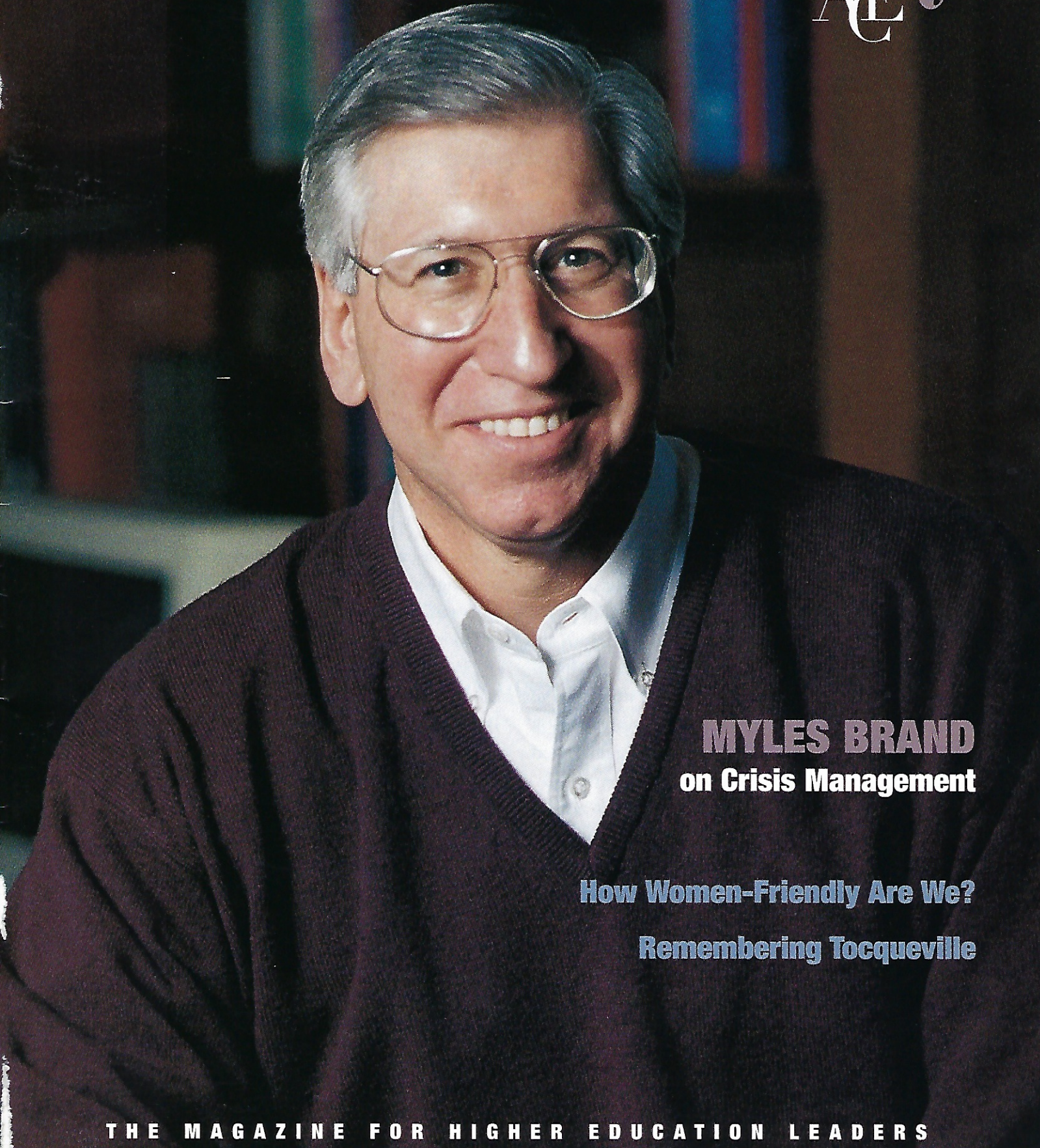


The Presidency

FALL 2000

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

ACE



MYLES BRAND
on Crisis Management

How Women-Friendly Are We?

Remembering Tocqueville

THE MAGAZINE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS

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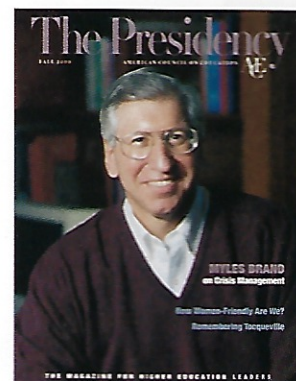
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From natural disasters to public relations nightmares, most presidents confront some form of crisis during their tenures. Negative events demand strong and swift leadership and the quality of the response often determines which presidents survive—and which do not. Indiana University's president offers his advice on seeing your way through tough times, with additional contributions from Seton Hall University's MONSIGNOR ROBERT SHEERAN and EDWARD FOOTE II, of the University of Miami.



