



Media Contact: Dr. Richard M. Southall, College Sport Research Institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
southall@email.unc.edu, 901.240-7197 (cell)/919.962-3507 (office)

Adjusted Graduation Gap:

NCAA Division-I Men's and Women's Basketball

*Study Reveals Large Gaps between Graduation Rates of
"Power Conference" College Basketball Players and Full-time Students*

Chapel Hill, NC – November 16, 2010... The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill released the NCAA Division-I men's and women's basketball installment of its annual Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. Among numerous findings, the report indicated the adjusted graduation gap between NCAA D-I men's basketball players and the general full-time male student body is sizable (-20), particularly in "Power Conferences" that compete at the highest level (-30.8). It should be noted the AGG is much lower for NCAA D-I women basketball players (-8.9). However, just as in men's basketball, women's mid-major conferences have a smaller overall AGG (-6.2) than "big-time" conferences (-14.6). The AGG is consistently less for "mid-major" conferences, some of which have lower entrance standards and more students drawn from lower socio-economic backgrounds. CSRI director and AGG report coauthor Richard Southall noted, "The AGG provides strong evidence that many men's and women's D-I basketball players do not graduate at rates comparable to full-time college students at their universities."

The 2010 Division-I Basketball AGG Report utilizes the published 4-class average Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) for the 1999-2002 cohort (the latest available) and adjusts the student-body FGR to remove the “part-time bias.” This allows for a realistic comparison of reported NCAA Division-I basketball players’ federal graduation rates with the adjusted full-time student graduation rates.

Results of the men’s report included:

- All 31 NCAA D-I men’s basketball conferences have negative AGGs. In other words, all conferences have men’s basketball player graduation rates that are less than the estimated full-time male student-body rate.
- The average AGG for all NCAA Division-I men’s basketball conferences is -20.0 percentage points. For the 21 mid-major conferences the average AGG is -14.8, 16 percentage points smaller than the -30.8 average for the majors (N=10). This difference is statistically significant.

Results of the women’s report included:

- Eight conferences, all mid-majors, have positive AGGs. The women’s basketball players’ graduation rates in these conferences exceed the estimated full-time female student-body rates.
- The remaining 23 NCAA D-I conferences have negative AGGs.
- The average AGG for all NCAA D-I women’s basketball conferences is -8.9 percentage points. For the 21 mid-majors the average AGG is -6.2, 8.4 percentage points smaller than the -14.6 average for the majors (N=10).

Comparing the men’s and women’s AGG reports:

- The women’s AGGs are smaller than the men’s for all but one of the 31 NCAA D-I conferences (Summit). The average difference is 11.1 percentage points and is statistically significant.
- Only one conference (Summit) had a larger AGG for women’s basketball players (-21) than for men’s basketball players (-11).

Complete NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gap Tables for NCAA Division-I conferences are found in the Appendix.

The graduation rate disparities are likely at least partly attributed to the extra-curricular time men's and women's basketball players devote to their sport. In addition, since the basketball season runs from November to March, the season's length may be a contributing factor. Given the intensity and length of the basketball season, the players' commitment is akin to that of a full-time job. Southall noted, "Basketball, with multiple games per week and often grueling road trips, places tremendous stress on players' academic commitments. Forced to endure long-distance, regional or cross-country commutes, players often miss class or return to campus after arduous 'red-eye' airline flights or bus trips. Just like other entertainers, big-time basketball players work nights and weekends in order to fill arenas and provide college-basketball fans with prime-time television entertainment. Multi-million dollar television contracts, which are the basis for this entertainment system, are negotiated by networks, athletic departments, and conferences with little or no regard for players' academic workloads. With no voice in any such negotiations, players are forced to juggle full-time academic-course loads around practice schedules, conditioning, film-study, media requests, games and travel. Inevitably, something has to give, and AGG data reveal what is 'giving' is NCAA Division-I basketball players' graduation rates. In addition, it should be noted that no 'graduation' metric can truly address the fundamental question: 'Are college basketball players being given the same opportunity to obtain a quality education as other full-time students?' Everyone involved in intercollegiate athletics should be committed to research that seeks to answer that question."

The authors of the study (CSRI Director Dr. Richard Southall, Dr. E Woodrow Eckard, and CSRI Associate Director Dr. Mark Nagel) commented that "The AGG report suggests the need for additional research regarding how various factors, including socio-economic status, educational background, cultural diversity, and migration patterns may reveal themselves in these significant negative graduation gaps."

AGG Report Development

In 1990, Congress mandated full disclosure of graduation rates at schools that award athletically-related aid and receive federal financial aid. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) reports the percentage of students (both athletes and non-athletes) who graduate within six years from the school they entered as freshmen. As a result, the FGR provides a measure of the extent to which colleges and universities retain and graduate the athletes they recruit, thus providing one measure of whether schools are fulfilling the NCAA's mission of maintaining athletes as an integral part of the student body. The strength of the FGR is its focus on student retention.

