



COIA Newsletter, Fall 2009

As the leadership of faculty governance bodies turns over, it is important to remind ourselves why each of our faculty senates joined The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA).

Intercollegiate athletics programs are in many ways an asset to the university. They provide students with opportunities for personal growth and leadership. They are entertaining. They build loyalty to the institution as they bring together students, alumni and the local community in a shared interest.

However, the primary mission of a university is academic – to educate and to learn. And these same athletics programs are often at odds with this mission.

Students may be admitted to institutions based on their athletic rather than academic prowess. Maintenance of eligibility is often the major factor guiding course selection and choice of major for student-athletes. The time demands of practice and competition often deny the student athlete the typical collegiate experience. The competition to build the most successful program has triggered a never-ending escalation in costs, which more often than not is paid for by dollars diverted from academic programs. And commercialization has created an environment in which the student-athlete is at risk of exploitation.

These issues should be of concern faculty at all institutions whose sports teams compete at the highest level. The academic mission of the university is the primary responsibility of the faculty. Thus faculty must take the initiative to protect that mission.

COIA is an organization that brings together faculty governance bodies of NCAA Division IA schools (now the FBS) to address these issues. Working with other organizations that share their goals, COIA has proposed best practices guidelines which faculty can use to evaluate athletics policies at their own institution, and which can serve as the basis for nation-wide reform.

MYLES BRAND

by Bob Eno, former Chair, COIA

When Myles Brand became President of the NCAA in 2003, he undertook to transform that association into an agent of change that could enable academic leaders to address the need for serious reform in college sports. In office he asserted the primacy of the academic mission and implemented the first sustained attempt to link success in athletics to academic integrity. His death on September 16 is a blow to all who, like COIA, endorsed this commitment to reform and hoped to see an expansion of that vision. Brand was a great friend of COIA and he met frequently with COIA members and representatives. Many of us feel his death as a personal loss.

COIA's origins were closely entwined with the emergence of Brand as a spokesperson for athletics reform, and our coalition was formed in the months surrounding Brand's NCAA appointment. As a university president Brand had been a strong supporter of faculty governance, and only three months into his tenure at the NCAA he brought members of his Board to meet with COIA leaders and initiate a publicly announced alliance with our coalition of faculty senates. He invited COIA representatives to a series of meetings with athletics directors, opening lines of

communication to help us educate one another. He visited our national meetings, introduced us to university presidents working for change, publicized our work, and opened doors for us in many ways.

For all that, COIA was frequently a voice of criticism. While steering a serious academic reform package through the complex and contentious NCAA structure was a tremendous achievement, COIA pointed to the work yet to be done verifying the effectiveness of those reforms and addressing other pressing issues, such as the professionalization of college sports and the arms race in salaries and facilities. Brand did not always agree with our ideas, but he always showed respect for them, and in many cases he accepted our criticisms, regretting that with the tools he possessed he could not do more.

In later years, the pace of reform slowed – the low-hanging fruit had been picked and problems fell short of a crisis that could mobilize broad political will. In a 2007 meeting at the NCAA, COIA leaders worried that without tangible progress our coalition could not be maintained. Brand's response was emphatic: "You have no idea how important it is to have a credible organization based in faculty governance articulating these views on a national level. It would be a terrible mistake to give up."

It will be months before anyone has a clear sense of the direction the NCAA will now take and there is no guarantee that the future will provide us with opportunities for effectively promoting the remaining reform proposals that COIA advocates. But in recognition of President Brand's accomplishments and his collegial friendship towards our coalition, the COIA Steering Committee has pledged to the NCAA Executive Committee that COIA will remain ready to support them in working towards President Brand's vision of intercollegiate

athletics as a truly constructive enhancement of our academic mission.

Since the spring of 2008, **COIA and Penn State's John Curley Center for Sports Journalism** have been collaborating on a survey titled "Athletic Integration into Academics." This survey has been designed as an assessment system to evaluate and compare the integration of athletics into the academic goals and mission of NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools. The survey provides a means of self-evaluation for institutions, and will be used to highlight schools doing a good job of integrating athletics into their academic mission by using established best practices.

Following the Curley Center's twelve-school pre-test of the survey this spring (of which seven completed and returned the survey), faculty governance leaders at the remaining FBS institutions were sent the survey. As of September 3, 18 more schools had completed and returned their surveys and another 20 had stated that they were in the process of completing it or still planned to do so. Due to new faculty governance leadership at several universities, the deadline for completion has been extended to September 15.

The Curley Center continues, through e-mail and phone calls, to encourage faculty governance leaders and faculty athletics representatives to complete the survey.

The 2010 COIA annual meeting will be held January 22-24 at San Diego State University. An official meeting notice will be mailed out soon. All COIA representatives and faculty senate presidents from member schools are encouraged to attend.

It would be useful for planning purposes if you could let us know whether one or more people from your institution are likely to attend.
(browne@wfu.edu)

Agenda

Annual Meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics Jan 22-24, San Diego State University

Friday, Jan 22

- 4:00** Meeting of the COIA steering committee
6:00 Reception

Saturday, Jan 23

- 9:00** Opening remarks by San Diego State President Weber, AD Schemmel, Senate Chair Benkov, and Intercollegiate Athletics Authority Chair Caves
9:30 Panel discussion on student-athlete welfare issues: Christine Jackson of Alabama State University, incoming President of the N4A, Gerald Gurney, University of Oklahoma, President –elect of the N4A, and Colleen Evans of San Diego State, Director of Student Athlete Support Services.
10:30 **break**
11:00 John Columbo, University of Illinois College of Law - Using the Tax System to Reform College Athletics
12:00 Jo Potuto, University of Nebraska – President of the Division I FARs
12:30 **lunch**
1:30 John Bruno, Ohio State- Representative to the NCAA Academic Cabinet
2:30 Brad Wolverton, Chronicle of Higher Education – Financial issues in intercollegiate athletics
3:30 **break**
3:45 Richard Lapchick - Director, Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport , University of Central Florida - "Race and Intercollegiate Athletics: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going."
4:45 Comments by invited guests
7:00 **dinner**
8:00 Charles Clotfelter –Duke University - "Athletics, University Aims, and the Prospects for Reform"

Sunday, Jan 24

- 9:00** Gerald Gurney, University of Oklahoma, President –Elect of the N4A, Meaningful Faculty Contributions to Athletic Academic Reform on the Campus and the National Scene
10:00 Diane Dickman, NCAA update
11:00 COIA business