



August 1999

In light of recent events in intercollegiate athletics, it seems particularly timely to offer this Internet version of the combined reports of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. Together with an Introduction, the combined reports detail the work and recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel convened in 1989 to recommend reforms in the governance of intercollegiate athletics. Three reports, published in 1991, 1992 and 1993, were bound in a print volume summarizing the recommendations as of September 1993. The reports were titled Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete, A Solid Start and A New Beginning for a New Century. Knight Foundation dissolved the Commission in 1996, but not before the National Collegiate Athletic Association drastically overhauled its governance based on a structure “lifted chapter and verse,” according to a New York Times editorial, from the Commission's recommendations.

Introduction

By Creed C. Black, President; CEO (1988-1998)

In 1989, as a decade of highly visible scandals in college sports drew to a close, the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (then known as Knight Foundation) were concerned that athletics abuses threatened the very integrity of higher education. In October of that year, they created a commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and directed it to propose a reform agenda for college sports.

As the trustees debated the wisdom of establishing such a commission and the many reasons advanced for doing so, one of them asked me, “What’s the down side of this?”

“Worst case,” I responded, “is that we could spend two years and \$2 million and wind up with nothing to show of it.”

As it turned out, the time ultimately became more than three years and the cost \$3 million. But far from having nothing to show for it, the trustees are satisfied that the time and money were well spent.

The Foundation's Interest

To understand the work of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, it is necessary to look back on the extent to which corruption had engulfed big-time college sports in the 1980s.

Before examining the problem, however, let me emphasize that the Foundation's decision to wade into this swamp did not reflect any hostility toward college athletics.

As Chairman James Knight said at the time, "We have a lot of sports fans on our board, and we recognize that intercollegiate athletics have a legitimate and proper role to play in college and university life. Our interest is not to abolish that role but to preserve it by putting it back in perspective. We hope this Commission can strengthen the hands of those who want to curb the abuses which are shaking public confidence in the integrity of not just big-time collegiate athletics but the whole institution of higher education."

We saw this as a goal worthy of a foundation which identified higher education as one of its primary interests, for the abuses in athletics programs had implications reaching far beyond football stadiums and basketball arenas.

In a cover story shortly before the Commission was created, Time magazine described the problem as "an obsession with winning and moneymaking that is pervading the noblest ideals of both sports and education in America." Its victims, Time went on to say, were not just athletes who found the promise of an education a sham but "the colleges and universities that participate in an educational travesty -- a farce that devalues every degree and denigrates the mission of higher education."

Please note that I have referred to big-time athletics programs. There are about 2,200 four-year institutions of higher education in this country, and the problem we set out to address centered around -- but was not entirely limited to -- about 1,900 schools in football and about 200 in basketball. Those were the institutions fighting for the big bucks that television exposure and bowl games and NCAA tournaments brought.

But the fact that a majority of colleges and universities were not involved could not support the argument, still heard in some quarters, that there were just a few bad apples in the barrel. Except for the Ivy League, the schools which were involved were the most visible institutions of higher education in the country. Their athletics programs, furthermore, were the most visible of their activities. And the picture emerging from those programs was not pretty.

Here are some of its broad outlines:

- In the 1980s, 109 colleges and universities were censured, sanctioned or put on probation by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.
- That number included more than half the universities playing at the NCAA's top competitive level -- 57 institutions out of 106.
- Nearly a third of present and former professional football players responding to a survey near the end of the decade said they accepted illicit payments while in college, and more than half said they saw nothing wrong with the practice.
- Another survey showed that among 100 big-time schools, 35 had graduation rates under 20 percent for their basketball players and 14 had the same low rate for their football players.

At times it seemed that hardly a day passed without another story about recruiting violations, under the table payoffs, players who didn't go to classes or who took courses like "recreational leisure" and "advanced slow-pitch softball." Even crime sprees in some athletic powerhouses were added to the list.

It was small wonder that eight out of ten Americans questioned in a Louis Harris poll in 1989 agreed that intercollegiate sports had gotten out of control, that the athletics programs were being corrupted by big money, and that the many cases of serious rules violations had undermined the traditional role of universities as places where young people learn ethics and integrity.

There was the tragedy of it. "Cynicism," as one commentator wrote during this period, "is nowhere more corrosive to society than in education."

That point had been driven home to me in 1986 in a letter received from a distinguished faculty member at the University of Kentucky after the Lexington Herald-Leader, of which I was then publisher, ran a shocking series on payoffs to basketball players there. He wrote:

If the institution and their supporters are prepared to wink at -- if not also to participate in -- cheating against the rules by athletes, can the schools stand against cheating anywhere else?

Is it OK for students to cheat in class? Does anybody want to be represented by a lawyer who cheated to get through law school -- or to be operated on by a surgeon who had to cheat to pass the medical school exams?

Can colleges and universities continue their traditional posture of upholding the highest values of personal character and integrity when they themselves display so little of either?

The questions answered themselves. Yet the madness in big-time college athletics continued to escalate. And as if that hadn't already done enough damage to American education, a 1989 series in The New York Times raised another warning flag:

High school athletics have become the latest entree on the American sports menu, served up to help satisfy the voracious appetite of the fan. As a result, scholastic athletes are on the verge of becoming as important to the billion-dollar sports industry as their college brothers and sisters -- and just as vulnerable to big-time exploitation.

Somehow, Knight Foundation concluded sanity had to be restored to this bleak scene and values put back into their proper place.

We were under no illusions that it would be easy. As far back as 60 years ago, another major American foundation -- the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching -- had published a study on college athletics which concluded that recruiting had become corrupt, professionals had replaced amateurs, education was being neglected and commercialism reigned.

That was 1929, not 1989. The problem had become even worse in the intervening years because the millions of dollars television was pouring into college athletics had raised the stakes -- and put an even higher premium on winning.

This money had also put colleges and universities into the entertainment business in a much bigger way. Many of the most vocal and partisan fans are not students or parents or alumni but just plain old sports nuts. That had become clear to me during my days in Lexington when one of the first protests we had after our series on cheating in the Kentucky basketball program came from an employee in our own mailroom who called to cancel his free subscription.

Such people want to be entertained -- and winning, of course, is more fun than losing. My personal observation, furthermore, is that they don't care how many rules have to be broken to produce a winner. Education means nothing to them.

We were not convinced, however, that all was lost. The good news was that it was still possible to point to major colleges and universities which ran successful athletics programs without sacrificing either their ethical standards or their academic integrity. The challenge of the 1990s was to develop and win acceptance of realistic reforms that would bring all institutions under that tent.

The Work Of The Commission

As its contribution to meeting that challenge, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics produced three seminal reports that helped channel the head of steam building up behind college sports reform in the 1990s:

- *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*, released in March 1991.
- *A Solid Start: A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics*, issued one year later.
- *A New Beginning for a New Century: Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States*, released in March 1993.

The release of the third report concluded the primary work of the Commission. As they finished, the members of the Commission agreed their reports would be more accessible in the future if collected within the covers of one volume. This is that volume.

In preparing this compendium, we have taken only one editorial liberty: An appendix lists each of the 20 specific recommendations advanced by the Commission in 1991 and indicates how the athletics community has to date, responded. As Timothy V. Franklin wrote in a 1992 doctoral dissertation completed at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, although scorecards can be poor measures of policy effectiveness, the Knight Commission's record in this regard is impressive. Despite the fact that it held no formal authority, nearly two-thirds of its specific recommendations had been endorsed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association by 1993.

As gratifying as this was, no scorecard can measure the full impact. It does not reflect the self-examination and changes implemented on their own by numerous institutions which heeded the Commission's admonition that reform "must take root on individual campuses; it cannot be imposed from without." Nor does it reflect underlying change in the fundamental environment and culture surrounding college athletics.

The Commission's first report laid out an analysis of the problems facing college sports and proposed a "new model for intercollegiate athletics." This analysis was straightforward: Following decades of presidential neglect and institutional indifference, big-time college sports were "out of control." The reform agenda Commission members proposed was equally straightforward, the "one-plus-three" model -- presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification. This model would become a kind of road map for athletics reform.

It is clear from the Commission's reports that members felt no obligation to propose solutions for every single problem on every campus. The Commission had no interest in rewriting the

NCAA manual, proposing new rules or suggesting new sanctions. It was marching to the beat of a different drummer. The commissioners kept their eye on the big picture.

No claim was made that their recommendations would solve all the problems tarnishing college sports, or even that all problems would ever be solved to everyone's satisfaction. "Reform is not a destination but a never-ending process," said the Commission's last report, "A Race Without A Finish." But Commission members expressed confidence that their work had helped create a framework to rein in today's abuses and deal with tomorrow's. In submitting their third and final report, the Commission co-chairmen -- Father Theodore Hesburgh and William Friday -- said they were "confident that we have accomplished what we set out to do."

The concluding paragraph of the Commission's final report left the presidents of America's colleges and universities with a challenge:

The final words of the members of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics to the nation's colleges and universities are an echo from long ago. In 1929, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published a landmark study taking presidents to task for their failure to defend the integrity of higher education. There can be no doubt that presidents today have the opportunity to put that long-standing criticism to rest. A genuine assessment of the value of the current reform movement cannot be made of today's observers. The true test will be applied by historians of the future, because they will ask whether today's presidents employed their power wisely and chose well.

The Stakes Involved In Reform

A. Bartlett Giamatti, the man who left the Yale presidency to become president of the National Baseball League and ultimately the Commissioner of Baseball, put the critical importance of reforming college sports in perspective in a brilliant small volume, *A Clean and Ordered Space*. His background as a scholar, academic administrator and nationally known sportsman provided him with a unique vantage point from which to consider the implications of corruption in intercollegiate athletics. That is what he had to say:

“Athletic programs of a certain kind are so visible, such surrogates for their institutions, that those programs do get the public’s attention. Except now the athletic programs are communicating failures of nerve and failures of principle and purpose that threaten to engulf the whole institution of higher education in ways unfair and dangerous. What was allowed to become a circus -- college sports -- threatens to become the means whereby the public believes the whole enterprise is a sideshow.”

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation agrees: Public faith in higher education cannot be sustained if college sports are permitted to become a circus, with the institution itself little more than a supporting sideshow. The members of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics clearly understood this. They showed no failure of nerve or purpose. On the contrary, they demonstrated that success in sports reform depends on standing behind a first principle: Athletics competition must be grounded in the academic tradition that created and nurtured it.

Listen again to what Mr. Giamatti had to say about the stakes involved in reform of college sports:

“To reform intercollegiate athletics is to begin to approach, again, a true examination of American higher education’s nature and purpose. To reform that valuable dimension of an education is to begin to remember that an education institution teaches far, far more, and more profoundly, by how it acts than by anything anyone within it ever says.”

“To reform the abuses of athletics would begin to earn again the public’s broad-based, deeply rooted faith in collegiate education, without which neither public nor private institutions, neither the large nor the small, can survive or flourish in ways they must if they are to fulfill their basic mission, to serve America and keep her as they themselves should be - civil, cohesive and free.”

On behalf of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees, I express our appreciation for the work of the Commission. The commissioners -- public officials, corporate executives, and major academic leaders in the United States -- believed that restoring the public’s “deeply-rooted faith in collegiate education” depended on restoring the public’s trust in the integrity of

college sports. The members of the Commission, its co-chairmen and staff director Christopher Morris and his associates, acted on that belief with conviction and skill.

Foundation Chairman Lee Hills spoke for all the trustees when he told the Commission at its final meeting:

“The Commission has done a tremendous service -- not just for college sports, but for higher education and our nation as well. Your work has been a credit to the Foundation, and we thank you for it.”



Creed C. Black, President

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

(1988-1998)

September 1993

Appendix: Action On Knight Commission Recommendations

I. PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL

Trustees should explicitly endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in athletics governance, delegate authority over finances, affirm the president's authority for personnel and annually review athletics program.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. Although no detailed records are available, more than 100 institutions and organizations have reported adoption of this principle.

Presidents should act on their obligation to control conferences.

The 1992 NCAA convention addressed the issue of presidential control, amending Article 5 of the NCAA Constitution so to require presidential approval of conference-sponsored legislative initiatives.

Presidents should control the NCAA.

Legislation passed at the 1993 NCAA convention formalized the governance role of presidents within the organization by the creation of a Joint Policy Board comprised of officers of the NCAA and the Presidents Commission.

Presidents should commit their institutions to equity in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics.

The 1992 NCAA convention delayed reductions in financial aid for Division I women's sports. Also, the NCAA appointed a Gender-Equity Task Force which issued its findings and recommendations in the Summer of 1993. Additional gender equality legislation is anticipated for the 1994 NCAA convention.

Presidents should control their institution's involvement with commercial television.

The 1992 NCAA convention directed that the Special Committee on Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics examine the issue of media revenues, among other financial considerations.



II. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “NO PASS, NO PLAY”

- **The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements: By 1995, initial eligibility should be based on a 2.00 average in 15 units of high school academic work and a combined score of 700 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT.**

The 1992 NCAA convention established core curriculum requirements of 13 units, and an initial eligibility index of 2.5 GPA in the core combined with an SAT score of 700 (ACT score of 17).

- **High school student-athletes should be ineligible for reimbursed campus visits (or signing a letter of intent) until they show reasonable promise of being able to meet degree requirements.**

The 1992 NCAA convention prohibited official visits prior to the early signing period in Division I sports if student-athletes do not present as SAT score of 700 (ACT score of 17) and a minimum 2.00 GPA in seven core courses. Under current bylaws, prospects may visit campus after the early signing period even if they do not meet SAT or ACT minimum requirements.

- **Junior college transfers who did not, on graduating from high school, meet proposition 48 requirements, should “sit out” a year of competition after transfer.**

This recommendation is substantially incorporated in a new progress toward degree requirement adopted at the 1992 NCAA convention (see below).

- **The NCAA should study the feasibility of requiring the range of academic abilities of incoming athletes to approximate the range of abilities of the entire freshman class.**

The NCAA’s new certification program (see section IV below) requires institutions to compare academic performance of incoming athletes with the rest of the freshman class.

The letter of intent should serve the student as well as the athletics department.

No action to date.

Athletics scholarships should be offered for a five-year period.

No action to date.

Athletics eligibility should depend on progress toward a degree.

The 1992 NCAA convention created new Division I requirements governing: mid-year transfer students, credits to be earned during the regular academic year, proportion of credits toward a specific degree, and minimum GPA toward that degree. The credit and GPA requirements govern athletics eligibility in years 3 and 4.

Graduation rates of athletes should be a criterion for NCAA certification.

The certification process (below) incorporates graduation rates as a major criterion.



III. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Athletics cost must be reduced, and cost control measures adopted in 1991 must not be “fine tuned” out of existence.

The 1992 NCAA convention reduced the allowable number of grants-in-aid. Also, the NCAA appointed a special Committee to Review Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics which issued a report in June 1993. Based upon the recommendations of the Special Committee, additional “cost-cutting” legislation will be introduced at the 1994 NCAA convention.

Athletics grants-in-aid should cover the full cost of attendance for the very needy.

No action to date.

The independence of athletics foundations and booster clubs must be curbed.

The 1992 NCAA convention directed the Special Committee to Review Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics to examine the role of booster clubs, among other financial considerations;

The NCAA formula for sharing television revenue from the national basketball championship must be viewed by university presidents.

The Presidents Commission reviewed the revenue-sharing formula, approved it, and recommended reserving additional moneys for the membership fund.

All athletics-related coaches’ income should be reviewed and approved by the university.

The 1992 NCAA convention required annual written approval from the institution’s CEO for all athletically related income.

Coaches should be offered long-term contracts.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses.

Institutional support should be available for intercollegiate athletics.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses.



IV. CERTIFICATION

The NCAA should extend the certification process to all institutions granting athletics aid.

The 1993 NCAA convention adopted a new athletics certification program for Division I institutions.

Universities should undertake comprehensive, annual policy audits for their athletics program.

The NCAA certification program entails an annual compilation of this and other data.

The certification program should include the major themes advanced by the Knight Commission, i.e., the “One-Plus-Three” model.

The NCAA certification program substantially incorporates the fundamental principles of the “One-Plus-Three” model.

Keeping Faith With The Student-Athlete

A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics

March 1991



Keeping Faith

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Mr. Lee Hills
Vice Chairman
Board of Trustees
Knight Foundation
2 South Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33131

Dear Mr. Hills,

On October 19, 1989, the Trustees of Knight Foundation created this Commission and directed it to propose a reform agenda for intercollegiate athletics. In doing so, they expressed concern that abuses in athletics had reached proportions threatening the very integrity of higher education, which is one of the principal program interests of the Foundation.

It has been our privilege to co-chair this endeavor and on behalf of the members of the Commission we are pleased to transmit this report, *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*.

In developing its recommendations, the Commission spent more than a year in study and debate, and benefited from the advice and suggestions of more than 80 experts. During a series of public meetings, we heard from athletics administrators, coaches, student-athletes, scholars, journalists, leaders of professional leagues and others.

The demanding task of monitoring college sports is made all the more difficult today by a confluence of new factors. These include the perception that ethical behavior in the larger society has broken down, the public's insistence on winning local teams, and the growth of television combined with the demand for sports programming. Clearly, universities have not immunized themselves from these developments.

We sense that public concern about abuse is growing. The public appears ready to believe that many institutions achieve goals not through the honest effort but through equivocation, not by hard work and sacrifice but by hook or by crook. If the public's perception is correct, both the educational aims of athletics and the institutions' integrity are called into question.

We have attempted to define the problems as we understand them and to suggest solutions, not search for scapegoats. This report addresses what we consider to be the main issues and does not attempt to treat subordinate matters in any detail. Even in respect to what we see as the major issues, we place less emphasis on specific solutions than on proposing a structure

through which these issues -- and others arising in the future -- can be addressed by the responsible administrators.

The first section introduces the core of our interest: the place of athletics on our campuses and the imperative to place the well-being of the student-athlete at the forefront of our concerns. The second section presents our recommendations. It outlines a new structure for intercollegiate athletics in which the well-being of student-athletes, our overarching goal, is attained by what we call the “one-plus-three” model -- presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification. The third section calls for a nationwide effort, growing from our campuses outward, to put the “one-plus-three” model into effect and suggests appropriate roles for each of the major groups on campus.

The members of the Commission were straightforward in their discussions and are candid in this report regarding both the strengths and the weaknesses of intercollegiate athletics. Although individual members of the Commission may have reservations about the details of some of these recommendations, they are unanimous in their support of the broad themes outlined in this document.

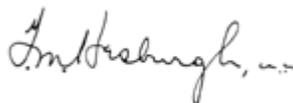
The commission’s commitment to the reform of college sport does not end with this report. We will follow through. We plan to monitor the progress in implementing the “one-plus-three” model. In twelve months we will revisit these issues and define what remains to be accomplished.

On a personal note, we want to express our deep sadness on learning, as this document went to press, of the death of a man who played a pivotal role in establishing the Commission, James L. Knight, Chairman of the Knight Foundation. We speak for the entire Commission in expressing our sympathy and our hope that this report keeps faith with Mr. Knight’s vision of what intercollegiate sport can be at its best.

Respectfully,



William C. Friday
Co-Chairman
President
William R. Kenan Jr. Fund



Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
Co-Chairman
President Emeritus
University of Notre Dame

INTRODUCTION

At their best, which is most of the time, intercollegiate athletics provide millions of people -- athletes, undergraduates, alumni and the general public -- with great pleasure, the spectacle of extraordinary effort and physical grace, the excitement of an outcome in doubt, and a shared unifying experience. Thousands of men and women in the United States are stronger adults because of the challenges they mastered as young athletes.

But at their worst, big-time college athletics appear to have lost their bearings. With increasing frequency they threaten to overwhelm the universities in whose name they were established and to undermine the integrity of one of our fundamental national institutions: higher education.

The Knight Commission believes that intercollegiate athletics, kept in perspective, are an important part of college life. We are encouraged by the energy of the reform movement now under way. But the clamor for reform and the distinguishing signals of government intrusion confirm the need to rethink the management and fundamental premises of intercollegiate athletics.

The Commission's bedrock conviction is that university presidents are the key to successful reform. They must be in charge -- and be understood to be in charge -- on campuses, in conferences and in the decision-making councils of the NCAA.

We propose what we call the "one-plus-three" model, a new structure of reform in which the "one" -- presidential control -- is directed toward the "three" -- academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification. With such a model in place, higher education can address all of the subordinate difficulties in college sports. Without such a model, athletics reform will continue in fits and starts, its energy squandered on symptoms, the underlying problems ignored.

This is how these recommendations can help change college sports:

PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL

1. Trustees will delegate to the president -- not reserve for the board or individual members of the board -- the administrative authority to govern the athletics program.
2. Presidents will have the same degree of control over athletics that they exercise elsewhere in the university, including the authority to hire, evaluate and terminate athletics directors and coaches, and to oversee all financial matters in their athletics departments.
3. The policy role of presidents will be enhanced throughout the decision-making structures of the NCAA.
4. Trustees, alumni and local boosters will defer to presidential control.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

1. Cutting academic corners in order to admit athletes will not be tolerated. Student-athletes will not be admitted unless they are likely, in the judgment of academic officials, to graduate. Junior college transfers will be given no leeway in fulfilling eligibility requirements.
2. “No Pass, No Play” will be the byword of college sports in admissions, academic progress and graduation rates.
3. An athlete’s eligibility each year, and each academic term, will be based on continuous progress toward graduation within five years of enrollment.
4. Graduation rates of student-athletes in each sport will be similar to the graduation rates of other students who have spent comparable time as full-time students.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

1. Athletics departments will not operate as independent subsidiaries of the university. All funds raised and spent for athletics will go through the university’s central financial controls and will be subject to the same oversight and scrutiny as funds in other departments. Athletics foundations and booster clubs will not be permitted to provide support for athletics programs outside the administration’s direct control.
2. Contracts for athletics-related outside income of coaches and administrators, including shoe and equipment contracts, will be negotiated through the university.

3. Institutional funds can be spent on athletics programs. This will affirm the legitimate role of athletics on campus and can relieve some of the pressure on revenue-producing teams to support non-revenue sports.

CERTIFICATION

1. Each year, every NCAA institution will undergo a thorough, independent audit of all academic and financial matters related to athletics.
2. Universities will have to withstand the scrutiny of their peers. Each NCAA institution awarding athletics aid will be required to participate in a comprehensive certification program. This program will verify that the athletics department follows institutional goals, that its fiscal controls are sound, and that athletes in each sport resemble the rest of the student body in admissions, academic progress and graduation rates.

The reforms proposed above are designed to strengthen the bonds that connect student, sport and higher learning. Student-athletes should compete successfully in the classroom as well as on the playing field and, insofar as possible, should be indistinguishable from other undergraduates. All athletes -- men or women, majority or minority, in revenue-producing and non-revenue sports -- should be treated equitably.

In order to help presidents put the “one-plus-three” model into effect, the Commission proposes a statement of principles to be used as the basis for intensive discussion at each institution. Our hope is that this discussion will involve everyone on the campus with major responsibilities for college sports. These principles support the “one-plus-three” model and can be employed as a starting point on any campus wishing to take the recommendations of this document seriously. We recommend incorporating these principles into the NCAA’s certification process and using that process as the foundation of a nationwide effort to advance athletics reform. Ideally, institutions will agree to schedule only those colleges and universities that have passed all aspects of the certification process. Institutions that refuse to correct deficiencies will find themselves isolated by the vast majority of administrators who support intercollegiate sports as an honorable tradition in college life.

Reform

THE NEED FOR REFORM

As our nation approaches a new century, the demand for reform of intercollegiate athletics has escalated dramatically. Educational and athletics leaders face the challenge of controlling costs, restraining recruiting, limiting time demands, and restoring credibility and dignity to the term “student-athlete.” In the midst of these pressures, it is easy to lose sight of the achievements of intercollegiate sports and easier still to lose sight of why these games are played.

The appeal of competitive games is boundless. In ancient times, men at war laid down their weapons to compete in the Olympic games. Today, people around the globe put aside their daily cares to follow the fortunes of their teams in the World Cup. In the United States, the Super Bowl, the World Series, college football and the NCAA basketball tournament command the attention of millions. Sports have helped break down bigotry and prejudice in American life. On the international scene, they have helped integrate East and West, socialist and capitalist. The passion for sport is universal, shared across time and continents.

Games and sports are educational in the best sense of that word because they teach the participant and the observer new truths about testing oneself and others, about the enduring values of challenge and response, about teamwork, discipline and perseverance. Above all, intercollegiate contests — at any level of skill — drive home a fundamental lesson: Goals worth achieving will be attained only through effort, hard work, sacrifice, and sometimes even these will not be enough to overcome the obstacles life places in our path.

The value and success of college sports should not be overlooked. They are the foundation of our optimism for the future. At the 828 colleges and universities which comprise the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), over 254,000 young men and women participate in 21 different sports each year in about one quarter of a million contests. At the huge majority of these institutions, virtually all of these young athletes participate in these contests without any evidence of scandal or academic abuse. This record is one in which student-athletes and university administrators can take pride and from which the Knight Foundation Commission takes heart.

All of the positive contributions that sports make to higher education, however, are threatened by disturbing patterns of abuse, particularly in some big-time programs. These patterns are grounded in institutional indifference, presidential neglect, and the growing commercialization of sport combined with the urge to win at all costs. The sad truth is that on too many campuses big-time revenue sports are out of control.

The assumption of office by a new executive director of the NCAA coincides with renewed vigor for major reform on the part of athletics administrators and university presidents.

