

**GPAC BY-LAWS**  
*(October 2011 Update)*

**ARTICLE I GENERAL POLICIES**

Section I. CONTROL OF ATHLETIC PROGRAM.

1. The members of the conference unanimously agree to maintain faculty control of all intercollegiate sports with a high standard of personal honor, eligibility and fair play.
2. The members shall strive in non-conference play to compete with schools having similar educational and athletic policies.

Section II. ADMISSION STANDARDS.

Athletes and non-athletes shall be admitted to the institution under the same admissions standards. All students shall be enrolled through the regular procedure established by the institution.

Section III. SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS-IN-AID, AND STUDENT LOANS.

The following by-laws have been adopted to formalize the GPAC regulations concerning financial aid. Regardless of GPAC financial aid by-laws, no member institution may award financial aid that is in violation of NAIA limits.

*(Effective date August 1, 2009)*

1. Assignment of scholarships, grants, student loans and work shall be controlled at each member institution in compliance with the guidelines and practices of the respective member institution.
2. Any financial aid or assistance to prospective or enrolled student-athletes in money or in kinds, except that which comes from members of their immediate family or from those upon whom they are legally dependent, shall be administered by the institution in compliance with the guidelines and practices of the respective member institution.
3. Non-Athletic Scholarships, grants, student loans and work shall be awarded on such basis as will not discriminate in favor of presumed or recognized athletes. Athletes and non-athletes shall be required to maintain the same minimum academic standing to qualify for such scholarships, grants, student loans and/or work.
4. All donations to a member institution's athletic scholarship program by an outside organization shall be deposited in an institutional fund and

administered in compliance with the guidelines and practices of the respective member institution.

5. A member institution of the Great Plains Athletic Conference shall award no more institutional scholarships and/or grants to the student-athlete than the actual cost of tuition at that school. Institutional scholarships and/or grants are defined as funds originating from college sources (including tuition remission and tuition exchange awards) and excludes any scholarships and/or grants received from federal and/or state sources based on need and “private” scholarships.
6. Private Scholarships are defined as scholarships from non-college sources (e.g.: churches and local civic organizations), awarded to specific student-athletes. In order to be excluded from the full-tuition limit, these awards must not be college-specific, but must be available to the student athlete no matter where they choose to attend college.
7. Any Great Plains Athletic Conference member awarding Academic Scholarships in excess of full tuition must, on an annual basis, request an exception from the Executive Committee in consultation with the Conference Commissioner.
8. Any Great Plains Athletic Conference member awarding institutionally-funded loans to student-athletes must have a properly executed, signed promissory note outlining repayment terms. No “forgivable” institutional loans may be made to student athletes if, when added to institutional scholarships and/or grants awarded the student-athlete, the total exceeds the actual cost of tuition at that member school.
9. Any Great Plains Athletic Conference member may award institutional, state or federally funded work to a student-athlete, in an amount not to exceed \$1,500 over the cost of tuition, providing that school awards the work in the same manner and at the same rate of pay as work assigned to non-athletes.
10. Students paid on an hourly basis will have a timesheet signed by both the student and the student’s supervisor indicating that the student worked the hours indicated and that the work was performed in a satisfactory manner.
11. Student-athletes paid a salary/stipend as opposed to an hourly rate (e.g.: Resident Assistants) shall be selected in the same manner and paid at the same rate as non-athletes. Since signed time-sheets are not completed for these individuals, Athletic Department personnel will not be involved in their selection.

12. In case of complaints, a statement of financial aid awarded to any particular student-athlete including all scholarships, grants, loans and/or work shall be made available to the Conference Commissioner upon his written request to the Chief Executive Officer. A note indicating this information has been made available to the Chief Executive Officer shall be placed in the student's file in the Financial Aid Office.

