

State of the Association - 'Citizens in a civil society'

Brand calls for renewed emphasis on sportsmanship in annual speech

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The NCAA News

Following is the full text of NCAA President Myles Brand's State of the Association speech entitled, "In All, Fairness." Brand delivered his remarks during the January 6 opening business session of the 2007 NCAA Convention in Orlando, Florida.

We are at the midpoint of another academic year, the 101st for the NCAA. The Centennial celebration is complete, and it was grand.



The breadth and diversity of intercollegiate athletics is extraordinary. It stretches from stadiums filled with more than 100,000 screaming fans to contests in which the participants outnumber the spectators, from games that command national broadcast attention to others reported only in the local college newspaper. They are all part of a deeply embedded national cultural phenomenon.

Intercollegiate athletics is a success story, and I want to talk about that today.

But any activity this comprehensive, this popular and this emotionally laden is bound to have challenges connected with it. And, as we all know, that is the case for intercollegiate athletics. College sports is truly extraordinary; yet, there are aspects of it that need improvement. And I will also discuss some of those challenges.

It strikes me, however, that the quintessential quality of intercollegiate athletics, and the way in which this Association has come to conduct its business, is a sense of fairness. It is an attribute that is central to the conduct of sports. It is basic.

But it is not simple. The centrality of fairness in intercollegiate athletics will be the unifying theme in all I discuss today.

Though not complete, academic reform is emerging as a significant success story. The NCAA has been engaged in academic reform of one kind or another for many decades. The current reform initiative began about 20 years ago, picked up momentum with the Knight Commission report of 1991, and again in the late 1990s with increased presidential involvement, and became a serious point of focus for the NCAA for the past few years.

In Division I, initial-eligibility standards are increasing, progress-toward-degree requirements were enhanced to lead to graduation in five years, and new metrics were developed to assess accurately academic performance.

Several features of this reform are especially noteworthy. The new metric, the Academic Progress Rate, focuses on semester-by-semester academic performance. A team's failure to achieve an average score of 925, which correlates to a Graduation Success Rate of 60 percent, results in sanctions, such as the loss of scholarships.

This is the second year the NCAA has calculated semester-by-semester academic performance and the first time it used sanctions to reinforce academic achievement.

When we began this reform effort several years ago, everyone spoke to the need for simple, straightforward rules and policies. That was a worthy goal, since it promoted clarity and broad understanding. But simple is not always fair.

It is unfortunate that, in an effort to treat each team and individual student-athlete fairly, to take into account the significant variations among universities and individual circumstances, simplicity has had to give way.

In the past, to be frank, the Association's bylaws were interpreted and implemented with an emphasis on competitive equity. There was a tendency for the Association to apply its rules rigidly, including its academic standards. Now we place fairness in a priority position. That demands we look carefully at the context and the local environment, that we give student-athletics the benefit of the doubt, and that we focus on improvement within a program rather than punishment.

The goal is to change behavior so student-athletes succeed academically, and issue sanctions only when necessary, and then using good judgment and fairness.

I want to publicly commend the many NCAA staff and committee members who work quietly but very effectively in implementing this new NCAA philosophy.

To additionally enhance accuracy, and thereby fair treatment, the NCAA has substituted its Graduation Success Rate for the federally mandated graduation rate. Division II also began issuing its Academic Success Rate this year, which accounts not only for transfer students, but also those who participate in intercollegiate athletics without scholarship support.

The federal rate is inaccurate. It counts all transfer students as dropouts and failures, and that is simply mistaken. And for Division II, the federal rate significantly undercounts student-athletes because it measures only those who are on financial aid.

In Division I alone, more than 30,000 student-athletes in good academic standing transfer each year. On average, the federal rate undercounts graduation by about 14 percentage points.

We hope the Department of Education will adopt this methodology or something relevantly similar. Not only is it more accurate, but the NCAA methodology protects student privacy.

About two months ago, the NCAA released the latest GSR for teams and athletics programs in Division I. It should be obvious to anyone looking at these results objectively that student-athletes are doing well academically. The GSR for all Division I student-athletes who receive grants-in-aid is 77 percent, an improvement of one percentage point from last year. Young men graduate on average at 70 percent and young women at 86 percent.

I have set an unofficial goal of 80 percent as an average for all student-athletes in Division I. I believe we can achieve that degree of success in the next few years, as the academic-reform initiatives mature. That would mean four of five student-athletes graduate within the six-year window. That result would be truly extraordinary.

