Members of the Rice Community:

Every 10 years, the NCAA requires participating institutions to complete a self-study of their athletics programs. Rice is proud of the academic, competitive and postgraduate achievements of its student-athletes and its long history of distinction in intercollegiate athletics. The university welcomes the self-study process as an opportunity to showcase Rice Athletics’ dedication to integrity, equity and excellence.

Rice last completed certification in March 1999; the process of self-study for recertification began in August 2007 and will conclude in February 2009. In this second cycle Rice is required to demonstrate compliance with NCAA standards in three areas:

- Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance
- Academic Integrity
- Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being

Preparation for the self-study process began in the spring of 2007 with President David Leebron’s appointment of me as chair of the self-study Steering Committee. President Leebron also appointed faculty, student and staff members to three subcommittees charged with reviewing the required areas. The subcommittees were chaired by professors Wes Morris, Ric Stoll and Nancy Niedzielski, none of whom is associated with the Department of Athletics. The subcommittees met throughout the 2007-08 academic term to gather and review data and seek input, in a variety of settings, from a range of campus constituencies.

The Steering Committee met April 25, 2008, to formally approve the final draft of the self-study report and the associated five-year plans for improvement. Rice University’s self-study was formally submitted to the NCAA May 1, 2008. The NCAA evaluation team will visit the Rice campus October 29-31, 2008, to review the self-study and meet with members of the Rice community. Final NCAA certification is expected in February 2009.

Rice’s self-study document totals 126 pages, including text and charts. In lieu of the entire self-study document, the following executive summary outlines the most important information. On behalf of my Steering Committee colleagues, I encourage you to examine what follows and warmly invite your comments and questions.

Sincerely,

Robin Forman
Dean of Undergraduates
GOVERNANCE AND COMMITMENT TO RULES COMPLIANCE

The Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance component of the NCAA self-study process requires that the university “identify how [it] has organized itself to maintain compliance with NCAA rules” and to demonstrate that rules education and compliance are central to Athletics Department operations and activities.

During the first-cycle review of 1999, the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification required that Rice “develop a means to ensure more widespread participation in the formulation of policies related to the conduct of the athletics program.” The current self-study found that Rice responded successfully to this finding. For example, in 2005, the registrar became the final certifier of team and student-athlete eligibility, and in February 2007 the Athletics Department initiated a rules education program for coaches, student-athletes and program supporters.

Rice’s self-study also concluded that the university has established effective and inclusive mechanisms for policy formulation and NCAA compliance oversight. The Rice University Athletics Committee (RUAC) and Rice Women’s Athletic Advisory Board (WAAB), which existed prior to 1999, and Rice’s Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and Rice’s Athletics Affairs Committee (RAAC), formed in 2006, participate in formulation of Athletics Department policies. Athletics also hired two full-time staff members (October 2006 and May 2008) to administer NCAA compliance. Moreover, in January 2008, the Compliance Office began reporting to the dean of undergraduates.

The current self-study found that compliance is additionally reinforced by the ongoing involvement of the Rice Board of Trustees and university president in all major decisions affecting the Athletics Department, and by the inclusion of the Director of Athletics (AD) on President Leebron’s senior administrators’ team in July 2006. The AD meets regularly with, and is evaluated annually by, the president. The AD also meets annually with the Faculty Senate.

The self-study concluded that Rice’s NCAA rules education efforts are comprehensive and ongoing, and designed to reach all student-athletes, coaches, Athletics Department staff and boosters. The study also concluded that Rice demonstrates a “clear and unambiguous commitment” to rules compliance and that its rules compliance program is subject to external evaluation on a regular basis.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Academic Integrity component of the NCAA certification process requires that an institution demonstrate that its student-athletes are subject to the same policies, rules and
academic standards as all other students, and that they receive the same support as other students in their progress toward graduation.

