

Specifically, the following five goals have been developed:

- Student-athletes will be better educated and prepared for increased achievement and success.
- Student-athletes will be enriched by a collegiate athletics experience based on fair and reasonable standards and a commitment to sportsmanship.
- Member institutions and conferences will have access to data, research and best practices that will assist the governance and the management of intercollegiate athletics.
- The national office will be operating in an accountable, effective and efficient manner.
- The public will gain a greater understanding of and confidence in the integrity of intercollegiate athletics and will more readily support its values.

When you review the draft plan, you will see that there are measurable objectives for each of these five goals. I encourage you to read the draft and provide your feedback. Our Association is an extraordinarily diverse organization, and institutions of higher education are ardently independent. Developing a strategic plan that will fully satisfy each and every constituent group is not only daunting, but it is probably likely impossible. Yet, as Myles reminded us last January: "Those who do not plan for the future are destined to be victimized by it."

Once this strategic plan has been approved in April, our challenge will be to come together in a broad partnership and find the discipline to implement the goals. There will be differences of opinion, but we should always keep our eyes on the single purpose—bringing values to the enterprise of collegiate athletics and to the education of student-athletes. Thank you for your patience and attention to the plan.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our president, Myles Brand, to present our State of the Association address. Just a few days ago, Myles completed his first year on the job as our Association's fourth executive officer. Fortunately for the Association and for intercollegiate athletics, Myles is no rookie with respect to addressing complex and sometimes very difficult issues. I would leave it to Myles to summarize the past 12 months, but I imagine he has discovered that there is no shallow end to the pool we call intercollegiate athletics. Please join me in welcoming President Myles Brand. (Applause)

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION ADDRESS

2004 Convention

Myles Brand (NCAA President): Thank you, Carol. Thank you for the presentation of the Association's strategic plan. That is an important initiative for the future of the Association and you provided an excellent overview.

It has been a year since I began serving as president of this great Association. Has it only been a year? It is my honor, seriously, to serve this organization, and I mean that sincerely.

This past year has been tumultuous in some ways; yet, I am pleased with the progress made in a number of areas, and I am energized by the challenges. Much of my year was devoted to learning about the interest of diverse constituencies. I have had the opportunity to make presentations to numerous groups, and I appreciate the welcoming reception I have received, as well as the constructive comments.

Importantly, I am impressed by the commitment to the success of intercollegiate athletics by many, many dedicated people. The passion and professionalism of those who work to make college sports a meaningful component of higher education are truly inspiring.

Today, I want to accomplish two things. First, I will make some selected comments about the past year; and second, I want to articulate, briefly at least, a value-based vision of intercollegiate athletics.

Collegiate athletics is valuable both for student-athletes and their home universities and colleges. That value is diminished or lost entirely if intercollegiate athletics fails to respect and embrace the educational mission of the university or fails to meet the academic and social, as well as the athletics, needs of student-athletes. When athletics programs are inte-

grated into the university's mission and when student-athletes are afforded genuine academic opportunities, there are enormous benefits for all.

In a number of respects, however, we are at a crossroads in intercollegiate athletics. Later, I will address directly what is necessary to follow the path based on the foundational values of higher education, the path that leads toward beneficial results.

First, however, let me address some issues that have arisen this past year. One question that I am increasingly asked is: What is the biggest surprise?

It is not what you think. The expected answer, I imagine, is a description of the difference between being the president of a university and being the president of a national membership organization.

But in fact, the biggest surprise has been the widespread lack of understanding of the nature of the NCAA. I have come to understand that the term "the NCAA" is systematically ambiguous.

It is used often to refer to three different things: First, it can refer to the members, by and large universities and colleges; or second, it can refer to the national office and the staff in Indianapolis; or third, it can refer to the "body corporate," as it were, which includes not only the members and national office staff, but the governance structure, the collected rules and regulations and the investigatory and enforcement functions.

Significant confusion arises when these three meanings of the term "the NCAA" are used interchangeably. For example, it is inaccurate to refer to the NCAA when campus-based decisions are at issue, such as the choice of affiliation involved in conference realignment. It is also a mistake to ascribe blame to a university for eligibility rules that affect a particular student-athlete when these rules are established by the membership as a whole through the legislative process.

As ambiguous as the term "NCAA" can naturally be, I have also come to understand that there is deliberate confusion from time to time—created occasionally by the media but sometimes by the membership itself. The NCAA is handy cover for anything that appears to run counter to common sense or the interests of some person or group.

