

5-29-1006 National Leadership Student Conference

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Today is Memorial Day, and
3 that means the National Leadership Conference is underway
4 in Orlando.

5 I had the pleasure of representing Brandeis
6 at the conference in the 2004, and it was one of the most
7 rewarding experiences of my life. I was with more than
8 300 other student athletes from all three divisions, and
9 we learned a great deal about ourselves as individuals
10 and how we could enhance the student athlete experience
11 for our classmates back on campus.

12 Dr. Brand, I know you're a big fan of the
13 leadership conferences.

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: These conferences are
15 absolutely amazing. You point out 300 student athletes
16 at the annual leadership conference in Orlando. These
17 are students who are good academically, they perform well
18 athletically, and they're campus leaders. It is such a
19 pleasure to be with this group of young people. I can't
20 tell you how wonderful it is.

21 JOSH CENTOR: And I think what's really
22 great -- you know, you look at the numbers and you have
23 300 -- this year, we're going to have 352 student
24 athletes at the leadership conference, which is more than
25 in years past.

1 But we've started regional leadership
2 conferences in the past few years, giving a broader
3 opportunity to our student athletes to have this
4 experience. I think that's really important.

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think allowing more
6 students, enabling more students to participate in these
7 leadership groups is terrific. And I think the regionals
8 help.

9 We're also, as you probably know, now
10 requiring that those who participate are not seniors so
11 they can go back to their campuses and bring their
12 experiences with them. And while it's not the same as
13 being at the conference itself, it does enable us, I
14 think, to bring out the ideas and the accomplishments of
15 these student athletes and bring them back to the campus.

16 JOSH CENTOR: I agree with you.

17 When I graduated from Brandeis in '04, and
18 as a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee had
19 an opportunity to still go to the leadership conference.
20 And I left with tons and tons of ideas and wanted to go
21 back and make an impact at Brandeis immediately.

22 Unfortunately, I had to go get a job, and I
23 wasn't able to return to the campus. So it was a bigger
24 challenge for me.

25 DR. MYLES BRAND: There are many events

1 that take place at these leadership conferences. And I'm
2 going to switch on you now and ask you a question.

3 What was the most interesting, most
4 important type of event that you participated in there?

5 JOSH CENTOR: Well, you know, at the
6 leadership conference, they really did a lot of
7 team-building exercises. And because it's -- the NCAA is
8 such a diverse group. You have more than a thousand
9 member institutions. You know, the starting center from
10 Syracuse's national championship team, Craig Forth, he
11 was there. Jason Avant, a wide receiver from Michigan;
12 he was there. And then Josh Centor from Brandeis
13 University, you know, your designated hitter; I was
14 there. And we all worked together, in teams, learning
15 leadership skills and nurturing skills that had been
16 identified from administrators. And we came together and
17 talked about Syracuse and Michigan and Brandeis and
18 Babson -- how these schools all differ, but how they're
19 the same. And we learned a little bit from each other.

20 So I don't know if there was one thing that
21 I could pinpoint. But it was the entire experience,
22 being around all of these student athletes and sharing
23 those experiences with them.

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: That sounds exactly
25 right. And I know there were a bunch of exercises, if

1 you like, that everyone did, and things you had to do as
2 a team and learn to work with other people you've just
3 met.

4 I think from my point of view, the most
5 fascinating part was watching the student athletes, who
6 didn't know each other. They came in cold, formed teams
7 quickly, understand what it was to work together in
8 teams, and accomplish, sometimes in a competitive
9 environment --

10 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: -- what that team had to
12 do. It really showed that they understood, deeply
13 understood what teams were. Also, we had a number of
14 speakers there that I think were very helpful. And
15 certainly the questions -- and I've spoken there a number
16 of times -- the questions that the student athletes ask
17 are penetrating and serious.

18 I think it's a great opportunity. I know
19 many of our student athletes really compete to get that
20 opportunity to go particularly to the national
21 conference.

22 JOSH CENTOR: I know this year they're
23 having an executive hour. They're putting a different
24 twist, more of a professional development twist in one of
25 the days. And they're bringing a number of executives,

1 including NCAA senior vice president Bernard Franklin and
2 Charlotte Westerhaus is going, as well as some athletics
3 directors.

4 So they're giving the participants an
5 opportunity to learn more about what they might expect if
6 they choose to go into intercollegiate athletics as a
7 profession.

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that's right.
9 And the fact is that we have a very diverse group -- tall
10 people, short people, people are playing gymnastics, as
11 you point out, a center on a basketball team -- all on
12 the same team, learning how to work together. I think
13 that's an incredible opportunity.

14 JOSH CENTOR: One of the things that I
15 think is really, really important for people to
16 understand about the leadership conferences is that every
17 student athlete comes back with an action plan of a plan
18 they want to implement when they go back to their
19 campus -- change they want to effect.

20 Maybe one campus doesn't have, you know, a
21 great relationship between the baseball team and the
22 wrestling team, and they want to work on a cohesive
23 environment for all student athletes. But every student
24 athlete goes back with a concrete plan to implement.

25 And I think that's key, because not every

1 student athlete can go to the leadership conference. But
2 they can all be effective if it works the way it can and
3 should.

4 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that's exactly
5 right. And I think one point that needs to be stressed
6 is we expect the student athletes, when they go back to
7 campus and assume this leadership role, to cross over
8 sports lines. I mean, we do have a tendency sometimes in
9 athletics to stick to the people we know and the sports
10 that they know and work together. It's good that they
11 have an opportunity to cross over and work as a group, as
12 a whole.

13 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, Dr. Brand,
14 great to talk about the leadership conferences, one of my
15 favorite things that the NCAA sponsors, with you.

16 The National Leadership Conference will run
17 through Thursday, and all three divisions will have
18 regional conferences in the fall.

19 Thanks for tuning in to "Mondays With
20 Myles", which can be found on the NCAA blog, the
21 DoubleAZone, each and every Monday morning. We'll see
22 you next week.

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