

# 2017-18 Conference Self-Study Guide (CSSG)

(Final CSSG report shall be submitted electronically to the NCAA)

## A. Conference Purpose, Philosophy and Attributes

1. **Conference Philosophy.** What is the conference's statement of philosophy and/or mission statement? How is the philosophy and/or mission statement used to guide conference policy, decision-making, and strategic planning?

The Liberty League completed a review of its conference philosophy, mission and guiding principles in 2012 to reflect its current position. The Liberty League's guiding principles, mission, vision and core values are as follows:

**Liberty League Guiding Principles:** Liberty League member institutions' top priority is the quality of the educational experience, both academic and athletic. Consistent with the NCAA Division III philosophy, Liberty League members seek to provide: 1.) an environment where intercollegiate athletic activities are an integral part of a student-athlete's educational experience and 2.) opportunities to achieve at optimal levels academically and athletically. The League and its members seek to provide an environment that promotes and adheres to the principles of cultural diversity and gender equity, within teams, athletic departments, and institutions. We seek to maximize the number and variety of athletic opportunities available to student-athletes that are consistent with their institutional philosophy.

**Mission Statement:** The Liberty League is comprised of a group of highly selective colleges and universities committed to academic and athletic excellence. The mission of the Liberty League is to promote high level competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner. Consistent with the mission of each member institution, the Liberty League supports excellence in intercollegiate athletics as a vital part of the student-athlete's educational experience.

**Vision Statement:** The Liberty League will be a nationally recognized Division III athletic conference for its academic and athletic excellence as well as a strong commitment to the values of sportsmanship and integrity.

**Core Values:** The League, through its member institutions' Presidents, Administrators, Faculty Athletic Representatives, Coaches and Staff, is unified in its commitment to the following core values:

- Integrity – Create an environment of respect and the highest ethical standards

- Excellence – Promote academic excellence for our institutions while offering high quality intercollegiate athletics programs
- Equity – Ensure equitable participation, representation, leadership, career and professional development opportunities for student-athletes and staff
- Inclusiveness – Cultivate and celebrate a diverse and inclusive culture and the differences that give strength to our League and institutions

Within the conference’s mission and philosophy, intercollegiate athletics is a valued and integral part of the educational experience. In keeping with the academic missions of the member institutions, 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 they may devote themselves to other aspects of the academic missions.

2. **Alignment with Division III Philosophy. How does the conference’s statement of philosophy and/or mission statement align with the Division III Philosophy Statement? In what ways does the conference incorporate elements of the DIII Identity and Strategic platform into the conference initiatives or strategic planning process?**

The Division III identity and strategic platform is interwoven throughout the conference philosophy. Consistent with the Division III strategic platform and central to the Liberty League’s philosophy is the commitment to ensuring that intercollegiate athletics programs are administered in a way that enhances a student-athlete’s overall educational experience. It is currently reflected in conference scheduling practices, which seek to minimize the impact on students’ academic pursuits while affording opportunities for other educational or career endeavors. Liberty League student-athletes annually engage in community service and fundraising efforts that are directed to non-profit organizations. In addition, many student-athletes travel abroad each year and hundreds are involved in internships. Within our commitment to diversity and gender equity, the Liberty League promotes a broad-based athletic conference that seeks to maximize athletic offerings, providing championship opportunities in 27 sports – 14 for women and 13 for men.

3. **Institutional Attributes of Member Institutions. How do the member institution missions, locations and profiles (e.g., public/private, religious) positively or negatively contribute to the achievement of conference ideals? In what ways, if any, is the composition of your conference a reflection of the conference philosophy? How do member**

**institution attributes impact how the conference forms policies? When accepting new member institutions or releasing current ones, what are the conference's primary considerations (e.g., obtaining and maintaining AQ, scheduling, religious affiliation, academic profile)?**