I have been proposing a simple solution to various audiences the last few months. Let us prescribe that when we mean to refer to the members of the NCAA, we say "the members of the NCAA." When we mean to refer to the national office, we say "the national office of the NCAA." And when we mean to refer to the entire complex of members—national office staff, and the various rules and functions—we should say "the Association." By disciplining ourselves to this explicit terminology, confusion and misleading statements can be avoided.

I want to remind you that last year I said that the focus of the Association—the body corporate—should be the two guideposts of reform and advocacy. Good progress is being made on the reform agenda, and I will return to that issue momentarily.

Advocacy, meanwhile, has enjoyed at least some forward motion, but advocating for the value of intercollegiate athletics to the members of the NCAA and broader population has been made more difficult by several high-profile cases this past year. Most often, these cases involve high-visibility coaches acting badly, though there continue to be instances of student-athletes and even presidents failing to abide by the standards of propriety.

In response, the vast majority of presidents have taken a strong stand in support of the integrity of intercollegiate athletics. They have exposed these bad behaviors and fired coaches when appropriate. Many have done so despite strong negative reactions by the local campus community and fans. I applaud the actions and courage of these presidents.

Many coaches have also reacted admirably to such cases and have affirmed their commitment to ethical and professional standards. For example, the Division I men's basketball coaches, through the leadership of the National Association of Basketball Coaches, came together days before the beginning of the season to re-establish their role as "guardians of the game."

Resolving problems of misconduct, however, removes only some of the barriers for suc-

cessfully advocating for intercollegiate athletics. We also have to push past the tendencies of human nature to be assertive about those things that are wrong while passive about the things that are right.

Key to the advocacy of college sports is articulation of the role intercollegiate athletics plays on campuses and the benefits that accrue to student-athletes.

For men and women in all sports and at all three divisional levels, there is educational developmental value in athletics participation. It teaches attitudes of striving toward excellence, teamwork, respect for the rules, resilience, self-discipline, and for making judgments on the basis of performance, not race or gender.

Students and fans alike associate the benefits for such behaviors with lessons for life relevant to their own circumstances. A well-functioning athletics program creates positive visibility for a campus and encourages high morale among those in the campus community.

Above all, intercollegiate athletics serves student-athletes well. There is no question that the vast majority of these students are changed for the better through their participation in athletics.

I have been delivering this message on every occasion afforded me. The national office delivers the message through the office of education services to young men and women and through its public statements, including the public service announcements during championship telecasts.

But we will need to become even better organized and clearer about our goals in order to be successful advocates for intercollegiate athletics. The strategic plan, of course, is where the discussion of goals is best addressed, and I will return to that initiative later.

While our future is being planned, however, we have not sat on the sidelines. There is never a lack of issues in college sports.

One example is the change in culture in the national office—and the Association as a whole—to establish a more flexible and less rigid approach to interpretation of our rules and granting of waivers when appropriate. Student-athletes are at the center of all that we do; and if we want our publics to believe that our core principle is to be supportive of student-athletes, we must be respectful of their situations and their needs.

No matter how carefully we craft our rules, there will be cases that are not directly addressed, ones that fall in the gray area. In the past, the national office and the several membership committees have used a strict approach to interpretation.

If the rule does not explicitly permit an action or a waiver, it is often ruled impermissible. Or where striving for competitive balance clearly conflicts with the best interest of a student-athlete, the strict interpretation has generally favored competitive balance.

The national office is in the process of adopting a “reasonableness” criterion to interpretation and waivers. If the rule does not explicitly permit a favorable response, then sound judgment, taking into account precedent and context, will determine whether the action in question is permissible. This approach tends to give the student-athlete the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases.

The national office is fortunate to count among its staff, including especially its senior staff, highly qualified, fair-minded and smart individuals. We need to empower these persons with the ability to implement this reasonableness approach. That involves giving them psychological permission to move from the strict interpretation approach to the reasonableness one, and it involves increased delegation of authority by the several membership committees.

All this constitutes a cultural change for the Association. During this past year, we have made good progress, but there remains much to do to successfully realize this cultural change.

When we have done so, the Association will no longer be, and be viewed as, a rigid, impersonal organization. Rather, it will be one that respects the value of rules, but also one that

is sensitive to the problems that face student-athletes—sometimes problems not within their control—and is responsive by means of reasonable applications of the rules. Be assured that I am personally committed to reaching this goal.

At the same time, when there are major infractions, the Association must take the necessary steps to investigate and to sanction. Investigations must be timely, so as to minimize adverse consequences to the entire university, and they must be sound. Over the past decade, the number of purported cases of major infractions has increased modestly, but the complexity of some cases has increased appreciably, the latter in part because of litigiousness. The number of national office investigators, however, has remained the same.

