



UNITED STATES OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

USOPC COLLEGIATE ADVISORY COUNCIL – MEETING UPDATE APRIL 8, 2020

U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee Collegiate Advisory Council reviews legislation implementation and 2021 Tokyo communications operations adjustments

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Collegiate Advisory Council convened via video conference on April 7, 2020, to discuss progress made across its messaging, pathway and alignment projects. Among those topics, the group focused on how the USOPC has implemented NCAA legislation that was adopted in January 2020. The group also discussed adjustments related to the postponement of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo from 2020 to 2021.

NCAA legislation permitting more training flexibility, resource access and Paralympic parity for elite national team student-athletes was effective immediately upon adoption in January. Since then, the council has supported the USOPC cultivation of senior-level collegiate liaisons to support student-athletes on campus who are navigating the collegiate and international landscapes. The implementation requires continued collaboration among the USOPC, national governing bodies, 60 schools and 20 conferences, and has thus far also involved creating athlete-specific support plans, sharing best practices and cultivating an online resource hub.

“The adoption of elite national team legislation was the first step to strengthen the bridge between national teams and our campuses,” said Chris Plonsky, University of Texas executive senior associate athletics director/chief of staff. “The collegiate liaisons to the USOPC are critical to ensuring the unique journey of each national team student-athlete is supported. These world-class athletes need additional support to achieve their collegiate and international goals, and as a council, we’re proud to aid in their journeys.”

The council was also briefed on the decision to postpone the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo from 2020 to 2021 and discussed its impact on the messaging project. Tokyo collegiate communications planning will be adjusted and activated in 2021, which includes three levels of activation: (1) USOPC on-the-ground content creation and aggregation, (2) USOPC stateside sharing of assets with schools and (3) a collegiate correspondent pilot program. The council will also be evaluating an extension of the *Olympians Made Here* and *Paralympians Made Here* campaigns given the new summer Games timelines. In 2016, nearly 80 percent of athletes on Team USA were current or former collegiate athletes and represented nearly 150 schools, and the USOPC hopes to highlight this footprint in Tokyo through these communications efforts. Through these efforts, the council is helping the USOPC engineer a collegiate communications program that can scale across the significant collegiate footprint both year-round and during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

“The collegiate community continues to stand strong and support our national team student-athletes on their extended journey to the Tokyo Games,” commented Sandy Barbour, Pennsylvania State University vice president of intercollegiate athletics and chair of the USOPC Collegiate Advisory Council’s messaging subcommittee. “There is an amazing story of resilience to tell about our national team student-athletes, and we hope this communications effort will be a meaningful and intentional way to help collegiate stakeholders celebrate student-athlete performances in Tokyo.”

The council, which meets quarterly, is scheduled to reconvene this summer.

About the CAC

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Collegiate Advisory Council was formed in October 2017 and is chaired by USOPC board member Kevin White (Duke University). The 10-member council is charged with increasing collaboration with NCAA member institutions and conferences to elevate national engagement and support of Olympic and Paralympic sport opportunities on campus. The council is comprised of:

- Sandy Barbour, Pennsylvania State University vice president of intercollegiate athletics
- Bob Bowsby, Big 12 Conference commissioner
- Greg Byrne, University of Alabama athletics director
- Bubba Cunningham, University of North Carolina director of athletics
- Bernard Muir, Stanford University athletic director
- Rob Mullens, University of Oregon athletic director
- Chris Plonsky, University of Texas executive senior associate athletics director/chief of staff
- Gene Smith, The Ohio State University senior vice president and athletic director
- Scott Stricklin, University of Florida athletic director
- Kevin White, Duke University vice president and athletic director