Section IV. **CAMPUS VISITATION AND RECRUITMENT OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENT ATHLETES.**

No part of the travel expense of prospective student athletes making visitation to the institution shall be paid by either the institution itself nor any individual or organization directly in support of the program unless such practice by a part of the general institutional policy in procurement of all students and not alone in securing athletes.

**ARTICLE II ELIGIBILITY**

Section I. Persons competing in men's and women's sports will be governed by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Official Handbook.

Section II. Exception to Section I is as follows:

1. A student who has attended one conference school is not eligible to participate for a second conference school for one calendar year in any sport.
  - a) In those cases where a student is attending a school and the school drops a sport, the student may transfer within the first two (2) terms after the school announces the discontinuance of that sport. The transfer restriction will be waived for the student in that sport.
  - b) If a student has not been certified in any sport at the school from which they transfer, and they receive a release from the athletic director at that school, this restriction will be waived.

*(Effective date August 1, 2005)*

2. The student athlete needs to maintain a minimum grade point average as follows:
  - a. Freshmen beyond first term of attendance, a 1.5000.
  - b. Students beyond the second term of attendance, a 1.7500.
  - c. Juniors, a 2.0000.
  - d. Seniors, a 2.0000.

**ARTICLE III. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

Section I. **ELIGIBILITY STATEMENTS.**

1. An NAIA Official Eligibility Certificate signed by the registrar, athletics director, coach, and faculty athletics representative of each institution is to be postmarked to the conference eligibility chair prior to participation.

The cumulative grade point average for each student athlete in their second term or later shall appear on the eligibility certificates.

2. In accordance with NAIA rules, institutions that sponsor sports that carry over from one term to another must submit a completed NAIA Official Eligibility Certificate signed by the registrar, athletics director, and faculty athletics representative of each institution to the conference eligibility chair. The cumulative grade point average for each student athlete in their second term or later shall appear on the eligibility certificates.

## Section II. CHAMPIONSHIPS.

1. Championships shall be recognized each year in any sport in which at least six of conference schools indicate at the second meeting of the conference that they will participate for the following academic year.
2. Championships in all sports are determined by participation in a conference schedule or conference meet.
3. The championship in all sports shall be decided on the percentage basis. For purposes of calculating percentages, a tie will be counted as one-half game won and one-half game lost. A forfeited game shall be counted in determining conference records and championships.
4. Any game or contest played within the conference in which any part of the Constitution, By-Laws or rules is violated will be arbitrated as specified under Article VII of the Constitution.
5. Cancellation or postponement shall be reported by the host institution to the commissioner as directed by individual sport by-laws.
6. Conference members will submit comprehensive athletic contest results to the conference upon request from the various committees or officers of the conference.
7. For NAIA post-season competition purposed the conference representatives in the postseason competition shall be the highest finishing team(s) or individual(s) in the conference championship play process that has declared its intent to participate in NAIA postseason competition and in accordance with the NAIA postseason qualifying standards for that given sport.

## Section III. UNIFORMITY AGREEMENTS.

1. It is agreed among the members of the conference that no student shall be awarded no more than one primary award (e.g. watch) for athletic

performance during his/her college course. However, additional awards may be given to graduating senior athletes and a special emblem may be awarded to members of the championship teams.

2. All games and contests within the conference shall be governed by the regular NAIA playing rules.
3. A uniform price rate shall be established for all students with activity cards. The rate shall be determined by the conference at the last regular conference meeting of the current school year. Such rate to go into effect the following school year (\$3 for 2010-2011). The rate shall be communicated to the respective business offices within one week following the last regular meeting. Faculty/staff members and their guest from the visiting colleges are to be admitted without charge at all conference games (excludes playoffs). Bona fide college bands or drum corps and cheerleaders shall be admitted without charge. Such groups must be in uniform and accompanied by their director or sponsor. The number of students in the organization and the name of the director or sponsor must be certified by the visiting school prior to the date of the event.
4. Conference members shall not make available films of athletic competitions involving member colleges to non-conference colleges without the approval of the colleges whose teams appear in the films.
5. The GPAC shall follow the 30-30 Rule from the NCAA and NATA in regards to handling of inclement weather at all our events.