Originally founded as the Upstate Collegiate Athletic Association in 1995 and renamed the Liberty League in the summer of 2004, the conference was founded by a grouping of institutions which shared values and philosophies. The missions, locations and profiles of the member institutions have contributed positively to the achievement of conference ideals. The League includes founding members Clarkson University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, University of Rochester, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, St. Lawrence University, Skidmore College and Union College. Vassar College became a full member of the League during the 2000-01 academic year. Bard College and Rochester Institute of Technology joined for the 2011-12 academic year when Hamilton College departed to fully integrate its athletic program into the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC). Ithaca College became a full member in 2017-18. The University of Rochester holds dual conference membership, also competing as a member of the University Athletic Association (UAA). At the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, New York University became an associate member in both men's and women's golf, while Wellesley College and Mount Holyoke College became associate members in women's golf. St. John Fisher College joined the Liberty League as an associate member in rowing in 2013-14. The Liberty League has had numerous institutions participate as associate members in football. While the league does not currently have any football associate members, Buffalo State College, has accepted an associate membership and will begin participation in the fall of 2019.

Liberty League member institutions have highly selective admission criteria and are able to attract and admit students who have exhibited qualities consistent with the stated academic missions. While obtaining and maintaining NCAA automatic qualification is important in providing opportunities for student-athletes to compete at the accomplished levels, the academic profile of prospective member institutions has been the primary consideration for membership during conference expansion. 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 a 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 campus constituents as an integral part of the academic mission.

Although the specific academic missions of the member institutions within the League may differ, 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 co-occupational settings. Community service stands as a central theme of Liberty League institutional missions. Civic engagement, locally and globally, is strongly encouraged.

Geographic proximity is important to conference membership and aids in developing policy to minimize travel time for competition. All full members of the Liberty League are located within New York State with the longest travel distances approximately 300 miles. Associate members in the sports of men's and women's golf are located in Massachusetts and the metropolitan New York area. Geographic proximity is utilized whenever possible in scheduling of contests so as to minimize travel time.

## **B. Conference Organization and Operation**

- 1. Conference Office Structure. Provide a conference office organizational chart or include it as part of the governance chart submitted in B.2. Provide the job descriptions for each member of the conference office staff. What are the core responsibilities of the conference office? Are conference-wide expectations of the conference office staff definable, obtainable and measurable? What physical and financial resources are provided for the conference office operation and how are those resources funded? Is the current conference office staffing sufficient to adequately meet the needs of the conference member institutions?**

### **COMMISSIONER – Responsibilities:**

#### **Office Operations:**

- Ensure the office has the necessary equipment and supplies to perform Liberty League business.
- Purchase, maintain and inventory office equipment and supplies as needed.

#### **Budget:**

- Work with the League Treasurer to develop an annual budget for presentation to the Executive Committee (EC) for their review and approval.
- Assist the League Treasurer with the preparation of budget reports distributed at League meetings.

#### **League Meetings and Correspondence:**

- Prepare and disseminate the agendas and minutes for all League meetings.
- Work collaboratively with the President of the League and the EC on projects as defined by the League Athletics Directors (ADs) and the President.
- Draft letters and/or appropriate documents for the President as requested.
- Organize, prepare and facilitate all League meetings (e.g., sport committees, SID, SAAC, SWA, Athletic Trainers).
- Review hardship waivers, prepare materials for decision by the EC and issue the decision to the needed individuals.
- Provide the League ADs with an annual report at the Spring meeting and other reports as needed throughout the year.
- Prepare all appropriate League correspondence.
- Update, compile and distribute the League handbook and directory on an annual basis.

**Scheduling:**

- Prepare regular-season schedules for approval by the League ADs.
- Maintain the schedule of championship formats, dates and times.
- Coordinate the distribution of approved schedules via the website.

**League Championships:**

- Oversee all League championships by providing support to the host institution (e.g., prepare seeding and bracket information, coordinate the assignment of championship officials, etc.)
- Coordinate and chair pre-championship League calls.
- Attend all League championships whenever possible.

**Awards:**

- Order and distribute all League awards.
- Coordinate external communications regarding all accomplishments of distinction for the League (e.g., All-League Teams, All-American Honors, NACDA Administrator of the Year, etc.).

