

9-18-2006 GSR-Graduate Success Rate-Goal of 80%

1 (File: 20060918_GSR.)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With
3 Myles". At your speech at (indiscernible) University a
4 couple of weeks ago, Dr. Brand, you said 80 percent is a
5 goal for the Graduation Success Rate for Division I
6 programs.

7 As a refresher, how does GSR work?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: GSR, Graduate Success
9 Rate, differs in a very fundamentally important way from
10 the federally mandated graduation rate. Namely, it
11 counts transfers in and transfers out. So if you are a
12 student at Institution A, and you transfer to Institution
13 B and graduate, A gets credit for it and doesn't lose it.
14 And we count it in the B's graduation rate as well.

15 So the fact of the matter is the federal
16 rate undercounts by as much as a third of the students in
17 our general population, as well as student athletes.

18 JOSH CENTOR: Why 80 percent?

19 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's an aspirational
20 goal. That's Myles Brand speaking.

21 JOSH CENTOR: Okay.

22 DR. MYLES BRAND: This isn't an initial
23 NCAA number. But, you know, it's my belief that good
24 enough is never good enough in athletics. No coach is
25 going to say, Oh, that was good enough. I don't care if

1 you do better. They're going to want to make sure that
2 you do your best athletically.

3 Well, I feel the same way academically, and
4 so should all our student athletes. And to do your best
5 means you have to have an aspirational goal. Now, I
6 think four out of five student athletes graduating in the
7 six-year window, using accurate measures, is an
8 aspirational goal worthy of the NCAA.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Is it achievable? Can we get
10 there?

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, I think we can
12 get there. We're actually pretty close now. We're at
13 76 percent. But when you get to those high numbers, it's
14 very hard to move it forward again. And the reason we're
15 so high right now at 76 percent is because we've been
16 able to help those who are in sports that haven't been
17 graduating at high enough rates to raise their floor.

18 And we've also seen, for example, African
19 American males graduate 17 percent greater than they had
20 in the past since we've started the reform efforts in the
21 mid '80s.

22 JOSH CENTOR: So how do you raise that
23 floor even more? How do you get to that higher rate?

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, you raise the
25 floor, I think, by making sure people pay attention

1 semester by semester. That's why we have the APR.
2 That's why we're measuring it very accurately and looking
3 at what are the issues and problems in each sport, each
4 school, each team. And where there are problems, trying
5 to correct them.

6 So you raise the floor. And then, for
7 those who are doing well, you ask them, is that good
8 enough? Can you do a little better? And I think we can
9 reach this aspirational goal. It may take us several
10 years to get there. This is not an easy goal. This is
11 not a gimme. This is a tough goal. But I would like to
12 set an aspirational goal for us.

13 JOSH CENTOR: Just raise the academic
14 standards of our student athletes.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, raising them in a
16 measurable way. We want our student athletes to
17 graduate. And four out of five graduating I think is
18 stupendous.

19 JOSH CENTOR: The student athlete
20 graduation rates compare to the general population
21 favorably.

22 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, in recent years,
23 not always. But in the last several years. Now, using
24 the federal rate, which doesn't count transfers, so it's
25 inaccurate, and it's only an approximation, but student

1 athletes tend to graduate on average two percentage
2 points higher than the general population. And they do
3 so in every demographic category.

4 JOSH CENTOR: Why do you think that is?

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think over the recent
6 years, coaches more and more, as well as presidents and
7 others on campus, have paid more attention to academic
8 success.

9 Now, I think the student athletes are
10 extraordinarily capable. They manage their time well.
11 They're smart. They -- you can't play football or
12 basketball, unless you're pretty smart, frankly. You
13 have to figure out what's going on.

14 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: And now they're applying
16 themselves more. So once having applied themselves and
17 being provided with the local assistance, I think in
18 terms of learning, they're doing well.

19 JOSH CENTOR: Going out there and making
20 this 80 percent GSR number, does that apply some pressure
21 to institutions? And is that what we're looking for to
22 apply that pressure? And if so, are we -- you know, the
23 integrity of the curriculum, might we see something like
24 that compromised?

25 DR. MYLES BRAND: Does it apply pressure?

1 You bet it does. It applies pressure to every team,
2 every student athlete. But there's nothing wrong with
3 pressure. You've been a student athlete. You know.

4 JOSH CENTOR: That's true.

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: There's always pressure,
6 and there's nothing wrong with pressure.

7 To say that by raising the standards we're
8 going to increase cheating, well, you take that argument
9 to the logical conclusions, we'll do away with all
10 standards. It doesn't matter and then there'll be no
11 cheating.

12 No. The point is that the integrity of the
13 faculty is what's going to keep academic soundness. And
14 when there is cheating, the NCAA and the institutions
15 will act on it. But to raise the standards does not
16 necessarily imply cheating.

17 In fact, we've been far more diligent in
18 the recent years about catching academic cheaters. And
19 I -- and while we're not perfect at it, I think it's
20 rather rare now. I'm not sure how rare it was in the
21 past, but it's rather rare now, we're pretty sure. And
22 when we do learn about it, of course, we're going to act
23 swiftly.

24 JOSH CENTOR: So our time frame for, you
25 know, reaching -- raising the bar -- I mean, I assume

1 that it's something that we just want to keep doing. If
2 we hit 80 percent, we probably want to get to 81 down the
3 road?

4 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, that's looking
5 pretty far down the road. I think if we can get to
6 80 percent in four to six years from now, we should
7 declare that as a serious victory.

8 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, there's no
9 question that education is the most important part of the
10 student athlete experience. Dr. Brand has set a higher
11 benchmark to help gauge student athlete success in the
12 classroom. And hopefully our almost 400,000 student
13 athletes will answer the call.

14 Thanks for being here, Dr. Brand.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's a pleasure.

16 JOSH CENTOR: Thanks for joining us this
17 morning, and we'll see you next week on "Mondays With
18 Myles".

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