'Dumb jock' appellation 'dead wrong'

There is little that frustrates me more than critics of college sports who get the facts wrong and make derogatory comments about the academic accomplishments of student-athletes. Overall, student-athletes graduate at higher rates than the general student body, and that is true in almost every demographic category.

Of course, not every group graduates above the national average — this is not Lake Wobegon. Critics pounce on the point that football and male basketball student-athletes graduate at lower rates than the general male student population. They are right, and improvement is needed. But they very often fail to note some key exceptions and overall improvement.

For example, compare the rates of African-American football and male basketball student-athletes with those of the general African-American male college population. These student-athletes do better by 12 points in football and five points in basketball. The GSR rates for the African-American football and men's basketball are 55 and 51 percent, respectively. African-American males and females are considerably outperforming their counterparts in the student body. We do need to do better in higher education in graduating African-Americans; but in athletics, we have, in fact, made genuine progress.

I challenge the critics of college sports, in the media and on campus, to get their facts right.

It is no mystery why student-athletes perform better academically than the general student body. First, they tend to enter college better prepared.

The average GPA of entering Division I student-athletes, for the most recent year in which we have data, is 3.35, modestly higher than that for the general student body. The entering SAT scores for student-athletes is 1,059, while that of the entering general student body is 1,026. That's a significant difference — 33 points.

The appellation “dumb jock” is not only insulting, it is dead wrong.

When student-athletes come to the university today, they often find assistance from academic professionals and good study facilities. It was not too long ago that the NCAA passed regulations designed to eliminate the use of drugs, sex and alcohol in the recruitment process. Today, athletics departments are attracting student-athletes by demonstrating a commitment to academic support. They are bragging to the student-athletes and their parents about their teams' graduation rates — and that is a good thing.

Student-athletes also tend to be highly motivated. They learn quickly how to manage their time. They have an immediate peer group, the team, which limits the alienation many entering college students feel and which is the single most important factor in retention. Coaches, more and more, are encouraging student-athletes to apply themselves academically and are recruiting student-athletes who are more likely to have academic success. All this increases the likelihood of success in the classroom.

In short, a large majority of student-athletes are receiving a fine education and graduating from our colleges and universities. Let us give them and their institutions the credit they deserve. Of course, there are also institutions and programs that need to do better. We cannot be satisfied until the underperforming programs reach acceptable levels.

I call on the critics to stop maligning the majority of student-athletes — including those in football and men's basketball — who are doing well. And these same critics should refrain from misrepresenting the success of our higher-education institutions.

Fiscal responsibility

These results in academic reform required persistent long-term efforts of many, including university presidents. The same effort will be required to address the complicated and vexing issue of college athletics costs.

About two years ago, we called on the presidents — as we had with academic reform — to consider the future of Division I athletics. Fifty chancellors and presidents composed a task force charged with setting an agenda for the future of Division I, and relatedly for the other divisions. I had the privilege to announce the recommendations of those presidents at the National Press Club recently.

Their recommendations included a prioritized list of critical topics on student-athlete well-being and financial aid to be considered by the Association's governance bodies; good practices for dealing with institutional governing boards and alumni clubs; and a clear commitment to fairness in hiring and in athletics participation. Of these, I want first to discuss the topic that took center stage in the report, namely the call for increased fiscal responsibility.

Many Division I institutions face financial stress in athletics. The problem is not at crisis stage, and it is unlikely it will reach that point, but clearly there are athletics programs facing economic stress.

Let's be clear. Over the last decade, only six institutions consistently have had athletics revenue surpluses at the end of the year — half a dozen programs. These few are not facing stress. They are setting the pace. They make most of the news about the money in college sports. But they are not wondering how they will make budget.

A second group of programs — only another six to eight — require some institutional support, but their subsidy is within reasonable limits (about 5 percent of their budget). That level of support doesn't strain overall institutional mission.

While there is some mobility among the remaining institutions, most are experiencing annual deficits in excess of 5 percent. In fact, 52 percent of all Division I institutions that sponsor football at the Bowl Subdivision level require subsidies greater than 5 percent every year. For those institutions, keeping

up with the pace means ever-increasing subsidies and institutional investments for facilities that could have long-term financial impact.