**Internal and External Relations:**

- Create and submit applications for appropriate NCAA grant opportunities that will result in additional funds for technology, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, interns and other League appropriate programs.
- Process application for access to NCAA National Championships for team sports with automatic qualifiers.
- Share responsibility with the League President as conference liaison and represent the League at appropriate regional and national meetings (i.e., NCAA Division III Commissioners Association).

- Explore ways to market the League and identify sponsorship opportunities.
- Inform the League ADs of opportunities to nominate members for NCAA committee service.
- Serve as liaison to Liberty League Presidents to assist in league communication and meetings.

**Public Relations:**

- Represent the League to external constituencies, including the NCAA and publicize the League and its members to internal and external audiences.
- Direct and oversee the sports information functions of the League.
  - Write and post press releases on all League events.
  - Distribute press releases to appropriate media.
  - Maintain and update all information on the League website.
  - Maintain archives of League sport records (e.g., regular season, championships).
  - Work collaboratively with the League SIDs to webstream all League Championship events.
  - Use social media to promote Liberty League institutions and sports.

**Other Responsibilities:**

- Develop and work with the President to set Liberty League priorities for new initiatives.
- Devise and implement procedures for production of communication-oriented materials and for rolling-out new programs and services.
- Assist in the education and orientation for new institutional personnel.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the President of the League.

**Supervision Received:**

- Supervision received from the President of the League. May also be accountable to other Athletics Directors for specific projects.
- Operates with considerable initiative and independence and exercises judgment in planning workflow, establishing priorities, meeting deadlines, and determining appropriate methods and techniques to carry out responsibilities.

**Supervision Exercised:**

- Supervise interns and/or other employees selected by the League.

**ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER – Responsibilities:**

**General Administration**

- Attend the annual meeting and league meetings as designated by the Commissioner.

- Assist in the planning and preparation of conference meetings, preparing meeting materials and recording meeting minutes.
- Assist in the day-to-day administrative operations of the league office.
- Serve as league SAAC advisor – leading annual conference SAAC meeting, assisting with coordination of conference SAAC projects.
- Plan and implement an annual SAAC community service project.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Commissioner.

### **Championships & Awards**

- Assist the Commissioner with the planning and coordination of league tournament and championship events.
- Attend select league tournaments and championship events, and in the absence of the Commissioner, serve as the representative for the league office.
- Assist in the development of league championship policies and procedures.
- Confirm officiating assignments for league championships.
- Develop and design championship programs.
- Assist in all aspects of the weekly, seasonal, and yearly awards for the conference, including student-athlete of the week selections, all-league awards, scholar-athlete awards and special awards.
- Coordinate the ordering and distribution of league awards.

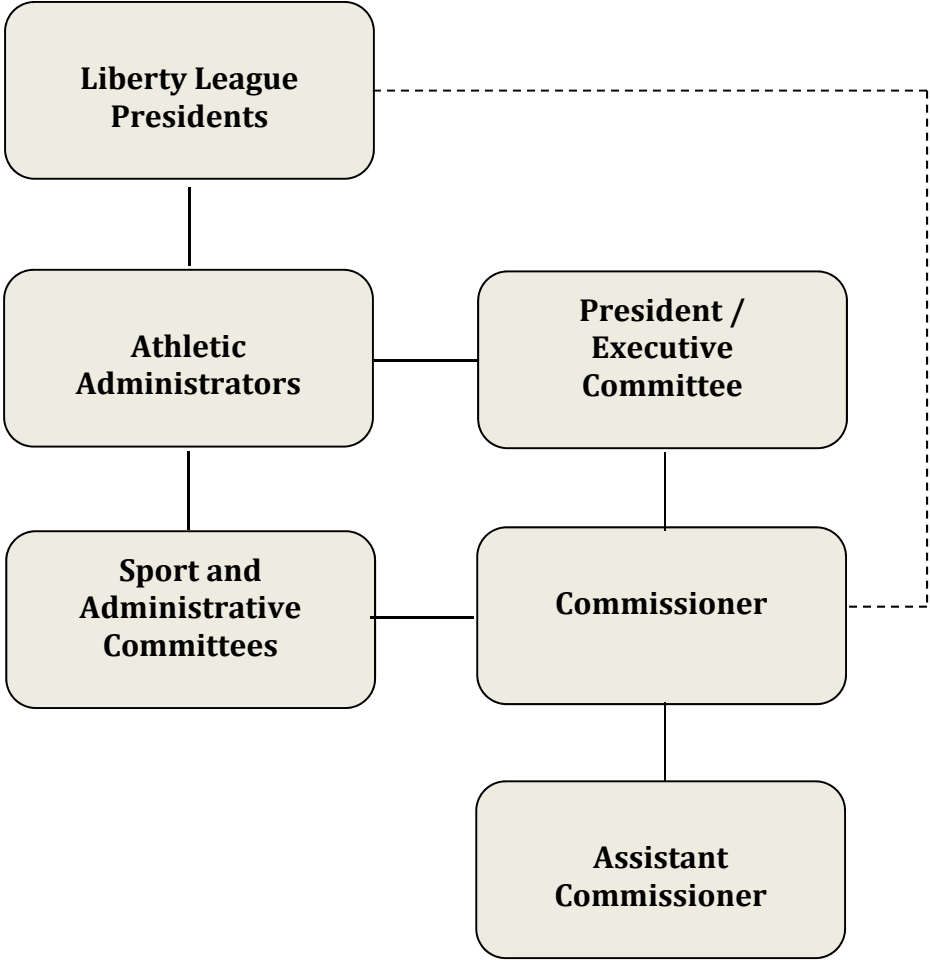
### **Public Relations / Sports Information**

