



Monday, January 27, 2003

OU conducting study of athletics program

Oakland University is looking for feedback from the campus community on its athletics program as part of the NCAA Division I athletics certification process.

Last October, the university began a year-long, campus-wide effort to study its athletics program as part of the certification process. Specific areas covered include academic and fiscal integrity, governance, rules compliance, commitment to equity, student athlete welfare, and sportsmanship.

While academic accreditation is common in colleges and universities, this process focuses solely on certification of athletics programs. NCAA Division I programs must be certified once every 10 years, with a five year interim-status report. This will be Oakland's first athletics certification process.

The study's purpose is to help ensure integrity in the institution's athletics operations, opening up the program to the rest of the university community and to the public. Oakland will benefit by increasing campus wide awareness and knowledge of its athletics program, confirming its strengths and developing plans to improve areas of concern.

The steering committee and subcommittees responsible for the study include OU President Gary; General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Victor Zambardi, who is the chair; and a broad spectrum of university faculty and staff as well as athletics department personnel.

Once the university has concluded its study, an external team of reviewers will conduct a four day evaluation visit on campus. Reviewers will include peers from other colleges, universities or conference offices who will report to the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification, another independent group. The committee then will determine the institution's certification status and announce the decision publicly.

The three options of certification status are: (a) certified; (b) certified with conditions; and (c) not certified. Universities have an opportunity to correct deficient areas, but those universities that do not take corrective actions may be ruled ineligible for NCAA championships.

The NCAA is a membership organization of colleges and universities that participate in intercollegiate athletics. The primary purpose of the association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body. Activities of the NCAA membership include formulating rules of play for NCAA sports, conducting national championships, adopting and enforcing standards of eligibility, and studying all phases of intercollegiate athletics.

For more information, visit [OU's NCAA Athletics Certification](#) Web site, which can be accessed from the [OU Athletics](#) Web site. The site contains lists of committee members, meeting minutes, a timeline, written plan, and links to the NCAA certification handbook and related materials.

SUMMARY

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