In order to process major infractions in a timely and effective manner, we have added a few investigators this year. Over the next year or two, the number of investigators will be increased by a total of approximately 50 percent. We will also review and revise our internal processes so that efficiency and timeliness are enhanced. We will do so without increasing the national office's scheduled budget. Sound, timely investigations and sanctioning, when necessary, are a critical function of the national office and the Association, and we will do it right.

A second example of an initiative begun since last year is the enfranchisement of all constituent groups within the Association. I have had the opportunity on a number of occasions to make this commitment concrete.

One instance is support for Title IX. Last year, Title IX was challenged by the review of a federal commission. Some of the recommendations from this commission threatened to reverse the progress made for the inclusion of women over the past 30 years.

In my view, Title IX was not broken, and it did not need to be fixed. Rather, it needed reaffirmation. Through the hard work of many, some at the national office, many others in the collegiate athletics community, Secretary of Education Paige concurred that no change in the substance of this measure should be made. This result is a major victory for all those who support women's athletics and women athletes.

An additional, very important point emerged from this national debate. The Secretary made clear that it is a disfavored approach to meet the requirements of Title IX to close men's sports programs. That is as it should be. Opportunities for young men should not be diminished as we provide opportunities for women. I fully understand that this ruling by the Department of Education increases the pressure on athletics department budgets. But I am a strong advocate for increasing participation opportunities for students, and I believe that universities and colleges should invest resources to that end.

Another occasion in which the commitment to ethical standards has begged for attention is rectifying the problem of too few black head football coaches. This past year, there were only four persons who are African-American among the 117 head coaches in Division I-A. That is unacceptable, especially given that a large proportion of student-athletes who participate on these teams are African-Americans.

The Black Coaches Association, the BCA, has focused on this issue. A good part of the problem, it seems to me, is that, in some cases, the search process makes it difficult or impossible for new talent to rise to the top. I am pleased that the BCA has incorporated in its plan to hold institutions accountable a focus on the hiring process. We are beginning to see some progress. For example, a hiring breakthrough in the Southeastern Conference, but there is a long way to go before we can claim success.

Similar problems of disenfranchisement exist with regard to women and minorities being appointed as athletics directors, and other high-level athletics administrative positions. Recently, the Southeastern Conference, once again, had a breakthrough appointment. But the fact of the matter is that a great deal remains to be changed before appointments to these positions are based wholly on talent.

These are examples of the state of the Association from an advocacy perspective. They

speak to the value of college sports to the large university experience. Despite the scandalous behavior of a few and the distraction due to the necessary business side of athletics, progress is being made. But much remains to be accomplished.

The reform agenda, by contrast, is making excellent progress. Reform in intercollegiate athletics is a journey, not a destination. It is not the case that once new rules are adopted, reform is completed for all time. Over the approximately 100 years of the Association's history, there have been a number of major reforms. But the environment changes, new problems arise, and old ones, which appeared resolved, re-emerge in an altered form.

In Division III, the presidents have been deeply involved in some of the most far-reaching reform in that division in decades. Beginning two years ago, the Division III Presidents Council has been developing a set of reforms designed to align the athletics programs with their academic mission and the principles of the division. The resultant package of academic reforms is before the membership at this meeting. There are nine proposals that promise to make for lively and, I would guess, sometimes contentious discussion.

But even with the implementation of all or most of the items in the package, the most robust reform efforts may lie ahead. To conclude this phase of the reform agenda, Division III will also have to come to grips with nothing less than the culture of athletics on these campuses.

As Bowen and Levin point out in their recent and important book "Reclaiming the Game," on a number of Division III campuses, an athletics culture has emerged in which student-athletes are no longer fully representative of the general student body. That is a fundamental issue.

Turning to Division I, the academic reform effort has included significant changes in initial and continuing eligibility. Effective this past fall, standards are being strengthened. There is a greater reliance on sound high-school preparation for college. This approach sends a clear signal to both the high schools and potential student-athletes: The bar has been raised, and if you are to participate at the collegiate level, you will need to perform well academically.

The national office will monitor carefully the results of these changes in eligibility and be prepared to recommend refinement, if necessary. For all intents and purposes, this stage of academic reform has been completed.

Historically, NCAA eligibility standards have placed accountability on the student-athlete, as well as his or her parents and school advisors. If the current reform efforts continue as proposed, teams and athletics programs will also be held accountable through a system of incentives and disincentives. The emphasis, we can expect, will be on the disincentives, or sanctions, for poor team academic performance.