- Assist the Commissioner and member institutions in promoting and publicizing league sports, teams, student-athletes and events.
- Write and edit weekly reports and press releases.
- Update and maintain the league website.
- Develop and utilize social media to disseminate league news.
- Assist the Commissioner in developing the use of new media and technology to promote the league.
- Compile, update and maintain league statistics and records.
- File statistics reports and league information to the NCAA and other organizations where applicable.
- Coordinate preseason coaches' polls for league team sports.

The core responsibilities of the conference office are to support the educational missions of its member institutions and student-athletes. This is achieved by overseeing conference competitions and championship events that provide an enhanced student-athlete experience, by administering conference policies that support successful academic achievement, and by promoting and recognizing the athletic and academic achievement of student-athletes.

Conference office resources are funded through membership dues. The league leases office space on a member institution campus. The league budget along with NCAA conference grant funding provides sufficient funding for conference office professional development, travel, equipment and supplies. The league added an internship position in 2012-13 funded through an NCAA Ethnic Minority & Women’s Internship Grant. At the conclusion of the two-year internship grant, the league successfully applied for an NCAA Strategic Alliance Matching Grant, which provided funding for a full-time assistant commissioner position. A conference office staff consisting of two full-time employees – consistent with other Division III conference offices – has provided sufficient staffing to adequately meet the needs of the conference and its member institutions.

2. (a) **Governance Structure**. Provide a conference governance organizational chart. If a constituent is not represented in the conference governance process, how does the conference engage them in conference issues? (e.g., Coaches, FARs, SWAs, ADRs, SAAC)



While constituents may not be formally represented in the Liberty League governance structure, regular discussion at the institutional level involves athletics administrators with athletics direct reports and faculty athletics representatives. When making decisions at the conference level, athletics administrators provide input from other constituents. The Liberty League meeting at the NCAA Convention has often included athletics direct reports and faculty athletics representatives.

**(b) Involvement of Institutional Personnel. 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?**

**a. 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. The Liberty League presidents have conducted annual in-person meetings and conference calls.

**b. Athletics Direct Report (if applicable).**

In several cases within the Liberty League, the Director of Athletics reports directly to the President. At member institutions where a senior administrator maintains oversight of athletics, the communication between the athletic director and the senior administrator provides guidance to the athletic director on governance and administration of conference policies. At this time, the senior administrators with athletics oversight are not formally part of the conference governance structure.

