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Terry
Holland

This is my personal opinion as expressed to numerous media, university CEO's and the NCAA Leadership. Printed for Faculty Senate Meeting of September 12, 2006.

First below is an excerpt from a January 2004 letter to Myles Brand, the President of the NCAA and the former Indiana University President. That is followed by a combination of my notes for a February 2004 presentation to the Knight Commission and a September 2004 speech to the Retired Faculty Association at UVA before I left there to become AD at East Carolina (October 1, 2004). I also expressed these sentiments verbally at my first meeting with the ECU Faculty Senate in the fall of 2004:

JANUARY 2004 MYLES BRAND LETTER EXCERPT

As the problems escalate, many good people (athletes, coaches and administrators) will have their careers unnecessarily ruined. Devastated careers are not limited to members of the athletic department - just ask Linda Bensel-Meyers and other faculty and staff members who have gotten caught in the crossfire when athletic departments are forced to either defend the indefensible or lose their competitive position.

Substantive reform can not occur until the Board of Directors is willing to acknowledge the severity of the problem. Since neither you nor the Board has interviewed Ms. Bensel-Meyers, it appears that you would prefer to believe that this could not happen on your campus or that this incident was overblown.

For a sobering and objective report, contact Bob Gilbert, (a long-time Associated Press writer and University of Tennessee publicist) at 865 982-2889; e-mail {rgilbert63090@mindspring.com} or Bob Lipsyte of the New York Times by e-mail {thelipsite@aol.com}.

The NCAA has failed our outstanding athletes, their coaches, athletic administrators and our CEO's by providing a fatally flawed set of "marching orders" that encourages even our most ethical individuals to focus on winning and financial considerations. Reform will not result from attempts to punish individuals or institutions as invariably the blame falls on the least responsible (but most vulnerable) party or parties. REFORM CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY CHANGING THE "MARCHING ORDERS."

NOTES FOR KNIGHT COMMISSION AND RETIRED FACULTY AT UVA:

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge both the quality of the individuals who participate in and oversee intercollegiate athletics and the many positive achievements and contributions of those individuals on an annual basis. There is no doubt that these are men and women who are among our "best and brightest."

However, there can also be no doubt that the forces driving intercollegiate athletics today are compromising these outstanding individuals at an alarming and increasing rate. How else can one explain the growing litany of outrageous (and irresponsible)

behaviors of athletes, coaches, athletic administrators, governing board members AND college presidents?

Most dangerous of all is the fact that the participants are now so invested (huge salaries, perks, etc.) in the status quo that they defend the indefensible and rationalize the irrational.

The "perception gap" is graphically illustrated by the comment of an upper level NCAA employee who dismissed concerns that professors may be pressured to inflate grades and keep athletes eligible to play:

"You tell me a faculty member will respond to pressure from athletic coaches, you're living in a dream world," she said. "I challenge you to find one athletic director who will claim they can affect what grades faculty give students."

As contrasted with this immediate reaction to her comments from a senior editor of a national publication (a man who has spent countless hours covering the NCAA for the last decade or so), "surprising--not even the NCAA is usually that dishonest. An NCAA Vice President told me he knew of athletic officials who had gotten not just grades changed, but entire majors added at colleges. Depressing."

Add these quotes from two outstanding professors who have taught at four different Division IA institutions in power conferences. Both of these men would be classified as "huge" sports fans with one having two children competing as scholarship athletes on nationally ranked Division I sports teams and the other qualifies as the best "sports trivia" person I have ever met:

(1) *"In my opinion, college presidents, independently or on NCAA boards, will never solve the problem. They are part of the problem. It is all about money and keeping their jobs. In a sense, they are more guilty than anyone because they should know better, and they let it happen, even encouraged it."*

The simple truth is that many college athletes should not be in college, and many others have no real reason or opportunity to behave like students once they get here. The problem is decades old, but it is now worse because of the money and TV. I believe that the only potential solution is a faculty revolt across universities, but apathy runs deep and who would organize it."

(2) *"It seems to me that, whether they want to be or not, Brand and the other presidents are prisoners of this huge cash generating colossus. No one can convince me that they care one whit about the academic achievements of athletes and I don't see them backing any reform that represents any risk to them personally."*

The saddest thing to me is that fans, like me and my faculty friends, accept this situation. What you propose makes so much sense and I believe anyone who is honest would agree. But I think there will be a thousand reasons for doing nothing."

It is disheartening that intelligent and caring fans who are also faculty members have little faith in the ability of college presidents to deal with reform in a forthright manner; but it is downright depressing that these same people actually question the presidents' willingness to attempt to deal with reform issues. And, it is truly embarrassing that an organization, (the NCAA) created to protect the integrity of our

programs, can be described as "dishonest" by a media member with intimate knowledge of (and friends within) the organization.

While the major concerns today are centered on football and men's basketball, I can assure you that as athletic director, I had 22 other sports programs chasing the football/men's basketball "model" as hard as they could, like lemmings off the cliff. Larger scholarship budgets for each sport have directly resulted in lower average SAT scores of entering athletes for that sport. Larger travel budgets have directly resulted in lower GPA's as teams simply miss more class and study time to play a "national schedule" or to make trips to Hawaii, etc. to make the program more attractive to potential recruits.