Under the proposed guidelines, academic performance is to be measured both by timely progress toward the degree and by graduation. The federally mandated rate is an inaccurate graduation measure and ignores completely interim progress toward a degree. Division I is proposing a new metric for academic progress and an improved one for graduation.

Using these more accurate measures, a progressive system of disincentives will be developed, based on comparative performance of student-athletes nationally and locally. Refinement of this approach continues at this meeting, with the final vote by the Division I Board of Directors in April. I am optimistic that appropriately strong standards and sound procedures will emerge from these discussions.

So, the current phase of the academic-reform journey in Division I is coming to a resting place. No doubt, it will need to be amended some time in the future.

In the end, successful academic reform, at all divisional levels, requires presidential leadership. There are strong forces driving athletics programs toward better and better athletics performance. This is understandable and good: athletics is about winning.

But it is essential that the response to these forces be made in a wider context of the mis-

sion of universities and colleges, which first and foremost are academic institutions. The champion for this mission must be the university president, and to him or her falls the leadership task of balancing the desire to win with both the education of student-athletes and the preservation of institutional integrity.

From the national office perspective, we need to be strategic in our thinking and action if we are to make progress in advocating for the value of college sports. It was for that purpose that I spoke last year of undertaking a strategic-planning process. President Cartwright has reported on the progress of that effort. It has proceeded well, and we are approaching closure on the plan.

The initiatives under way to create a more flexible, "student-athlete friendly" Association and our collective commitment to act on the highest ethical standards of integrity and exclusiveness will be, of course, included in our strategic plan.

The plan as a whole represents a recommitment to the collegiate model of athletics. This is another topic about which I have been speaking in recent months and finding encouraging support. The collegiate model is a value-based template for intercollegiate athletics. It is a vision for the future that must guide us.

Let me make clear what I mean by the collegiate model of athletics. Beyond youth in high-school sports, there are two dominant approaches to sports in America—the collegiate model and the professional model.

The collegiate model is more than 100 years old. The professional approach is a more recent development, but both have become dominant entertainment factors, popular with large segments of the American sports population, attractive to networks as programming inventory, and appealing to the commercial sector as advertising platforms.

But far more important than the similarities are the critical differences between the two approaches. Simply put, the collegiate model is education-based. The professional model is profit-based. The participants in the collegiate model are student-athletes in pursuit of an education. The participants in the professional model represent a labor force in pursuit of a negotiated salary.

In the collegiate model, specific teams are necessarily attached to a college or university. The relationship between a professional team and its host community is far more tenuous. Professional teams do, on occasion, move to a new host community, having been drawn by new stadiums or other benefits. By contrast, the Notre Dame football team cannot, in principle, move to another university. College teams consist of students enrolled in the academic programs of their university.

These differences define the value of college sports to higher education. They also define the danger of allowing intercollegiate athletics to drift without check toward the professional approach.

I do not mean to disparage the professional sports model. It has its place, and it is worthy of support. But college sports must not be allowed to be drawn to the professional model like a moth drawn to a flame.

There is a real threat that the collegiate model will be transposed into a system that more closely resembles the professional sports approach. If this movement continues, college sports as we know it will disappear, and with it, the educational value to student-athletes and the institutional goodwill from alumni and fans.

The danger here is most obvious in Division I, but in fact Divisions II and III are also at risk. The threat is real, and the consequences devastating. I want to go on record in calling attention to this potential disaster.

The changes leading to this threat have been in the way athletics functions within the context of higher education. This is the cultural deterioration of fundamental relationship between college sports and the college campus.

Generally, the changes in the collegiate model have been rather subtle, the result of suc-

cess, in most cases, and the inevitable desire for more success. But as benign as these changes appeared at the time, the cumulative effect is an erosion of the bond between athletics and academics.

The mission of universities is education, broadly understood, and college sports must serve that mission. Intercollegiate athletics is not a freestanding, wholly autonomous enterprise that is located in close proximity to a university. To the degree that athletics programs look and behave like such freestanding enterprises, we have seen the type of drift toward the professional model that will diminish and in the long run will eliminate the value of the program to its university.

If we are to reaffirm the collegiate model and sustain its future within higher education in ways that are valuable to universities, we have to focus on three objectives.

First, we have to recommit to academic success as a primary goal of intercollegiate athletics. Second, we have to respect the concept that the student-athlete is central to the enterprise. And third, we have to reconnect athletics programmatically and financially with the rest of the university.

We cannot just pay lip service to these objectives. We cannot say we are committed and then sacrifice education and the welfare of student-athletes to competitive success and financial return. When we do that, we can fairly be accused of becoming a campus version of professional sports. The end result is not merely a distortion of intercollegiate athletics, but it is also a distortion of the university itself.

