



## **EASTERN COLLEGE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE**

**39 OLD RIDGEBURY ROAD  
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810  
PHONE: 203-745-0434  
FAX: 203-745-0440**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Drew Brown, Vice President for External Affairs  
203-745-2785/dbrown@ecac.org

### **ECAC Board of Directors Cast Historic Vote to Add Varsity Sports Opportunities for Student-Athletes with Disabilities in ECAC Leagues and Championships**

DANBURY, Conn. – On January 15, 2015, the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Board of Directors adopted an inclusive sport strategy that will provide new intercollegiate athletic opportunities for student-athletes with a variety of disabilities attending ECAC member colleges and universities in Division I, II and III. By taking this pioneering action, the ECAC becomes the first NCAA sanctioned conference to provide a range of options for students with disabilities to realize their dreams of competing as intercollegiate varsity athletes.

“The ECAC is proud to promote and provide opportunities to potentially thousands of student-athletes with disabilities who attend ECAC member institutions,” said ECAC President and CEO Dr. Kevin T. McGinniss. “This historic action systematically includes student-athletes with disabilities in intercollegiate sports for the first time in any NCAA Division. I believe this action will allow many more students, including wounded veterans returning to college, to experience the benefits of competitive intercollegiate sports.”

This strategy includes providing reasonable accommodations in existing events and adding adaptive-specific events to existing ECAC Championship sports such as track & field, swimming, rowing, and tennis. Over the coming few years, the ECAC also aspires to add new leagues and championships for adaptive team sports such as wheelchair basketball, sled hockey, goal ball and sitting volleyball. To help insure the success of this strategy, the ECAC will provide all appropriate and necessary governance, administrative, operations, and sport technical support.

The ECAC Board’s action culminated after a year of planning and discussions led by Dr. Ted Fay, who is a sport management professor at SUNY Cortland and a Paralympic expert as well as an ECAC Senior Advisor on Inclusive Sport. He engaged former and current Paralympic athletes, coaches, intercollegiate sport administrators and athletic directors, and key officials from disability sport organizations and national sport governing bodies in helping to design this strategy. Work on this initiative will begin immediately with the first results anticipated to be seen in the 2015-16 academic year.

#### **About the ECAC**

In the 76 years since its inception, the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) has emerged as the nation's largest NCAA conference. The ECAC has grown considerably from its charter membership of 58, currently boasting over 300 members in Divisions I, II and III, ranging in location from Maine to South Carolina, and westerly to Missouri. At the conclusion of the 2014-15 academic year, the ECAC will host nearly 100 championships in 32 men's and women's sports as the sponsors of over 5,800 varsity teams and 111,000 male and female athletes. For more information, visit [www.ecacsports.com](http://www.ecacsports.com).

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