COLLEGE SPORT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Media Contacts:

- **Dr. Richard M. Southall,** Director: College Sport Research Institute – University of South Carolina 901-240-7197 (cell) southall@hrsm.sc.edu
- **Dr. Mark S. Nagel**, Associate Director: College Sport Research Institute – University of South Carolina 770-891-9714 (cell) nagel@sc.edu
- **Mr. Allen Wallace**, Communications Manager, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management – University of South Carolina 803-777-5667 (office) awallace@sc.edu

2018 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA FBS Football

College Football Playoff Top-10 has a cumulative AGG of -25.5: -30.8 for Black players and -9.2 for White players

Columbia, SC – January 29, 2019… The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its ninth-annual National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) Football Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. Not surprisingly, given their nearly singular focus on qualifying for the College Football Playoff (CFP), the CFP Top-10 has a cumulative AGG of -25.5. The cumulative AGG for CFP Top-10 Black players is -30.8, while the cumulative AGG of White players on CFP Top-10 rosters is only -9.2 (See Table 2 in appendix.).

For the ninth year in a row, there is a significant discrepancy between FBS Football players' graduation rates and those of full-time male students. The 2018 Power-5 Conferences AGG mean remains sizable and significant at -16.4, while the Group-of-5's AGG average is -9.8.

It should not be overlooked that overall Power-5 AGGs do show a (weak) improving trend (about 0.8 points per year) over the last five years (See Chart 1 below.). However, if this progress continues at its current rate, it will take 20 years for negative P-5 AGGs to disappear. In addition, 65 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, it is notable that improvements in AGG trends are mostly attributable to decreases in the AGGs of White P-5 players. This year's AGGs continue to reflect staggeringly dissimilar graduation outcomes for Black and White FBS football players (especially in P-5 conferences and CFP Top-10): This year's overall AGG of Black Power-5 players is -21.8, compared to -1.9 for White players, an almost 20-point difference.

The continuing large discrepancy between Black and White Power-5 AGGs should be cause for concern and embarrassment among academic administrators, athletic department personnel, commentators, and politicians who profess concern for the educational welfare of big-time NCAA profit-athletes.

Study Highlights

(See tables and chart in appendix for additional information.)

- ❖ Power-5 AGGs continue to be large: the football player graduation rate averages 16.4 percentage points lower than the general male student body at the 64 Power-5 schools.

- ❖ Black and White Power-5 AGG differences remain striking. The Black AGG is -21.8 compared to only -1.9 for the White AGG, almost 20 percentage points worse.

- ❖ Power-5 AGGs show a (weak) improving trend over the last five years (see graph below). The AGG has improved by 4.2 percentage points since 2013, about 0.8 points per year. If this continues, the P-5 AGG will not disappear for another 20 years.

- ❖ The College Football Playoff Top 10 have an AGG of -25.5, worse than last year's -24.8, and 9.1 percentage points worse than the Power-5 average.

- ❖ The Group-of-5 AGG remains significant at -9.8, albeit 6.6 percentage points better than the Power-5 AGG.

- ❖ The Group-of-5/Power-5 AGG difference is caused solely by a difference in Black AGGs, as White AGGs are virtually the same for the two sets of schools.

- ❖ Group-of-5 AGGs have decreased about one point per year (4.9 points overall) since 2013.

- ❖ For the 7th straight year, the Big 12 has the best Power-5 AGG at -10.7. The PAC-12 has the worst AGG at -19.3.

- ❖ Among the Group-of-5, the Sun Belt has the best AGG at -1.4 and the American has the worst at -17.2.

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), while 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 for the following NCAA Division-I sports: FBS football, D-I men's & women's basketball, D-I softball, and baseball. Reports for 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 measure 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.

CSRI

The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina – Columbia. CSRI is dedicated

1-21-19_2.0

to conducting and supporting independent data collection and analysis related to college-sport issues.

Along with conducting and disseminating in-house research on college athletes' graduation rates, post-athletic transition issues, and oscillating migration patterns, CSRI hosts the annual CSRI Conference on College Sport in Columbia, SC. This conference provides a forum for research of current college-sport issues and possible solutions to these challenges. CSRI also publishes a peer-reviewed scholarly journal entitled: *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics (JIIA)*, which provides an additional outlet for research related to college-sport issues.

This is the ninth-annual installment of the CSRI's AGG FBS Football Report. We hope this information encourages continuing research and discussion regarding both graduation rates and the quality and type of educational opportunities offered college athletes.

CSRI Research Team & Co-Authors

Dr. Richard M. Southall is Director – College Sport Research Institute and a Professor of Sport and Entertainment Management, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina.

Dr. E. Woodrow Eckard is a Professor of Economics, Business School, University of Colorado – Denver.

