

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

The Island University

6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412 (361) 825-2335 FAX (361) 825-2620

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CONTACT: Marshall Collins 361.825.2427

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Receives NCAA Letter Detailing Alleged Violations by Islander Athletic Programs

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is preparing its formal response to a letter from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) citing alleged violations by the Islander athletics department.

The NCAA's allegations detailed in the letter received Thursday, July 24, stem from the investigation that began shortly after the University received a notice of inquiry dated March 26, 2008. Possible violations were cited involving women's volleyball, men's tennis, men's basketball, and the reporting of income earned outside the University by athletic department staff.

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi undertook the investigation jointly with the NCAA. President Flavius Killebrew appointed an investigative oversight committee to ensure the NCAA easy access to the University's people and records. The oversight committee has recommended the implementation of recent department restructuring for NCAA compliance and student-athlete academic advising now reporting to the University's academic affairs division.

"We take the issues presented to us by the NCAA very seriously," President Killebrew said. "Our intercollegiate athletic program must be transparent beyond any reproach and, from the first day we were notified, we have worked closely with the NCAA in its inquiry."

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi also hired The Compliance Group of Lenexa, Kan., in April to assist the University in reviewing possible violations of NCAA legislation. The Compliance Group is assisting the University in crafting the response to the NCAA.

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“Our less than 10-year-old Islander athletic program is young when compared to programs at most of the nation’s universities,” said the president. “The solid achievements by our student-athletes clearly show that we have great promise ahead as a major name in intercollegiate athletics. We do not want that tarnished.”

The letter from the NCAA identified the following violations:

(1) In the 2005-2006 academic year the University permitted a student-athlete to play volleyball for a sixth year in excess of the permissible five-year period of eligibility.

(2) A student-athlete in spring 2004 was provided athletically related financial aid at the time he was a nonqualified and was fulfilling a year of residency at the University. In addition, in spring and fall 2004 the same student-athlete was permitted to serve as a manager for the men’s tennis program although he was not eligible to serve in this capacity. Furthermore, when the University became aware in spring 2005 of this improper financial aid and managerial duties it failed to declare him ineligible and permitted him to play tennis.

(3) From August 2007 through February 2008 the assistant men’s basketball coach placed impermissible telephone calls to four two-year prospective student-athletes.

(4) In spring 2008 the University provided a four-year transfer student-athlete with various impermissible recruiting inducements such as housing and transportation while the student-athlete was residing near the institution and attempting to enroll.

(5) The current athletic director was involved in and had knowledge of the decisions to not report alleged violations by two student-athletes, as well as the submission in November 2007 of an inaccurate self report.

(6) A former director of compliance was involved in and had knowledge of alleged violations by two student athletes, as well as the giving in April 2008 of false and misleading information to the NCAA enforcement staff.

(7) A former director of compliance failed to withhold a student-athlete from athletic competition, and he authorized transportation for a prospective student-athlete in violation of NCAA rules.

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(8) The scope and nature of the alleged violations demonstrate that the University failed to exercise institutional control and monitoring in the conduct and administration of its athletics program in the critical areas of NCAA compliance.

(9) The director of athletics in February 2008 authorized the head men's basketball coach to expend personal funds for recruiting purposes, inconsistent with institutional polices and in violation of NCAA regulations.

The University is working on its response for submission to the committee on infractions by the Oct. 29, 2008 deadline. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi is scheduled to appear before the committee Dec. 5 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Among the personnel changes in place for compliance and student-athlete advising are the hiring of Scott Lazenby from Texas State University who begins Aug. 4 as associate athletic director for compliance and Jennifer Baker from Texas A&M University in College Station as senior academic athletic advisor. Additional hires anticipated are a compliance assistant and an additional athletic advisor.

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