Reform efforts are well underway. One conference has voted to bar from athletics participation all students who do not meet NCAA freshman-eligibility standards. One state has decided to require all students in publicly supported institutions to maintain a “C” average in order to participate in extracurricular activities, including intercollegiate sports. Judging by the tone of recent NCAA conventions, concern for the university’s good name and the welfare of the student-athlete — irrespective of gender, race or sport — will be the centerpiece of athletics administration as we approach a new century. We do not want to interfere with that agenda. We hope to advance it.

THE PROBLEM

The problems described to the Commission — in more than a year of meetings and discussions with athletics directors, faculty representatives, coaches, athletes, conference leaders, television officials and accrediting associations - are widespread. They are not entirely confined to big schools ... or to football or basketball ... or to men’s sports. But they are most apparent within major athletics programs and are concentrated most strongly in those sports for which collegiate participation serves the talented few as an apprenticeship for professional careers.

Recruiting, the bane of the college coach’s life, is one area particularly susceptible to abuse. While most institutions and coaches recruit ethically and within the rules, some clearly do not. Recruiting abuses are the most frequent cause of punitive action by the NCAA. Even the most scrupulous coaching staffs are trapped on a recruiting treadmill, running through an interminable sequence of letters, telephone calls and visits. The cost of recruiting a handful of basketball players each year exceeds, on some campuses, the cost of recruiting the rest of the freshman class.

Athletics programs are given special, often unique, status within the university; the best coaches receive an income many times that of most full professors; some coaches succumb to the pressure to win with recruiting violations and even the abuse of players; boosters respond to athletic performance with gifts and under-the-table payments; faculty members, presidents and other administrators, unable to control the enterprise, stand by as it undermines the institution’s goals in the name of values alien to the best the university represents.

These programs appear to promise a quick route to revenue, recognition and renown for the university. But along that road, big-time athletics programs often take on a life of their own. Their intrinsic educational value, easily lost in their use to promote extra-institutional goals, becomes engulfed by the revenue stream they generate and overwhelmed by the accompanying publicity. Now, instead of the institution alone having a stake in a given team or sport, the circle of involvement includes television networks and local stations that sell advertising time, the corporations and local businesses buying the time, the boosters living vicariously through the team’s success, the local economies critically dependent on the big game, and the burgeoning population of fans who live and die with the team’s fortunes.

In this crucible, the program shifts from providing an exciting avenue of expression and enjoyment for the athletes and their fans to maximizing the revenue and institutional prestige that can be generated by a handful of highly visible teams. The athletics director can become the CEO of a fair-sized corporation with a significant impact on the local economy. The “power coach,” often enjoying greater recognition throughout the state than most elected officials, becomes chief operating officer of a multi-million dollar business.

Within the last decade, big-time athletics programs have taken on all of the trappings of a major entertainment enterprise. In the search for television revenues, traditional rivalries have been tossed aside in conference realignments, games have been rescheduled to satisfy broadcast preferences, the number of games has multiplied, student-athletes have been put on the field at all hours of the day and night, and university administrators have fallen to quarreling among themselves over the division of revenues from national broadcasting contracts.

But the promise of easy access to renown and revenue often represents fool’s gold. Recognition on the athletic field counts for little in the academic community. Expenses are driven by the search for revenues and the revenue stream is consumed, at most institutions, in building up the program to maintain the revenue. Renown for athletic exploits can be a two-edged sword if the university is forced to endure the public humiliation of sanctions brought on by rules violations. Above all, the fragile institution of the university often finds itself unable to stand up against the commitment, the energy and the passion underlying modern intercollegiate athletics.

In the circumstances we have described, it is small wonder that three out of four Americans believe that television dollars, not administrators, control college sports. But the underlying problems existed long before the advent of television. A 1929 report from the Carnegie Fund for the Advancement of Teaching identified many of the difficulties still with us today. In college athletics, it said, recruiting had become corrupt, professionals had replaced amateurs, education was being neglected, and commercialism reigned. That document still rings true today, reminding us that it is an oversimplification to blame today’s problems on television alone. Even so, the lure of the television dollars has unquestionably added a new dimension to the problem and must be addressed.

At the root of the problem is a great reversal of ends and means. Increasingly, the team, the game, the season and “the program” — all intended as expressions of the university’s larger purposes — gain ascendancy over the ends that created and nurtured them. Non-revenue sports receive little attention and women’s programs take a back seat. As the educational context for collegiate athletics competition is pushed aside, what remains is, too often, a self-justifying enterprise whose connection with learning is tainted by commercialism and incipient cynicism.

In the short term, the human price for this lack of direction is exacted from the athletes whose talents give meaning to the system. But the ultimate cost is paid by the university and by

society itself. If the university is not itself a model of ethical behavior, why should we expect such behavior from students or from the larger society?

Pervasive though these problems are, they are not universal. This is true even if the universe is restricted to the roughly 300 institutions playing football or basketball at the highest levels. But they are sufficiently common that it is no longer possible to conclude they represent the workings of a handful of misguided individuals or a few “rotten apples.” One recent analysis indicates that fully one-half of Division I-A institutions (the 106 colleges and universities with the most competitive and expensive football programs) were the object of sanctions of varying severity from the NCAA during the 1980s. Other institutions, unsanctioned, graduate very few student-athletes in revenue-producing sports.

The problems are so deep-rooted and long-standing that they must be understood to be systemic. They can no longer be swept under the rug or kept under control by tinkering around the edges. Because these problems are so widespread, nothing short of a new structure holds much promise for restoring intercollegiate athletics to their proper place in the university. This report of the Knight Foundation Commission is designed to suggest such a structure.

We are at a critical juncture with respect to the intercollegiate athletics system. We believe college sports face three possible futures:

- higher education will put its athletics house in order from within;
- athletics order will be imposed from without and college sports will be regulated by government; or
- abuse — unchecked — will spread, destroying not only the intrinsic value of intercollegiate athletics but higher education’s claim to the high moral ground it should occupy.

Concern for the health of both intercollegiate athletics and American higher education makes the choice clear.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS

Even clearer, in the Commission’s view, is the need to start with the student-athlete. The reforms we deem essential start with respect for the dignity of the young men and women who compete and the conviction that they occupy a legitimate place as students on our campuses. If we can get that right, everything else will fall into place. If we cannot, the rest of it will be all wrong.

Regulations governing the recruitment of student-athletes — including letters-of-intent, and how and under what conditions coaches may contact athletes — take up 30 pages of the NCAA Manual. But there is no requirement that the prospective student-athlete be found

academically admissible before accepting a paid campus visit. A prospective player can very easily agree to attend an institution even though the admissions office does not know of the student's existence. Similarly, student-athletes deemed eligible in the fall can compete throughout the year, generally regardless of their academic performance in the first term.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that there are few academic constraints on the student-athlete. Non-academic prohibitions, on the other hand, are remarkable. Athletics personnel are not permitted to offer rides to student-athletes. University officials are not permitted to invite a student-athlete home for dinner on the spur of the moment. Alumni are not allowed to encourage an athlete to attend their alma mater.

Each of these prohibitions — and the many others in the NCAA Manual — can be understood individually as a response to a specific abuse. But they add up to a series of checks and balances on the student-athlete as an athlete that have nothing to do with the student-athlete as a student. Some rules have been developed to manage potential abuse in particular sports, at particular schools, or in response to the particular circumstances of individual athletes. Whatever the origin of these regulations, the administration of intercollegiate athletics is now so overburdened with legalism and detail that the NCAA Manual more nearly resembles the IRS Code than it does a guide to action.

It is time to get back to first principles. Intercollegiate athletics exist first and foremost for the student-athletes who participate, whether male or female, majority or minority, whether they play football in front of 50,000 or field hockey in front of their friends. It is the university's obligation to educate all of them, an obligation perhaps more serious because the demands we place on them are so much more severe. Real reform must begin here.

A New Model

“ONE-PLUS-THREE”

Individual institutions and the NCAA have consistently dealt with problems in athletics by defining most issues as immediate ones: curbing particular abuses, developing nationally uniform standards, or creating a “level playing field” overseen by athletics administrators.

But the real problem is not one of curbing particular abuses. It is a more central need to have academic administrators define the terms under which athletics will be conducted in the university’s name. The basic concern is not nationally uniform standards. It is a more fundamental issue of grounding the regulatory process in the primacy of academic values. The root difficulty is not creating a “level playing field”. It is insuring that those on the field are students as well as athletes.

We reject the argument that the only realistic solution to the problem is to drop the student-athlete concept, put athletes on the payroll, and reduce or even eliminate their responsibilities as students.

Such a scheme has nothing to do with education, the purpose for which colleges and universities exist. Scholarship athletes are already paid in the most meaningful way possible: with a free education. The idea of intercollegiate athletics is that the teams represent their institutions as true members of the student body, not as hired hands. Surely American higher education has the ability to devise a better solution to the problems of intercollegiate athletics than making professionals out of the players, which is no solution at all but rather an unacceptable surrender to despair.

It is clear to the Commission that a realistic solution will not be found without a serious and persistent commitment to a fundamental concept: intercollegiate athletics must reflect the values of the university. Where the realities of intercollegiate competition challenge those values, the university must prevail.

The reform we seek takes shape around what the Commission calls the “one-plus-three” model. It consists of the “one” -- presidential control -- directed toward the “three” -- academic integrity, financial integrity and accountability through certification. This model is fully consistent with the university as a context for vigorous and exciting intercollegiate competition. It also serves to bond athletics to the purposes of the university in a way that provides a new framework for their conduct.

The three sides of the reform triangle reinforce each other. Each strengthens the other two. At the same time, the three principles can only be realized through presidential leadership. The coach can only do so much to advance academic values. The athletics director can only go so far to guarantee financial integrity. The athletics department cannot certify itself. But the

president, with a transcendent responsibility for every aspect of the university, can give shape and focus to all three.

With such a foundation in place, higher education can renew its authentic claim on public confidence in the integrity of college sports. All of the subordinate issues and problems of intercollegiate athletics -- athletic dorms, freshman eligibility, the length of playing seasons and recruitment policies -- can be resolved responsibly within this model. Without such a base, athletics reform is doomed to continue in fits and starts, its energy rising and falling with each new headline, its focus shifting to respond to each new manifestation of the underlying problems. It is the underlying problems, not their symptoms, that need to be attacked. The “one-plus-three” model is the foundation on which those who care about higher education and student-athletes can build permanent reform.

THE “ONE”: PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL

Presidents are accountable for the major elements in the university’s life. The burden of leadership falls on them for the conduct of the institution, whether in the classroom or on the playing field. The president cannot be a figurehead whose leadership applies elsewhere in the university but not in the athletics department.

The following recommendations are designed to advance presidential control:

1. Trustees should explicitly endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in all matters of athletics governance. The basis of presidential authority on campus is the governing board. If presidential action is to be effective, it must have the backing of the board of trustees. We recommend that governing boards:

- Delegate to the president administrative authority over financial matters in the athletics program.
- Work with the president to develop common principles for hiring, evaluating and terminating all athletics administrators, and affirm the president’s role and ultimate authority in this central aspect of university administration.
- Advise each new president of its expectations about athletics administration and annually review the athletics program.
- Work with the president to define the faculty’s role, which should be focused on academic issues in athletics.

2. Presidents should act on their obligation to control conferences. We believe that presidents of institutions affiliated with athletics conferences should exercise effective voting control of these organizations. Even if day-to-day representation at conference proceedings is delegated to other institutional representatives, presidents should formally retain the authority to define agendas, offer motions, cast votes or provide voting instructions, and review and, if necessary, reshape conference decisions.

3. Presidents should control the NCAA. The Knight Commission believes hands-on presidential involvement in NCAA decision-making is imperative. As demonstrated by the overwhelming approval of their reform legislation at the 1991 NCAA convention, presidents have the power to set the course of the NCAA - if they will use it. The Commission recommends that:

- Presidents make informed use of the ultimate NCAA authority - their votes on the NCAA convention floor. They should either attend and vote personally, or familiarize themselves with the issues and give their representatives specific voting instructions. Recent procedural changes requiring that pending legislation be published for review several months before formal consideration simplify this task enormously.
- The Presidents Commission follow up its recent success with additional reform measures, beginning with the legislation on academic requirements it proposes to sponsor in 1992. The Commission can and should consolidate its leadership role by energetic use of its authority to draft legislation, to determine whether balloting will be by roll call or paddle, and to order the convention agenda.
- Presidents must stay the course. Opponents of progress have vowed they will be back to reverse recent reform legislation. Presidents must challenge these defenders of the status quo. They cannot win the battle for reform if they fight in fits and starts — their commitment to restoring perspective to intercollegiate athletics must be complete and continuing.

4. Presidents should commit their institutions to equity in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. The Commission emphasizes that continued inattention to the requirements of Title IX (mandating equitable treatment of women in educational programs) represents a major stain on institutional integrity. It is essential that presidents take the lead in this area. We recommend that presidents:

- Annually review participation opportunities in intercollegiate programs by gender.
- Develop procedures to insure more opportunities for women's participation and promote equity for women's teams in terms of schedules, facilities, travel arrangements and coaching.