During the first-cycle of NCAA certification, no corrective actions in this area were imposed on Rice by the NCAA. Nonetheless, the following actions were implemented at the recommendation of the university’s Self-Study Steering Committee:

- The Registrar’s Office became more involved in monitoring the eligibility of student-athletes
- The director of athletic academic advising began meeting regularly with the assistant athletics director of academic services to share information and collaborate more closely on assessment and advancement of student-athletes’ academic progress
- In January 2008, athletic academic advising and compliance were placed under the jurisdiction of the dean of undergraduates to enhance student-athletes’ access to academic services, and advance their academic success

The Academic Integrity component of the self-study addresses a variety of issues related to academic standards. On the topic of admission, the holistic admission process at Rice considers many more aspects of an applicant’s record than high school grades and SAT or ACT scores. With the goals of creating a diverse and interesting class, and the unique context of its residential college culture, Rice considers elements such as extracurricular involvement, depth of community and intellectual engagement, leadership, service, record of overcoming social and economic disadvantages, special talents, etc. Student-athletes and all other applicants are evaluated with these goals and criteria in mind, and the final authority for admission of student-athletes rests with the vice president for enrollment.

The self-study report concludes that Rice admits only student-athletes who have reasonable expectation of obtaining academic degrees at Rice. While there is a difference in the test scores of student-athletes and the rest of the population of admitted undergraduates, Rice student-athletes have very high academic credentials in the context of NCAA Division I student-athletes. For example, for the 1997 through 2000 entering classes, Rice’s Federal Graduation rate for student-athletes ranked first in Conference USA as well as eighth among NCAA Division I Football Subdivision schools. During that same time, Rice’s Federal Graduation rate for African-American student-athletes was eighth among NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision. Last year eight of Rice’s 16 teams received the NCAA Public Recognition Award for having an Academic Progress Rate (APR) in the top 10 percent for their sport. This is the second highest percentage for any school in Division I Football Bowl Subdivision and the fourteenth highest in all Division I. The graduation rate of student-athletes who have exhausted their athletic eligibility for the ten years of entering classes from 1991 to 2000 was 98 percent, ranking it fifth among NCAA Division I – Football Bowl Subdivision institutions.
Moreover, once admitted, student-athletes are subject to the same academic standards, regulations, and graduation requirements as the general student population, according to the Academic Integrity Subcommittee. Eligibility, missed class time, and academic progress for student-athletes are carefully monitored by Rice’s faculty athletics representative (FAR), the Rice University Athletics Committee, head coaches and other Athletics Department staff. Each semester, a Missed Class Time Survey is compiled and reported to the director of athletics and Conference USA and reviewed by Rice’s FAR.

The Academic Integrity section also addresses issues related to “academic support” for student-athletes. During Rice’s first-cycle of NCAA certification, no corrective actions in this area were imposed by the NCAA. Nonetheless, the university’s Self-Study Steering Committee at the time urged better integration of the Office of Academic Advising and Academic Athletic Services. Action followed swiftly. Beginning in the fall of 1999, Athletics Department staff members began attending training meetings with the university’s academic advising staff, and advances were made in student-athletes’ access to and use of advising and tutoring resources based in the residential colleges.

In January 2008, the integration of athletic academic services and academic advising was completed: the staff of the latter now report to the assistant dean of undergraduates/director of academic advising, within the dean of undergraduates’ division.

During the current self-study, the Academic Integrity Subcommittee found that Rice student-athletes receive excellent academic support and advising not only through the department’s academic athletic advisers but also through various means available to all Rice students. Nevertheless, the subcommittee endorsed a number of recommendations of the Athletics Academic Advisory Review Board for enhancing the athletics academic advising program. The recommendations included:

- Creation of a group of faculty and staff who would serve as consultants for academic advising, generally, and athletic academic advising, in particular
- Improved communications with student-athletes regarding academic advising philosophy
- Updating of athletic academic advising forms and creation of a policies and procedures manual for athletics academic advising
- Expansion of the peer athletics academic advising program
- More training for Athletics Department coaches and staff on academic advising issues and policies
- More training of university staff on NCAA academic regulations
- Creating a more efficient electronic mechanism for faculty to report student-athletes’ academic progress
- Exploring possibilities for establishment of a learning disabilities assessment tool
- Exploring additional ways to celebrate and enhance campus community awareness of student-athletes’ academic achievements
Overall, the current self-study found that Rice University continues to rank among the leaders in Division I institutions in regard to both the integrity of its athletics program and the academic achievement of its student-athletes.

