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## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES & INTERPRETATIONS FOR THE 2008-2009 NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT

**APPLICABLE NLI SPORTS:** An institution may only issue National Letters of Intent (NLI) to prospective student-athletes who will compete in sports listed in NCAA Bylaw 17 and/or NCAA Bylaw 20.

**THE BASIC RULE:** By signing an NLI and athletics financial aid agreement, a prospective student-athlete agrees to attend for one academic year as a full-time student the signing institution and be on an athletics grant-in-aid for one academic year, provided the prospect meets all applicable university, conference and NCAA policies for receipt of financial aid.

**THE BASIC PENALTY (PROVISION 4):** If a student-athlete does not attend the signing institution or attends that institution for less than one full academic year, and that student enrolls in another NLI institution, that student may not represent the second institution in intercollegiate athletics competition until he or she has completed one academic year in residence at the second NLI member institution. Additionally, the student will lose one season of eligibility in all sports.

**RELEASE FROM THE NLI OBLIGATION (PROVISION 5):** An institution may release a student from his or her NLI obligation by selecting the "Complete Release" option on the NLI Release Request Form before signing and filing the document with its conference office.

**APPEALING A "NO RELEASE" DECISION (PROVISION 6):** When an institution does not release a student from his or her NLI obligation, the student may appeal the decision by filing a petition with the NLI Policy & Review Committee. Petitioning students should submit an NLI Appeals Form, a copy of the Release Request Form and any supporting materials to the NLI office. Students are notified in writing regarding the NLI Policy & Review Committee's determination on their petitions. The appeals process takes approximately 6-8 weeks. Decisions of the NLI Policy & Review Committee may be reviewed by the NLI Appeals Committee, whose decisions are final and binding.

**Reminder:** All petitions by a student of an NLI Policy & Review Committee decision must be made within 30 days of the date on the decision letter provided by the NLI office.

**Reminder:** An institution does not have the right to appeal a decision of the NLI Policy & Review Committee. Furthermore, as a condition of membership in the NLI program, participating institutions and conferences are precluded from bringing legal action against the National Letter of Intent program or the Collegiate Commissioners Association.

**NULL AND VOID LETTERS:** In addition to seeking a complete release, students often seek to have their NLIs declared null and void. While there are many circumstances which may result in an NLI being declared null and void, the next three circumstances should be noted.

**ONE-YEAR ABSENCE (PROVISION 7c):** If a student has not attended any institution for at least one academic year (or has attended an institution such as a preparatory school or a junior college that does not participate in the NLI program), the student may seek to apply this provision. It is permissible for the student to have initially attended an NLI member institution, including the signing institution, and remain eligible for this provision. To apply the provision, the student must make a request to the Director of Athletics of the original signing institution for athletics aid for a subsequent fall term. Thereafter, the student must receive a statement from the Director of Athletics indicating the amount of financial aid originally offered is not available. Absent such a statement from the Director of Athletics, the NLI is considered valid and binding.

**Reminder:** A student may seek to apply the One-Year Absence Provision (7c) if he or she does not attend an NLI institution for at least one academic year. Accordingly, if a student does not attend an NLI institution for two years, he or she could still seek to apply the One-Year Absence Provision.

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**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS (PROVISION 7a):** If a prospective student-athlete is denied admission to the signing institution, the NLI shall be declared null and void. There must be documentation substantiating the denial of admission before an NLI is considered null and void. The institution must notify its conference office regarding the denial, and the student should be informed by the signing institution of the status of his or her admissions application prior to July 1.

If an institution fails to provide an admissions decision in writing by the opening day of classes for the fall term and the prospect has submitted a complete admissions application, the NLI shall be declared null and void.

Furthermore, it should be noted that a prospective student-athlete has an obligation to provide, upon request, a transcript of his or her previous academic record and an application for admission to the institution. The prospect also has an obligation to register with and provide academic eligibility information to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

**Reminder:** If a midyear junior college transfer student in the sport of football signs an NLI and the student is denied admission on or before the opening day of classes of the winter or spring term, the NLI shall be declared null and void. However, if such a student does not meet the admissions requirements by the opening of the winter quarter but does meet them by the opening of the spring quarter, then the NLI is still valid.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (PROVISION 7b):** If a prospective student-athlete does not meet the requirements outlined in NLI Provision 7b by the institution's opening day of classes for the fall term, the conference does not have to wait until the opening day of classes to rule on whether the NLI is null and void if the last opportunity to meet those requirements has passed and the prospect has not met them. For example, if the last summer term at a junior college ends two weeks prior to the start of fall classes at the signing institution and the student has not met the junior college transfer requirements by the end of the last summer term, then the NLI could be considered null and void at that time, rather than waiting until the first day of classes at the signing institution.