5. Presidents should control their institution's involvement with commercial television. The lure of television dollars has clearly exacerbated the problems of intercollegiate athletics. Just as surely, institutions have not found the will or the inclination to define the terms of their involvement with the entertainment industry. Clearly, something must be done to mitigate the growing public perception that the quest for television dollars is turning college sports into an entertainment enterprise. In the Commission's view it is crucial that presidents, working through appropriate conference and NCAA channels, immediately and critically review contractual relationships with networks. It is time that institutions clearly prescribe the policies,

terms and conditions of the televising of intercollegiate athletics events. Greater care must be given to the needs and obligations of the student-athlete and the primacy of the academic calendar over the scheduling requirements of the networks.

THE “THREE”: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The first consideration on a university campus must be academic integrity. The fundamental premise must be that athletes are students as well. They should not be considered for enrollment at a college or university unless they give reasonable promise of being successful at that institution in a course of study leading to an academic degree. Student-athletes should undertake the same courses of study offered to other students and graduate in the same proportion as those who spend comparable time as full-time students. Their academic performance should be measured by the same criteria applied to other students.

Admissions — At some Division I institutions, according to NCAA data, every football and basketball player admitted in the 1988-89 academic year met the university’s regular admissions standards. At others, according to the same data, not a single football or basketball player met the regular requirements. At half of all Division I-A institutions, about 20 percent or more of football and basketball players are “special admits,” i.e., admitted with special consideration. That rate is about 10 times as high as the rate for total student body.

The Commission believes that the freshman eligibility rule known as Proposition 48 has improved the academic preparation of student-athletes. Proposition 48 has also had some unanticipated consequences. Virtually unnoticed in the public discussion about Proposition 48 is the requirement that the high school grade point average be computed for only 11 units of academic work. Out of 106 Division I-A institutions, 97 of them (91 percent) require or recommend more than 11 high school academic units for the typical high school applicant. In fact, 73 Division I-A institutions, according to their published admissions criteria, require or recommend 15 or more academic high school units from all other applicants.

Academic Progress — The most recent NCAA data indicate that in one-half of all Division I institutions about 90 percent of all football and basketball players are meeting “satisfactory” progress requirements and are, therefore, eligible for intercollegiate competition. Under current regulations, however, it is possible for a student-athlete to remain eligible each year but still be far from a degree after five years as a full-time student. The 1991 NCAA convention began to address this issue in enacting provisions requiring that at the end of the third year of enrollment, student-athletes should have completed 50 percent of their degree requirements.

The 1991 convention also made significant headway in reducing the excessive time demands athletic participation places on student-athletes. Throughout the 1980s, according to the recent NCAA research, football and basketball players at Division I-A institutions spent

approximately 30 hours a week on their sports in season, more time than they spent attending or preparing for class.

Football and basketball are far from the only sinners. Baseball, golf and tennis players report the most time spent on sports. Many other sports for both men and women, including swimming and gymnastics, demand year-round conditioning if athletes are to compete successfully. It remains to be seen whether the recent NCAA legislation will make a genuine dent in the onerous demands on students' time.

Graduation Rates -- At some Division I institutions, 100 percent of the basketball players or the football players graduate within five years of enrolling. At others, none of the basketball or football players graduate within five years. In the typical Division I college or university, only 33 percent of basketball players and 37.5 percent of football players graduate within five years. Overall graduation rates for all student-athletes (men and women) in Division I approach graduation rates for all students in Division I according to the NCAA -- 47 percent of all student-athletes in Division I graduate in five years.

Dreadful anecdotal evidence about academic progress and graduation rates is readily available. But the anecdotes merely illustrate what the NCAA data confirm: About two-thirds of the student-athletes in big-time, revenue-producing sports have not received a college degree within five years of enrolling at their institution.

The Commission's recommendations on academic integrity can be encapsulated in a very simple concept -- "No Pass, No Play." That concept, first developed for high school athletics eligibility in Texas, is even more apt for institutions of higher education. It applies to admissions, to academic progress and to graduation rates.

The following recommendations are designed to advance academic integrity:

1. The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements. Proposition 48 has served intercollegiate athletics well. It has helped insure that more student-athletes are prepared for the rigors of undergraduate study. It is time to build on and extend its success. We recommend that:

- By 1995 prospective student-athletes should present 15 units of high school academic work in order to be eligible to play in their first year.
- A high school student-athlete should be ineligible for reimbursed campus visits or for signing a letter of intent until the admissions office indicates he or she shows reasonable promise of being able to meet the requirements for a degree.
- student-athletes transferring from junior colleges should meet the admissions requirements applied to other junior college students. Moreover, junior college transfers who did not meet NCAA Proposition 48 requirements when they graduated from high school should be required to sit out a year of competition after transfer.

- Finally, we propose an NCAA study of the conditions under which colleges and universities admit athletes. This study should be designed to see if it is feasible to put in place admissions requirements to insure that the range of academic ability for incoming athletes, by sport, would approximate the range of abilities for the institution's freshman class.

2. The letter of intent should serve the student as well as the athletics department.

Incoming freshmen who have signed a letter of intent to attend a particular institution should be released from that obligation if the head coach who recruited them leaves the institution, or if the institution is put on probation by the NCAA, before the enroll. Such incoming student-athletes should be automatically eligible to apply to any other college or university, except the head or assistant coach's new home, and to participate in intercollegiate athletics. Currently student-athletes are locked into the institution no matter how its athletics program changes -- a restriction that applies to no other student.

3. Athletics scholarships should be offered for a five year period. In light of the time demands of athletics competition, we believe that eligibility should continue to be limited to a period of four years, but athletics scholarship assistance routinely should cover the time required to complete a degree, up to a maximum of five years. Moreover, the initial offer to the student-athlete should be for the length of time required to earn a degree up to five years, not the single year now mandated by NCAA rules. The only athletics condition under which the five-year commitment could be broken would be if the student refused to participate in the sport for which the grant-in-aid was offered. Otherwise, aid should continue as long as the student-athlete remains in good standing at the institution.

4. Athletics eligibility should depend on progress toward a degree. In order to retain eligibility, enrolled athletes should be able to graduate within five years and to demonstrate progress toward that goal each semester. At any time during the student-athlete's undergraduate years, the university should be able to demonstrate that the athlete can meet this test without unreasonable course loads. Further, eligibility for participation should be restricted to students who meet the institution's published academic requirements, including a minimum grade point average when applicable.

5. Graduation rates of athletes should be a criterion for NCAA certification. The Commission believes that no university should countenance lower graduation rates for its student-athletes, in any sport, than it is willing to accept in the full-time student body at large. Fundamental to the restoration of public trust is our belief that graduation rates in revenue-producing sports should be a major criterion on which NCAA certification depends.

THE “THREE” : FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

An institution of higher education has an abiding obligation to be a responsible steward of all the recourse that support its activities — whether in the form of taxpayer’s dollars, the hard-earned payments of students and their parents, the contributions of alumni, or the revenue stream generated by athletics programs. In this respect, the responsibility of presidents and trustees is singular.

Costs - A 1990 College Football Association study indicated that in the prior four years, the cost of operating an athletics department increased 35 percent while revenues increased only 21 percent. For the first time in its surveys, said the CFA, average expenses exceed average income. Overall, 39 of 53 institutions responding — including some of the largest and presumably the most successful sports programs — are either operating deficits or would be without institutional or state support. More comprehensive data from the NCAA confirm that, on average, the athletics programs of Division I-A institutions barely break even. When athletics expenses are subtracted from revenues, the average Division I-A institutions is left with \$39,000.

The Larger Economic Environment - Big-time sports programs are economic magnets. They attract entertainment and business interests of a wide variety. They support entire industries dedicated to their needs and contests. But while college sports provide a demonstrably effective and attractive public showcase for the university, potential pitfalls abound because of the money involved. Particular vigilance is required to assure that central administrators set the terms under which the university engages the larger economic environment surrounding big-time college sports. The lack of such monitoring in the past explains many of the financial scandals that have tarnished college athletics.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

1. Athletics costs must be reduced. The Commission applauds the cost control measures — including reductions in coaching staff sizes, recruiting activities and the number of athletics scholarships — approved at the 1991 NCAA convention. It is essential that presidents monitor these measures to insure that, in the name of “fine tuning,” these provisions are not watered down before they become fully effective in 1994. We urge the Presidents Commission, athletics directors and the NCAA leadership to continue the search for cost-reduction measures.

2. Athletics grants-in-aid should cover the full cost of attendance for the very needy. Despite the Commission’s commitment to cost reduction, we believe existing grants-in-aid (tuition, fees, books, and room and board) fail to adequately address the needs of some student-athletes. Assuming the ten percent reduction in scholarship numbers approved at the 1991 NCAA convention is put in place, we recommend that grants-in-aid for low-income athletes be expanded to the “full cost of attendance,” including personal and miscellaneous expenses, as determined by federal guidelines.

3. The independence of athletics foundations and booster clubs must be curbed.

Some booster clubs have contributed generously to overall athletics revenues. But too many of these organizations seem to have been created either in response to state laws prohibiting the expenditure of public funds on athletics or to avoid institutional oversight of athletics expenditures. Such autonomous authority can severely compromise the university. Progress has been made in recent years in bringing most of these organizations under the control of institutions. More needs to be done. The Commission believes that no extra-institutional organization should be responsible for any operational aspect of an intercollegiate athletics programs. All funds raised for athletics should be channeled into the university's financial system and subjected to the same budgeting procedures applied to similarly structured departments and programs.

4. The NCAA formula for sharing television revenue from the national basketball championship must be reviewed by university presidents.

The new revenue-sharing plan for distributing television and championship dollars has many promising features - funds for academic counseling, catastrophic injury insurance for all athletes in all divisions, a fund for needy student-athletes, and financial support for teams in all divisions, including increased transportation and per diem expenses. Nonetheless, the testimony before this Commission made it clear that a perception persists that the plan still places too high a financial premium on winning and that the rich will continue to get richer. The Commission recommends that the plan be reviewed annually by the Presidents Commission during the seven-year life of the current television contract and adjusted as warranted by experience.

5. All athletics-related coaches' income should be reviewed and approved by the university.

The Commission believes that in considering non-coaching income for its coaches, universities should follow a well-established practice with all faculty members: If the outside income involves the university's functions, facilities or name, contracts for particular services should be negotiated with the university. As part of the effort to bring athletics-related income into the university, we recommend that the NCAA ban shoe and equipment contracts with individual coaches. If a company is eager to have an institution's athletes using its product, it should approach the institution not the coach.

6. Coaches should be offered long-term contracts.

Academic tenure is not appropriate for most coaches, unless they are bona fide members of the faculty. But greater security in an insecure field is clearly reasonable. The Commission suggests that within five years of contractual employment, head and assistant coaches who meet the university's expectations, including its academic expectations, should be offered renewable, long-term contracts. These contracts should specifically address the university's obligations in the event of termination, as well as the coach's obligations in the event he or she breaks the contract by leaving the institution.

7. Institutional support should be available for intercollegiate athletics. The Commission starts from the premise that properly administered intercollegiate athletics programs have legitimate standing in the university community. In that light, general funds can appropriately be used when needed to reduce the pressure on revenue sports to support the entire athletics program. There is an inherent contradiction in insisting on the one hand that athletics are an important part of the university while arguing, on the other hand, that spending institutional funds for them is somehow improper.

THE “THREE”: CERTIFICATION

The third leg of our triangle calls for independent authentication by an outside body of integrity of each institution’s athletics program. It seems clear that the health of most college athletics programs, like the health of most individuals, depends on periodic checkups. Regular examinations are required to ensure the major systems are functioning properly and that problems are treated before they threaten the health of the entire program. Such checkups should cover the entire range of academic and financial issues in intercollegiate athletics.

The academic and financial integrity of college athletics is in such low repute that authentication by an outside agency is essential. Periodic independent assessments of a program can go a long way toward guaranteeing that the athletics culture on campus responds to academic direction, that expenditures are routinely reviewed, that the president’s authority is respected by the board of trustees, and that the trustees stand for academic values when push comes to shove in the athletics department.

Regarding independent certification, the Commission therefore recommends:

1. The NCAA should extend the certification process to all institutions granting athletics aid. The NCAA is now in the midst of a pilot effort to develop a certification program which will, when in place, certify the integrity of athletics programs. We recommend that this pilot certification process be extended on a mandatory basis to all institutions granting athletics aid. Of critical importance to the Commission in its support of this new activity is the assurance of NCAA officials that certification will depend, in large measure, on the comparison of student-athletes, by sport, with the rest of the student body in terms of admissions, academic progress and graduation rates. Equally important are plans to publicly identify institutions failing the certification process.