The spending behaviors at the Bowl Subdivision level impact those three categories of institutions differently, and that is where the concern rises. Consider coaches' compensation, for example. The institutions with revenues exceeding expenses have clearly responded to a changed compensation market.

Frankly, it can be argued the increases in both gross and net revenues attributed to the success of a new coaching regime is a sound investment. As USA Today reported earlier this fall, a handful of institutions with seven-figure head-coaching compensation packages have experienced returns in the tens of millions. These increased revenues mean that broad athletics opportunities can continue without institutional support.

But keeping pace for those institutions where modest institutional subsidies are necessary has not resulted in sufficient return to move the athletics programs to a self-sustaining level. Spending more has not meant sufficiently more revenue to reduce subsidies.

The remaining, heavily subsidized programs throughout all of Division I face even more difficult times.

Indeed, the debt-service for facilities and the other costs of trying to keep up exacerbates the problem. For the programs at greatest risk, these new investments outrun any increases in revenue in the short term and leave heavy mortgages for facilities in the long term.

The underlying problem is the rate of increase of athletics expenditures exceeds by a factor of two to four the rate of increase of nonathletics expenditures on these campuses. At the same time, the rate of increases of athletics department revenues that, in the recent past, exceeded that of the campus as a whole has now started to level off. As a result, these athletics departments are being inevitably squeezed and they will require additional subsidy in the future.

These financial strains are coming at a time when campuses, most especially public universities, are being asked to do more with less funding. There is national recognition that higher education needs to become more accessible to low-income students.

That recognition will continue the trend of pressure against raising tuition. State funding for higher education continues to suffer from competition with needs in K-12 education, the criminal justice system, health care and other entitlement programs.

For a number of years, the federal government has not increased Pell grants for need-based financial aid — though that might begin to change with new leadership in Congress. All in all, most universities will find increasing the subsidies for athletics difficult.

I am not arguing that athletics subsidies should be eliminated, or even that the goal for Division I athletics departments in all cases is to balance their budgets without subsidy. The few institutions that have the advantage of large stadiums and fan bases, excellent media contracts and wealthy donors, manage without subsidies.

Other athletics departments, which do not have these advantages, require subsidies. We should not push them to be overly aggressive, to undertake activities that could embarrass the institution or exploit student-athletes, in order to accrue additional revenues and eliminate subsidies.

For that reason, the Task Force recommended the philosophical principle about the need to produce revenue be reworded so it is not interpreted as a mandate that almost anything goes in raising funds for athletics. Of course, like every other campus unit, there is a responsibility to generate revenue; but it should be done with good judgment and an awareness of the mission of higher education.

The Presidential Task Force understood the limitations of the NCAA national office in managing the financing of intercollegiate athletics. While it was not only possible, but was more effective to manage academic reform on a national basis, fiscal responsibility is a campus matter. The NCAA national office cannot set the budgets for individual institutions without the risk of violating Sherman antitrust law.

Rather, the Presidential Task Force recognized that the NCAA national office could best provide assistance to its members by developing financial information that would be useful in local decision-making. The NCAA worked with university business offices through their national association, NACUBO, to develop new definitions and systems for financial data collection, in which there would be apples-to-apples comparisons. This is a major step forward.

Additionally, the Task Force recommended increased transparency in the aggregate and a simplified means of tracking trends through so-called dashboard indicators. A number of these recommendations have been put in place; some others will require NCAA legislative action, and that process has already begun.

Three groups must work with the presidents if substantial campus-based change is to occur. First, the athletics administrators, most especially the athletics directors, are key to the process. As the business of college sports becomes more complex, and as additional financial pressures are focused on athletics departments, the role of the athletics director becomes more difficult and more vital to the success of the program. These are tough jobs and the people who are in charge of our athletics departments, the athletics directors, deserve significant recognition for their high level of professionalism and their commitment to student-athletes and institutional success.

Second, presidents need the support of the faculty to make these changes on campus. Meeting the challenges of intercollegiate athletics requires an informed, engaged faculty. The faculty athletics representatives, in particular, play a central role in bridging the worlds of athletics and academics.

I am encouraged by the rising presence of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, which now includes the faculty senates on more than 50 Division I campuses. COIA is poised to stand with the Faculty Athletics Representatives Association as significant allies for presidents in addressing fiscal issues.