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On the cover: Myles Brand, president, Indiana University
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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

A Time of Crisis?



Crises are part of the presidency. Some presidents thrive on crises; others are brought down by them. In the best of circumstances, we all learn from these searing traumas.

Thirty years ago, I sat at the foot of my friend and mentor Jack Oswald, then president of Penn State. Jack was amiable, gentle, lovable, a big man with a big heart, but he also was a former lineman from DePauw University who enjoyed a good fight. We gathered around the president's table every Monday morning and if we didn't face a crisis when we arrived, we had created one by the time we left.

Crisis management is not an especially good way to lead a college or university. Indeed, one task of leadership is to avoid crises. More often than not, they drain attention away from other priorities. A presidency defined primarily by crisis management lacks vision and strategic purpose.

Still, I learned a great deal from Jack Oswald on those mornings. I learned to focus. I learned to persevere. I learned to understand how Jack's personal and academic values defined the crisis. I gained perspective. I came to know the satisfaction gained through struggle with crisis.

As Indiana University President Myles Brand acknowledges in this issue, while crises are inevitable, they sometimes go beyond the normal trials to become major events. Depending on how they are handled, these situations can either leave the institution and the presidency damaged, or position it for recovery and progress.

Crises often are painfully public; most of us have followed Myles's challenges, from the initial sanctioning to the more recent firing of Indiana men's basketball coach Bobby Knight. As Myles points out, the story became a major news item, not confined to the sports column, but landing smack on the front page.

Last January, many of us shared in the anguish of Seton Hall University, when a fire in a freshman residence killed three students, injured 58 others, and left 600 students displaced. As Monsignor Robert Sheeran writes, it was the institution's "most public day. It seemed that all the world was watching."

A presidency defined primarily by crisis management lacks vision and strategic purpose.

However, when an event cuts a deadly swath across a broad area, as when Hurricane Andrew struck southern Florida in 1992, university leaders may want to use their preeminence in the community to disseminate critical intelligence. As University of Miami President Edward Foote tells us, "We used the local and national media to report directly to our students and parents . . . [T]he hurricane was such big news that reporters were glad to have almost any front-line information."

What can be learned from such crises? And what crises confront us as a higher education community?

The authors in this issue talk about the need for the president to assert leadership, consult widely but focus on key constituencies, expect criticism, and learn from the experience. The moral dimension of crises also becomes apparent. In the Knight incident, Myles is guided by a concern for how to treat Knight fairly. Making decisions based on fairness and doing what's right calls for moral and ethical judgments that define both the president and the institution.

At Seton Hall, as the news media clamored for attention, Monsignor Sheeran concluded that he needed “to make meeting the needs of our students and their families my top priority.” An obvious response, perhaps, but as the monsignor points out, “It was with them that I belonged.”

Each crisis is different. There is much to be learned, but in a time of crisis, a president never has all the answers.

Considering the overall enterprise, is American higher education in “a time of crisis”? It is difficult to make the case. By almost any measure, the ‘90s were good for higher education. Revenues grew by 34 percent, while expenditures increased by 31 percent, in real terms. Support from government increased for public and independent institutions alike, and endowments grew at an average annual rate of 13 percent. Opinion polls show that public interest in and desire for higher education escalated over the decade, as did the per-

centage of students enrolling in college immediately after high school. Federal research funding expanded at an unforeseen rate, and lifelong learning moved from an academic ideal to a practical reality.

Still, whether they are called “crises” or “challenges,” serious struggles continue. Janet Holmgren, Mills College president, writes about higher education’s struggle to open opportunities for women. Jan observes that over the last 30 years, the share of women enrolled at America’s colleges and universities has grown from 41 percent to 55 percent, and as a share of the professoriate, women

have moved from 22 percent to 34 percent. On the other hand, Jan talks about the leadership challenges faced by all presidents to make campuses more positive environments for men as well as women.

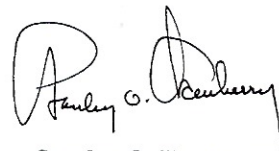
There is yet another struggle that could become a crisis. In this issue of *The Presidency*, Duke University’s Nan Keohane argues that colleges and universities “should be places where . . . radical inequalities are cause for deep concern.”

