



GULF COAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

2016 EDITION



Articles

Gulf Coast Athletic Conference

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (GCAC). It is an affiliated conference within the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of the conference will be to regulate and promote all recognized activities of intercollegiate athletics sponsored by member institutions through the maintenance of high standards of honor, integrity, and fair play. All member institutions agree to pursue the highest standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. The conference shall operate within NAIA standards

ARTICLE III

Membership

Section 1. The following institutions are charter members of this conference:

Belhaven College
Dillard University
Louisiana College
Spring Hill College
Tougaloo College
William Carey College
Xavier University of Louisiana

Additional members are:

Mobile College/University of Mobile added on October 1, 1985;
Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) added on October 8, 1986;
Loyola University, added on April 3, 1995;
Talledega College, added April 29, 1999, withdrew August 12, 2002; rejoined December 13, 2010
Louisiana State University-Shreveport, added on April 25, 2000;
Louisiana College, withdrew May 31, 2000. 2
Belhaven College, withdrew May 31, 1999, rejoined April 30, 2002;
Belhaven College/University, withdrew May 31, 2010
Louisiana State University-Shreveport, withdrew May 31, 2010
Loyola University, withdrew May 31, 2010
University of Mobile, withdrew May 31, 2010
Spring Hill College, withdrew May 31, 2010
William Carey College/University, withdrew May 31, 2010
Edward Waters College, joined April 23, 2010
Fisk University, joined April 23, 2010
Philander Smith, joined December 13, 2010
Voorhees College, joined March 30, 2012



Fisk University, withdrew May 1, 2013
Voorhees College, withdrew June 4, 2015

Section 2. Any four-year college or university in the Southeast U.S. area which is regionally accredited and which has the sponsorship of a member school may apply for membership.

Section 3. New members may be admitted by a two-thirds vote of the entire conference at a regular or special meeting of the conference, provided that application has been made by the president of the applying institution or his representative to the Commissioner at least thirty days prior to the meeting and notice sent to all conference members at least fifteen days prior to the meeting. A letter of sponsorship from the president of the sponsoring institution, or his representative, must accompany the application.

Section 4. Member institutions may be dismissed from the conference by a two-thirds vote of the membership at any meeting.

Thirty days written notice of intent to make a motion of dismissal shall be given to the president of the institution subjected to such a motion. Such institution shall be given the opportunity to state its case at the meeting considering the motion to dismiss.

Section 5. Any member institution may resign from the conference after giving one year's written notice of intent to do so to all other members.

ARTICLE IV Governance

Section 1. Council of Presidents (COP). As required by the NAIA, final authority for the operations of the conference resides with this body composed of institutional chief executive officers within the conference. It shall convene at least once annually in person or by teleconference. Voting may not be delegated and may be exercised only by CEO's present at the meeting. The COP shall select one of its members as its chair and that CEO shall convene the group and shall serve as the GCAC's representative to the NAIA Council of Presidents. The COP shall also meet in special session in person or by teleconference at the call of the chair or at the request of any two member institutions. Such meeting shall be held on not less than one week's notice. The COP shall have direct authority over:

- a. Amendments to the constitution, bylaws and other governing documents;
- b. Budget approval and financial oversight;
- c. Employment and supervision of the conference commissioner;
- d. Conference membership; and
- e. Approval of the conference strategic plan.

Enumeration of the above responsibilities shall not be construed to deny the right of the COP to exercise any other power or perform other duties within the field of governance of the affairs of the conference. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the conference CEO's.

Section 2. Conference Executive Committee: Each member of the conference shall be represented on this body by one delegate who shall be entitled to cast the vote of the delegate's institution. This vote shall be cast by the individual designated by the president of the institution to serve as delegate. Such delegation should be in writing. In the absence of any presidential delegation the faculty athletic representative shall serve as delegate. This group shall convene at least twice yearly in person at the meetings of the conference. The group shall select the conference president who shall convene the group and, if designated as an institutional delegate, shall cast the vote of that institution. If the president is not the institutional delegate, the president may vote only to break a tie. The group shall also select the

conference vice-president who shall attend all committee meetings. The vice-president shall convene the group in the absence of the president and, if designated as an institutional delegate, shall cast the vote of that institution. If the vice-president is not the institutional delegate, the vice-president may vote only to break a tie in the absence of the president. The Executive Committee shall also meet in special session in person or by teleconference at the call of the conference president or at the request of any two member institutions. Such meeting shall be held on not less than one week's notice. Only paid-up members may exercise their voting privileges.