In April of this year, the NCAA passed "incentives/disincentives" legislation which is intended to penalize Division I teams whose graduation rates fall below an as yet unspecified percentage.

Penalties would include reductions in the number of athletic scholarships a team could award and, in extreme and persistent cases, ineligibility for Bowl Games and the NCAA basketball tournament.

NCAA President Myles Brand seems convinced that the reforms will hold "individual institutions and sports programs accountable for educating student-athletes." We all should applaud President Brand's leadership and the Board's sincere desire to improve graduation rates and guarantee athletes the opportunity for an education.

However, the NCAA's desire to achieve the end result (improved graduation rates) can not ignore the dynamics created by the competitive and financial forces driving intercollegiate athletics today.

Recent history clearly warns us that attempts to dictate an end result will not work if we simply force athletes, coaches, and administrators at individual institutions to find the "means" to achieve the desired result. For example, increasing the initial eligibility standards and increasing the standards to remain eligible has not resulted in an improved academic experience for athletes.

The actual result of the higher standards has been a greater incidence of academic fraud and embarrassing revelations of "mickey mouse" courses and majors for athletes, athletes passing courses they never attended, tutors writing papers for athletes, etc.

The NCAA must acknowledge the competitive and financial realities that force institutions and individuals into ethical dilemmas. Every athlete, coach, and administrator can, and will, respond positively if we provide clear marching orders for them to find the means to do so.

At the present time, our WORDS to our athletes tell them that "class-work comes first" and "graduation is your most important objective" - but our ACTIONS speak so loudly that they can not hear our words when we schedule athletic competitions, including NCAA Championships, on their class days, during their exams and even during their graduation ceremonies.

I am here today to plead with all current and former faculty members to demand three simple governing principles that could begin to change the momentum in intercollegiate athletics from destructive to constructive action:

1. SAY WHAT YOU MEAN AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY - If our presidents believe that academics are our first priority then simply demand that athletes attend every class as the minimal requirement to conduct an athletic program on the campus of each institution.

I coached nationally competitive basketball teams in the ACC for 16 years and our players rarely missed a class for regular season games - we did, however, miss a huge amount of class for ACC and NCAA tournaments since we had no control over the scheduling of those events. Only Men's Basketball will have problems meeting a "no missed class mandate and, even in the short term, careful scheduling can eliminate 70 to 80 per cent of the current missed classes in Men's Basketball without affecting the television contracts already in place.

Our athletes can never believe that academics are important as long as athletic competitions are scheduled during their classes, their exams, and even during their graduation ceremonies.

While it is true that many athletes can miss class and maintain eligibility, they can not compete at their best under such circumstances. Our coaches would certainly tell you that athletes who miss practices and competitions may still be good players but they would be less than their best athletically.

What if the math department offered to pay for athletic "tutors" for athletes who had to miss athletic practices and competitions in order to attend math class? Would our coaches believe that "tutors" can remedy the problems associated with missed practices and missed competitions? If the answer is "NO!" then why should we expect professors to believe that academic tutoring can replace missed class time?

2. PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS - If our presidents want our institutions to recruit football and basketball players who can, and will, succeed academically, then provide financial and competitive rewards to those institutions who award scholarships to athletes with academic credentials similar to those of their classmates.

This would at least allow institutions to choose between (1) trying to succeed financially simply by doing whatever it takes to win or; (2) to succeed financially by recruiting athletes who fit the institution's academic profile.

It is a simple fact of life that every institution can not have a winning record in any given year but it is possible for every institution to recruit athletes who fit that institution's academic profile every single year - if we can eventually provide sufficient financial and competitive motivation for them to do so.

3. RETURN THE DETERMINATION OF ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY TO THE FACULTY OF EACH NCAA INSTITUTION - simply require a year of residence at an institution before the individual can represent the institution in competition (this would make freshmen and all transfers ineligible during their first year at an institution).

A "first year residency" allows students to prove that they can (and will) do the work required at that particular institution. It also emphasizes to them that class work does truly come before athletic competition will be allowed.

The grades awarded by the faculty at the institution during the year of residency would then determine if and when an athlete is ready to represent the institution in competition.

These three simple policy changes could change the dynamics of intercollegiate athletics for all time. By "saying what we mean" and "meaning what we say," we would be encouraging athletes, coaches and administrators to use their resources and time to develop strong and competitive athletic programs that are consistent with the academic missions of our member institutions.

If the NCAA continues its present policy of attempting to dictate the end result without addressing the means to that result, Sports Illustrated will continue to write touching stories about athletes who graduated but can not read. And the 13 year NBA veteran can still answer truthfully when asked if he earned his degree - "No. But they gave me one anyway."

Devra Lee Davis in her book, *When Smoke Ran Like Water*, recalls a Jewish Midrash (story-telling) traditional parable:

A group of workers is asked to do something quite difficult and complicated. They protest, "the day is short"; "the work is too hard"; "the project is too big"; "we do not have the right tools"; "and anyway, we are too tired"; "we will never finish this job!" Their teacher replies, "it is not for you to finish the task. But...you must begin."

It is time to put aside our individual and institutional agendas, denials, and rationalizations to create a vision for intercollegiate athletics that will enhance the experience for future generations of young people in our colleges and universities.

TERRY HOLLAND