Dr. Mark S. Nagel is Associate Director – College Sport Research Institute and a Professor of Sport and Entertainment Management, College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, University of South Carolina.

Mr. Victor Kidd is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, University of South Carolina, and a College Sport Research Institute Research Associate.

Mr. Tim Koba is a second-year PhD student in the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, University of South Carolina, and a College Sport Research Institute Research Associate.

Mr. Chris Corr is a first-year PhD student in the Department of Sport and Entertainment Management, University of South Carolina, and a College Sport Research Institute Research Associate.

1-21-19_2.0

Appendix

Table 1-2018 Football Bowl Sub-division (FBS) Power-5 and Group-of-5 AGGs

Power-5 Conference	B+W Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
Big XII	-10.7	-15.9	+4.3
Southeastern	-16.8	-21.4	+1.8
Atlantic Coast	-17.5	-21.2	-6.3
Big Ten	-17.9	-26.1	-3.6
PAC-12	-19.3	-24.3	-5.7
Average	-16.4	-21.8	-1.9

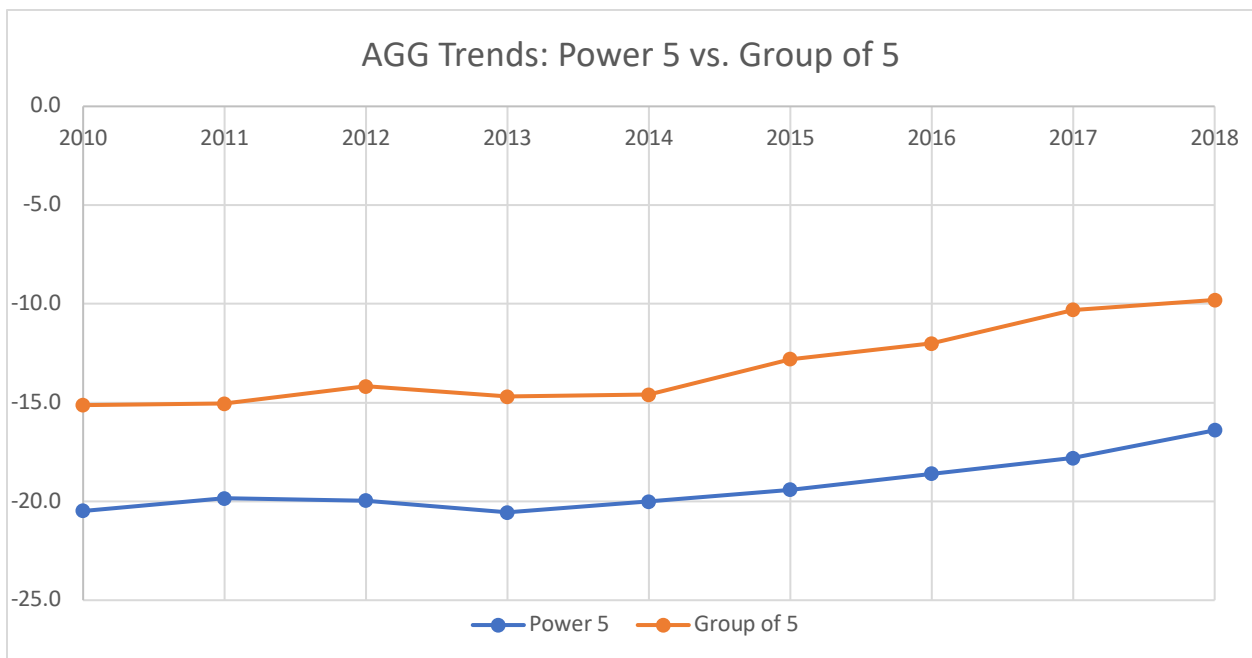| Group-of-5 Conference	B+W Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
Sun Belt	-1.4	-0.8	+5.2
Mid-American	-7.4	-12.8	+1.0
Conference-USA	-11.0	-13.7	-1.3
Mountain West	-12.1	-19.4	-3.8
American	-17.2	-18.7	-10.2
Average	-9.8	-13.1	-1.8

Notes:

- ❖ Power-5
  - o Notre Dame excluded - Independent in FB
- ❖ Group-of-5
  - o Charlotte excluded - No FB FGRs
  - o Air Force & Navy excluded - Data not comparable to civilian schools

1-21-19_2.0

Table 2 – 2018 College Football Playoff Top-10 AGGs

College Football Playoff	B+W Mean	Black Mean	White Mean
Top-10	-25.5	-30.8	-9.2
Top 11-to-25	-9.2	-14.1	+2.0

Chart 1 – Eight-year Trend-lines: Power-5 and Group-of-5 AGGs*

* "AGG Trends" means are based on individual school AGGs, not conference mean AGGs. Consequently, means may differ slightly from "Conference Summary" means.