The Conference Executive Committee shall have authority over all conference matters not directly controlled by the COP. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Approval or rejection of all policies regarding competition, championships, and conduct.
- b. Approval or rejection of all recommendations from the Council of Athletics Directors and Sport Committees.
- c. Granting or denying exceptions to conference rules.
- d. Hearing appeals from the decisions of the commissioner, the president, and conference committees
- e. Investigating and inspecting activities of the member institutions whenever the committee deems necessary. This function may be carried out by the committee directly or, at its direction, by the Commissioner.
- f. Making policy decisions on all matters under their authority arising between conference meetings not covered in the Constitution, By-laws, conference regulations, or previous conference decisions.
- g. Enacting and implementing, on its own initiative, rules and regulations to deal with situations that may arise between meetings. Such rules and regulations shall be enforced by the Commissioner.
- h. Making recommendations to the Council of Presidents in any area of the Executive Committee's choosing.
- i. Suspending or placing on probation any student athlete of a member institution for violation of conference rules; prohibiting from competition or placing on probation any student athlete of a member institution for violation of conference rules or for acts of poor sportsmanship; and prohibiting from participation in any conference activity or place on probation any coach, faculty or staff member or team follower of any member institution for violation of conference rules or for acts of poor sportsmanship. The committee may, for cause, vacate a championship already awarded to an institution or individual. Complaints must be filed with the Commissioner or with the President, as chairman of the Executive Committee.
- j. Enacting and implementing, on its own initiative, rules and regulations to deal with situations that may arise between meetings. Such rules and regulations shall have the force of conference-voted rules until the next regular meeting and shall be enforced by the Commissioner. enacting and implementing, on its own initiative, rules and regulations to deal with situations that may arise between meetings. Such rules and regulations shall have the force of conference-voted rules until the next regular meeting and shall be enforced by the Commissioner.

Section 3. Council of Athletics Directors: This group shall convene twice yearly in person at each regular conference meeting and elect its own chair and vice-chair. Its duties include:

- a. Reviewing all proposals from sports committees. Any sports committee proposal must have the approval of the Council of Athletics Directors to proceed further.
- b. Overseeing all athletic competition within the conference and making recommendations regarding policies and budgetary matters to the COP and the Conference Executive Committee.



Section 4. Any member of the conference failing twice in succession to be represented at the regular meetings of either the COP, the Executive Committee or the Council of Athletics Directors may be dropped from membership.

ARTICLE V Officers

The officers of the conference shall be a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer commissioner, eligibility chair, conference faculty athletic representative, conference information director, and conference registrar. Except for the commissioner these officers shall be elected by the Conference Executive Committee.

Section 1. The President shall serve for a two-year term and may be re-elected for a second term but not for a third, consecutive term. The duties of the office shall include:

- a. Presiding at all meetings of the conference
- b. Appointing all Standing and Special Committees whose selection is not otherwise specified in the Constitution and By-laws.
- c. Calling special meetings of the Conference Executive Committee at his or her own initiative or when two members so request.
- d. Providing necessary physical arrangements for the regular and special conference meetings
- e. Serving as the official representative of the conference including serving on the NAIA National Administrative Council and casting the conference vote at the national NAIA Business Meeting unless the COP designates another individual.

Section 2. The Vice President shall serve for a two-year term, may be re-elected for a second term, and shall not be from the same institution as the president. He or she shall not be compensated except for expenses incurred while serving as representative of the conference at meetings other than those of the conference. He or she shall perform the duties of the president in the latter's absence. Disability, resignation, or disassociation from a member institution.

Section 3. The Secretary-Treasurer shall serve for a two-year term and may be re-elected. His or her duties shall include:

- a. Keeping the minutes of the meetings of the conference and the executive committee.
- b. Invoicing member institutions for conference dues and membership costs.
- c. Keeping and submitting at each regular meeting a detailed record of conference income and outflow.
- d. Disbursing the conference funds as directed by conference policies.
- e. Supplying the COP, conference president, faculty athletic representatives and athletic director of each member institution with updated copies of all conference rules, regulations, and amendments. Copies of such rules, regulations, and amendments are to be forwarded by the secretary-treasurer within 60 days of the conference at which they are approved.