**The NCAA/NATA 30-30 Rule**

**Criteria for suspension of Activities:**

By the time the flash-to-bang count approaches 30 seconds, all individuals should already be inside a safe shelter.

**Criteria for resumption of Activities:**

Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound (thunder) or observation of lightning before leaving the safe shelter to resume activities.

Section IV. MINUTES AND HANDBOOK.

1. All rulings of the conference as recorded in the approved minutes of its meetings, together with the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be equally binding upon its members.
2. Within ten (10) days after each conference meeting, electronic copies of the minutes of that meeting and any changes in the handbook shall be sent to the President, Athletic Director and FAR of each member institution by the conference commissioner. Simultaneously, the updated handbook will be posted on the GPAC website.

Section V. CONFERENCE MEETS AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENTS. Admission (\$8 for adults and \$3 for students (both schools with valid school ID) shall be collected by the host institution for all conference championship meets and championship tournament contests. The host institution for conference championship meets and championship tournament contests shall be responsible for all expenses except game official's fees. Officials expenses shall be paid by the conference. All net revenues from championship meets and championship tournament contests shall be sent to the treasurer with a completed financial worksheet provided by the commissioner. Unusual expenses (e.g. unanticipated rentals, security, supplies) may be appealed to the Executive Committee through the Commissioner for payment by the conference.

Section VI. STEERING COMMITTEE & SPORT COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

1. The Steering Committee shall meet on the day prior to the conference meeting. The agenda for Steering Committee meetings shall be prepared jointly by the Commissioner and Committee Chair and the agenda and packet of supporting materials shall be distributed to all committee members no less than 14 days prior to a meeting.
2. All recommendations and resolutions to the Steering Committee from Conference Sport Committees must be received in writing no less than 21 days prior to a meeting and shall include rationale and the coaches' vote on the item.
3. Each Conference Sport Committee shall have one annual business meeting. Joint meetings will be held when men's and women's competition are sponsored in the same sport. Agendas shall be prepared jointly by the Commissioner and the Conference Sport Committee Chair. The date of the annual meeting shall be such that recommendations and resolutions are made in writing no less than 21 days prior to a Steering Committee meeting.

Section VII. SCHEDULING DEADLINE/CHANGES POLICY

#### **ARTICLE IV ADMITTANCE TO THE CONFERENCE**

Section I. PROCESS OF ADMITTING A NEW CONFERENCE MEMBER

1. There is to be a formal letter of application from the president of the inquiring school written to the conference.
2. A check list of various articles and sections from the Constitution and By-Laws will be sent to the school. Signatures of the president, athletic

director and faculty athletic representative will be requested and returned to the executive committee of the conference for review.

3. The checklist will be reviewed by the executive committee of the conference. The executive committee will make the decision regarding the continuation of the process.
4. A visit will be scheduled with the school.
  - a. The conference visiting team will be selected by the executive committee and will consist of one president, one athletics director, one faculty athletics representative, and one financial aid officer.
  - b. The visit will be paid for by the visited school and will include transportation, meals and overnight accommodations if necessary.
  - c. The visiting team will draw up a written report that will be presented at the first conference meeting that follows the visitation.
5. An 85% vote of the total conference membership at a regular conference meeting will be needed to continue the membership process and send a recommendation to the COP.
6. An 85% vote of the total membership of the COP will be needed to continue the membership process.
7. The school seeking membership shall schedule (with contracts established) all conference schools in sports required by conference membership within two (2) years from the time the vote is taken in step 6. (See Constitution, Article III, Section II.)
8. When step seven is complete, the conference shall recommend final approval by an 85% vote by conference members at a regular meeting. This final recommendation shall be ratified by an 85% vote of the COP at its annual meeting. Membership will begin the academic year following the COP vote. Eligibility for conference championships will begin when the new member is competing with all other conference schools.