**EQUITY AND STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING**

The Equity and Student-Athlete Well-being component of the NCAA certification process requires that an institution:

- report on the implementation of plans to address gender and minority issues and student-athlete well-being developed by the institution during its first-cycle certification process
- demonstrate that participation opportunities for female student-athletes are consistent with the abilities and interests of the institution’s female enrollment
- demonstrate that female student-athletes, female coaches and women’s athletics teams are treated equitably in all respects
- provide evidence that matters concerning gender equity are monitored, evaluated and addressed on a continuing basis
- analyze, explain and address any discrepancies in gender equity for 13 program areas and provide a five-year plan for improvement for identified discrepancies

- demonstrate that it provides equitable treatment of minority student-athletes and coaches in all program areas
- provide evidence that matters concerning minority issues are monitored, evaluated and addressed on a continuing basis
- for the three most recent academic years, provide the racial or ethnic composition for Athletics Department staff, coaches, advisory and policy-making boards, as well as for student-athletes who received athletics aid, and analyze and comment on any trends over the three-year period
- analyze, explain and address any discrepancies in minority equity for eight program areas and provide a five-year plan for improvement for identified discrepancies

- describe the institution’s educational enhancement programs and practices in place to encourage and assure student-athletes’ access to these programs

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1 The 13 program areas are scholarships, accommodation of interests and abilities; equipment and supplies; scheduling of games and practice times; travel and per diem allowance; tutors; coaches; locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities; medical training facilities and equipment; housing and dining facilities and services; publicity; support services; and, recruitment of student-athletes.

2 The eight program areas are institutional and athletics department commitment; evaluation of department activities for consistency with the university’s goals for diversity; policies, organizations, and/or activities to help enhance diversity; enrollment goals; comparison of populations; participation in governance and decision-making; employment opportunities; and, programs and activities that address the needs and issues affecting minority student-athletes.
GENDER EQUITY

During the first-cycle of NCAA certification, no corrective actions in this area were imposed by the NCAA. Nonetheless, the following actions were implemented as part of a five-year plan (2000-2005) for improvement at the recommendation of the university’s Self-Study Steering Committee:

• Rice increased participation opportunities for women student-athletes by the addition in August 2001 of women’s soccer as a varsity sport
• Rice increased funding for athletic scholarships for female student-athletes to the maximum allowed
• Rice hired a senior woman administrator, who was given the charge of ensuring that the Athletics Department provided fair and equitable treatment of all student-athletes and Athletics’ personnel
• In fiscal year 2000, Rice allowed women’s teams to exceed their allocated budgets to provide their student-athletes with top-quality equipment and other supplies
• Rice provided additional support for women’s basketball by hiring a director of basketball operations
• Rice terminated the men’s swimming program
• Rice hired three additional full-time, certified athletic trainers and an additional strength and conditioning coach to better serve women student-athletes
• Rice increased the recruiting budgets for women’s basketball and volleyball\(^1\)

2007-08 Review of Gender Equity:

To execute its charge to review 13 program areas within Rice Athletics for gender issues, the Equity and Well-being Subcommittee completed in-person interviews with student-athletes and head coaches, surveyed head coaches, evaluated financial information contained in the three most recent Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) reports\(^{ii}\), reviewed various university and Athletics handbooks, and performed inspections of Athletics Department facilities.

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\(^1\) The first-cycle Self-Study also recommended addition of women’s crew or golf as part of the five-year plan for improvement. This recommendation was not implemented. When the plan was adopted, Rice’s club team for crew was flourishing. However, the crew team disbanded as the Athletics Department was developing a plan for elevating crew to varsity status. There was little interest on campus at the time for restarting the program at the varsity level. Bolstered by the discovery that very few high school students in Texas competed in crew and the lack of interest in crew in fellow members of the Western Athletic Conference, President Malcolm Gillis decided not to add this sport and postponed the consideration of addition of another women’s team until completion of the study of Rice Athletics commissioned by the Rice Board of Trustees in June 2003.