2. Universities should undertake comprehensive, annual policy audits of their athletics program. We urge extending the annual financial audit now required by the NCAA to incorporate academic issues and athletics governance. The new annual review should examine student-athletes’ admissions records, academic progress and graduation rates, as well as the athletics department’s management and budget. This

activity should serve as preventive maintenance to insure institutional integrity and can provide the annual raw data to make the certification process effective.

3. The certification program should include the major themes put forth in this document. If the new certification program is to be effective and institutions are to meet its challenge, we believe colleges and universities will be forced to undergo the most rigorous self-examination of the policies and procedures by which they control their sports programs. This document concludes with ten principles that, in the form of a restatement of the Commission's implementing recommendations, can serve as a vehicle for such self-examination. We urge the NCAA to incorporate these principles into the certification process.

Putting Principles Into Action

PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION

Reform will not be realized with calls for improvement or with recommendations that sit on a shelf. What is required is a great nationwide effort to move reform from rhetoric to reality. This campaign should be directed at putting the “one-plus-three” model into place and ridding intercollegiate athletics of abuse.

This effort must take root on individual campuses; it cannot be imposed from without. It should draw on the energy of university presidents and trustees. It should seek the counsel of athletics directors, coaches, faculty and alumni, and call forth the best that is in our student-athletes. This campaign needs the assistance of secondary school administrators and the staunch support of the NCAA. With these elements in place, college sports can be transformed.

If that is to happen, the major actors involved in intercollegiate athletics must clearly understand their roles. The Commission wishes to speak directly to each of them.

TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS:

Your success at the 1991 NCAA convention confirms what we believe: You are the linchpin of the reform movement. At your own institution, your efforts are critical to a sound athletics program, one that honors the integrity of both your institution and the students wearing your colors. Together with your colleagues across the nation you can assure that college athletics serve the best ideals of higher education.

This report suggests how you can make a difference on your campus. It recommends your involvement in directing your athletics conference and in strengthening the policy-making role of presidents within the NCAA. It insists that you pay greater attention to the academic and financial functioning of your athletics department. We ask that you maintain open lines of communication with your athletics director; there should be no misunderstanding about your institution’s academic and athletics goals. The burden is on you to insist that athletics reform is a matter of utmost concern in your institution’s academic principles.

TO CHAIRS OF GOVERNING BOARDS:

When you support your president in these reforms, success will be assured. If you do not, we do not know how reform can be accomplished.

The proper role of a board is policy and oversight, not management and personnel actions. The board you lead can be the conscience of the university and the strong right arm of the president. But, without your firm hand, your board can easily lose its way amidst the doubts

and misgivings that attend any great undertaking. Your task is to assure unity of purpose and firmness of resolve. Your reward will be an institution secure in the knowledge that no crisis of public confidence can arise from scandal in the athletics program.

TO THE FACULTY:

You are the inheritors of a tradition stretching back through the centuries. It holds that the faculty is responsible for academic standards and protecting the curriculum.

Your first responsibility is to that inheritance. If your institution offers classes or courses of study designed largely for student-athletes, you have fallen short. You cannot remain true to the tradition you bear by permitting athletes to masquerade as students.

Your second task is to help insure that your institutional representatives to the NCAA are not confused about their purpose. The evidence presented to the Commission indicates that some faculty athletics representatives have not fulfilled their potential as guardians of the academic interest. Working with the president, you must make it clear that these faculty members attend athletics meetings to represent the academic values of the institution.

TO ATHLETICS DIRECTORS:

It is up to you to put muscle and sinew on the framework we have suggested here and to oversee its day-to-day implementation. Most of you understand the importance of what we are proposing and have already supported essential elements of our plan within the councils of the NCAA.

Your most difficult task will be to counterbalance the traditional demand for winning teams with the renewed call for integrity and the equitable treatment of all athletes. Your best guide will come not from boosters with short memories, but from your president and your institution's trustees. Their larger vision of the university's responsibilities and their longer memory of its achievements represent your surest standards.

Your success as a leader in athletics reform will undoubtedly be judged by your ability to transform the athletics culture on your campus. That culture must be reshaped from one in which winning is everything to one in which competition is grounded in the "one-plus-three" model.

TO COACHES:

We know that at their best coaches are educators, mentors, and loyal advocates for the institutions and for higher education. We understand that you are on the front line - forced to make career-shaping decisions under great pressure, constantly on the alert to insure that rivals do not gain an advantage over you, your program or your institution.

You and your colleagues are the adults with the greatest day-to-day contact with our student-athletes. You must make them understand that fewer than one in a hundred will ever make a

living from their athletic ability. Emphasize to them the value of a college degree. Insist that the privilege of being a member of your squad carries with it the obligation of being a student in good standing. Search out every opportunity to drive home the point that your athletes' behavior, on and off the field, is important not merely because of what it says about them. Your satisfaction will be a lifetime associated with adults who have, with your assistance, achieved their full potential.

Your most difficult challenge may be to take to heart the warning in this document that if intercollegiate sport will not police itself, others will. That is no empty threat. It is essential that you forego the temptation to cynicism and, with your colleagues throughout the coaching profession, forge a coalition for reform built around the "one-plus-three" model.

TO THE ALUMNI:

As a product of your institution, you have a critical role to play in safeguarding its reputation. University presidents, faculty members and members of governing boards come and go, but you remain.

In the marketplace, the value of your degree is based on your institution's reputation today, not the reputation it enjoyed when you were students. You can help protect the stake you hold in that degree by insisting that the athletics program is directed along ethical lines. Through your formal participation in structures such as governing boards, alumni boards, athletics councils and local alumni clubs, you can insist that your institution holds fast to the reform model we present here.

TO STUDENT-ATHLETES:

No one has a greater stake in the outcome of the issues described here than you. With this document the Commission has placed your concerns at the heart of athletics administration. If these reforms are adopted, letters of intent will no longer bind so tightly, the initial grant-in-aid offer will no longer be for only one year, and our institutions will renew their commitment to deliver educationally even if you are injured and unable to play.

You must deliver, too. University presidents, trustees, athletics directors and coaches have the power only to create the conditions under which you can reap the rewards of a university education. You must gather that harvest. We plead with you to understand that — unless you are one of the remarkably talented and very lucky — when your athletics eligibility has expired *your playing days are over*. Your task, even if you are one of the fortunate few, is to prepare yourself for the years and decades that stretch ahead of you beyond college. Boosters and alumni cannot do that for you. Presidents and coaches cannot create your future. You must create it yourself. The best place to do that is in the classroom, the library and the laboratory.

TO SECONDARY SCHOOL OFFICIALS:

Many of you have objected over the years to the overemphasis on athletics at the collegiate level. But the nature of the problem has, in recent years, changed. We sense that some secondary school programs now emulate the worst features of too many collegiate programs: recruiting abuses, permitting athletics to interfere with college preparation, standing by as coaches enter into shoe contracts, permitting the time demands for team travel to grow beyond reason, and pursuing television exposure and national rankings with the same passion as colleges and universities.

With this report, we are doing our very best to re-establish important values at the center of intercollegiate sport — and to restore the student-athlete to the center of our concern. We ask you to join us in this effort.

In particular, we ask you to cooperate with us in putting an end to all-star games during the academic year, and to summer camps and leagues dominated by commercial interests. These activities promote a false sense of the importance of athletics in the student's long-term future. We urge you to encourage high school athletes to spend as much time preparing themselves academically as they do preparing themselves athletically. We suggest that you guide them toward institutions that will put their welfare as students and their maturation as young adults ahead of their performance as athletes. We encourage you to make them aware of the importance of attending institutions that have adopted the "one-plus-three" model set forth in this report.

TO THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION:

Finally, we address the National Collegiate Athletic Association — both our colleagues in the institutions which constitute the Association and the staff which directs the organization in their name. Throughout this document we have alluded to the NCAA. We have applauded it when justified and taken it to task when appropriate.

The NCAA has many critics. Aggrieved institutions and coaches complain about it. Disappointed boosters and politicians disagree with it. Enraged editors attack it. Presidents and academics complain that its investigative techniques are unfair. Some of the members of this Commission are among the organization's more severe critics; most of us are not.

We want to make a few major points with respect to the NCAA. First, if it did not exist, higher education would have to create it, or something very much like it. It is clear that a governing, rulemaking and disciplinary body of some sort is required. This Commission cannot impose progress; major change has to grow from within and mature through governing bodies. Handcuffing the NCAA is no way to advance athletics reform.

Second, critics of the NCAA -- particularly those in higher education - should be reminded that it is not some mysterious, omnipotent, external force. It is simply the creature of its own members. Colleges and universities have only themselves to blame for its shortcomings, real or imagined; the power to change the Association rests entirely within their hands.

Third, our recommendation for advancing reform through the NCAA is built on our bedrock principle of presidential control. In fact, the organization itself preaches presidential authority on campus. The activities of the Association should reflect that conviction.

Finally, with that change in place we ask that the NCAA apply itself to the task of simplifying and codifying complex NCAA rules and procedures. Any man or woman on the street should be able to understand what the NCAA does, how it works, how it makes its decisions, and, in particular, how it determines its sanctions. As it stands, not only can the average citizen not answer those questions, but very few presidents, athletics directors, coaches or student-athletes can predict what it is likely to do in any given circumstance. This situation must be addressed.

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

It is clear that this nationwide effort must grow from our campuses. We have reduced the essence of our concerns to the “one-plus-three” model. We have expanded this model through the implementing recommendations that form the core of Chapter II. But the question remains, where to begin?

We believe that any institution wishing to take seriously the “one-plus-three” model would do well to start with the following statement of principles which recasts this report’s main themes. We urge presidents to make this statement the vehicle for serious discussions within their institutions and, in particular, with the members of the governing board. Each principle is significant. Each deserves a separate conversation. Together they can define what the university expects, and how it hopes to realize its expectations.

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Preamble: This institution is committed to a philosophy of firm institutional control of athletics, to the unquestioned academic and financial integrity of our athletics program, and to the accountability of the athletics department to the values and goals befitting higher education, in support of that commitment, the board, officers, faculty and staff of this institution have examined and agreed to the following general principles as a guide to our participation in intercollegiate athletics:

- I.** The educational values, practices and mission of this institution determine the standards by which we conduct our intercollegiate athletics program.
- II.** The responsibility and authority for the administration of the athletics department, including all basic policies, personnel and finances, are vested in the president.
- III.** The welfare, health and safety of student-athletes are primary concerns of athletics administration on this campus. This institution will provide student-athletes with the opportunity for academic experiences as close as possible to the experiences of their classmates.
- IV.** Every student-athlete -- male and female, majority and minority, in all sports -- will receive equitable and fair treatment.
- V.** The admission of student-athletes -- including junior college transfers -- will be based on their showing reasonable promise of being successful in a course of study leading to an academic degree. That judgment will be made by admissions officials.
- VI.** Continuing eligibility to participate in intercollegiate athletics will be based on students being able to demonstrate each academic term that they will graduate within five years of their enrolling. Students who do not pass this test will not play.

- VII.** Student-athletes, in each sport, will be graduated in at least the same proportion as non-athletes who have spent comparable time as full-time students.
- VIII.** All funds raised and spent in connection with intercollegiate athletics programs will be channeled through the institutions general treasury, not through independent groups, whether internal or external. The athletics department budget will be developed and monitored in accordance with general budgeting procedures on campus.
- IX.** All athletics-related income from non-university sources for coaches and athletics administrators will be reviewed and approved by the university. In cases where the income involved the university's functions, facilities or name, contracts will be negotiated with the institution.
- X.** We will conduct annual academic and fiscal audits of the athletics program. Moreover, we intend to seek NCAA certification that our athletics program complies with the principles herein. We will promptly correct any deficiencies and will conduct our athletics program in a manner worthy of this distinction.

We believe these 10 principles represent a statement around which our institutions and the NCAA can rally. It is our hope that this statement of principles will be incorporated into the Association's developing certification program. The Commission believes that the success of the NCAA certification program must be judged on the degree to which it advances these principles as the fundamental ends of intercollegiate programs. Ideally, institutions will agree to schedule only those colleges and universities that have passed all aspects of the certification process: Institutions that refuse to correct deficiencies will find themselves isolated by the vast majority of athletics administrators who support intercollegiate athletics as an honorable tradition in college life.

The members of the Knight Foundation Commission are convinced, as we know most members of the public and of the athletic and academic worlds are convinced, that changes are clearly required in intercollegiate athletics. Making these changes will require courage, determination and perseverance on the part of us all. That courage, determination and perseverance must be summoned. Without them, we cannot move forward. But with them and the "one-plus-three" model we cannot be held back. The combination makes it possible to keep faith with our student-athletes, with our institutions, and with the public that wants the best for them both.

Appendix A: Acknowledgments

The Commission is grateful for the contributions of many individuals and organizations whose assistance made this report possible. Our first acknowledgment goes to the Board of Trustees of Knight Foundation. Their belief in the importance of this effort launched this Commission. The Foundation has been generous in its support and unflagging in its commitment to the reform of intercollegiate athletes. The leadership of Knight Foundation President Creed Black has inspired us all throughout the course of this project.

