

6-11-2007 University Presidential Leadership

1 (File: 20070611mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With Myles".

3 Dr. Brand, you are a former president of two high
4 profile universities. Why is presidential leadership so
5 important for the NCAA and for college athletics?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Even though college athletics
7 actually is a very small part of the activities undertaken in
8 universities for these large universities, the flagship
9 campuses, for example, it's only about 3 or 4 percent of their
10 budget, it is nonetheless one of the most visible, if not the
11 most visible, aspect of what these colleges and universities
12 do. It enters the sports pages in the local paper, as well as
13 nationally every year. It has a lot of broadcast media
14 attention. And so it sheds a lot of light, and sometimes not
15 the brightest and best light on the institution.

16 Presidents have to attend to athletics. If you wait
17 for a crisis to come, it's too late. So presidents really
18 need to keep their hands on the wheel with respect to
19 athletics.

20 JOSH CENTOR: When you're on campus, what percentage
21 of your day would you say -- or of your week may be easier --
22 was spent on the athletics program?

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: Very little. I wouldn't even know
24 how to ascribe a percentage, but well below 5 percent.

25 JOSH CENTOR: Wow.

1 DR. MYLES BRAND: But on occasion, it would be
2 important. So for example, every fall Saturday, I had a
3 football game. Now, actually, I didn't spend much time
4 watching the game. I spent a lot of time working with friends
5 and donors and legislators concerned with the university.
6 They were interested in football, and it gave me a chance to
7 talk with them. So that was an activity. Is that a football
8 activity? Or is that an activity in terms of making friends
9 and building relationships for the university? I would say
10 the latter.

11 But sometimes when things go wrong, it takes a lot of
12 your time. But in the normal course of events, it requires
13 more oversight and pointing the right people to the right
14 positions, such as the athletic director, in particular. I
15 would get involved when the new coaches, head coaches,
16 particularly when the high profile sports were engaged. But I
17 did not, and I don't think presidents should be engaged in a
18 day-to-day operational part of athletics.

19 JOSH CENTOR: I would think that most of your
20 colleagues shared the same philosophy. In a recent Chronicle
21 of Higher Education survey, 60 percent of presidents said they
22 believe athletics is actually a liability for the campus.

23 Do you share that opinion?

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: I can understand why they're saying
25 that. In part when things go wrong, they go terribly wrong,

1 and it's not favorable to the university. There is a subsidy
2 that must be paid, so it's not a financial benefit to have
3 athletics. It's part of the cost of doing -- of having a
4 comprehensive educational program.

5 Nonetheless, particularly for the public universities,
6 there is a sense of connectivity to the institution and the
7 community that would be missing without athletics, and
8 although it has the risk of things going wrong, and it is not
9 for free. It's costly. Nonetheless, I think it has overall
10 benefits, particularly if done with integrity.

11 JOSH CENTOR: Some people who may be unfamiliar with
12 the way the NCAA works -- it's a member-driven organization.
13 In our highest levels of the committee structure, we have the
14 Divisions I, II, and III President's Councils, and the
15 Division I board of directors. These are university and
16 college presidents making the rules and being actively
17 involved with legislation for the organization. I assume that
18 they believe that athletics is important for the campus and
19 maybe not so much of a liability.

20 What can the NCAA do to convince the other presidents
21 and chancellors that athletics is, in fact, extremely
22 important for their campus environments?

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think they probably all do see it
24 as important, particularly in Division I. I don't think
25 that's the issue. The issue is really is that there's a risk

1 involved in having to conduct athletics, and that's the
2 liability portion. Also, the vast majority understand the
3 budgets well enough so that it is realized as a subsidized
4 activity. And the financial situation of our universities and
5 colleges these days is that every nickel and dime counts, and
6 so what you're paying for one program, you can't put it in
7 another.

8 So it's a liability in that sense. But I don't think
9 anyone would say it doesn't have a role to play in the
10 institution.

11 JOSH CENTOR: How about the board of trustees?
12 Institutions have boards of trustees. What is that role in
13 athletics?

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's a very important question,
15 and it's not always well understood what the answer is, and
16 even by some of the trustees in our nation.

17 Every university has a board of trustees or regents.
18 Private universities have larger boards than public
19 universities. Their role in the area of athletics, like the
20 rest of the university, is improving policy and approving
21 overall budgetary expenditures. Their role is not to manage
22 the day-to-day operations.

23 So for example, hiring and firing high profile
24 coaches -- the management of that belongs to the president.
25 Understanding, for example, whether you should put up a new

1 football stadium, final authority has to come from the
2 trustees, because it's a major university commitment. Making
3 sure that student athletes meet the athletic standards of that
4 institution, the day-to-day operations fall to the academic
5 programs, the institutions overseeing and responsible to the
6 president.

7 What the board needs to do is have that policy in
8 place, but we don't expect them and don't want them, because
9 it's not the proper role to look at the individual student
10 athlete's success in the classroom or on the field.

11 JOSH CENTOR: More of an advisory?

12 DR. MYLES BRAND: No. As a policy maker. They have
13 ultimate responsibility for policy, ultimate responsibility
14 for budgets. But they are assigned to the president, and the
15 president, in turn, assigns to others in the institution, the
16 operations, the day-to-day operations. So if the president
17 assigns to the athletic director the running of the athletic
18 department, like he assigned to the dean of the business
19 school, the running of the business school, although he bears
20 overall responsibility for it. That's the president's job.
21 But academic policy, major expenditures, that's the board's
22 policy.

23 JOSH CENTOR: That's your in-depth look at the way
24 colleges and universities work. You can't get that anywhere
25 else. Thanks for listening to "Mondays With Myles".

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25

Thank you, Dr. Brand.

DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure.