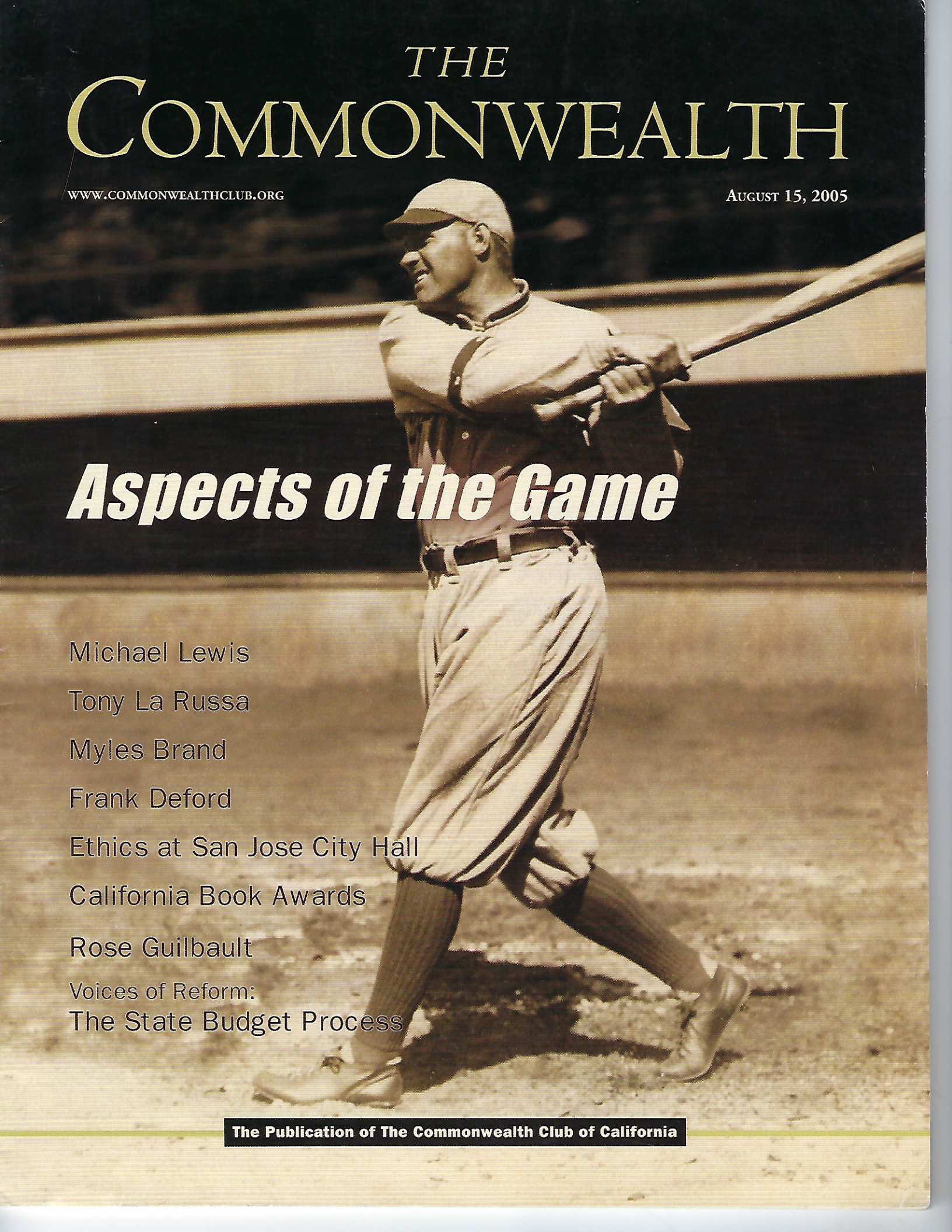


THE COMMONWEALTH



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AUGUST 15, 2005

Aspects of the Game

Michael Lewis

Tony La Russa

Myles Brand

Frank Deford

Ethics at San Jose City Hall

California Book Awards

Rose Guilbault

Voices of Reform:

The State Budget Process

The Publication of The Commonwealth Club of California



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VOLUME 99, NO. 16

AUGUST 15, 2005

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Peanuts and Cracker Jack

Steven Boyd Saum

Editor-in-Chief

The first hero I ever had in my life was an outfielder for the Chicago Cubs, Billy Williams. "Soft-spoken, clutch performer" begins his Hall of Fame plaque; he was lauded for his "picture-perfect swing" and for letting "his bat do the talking." The first game my father took me to was in 1973, the year after "Sweet Swingin' Billy" led the league in batting average (.333) and slugging percentage (.606). There's an aura of magic I've come to associate with that first trip to Wrigley Field. And at least in my memory, the Cubs had not yet been mathematically eliminated from winning the division title. In 1972, the year Billy Williams had his best season, the Cubs finished second in their division. The first year I went to see Williams play, they ended with a 77-84 record and finished fifth. *Wait till next year* was the refrain.