We also appreciate the many contributions of the able and hard working staff which helped guide our work. Staff Director Christopher Morris helped keep the Commission focused on its objectives. His experience in athletic administration on three different campuses was a critical resource for the Commission. Associate Director Maureen Devlin was tireless in preparing and reviewing materials, responding to our needs, and checking our facts. Roger Valdiserri, Associate Athletics Director, University of Notre Dame, served ably as Executive Assistant to Fr. Hesburgh. Bryan Skelton provided important research assistance and administrative support.

James Harvey provided timely briefings to the Commission and served as principal draftsman of this document. Bruce Boston and Adam Kernan-Schloss of James Harvey and Associates, Washington, D.C., also assisted in developing the report. John Underwood provided skillful editing of the final draft. Louis Harris addressed the Commission and lent key insights on several aspects of our work. The report was designed by Luquire George Andrews, Inc. and printed by Washburn Graphics. Finally, we wish to extend our thanks to the dozens of men and women — athletes, coaches, athletics directors, faculty members, conference commissioners, television executives, writers, accrediting officials and leaders from professional sports — who took the time to share their thoughts with us. Their participation was invaluable.

Appendix B: Meeting Participants

CONFERENCE COMMISSIONERS

Eugene Corrigan <i>Atlantic Coast Conference</i>	James Frank <i>Southwestern Athletic Conference</i>
Kenneth Free <i>Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference</i>	Thomas Hansen <i>Pacific-10 Conference</i>
Fred Jacoby <i>Southwest Conference</i>	Carl James <i>Big Eight Conference</i>
Joseph Kearney <i>Western Athletic Conference</i>	Margie McDonald <i>High Country Athletic Conference</i>
Charles Neinas <i>College Football Association</i>	Ronald Stephenson <i>Big Sky Athletic Conference</i>
Patty Viverito <i>Gateway Collegiate Athletic Conference</i>	Kevin Weiberg <i>Associate Commissioner</i> <i>Big Ten Conference</i>

FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES

Oscar Butler <i>South Carolina State University</i>	Richard Dunn <i>University of Washington</i>
Norris Edney <i>Alcorn State University</i>	Charles Ehrhardt <i>Florida State University</i>
Daniel Gibbens <i>University of Oklahoma</i>	Carla Haye <i>Marquette University</i>
Jerry Kingston <i>Arizona State University</i>	Daniel Reagan <i>Villanova University</i>
Billy Seay <i>Louisiana State University</i>	B.J. Skelton <i>Clemson University</i>
Yvonne Slatton <i>University of Iowa</i>	Robert Sweazy <i>Texas Technological University</i>
Albert Witte <i>University of Arkansas</i>	

ATHLETICS DIRECTORS AND SENIOR WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

Richard Bay

University of Minnesota

Karen Fey

New Mexico State University

Christine Grant

University of Iowa

Kaye Hart

Utah State University

Samuel Jankovich

University of Miami

C. M. Newton

University of Kentucky

Eugene Smith

Eastern Michigan University

Richard Tamburo

University of Missouri

Joan Cronan

University of Tennessee

William Flynn

Boston College

Charles Harris

Arizona State University

Judith Holland

University of California, Los Angeles

Jack Lengyel

U.S. Naval Academy

Marcia Saneholtz

Washington State University

Glen Tuckett

Brigham Young University

Chris Voelz

University of Minnesota

BASKETBALL COACHES

Dale Brown

Louisiana State University

Robert Knight

Indiana University

Richard Phelps

University of Notre Dame

George Raveling

University of Southern California

Vivian Stringer

University of Iowa

Roy Williams

University of Kansas

Jill Hutchison

Illinois States University

Michael Krzyzewski

Duke University

Rene Portland

Pennsylvania State University

Dean Smith

University of North Carolina

John Thompson

Georgetown University

FOOTBALL COACHES

Terry Donahue
University of California, Los Angeles

Richard MacPherson
Syracuse University

Joseph Paterno
Pennsylvania State University

Richard Sheridan
North Carolina State University

Dennis Green
Stanford University

Thomas Osborne
University of Nebraska

Francis Peay
Northwestern University

STUDENT-ATHLETES

David Berkoff
Harvard University

Susan Nissen
Central Michigan University

Henrietta Walls
University of North Carolina

Shola Lynch
University of Texas, Austin

Todd Sandroni
University of Mississippi

Jason Wilkie
Central Michigan University

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Arthur Ashe
Author

John Berry
Florida Bar Association

Charles Cook
New England Association Schools and Colleges

Daniel Dutcher
National Collegiate Athletic Association

Russ Granik
National Basketball Association

Gregg Hartley
Athletic Footwear Association

Richard Lapchick
Center for the Study of Sport in Society

John Moylan
DeMatha Catholic High School

Harvey Schiller

Barbara Bergmann
American University

Robert Bradley
University of Kentucky

Frank Deford
The National

Paul Getto
Kansas Association of School Boards

Frank Haggard
Iowa State University

David Knopp
National Collegiate Athletic Association

Bill Moyers
Public Affairs Television

Neal Pilson
CBS Sports

Michael Slive

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

U.S. Olympic Committee

Fred Stroock

University of California, Los Angeles

John Thelin

College of William and Mary

John Underwood

Author

Lawrence Wiseman

College of William and Mary

Linde Thomson Law Firm

Paul Tagliabue

National Football League

Steven Tweedie

Oklahoma State University

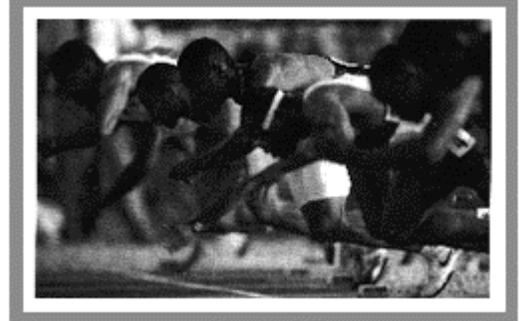
Brenda Weare

National Collegiate Athletic Association

A Solid Start

A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics

March 1992



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

March 17, 1992

Mr. Lee Hills
Chairman
Board of Trustees
Knight Foundation
2 South Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, FL 33131

Dear Mr. Hills,

In March 1991, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics submitted to you its report, *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*.

The document, the product of more than a year of study, debate and discussion, placed less emphasis on specific solutions for the problems in college sports and more on proposing a structure for reform. We suggested what we call the "one-plus-three" model, a road map to help guide academic officials as they grapple with the difficult and complex problems of big-time intercollegiate athletics.

When we released our report, the members of the Commission pledged to follow through. We joined forces with other leaders of the athletics reform movement -- the Presidents Commission of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), professional associations, college and university presidents, and governing boards -- to advance reform. This alliance has already begun to build on a new model. In this regard, the leadership of the Presidents Commission has been outstanding. In fact, substantial progress has already been made on ten of the twenty specific recommendations put forth by the Knight Commission one year ago.

Today, one year later, we believe the reform movement is off to a fine start. But a long road lies ahead of us. Because much of that road -- particularly in the areas of presidential control, financial integrity and certification -- is still under construction, the rest of the journey will undoubtedly be more difficult and time consuming. Nevertheless, we are enormously encouraged by the progress to date.

We are grateful that the Foundation's trustees have extended the life of the Commission in 1993. With your continued support and guidance, we plan to persevere.

Respectfully,



William C. Friday
Co-Chairman
President
William R. Kenan, Jr. Fund



Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
Co-Chairman
President Emeritus
University of Notre Dame

A Solid Start

Twelve months ago the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics concluded that big-time college athletics appeared to have lost their bearings and to be veering out of control. In support of a burgeoning sports reform movement, the Commission proposed a new model for intercollegiate athletics, a road map entitled “one-plus-three” in which the “one” - presidential control — would be directed toward the “three” — academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification. We believed that all of the subordinate problems and issues of college sports could be addressed responsibly within this model.

The Commission’s statement, *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete*, was not delivered in a vacuum, but in the midst of a growing debate in academic and athletics circles about college sports, their purposes, and how to reform them. We decided to make common cause with the leaders of this reform movement, including the Presidents Commission of the NCAA, college and university presidents, and governing boards. That alliance has already produced results.

As Washington Post columnist Thomas Boswell wrote in June 1991, after reviewing the Presidents Commission’s new proposals to raise academic standards, “Just 100 days ago, it seemed like dreamy stuff for the Knight Commission to intone, “Cutting academic corners in order to admit athletes will not be tolerated.” Now it doesn’t seem quite so farfetched.“ Today it is not at all farfetched. When the January 1992 NCAA Convention enacted the presidents’ proposals, significantly higher academic standards became binding on every big- time college and university athletics program.

The presidents’ proposals were approved by handsome margins. The 3-1 votes by which academic standards were raised reinforced the impression that presidents had taken charge. Other important reform measures were also approved, and action on still more was scheduled in a new strategic plan developed by the Presidents Commission.

Meanwhile, acting independently of the NCAA, many governing boards and higher education associations have given impetus to reform with their public endorsements of the Knight Commission recommendations. And with more than 25,000 copies already distributed, it is clear that the report and its statement of principles have become — as we hoped — “a serious vehicle for discussion” on individual campuses.

Perhaps the most encouraging news is the following: The public clearly senses that reform is underway. In its report last year, the Knight Commission referred to a Louis Harris poll conducted in 1989 indicating that 78 percent of Americans believed big-time intercollegiate athletics were out of control. A recent follow-up survey indicates that 47 percent of the public now holds that view, a dramatic 31 point decline. Completed in February 1992, the new Harris survey attributes this impressive change to the accelerated pace of reform in recent years.

As for the NCAA itself, its 1992 convention proved to be one of the most significant in memory. Here is how that convention's actions promise to reshape intercollegiate athletics.

1. Effective this year:

- **Satisfactory Progress in Degree Requirements.** "Majoring in eligibility" is a thing of the past. Division I student-athletes must have completed 25 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent of the program course requirements for their specific degree in order to compete in their third, fourth and fifth years of enrollment, respectively.
- **Satisfactory Progress in Grade Point Average.** Student-athletes cannot compete with little chance of graduating. Entering their third and fourth years of enrollment, Division I student-athletes must have a GPA of 90 and 95 percent, respectively, of the minimum cumulative GPA required to graduate.
- **Satisfactory Progress in School Year.** Student-athletes can no longer slide by during the academic year. Division I and II student-athletes will have to take three-quarters of their courses during the regular academic year, instead of relying on summer school to make up credits.
- **Coaches' Income.** It is clear who employs the coaches. All coaches in Division I and II are now required to obtain prior, annual, written approval from university presidents for all athletically related income, the use of the institution's name, and outside compensation from shoe and apparel companies.
- **Official Visits.** High school athletes will understand that reform is real. Prospects cannot accept official visits to Division I schools prior to the "early signing period" unless they present minimum SAT results of 700 (ACT results of 17) and a GPA of 2.0 in seven core courses.
- **Transfer Students.** Mid-year transfer students (including junior college transfers) at all Division I and II institutions must meet satisfactory progress requirements the following fall, not one year later.

2. Effective by 1993:

- **Presidential Control.** University presidents and the NCAA Council will have in hand a major examination of the role of presidents at the institutional, conference and national levels.
- **Certification.** The proposals of the NCAA Subcommittee on Certification, which encompass the "one-plus-three" model, will be considered at the 1993 convention.

- **Gender Equity.** A study of gender equity in intercollegiate athletics will be completed, including consideration of equity in grants-in-aid for women's sports.
- **Cost Containment.** Grants-in-aid for Division II programs will be reduced by 10 percent, matching cost reductions enacted in 1991 for Division I.

3. Effective by 1994:

- **Financial Integrity.** University presidents and the NCAA Council will have access to a comprehensive examination of financial issues (including sources of financial assistance for student-athletes; the influence of athletics foundations, booster clubs and media revenues; and gender equity).

4. Effective by 1995:

- **Initial Eligibility.** New initial eligibility rules will insure that prospective student-athletes have a reasonable chance of completing college. By August 1995, prospects will be required to present a 2.5 grade point average (out of a possible 4.0) in 13 core high school units, along with a combined SAT core of 700 (ACT score of 17) in order to compete in their first year of enrollment.

The Commission concludes that a solid start on the road to athletics reforms has been made. Presidents are in control of the process. Academic reforms, — “no pass, no play” — have been enacted and will be put into place over the next several years. A major study of financial issues is planned, with legislation scheduled for 1994. A certification program is being tested and will top the NCAA's 1993 legislative agenda.