**c. 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) to conduct League business and develop League policies and procedures. Communication among Directors and between Directors and the Liberty League Commissioner occurs frequently via phone and e-mail. Additionally, three Directors of Athletics serve two-year terms as the Officers and Executive Committee. The Executive Committee consists of the Liberty League President, the immediate past president and the president-elect. The Executive Committee is responsible for the conduct of the day-to-day operations of the League

consistent with existing League Policies and Procedures and Team Guidelines, addresses all issues and keeps member institutions appropriately informed, develops agendas for League meetings, provides oversight on League matters and assists the Commissioner in conducting regular League business. The position of Treasurer is a non-voting member of the Executive Committee and serves a three-year renewable term. The position of Treasurer has been filled by a member institution's Director of Athletics since the inception of the Liberty League.

**d. Senior Woman Administrator.**

While not a formal committee within the Liberty League governance structure, the Senior Woman Administrators play an important role at both the institutional and conference levels. Senior Woman Administrators regularly attend League meetings with the Directors and are 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. The League's Senior Woman Administrators have met periodically to discuss institutional and conference issues related to women's athletics.

**e. 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. The Faculty Athletics Representatives do not presently have a formal role in the conference's governance structure.

**f. 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 Athletic 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 annually, typically via conference call, to discuss concerns and confirm expectations and procedures for League competition.

**g. SAAC.**

The Liberty League SAAC meets annually to discuss league and institutional issues. While a student-athlete does not attend meetings of the Liberty League administrators, SAAC has an administrator that serves as the liaison between the committee and administrators. Any SAAC legislative proposals, concerns or areas of discussion are conveyed to the administrators. Campus SAAC leaders also provide insight and feedback on conference issues to their respective administrators.

3. **Presidential Oversight. How does the conference ensure chancellors or presidents have ultimate and final authority for the conference? How often do the conference chancellors and presidents meet as a group?**

As detailed in B.2.(b)a., the Presidents of Liberty League member institutions are 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. The Liberty League presidents have conducted annual conference calls and in-person meetings in which they have discussed and voted on key league issues, including membership expansion.

4. **Membership Process. What are the procedures for when an institution joins the conference or leaves the conference? How do conference bylaws specifically address inquiries for affiliate/associate membership? What is the exit policy and process when an institution is leaving the conference?**

Following recent membership inquiries, the Liberty League established an application process for institutions seeking full membership. Institutions seeking membership in the Liberty League must make application to the conference President/Executive Committee. In all cases the potential new member is evaluated by existing members via institutional discussions among Athletic Directors, Presidents, Senior Administrators, Faculty Athletic Representatives, and Senior Woman Administrators. The President/Executive Committee will bring the application before the League for consideration at an annual or special meeting. Approval of a new member will be determined by the unanimous vote of the membership, less one. Voluntary termination of membership requires one year's notice. The Presidents or their designees may also grant associate membership status to a college or university for the purpose of permitting such institutions to participate in sports conducted under the auspices of the League.

5. **NCAA Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program. What policies does the conference have in place for allocating the strategic initiative grants**

**that ensures 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? How does the conference review the annual impact form with member schools?**

The Liberty League's main objective with regard to strategic initiatives grant funding is to allocate funds equitably among the member institutions in Tier I and II. Tier III funds are typically utilized to enhance the league championship experience and to address institutional technology needs. The commissioner reviews the league's distribution plan annually with the athletics administrators while other key constituents review the league's impact form prior to its submission to the NCAA. The league has prioritized annual funding for professional development among key constituent groups including athletics direct reports, ethnic minorities and faculty athletics representatives. Rather than mandate conference-wide programming through Tier II, the league allocates funds to each institution so that the institutions can determine what programs will best meet the varying educational needs of their respective student-athletes while also supporting the tenets of the Division III strategic plan.

6. **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?**

In 2016, the Liberty League established a scheduling philosophy and set of principles to guide all decisions related to contest scheduling. The following principles were identified as the highest priorities based on the overall quality of the educational experience of the student-athletes: 1. Minimizing the educational impact on student-athletes; 2. Commitment to student-athlete welfare; 3. Commitment to gender and sport equity; 4. Minimizing budget impact; 5. Awareness for support staff scheduling. Where feasible, the league has employed a scheduling partner model in which teams play games on Friday and Saturday in order to minimize missed class time. As indicated in the scheduling principles, the league has sought to develop equitable schedules for men's and women's sports. In basketball, a survey was conducted among both women's and men's student-athletes in which both genders overwhelmingly preferred that the women's teams play the first game and the men's teams play the second game in a Liberty League doubleheaders. Student-athletes believed this would provide for the best possible student-athlete experience.