Section 4. The Commissioner shall be considered the administrator of the conference. He or she is selected by the COP. The term of employment shall be for a one-year term beginning on June 30 of the year of appointment. The commissioner shall report to the COP. The COP will be responsible for evaluation of the conference commissioner annually and report their evaluation to the Conference. The individual selected may not be concurrently affiliated with any GCAC institution. His or her duties shall include:

- a. Implementing the Constitution and By-laws of the conference and all other rules and regulations of the conference and of other regulatory bodies to whom the conference is accountable under the supervision of the COP.
- b. Implementing the decisions of the COP and Conference Executive Committee in all areas not elsewhere assigned to other officers.
- c. Final responsibility for supervising officiating in conference team sports. The conference shall employ the services of an assignments secretary or secretaries for basketball officiating who shall work under his supervision and may employ assignments secretaries for other sports. He or she shall receive and respond to all complaints or protests relative to game officials, game procedures or conditions, and actions of the players, coaches, or team supporters of member institutions. He or she may require written or oral statements and other evidence from all parties concerned for disposition and settlement.
- d. Imposing all penalties prescribed by the Constitution and By-laws of the conference or by the COP or Conference Executive Committee. The Commissioner may, at his or her discretion, impose immediate penalties for violations of conference rules including unsportsmanlike activities. In such instances he or she shall notify the COP or Executive Committee in writing within three working days of his decision. The Commissioner's decision may be appealed within seven days after notification to the institution or individual involved to the COP or Conference Executive Committee upon written notice of appeal to the conference president and payment of a one hundred dollar (\$100.00) appeal bond (cashier's check only). The bond is refunded in full to the penalized institution only if the COP or Conference Executive Committee renders a final appeal decision in favor of the institution.
- e. Arranging, with the assistance of the committee of the sport involved, conference game or tournament schedules for the purpose of maximizing convenience and minimizing expense.
- f. Arranging for the purchase and delivery of trophies for conference champions and for individual awards.
- g. Supervising conference championship competition either in person or by a designated representative.
- h. Providing information to the National NAIA as required by NAIA regulations
- i. Attending National NAIA meetings as required of conference commissioners
- j. Supervising the annual publication of the conference directory
- k. Supervising the Secretary-Treasurer and the Conference Information Director.

An Assistant Commissioner may be appointed by the COP. If appointed, he/she shall be responsible for all duties assigned by the Commissioner. He/She shall serve as Commissioner in the absence of or at the request of the Commissioner.

Section 5. The Information Director shall serve for a two-year term and may be re-elected. His or her duties shall include:

- a. Maintaining a complete and official record of all athletic activity engaged in by the conference membership.
- b. Keeping the complete athletic participation record of all participants in conference-sponsored sports.
- c. Sending news releases of conference activities to the news media in the GCAC area.
- d. Maintaining and updating the conference website.

Section 6. The Conference Faculty Athletic Representative shall represent the GCAC within the structure of the national organization.

Section 7. The Eligibility Chair shall chair the Eligibility Committee and be responsible for enforcement of all eligibility regulations. The Commissioner may, but does not necessarily, also serve as Eligibility

Chair. The positions are treated as entirely separate and if a different individual serves as the Eligibility Chair he or she may be concurrently affiliated with a conference institution. Duties include:

- a. Receiving all required eligibility certification materials, checking them for compliance with NAIA and GCAC standards, and maintaining a file of all such materials for four years after submission.
- b. Reporting any suspected violations of eligibility regulations first to the CEO, Athletics Director and Faculty Athletics Representative of the institution involved and then to the National NAIA Office.
- c. Collecting and sending appropriate materials regarding any apparent or suspected violations to the Conference Eligibility Committee for a recommendation and to the National NAIA Office.
- d. Processing any requests for exceptions to NAIA rules as directed by the NAIA By-laws.
- e. Conduct a workshop at one conference meeting per year for faculty athletics representatives and registrars on eligibility rules and processes.

Section 7. The Registrar shall represent the Conference as appropriate in the national organization.

ARTICLE VI Committees

The conference shall have the following Standing Committees:

Sport Committee (one for each sport in which there is conference competition)
Eligibility Committee

Section 1: Each sports committee is composed of the head coaches of that sport at each institution shall elect its own chair who serves for one year and may be re-elected. Each committee shall, in consultation with the Commissioner, devise methods to determine schedules, champions, and all-conference teams (where appropriate), and other awards and recognition in their specific sport.

Section 2: The Eligibility Committee shall be composed of three individuals appointed by the President, normally Faculty Athletics Representatives, from three separate institutions. The Eligibility Chair shall serve as chair of this committee but shall not have a vote unless necessary to break a tie. The Eligibility Committee makes recommendations to the National NAIA in matters of violations and requests for exceptions to NAIA rules. If a member of the committee is affiliated with an institution either under investigation for a possible violation or requesting an exception he or she shall be recused from any participation in the case.