The Rest Of The Road



Encouraging as these developments are, a long and hazardous road lies before us. One indication of the difficulties ahead can be found in the February Harris poll. Although the public appears convinced that a substantial reform effort is under way, it has adopted a wait-and-see attitude on whether presidents can complete the job. Large majorities (70 percent or more) continue to express concern about rules violations and their impact on university

integrity, the false promise of professional careers for student-athletes, financial greed in college sports, and the seemingly insatiable appetite for television revenues. Nearly half (43 percent) still doubt that higher education can put its athletics house in order.

professional careers for student-athletes, financial greed in college sports, and the seemingly insatiable appetite for television revenues. Nearly half (43 percent) still doubt that higher education can put its athletics house in order.

Remaining issues have less to do with the bread-and-butter of higher education (assessing what students know and are able to do, and setting standards of performance) than with complex and difficult problems of athletics governance, presidential control, financial integrity, and public accountability through certification. Because these issues are less clear cut, involving large stakes for individuals and institutions, they are also of necessity more political. The task for academic and athletics administrators is to keep their eyes on the main prize: a structure for intercollegiate sports embodying the standards and values befitting higher education.

In this regard, several actions taken in the past years are promising. First, in developing a strategic plan to take up enduring issues in intercollegiate athletics, the Presidents Commission has demonstrated its long-term commitment to reform. The results of both the 1991 and 1992 conventions speak for themselves as evidence of the power of that commitment. When presidents are informed and involved, good things happen.

Second, in the next two years the NCAA intends to concentrate on major structural considerations in athletics: certification; presidential authority at the institutional, conference and national levels; and financial control and integrity. These intentions stake out the road ahead, and they round out the “one-plus-three” model. But lasting structural reform will not be secured with good intentions alone. Continued diligent work by college and university presidents will be required.

CERTIFICATION

The Commission wants to note its support for the NCAA's efforts to develop a certification program and its concern that current plans appear to be overly complex. The January convention received a report on the progress of the NCAA Council's Subcommittee on Certification. The subcommittee plans to issue a final report, including its recommendations, later this year -- on the assumption that legislation relating to certification will be considered at the 1993 NCAA convention. A pilot certification program is already completed or under way in 36 NCAA member institutions. In discussing the certification program with NCAA representatives, Knight Commission holds strongly to the view that certification should not be a laborious review of institutional compliance with the regulations detailed in the 479-page NCAA Manual. The "one-plus-three" model offers a ready structure for certification. In the Commission's view, the object should be a relatively simple process to validate, institution by institution, presidential control directed toward academic and financial integrity of the athletics program. In the area of academics, for example, NCAA Executive Director Richard Schultz has succinctly defined the key issue: In admissions, academic progress and graduation rates, the profile of student-athletes should match the profile of other full-time undergraduates.

POTENTIAL DETOURS

Among the difficulties in the journey ahead lie several detours. These must be avoided. The first detour is the temptation to "fine tune" out of existence the reforms enacted in the last several years. Each element of the world of intercollegiate athletics can put forward a "favorite son" for special consideration -- an additional graduate assistant here, an extra grant-in-aid there, a waiver of eligibility requirements elsewhere. Individually, these exceptions may have merit. Collectively they overwhelm reform.

The second lies in legislative efforts at the federal level to impose reform from on high. While these efforts maintain pressure from internal reform, they threaten more harm than good. One proposal, for example, would impose a federally mandated administrative structure on the NCAA. The NCAA is a private, voluntary association. Only the political appeal of intercollegiate athletics makes this voluntary association vulnerable to such a threat. We believe this legislation promises bad law. More than that, it creates poor precedent for dealing with the private sector, profit or non-profit.

The third detour leads directly to the courtroom. Four states already have enacted legislation to lay aside existing NCAA enforcement rules; comparable legislation is pending in six others. Their immediate effect, within each of the various states, is to virtually forbid the NCAA from enforcing any of its rules without court action. Left unchallenged, these measures threaten to kill nationwide collegiate competition.

Although these statutes appear to involve narrow issues of compliance or legislative support for local institutions, they go right to the heart of what athletic competition - Little League, intercollegiate, or professional -- is all about. As a former president of Yale University, the late

A. Bartlett Giamatti, once pointed out, sports are bound by rules for a very good reason. They try to assure that the outcomes of contests are fair, that they depend on the relative skills of the contestants and their coaches. If fairness cannot be demonstrated, there is no point in competing because the results have no meaning.

In this regard, a fundamental obligation of sports administration is maintaining oversight of the rules, changing them as participants agree, and enforcing compliance in the event of violation. If national governing bodies for intercollegiate athletics cannot ensure fair play through common compliance procedures across 50 states and the District of Columbia, nationwide intercollegiate competition as we have know it will not survive.

The final detour is the danger of despair. Given the complexity of these issues, there detail in public volatility, presidents could easily throw up their hands fearing the effort might be endless and ultimately futile. Presidents must stay the course, and governing boards must give them the authority to act. Presidents cannot lead without the boards support.

Too much has already been gained to falter now. The battle for reform cannot be won if it is waged in fits and starts. We urge our colleagues in the world of intercollegiate athletics to persevere. The short-term reward will be athletics programs free of academic abuse, financial irregularities and the suspicion that “the program” defies academic control. But the long-term benefits will belong to student-athletes, and rightfully so, because their welfare is what college sport is all about.

Equally important, we ask our friends in the world of public policy and legislation to stand aside while college and university leaders complete the job. Academic and athletics administrators are demonstrating they can meet the challenge. Attempted legislative remedies, even when well intentioned, can only complicate their task by erecting road blocks on the road to reform.

College sports are far different today than they were a year ago, so this is no time for detours through the courtroom, the state capital, or the halls of Congress. The new model, the `Presidents Commission, and the NCAA leadership offer college and university administrators a map to get from where we have been to where we want to be — a system of intercollegiate athletics firmly joined to the traditions and values of higher education.

Creed C. Black

President, Knight Foundation

Douglas S. Dibbert

General Alumni Association, University of North Carolina

John A. DiBiaggio

President, Michigan state University

William C. Friday

President Emeritus, University of North Carolina

Thomas K. Hearn
President, Wake Forest University

Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame

J. Lloyd Huck
Chairman of the Board, Pennsylvania State University

Bryce Jordan
President Emeritus, Pennsylvania State University

Richard W. Kazmaier
President, Kazmaier Associates

Donald R. Keough
President, The Coca-Cola Company

Martin A. Massengale
President, University of Nebraska

The Honorable Tom McMillen
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Chase N. Peterson
President, University of Utah

Jane C. Pfeiffer
Former Chair, National Broadcasting Company

A. Kenneth Pye
President, Southern Methodist University

Richard D. Schultz
Executive Director, National Collegiate Athletic Association

Donna E. Shalala
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison

R. Gerald Turner
Chancellor, University of Mississippi

LeRoy T. Walker
Treasurer, United States Olympic Committee

James J. Whalen
President, Ithaca College

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.
Chairman & CEO, TIAA-CREF

Charles E. Young
Chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles

Statement Of Principles

Preamble: This institution is committed to a philosophy of firm institutional control of athletics, to the unquestioned academic and financial integrity of our athletics programs, and to the accountability of the athletics department to the values and goals befitting higher education. In support of that commitment, the board, officers, faculty and staff of this institution have examined and agreed to the following general principles as a guide to our participation in intercollegiate athletics:

1. The educational values, practices and mission of this institution determines the standards by which we conduct our intercollegiate athletics program.
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7. Students-athletes in each sport, will be graduated in at least the same proportion as non-athletes who have spent comparable time as full-time students.
8. All funds raised and spent in connection with intercollegiate athletics programs will be channeled through the institution's general treasury, not through independent groups, whether internal or external. The athletics department budget will be developed and monitored in accordance with general budgeting procedures on campus.
9. All athletics-related income from non-university sources for coaches and athletics administrators will be reviewed and approved by the university. In cases where the income involves the university's functions, facilities or name, contracts will be negotiated with the institution.

10. Annual academic and fiscal audits of the athletics program will be conducted. Moreover, this institution intends to seek NCAA certification that its athletics program complies with the principles herein. The institution will promptly correct any deficiencies and will conduct its athletics programs in a manner worthy of this distinction.

Acknowledgments

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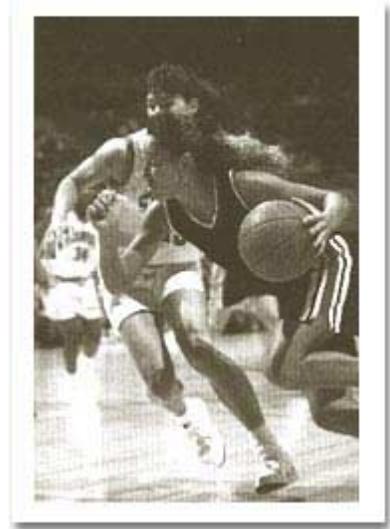
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A New Beginning For A New Century

Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States

March 1993



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

March 18, 1993

Mr. Lee Hills
Chairman Board of Trustees
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
2 South Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, FL 33131

Dear Mr. Hills,

On October 19, 1989, the Trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, concerned that abuses in intercollegiate athletics threatened the integrity of higher education, created this Commission and directed it to propose a reform agenda for college sports. Following nearly 18 months of study, involving meeting with more than 90 athletes, educators, coaches, journalists and administrators, we submitted our recommendations in March 1991 in a report entitled *Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*.

In that document and its successor, *A Solid Start*, issued one year later, the commission placed less emphasis on specific solutions for discrete abuses in college sports and more on establishing a structure for reform. We suggested what we called the "one-plus-three" model -- presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification -- a kind of road map to guide academic officials as they grapple with difficult and complex problems in intercollegiate athletics. Our suggestions, confirmed by the thinking of the executive director and the Presidents Commission of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), fell on fertile soil.

Today, we are pleased to submit to you our final report, *A New Beginning for a New Century*, confident that we have accomplished what we set out to do. Responding to our initiatives, the leaders of the nation's colleges and universities and the members of the NCAA have put reforms in place over the past three years that, in effect, establish the "one-plus-three" model.

We do not pretend that all of the problems of college sports are behind us. Human nature being what it is athletics scandal will continue to leave its mark on some institutions. Moreover, the full effect of the reforms recently enacted will not be visible until the end of this decade. We are, however, confident that the "one-plus-three" model promises to curb abuse and offers a framework for addressing other pressing issues in intercollegiate athletics, including burgeoning costs and gender equity.

On behalf of the entire Commission, we express our appreciation to you and the members of the Foundation's board for your staunch support of this undertaking and your confidence in our ability to see it through. We also want to make special acknowledgment of the work of our staff director and his colleagues. Under the skilled leadership of Christopher Morris, the staff and consultants made splendid contributions to our effort.

Respectfully,

William C. Friday
Co-Chairman
President
William R. Kenan, Jr. Fund

Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
Co-Chairman
President Emeritus
University of Notre Dame

A New Beginning For A New Century

“As our nation approaches a new century,” the Knight Foundation Commission observed in 1991, “the demand for reform of intercollegiate athletics has escalated dramatically.” Today, that escalating demand is being matched by accelerating reform. College and university presidents, along with the leaders and members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), have taken advantage of a swelling chorus for reform to make a new beginning in college sports. Although barely implemented today, the full effects of recent reforms will be visible as the 21st century dawns.

The distance college sports have traveled in three short years can be measured by developments in public opinion. In 1989, pollster Louis Harris asked if big-time intercollegiate athletics were out of control. Across the United States, heads nodded in agreement: 78 percent of Americans thought that the situation was out of hand. In 1993, 52 percent of the public continued to agree. This significant 26-point decline represents how far college sports have come. The fact that about half of all Americans remain troubled represents the distance yet to go. Nevertheless, a new air of confidence is measurable and can be seen in other findings of the Harris survey: In 1989, nearly two-thirds of Americans believed state or national legislation was needed to control college sports; less than half feel that way today. Earlier negative views of the NCAA have turned into positive marks for its efforts to control excesses in college sports.

What accounts for the impressive turnaround in perceptions? The improvement is no accident, but a response to the highly visible pace of reform in recent years. Since 1989, college and university presidents, the members of the NCAA, and athletics leaders have addressed a single goal with singular concentration: restoring integrity to the games played in the university’s name. They have created a structure of reform that can reshape the conduct, management and accountability of college sports. The new Harris poll tells us the American people are paying attention.

Reforms Of Recent Years

In 1991, this Commission proposed a new model for intercollegiate athletics, a kind of road map entitled “one-plus-three,” in which the “one” -- presidential control -- would be directed toward the “three” -- academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification.

Such a model, this Commission believed, represented higher education’s only real assurance that intercollegiate athletics could be grounded in the primacy of academic values. NCAA legislation in recent years has put this model in place.

