to provide student-athletes the opportunity to have mementos of their participation and to further promote the league identity.

11. **Communication.** Do you have an established system or process to communicate with all key constituent or governance groups (e.g., list serve, phone list)? What is the conference philosophy regarding communication initiatives? What role does the conference office play in this process?

Communication most frequently occurs within key governance and constituent groups via e-mail groups. The league facilitates communication within and among these groups wherever possible. The conference office also maintains a standing conference call number and passcode that is frequently utilized by various groups within the league.

IV. Conference Accountability and Control

1. **Rules Compliance.** What role does the conference play related to rules compliance? Does the conference review its systems and services for rules education and monitoring/enforcement to assist its member institutions to comply with all applicable conference and NCAA rules and regulations?

The conference facilitates rules compliance by utilizing the commissioner as a resource for rules interpretations and as a means of communicating with the NCAA. Conference rules are reviewed annually with communication regarding specific rules applications issued as needed. Member institutions report directly to the NCAA enforcement staff for issues related to NCAA rules and regulations.

2. Financial Aid Reporting Process. Does the conference share information from institutional financial aid reports? If yes, how is the process conducted?

The league is not currently sharing data from institutional financial aid reports.

3. Other Reporting. Does the conference share other reports and/or data (e.g., EADA) among member institutions?

The league is not currently sharing other reports and/or data among member institutions.

4. Fiscal Policies and Stability. Is the conference administered with prudent management and fiscal policies to ensure financial stability? How often are conference fiscal policies and procedures reviewed to ensure future financial stability for the conference?

The conference budget and financial reports are reviewed at each meeting of the league, with additional monitoring conducted by the executive committee as needed. The frequent monitoring and evaluation of fiscal policies and procedures includes projections several years into the future in order to ensure continued financial stability.

5. Budget and Audit Process. How is the conference operational budget established? Do conference policies require that all expenses and revenues associated with the operation of the conference be audited at least annually?

The conference operating budget is adopted each spring for the ensuing academic year and is reviewed by the entire league at each meeting and more frequently by the executive committee as necessary. While league policies do not require an annual audit, league expenses and revenues have been regularly audited by the treasurer's host institution.

V. NCAA Involvement

1. NCAA Leadership. What role have conference members played in the NCAA governance structure? What role should they play? Does the conference actively nominate presidents or chancellors, faculty and athletics administrators to fill vacancies on Association-wide and Division III committees? Does the conference actively nominate coaches to serve on sports and/or rule committees?

Liberty League members are active within the NCAA governance structure, with representatives currently or recently serving on the Presidents Council, Management Council and Nominating Committee as well as numerous sports and rules committees. Members have been nominated by means other than the conference in most cases as the conference is not currently in the practice of actively nominating for committee vacancies.

2. NCAA Convention Attendance. How does the conference ensure attendance at the NCAA Convention? What is the conference philosophy regarding involvement in the governance structure, including voting at the Convention? How is the conference vote on legislative proposals developed?

Who provides input and who has final authority?

The members of the Liberty League have regularly attended the NCAA Convention on an annual basis. A conference meeting is held each year at the convention to further ensure member attendance. The conference vote on legislative proposals is determined by majority vote of the members at this meeting, with the institutional votes determined through the discussions and processes in place at each campus.

3. Other NCAA Events. Are athletics staff members encouraged to attend NCAA sponsored events (e.g., Regional Rules Seminars, Gender-Equity Issues Forum) for professional development?

The league encourages members to attend professional development events and has had consistent participation in Rules Seminars as well as other NCAA sponsored events. Member institutions value professional development and support staff participation, with additional funding made available from the NCAA through the Strategic Grant Initiative.

VI. Sportsmanship, Ethical Conduct and Diversity

1. Citizenship/Leadership/Sportsmanship. Does the conference actively encourage all student-athletes, coaches and fans to respect each other, practice civility, encourage teamwork, appreciate differences and understand citizenship responsibilities? If yes, describe how.