Section 3: The COP or the President may appoint additional special committees or task forces as needed.

ARTICLE VII Meetings and Domicile

Section 1. The conference shall normally meet in regular sessions twice yearly. One meeting in the fall and one in the spring shall be held on dates chosen by the President or Conference Executive Committee.

Section 2. Called meetings shall be held upon call of the President acting on his or her own initiative or upon call of the President upon request of one-third of the membership.



Section 3. The site of these meetings shall normally be rotated among the campuses of the member institutions although the President may designate an alternative site.

Section 4. The President shall provide a schedule for conference meetings at least one week in advance. Sports committees, Council of Athletics Directors, and the Executive Committee shall meet on each occasion. The Eligibility Committee and any special committees may meet as necessary. A general session shall be held for the purpose of hearing reports from conference committees and councils, the Commissioner, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Information Director, and other conference personnel as needed. All conference personnel are invited and encouraged to attend. The primary purpose is informational, but opportunity should be provided for questions, discussion, and suggestions. At one meeting, normally in the fall, the Eligibility Chair shall conduct a workshop for faculty athletics representatives and registrars on eligibility rules and processes. Athletics directors, coaches, and other interested individuals may also attend.

Section 5. The domicile of the conference for purpose of law which shall be construed as controlling any conference contact and for purpose of service of process shall be the city of the conference commissioner, which is to be the site and location of all conference records.

ARTICLE VIII Expenses

Expenses incurred during the year in carrying on the work of the conference shall be divided equally among the member institutions if annual dues are insufficient to meet same.

ARTICLE IX Amendments

The By-laws may be amended by the COP at their provided that the proposed amendment shall have been submitted to the chair of the COP and the Commissioner thirty days before the meeting and that a copy of each amendment be sent to each member institution fifteen days prior to the meeting. All amendments shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.

BY-LAWS

By-Law I Dues

The annual dues per member shall be determined by the Conference and shall be payable to the Conference office on or before the date of the fall meeting. *Members delinquent in payment for more than six months may be expelled from the conference at the discretion of the Executive Committee. In addition, members will contribute an additional fee (determined by the COP and Conference Office) to operate all conference championship tournaments*

By-law II Vacancies

A vacancy occurring in any office between conference meetings except that of the Commissioner and the President shall be filled by the Executive Committee. The COP will deal the office of Commissioner and the Vice-President succeeds to the office of President.

By-law III Participation

Section 1. All conference members shall participate in men's and women's basketball. Conference members shall participate in at least one men's and one women's sports in each season unless granted an exception by the Executive Committee. Conference champions shall be determined in other sports (men's and women's) where at least four conference schools participate.

Section 2. All conference schools participating in a sport shall be required to compete in the conference championship process.

By-law IV Eligibility

Section 1. Prospective student athletes may sign a letter of intent or grant-in-aid which upon signing prohibits those student-athletes from participating at another member institution will, by written consent of the Athletics Director or designee, release the student from signing of said letter of intent or grant-in-aid.

Section 2. Student athletes who transfer from one conference institution to another after participation in competition must obtain a document release in writing from the institution they are exiting.

Student-athletes are able to play immediately if they meet any of the following criteria:

- A. The student has completed all academic requirements for graduation and who is enrolling in a graduate program at the transferring institution, may participate in intercollegiate athletics

provided the student has athletic eligibility remaining and meets the NAIA requirements for eligibility.

B. The student is not an athlete nor were they recruited as an athlete, then the above statements does not apply. The athletic director will be responsible to verify in writing, the students current status and provide a release if deemed appropriate.

C. The student-athlete's former institution has announced that it will discontinue the sport in which the student athlete participated.

*Note: The originating institution granting the release may include conditions that must be adhered to by the new institution.

The conference will abide by the eligibility rules of the NAIA as specified in the latest revision of that organization's handbook unless conference rules specify additional criteria for eligibility.

