

## Request for Waiver of NCAA Division II Sports Sponsorship Requirements

### *University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Pursuant to NCAA Division II Bylaw 20.1.7.2-(d), the University of Alaska Fairbanks 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 Fairbanks sponsors 10 intercollegiate sports.

<b>Men's Sports</b>	<b>Women's Sports</b>	<b>Co-ed Sport</b>
Hockey*	Basketball	Rifle
Basketball	Volleyball	
Cross Country	Cross Country	
Skiing	Skiing	
	Swimming	

\* *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, and funding for state-sponsored programs – including all higher education programs – is being drastically reduced. See **Attachment A**. Athletics at Alaska Fairbanks are not exempt from these reductions, and the President of the University of Alaska System has directed Alaska Fairbanks to reduce its athletics operating budget by 20% in advance of the 2018 fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) as part of the statewide initiative to reduce costs. This budget reduction equates to approximately \$800,000, which cannot be achieved without the outright elimination of sports programs coupled with administrative and/or scholarship reductions. Further complicating matters, Alaska Fairbanks 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 Fairbanks shall make every effort to retain men's hockey.

Accordingly, Alaska Fairbanks is seeking a waiver from the Division II 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 Fairbanks will eliminate two sports [men's and women's skiing] and further reduce scholarship offerings among the remaining eight (8) sports to achieve the \$800,000 savings mandate. In this scenario, Alaska Fairbanks will maintain the required minimum number of women's sports, contests, participants, and equivalency awards in its remaining sports pursuant to NCAA legislation.<sup>1</sup> [Alaska Fairbanks presently has a waiver for the three-season requirement set forth in Bylaw 20.10.4.]

At the outset of year five (2021-22), as Alaska Fairbanks approaches the conclusion of the waiver period, it will evaluate its options to return to the 10-sport minimum required for compliance with

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<sup>1</sup> The University System and Alaska Fairbanks are continuing to analyze the impact of eliminating sports and/or scholarships on state and federal gender equity guidelines, but it expects to remain in compliance by eliminating one male sport and one female sport.

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 its overall membership status during the five-year period, and that it will otherwise retain those privileges associated with Division II membership (i.e., championships participation, voting rights, NCAA revenue distributions, etc.).