The Liberty League encourages citizenship, leadership, and sportsmanship through league-wide initiatives as well as campus-specific programs. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committees are leaders in this area, both at the institutional and conference level. Community service projects are regularly undertaken by student-athletes as individual teams as well as the campus-wide student-athlete population. Additional education and leadership programming is supported by the conference through the NCAA Strategic Initiatives Grant.

2. Conference Sportsmanship Statement. Does the conference have a sportsmanship statement or policy? How is the sportsmanship statement or policy administered at athletics events? How are member institutions assuring sportsmanship education with their athletics staff, student-athletes and fans?

The league has a sportsmanship statement that is read by the public address announcer prior to each event on a member campus, and is also frequently printed in event programs. Game management personnel are in place to monitor unsportsmanlike behavior at events, with offending fans removed from the site of competition if necessary.

3. Diversity. What is the conference commitment regarding gender and ethnic diversity? Is it consistent with the NCAA legislative principles and the Division III Philosophy?

Liberty League members are committed to gender and ethnic diversity through campus hiring procedures which encourage such diversity in athletics as well as all other departments. Members have also participated in the NCAA Diversity Workshops and several member institutions are

currently hosting or have recently hosted interns funded through the NCAA Ethnic Minority and Women's Internship Grant Program. All of these efforts are consistent with NCAA legislative principles and the Division III Philosophy.

VII. Student-Athlete Inclusion and Development

1. Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Does the conference SAAC have a philosophy and mission statement? If yes, what is it? Is the conference SAAC active? What are its primary areas of focus? Does it represent the concerns and ideas of the conference's student-athletes and is its reporting structure consistent with student-athlete well-being?

The Liberty League SAAC mission statement, as specified in the league's policies and procedures, is as follows:

- To promote efficient communication between the Liberty League student-athlete population and respective athletic departments.*
- To encourage and provide the student-athlete with the opportunity to effectively communicate with their respective athletic departments in order to provide suggestions/questions etc., related to the development of programs designed to serve their needs.*
- To encourage the involvement of student-athletes in both campus and overall community service projects.*
- To assist in the development and implementation of programs within campuses that motivate student-athletes to strive for and be recognized for academic excellence, commitment, sportsmanship, leadership and good community relations.*

The league SAAC is active and meets several times each year, with at least one in-person meeting. In recent years SAAC activities have focused on sportsmanship initiatives with active involvement in the league-wide initiative utilizing the "Be Loud, Be Proud, Be Positive" campaign. The league SAAC represents the concerns and ideas of the conference's student-athletes through its reporting structure utilizing campus SAAC's and their continual monitoring of student-athlete well-being.

2. Academic Performance of Student-Athletes. Does the conference measure the academic success of its student-athletes? How is success measured? Does the conference compare the academic performance of student-athletes with students in general?

The league does not currently measure the academic success of its student-athletes through any formal measures, however evidence produced and publicized by several member institutions indicates that student-athletes frequently outperform the general student body, as measured by grade point average.

3. Championships/Awards/Recognition. Does the conference provide student-athletes with appropriate championships opportunities and recognition? Are these programs consistent with the

division's commitment to student-athlete well-being, the philosophy that athletics is an integral part of the total educational experience and the philosophy that primary emphasis shall be on regional in-season competition and conference championships?

The league conducts 24 championship events annually and has numerous opportunities for recognition of both athletic and academic achievements. The league awards program consists of weekly awards, end-of-season awards, and an all-academic team in each sport. These programs are consistent with the division's commitment to student-athlete well-being as the emphasis on minimizing time out of the classroom extends to league championship competition as well as regular season play.

4. NCAA Student-Athlete Regional Leadership Conference. How does the conference ensure student-athlete participation at the NCAA Student-Athlete Regional Leadership Conference? Does the conference play a role in encouraging student-athletes to attend the leadership conference? Does the conference play a role in ensuring participation at the NCAA National Leadership Conference?

Liberty League members have actively participated in NCAA Student-Athlete Regional Leadership Conferences and will continue to do so in the future. The league encourages participation in the National Student-Athlete Leadership Development Conference by institutions who are hosting CHAMPS/Life Skills programs as well as those who are not.