Section By-law V

Sportsmanship

Each member institution shall be responsible for conducting all its athletic contests in an atmosphere of sportsmanship and friendly competition. Each school is responsible for the actions of its players, coaches, staff members, and students. The home school shall be responsible for taking measures, including the employment of law enforcement personnel, to assure that the visiting team and their supporters are free from intimidation, abuse, harassment, and threats or actions of violence by students, spectators, or on-lookers before, during, and after any athletic contest. In the event that trouble arises, officials of the home team must take whatever action is necessary to ensure the well-being of the visiting team, its supporters and the officials. Each home school shall also provide true and accurate game statistics to the visiting school as provided by conference agreement and shall forward true and accurate statistics to the conference information director as requested by the director. Institutions failing to provide the above shall be subjected to prompt penalties by the Commissioner including probation, removal from championship competition, forfeiture of athletic contests, and suspension of conference rights. By vote of the conference members, a member may be expelled for the same reason. Student-athletes involved in instances of unsportsmanlike action may be penalized with probation, suspension for a limited period, or loss of all eligibility within the conference. Faculty or staff members of member institutions involved may be penalized with probation, suspension from all conference activities for a limited period, or a permanent ban from all conference activities.

ARTICLE ~~By-law~~ VI Income Taxes

The purpose of the conference will be to regulate and promote all recognized activities of intercollegiate athletics sponsored by member organizations within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the



corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code). Upon the dissolution of the organization, the members shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the organization in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) as the member shall determine.

**ARTICLE ~~By-law~~ VII (adopted Fall 2015)
Conference Tournament Operating Mode 1**

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The Conference Office has full authority and responsibility to operate all championship tournaments including selecting tournament location. The conference office will work in conjunction with member institutions utilizing facilities and staff.~~Bid Process (adopted Fall 2011)~~

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CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT BID PROCESS

- ~~1. Bids/Proposals may be submitted to any conference member Athletic Director.~~
- ~~2. The Athletic Director is responsible for submitting the bid/proposal to the Conference President who will forward the bids/proposals to the Executive Committee~~
- ~~3. Bids/Proposals must be submitted one week (seven days) prior to the regularly scheduled Spring Meeting.~~
- ~~4. The executive committee will decide on bid winners at the Spring Meeting.~~

Criteria for Proposal

Any proposals submitted should address the following:

- ~~Facility

 - ~~Practice space to accommodate 16 teams with at least a one hour practice over a two day period.~~
 - ~~Locker room space to accommodate four teams at a time~~
 - ~~Minimum seating capacity of 1200~~~~

~~Hotel Accommodations~~

~~Conference Guarantee~~

Sport	Minimum Guarantee for Outside Entity	Minimum Guarantee for a Member Institution	Due Date for 50% of Guarantee
Men and Women's Basketball	\$10,000	\$5,000	December 1
Volleyball	\$1,000	\$500	September 1
Cross Country	\$1,000	\$500	September 1
Track	\$1,000	\$500	December 1

**ARTICLE ~~By-law~~ VIII
GCAC Trophy and Honors Policy**

Conference Championship Trophy and Individual Awards

For a sport in which 3 or more schools compete a GCAC Championship Trophy is awarded. For a sport in which 6 or more schools compete a GCAC Championship Trophy, a runner-up trophy, up to 12 all-conference awards and individual sports specific awards (such as player of the year) are awarded (All sports detail the name of specific awards in the operating policies and procedures for their respective sport). The latter awards are an individualized certificate mounted on a wooden plaque suitable for hanging on a wall. The manner in which player awards and coach of the year awards are left in the hands of the coaches in each sport. (Basketball, by a special vote, awards a regular season champion trophy (or co-champion if tied))

GCAC Honor Roll

GCAC Honor Roll awards are available to any athlete who has a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 or above and who actually competed (no minimum specified). The G.P.A. would be the one existing after the conclusion of the semester in which competition was completed. These must be certified to the commissioner/eligibility chair by the faculty athletic representative and the athletic director by June 30 for the sports just concluded in that school year. The award is a signed individualized certificate (no plaque). The names of the recipients of all awards are included in the following year's directory.

Thomas Howell Cup

The Thomas Howell Cup is awarded annually to the member institution that accumulates the greatest number of points in competition that year in all sports (men's and women's) sponsored by the NAIA. The number of points awarded depends on the number of schools competing. [Ex.: If 8 schools compete, first place is worth 8 points, second place 7 points, etc. If three schools compete, first place is worth 3 points. If only one school competes, that school is awarded 1 point.] If regular season standings are kept, points shall be awarded on the basis of regular season results. Otherwise, points are awarded on the basis of the results of the conference meet or tournament. The cup is transferred from the previous winner to the current winner as soon as results are announced.

ARTICLE By-law IX

Conference Game Times (adopted Spring 2012)

All conference game times shall be played at 3 pm and 5 pm respectively in the sports of men's basketball, women's basketball and volleyball. Game times may be changed with mutual agreement between both schools Athletic Directors.