7. **Championship Sponsorship and Policies. How are championship decisions made? Does your conference have a standing committee(s)?**

**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?**

Liberty League championship policies and decisions are made by the athletics administrators with input and recommendations provided by the respective sport committees. The league does not have standing committees but will utilize ad hoc committees to review championship policies as needed. Championship guidelines are reviewed periodically to ensure a consistent experience across all sports. Liberty League championships generally follow NCAA championship protocol, ensuring that student-athletes participate in a conference championship that mirrors the national tournament. The league also utilizes Tier III strategic initiatives grant funds to provide championship enhancements in the form of awards and signage.

- 8. Communication. Detail the conference's established system of communicating with the membership and identify any areas for improvement.**

The Liberty League has utilized multiple methods to communicate with groups and individuals across its membership. In addition to direct communication via email and phone between athletic administrators and the league office, much of the communication occurs electronically as the league attempts to utilize technology to promote efficiencies. While committee and sport liaisons are encouraged to host on in-person meeting per year with their respective committees, numerous meetings are conducted via conference call as a time and cost-saving measure. Nominations, voting, and selections for weekly and post-season awards are processed through an online system. The League has also implemented electronic film exchange procedures in a number of sports, including football, basketball, lacrosse, soccer and volleyball in an effort to further provide enhanced services to the membership. The League continues to explore technology advancements to enhance communication and improve services. Technology initiatives include webcasting opportunities to provide an enhanced student-athlete experience.

### **C. Conference Accountability and Control**

- 1. Rules Compliance. What role does the conference play related to NCAA rules compliance? Describe the conference expectations/policies regarding NCAA rules compliance (i.e., protocol for submitting interpretation requests, self-reports via RSRO, submission of sport sponsorship & demographic forms and/or the ISSG).**

The Liberty League office provides assistance with NCAA rules interpretations to its member institutions upon request. Institutional

compliance officers, many of whom work with multi-divisional athletic programs, typically submit interpretation requests directly through the NCAA's RSRO system. Member institutions are not currently required to submit requests through the conference office. The submission of institutional sport sponsorship & demographic forms and Institutional Self-Study Guides (ISSG) to the conference office is also not currently required.

2. **Rules Education. What role does the conference play with regard to NCAA rules education? Describe any resources, initiatives or tools the conference produces or distributes to the membership to assist in compliance.**

The Liberty League has provided financial assistance through the Strategic Initiatives Grant (conference grant program) for individuals to attend NCAA Regional Rules Seminars. The conference maintains a list of Rules Seminar attendance to ensure that member institutions have fulfilled their Division III membership requirement of attending a Rules Seminar once every three years. The conference does not currently produce any compliance-related materials to assist with rules education. Compliance coordinators at member institutions serve as an ad hoc resource group for one another, often sharing ideas, questions, issues and suggestions.

3. **Risk Management. How does the conference conduct risk assessment and implement risk management policies (e.g., liability and D&O insurance, additionally insured, event-related liability coverage, etc.)?**

The Liberty League treasurer has worked with an insurance broker to ensure that the league has appropriate insurance coverage. The league maintains liability insurance as well as worker's compensation insurance for staff. Insurance policies are reviewed periodically to assess the level of coverage necessary.

4. **Data Reporting and Information Sharing. What role (if any) does the conference office play in creating reports related to institutional-based data (e.g., institutional financial aid reports, Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA), student-athlete academic performance results)? How are those conference-created reports used within the league? With who are these reports shared (e.g., presidents, directors of athletics)?**

The Liberty League has previously compiled an Assessment of Student-Athlete Experience report that has shared data on academic performance (grade point averages), graduation rates and demographic data on student-athletes among its member institutions. These reports have been shared with presidents and athletic administrators. Financial aid reporting data has not been compiled and shared among conference members.