The third group is the governing board (the regents or trustees). The governing board of a university has fiduciary responsibility and ultimate authority for policy. The Task Force was greatly assisted by the Association of Governing Boards in reinforcing that board members should focus on athletics policy, rather than direct management intervention.

The recommendations of the Task Force were designed specifically for Division I. However, the philosophic stance taken by the Task Force is also applicable to Divisions II and III. Intercollegiate athletics is to be integrated into the mission and operation of the campus; student-athletes are to be recognized as students first and their academic success is paramount; and athletics must be conducted in a fiscally responsible manner.

Sportsmanship as fair play

I want to spend the balance of my time this afternoon talking about three challenges we must face in college sports, each of which concerns fairness.

The first is one that rarely gets its due — sportsmanship.

This fall saw several fights on the football field, which portrayed the sport, the schools and the players in unfavorable lights. In the worst cases, they involved intentional acts of harm to opponents.

These incidents were ugly to watch, and they provided grist for the cynical mill of commentators and reporters. In one case, it touched off a media fire storm of criticism and second-guessing about the severity of sanctions to the involved student-athletes.

However, few among the critics got the story right. They focused on the need for harsher penalties. But by doing so, they missed the main point.

The real problem is that such student-athlete behavior illustrates a failure to have internalized the values of sportsmanship. Only a deep, personal commitment to sportsmanship can best the urge to initiate such behavior or join the fray. This commitment, importantly, must be established long before it is tested on the field.

This is a significant responsibility and challenge for intercollegiate athletics.

The presidents of the involved institutions understood the real issue. In addition to missed games, they prescribed community service. On the surface, this may appear to be a tepid response to outrageous behavior.

But the presidents knew what they were doing. They wanted to use community service to teach respect for others, and respect for others is an essential part of sportsmanship.

Simply put, sportsmanship is essential to the proper conduct of intercollegiate athletics. It is the manifestation of good character within the context of competitive athletics.

One central reason for the acceptance of intercollegiate athletics as part of the academy is that it teaches development of student-athletes as citizens in a civil society. Without the developmental growth connected with sports participation, the reasons to connect intercollegiate athletics with a university education would be significantly diminished.

What, then, is sportsmanship? Let me say, before answering that question, that I take this term to include both genders, despite its male reference.

Now, it seems to me that there are two necessary conditions of sportsmanship as it applies to competitive athletics contests, especially those that are part of intercollegiate athletics. Sportsmanship, no doubt, is a complex concept, and I do not mean to provide an exhaustive explanation; but the following features capture the heart of the phenomenon.

First, a student-athlete exercises sportsmanship only if he or she respects others with whom and against whom he or she competes. It does not matter whether the sport is an individual one, such as track and field or wrestling, or a team one, such as softball or football.

To show respect for an opponent does not diminish the competitiveness involved in sport. Indeed, if one does not maximize competitiveness, then that is disrespectful; to not give full effort, to not do one's best, is to say, implicitly at least, the opponent is not fully worthy. In the case of contact sports, such as football, to show respect is perfectly compatible with hard play.

But for the sportsman, full effort and hard play must be done with a commitment to fairness. Fair play means more than merely abiding by the explicit rules of the game. Every sport has explicit rules for competition and for safety; but each sport also has implicit conventions about fair play and respect for opponents. Given the differences among sports, these implicit rules vary considerably; but they all pertain to the way players treat each other.

Second, a student-athlete exercises sportsmanship only if he or she respects the game. That means respecting the code of ethics and conventions surrounding the game. For example, while it is permissible — though it does incur a penalty — to foul someone going in for a lay-up late in a game, it is not permissible, according to basketball's conventions, to foul more aggressively than necessary to disrupt the shot.

Importantly, the game is disrespected when a student-athlete cheats. Some cheating involves intentionally breaking the rules of the game, such as using illegal equipment, say a corked bat. But some cheating has more to do with student-athlete behavior that affects the competition.

Using performance-enhancing drugs is an example of this latter type of cheating. In that case, an athlete attempts to gain an unfair advantage by using artificial means. It is disrespectful to the traditions and code of conduct of a sport to compete on a drug-assisted basis. It shows the participant places personal success beyond all considerations, and he or she disregards the commitment to fair play.

The NCAA has, for some time, been diligent in enforcing rules against the use of performance-enhancing drugs. The NCAA tests in Divisions I and II, and Division III has begun a serious pilot study that involves testing.

Similarly, gambling on college sports disrespects the game. Our American culture tolerates a high level of gambling; there are some municipalities and states in which gambling is legal. Poker has

turned into a national pastime, with adolescents among the most prolific participants.

Be that as it may, wagering on college games by those engaged in intercollegiate athletics, especially student-athletes themselves, creates the threat of illicit influences on the outcome of games. One of the key reasons why college sports is popular is the games have credibility and no one knows their outcomes in advance. They are fair contests. If the outcomes are manipulated by point shaving, for instance, the credibility on which they are based evaporates. I believe there is little, if anything, that would be more harmful to college sports than systematic intrusion of gambling interests.

Sportsmanship applies not only to participants, student-athletes, but also to others associated with college sports. Among those are the coaches and officials, athletics and university administrators, fans and boosters, and the media. The core elements of sportsmanship are relevant to all: namely, respect for the participants and respect for the game.

One critical group is the fans. College sports fans, survey research has shown, are among the most avid. Their commitment to their university or college team is often intense, lifelong, and carried with pride. That is good. Being a college sports fan is enjoyable; it builds bonding with others and with the institution. It offers a cathartic outlet for the pressures of modern life.

Avid fan behavior, however, has a dark side. It can become unruly, even dangerous at times. It is fine for fans to cheer loudly for their teams; but it is unsportsmanlike to hurl derogatory, demeaning epithets at opposing players.

It is fine to stand and shout at critical moments; but it is potentially dangerous to charge onto the field to pull down the goal posts. It is fine to tailgate before the game, to party after the game; but it is unacceptable to have celebratory riots in which fires are set, property is destroyed, and drunken mobs roam the streets.

How are we to promote and reinforce sportsmanship? How are we to deal with the egregious failures of sportsmanship — for example, team fighting and fan celebratory riots?

The answer is far easier to articulate than to put successfully into practice. Sportsmanship is learned through education. The good news is that no one is better at education than universities. But sportsmanship must be taught continually. The task is never done, in part because the players and the student fans change every year.

Aristotle argued that one becomes virtuous by doing virtuous acts. That is, the underlying attitudes leading one to act virtuously begins by undertaking the right behaviors until they become habitual. The attitudes necessary for sportsmanship must be nurtured, taught and reinforced.

Athletes new to the team must be told what is expected of them. Coaches, of course, are key to this process, but mature peers, older players, also have a role to play. Athletics directors and professional support personnel must set the expectations and reinforce the right behaviors.

The NCAA has been actively involved in the teaching of all aspects of sportsmanship for some time. It promotes and supports campus-based educational programs concerned with fair play, nutrition and health, and gambling abstention. Among its major programs are CHAMPS/Life Skills, APPLE and Don't Bet On It. In addition, a new Web site offers best practices, and the "Everyone's a Player" campaign highlights respect, responsibility and integrity. Nonetheless, it is not likely these national programs are sufficient to teach sportsmanship. Campus-based instruction, both formal and informal, is critical to successful learning.

Universities have recently taken steps to minimize disruptive fan behavior and to increase safety. For example, schools better manage crowds trying to charge the field or court — some have installed safer collapsible goal posts; law enforcement is better prepared; and city and municipal government, and the media, are more cooperative.

In the end, individual campuses must decide which practices work best in their environments. They must understand and act on the effective strategies to prepare for the big game; they must manage the game to best ensure the safety of players, coaches, officials and fans; and, if necessary, mete out

fair, consistent but strong punishments for those who are ill-behaved.

The task facing campuses is made more difficult by a culture that often accepts, even encourages, sports fan misbehavior. It is important for leadership both inside and outside the university to counter this untoward perspective.

In sum, sportsmanship is a central element in college athletics. Good sportsmanship reinforces the positive nature of intercollegiate athletics. It demonstrates character development by student-athletes, the role of coaches as teachers and mentors, and it adds to the pleasures of college fans. But poor sportsmanship reflects poorly on all those engaged in intercollegiate athletics.

Fairness in hiring

Fairness continues to be a topic of central concern to the NCAA in other areas, as well. I appointed the Diversity Leadership Strategic Planning Committee to help set the agenda for future progress. The committee is reporting its findings and recommendations at this Convention. We appreciate the good work and sound insight of the committee members.

Let me turn, finally, to two challenges to fairness discussed by this committee. The two challenges are: fairness in hiring and fairness in student-athlete participation.

