

2-25-2008 VP Diversity & Inclusion

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Good morning and welcome to "Mondays
3 With Myles". It's February 25th. It's Black History Month,
4 and we have a very special podcast for you today. Joining
5 Dr. Brand and me is Charlotte Westerhaus, NCAA vice president
6 for Diversity and Inclusion. This is a great opportunity to
7 talk about Black History Month and some of the things going on
8 in the NCAA.

9 Charlotte, as the vice president for Diversity and
10 Inclusion, can you tell us a little bit about Black History
11 Month and the NCAA spin on things?

12 MS. CHARLOTTE WESTERHAUS: I would like to do that.

13 Black History Month actually started out as a week
14 back in 1926. And it was started by historian Carter Woodson
15 who was very concerned, as he was a historian. And looking
16 back through history as it was being taught in universities
17 and high schools, he discovered that African Americans,
18 blacks, Negroes at that time, were not included in the
19 discussion or in the education or in the history of how this
20 country was formed. So he formed Black History or Negro
21 History Week to celebrate the accomplishments of Negroes at
22 that time within our country.

23 It was expanded in 1976 and was then called African
24 American Month -- Black History Month, as we know it right
25 now, as a celebration of the historical events, the

1 contributions that African Americans have done within the
2 United States.

3 JOSH CENTOR: I would say that African Americans are a
4 historically underrepresented group in higher education.

5 Dr. Brand, what is the NCAA trying to do, in terms of
6 its diversity, to increase opportunities for African Americans
7 and other minorities?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, amongst students -- and
9 particularly in some sports such as Division I football and
10 basketball -- many of the players, in fact half the players,
11 are African Americans and are performing very well in the
12 classroom, as well as on the field.

13 In certain areas of coaching, for example, African
14 American head coaches in basketball are reasonably well
15 represented. In other areas, African American head football
16 coaches, they're not well represented at all and that remains
17 a challenge for us.

18 JOSH CENTOR: Charlotte, I know your group has done
19 expectational work with some of its coach academies. Can you
20 tell our listeners a little bit about that, the purpose behind
21 them, and some of the success you've had?

22 MS. CHARLOTTE WESTERHAUS: Yes. Within the last four
23 or five years, NCAA in working with the American Football
24 Coaches Association, and other athletic directors and
25 conference commissioners, have sponsored a variety of

1 academies, going from entry level to the expert level to
2 enhance not only professional development, but opportunities
3 for coaches of color to obtain their desired goal of becoming
4 a head football coach. And they have been extremely
5 successful.

6 This past year we saw four individuals of color being
7 named as head football coaches in the FBS. One was a Pacific
8 Islander, three were African American men. And of those four,
9 the three African American males all attended one of our
10 academies at one time in their career.

11 We have also been seeing success as supported by the
12 coaches association and their basketball academies which are
13 called The Ace Programs to enhance a number of opportunities
14 for men and women who want to become basketball coaches.

15 And I'm real excited to see how our NCAA staff and our
16 championships have been working with wrestling, for instance,
17 swimming, gymnastics -- to work with not only the enhancement
18 of coaching opportunities, but to celebrate the contributions
19 of African Americans in these sports and other championship
20 sports within the NCAA.

21 JOSH CENTOR: Dr. Brand, why is diversity important
22 within our coaching ranks within the athletics administrator
23 ranks?

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's important for the same reason
25 it's important to have diversity throughout all professions,

1 not just coaching and not just athletes, in all that we do.
2 And the reason for that is very clear, we always want to give
3 the people with the best talent, those who work the hardest,
4 those who have the most to contribute, every opportunity to be
5 successful. And we don't want to hold irrelevant factors,
6 such as skin color, against them.

7 Just the opposite, we want to make sure that everyone
8 who has the ability and the desire has a genuine opportunity
9 to do so. Unfortunately, in our society, in American culture
10 historically, that has not always been true. And so we need
11 to take special steps, I think, in order to make sure those
12 opportunities are genuine and real and do allow everyone to
13 exercise their abilities to the greatest of their talent.

14 JOSH CENTOR: It seems, Charlotte, with the statistics
15 that you just cited that progress is certainly being made.
16 But I get the sense that it's not enough, that we need to keep
17 working on it to really get to where we need to be.

18 MS. CHARLOTTE WESTERHAUS: It is extremely
19 challenging, but it is worth the effort of the NCAA. Myles
20 Brand has emphasized through his leadership and also
21 leadership of our universities' presidents involved with the
22 NCAA and our athlete directors, that the NCAA is an
23 educational association. And diversity enhances the
24 educational opportunities not only for our students of color,
25 our student-athletes of color, athletic administrators of

1 color, but it enhances educational opportunities for all of
2 our student-athletes within the NCAA.

3 So although it's been challenging and yet at times the
4 progress has been slow and frustrating, it is worth the
5 collective effort to continue -- to continue to enhance
6 diversity within the NCAA.

7 JOSH CENTOR: And, Dr. Brand, finally I want to add
8 this because we've spoken a number of times about one of your
9 boyhood heros, Jackie Robinson. I want to just talk for a
10 second about how Jackie Robinson influenced you and why you so
11 admire him.

12 DR. MYLES BRAND: I admire him for his talent and for
13 his courage. Very early on I understood that this was a man
14 of integrity who stood up against a system that was unfair,
15 and he was willing to put himself on the line to not just help
16 himself but to make a statement to help others as well. And
17 then, of course, how can you not like anyone who could steal
18 from third to home.

19 JOSH CENTOR: Well, absolutely.

20 Dr. Brand and Charlotte, thank you so much for joining
21 me today.

22 Black History Month is about to wrap up, but rest
23 assured the NCAA's commitment to diversity and inclusion will
24 not. We'll see you next time.

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