5. **Academic Performance of Student-Athletes. Does your conference have academic and eligibility standards that differ from the NCAA standards for continuing student-athletes and/or transfers? If so, what are those and how are they monitored?**

The Liberty League does not currently have academic and eligibility standards that differ from the NCAA standards.

6. **Fiscal Policies and Stability. How often are conference fiscal policies and procedures reviewed to ensure future financial stability for the conference?**

The Liberty League treasurer prepares quarterly budget reports that are shared and reviewed with athletics administrators. Based on budget projections, conference fiscal policies are adjusted accordingly, ensuring the financial stability of the conference.

7. **Budget and Financial Review 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? If so, how often? If not, how does the conference conduct a financial review?**

The Liberty League's operational budget is established based on projected revenues and expenses. The league conducts an annual financial review compiled by a certified public accountant who files all applicable tax returns associated with the organization's 501(c)(3) status.

8. **Grant Third-Party Review Form. What is the process for the annual completion of the NCAA Division III Strategic Initiative Grant Program third-party review form?**

After the Liberty League submits its annual Strategic Initiatives Grant impact form to the NCAA, the league's treasurer provides a copy of the form along with receipts for all conference grant expenditures to the conference's certified public accountant for review. The CPA completes the third-party review form and provides a copy to the treasurer and commissioner for submission to the NCAA.

#### **D. NCAA Involvement**

1. **NCAA Committee Service and Leadership. What role have conference members played in the NCAA governance structure? What role does the conference office assume in encouraging self-nomination or actively nominating—chancellors or presidents, faculty and athletics administrators to fill vacancies on Association-wide and Division III**

**committees? How does the conference office assist in getting conference representation on sports and/or rules committees?**

Liberty League members are active within the NCAA governance structure, with representatives currently and recently serving on various sport and rules committees as well as working groups. The conference encourages the participation of administrators and coaches on sport and rules committees. When the conference receives notification of openings on committees, coaches and administrative groups are contacted to solicit interest. Qualified individuals are nominated by the conference. While the conference has solicited interest of member presidents in serving on the Division III Presidents and Chancellors Advisory Group, institutional commitments have created challenges in identifying a president to fill that role.

2. **NCAA Convention Attendance. How does the conference ensure attendance at the NCAA Convention? What is the conference philosophy regarding involvement in the NCAA 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.

**E. Sportsmanship, Ethical Conduct and Diversity**

1. **Conference Sportsmanship Statement. Does the conference have a sportsmanship statement or policy? If so, include the statement or policy within your report. How is the sportsmanship statement or policy administered at athletics events? How does the conference office assist member institutions in sportsmanship education? What conference initiatives are in place to address sportsmanship both on the field and in the stands (game-day environment)?**

The Liberty League sportsmanship statement reads as follows:

“(Institution name) and all members of the Liberty League are committed to the principles of good sportsmanship. We believe all student-athletes, coaches, and spectators should strive to represent the very best spirit and tradition of intercollegiate athletics. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Profanity, sexist, ethnic, racial, homophobic, or other bigoted comments, or other intimidating actions or obscene gestures directed at officials, student-

athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the site of competition.”

The sportsmanship statement 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. Sportsmanship education and programming is supported at both the conference and institutional levels through the NCAA Strategic Initiatives Grant. League members periodically share sportsmanship best practices at conference meetings. Division III initiatives such as the “Gameday the DIII Way” program are evaluated to determine how they might improve sportsmanship at the institutional level.

2. **Diversity. Describe any diversity and/or inclusion initiatives or programs your conference currently supports or promotes. Describe any plans the conference has for addressing related issues in the next one to three years.**

Liberty League members are committed to gender and ethnic diversity through campus hiring practices which encourage such diversity in athletics as well as all other departments. The Liberty League previously conducted a two-day ‘Women in Athletics Symposium’ in which 25 student-athletes and 10 staff members engaged in discussions related to careers and women’s issues in athletics. Members have also participated in the NCAA Diversity Workshops. Institutions have applied and are encouraged to apply for the NCAA Ethnic Minority and Women’s Internship Grant. The conference office and several member institutions are currently hosting or have recently hosted interns funded through the Ethnic Minority and Women’s Internship Grant and Strategic Alliance Matching Grant programs. Through the Division III Strategic Initiatives Grant, the conference will continue to fund professional development opportunities for ethnic minorities.

