

10-23-2006 Work & Life Balance Task Force

1 (File: 20061023 Work & Life Balance task force)

2 JOSH CENTOR: I had the privilege to attend the  
3 inaugural meeting of the Work and Life Balance Task Force this  
4 summer in Dallas. I was fascinated by the stories I heard  
5 from the task force members and learned a lot about the  
6 culture of intercollegiate athletics.

7 I have some questions about these issues, and thought  
8 today would be a good opportunity to discuss the topic with  
9 NCAA President, Myles Brand.

10 First of all, welcome, Dr. Brand.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: Thank you, Josh. Good to be here  
12 today.

13 JOSH CENTOR: Why do we have a task force looking at  
14 this issue?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: There are social and cultural issues  
16 in which women in our society undertake a disproportionately  
17 high level of childbearing and taking care of the home. It's  
18 just a fact of life. Now, it's not that case in every  
19 instance, but, by and large, it's true.

20 Women also deserve to have a full opportunity to  
21 advance in the profession of intercollegiate athletics, to be  
22 a coach at the highest levels, to be an athletic director, and  
23 some of these cultural issues make it more difficult for women  
24 to succeed.

25 We see the same thing, frankly, in universities as a

1 whole, when women are trying to get tenure during the normal  
2 six-year process. And most universities are beginning to make  
3 allowances for that, and I think we need to do something  
4 similar in the case of intercollegiate athletics.

5 JOSH CENTOR: There are also some of these issues  
6 affecting men. I mean, is the task force looking at those, as  
7 well?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: I believe the task force is looking  
9 at those issues as well. And indeed, it affects anyone who  
10 has a disproportionate share of care for children, care for  
11 the home, care for elderly, including parents. But, by and  
12 large, again, in our society, it falls to women as caregivers.

13 JOSH CENTOR: So why is it, you know, moving a little  
14 bit forward, why is it so important to look at these for the  
15 future of college athletics?

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: We want the best talent we can  
17 possibly find -- in coaching, in leadership positions, in  
18 administration. And good talent isn't restricted to one  
19 gender. Good talent can be found amongst men and women.

20 But if we have artificial barriers that make it much  
21 more difficult for women and some men to succeed, then we have  
22 to find ways in which to assist those persons in order to  
23 exercise their talent, and that's good for intercollegiate  
24 athletics.

25 JOSH CENTOR: I have to ask you, can the culture truly

1 change? We have basketball games that start at 7 o'clock at  
2 night, 9 o'clock at night. We have a lot of sporting events  
3 on the weekends, and a lot of that -- I don't see how that can  
4 possibly change.

5 So you have folks who work in college athletics, your  
6 sports information directors -- I mean, we're not only talking  
7 about coaches here. We have the entire administration that  
8 has to be there nights and weekends. So how can we really  
9 change that culture, if we're not talking about moving  
10 sporting events?

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's the challenge facing the task  
12 force. There are some constraints on the solutions to the  
13 problems -- when people watch games, when student athletes can  
14 play games, travel schedules of student athletes. So you have  
15 some constraints. You aren't free to design any solution you  
16 like. That's what makes the challenge so difficult.

17 I think there may be other things we can do in terms  
18 of the work environment, our expectations that we have for  
19 people who are caregivers in the home and with children. But  
20 we may be able to make some changes in terms of game times,  
21 but I think that's just a constraint on the problem.

22 It isn't just saying television made us do it. The  
23 fact of the matter is the greater society wants to see those  
24 games at certain times, and the players are better off playing  
25 sometimes rather than others. It just makes the solution more

1 difficult.

2           JOSH CENTOR: I've got to say, I'm pretty interested  
3 in what this task force comes out with. I'm slightly  
4 concerned or more than slightly concerned. We had a coach  
5 write a post on the blog, Dena Evans, who is a former national  
6 coach of the year, coach of Stanford women's cross country  
7 team, and they won a national championship while she was  
8 there. She's the mother of two young children and she had to  
9 step down from her position.

10           And she discussed -- you know, she loved coaching.  
11 She loves coaching. She loves her children. And she wasn't  
12 able to go watch her daughters play soccer and spend the time  
13 that she needed when she was out on the recruiting trail. And  
14 she just had to make that almost impossible decision to walk  
15 away from coaching. And she really talks about that on the  
16 blog, and I think it's quite powerful.

17           So I'm concerned that there are a ton of coaches that  
18 might be facing these decisions. And again, I say, not just  
19 coaching, but your sports information directors, your athletic  
20 trainers. This is a pervasive problem - --

21           DR. MYLES BRAND: It is a pervasive problem, and  
22 obviously it reaches far beyond intercollegiate athletics. If  
23 you go into the corporate world and you're talking about high  
24 level positions in which people aren't just working 8:00 to  
25 5:00, they really have very serious travel schedules and need

1 to be away from home, but yet are trying to raise children.  
2 That is a very difficult issue, and it is an encompassing  
3 issue for our society at large. We're not going to be able to  
4 solve that entire problem, in terms of intercollegiate  
5 athletics.

6 The case you named is a paradigmatic example of what  
7 can go wrong if there aren't appropriate allowances made. I'm  
8 not sure we can actually solve the problem completely. But  
9 could we make the opportunities better, so that a coach of  
10 this quality in the highest level now -- Stanford coaching is  
11 high level. We're not talking about someone who is just  
12 starting out. A head coach is someone who has been  
13 successful. To lose that coach, even for a period of time, to  
14 other obligations she has doesn't work for her and doesn't  
15 work for intercollegiate athletics.

16 Again, I wish I knew the answer -- in fact, if I knew  
17 the answer, I wouldn't have started the task force.

18 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: The reason why we called the task  
20 force in to meet is we're trying to bring the best minds,  
21 women and men, together to see what we can do within the  
22 context and the challenges and constraints we have to find a  
23 solution, so that we have less or maybe none of those cases  
24 again.

25 JOSH CENTOR: And just to be clear, these really are

1 the best minds. We have former president of Kent State  
2 University, Carol Cartwright leading the task force. And then  
3 we have some really, really terrific people around the table  
4 discussing it.

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: We have people who are experienced  
6 in these areas, who have thought about it, who have looked at  
7 it broadly, as well as intercollegiate athletics. We have  
8 people who have experienced it first-hand in their own lives.  
9 Carol Cartwright who is a former chairperson of our Executive  
10 Committee at the NCAA and certainly knows how we work. She  
11 knows all the rules in and out.

12 So I think we've got the right people at the table.  
13 And I have confidence in the quality of the people at that  
14 group to give us the best solutions.

15 But I have to say, again, these are very difficult  
16 problems. And one of the difficulties, one of the challenges  
17 that we are facing is a culture as a whole that doesn't give  
18 enough leeway to people who care for children and the home.

19 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, we certainly will have  
20 to stay tuned to the work of the task force, which is  
21 obviously very important in facing difficult issues.

22 Thanks so much for listening to "Mondays With Myles".  
23 We'll see you next week.

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