It's a mantra I have come to know well. Because, though I've lived in cities home to the A's, Giants, Padres, Braves, Orioles and Dragons (or *Draci* in their native Czech), I've come to accept the fact that, for me, rooting for the Cubs is like rooting for world peace: It may not mean you win, but it's still the right thing to do.

All that's by way of a long introduction (replete with stats, in proper baseball fashion) to the handsome issue of *The Commonwealth* you now hold in your hands. We take you back to the creation of the "American National Game," care of writer and commentator Frank Deford. Michael Lewis offers lessons in life and baseball by discussing a coach he had as a boy. Cards manager Tony La Russa joins writer Buzz Bissinger in conversation about the state of baseball in '05. And NCAA head Myles Brand takes us off the elysian fields onto the gridiron and the b-ball court discussing "The Business of College Sports."

When you get up for your seventh inning stretch, check out the INFORUM panel on "The Craft Beer Movement," and remarks of a few California Book Awards winners. And enjoy Club Board Chair Rose Castillo Guilbault's conversation with Barbara Lane about Guilbault's new memoir, *Farmworker's Daughter*.

Playing by the rules isn't only the stuff of sports, as our "Ethics at San Jose City Hall" makes clear. Though the rules themselves can be part of the problem, as the Voices of Reform editorial board discussing California's budget process underscores.

But back to Billy Williams. He did finally have a chance to play in the World Series. Folks in Oaktown know, of course, that was after he was traded to the A's.

About Our Cover – SF native Heine Heitmuller playing at the San Francisco Seals stadium in 1912 – the last season Heitmuller played in the Pacific Coast League. Tragically, he contracted typhoid in September and died in October – still winning, however, the PCL batting title. The Seals played in SF for nearly four decades more – until the arrival of the major league Giants. Photo courtesy of the San Francisco History Center at the San Francisco Public Library. Photo research by Justin Gerdes. Cover design by Amanda Leung.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

This month's issue of *The Commonwealth* in brief

WHAT WILL DEMOCRACY SOLVE? 3
Club President and CEO Dr. Gloria C. Duffy looks at what ills the promotion of democracy abroad might solve – and what it might not.

MICHAEL LEWIS 4
On May 12, journalist Michael Lewis joined former Club Board member and Oakland A's President Roy Eisenhardt for a conversation about "Lessons in Baseball and Life" – the formative influence Lewis' high school baseball coach had on him and how that coach's clash with parents of current students reveals a larger friction today between parents and teachers and coaches.

TONY LA RUSSA 10
On February 11, before the boys of summer had suited up for spring training, the buzz around baseball was more steroids than stats. The Club brought in former Oaktown manager Tony La Russa for a conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Buzz Bissinger on "The State of Baseball in 2005." They looked at what's gone wrong with America's pastime – and what's still right about it.

MYLES BRAND 15
On June 30, Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) spoke to a Club audience on "The Business of College Sports," in which he debunked four myths of college sports. In the Q&A, Brand explains why colleges should not pay student-athletes, comments on the boom in women's athletics made possible by Title IX and describes the NCAA's steroids policy.

FRANK DEFORD 22
On June 28, writer and radio commentator Frank Deford spoke on "The Creation of Modern Baseball." Deford calls turn-of-the-20th-century New York the "incubator" for modern American sport. To him, there were no bigger figures in the ascendance of baseball to primacy in American life than New York Giants hurler Christy Mathewson and manager John McGraw.

ETHICS AT SAN JOSE CITY HALL 27
On March 30, The Club looked at "Ethics at San Jose City Hall." Club President and CEO Dr. Gloria C. Duffy moderated a panel with Bob Kieve, president of Empire Broadcasting; former San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery; Markkula Center for Applied Ethics Senior Fellow Judy Nadler; and then-V.P. and Senior Editor of the *San Jose Mercury News*, David Yarnold.

GOOD LIT: ROSE CASTILLO GUILBAULT 32
Club members know Rose Castillo Guilbault as chair of The Club's Board of Governors. But she's also the author of a new memoir, *Farmworker's Daughter*. So on Cinco de Mayo, she joined Club Literary Director Barbara Lane for a conversation about her new memoir about growing up in the Central Valley as the daughter of an immigrant farmworker.

VOICES OF REFORM: THE BUDGET PROCESS 37
Governor Schwarzenegger's interest in government reform presents an opportunity to draw attention to ways of improving the efficiency and responsiveness of our state government. The Club's Voices of Reform Project and the editorial pages of some of California's leading newspapers are collaborating on a unique editorial series addressing structural governance issues. The partnership is called Making California Work, and the roundtable focusing on the budget process was convened by The Club at *The Sacramento Bee* on April 20.

The Business of College Sports

Myles Brand, President, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

While acknowledging problems exist within collegiate athletics – low graduation rates for football and men's basketball players, potentially unsustainable growth in athletic spending, a rise in high-profile coaches' salaries – Myles Brand argues that the challenges are overstated. Here he identifies and debunks four myths of collegiate athletics.

It went something like this: The offense would line up in a phalanx with the ball carrier in the center, the formation would then get a 10-yard running start and charge headlong into the defensive line with arms locked. Some hapless, small defender would be required to curl up in a ball and be thrown at the ball carrier. The "flying wedge" was a favorite offensive formation. Moving up to varsity from the scrub team would often require a rite of passage that would include hours of brutal treatment in the heat without food or water, followed by miles-long, end-of-practice runs. The health and safety of college football players was at risk and reached critical mass in 1905: 18 players were killed as a direct result of football, 149 were seriously injured. President Theodore Roosevelt, a big fan of the game, summoned a small group of college presidents to the White House in 1906 to discuss how football should be tamed, and out of that first meeting, the NCAA was born.

One hundred years later, critics claim routinely that college sports is over-commercialized, over-regulated and a stain on the reputation of colleges and universities that sponsor intercollegiate athletics. As the NCAA approaches its centennial, I want to debunk four central

myths about college sports.

Since assuming the office of NCAA president about two and half years ago, I've been able to observe intercollegiate athletics with a fresh eye. I have great respect for the enterprise and for the presidents, conference commissioners, athletic directors, the sports administrators, coaches and, especially, for the student-athletes. If you'd followed me across America over the past several years, and visited with these individuals from campus to campus, you would have come away uplifted.

At the same time, I've come to understand that our often-repeated, commonly held, but sometimes self-fulfilling perceptions of intercollegiate athletics have focused on the worst cases and burdened the balance of college sports

"I seriously doubt that, to any appreciable degree, faculty members are more accommodating to student-athletes."

to such a degree that the value and values of the enterprise are largely obscured. Myths exist because there's a modicum of truth to the perceptions that evolve into publicly accepted lore. The four myths that I identify here need serious attention. But these four areas are far more myth than reality.

Myth No. 1: *College sports is more about sports than college.* The perception is that student-athletes, on their own, or because of pressure from their coaches, disproportionately attend to athletic skill development and winning than to the classroom and getting an education. The evidence, however, doesn't support the

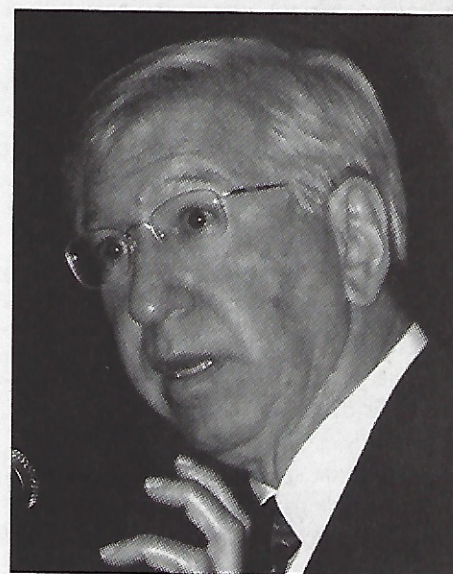


Photo by Paul Eric Felder

myth. The Department of Education has collected and distributed graduation rates for colleges and universities for years; however, the rates do not count everyone. Transfers who leave an institution, no matter their academic standing, count against the institution; and those who transfer in and earn their degree never get counted at all. In addition, the federal government only tracks those on scholarship, so while a significant portion of

Division I student-athletes are included, a smaller portion are counted in Division II and the numbers are virtually meaningless for the large Division III.