Another useful measure of graduation rates for athletes is called the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). The GSR, a creation of the NCAA, excludes from its calculation those athletes—primarily transfers—who leave a particular school prior to graduating (i.e. early), but in good academic standing. The NCAA methodology includes athletes who transfer into an institution in a school's graduation success rate. The GSR is a useful adjunct to the FGR, in that it recognizes athletes may take a different path to graduation than other full-time students. Similar to many part-time students who must work a full-time job while in school, athletes may transfer from one school to another – either of their own accord or at the behest of a coach who encourages them to transfer or “non-renews” their yearly grant-in-aid (GIA) . One of the limitations of the GSR is the inability to compare athletes' GSR to a similar rate for the general student body. In addition, at times NCAA athletes' Graduation Success Rates and Federal Graduation Rates for the general student body are sometimes intermingled in discussions of graduation rates. Unless clearly delineated, such comparisons may confuse the general public and result in a more favorable impression regarding the retention and graduation of college athletes from the university to which they initially enrolled. However, as long as the purpose and scope of the GSR is clearly delineated, at its core, it is a useful indicator of college athletes' persistence in making progress toward a degree.

The Adjusted Graduation Gap was developed to partly address a limitation of the FGR and provide a context to examine retention rates among various student populations on college campuses. The AGG compares an adjusted graduation rate (AGR) for full-time students and the reported FGR for college athletes from the following NCAA Division-I sports: football – Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) & Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), men’s and women’s basketball, softball and baseball. Reports regarding each sport are released at various times during the year. Just as the FGR and GSR have limitations, the AGG is not intended to be used in isolation or intended to refute the FGR or GSR analyses.

The College Sport Research Institute believes in full disclosure and use of all measures pertaining to college athletes’ graduation, since no one measure is “perfect,” “better,” or somehow “fairer” than another. They simply measure different things. The FGR focuses on an institution’s ability to retain the students (including athletes) it initially admits, while the GSR attempts to account for athletes who leave a school that initially admitted them. The AGG’s fundamental premise is that contrary to many full-time students, college athletes (especially those in revenue sports) effectively work full-time jobs while in school. The AGG reveals the gaps in graduation rates between these dissimilar students: athletes who work full-time at their sport and those full-time students who do not hold down a full-time job.

Historically, standard evaluations of NCAA athlete graduation rates have involved comparisons with general student body rates presumed to pertain to full-time students. However, at many schools general student body rates include a significant number of part-time students. This is problematic because athletes must be “full-time” and should therefore be compared with other full-time students. The downward “part-timer bias” in the student-body rate distorts the comparison. Because part-time students take longer to graduate, this significantly reduces the measured general student-body graduation rate (FGR). CSRI’s Adjusted Graduation Gap addresses this “part-timer bias” using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-

timers. These estimates then become the basis for the AGG comparison of graduation rates among full-time students.¹

CSRI

The College Sport Research Institute is dedicated to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college-sport issues. CSRI is one of eight laboratories and institutes within the Department of Exercise and Sport Science at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As of fall 2010, CSRI has over 100 supporting members from across the United States, including current and former students, faculty, current and former college and professional athletes, athletic administrators, and the general public.

In keeping with its mission and goals, the institute sponsors an annual conference dedicated to providing college-sport scholars and intercollegiate athletics practitioners a forum to discuss issues and research related to pressing college-sport issues, publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, and releases periodic research reports related to college-sport issues.

This men's and women's basketball AGG report is the second of three College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) 2010-2011 Adjusted Graduation Gap Reports. The spring AGG will present data on NCAA D-I softball and baseball. It is hoped the AGG will continue to encourage research and dialogue regarding not only graduation rates, but also the quality and type of educational opportunities afforded college athletes.

¹ Technical details of the AGG can be found in E. Woodrow Eckard, "NCAA Athlete Graduation Rates: Less than Meets the Eye," *Journal of Sport Management*, January 2010, pp. 45-58.

The authors:

Dr. Southall is Director-College Sport Research Institute, Assistant Professor of Sport Administration, and Graduate Sport-Administration Program Coordinator, Department of Exercise and Sport Science, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Eckard is Professor of Economics, Business School, University of Colorado Denver.

Dr. Nagel is Associate Director- College Sport Research Institute and Associate Professor, Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, University of South Carolina.