Nan points out that “funds for aid to children of the poorest families are becoming scarcer.” She notes that federal priorities for student aid have shifted away from the needs of the poorest to respond to middle-class fears about college cost. More of the campus student aid dollars, she argues, are being “channeled to attract talented students . . . rather than to make it possible for underprivileged kids to attend any college at all.”

In choosing between tuition discounting or merit-based aid on the one hand, and aid based on financial need for the “poorest families” on the other, American higher education must grapple with competing values. Our choices carry profound implications.

Equal access, regardless of family circumstances, must remain the bedrock of public policy and the first priority of higher education. Should we fail, should our commitment to equal opportunity weaken, American higher education would, in fact, face a crisis of grave moral and societal consequences.

Whether in the realm of public policy or campus misfortune, higher education confronts high-stakes struggles we dare not lose. On the campus and in Washington, the call is for leadership that will do more than manage the inevitable crises. We must offer a vision that will advance the long-term health of the enterprise. To do so is an increasing challenge, but the very essence of presidential leadership.



Stanley O. Ikenberry

Should our commitment to equal opportunity weaken, American higher education would, in fact, face a crisis of grave moral and societal consequences.

When the Going Gets

TOUGH...

by Myles Brand

Indiana University has recently been a very popular place. Unfortunately, the spotlight fell on us for an undesirable reason: Last May, I announced that our legendary basketball coach, Bob Knight, would be sanctioned for grabbing a player by the throat during practice. I also articulated a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate behavior on Coach Knight's part in the future.

MYLES BRAND is president of Indiana University.





I was hopeful we could continue to benefit from his talents as a coach and educator while eliminating the uncivil and embarrassing incidents that have marked his tenure at IU.

Early in September, I held a similar press conference. Accompanied by members of our Board of Trustees, I described a series of incidents that constituted a persistent pattern of defiant and hostile behavior. Because these incidents violated both the letter and the spirit of the zero-tolerance agreement, I announced that we were relieving Bob Knight of his duties as coach of IU's men's basketball team. Our earlier decision not to dismiss Coach Knight provoked strong criticism in the media and from the university's various constituents. My unavoidable decision to terminate Coach Knight's contract elicited a similar flood of protests.

Colleges and universities inevitably face crises. These situations go beyond the normal trials and difficulties with which each institution must deal; they

Bob Knight had coached at Indiana University for nearly three decades. During this time, he had compiled an enviable record of championships and high graduation rates. He had built a successful program devoid of major NCAA violations. But he had also angered many with his harsh words and tactics both on and off the court, and he had clashed repeatedly with the media.

About three years ago, our athletic department undertook an investigation into an allegation that Knight had choked a player during a practice session. No substantiating evidence was found, and the player involved, who eventually left the university, refused to discuss the incident. Then, just before this year's NCAA tournament, the CNN/SI network ran an interview with the player in which he claimed that Knight had attacked him and had to be restrained by two assistant coaches. Although the practice in question had been videotaped, the tape had been stolen.

CNN/SI obtained and aired the videotape. It



Depending on how they are handled, some crises leave the institution and the presidency damaged; others position the university for recovery and progress.

are major events that rock the campus. They can occur unpredictably, with great force and unforeseen consequences. Depending on how they are handled, some crises leave the institution and the presidency damaged; others position the university for recovery and progress. I would sum up the lessons I've learned this way:

- Be prepared.
- Consult widely, but focus on key constituencies.
- Assert leadership.
- Expect, and accept, criticism.
- Learn from the past.

The Media Glare

More than 250 reporters from every major news and broadcast outlet, including the international press, attended our May and September press conferences. The events were broadcast live nationwide. It was clear from the questions at both gatherings that whatever course we took would spark criticism.

showed that the incident lasted approximately two seconds, that the player was not injured, and that Knight did not need to be restrained. There's no question that Knight's actions were unacceptable. But the tape did not support the contention that he had severely choked the player.

I asked the president and vice president of the Board to review the matter. Each is a distinguished attorney, and one has served as president of the state bar association; nonetheless, we did receive initial criticism for not appointing outside investigators. I asked these members of the Board to look into the allegations because I believed they were in the best position to have full access to witnesses and to uncover the facts. They conducted a thorough investigation and, in so doing, directly informed their fellow Board members of the facts of the case. It was critical to keep the members of the governing board, the key constituency in this matter, fully informed and in a position to contribute to the resolution of the problem.