Nevertheless, student-athletes in both Division I and II graduate at a higher rate than the general student body – two percentage points in Division I, eight percentage points in Division II. Women graduate at higher rates than men, whites graduate more often than blacks, but all demographic cohorts among student-athletes, including African Americans, men and women, graduate at higher rates than the general student body. However (and this is why the myth has

Continued on following page

grown), football student-athletes, and more so male basketball players – the two highest-profile sports – graduate below the student-athlete rate and the general student body in Divisions I and II. In Division I, the differential in football is modest: two percentage points. In men's basketball, it is truly problematic: a differential of 16 points. It's true that African-American male basketball players graduate at approximately six percentage points above African-American males in the general student body. The bottom line: too many student-athletes in these two sports are simply leaving before they earn a degree.

A year ago, the Division I board of directors approved a package for academic reform that raised the bar for incoming freshman and enrolled student-athletes. To participate in college sports in Division I, high school student-athletes must present a significantly higher level of academic

place the federal graduation rate. The GSR will track transfers in and out of a program, and include their success or failure in the graduation calculation. Based on these data, a second set of penalties will be applied to those programs that show a pattern of less than acceptable academic achievement, enabling us to identify and sanction truly poor-performing programs. In addition to warnings and loss of scholarships, such teams will be withheld from postseason competition, such as the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament or, in the worst cases, decertified.

The cynics are going to say, *This isn't enough*. They argue that student-athletes are directed to easy courses, worthless majors and accommodating professors. Some courses are easier than others; some majors are more obviously career-based than others. I seriously doubt that, to any appreciable degree, faculty members are

assume that athletics eats up, say, 25 percent or more of a Division I university's budget. The percentage of a university's budget consumed by athletics at the average Division I program represents only 3-4 percent of university expenditures. Ohio State has the largest annual athletics budget in college sports, approximately \$83 million for 2004. However, if that were the entire operating budget for Ohio State, with \$3.4 billion in annual expenditures, it could keep its doors open only for about 10 days. The average Division I university expends about \$15 million on its athletics program, and those that participate in Division I-A, the 117 that get the most media exposure, average about \$27 million.

These budgets have risen at the same time higher education has gone through a series of economic downturns. The financial pressures of maintaining and enhancing large physical plants, competing for, hiring and retaining faculty and staff and increased technology demands have ex-

“Student-athletes in both Division I and II graduate at a higher rate than the general student body.”

preparation than ever before, and enrolled student-athletes have to make genuine progress, term by term, toward a degree.

In February, we announced two new metrics that will not only provide some accurate graduation data, but also reveal a term-by-term analysis of how specific sports programs on each campus are doing academically. The term-by-term measurement is called the Academic Progress Rate. It examines how student-athletes in each sport are doing in terms of academic eligibility and retention. We released the first set of numbers in February as a tool for individual member schools to use in determining how well their student-athletes are doing in the classroom. These were preliminary numbers. Next year, if enough student-athletes in a sport flunk out, the team will be at risk of losing scholarships for a year. These penalties are applied immediately, and they will be significant.

The second new measurement, the Graduate Success Rate (GSR), will re-

more accommodating to student-athletes. In fact, student-athletes often claim, with some justification, that some faculty members do not give them the benefit of the doubt. But all courses and majors are available to the entire student body. The academic integrity of an institution rests with its faculty. We presume that the courses and majors offered are worthy of a university. If student-athletes are deliberately herded into courses and majors that do not allow them to emerge with an honorable degree or a quality higher education experience, shame on those who permit such practices.

Myth No. 2: *College sports is only about the money, and the student-athlete is the forgotten pawn*. According to this myth, college sports is big business in which the top personalities earn million-dollar salaries. It has succumbed to the machinations of media networks and sold its soul to corporate America. Let's make clear: intercollegiate athletics is not inexpensive. Most in the general public

acerbated the problem. The need and desire for additional resources in other areas of the university creates pressure in Division I to minimize or eliminate institutional subsidy for sports. The more revenue that an athletics department can accrue, the more university general funds can be allocated to higher priority areas. Finding outside revenue sources, often from media contracts, has come just at the right time.

But here's the problem: The increased ability of colleges to enhance revenues, especially through ticket sales and the sale of media rights, enables Division I athletics departments to grow expenditures at rates higher than that of other parts of the university – three to four times as high in some cases. It has also led to significant capital investment in facilities, most often through bonds paid by future athletics revenues. The need for increasing the rate at which revenue expands has also resulted in an inflated need to increase wins, and the

growing need for wins has increased the competition for outstanding student-athletes and coaches. The result has been student recruiting scandals and rapidly rising compensation packages for some three dozen coaches across the country. In Division I-A football, the result has been an expanded market for coaches, which now includes both college and professional teams, resulting in higher compensation packages and higher fees for coaches' agents. It has also led to an intolerance for the time necessary to build a program. There is now an expectation for high levels of immediate and sustainable success. And if the ready flow of media revenues or corporate sponsorships does not increase at the expected rate, what happens then?

The credibility of intercollegiate athletics could suffer serious damage as it edges closer to the professional model. Worse, this mounting financial problem threatens the integrity of the university itself. When the public begins to believe that the value of an institution is measured by the success of its athletics teams, the core mission of the university is threatened. There are campuses where athletic programs are being conducted exactly right, fiscally responsibly. The goal is to transport those successful strategies and practices to a much broader range of schools while recognizing that no two schools operate in the same context or have the same tradition or strengths.

The key to reform: engage the interest and action of college and university presidents. I created a presidential task force earlier this year to address the future of Division I intercollegiate athletics. This large group of chancellors and presidents, nearly 50, represents the broad spectrum of Division I. The task force has been organized in four subcommittees: the values of college sports; the financial underpinnings of intercollegiate athletics; the well-being of student-athletes; and presidential leadership and the influence of internal and external groups, such as boosters. While these four areas aren't related, the need for bringing greater fiscal responsibility to intercollegiate athletics is critical to all four.

Is it any wonder that athletic departments are frequently the object of scorn regarding where and how the revenues are generated? Athletic departments often find themselves whipsawed between the need to accommodate several hundred student-athletes who compete in 25-35 sports on each campus, and underwrite that effort through the revenues of only one or two high-profile sports – and do this while confronting the charge that they're commercializing the enterprise.

Cynics and radical reformers like to argue that commercialism is ruining college sports. They point to television advertising, ubiquitous product placement and flashy signage in athletics venues as proof that intercollegiate athletics is nothing more than professional sports entertainment conducted by universities and colleges. But the financial model for higher education is that colleges and universities bring in revenues from various sources, such as federal grants and tuition, but also the corporate community, and then use this revenue in ways that best meet the goal of educating students and pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge.

Intercollegiate athletics works in just the same way: revenues come to athletic departments from several sources, including the corporate community, and then are used to support student-athletes across a spectrum of sports. Redistribution of revenue from programs that generate revenues to those that do not is the model used throughout higher education. Undergraduates support graduate education; Psychology 101 helps underwrite philosophy and classics programs.

The financial conundrum facing intercollegiate athletics is not the amount of money, though we must be concerned about an unsustainable rate of growth, or even the commercial source of the money; the issue is whether the money is being expended in ways that support the mission of the university and the education of student-athletes.

Myth No. 3: *Myles Brand is the czar of college sports.* The NCAA controls every aspect of intercollegiate athletics, and if that's so, why don't the NCAA and Myles

Brand step in to control those things that are really broken? I receive letters or read newspaper columns that urge me to do the right thing – say, cap coaches' salaries, moderate facility expansion, define campus budget priorities and, especially, to respond to the clamor of fans and the media to create a Division I-A football playoff. What is really being asked is that I ride roughshod over the wishes of the membership and install a form of collegiate martial law.

There's systematic ambiguity of the term *NCAA*. It can mean the national office in Indianapolis, or it can mean the thousand or so colleges and universities that belong to the association, or it can mean the governing body, the collection of committees that make and enforce the rules, as well as the rules themselves. The association's leadership expects a larger leadership role from the office of the NCAA president than in the past; leadership is not the same as control. I have the bully pulpit, and I've used it to urge action, change and reform. But associations – the democratic process through representative governance is what determines what decisions will be made, and the driving force, the agents of change in this process, are the college and university presidents.

Myth No. 4: *Amateurism is itself a myth.* It's the most complex. It's both insidious and pervasive. While amateurism is the defining difference between the collegiate and professional models of sports, it's become the lightning rod for those who would relegate intercollegiate athletics to a third-rate campus version of professional sports.

The popular notion is that *amateur* means athletics on the cheap: student-athletes aren't paid, and coaches and others should receive only minimum salaries; the facilities of 80 years ago should be good enough for today; and uniforms and other equipment should be hand-me-downs. But since college sports is now all about money, amateurism is dead and student-athletes should be paid, they should share in the profits of football and basketball.

Students come to college to get an education, and some of them, the most

Continued on following page

gifted and most determined, play sports under the banner of the university for the love of the game. I challenge the cynics to survey the 360,000 active student-athletes each year who participate in college sports, to see if they don't overwhelmingly say that is exactly why they play. The vast majority will be going pro in something other than athletics. Amateurism has never been about the size of the budgets or the salaries, it isn't about facility expansion or skyboxes or commercialism; amateurism is about why student-athletes play sports, and *that* we should never change.

There's something these four myths have in common: while they exaggerate the problems, they draw attention to the fact that higher education and intercollegiate athletics can be easily distracted from its primary mission – the education of all students on a campus, including the student-athletes. The work before us is to align the enterprise with the academic mission of the university, and keep the spotlight focused on the success of student-athletes on the field, in the classroom and for life.

Question and Answer Session

Q: Thirty years ago, a head football coach was paid about the same as a professor; today, they are paid millions because of the revenues they bring to the university. Why not pay college players?

A: Once you pay college players you've given up the collegiate model of athletics; you've turned them from students into employees. They're no longer there to get an education; they're there to earn a livelihood. A philosophy professor, over a long and distinguished career, will earn somewhere around \$110,000 if they are in a very good university. An incoming accountant with a Ph.D. and no experience, who's going to teach in a business school, will probably earn as much. Why? The fact is we don't pay everyone the same in the universities; it's determined by the market. For the three dozen coaches, they have a high

level of demand in colleges as well as in professional ranks, in football at least, and that drives up their compensation. Those three dozen are earning seven-figure compensation packages – I say "compensation packages," because the universities are only paying them a couple of hundred thousand dollars. That's not trivial, but all the rest of the money is earned outside – television appearances, speaking engagements, apparel/merchandising contracts, outside consulting arrangements.

They're not the only ones who have seven-figure salaries who are earning it outside the university. At any good medical school there's likely to be three dozen or more individuals earning seven figures. The vast majority is not coming from the university – it's coming from their outside earned income. Those who perform a lot of procedures – heart surgeons, ophthalmologists – have high earning power. Like business professors, musicians on the faculty who go out and play international tours all have outside earnings opportunities like the coaches. How come we don't hear about that very much? The NCAA requires public disclosure of coaches' salaries and compensation packages; in the other cases, we have no such rules.

Q: The Bowl Championship Series – what do you think of ditching it when the current contract expires and going to a playoff system?

A: The NCAA oversees all championship sports – 88 championships in all three divisions – but there's one we don't oversee: Division I-A football, which the presidents and the commissioners of the 11 I-A conferences decide. The presidents are not prepared to give up the current bowl system. You won't get a single-elimination championship like the NFL, or the college basketball championship, as long as there's continued interest in maintaining the tradition of the bowls. I don't think there's any strong desire during the next four years of the Fox contract to want to move back from appreciating and supporting the bowls. Four or eight years from now, things could change.

Q: How should college sports money be allocated to increase visibility of women's sports?

A: Women's sports are much better supported than they were in the past. I'm going to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about Title IX – if not the most important higher education piece of federal legislation in the second half of the 20th century, at least one of the top two or three. Title IX was originally designed so that young women can go to graduate school and professional school in business, medicine, law; incidentally, it also affected athletics. Since Title IX was passed, we've seen a tenfold increase in women participating in athletics. We have not yet reached full equity: about 60 percent of the student-athletes are now men, 40 percent women.

Q: What is the NCAA policy on steroids?

A: We started testing, including random testing, in 1986. We use the same list of performance-enhancing drugs and street drugs that the Olympics use; we use the same laboratory the Olympics uses. We use an independent agency to do the random testing, and we test all student-athletes in every sport year round. We have a very low proportion of positives as a result. In performance-enhancing drugs, new drugs are being designed all the time, and it's important that we keep up with it. But our testing procedures are as careful and serious as any in the world. If you're caught the first time using a performance-enhancing drug, you lose eligibility for one year – 25 percent of your total eligibility. If you're caught a second time, you are banned for life from college sports. Ω

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