## **ARTICLE VI JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Section I. ELIGIBILITY CHAIR**

1. Description
  - a. The position of a conference eligibility chair is a paid conference position.
  - b. The term of employment shall be for one year beginning on June 1 of each year. Appointment to the position and salary shall be determined at the spring meeting of the conference.
  - c. The eligibility chair shall report to the president of the conference.

- d. The executive committee will be responsible for evaluation of the eligibility chair.
2. Responsibilities.
- a. Communicate with faculty athletics representatives (FARs) and registrars of member institutions on NAIA policies and procedures related to athletic eligibility.
  - b. Relay NAIA policies through case studies or information from NAIA national office as requested by conference faculty athletic representatives and registrars.
  - c. Receive eligibility reports and other appropriate NAIA forms for member institutions.
  - d. Report to member institutions through their Faculty Athletic Representative on the status of eligibility reports.
  - e. Serve as chair of the conference eligibility committee to process eligibility violations and requests for exceptions.
  - f. File eligibility reports with the NAIA national office.

Section II. SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTOR

1. Description

- a. The position of a conference sports information director (SID) is a paid conference position.
- b. The term of employment shall be for one year beginning on June 1 of each spring meeting of the conference.
- c. The SID shall report to the chair of the Steering Committee.
- d. The Steering Committee will be responsible for the evaluation of the SID.

2. Responsibilities.

- a. The SID will coordinate conference statistical information:
  - 1) Collect weekly statistics, records and pertinent information from member institutions and compile in accordance with NAIA guidelines and requirements. Statistics will be compiled for baseball, men's and women's basketball, softball, men's and women's soccer and volleyball.
  - 2) Distribute to conference institutions and to the NAIA national office statistical information required by the NAIA or GPAC.
  - 3) Providing statistical information to NAIA National Office as required or requested.
  - 4) Provide a means for the selection and announcement of GPAC player(s) of the week for all sports.

- b. The conference SID will serve as a liaison for the conference by maintaining appropriate contact with:
  - 1) The NAIA national office.
  - 2) The National Sports Information Office.
  - 3) Conference institutions through the institution's AD and SID.
  - 4) Individual GPAC sports chairs.
  - 5) This responsibility will include responding to reasonable requests for statistical and other sports information.
  
- c. The conference SID will serve as conference media contact:
  - 1) Initiate and maintain contact with local media identified by the conference institutions through their AD or SID.
  - 2) Issue press releases concerning conference athletic activity including, but not limited to, results of athletic contests, conference standings and statistics, GPAC players of the week.
  - 3) Issue press releases to the media as requested by conference president.
  
- d. The conference SID will serve as a resource to the conference by attending:
  - 1) Meetings of the GPAC steering committee to record and distribute minutes of the meeting to committee members and the conference president.
  - 2) Conference athletic contests during the regular season as needed to function effectively as a conference resource.
  - 3) Post-season tournament championship contests.
  - 4) Pre-season football media day.
  - 5) Other conference, regional or national meetings at the reasonable request of the conference executive committee.

### Section III. SUPERVISOR OF OFFICIALS.

#### 1. Description.

- a. The following sports will utilize supervisor or assignor of officials: baseball, football, men's basketball, men's soccer, softball, volleyball, women's basketball, women's soccer.
- b. Supervisors of officials will be paid and contracted to individuals for one year beginning on May 1 of each year. Appointment to the position and salary shall be determined at the spring meeting of the conference.
- c. The supervisors and assignors of officials shall report to the commissioner.
- d. The coaches of each designated sport will be responsible for evaluation of the supervisor of officials. Such evaluation will be coordinated by the sport chair.

2. Responsibilities.

- a. The responsibilities for each position will be established by the coaches of the designated sport.

Section IV. COMMISSIONER OF THE GPAC.