These changes promise to reshape dramatically the environment of intercollegiate athletics. In 1989, the NCAA’s Presidents Commission was tentative about how best to challenge the status quo in intercollegiate athletics. Established in 1984 as a compromise to a more ambitious effort to ensure presidential control of the NCAA, the Commission found itself five years later on the defensive. But by 1993, the Presidents Commission was in firm control of the Association’s legislative agenda. President’s Commission recommendations have dominated three successive NCAA conventions. With majorities of 3-1 or better, the Commission has pushed through preliminary cost reductions, new academic standards and an athletics certification program. Of even greater long-term significance, the 1993 legislation created an NCAA Joint Policy Board, made up of the Association’s Administrative Committee and officers of the Presidents Commission with authority to review the NCAA budget and legislative agenda and to evaluate and supervise the executive director. Presidential leadership is the hallmark of today’s NCAA.

In 1989, student-athletes could compete in their first year of college if they had finished high school with a “C” average in 11 core academic subjects, along with combined Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of 700. This weak foundation, combined with lack of attention to academic progress, meant that, five years later, many student-athletes found themselves far short of a college degree. By 1995, eligibility to play in the freshman year will require a 2.5 high school grade point average (“C+” or “B-”) in 13 high school academic units. One year later the 13 units must include four years of English and one year each of algebra and geometry. Meanwhile, graduation rates for student-athletes are published annually and, effective this academic year, student-athletes must demonstrate continuous, satisfactory progress toward graduation: They are now required to meet annual benchmarks in both grades and course work applicable to a specific degree. Academic integrity is being restored; student-athletes will now be students as well as athletes.

Three years ago, athletics finances were escalating beyond reason. Colleges and universities were in the midst of a kind of athletics arms race: Deficits mounted ... the costs of grant-in-aid mushroomed ... athletics budgets ballooned beyond institutional reach ... and it was unclear who employed some “power” coaches, since their outside income often dwarfed university compensation. Today the number of grants-in-aid of men in Division I and II of the NCAA

has been reduced 10 percent; coaching staffs have been trimmed; athletics budgets are reviewed as part of a new certification process; cost containment is the subject of a major new study; and coaches must have annual written approval from their presidents for all athletically related outside income. Universities have made a start in restoring order to the financial side of the house of athletics.

Finally, in 1989, too many big-time athletics programs had succeeded in imposing on universities a great reversal of ends and means. They had, this Commission found, become self-justifying enterprises in which winning-at-all-costs had pushed aside the educational context of athletics competition. Beginning this fall, each NCAA Division I institution will have to participate in a certification program once every five years. This program requires each institution to examine four key areas -- institutional mission, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity -- and (the most important factor) permit an external jury of academic and sports peers to evaluate and verify its findings. The new program promises to align means and ends.

The certification process is the capstone of the reform movement and will remain one of the movement's genuine legacies. Because it involved the entire campus community in a detailed examination of athletics policy issues, certification embodies the standards and values befitting higher education. By calling for regular self-examination of every corner of big-time programs under the bright light of outside peer review, certification should curb abuse before it starts, instead of after the damage has been done.

Meanwhile, on campuses and in conferences across the country, athletics and academic leaders have drawn new energy from the reform movement. Often using the "one-plus-three" model as their lens, presidentially appointed task forces, trustees and athletics boards have examined again the goals and operations of their athletics programs.

Challenges Ahead



This progress is encouraging, but the struggle for reform is far from won. Winning that struggle is what the “one-plus-three” model is all about. Academic and athletics officials now possess a new framework within which to tackle the many problems of college sports:

- abuses in recruiting, the bane of the college coach’s life;
- the compulsion of boosters to meddle in athletics decision-making;
- the search for television revenues and the influence of the entertainment industry on intercollegiate athletics;
- the relationships among high school, junior college, college and professional sports;
- the need to respect the dignity of the young men and women who represent the university on the playing field;
- the obligation to further strengthen academic standards so that the profile of student-athletes matches that of other full-time undergraduates in admissions, academic progress and graduation rates; and
- the imperative to meet the needs of minority student-athletes, particularly those from backgrounds of inner-city or rural poverty.

As this Commission’s tenure draws to a close, two great issues, cost containment and gender equity, dominate athletics policy discussions. These are first-order questions, significant problems requiring the best thinking of the nation’s university and athletics leaders. Part of their complexity lies in the fact they are intertwined: Costs should not be controlled at the price of rebuffing women’s aspirations. Opportunities for women must be provided in the context of controlling outlays for athletics programs that already cost too much. The cost control and equity dilemmas have to be addressed together.

The Cost Explosion. Despite recent modest reductions in athletics expenses, the hard work of cost reduction lies ahead. Quite apart from athletics, American higher education entered the 1990s facing its bleakest financial prospects since World War II. All institutions, including most flagship public and private universities, are in the midst of harrowing financial reductions, often involving staff and faculty layoffs, enrollment ceilings, and the elimination

of academic departments, In this environment, athletics programs can expect no special immunity from the financial hardships facing the institutions they represent.

NCAA figures that throughout the 1980s, athletics programs engaged in a financial arms race: Athletics costs grew twice as fast as academic salaries and three times faster than inflation, The urge to be nationally competitive, no matter the expense, assumed its own dynamic. Despite conventional wisdom, about 70 percent of Division I programs now lose money, many of them operating deeply in the red. It seems clear that athletics programs stand in need of the same kind of financial restructuring the larger academic community is already experiencing. On most campuses, athletics operating costs can be reduced substantially. But athletics programs will not disarm unilaterally. The active support of conferences and the NCAA is critical to effective cost control.

Gender Equity. Against the backdrop of the imperative for cost reduction, the unfinished agenda of equity for women also demands attention. Most campuses are struggling to meet the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, even as case law defining those requirements is being made. In general, according to an NCAA study of gender equity study released in 1992, Title IX regulations call for accommodating the athletics interests of enrolled women, allocating financial assistance in proportion to the number of male and female participants, and making other benefits equivalent. Slowly, often in the face of opposition opportunity for women to participate in intercollegiate athletics has become a reality.

But the opportunity is not truly equal. On many campuses, fans would be outraged if revenue-generating teams were expected to make do with the resources available to women. Even leaving out of the equation the major revenue-generating sports, football and men's basketball, women's programs generally operate on smaller budgets than men's. No matter the cause, the situation carries with it the threat of continued legal and Congressional scrutiny into whether young women are denied the benefits of participation in college sports.

The equity issue transcends athletics politics because it goes to the heart of what higher education is all about. Colleges and universities advance their intellectual mission by placing a premium on fairness, equality, competition and recognition of merit. These values are as important in the department of athletics as they are in the office of the dean. Keeping faith with student-athletes means keeping faith with women as well as men. The goal to keep in mind is the imperative to create comparable opportunities for participants, whether men or women, while controlling costs.

A Promise And A Choice

If that goal is to be reached, the “one-plus-three” model advanced by this Commission will be put to a severe test. Tempted to believe the battle for reform has been won because the framework is in place, presidents may turn their attention to other demands. That must not be allowed to happen. Presidential neglect of these issues is a sure formula for giving ground on the progress already made.

This Commission believes the reforms enacted to date represent some of the most encouraging developments in intercollegiate athletics since the NCAA was established in 1906. But optimism about the reforms and their potential must be tempered with realism. Reform is not a destination but a never-ending process, a race without a finish. By requiring presidents, trustees, faculty members, athletics administrators and coaches to examine the integrity of their sports programs every five years, certification keeps the process alive.

Maintaining the momentum for reform is important. The reforms of the last three years remain a promise yet to be kept: They will be implemented fully in 1995-96. This means that not a single student-athlete has yet entered and completed college under these changes. The first student-athletes to do so will graduate, at the earliest, in 1999. The certification program is ready to be launched, but it will not complete a full cycle of all Division I institutions before the 1998-99 school year. Making judgments today about the effects of these changes is premature; their real effects will appear at the end of the decade.

Moreover, no matter how deep-rooted reform is, it cannot transform human nature. Even with the new changes fully in place and working effectively, no one should be surprised when some institutions continue to be embarrassed by revelations about their athletics departments. People in college sports are like people everywhere: Most want to do the right thing; but some will try to skirt the rules, inevitably getting themselves, their associates, presidents and their institutions into trouble because, sooner or later, they will ignore the line dividing the acceptable from the unacceptable.

But realism should not give way to pessimism or cynicism. Critics may dismiss the reform effort, but they do so at their own risk. Something fundamental has changed in college sports. It is perhaps best illustrated by support for the Presidents Commission reform agenda from coaches, athletics directors, conference leaders and faculty representatives. Because not everyone is ready for reform, this support is far from universal; nevertheless, it is impressive.

What has changed fundamentally is the following: The institutional indifference and presidential neglect that led to disturbing patterns of abuse throughout the 1980s have been replaced with a new structure insisting on institutional oversight and depending on presidential leadership backed up by the trustee support. The leaders and members of the NCAA now have a framework for meaningful reform if they have the will, the courage and the perseverance to use it.

Along with that framework come new responsibilities. It was once possible for college sports administrators on the one hand, and university presidents and trustees, on the other to evade responsibility for the difficulties of intercollegiate athletics. Each side could plausibly claim the other possessed the authority to act. That claim no longer holds water. The “one-plus-three” model places authority exactly where it belongs in the councils of the NCAA and on individual campuses, Presidents today possess the power they need and, with the backing of their trustees, the responsibility to act.

The presidents of the nation’s colleges and universities have reached a kind of Rubicon, a point of decision, with regard to their athletics programs. They face a choice about how to proceed, a choice between business as usual and making a new beginning.

Business as usual in college sports will undermine American higher education, It leads inexorably to regulation of intercollegiate athletics by the courts or Congress. That is a consequence no one wants, but many, unwittingly, may invite.

The second choice strengthens American higher education. The Harris poll convincingly demonstrates that the American people respect college sports when they are grounded in the larger mission of the university. As the United States approaches a new century, the new beginning represented by a strong “one-plus-three” model promises to restore higher education’s moral claim to the high ground it should occupy.

These choices and their consequences are what is at stake in the athletics reform movement. The final words of the members of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics to the leaders of the nation’s colleges and universities are an echo from long ago. In 1929, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published a landmark study taking presidents to task for their failure to defend the integrity of higher education. There can be no doubt that presidents today have the opportunity to put that long-standing criticism to rest. A genuine assessment of the value of the current reform movement cannot be made by today’s observers. The true test will be applied by historians of the future, because they will ask whether today’s presidents employed their power wisely and chose well.

Creed C. Black

President, Knight Foundation

Douglas S. Dibbert

General Alumni Association, University of North Carolina

John A. DiBiaggio

President, Michigan State University

William C. Friday

President Emeritus, University of North Carolina

Thomas K. Hearn

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Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.

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James J. Whalen
President, Ithaca College

Charles E. Young
Chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles

The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation want to express their appreciation for the contributions of three distinguished educators who resigned from the Commission following their appointment by the President of the United States:

Honorable Lamar Alexander
President of the University of Tennessee
(appointed Secretary of Education by President Bush in December 1990)

Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
(appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services by President Clinton in January 1993)

Honorable Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.
Chairman and CEO, TIAA-CREF
(appointed Deputy Secretary of State by President Clinton in January 1993)

Reprinted From The 1995 Knight Foundation Annual Report

From the start of its work in the early 1990 until its dissolution six years later, the Knight foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics steadfastly championed an agenda built around a central recommendation -- presidential control of college sports.

“Our bedrock conviction is that university presidents are the key to successful reform,” the members of the blue-ribbon panel said in their initial report in 1991. “They must be in charge -- and understood to be in charge -- on campuses, in conferences and in decision-making councils of the national Collegiate Athletic Association.”

If that seemed to be a pipe dream after almost a century in which athletic administrators and coaches had been in charge, it didn't remain so for long. At its January 1996 convention, The NCAA drastically overhauled its governance structure in what one news account called “the most significant event in the organization's 90-year life.” The news structure grants greater autonomy to NCAA's three divisions, designates CEO's as the sole members of each divisions governing body and establishes an overall executive committee chosen from the divisional executive boards.

A New York Times editorial called the move a big victory in the campaign “to control runaway athletic programs” and said that the restructuring plan “was lifted chapter and verse” from the Knight Commission. And NCAA President Gene Corrigan described it as “the crowning touch to the Knight Commission's recommendations. It puts the real power where it ought to be. Presidents no longer have any place to hide.”

Restructuring, however, was by no means the only progress made toward realization of the Commission's “one-plus-three” model, with the “one” being presidential control directed toward the “three” -- academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification. In previous NCAA conventions during the life of the Commission, academic standards were significantly raised, financial controls were strengthened and a certification program based on periodic peer review of athletic programs was put in place.

The commission, an independent group of 22 leaders from the fields of education, business and sports, was chaired by the rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president emeritus of Notre Dame; and William C. Friday, president emeritus of the University of North Carolina.

“We're under no illusions that the problems which led us to form this Commission have been completely resolved,” Foundation President Creed Black said announcing its dissolution. “As the Commission said in its final report, 'Reform is not a destination but a race without a finish.' But the new NCAA structure give presidents for the first time the direct authority they need to match their responsibility for addressing both current and future problems. “Now it's up to them to deliver.”

