

Request for Waiver of Division II Sports Sponsorship Requirements

University of Alaska Anchorage

Pursuant to NCAA Division II Bylaw 20.1.7-(d), the University of Alaska Anchorage is seeking a waiver of criteria required for Division II membership. Specifically due to extenuating economic circumstances in the State of Alaska, the University is requesting approval from the Membership Committee to sponsor fewer than the required number of total sports, per Bylaw 20.10.3, beginning with the 2017-18 academic year and continuing through the 2021-22 academic year (a five year period). Currently, Alaska Anchorage sponsors 13 intercollegiate sports.

Men's Sports	Women's Sports
Basketball	Basketball
Ice Hockey*	Volleyball
Cross Country	Cross Country
Skiing	Skiing
Indoor Track	Indoor Track
Outdoor Track	Outdoor Track
	Gymnastics*

*Division I Classification

The State of Alaska is currently experiencing a nearly \$3.5 billion state budget shortfall resulting from the falling price of oil, funding for state-sponsored programs - including all higher education programs - is being drastically reduced. See Attachment A. Athletics at Alaska Anchorage are not exempt from these reductions, and the Board of Regents for the University of Alaska System has directed Alaska Anchorage to reduce its athletics operating budget by 20% in advance of the 2018 fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) as a part of the statewide initiative to reduce costs. This budget reduction equates to approximately \$1.9 million, which cannot be achieved without the outright elimination of sports programs coupled with administrative and/or scholarship reductions. Further complicating matters, Alaska Anchorage must sponsor men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball and men's and women's cross country in order to remain a member of the Great Northwest Athletic Conference (GNAC) and the President of the University System has stated that Alaska Anchorage shall make every effort to retain men's hockey.

Accordingly, Alaska Anchorage is seeking a waiver from the DII Membership Committee to operate its athletics program with fewer than the required total number of sports, as set forth in Bylaw 20.10.3, for a five year period. Specifically, Alaska Anchorage will eliminate four sports [men's indoor track, men's skiing, women's indoor track and women's skiing] - and potentially a fifth sport (if necessary) - in order to achieve the \$1.9 million savings mandated by the Board of Regents. In this scenario, Alaska Anchorage will sponsor only nine sports - potentially eight-but it will otherwise maintain the required minimum number of women's sports, contests and participants and equivalency awards pursuant to NCAA legislation.¹

¹ The University System and Alaska Anchorage are continuing to analyze the impact of eliminating sports and/or scholarships on state and federal equity guidelines, but it is expected to remain in compliance despite eliminating two (possibly three) male sports and two female sports.

At the outset of year five (2021-2022), as Alaska Anchorage approaches the conclusion of the waiver period, it will evaluate its options to return to the 10-sport minimum required for compliance with Division II membership criteria for the 2022-23 academic year and provide a report to the Membership Committee concerning the same. If at any time during the five - year period - the waiver becomes unnecessary, the University will alert the Membership Committee.

Finally, if approved, the University trusts that the waiver will not impact it's overall membership status during the five year period and that it will otherwise retain those privileges with DII membership (i.e. championships participation, voting rights, NCAA revenue distribution, etc.)