Appendix

Table 1: 2010 Men's Basketball NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) Report - (1999-2002 4-class Cohort)

Ranking	Conference	AGG*	
1	Metro Atlantic	-2	MM
2	Southwestern	-3	MM
3	Southern	-3	MM
4	Northeast	-5	MM
5	Big South	-8	MM
6	Summit	-11	MM
7	Atlantic Sun	-12	MM
8	Mid-American	-12	MM
9	American East	-14	MM
10	Horizon	-15	MM
11	Mid-Eastern	-15	MM
12	Ohio Valley	-16	MM
13	Patriot	-17	MM
14	Missouri Valley	-18	MM
15	Conference USA	-20	
16	Colonial	-21	MM
17	Big Sky	-21	MM
18	Great West	-22	MM
19	West Coast	-22	MM
20	Sun Belt	-23	MM
21	Southland	-24	MM
22	Western Athletic	-25	
23	Big East	-26	
24	Big 12	-27	
25	Big West	-28	MM
26	Mountain West	-31	
27	Southeastern	-31	
28	Big Ten	-34	
29	Atlantic 10	-34	
30	Pacific-10	-38	
31	Atlantic Coast	-41	

AGG = (BB Fed Rate) – (Adjusted Male Student-body Fed Rate)*

* Adjusted for part-time students

Notes:

1. MM = Mid-major per Collegeinsider.com
2. -20.0 = mean AGG all D-I conferences (N=31)
3. -30.8 = mean AGG for majors (N=10)
4. -14.8 = mean AGG for mid-majors (N=21)
5. The Ivy League is excluded because of unreported BB graduation data for both men and women.
6. Air Force, Army, and Navy are excluded because of unreported BB graduation data for both men and women.
7. The following schools are excluded because their graduation rate reports are not posted on NCAA.org: Houston Baptist, Kennesaw State, North Dakota State, and North Florida.

Table 2: 2010 Women's Basketball NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) Report - (1999-2002 4-class Cohort)

Ranking	Conference	AGG	
1	Southwestern	+8	MM
2	Northeast	+5	MM
3	Big South	+4	MM
4	Metro Atlantic	+1	MM
5	Mid-American	+1	MM
6	Southern	+1	MM
7	Missouri Valley	+1	MM
8	Patriot	+1	MM
9	Horizon	-2	MM
10	Mid-Eastern	-4	MM
11	Ohio Valley	-4	MM
12	West Coast	-6	MM
13	Colonial	-7	MM
14	American East	-9	MM
15	Big 12	-10	
16	Atlantic Sun	-11	MM
17	Atlantic 10	-11	
18	Big Ten	-12	
19	Great West	-14	MM
20	Southeastern	-15	
21	Big West	-15	MM
22	Western Athletic	-16	
23	Pacific-10	-16	
24	Mountain West	-16	
25	Atlantic Coast	-16	
26	Southland	-16	MM
27	Conference USA	-17	
28	Big East	-19	
29	Big Sky	-20	MM
30	Summit	-21	MM
31	Sun Belt	-22	MM

AGG = (BB Fed Rate) – (Adjusted Female Student-body Fed Rate)*

* Adjusted for part-time students

Notes:

1. MM = Mid-major per Collegeinsider.com
2. -8.9 = mean AGG all D-I conferences (N=31)
3. -14.6 = mean AGG for majors (N=10)
4. -6.2 = mean AGG for mid-majors (N=21)
5. The Ivy League is excluded because of unreported BB graduation data for both men and women.
6. Air Force, Army, and Navy are excluded because of unreported BB graduation data for both men and women.
7. The Citadel and Virginia Military do not have women's basketball.
8. The following schools are excluded because their graduation rate reports are not posted on NCAA.org: Houston Baptist, Kennesaw State, North Dakota State, and North Florida.

Table 3: Comparison of 2010 Men's and Women's Basketball NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gaps - (1999-2002 4-class Cohort)

	Men's	Women's	M vs. W
Conference	AGG	AGG	Gap
Atlantic Coast	-41	-16	-25
Atlantic 10	-34	-11	-23
Pacific-10	-38	-16	-22
Big Ten	-34	-12	-22
Missouri Valley	-18	+1	-19
Patriot	-17	+1	-18
Big 12	-27	-10	-17
Southeastern	-31	-15	-16
West Coast	-22	-6	-16
Mountain West	-31	-16	-15
Colonial	-21	-7	-14
Mid-American	-12	+1	-13
Big West	-28	-15	-13
Horizon	-15	-2	-13
Big South	-8	+4	-12
Ohio Valley	-16	-4	-12
Mid-Eastern	-15	-4	-11
Southwestern	-3	+8	-11
Northeast	-5	+5	-10
Summit*	-11	-21	+10
Western Athletic	-25	-16	-9
Great West	-22	-14	-8
Southland	-24	-16	-8
Big East	-26	-19	-7
American East	-14	-9	-5
Southern	-3	+1	-4
Metro Atlantic	-2	+1	-3
Conference USA	-20	-17	-3
Sun Belt	-23	-22	-1
Big Sky	-21	-20	-1
Atlantic Sun	-12	-11	-1

* Only conference with a larger AGG for women's than men's basketball players.