1. Description.

- a. The position of a conference commissioner is a paid conference position.
- b. The term of employment shall be for a one year term beginning on June 1 of the year of appointment. Appointment to the position and salary shall be determined at the appropriate spring meeting of the conference.
- c. The commissioner shall report to the Council of Presidents.
- d. The Council of Presidents will be responsible for evaluation of the conference commissioner annually and report their evaluation to the Conference at the spring meeting.

2. Responsibilities.

- a. The conference commissioner will serve as the primary **administrator** of the conference. In this capacity, the commissioner will:
  - 1) Oversee and coordinate the ongoing activities of the conference by:
    - a) Ensuring that all GPAC operations are conducted according to established rules and regulations of the conference and the NAIA.
    - b) Promoting the general welfare of the conference through identification of areas which need correction or are opportunities for growth.
    - c) Serving as an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Steering Committee.
    - d) Assisting in the development of master schedules for conference sports.
  - 2) Serve as contact person for mediation of conference grievances by:
    - a) Facilitate resolution of protests, grievances or other special concerns for action by hearing the evidence and mediating the dispute. If necessary, the commissioner is the final arbiter of all disputes.
    - b) Directing cases of misconduct and unethical behavior to the Ethics and Conduct Committee.

- c) Working with vigilance to anticipate and prevent unsportsmanlike conduct by members of institutions of the conference.
  - 3) Coordinate regular season competitions and post-season conference championships by:
    - a) Coordinating and promoting the administration of all conference events and championships.
    - b) Having available championship trophies, medals and plaques at the conclusion of conference competition.
  - 4) Serve as a resource to the conference by:
    - a) Possessing complete knowledge of the GPAC constitution, by-laws and procedures.
    - b) Providing assistance to member institutions to ensure compliance with GPAC and NAIA policies as stated in the constitution and by-laws.
    - c) Visiting conference institution in conjunction with an athletic contest or conference championship and observing the operation of its intercollegiate athletic program relative to conference rules.
- b. The GPAC Commissioner will serve as the primary **liaison** between the conference and the NAIA national office. In this capacity, the Commissioner will:
  - 1) Attend and represent the GPAC at the Association of Affiliated Conference meetings.
  - 2) Attend as GPAC voting member at national NAIA meetings.
  - 3) Provide in a timely manner information from the NAIA to the member institutions.
  - 4) Complete and return all required NAIA forms to the national office.
- c. The conference commissioner will function as the **secretary** for the conference. In this capacity, the commissioner will:
  - 1) Maintain and distribute current editions of the GPAC Constitution, By-Laws, and Sport Handbooks.
  - 2) Assemble and distribute the agenda prior to each conference meeting.
  - 3) Record and distribute minutes of each conference meeting in accordance with the By-Laws.
  - 4) Record and distribute the minutes of meetings of the Council of Presidents
  - 5) Record and distribute the minutes of meetings of the Steering Committee.
  - 6) Maintain and distribute a directory of the conference which includes listing of President, Faculty Athletic Representative,

Athletic Director, Sports Information Director, and head sport coaches of each institution.

- 7) Keep current and historic files of conference correspondence including:
    - a) Correspondence within the conference.
    - b) Correspondence on behalf of the conference.
    - c) Hardship certification.
    - d) Documentation of NAIA award nominations.
    - e) Transference of these files to a designated representative of the conference upon request of the Executive Committee.
  - 8) Respond to reasonable requests from member schools for documents and records.
- d. The Conference Commissioner will function as **budgetary officer** for the conference. In this capacity, the Commissioner will:
- 1) With the treasurer of the conference, prepare and submit an annual budget to the COP for review and approval. Such budgets shall include, but not be limited to, line items for:
    - a) Salaries of Commissioner, Eligibility Chair, Supervisors of Officials, and Conference Sports Information Director.
    - b) Expense budget for each position identified above.
    - c) Recommended institutional dues.
    - d) Estimated receipts from conference tournaments.
    - e) Estimated receipts from fund raising and sponsorships.
  - 2) Contract the purchase of conference trophies, medals and awards.
  - 3) Work with the treasurer to ensure timely payment of all conference bills.
- e. The Conference Commissioner will serve as or select the Supervisors of Officials for individual sports. In this capacity, the Commissioner will:
- 1) Work with the Steering Committee to appoint a Supervisor of Officials for selected sports as designated in the conference By-Laws.
  - 2) Evaluate, with the Steering Committee and the individual sport committees and the Supervisors of Officials.
  - 3) Propose changes in job description and/or develop job descriptions for Supervisors of Officials as needed or directed.
- f. The Conference Commissioner will serve as or select a **conference Sports Information Director**. In this capacity, the Commissioner will:
- 1) Recommend to the Conference at its spring meeting an individual for the position of Conference Sports Information Director

