

3-24-2008 Limiting Commercialism

1 (File: 20080324mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Dr. Brand, today we are going to talk
3 about commercial activity and how it impacts intercollegiate
4 athletes.

5 First question I have for you, are we concerned about
6 how some schools, some athletics departments, bring in their
7 money?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Oh, we are always concerned with
9 that, but I think the context is critically important.
10 Universities accrue funds from all sources, obviously tuition.
11 You remember that from school?

12 JOSH CENTOR: Absolutely.

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: But also they accrue money from
14 philanthropy, from federal grants and contracts, but they also
15 have commercial relationships. For example, some universities
16 will have a soft drink deal, not just for athletics, but for
17 the university as a whole. They'll have naming rights from
18 parts of the college of business. They'll have equity
19 positions in inventions, sometimes started by their own
20 faculty.

21 They have a pretty clear idea of what they find
22 acceptable to the mission and consistent with the mission of
23 the university. That same set of principles carries over to
24 athletics.

25 We have to be careful about treating athletics

1 separately from the way we treat the rest of the university.
2 Commercialism is okay. Commercial activity undertaken by
3 athletics departments is okay, provided that it fits within
4 the mission of higher education.

5 JOSH CENTOR: Are there certain places schools should
6 not partner with? Casinos, bars, tobacco companies?

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: Some schools, through the work of
8 students, for example, the general student body, as well as
9 trustees, have taken a principled position about being
10 engaged, for example, in certain activities that they find
11 unacceptable -- for example, tobacco companies, certain
12 corporations or companies that mistreat certain gender issues,
13 other kinds of abuses. So they do that as well.

14 I think it isn't only that, though. It's the way the
15 presentations are being made. So let me give you an example.
16 It is okay, in whatever way you want in a professional
17 organization, such as a professional athletics team, to
18 show -- to use the commercialism in a way that you think would
19 be most impactful.

20 Actually, it can spoil the game and misrepresent the
21 university's relationship to athletics by overdoing it -- by
22 being overenthusiastic in the presentation of certain
23 commercial activity.

24 So I think it isn't just the content of what is being
25 advertised, but how it's being advertised as well. And I want

1 to bring to the floor one very important point there.
2 Professional athletics may endorse products in any way they
3 like. They are professionals. And that's part of the way
4 they make their livelihood. But we don't want
5 student-athletes to actually endorse the products being
6 identified with any particular product because they are not
7 professionals. They are students. And they shouldn't be
8 asked and shouldn't represent the university as asking for any
9 kind of product endorsement.

10 So there are ways in which we would do it, even if we
11 are agreeable about what products should be endorsed.

12 JOSH CENTOR: Let's talk for a minute about the NCAA
13 and the association as a whole. What kind of process does the
14 NCAA go through with its corporate partners and champions?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: We work directly with our media
16 partners to identify key corporate partners. Let me make a
17 specific example -- Coca-Cola is a long-term corporate partner
18 for us, and their message is one that we resonate well with,
19 in terms of the excitement of the games and youths' role in
20 creating a very comfortable environment for the future.

21 So I think when we get a proposed advisement from
22 Coca-Cola, or any other corporate partner, we scan it to make
23 sure that it meets our rules and regulations in the kind of
24 presentation that's taking place -- for example, that there
25 are no endorsements required by any individual athletics. And

1 so we scan it according to our rules, and then report back to
2 Coke. And if there's changes necessary to make, we'll make
3 them. By this time, of course, having worked with Coke for so
4 long, they understand what are rules are, and so that rarely
5 happens.

6 But for every ad and every presentation and every
7 image you see for our championship games, we do carefully scan
8 it for those rules.

9 JOSH CENTOR: Can anyone become a partner or a
10 corporate champion if there is enough money on the table?

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: No, no. There are some things that
12 we won't agree to advertising. For example, hard liquor --
13 there is no way in which we would agree to have a hard liquor
14 advertiser as part of the NCAA championship. In fact, we
15 don't even accept the kinds of commercials, whether we like
16 the partner or not, that I think are abusive to gender
17 issues -- for example, portraying women in unflattering
18 positions. We just won't do that.

19 JOSH CENTOR: Do our relationships have anything to do
20 with the mission of higher education? Is that an important
21 part when we look for our champions and partners?

22 DR. MYLES BRAND: It is not a requirement, but it is
23 strictly encouraged. We want our corporate partners very much
24 to represent what is good and important about higher
25 education. So, for example, the Hartford, which is a

1 corporate partner for us, has started a program to help
2 student-athletes, and other students, better understand what
3 their financial situation is and how to take advantage of that
4 as they finish college, and it's been an educational
5 opportunity. So Hartford, of course, has a reason to engage
6 in this because they want to sell their products, financial
7 products. But at the same time, they are also helping educate
8 student-athletes and others about financial issues of a
9 personal nature.

10 So I think that's a really good example of bringing
11 together some benefits for higher education and the
12 student-athletes, in particular, with our corporate partners.
13 They could have gone in a different direction, but they chose
14 to go in a direction that supported the mission, namely
15 helping our student-athletes.

16 JOSH CENTOR: Well, Dr. Brand, as you very well know,
17 we are in a new media world. We are here recording a podcast
18 that's going to be posted on the DoubleAZone blog.

19 So in what ways does new media play to this issue?

20 DR. MYLES BRAND: New media plays to the issue because
21 it allows the student-athletes and younger people -- and I can
22 say it because I'm an older person -- to be able to get these
23 messages and listen to the games, and, frankly, connect with
24 our corporate partners in ways that were not possible not too
25 long ago. And the fact that there are 25, maybe 100 different

1 ways to get this content and get these messages out, and it
2 allows choice by those who are listening or watching or
3 texting these messages -- I think is a very exciting part.
4 And maybe we older guys will learn how to do it better in the
5 future.

6 JOSH CENTOR: Well, thanks so much for giving us this
7 education on commercial activity.

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Thank you.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25