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2015 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA Softball and Baseball

D-I SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL GRADUATION GAPS PERSIST –

Show No Sign of Improvement

Columbia, SC – September 28, 2015… The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI), at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its fifth-annual NCAA Division-I Softball and Baseball Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. This report provides an overview of the AGGs of Division-I softball and baseball players as well as a five-year longitudinal view of "All AGGs" for Division-I conferences sub-divided into "Major" and "Mid-Major" categories.

CSRI Research – Team Statement

The College Sport Research Institute's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) analysis of NCAA Division I graduation rates reveals that overwhelmingly baseball players do not graduate at rates comparable to other full-time students at their universities. Softball players also have graduation rates lower than other full-time students, but the gaps are small.

Study Highlights Overall Results (See tables and charts in Appendix)

- ❖ In nearly every conference, Softball AGGs are much smaller than baseball AGGs.
- ❖ Over the last five years, there is no sign of improvement in either the softball or baseball AGGs.
- ❖ For baseball, the Major conferences have a far worse AGG average than the Mid-Major conferences.
- ❖ For softball, the Major conferences have AGGs that are about the same as the Mid-Major conferences
- ❖ For baseball, both the Major (-33.2) and Mid-Major (-16.8) gaps are greater than those for football (-20.0), but less than those for men's basketball (-34.7).
- ❖ For softball, both Major (-6.6) and Mid-Major (-4.1) conference average gaps are smaller than those for women's basketball (Major -15.1; Mid-Major -15.7).

Conference Results (See tables and charts in Appendix)

- ❖ For baseball, the smallest (though still sizeable) Major conference AGGs were the Big Ten (-20.4) and Big 12 (-30.9) conferences.
- ❖ For softball, the smallest Major conference AGGs were in the Big Ten (-2.7) and Southeastern (-5.1) conferences.
- ❖ The best baseball Mid-Major AGGs were in the SWAC (0.7), Horizon (0.4), and Mid-Eastern (-3.5) conferences.
- ❖ The best softball Mid-Major AGGs were in the Northeast (9.1), Mid-Eastern (6.7), and Missouri Valley (6.1), with these positive AGGs indicating higher graduation rates than the general student body.

- ❖ The worst Major AGGs in baseball were in the Atlantic Coast (-36.8) and PAC-12 (-44.1) conferences.
- ❖ The largest Major AGGs in softball also were in the Atlantic Coast (-10.5) and PAC-12 (-7.4).
- ❖ The largest baseball Mid-Major AGGs were the American (-33.7), Big West (-34.4), and Mountain West (-41.3) conferences.
- ❖ The worst softball Mid-Major AGGs were in the Southland (-14.8), WAC (-12.4), and Mountain West (-11.4).

Notes

- ❖ The NCAA does not report ethnic breakdowns for softball.
- ❖ Too few schools report Black FGRs to allow ethnic breakdowns for baseball.

CSRI Position on Graduation Rates

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) reflects the percentage of students (athletes and non-athletes) who graduate within six years from the school where they initially enrolled as a full-time student. The FGR measures the extent to which colleges and universities retain and graduate recruited athletes, thus providing one measure of whether they are fulfilling the NCAA's mission of maintaining athletes as an integral part of their student body. The strength of the FGR is its focus on student retention.

Another useful graduation rate measure, created by the NCAA to track athletes, is called the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). The GSR excludes from its calculation athletes—including transfers—who leave a particular school prior to graduating (i.e. early), but in good academic standing. The NCAA methodology also includes athletes who transfer into an institution in a program's GSR. The GSR recognizes college athletes may take a different path to graduation than other full-time students. However, a limitation of the GSR is that currently no comparable "graduation" rate exists for the general student body. In other words, the GSR and FGR measures are not comparable.

The AGG was developed to partly address FGR and GSR limitations. The AGG compares an adjusted FGR for full-time students and the reported FGR for college athletes from the following NCAA Division-I sports: FBS football, D-I men's and women's basketball, and D-I softball and baseball. Reports regarding each sport are released at various times during the year.

The College Sport Research Institute believes in the full disclosure of all measures pertaining to college athlete graduation, including the FGR, GSR, and AGG since one measure is not "better" or somehow "fairer" than the others as each measures different things. The FGR focuses on an institution's ability to retain and graduate students it admits, while the GSR attempts to account for athletes who leave a school that initially admitted them.

Historically, standard evaluations of NCAA athlete graduation rates have involved comparisons with general student body rates presumed to pertain to full-time students. However, many schools' general student body rates include a significant number of part-time students. This is problematic because all NCAA athletes must be "full-time" and should therefore be compared with other full-time students. The downward "part-timer bias" in the student-body FGR distorts this comparison. Because part-time students take longer to graduate, this significantly reduces the measured general student-body FGR, making the relative rate of college athletes at many schools and conferences appear more favorable. CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap methodology addresses this "part-timer bias" using regression-based adjustments for the percentage of part-time students enrolled at an institution. The adjustments also account for the aggregate influence of school-specific factors such as location and student demographics. These estimates then become the basis for the AGG comparison. [1]

CSRI

The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Sport and Entertainment

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[1] Technical details 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.

Management Department at the University of South Carolina – Columbia. CSRI is dedicated to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college-sport issues.

Along with conducting and disseminating in-house research, CSRI holds the annual Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC. This conference provides college-sport scholars and intercollegiate athletics practitioners a forum to present research related to current college-sport issues and discuss possible solutions to these challenges. CSRI also publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal entitled: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, which provides an outlet for research related to college-sport issues.

This is the fifth annual installment of the CSRI's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) Report. We hope this report encourages continuing research and discussion regarding college athlete graduation rates, as well as a focus on the quality and type of educational opportunities offered to college athletes.