- 2) Evaluate and review the performance of the Sports Information Director annually, or arrange for the Steering Committee of the Conference to perform such an evaluation.
- g. The Conference Commissioner will develop and coordinate a plan for acquiring non-institutional funding of the conference.

## Section V. PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

### 1. Description

- a. The President of the Conference shall be designated in the manner described in the Constitution Article IV Officers.
- b. The President of the Conference shall be the chair of the Committee of Faculty Athletics Representatives, of the Executive Committee and of the General Conference Meeting.
- c. The President of the Conference shall be the Conference FAR for the NAIA.

### 2. Responsibilities

- a. Work with the Commissioner to prepare an agenda for the General Meeting as described in By-Laws Article III Section VI. Meetings. Offer all Athletic Directors and Faculty Athletics Representatives an opportunity to contribute items to the meeting agendas.
- b. Attend Steering Committee meetings to advise the Athletic Directors on behalf of the Faculty Athletics Representatives and to prepare a report for the meeting of the Faculty Athletics Representatives the next morning.
- c. Chair the General Meeting of the Conference and prepare a President's report for that meeting.
- d. Coordinate the process for selecting conference nominees for the Duer and Liston awards, with the following procedures:
  - 1) Packets should be submitted by each institutional FAR to the President on or before the date set by the national office.
  - 2) Within 7 days after the submission deadline, the President will duplicate and send the nomination materials to each FAR.
  - 3) Within 7 days of receipt of the nomination materials, each FAR will rank the nominees and submit those rankings to the President by fax or e-mail. Rankings from a given FAR will not include individuals nominated by that FAR.
  - 4) The President shall compile the institutional rankings, determine the conference nominees and forward the nomination packets to the national office prior to the deadline for submission of conference recipients.

- 5) The names of the institutional nominees and the conference winner will be posted on the GPAC website. The conference recipients shall be honored with a certificate to be presented at an appropriate occasion arranged by the individual institution.
  - 6) The President e-mails each FAR with names of national award winners.
- e. As conference FAR, receive and respond to communications from the NAIA.
  - f. Provide support and feedback to the Conference Commissioner.

## Section VI. CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

### 1. Description

- a. The Chair of the Council of Presidents (COP) shall be designated in the manner described in the Constitution, Article V, Organization

### 2. Responsibilities.

- a. The Chair of the COP shall call and preside over the meetings of the COP.
- b. The Chair of the COP shall attend the annual meeting of the Conference and shall present the President's report, proposed budget for the conference, and the results of the annual evaluation of the Commissioner.
- c. The Chair of the COP will present to the Conference at the annual meeting the recommendation of the COP for Conference Commissioner.
- d. At the meetings of the conference, the Chair of the COP, or an institutional president designated by the Chair of the COP, will be given the privilege of the floor for the purpose of discussion and making motions on behalf of the COP.

## Article VII - Amendments

The By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the member institutions as cast by each institution's President at a regularly scheduled meeting, provided the amendment has first been reviewed by the General Assembly at the meeting prior to the Council of Presidents meeting. Any member institution of the GPAC can sponsor an amendment to the by-laws.