**Reminder:** The NLI is null and void if the prospective student-athlete becomes a nonqualifier.

**NOTIFICATION TO PROSPECT:** The NLI signing institution must notify a prospect in writing that his or her NLI is not valid within five business days from when the institution is made aware of the status of the NLI. The institution must copy its conference NLI administrator on any such notification sent to a prospect.

**Reminder:** An institution must provide written notification to its conference office within five days of a student being denied admission or failing to meet NCAA initial eligibility standards (e.g., nonqualifier).

**SATISFYING THE TERMS OF THE NLI (PROVISION 3):** A student may satisfy the terms of the NLI by attending the signing institution for at least one academic year as a full-time student, or by graduating from a junior college.

**FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENT (PROVISION 2):** An NLI is null and void if the prospect does not receive at the time of signing a written offer of athletics financial aid applicable for the entire upcoming academic year that is subsequently signed by both the prospect and his or her parent/legal guardian. Midyear junior college football transfers must receive a financial aid award for the remainder of the current academic year. Thus, an NLI signed by a "walk-on" or "non-scholarship student-athlete" is not valid. An institution which submits an NLI to a prospective student-athlete that does not meet the terms of NLI Provision 2 may be in violation of the NLI program and subject to sanctions.

**WHO SIGNS THE NLI (PROVISION 1):** As a general rule, the only prospective student-athletes who may sign an NLI are students who will be entering four-year institutions for the first time as full-time students. It is not permissible for a junior to sign the NLI. (International and home-schooled prospects shall be managed in accordance with their program's requirements for completion.) This rule's one exception is that 4-2-4 transfer students who are graduating from a junior college may also sign an NLI.

**Reminder:** The only midyear enrollees who may sign an NLI are junior college football transfers who graduate from the junior college at midyear. All other midyear enrollees are only permitted to sign an offer of athletics financial aid.

**SIGNING ONLY ONE NLI (PROVISION 8):** A student may sign only one valid NLI annually. Thus, a student may not sign a basketball NLI and later sign a soccer NLI. He or she is bound by the first valid NLI signed.

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**Reminder:** Inasmuch as a prospective student-athlete may sign only one valid NLI during an academic year, a student who is granted a complete release by the signing institution, the NLI Policy & Review Committee or the NLI Appeals Committee may not sign another NLI during that year.

**SIGNING THE NLI (PROVISIONS 11-14):** The prospective student-athlete must sign the NLI and financial aid agreement within 14 days of issuance; otherwise, the NLI is invalid. In turn, the institution must file the NLI with its conference office within 21 days of the date of final signature; otherwise, the NLI is invalid.

**Reminder:** An NLI that has been signed and returned to the institution in accordance with the NLI provisions remains valid until it is declared invalid by the conference office. For example, an NLI that is not filed within the required 21 days with the conference office is considered valid through the 21st day.

A prospect's parent/legal guardian must cosign the NLI with the prospect if he or she has not reached the age of 21. Falsification of a signature or a signature by a party other than the prospect and the prospect's parent/legal guardian may result in a prospect forfeiting the first year of eligibility at any NLI participating institution.

**Reminder:** Junior college transfer students should list their home address rather than their campus address on the line that calls for the student's permanent address on the NLI signature page.

**RECRUITING BAN AFTER SIGNING (PROVISION 9):** The NLI Recruiting Ban remains in effect until the prospect enrolls in the signing institution. Once a student enrolls in the signing institution he or she is governed by applicable NCAA recruiting bylaws, specifically NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.3.

**Reminder:** The NLI Recruiting Ban remains in effect while a student seeks to apply the One-Year Absence Provision.

**ANNUAL INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT:** Each NLI member institution is required to file with its conference office on an annual basis a signed copy of the NLI Institutional Commitment Form. The document must be signed and dated by the institution's Director of Athletics prior to submission to the conference office. (Commitment forms are available at [www.national-letter.org](http://www.national-letter.org).)

**DELIVERY OF THE NLI (PROVISION 20):** Per NCAA Bylaw 13.1.6.7, any in-person, off-campus contact made with a prospect for the purposes of signing an NLI or other commitment to attend the institution or attendance at activities related to the signing of an NLI or other commitment to attend the institution, shall be prohibited. Further, per NCAA Bylaw 13.1.6.7.1, in-person, off-campus delivery of an NLI by an institutional staff member shall be prohibited. The NLI may be delivered by express mail, courier service, regular mail, facsimile machine or electronic mail.

**OTHER LETTER OF INTENT PROGRAMS:** A letter of intent signed with a junior college or NAIA school does not apply to NCAA Division I and II members participating in the National Letter of Intent program. Junior colleges and NAIA schools have their own letters of intent.

**RECRUITING RULES VIOLATION (PROVISION 7f):** A National Letter of Intent shall be declared null and void if eligibility reinstatement by the NCAA student-athlete reinstatement staff is necessary due to NCAA and/or conference recruiting rules violations.

**For additional information regarding the NLI program, visit the NLI website: <http://www.national-letter.org/>**

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