In men's basketball, a critical mass of head coaches are African-American. That has permitted upward mobility for young coaches who are African-American, as well as opportunities to change positions for experienced head coaches.

Unfortunately, in football we have not yet seen this type of upward mobility or opportunities. Indeed, the proportion of ethnic minority head football coaches is inexcusably low.

In the case of athletics directors and other high-level athletics administration posts, we see similar problems for women and people of color.

Fortunately, there is some recent modest improvement. The number of head football coaches has increased from three to seven over the past few years, and the number of athletics directors who are ethnic minorities or women has showed good increases. The most encouraging change is that ethnic minorities and women are receiving more interviews and they are appearing on the final lists of candidates more often.

Nonetheless, much remains to be accomplished before equity is obtained. The simple fact of the matter is that there are highly qualified, hard-working persons waiting for a chance to be successful. In the competitive environment that is college sports, it remains unjustifiable that the most qualified person does not get the job.

Individual institutions are wholly responsible for the hiring of coaches and administrators. That is as it should be. No outside body, such as the NCAA, should usurp the authority or responsibility of universities and colleges in hiring.

But having said that, it must also be recognized that good practices in hiring are prerequisites to fairness and lead to the best search results. The central point is that the recruitment and evaluation of candidates must be truly open and inclusive.

How can the NCAA be most helpful in the search for head football coaches of color and for athletics administrators, especially athletics directors? First, the NCAA should call attention to these problem areas and make known the best practices for high-level searches.

Second, the NCAA can help prepare candidates for the search process. The NCAA conducts 19 programs annually to provide practical and professional education and advice to candidates. These programs range from academies for relative beginners to advanced levels, and include opportunities for both men and women. Hundreds of individuals have gone through these programs during the last five years.

I take personally the responsibility for calling public attention to the dimensions of this problem — as I am doing now. I will continue to do so. And the NCAA will continue to sponsor educational opportunities to prepare candidates.

Fairness in participation

The second issue concerning fairness is student-athlete participation. In particular, consider the implementation of Title IX.

Since 1972, the number of young women participating in college sports has increased five fold, to more than 165,000. As good as that is, it remains short of the goal of full implementation of Title IX.

But what does full implementation mean? In simple terms, it means no college student with the skills and interest in athletics participation should be denied the opportunity because of gender.

Recent attacks on Title IX have been directed against its full implementation. The most recent one, initiated by the Department of Education, seeks to ease compliance by permitting the results of an e-mail survey of the student body to demonstrate that interest among young women — the under-represented gender — is being satisfied. But even a well-constructed survey can at best be a partial answer. Such campus surveys are notoriously unreliable, especially when a lack of response is taken to be a negative response.

The NCAA Executive Committee passed and publicized a resolution that clearly and strongly advised against the Department of Education approach. By and large, colleges and universities have not adopted that approach, but a few institutions have done so. It would be appropriate for those that have used the Department of Education's survey to reconsider and re-evaluate its means of complying with Title IX.

It should not be the case that men's participation opportunities are diminished to comply with Title IX. The best way to meet the requirements of Title IX is to increase opportunities for women.

Specifically, I certainly hope no university cuts sports to comply with Title IX. There are always alternatives, and the NCAA staff is ready and able to work with an athletics department to identify acceptable alternatives to cutting sports.

Despite financial pressures, an investment in intercollegiate athletics to assure proper compliance with Title IX is appropriate. Participation in athletics for young women, as it is for young men, provides opportunities for personal growth in terms of attitudes and experiences that lead to successful careers and citizenship. If we provide these opportunities for growth to young men, how can we, in good conscience, deny them to young women? Young women deserve all the opportunities afforded to young men.

The challenge to maximize fairness for all needs to remain high on the NCAA's agenda. While there is progress in some areas, much remains to be accomplished.

Over the past 100 years, intercollegiate athletics has become a great American institution. Its successes considerably outweigh the problems and challenges.

But there are responsibilities to the position accorded college sports both within higher education and society as a whole. We must continue to celebrate and honor the student-athlete. We must ensure the mission of educating student-athletes is primary. We must conduct intercollegiate athletics with fiscal integrity. And we must be committed to a guiding philosophy that in all our endeavors, intercollegiate athletics is fair.

Let's begin the 101st year of the NCAA with these responsibilities clearly in mind.