CSRI Research Team & Co-Authors

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Appendix
2014-15 NCAA Division-I Adjusted Graduation Gap Tables

Table 1: 2015 NCAA Division-I Baseball Adjusted Graduation Gaps

Conference	2015 AGG	Type
Big Ten	-20.4	Major
Big 12	-30.9	Major
Southeastern	-34.1	Major
Atlantic Coast	-36.8	Major
PAC-12	-44.1	Major
Average Major	**-33.2**	
SWAC	0.7	Mid Major (MM)
Horizon	0.4	MM
Mid-Eastern	-3.5	MM
Northeast	-5.7	MM
Patriot	-6.0	MM
Ohio Valley	-7.6	MM
Metro Atlantic	-9.3	MM
Mid-American	-11.4	MM
American East	-12.8	MM
Big South	-14.0	MM
Colonial Athletic	-14.8	MM
Summit	-15.4	MM
Southern	-15.9	MM
Atlantic 10	-16.2	MM
Southland	-16.4	MM
Atlantic Sun	-17.1	MM
Big East	-17.8	MM
Conference-USA	-21.8	MM
Missouri Valley	-22.7	MM
Sun Belt	-25.2	MM
WAC	-25.7	MM
West Coast	-31.6	MM
American	-33.7	MM
Big West	-34.4	MM
Mountain West	-41.3	MM
Average Mid Major	**-16.8**	
Average All DI	**-20.0**	

Table 2: 2015 NCAA Division-I Softball Adjusted Graduation Gaps

Conference	2015 AGG	Type
Big Ten	-2.7	Major
Southeastern	-5.1	Major
Big 12	-7.1	Major
PAC-12	-7.4	Major
Atlantic Coast	-10.5	Major
Average Major	**-6.6**	
Northeast	9.1	MM
Mid-Eastern	6.7	MM
Missouri Valley	6.1	MM
West Coast	2.3	MM
American	2.2	MM
SWAC	1.1	MM
Metro Atlantic	0.9	MM
Patriot	-0.1	MM
Big East	-0.4	MM
Sun Belt	-1.7	MM
Big South	-3.5	MM
Mid-American	-3.6	MM
Ohio Valley	-3.6	MM
Southern	-6.0	MM
Colonial Athletic	-6.4	MM
Atlantic Sun	-6.6	MM
Horizon	-7.5	MM
Summit	-8.1	MM
Conference-USA	-8.1	MM
American East	-8.5	MM
Atlantic 10	-9.6	MM
Big West	-10.3	MM
Big Sky	-11.3	MM
Mountain West	-11.4	MM
WAC	-12.4	MM
Southland	-14.8	MM
Average Mid-Major	**-4.1**	
Average All DI	**-4.5**	

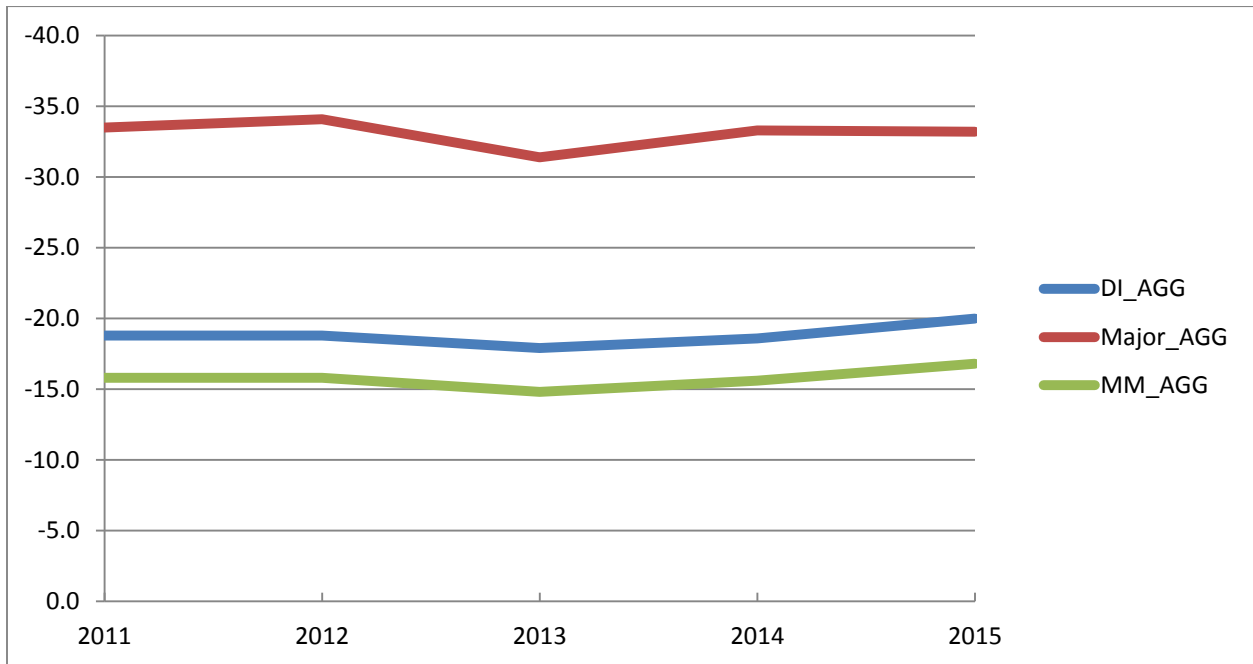## Chart 1- Five-Year Trend-lines: D-I Baseball, "Major" and "Mid-Major" AGGs

Chart 2- Five-Year Trend-lines: D-I Softball, "Major" and "Mid-Major" AGGs