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## 2014 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report: NCAA FBS Football

### *DOUBLE-DIGIT FBS FOOTBALL GRADUATION GAPS PERSIST - Most Pronounced Among Black Players*

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**Columbia, SC – October 5, 2014...** The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI), at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, released its fifth-annual NCAA Division-I Football Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) report today. This report provides an overview of the AGGs of Black and White Division-I football players as well as a five-year longitudinal view of “All AGGs” for Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) conferences sub-divided into “Power 5” and “Other FBS” categories.

## CSRI Research – Team Statement

During the August 10, 2014 episode of ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos," NCAA President Dr. Mark Emmert stated "More [student athletes] graduate than the students who aren't student athletes." While this statement may be "true" when applied to all college athletes, the College Sport Research Institute's Adjusted Graduation Gap (AGG) analysis of graduation rate data for NCAA football players in the newly autonomous "Power 5" conferences reveals these players do not graduate at rates comparable to non-athlete male students at their universities. In addition, this graduation gap is apparent in either Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) or AGG analyses.

### Study Highlights

- ❖ The five-year "All AGG" trend is flat for both "Power 5" and "Other FBS" schools, revealing no significant changes in graduation gaps.
- ❖ Of the "Power 5" conferences, All AGG's range from (-17.5) for the Big XII, to (-22.8) for the PAC-12.
- ❖ Among "Other FBS" conferences, All AGGs range from (-11.1) for the Mountain West Conference (MWC), to (-18.7) for the American Athletic Conference (AAC).
- ❖ The mean All AGG for the "Power 5" conferences is larger in magnitude than the "Other FBS" conferences (-20.0 vs. -14.6). This difference is statistically significant at the 1% level.
- ❖ This is the fifth straight year the Pac-12 has the highest All AGG (-22.8).
- ❖ The difference between Black and White mean AGGs for "Power 5" conferences range from (-23) for the SEC to (-17) for the Big Ten and Pac-12.
- ❖ Excluding the MWC, that had a difference of (-.8) between Black and White mean AGGs, the difference between White and Black player AGGs for "Other FBS" conferences range from (-13.4) to (-23.1).
- ❖ The sample includes 119 schools (64 from "Power 5" conferences and 55 from "Other FBS" conferences).
- ❖ Schools with missing FGR data from the NCAA Public Graduation Rate dataset, along with independents and service academies, are excluded from this report.

## 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. Each measures different things. The FGR focuses on an institution’s ability to retain 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 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.<sup>1</sup>

## **CSRI**

The College Sport Research Institute (CSRI) is housed within the Sport and Entertainment 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 will hold its 8<sup>th</sup> annual CSRI Conference on College Sport on April 20-22, 2015 in Columbia, SC. This conference provides college-sport scholars and intercollegiate athletics practitioners a forum to

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

**TABLE 1 - 2014 FOOTBALL BOWL SUB-DIVISION (FBS) "POWER FIVE" AGGs**

<b>Conference (# of schools)</b>	<b>All AGG</b>	<b>Black AGG</b>	<b>White AGG</b>
Big XII (10)	-18	-25	-3
SEC (14)	-18	-23	0
ACC (14)	-21	-25	-6
Big Ten (14)	-21	-28	-11
Pac-12 (12)	-23	-29	-12
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-26</b>	<b>-7</b>

**TABLE 2 – 2014 FOOTBALL BOWL SUB-DIVISION (FBS) “OTHER FBS” AGGs**

<b>Conference (# of schools)</b>	<b>All AGG</b>	<b>Black AGG</b>	<b>White AGG</b>
MWC (12)	-11	-14	-14
C-USA (13)	-14	-20	-7
Sun Belt (11)	-14	-22	-5
MAC (13)	-15	-24	-1
AAC (11)	-19	-24	-9
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-7</b>

**TABLE 3 – FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE OF FBS “POWER FIVE” AGGs**

<b>Conference</b>	<b>2010 AGG</b>	<b>2011 AGG</b>	<b>2012 AGG</b>	<b>2013 AGG</b>	<b>2014 AGG</b>	<b>5-year AGG Avg.</b>
Big XII	-16	-18	-14	-16	-18	-16
SEC	-19	-18	-18	-18	-18	-15
ACC	-20	-20	-22	-21	-21	-21
Big Ten	-23	-21	-20	-21	-21	-21
Pac-12	-30	-26	-27	-28	-23	-27
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-22</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-21</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-20</b>

❖ Yearly conference realignment may affect these numbers. Conference means for each year are based on conference membership for that year.



**TABLE 4 – FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE OF “OTHER FBS” AGGs**

<b>Conference</b>	<b>2010 AGG</b>	<b>2011 AGG</b>	<b>2012 AGG</b>	<b>2013 AGG</b>	<b>2014 AGG</b>	<b>5-year AGG Avg.</b>
MWC	-26	-15	-13	-12	-11	-15
C-USA	-15	-14	-13	-15	-14	-14
Sun Belt	-15	-15	-15	-13	-14	-14
MAC	-10	-14	-14	-15	-15	-14
AAC	-12	-14	-15	-17	-19	-15
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-15</b>	<b>-14</b>

❖ Yearly conference realignment may affect these numbers. Conference means for each year are based on conference membership for that year.

**Chart 1- Five-Year Trend-lines: “Power Five” and “Other FBS” AGGs**