\(^{ii}\) EADA reports are Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act reports that are required annually by the federal government. The reports include data on athletic financial aid, and per-sport revenues and expenses.
In general, the subcommittee found that Rice University and the Rice Athletics Department are committed to providing equitable treatment to all male and female student-athletes, men’s and women’s teams and Athletics’ coaches and staff. To support and extend this commitment, the university will, on the recommendation of the subcommittee, retain an external consultant to conduct an equity review every five years that addresses the 13 program areas under Gender Equity. The consultant’s report will be reviewed by the director of athletics, the FAR, the RUAC and RAAB, as well as by the president of the university, to ensure equity issues are monitored and addressed.

In its review of the 13 program areas, the subcommittee found much to admire; however, a number of issues invited comment and targeted recommendations:

1. The disparity between athletic participation rates and enrollment for female students is significant:
   
   Enrollment:
   2005: Men = 51 percent  Women = 49 percent
   2006: Men = 52 percent  Women = 48 percent
   2007: Men = 51 percent  Women = 49 percent

   Athletic Participation:
   2005: Men = 57 percent  Women = 43 percent
   2006: Men = 57 percent  Women = 43 percent
   2007: Men = 58 percent  Women = 42 percent

   The subcommittee noted this disparity but also recognized that Rice has shown a commitment to accommodating female students’ athletic interests, as evidenced by the addition of intercollegiate soccer in 2001. The subcommittee also found positive the continued growth of participation in club sports and the January 2008 assumption of responsibility for intramural and club programs by the Athletics Department. These developments, and the fact that Rice is in the midst of a multi-year expansion of the undergraduate population, led the subcommittee to abjure recommending the addition of a women’s sport to address the disparity, pending the conduct of an annual survey of first-year students to more accurately gauge whether the interests and abilities of female undergraduate students are understood and met.¹

2. Noting disparities in funds budgeted for men’s and women’s tennis, and concern about the adequacy of budgets for men’s and women’s track and cross-country, the subcommittee recommended an Equity Plan that would increase the budget for women’s tennis to equity with men’s tennis by FY 2011 and an immediate review of the budgets for cross-country and track.

3. The subcommittee encountered expressions of concern about the equity of travel and per diem allowances for women’s teams, in general, and for both men’s and women’s track teams, in particular. Accordingly, the subcommittee recommended adoption of a policy regarding travel for away-

¹ The first such survey was administered to new students August 22, 2008.
from-home competition and that such a policy be equitable for men’s and women’s teams.

4. Some female student-athletes expressed concern about the renovations to the Autry Court training and weight rooms, and about unequal access to the varsity weight and training rooms. The subcommittee believes that resolution of many of these issues will be aided by the return of Autry Court to use in November 2008 and the addition of a new weight room in that facility. However, the subcommittee also urged the Athletics Department to review on an annual basis policies and practices governing weight and training room facilities and staff to ensure equity for male and female student-athletes and teams.

MINORITY EQUITY:

The NCAA required no corrective actions, conditions for certification, or strategies for improvement regarding minority equity issues during Rice’s first-cycle certification. The NCAA and Rice’s self-study concluded in 1999 that Rice provides student-athletes with fair and equitable participation opportunities without regard to race; provides student-athletes with athletic financial assistance without regard to race; and, provides equivalent benefits, resources, opportunity and treatment throughout the athletics program without regard to race.

To support and extend Rice University’s commitment to equity for and the well-being of minority student-athletes and Athletics Department personnel, the Athletics Department responded to the first-cycle certification process by implementation of a five-year Minority Equity Compliance Plan (FY 2000-2005). That plan provided for:

- Annual review of athletic scholarships to ensure scholarships are awarded without regard to race
- Annual review of policies and practices related to equipment and supplies, travel, and recruiting to ensure all such benefits are provided without regard to race
- Annual review of Athletics Department staff and coaching positions by the director of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, to ensure that compensation and employment benefits are provided without regard to race.

