

From: Bob Eno
Sent: Sunday, September 12, 2004 11:56 AM
Subject: Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics

Dear Colleagues,

I'd like to begin this message by welcoming the University of Southern Mississippi to the Coalition. We now have thirty-nine members. The new academic year has brought many changes in senate leaderships, and the email roster of Coalition representatives, which appears at the end of this message, has many new names.

This is the first of two messages from the Coalition Steering Committee that you'll be receiving to start the year. The next should come in a few days, and it will include an extensive set of proposals from the Steering Committee to the Coalition membership concerning issues of academic integrity and college sports. This message is intended to alert you to expect that document, to relate it to our agenda for this term, and to let you know of a plan we have developed for a meeting of the Coalition in January.

Last Spring, we developed policy positions concerning campus athletics governance, including a best-practices guide, and four specific proposals for NCAA bylaw changes related to governance issues. Part of our Fall agenda will be following up on these bylaw proposals. The NCAA staff has been helping our Steering Committee learn how to move these proposals into the legislative process, and we've been invited to join a meeting of Division IA FARs later this month to see whether FARs will help us with their support. Turning the policies we adopted last Spring into reform accomplishments will be part of our Fall work.

However, the major effort we envision now will be moving on to "academic integrity" issues - policies that concern admissions, scholarships, curricular integrity, season scheduling, and advising for athletes.

The draft you'll receive from the Steering Committee will involve many tough issues. Our plan is to collect feedback for COIA very broadly: we will ask for responses from all Div IA schools, from the NCAA staff, and from others. Any input we receive will be circulated within the Coalition for our own internal discussions, so that when we arrive at an amended document and vote on adoption we'll all feel we've done due diligence in vetting our ideas and hearing reports from varied perspectives. The Steering Committee believes we'll want to take the entire Fall term to collect reactions, discuss them, and improve the document.

Given the complexity of the issues we'll be addressing, we think we'll need to have a face-to-face Coalition meeting in order to reach final agreement on these academic integrity policies. The Steering Committee has been working on arrangements for a meeting of the Coalition, tentatively scheduled for Jan. 6-7 (before most of us return to teaching after the holidays). Our thought is that we would spend one entire day finalizing the academic integrity document, and a second, shorter day discussing priorities and strategy for 2005. We should have more details when we convey the academic integrity draft to you in a few days.

If we're successful this Fall, the areas that will be left for us to focus on, starting this Spring, will be the toughest of all: the inflating cost structure of athletics - the arms race - and control of commercialization.

During 2003 and 2004, COIA strategy has been to earn credentials and make contributions to reform by working on those areas that faculty have expert knowledge of and some direct control over: governance and academics, as they relate to athletics. We hope to have completed good work on these by January, and to have initiated efforts to translate those policies into NCAA legislation and practical guidance for local campuses. In the view of the Steering Committee, our primary task from that point will be to use the leverage we've gained to help bring university presidents, NCAA leadership, and others to the table to make a concerted, good faith effort to bring the arms race and problematic commercialization under control. In a political sense, this is what we have been building the Coalition for, and it will constitute our agenda in 2005.

The odds are still long, but the broader our basis in faculty senate support, the greater our potential to overcome them. We're continuing to seek additional endorsements from other senates. We've renewed contacts with senate chairs at all Div IA schools who have not yet joined, and there has been an encouraging response.

As always, please feel free to convey questions that you and your colleagues may have. We'll always do our best to respond.

Best,
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