## **F. Student-Athlete Inclusion and Development**

- **Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Does the conference have a SAAC statement of philosophy and/or mission statement? If so, include within your report. Describe the level of activity and engagement of the Conference SAAC. What have been its primary areas of focus in the past two to three years? Describe any ongoing or upcoming initiatives or programs in which the conference SAAC is engaged. How is the SAAC incorporated into the governance structure and/or legislative process?**

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 athletics departments.
- To encourage and provide the student-athlete with the opportunity to effectively communicate with their respective athletics 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.

At the conference's annual SAAC meetings, school representatives share ideas for campus initiatives, including community service, sportsmanship and student-athlete well-being. The meetings provide student-athletes with a forum to discuss concerns, both at the institution and conference levels. During the past two years, the conference SAAC has coordinated efforts with campus SAAC members to raise funds for Special Olympics through a friendly "SAAC Change War" competition against institutions from the Empire 8 Athletic Conference. Each conference institution collects change with proceeds going to benefit Special Olympics New York.

While SAAC members are not part of the conference's formal governance structure, student-athletes have an opportunity through campus SAAC groups to provide feedback to their athletics administrators on key conference issues. The institutional and conference decisions of athletics administrators are made after the best interests of the student-athletes are considered. The Liberty League SAAC also has an administrator that serves as liaison between the SAAC and athletic administrators committee. The liaison provides an annual report to the administrators on behalf of the conference SAAC.

**CSSG**  
**Notification of Completion**

This form is to be returned by the conference executive on completion of the conference's self-study required at least once every five years in accordance with Constitution 3.3.4.6. **Please note that only this form, not the completed self-study document, is to be returned to the NCAA national office.** The completed self-study document and supporting documentation are to be retained on file with the conference office and available for examination on request by an authorized NCAA representative.

This is to certify that

**Liberty League**

(Conference)

has completed a comprehensive self-study and evaluation using the Conference Self-Study Guide in accordance with the provisions of Constitution 3.3.4.6 and that a conference plan to correct areas determined to be program weaknesses will be implemented and placed on file with this study. It is understood that a report of the self-study and supporting documentation are available for examination on request by an authorized representative of the NCAA.

Anthony Collins

Printed name of designated conference chancellor or president representative\*

Anthony G. Collins

Anthony G. Collins (Jun 8, 2018)

Signature

Tracy King

Printed name of conference executive (commissioner)

Tracy A. King

Tracy A. King (Jun 8, 2018)

Signature

Steve Yianoukos

Printed name of designated conference director of athletics representative

Steve Yianoukos

Steve Yianoukos (Jun 8, 2018)

Signature

Joanne Little

Printed name of designated conference senior woman administrator representative

Joanne Little

Joanne Little (Jun 8, 2018)

Signature

Cheryl Stuntz

Printed name of designated conference faculty athletics representative

Cheryl P. Stuntz

Cheryl P. Stuntz (Jun 12, 2018)

Signature

Matt Knigge

Printed name of designated student-athlete advisory committee representative

Matthew Knigge

Matthew Knigge (Jun 8, 2018)

Signature

\*This is an institution's chancellor or president.

Date CSSG was completed: May 27, 2018 (submission date)

Names and titles of individuals on the self-study committee (please note chair):

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Did your conference use an outside consultant?  Yes  No

If yes, describe the responsibilities of the outside consultant. Please refer to Page No. 3 for limitations on the use of outside consultants.

**N/A.**

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**Active Division III members should return Notification of Completion (but not the completed CSSG) via email (scanned) not later than June 1, 2018 to:**

**Kristin DiBiase  
kdibiase@ncaa.org**

Questions or comments should be directed to Jay Jones at [jkjones@ncaa.org](mailto:jkjones@ncaa.org).