During the current second-cycle self-study, the Subcommittee on Equity and Student-Athlete Well-being found that the university continues to maintain an admirable record on minority issues. Indeed, over the past decade Rice’s commitment to diversity has deepened to the point of becoming a central component of the university’s mission and values. The subcommittee found this echoed by student-athletes and coaches, as it conducted focus groups and individual interviews throughout spring 2008. Student-

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1 In 2003, the Rice Board of Trustees adopted the following Resolution on Educational Diversity: “RESOLVED, that Rice University should further its mission of academic excellence by recruiting and matriculating a broadly diverse student body as part of its effort to foster an educationally diverse learning environment, and that these efforts should consider race, national origin and ethnicity among the factors taken into account to achieve educational diversity. . . .” This commitment was further defined by President David Leebron’s statements on Rice Community Values (April 2, 2008, and October 16, 2008).
athletes, in particular, described their experiences as athletes as free of any hint of discrimination or inequity based on race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Coaches generally agreed with this assessment, but several also expressed some concern with the social challenges faced by African-American student-athletes, in particular, which they viewed as resulting from the small numbers of African-American students in the overall undergraduate population.

In reviewing the university’s enrollment goals for minority students and minority student-athletes, the subcommittee found common recognition of this challenge and a variety of programs in place to recruit minority students.

STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING

The NCAA required no corrective actions, conditions for certification, or strategies for improvement regarding student-athlete well-being during Rice’s first-cycle certification, and the university’s Self-Study Steering Committee made no recommendations in this area for plans for improvement. Nonetheless, since 1999, the Athletics Department has taken a number of actions that have significantly enhanced many aspects of student-athlete well-being, including:

- Hiring additional athletic trainers and strength and conditioning coaches
- Hiring a full-time senior woman administrator
- Hiring an assistant athletics director for life skills
- Staffing all teams with the maximum number of coaches allowed by the NCAA
- Upgrading facilities
- Establishing an academic center for student-athletes
- Expanding the team-doctor program to include a wider variety of specialists

Overall, the current Equity and Well-Being Subcommittee found that Rice University is committed to equity and student-athlete well-being, and monitors, evaluates and addresses the latter on a continual basis. Rice views the undergraduate experience as a holistic one and offers the full range of student-life services under the oversight of the dean of undergraduates. Moreover, as members of Rice’s renowned residential colleges, student-athletes benefit from the presence of faculty masters, as well as faculty and staff resident associates, who oversee the colleges and devote considerable time and energy to monitoring the well-being of individual students. The university’s commitment to the well-being and full integration of student-athletes into the general undergraduate population was underscored by the January 2008 decision to place compliance and athletic academic advising under the oversight of the dean of undergraduates.

The subcommittee also found that the Athletics Department devotes considerable resources and attention to safeguarding and promoting awareness among student-athletes, coaches and other staff of all health, safety, travel and sports-medicine policies, as well as

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1 The subcommittee met with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) November 14, 2007, and hosted three confidential forums for student-athletes (1/22/08, 1/28/08, 3/18/08).
awareness of the university’s and the Athletics Department’s zero-tolerance policies towards hazing and any form of discrimination or harassment.¹

The Athletics Department monitors student-athlete well-being in a number of ways. For instance, the Department conducts exit interviews of all athletes at the end of each team’s season; the interviews are informed by data collected in an anonymous survey of all aspects of the student-athletes’ experience as Rice undergraduates. The director of athletics and senior woman administrator then meet with each team. Distinct exit interviews are conducted with senior student-athletes by the department and RUAC. As the formal liaison between teams and the Athletics Department, the Student Athlete Advisory Committee also plays an important role in department governance and decision-making, and on-going efforts to monitor and enhance student-athlete well-being.²

¹ Policies are updated annually and detailed in the Student-Athlete Handbook.
² The subcommittee found that the SAAC is highly functional but has also recommended that the policies governing selection of members of the SAAC include a statement regarding sensitivity to inclusion of minority student-athletes and involvement of male and female seniors, juniors, sophomores.