Success in sustaining the collegiate model also depends on the willingness and ability of universities and colleges to come together and commit themselves to the values that underlie this approach and to take the necessary steps to act on the basis of these values.

One critically important role of the NCAA as an Association—the body corporate—is to be the forum in which these values are articulated and the platform on which value-based rules of conduct are built. The Association is the central point of contact in sustaining the collegiate model.

For the Association to meet this obligation, it must develop successful cooperative arrangements and agreements among those who have a legitimate stake in college sports. These cooperative arrangements and agreements can rightfully be called “partnerships.” That is, by partnering with the many stakeholders in college sports, the Association becomes the common and central ground on which the collegiate model stands. Partnerships are sometimes difficult in college sports because those engaged in the enterprise are natural competitors with one another. But working for the success of the collegiate model will require that all of us work jointly toward this ideal.

Given that, the NCAA, as an Association, has the responsibility to be the means by which cooperative action is undertaken in support of the collegiate model. In particular, I will pledge the national office as the advocate for cooperative decision-making and action in support of the game. The national office is, and should be, the neutral objective instrument for cooperative action; it is the one element in collegiate sports that is not competitive with others.

Over this past year, I have been pursuing these obligations of the national office. I have articulated this vision of the collegiate model as the future of intercollegiate athletics on numerous occasions in speeches and media interviews, in private discussions and public presentations. I have defended the collegiate model against those who would turn intercollegiate athletics into professional sports. I have also sought to develop the partnerships through the national office that are necessary to sustain the collegiate model.

I intend to continue listening and learning from all our constituents, even after the formal strategic-planning process is completed. To the extent that it is up to me and the national office, there will not be any legitimate stakeholder excluded from intercollegiate athletics.

What should you expect this coming year? Reform and advocacy remain the dual guideposts. In particular, my focus will be in three main areas. First, I will continue to work toward bringing to completion the academic reform agenda. Once completed, reform efforts will turn more directly to issues of student-athlete welfare and to the financial underpinning of intercollegiate athletics.

Second, I will advocate strongly for the collegiate model of athletics. This approach represents our best future, and the role of the national office and the president of the Association is to articulate this vision and to take strong and consistent action in support of it.

Third, sustaining the collegiate model depends on the cooperative action of all stakeholders in college sports. I will work to create and embrace partnerships between the national office and the stakeholders, and among the various stakeholders themselves, so that we are all rowing in the same direction and at the same time.

After a year in the office of the president, I am more convinced than ever that the relationship of intercollegiate athletics and higher education has survived the test of time because those who went before us had the values right. It falls to us—all of us—to see that these values are preserved and that they direct our future actions. I thank you. (Applause)

Ms. Cartwright: Thank you very much, President Brand, for your very thorough review of the State of the Association and for the challenges you present to us for the future. For those of you who may want a copy of the address, it is available online at www.ncaa.org, and it will be reprinted in the January 19th issue of The NCAA News.

Myles, I hope you caught your breath, because I now ask you to return to the podium to present the first NCAA President Gerald R. Ford Award.

PRESENTATION OF THE NCAA PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD AWARD

Mr. Brand: Thank you again, Carol. It is my great pleasure to present the inaugural NCAA President Gerald R. Ford Award. It is a double pleasure not only because it is a new award and I get to announce the recipient, which I will do in a moment, but also because of the individual for whom the award is named. Gerald R. Ford is best known as the 38th President of the United States, who served during one of the most tumultuous periods of this nation's political history. You may not be as familiar, however, with his days as a student-athlete at the University of Michigan, where he participated on the national championship football teams in 1932 and 1933. He started in every game in his senior year and was voted the most valuable player by his teammates, an honor that any athlete values.

His football talents were also recognized by others. He received contract offers from the Green Bay Packers and the Detroit Lions after his graduation from Michigan. President Ford opted instead to start law school at Yale University and to enter into life as a public servant. America is the beneficiary.

At the University of Michigan, Ford wrote his own chapter in the history of football. He led the team to back-to-back national championships in football. He arrived at Yale University and was on the boxing and football team until he became interested in the law program.

Ford graduated from law school in 1941 at the top of his class, but in a time of international turmoil, he put aside his own dream to practice law to come to the aid of his country. When he returned, he knew he would serve his country well.

He ran for Congress and served notice that one day he would become a great leader of this nation. His name is synonymous with integrity and honor. He assured the nation that he was there every day and he rebuilt the trust that we have. The American people are sensitive to family and community and liked his words. Whether it was to guide the football team or whether it was a law issue, he said athletics was a great positive and that being a