

5-19-2008 4 Years APR Data

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2 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Dr. Brand, two weeks ago we
3 released our fourth year of APR data. Can you let our
4 listeners know where we're at in our academic reform
5 initiatives right now?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Important question, Josh. You're
7 right. We released four years of data, which means
8 essentially that the small squad size adjustment as gone away,
9 and we now have accurate information over a long period of
10 time.

11 There is plenty of good news, and some news that's not
12 quite as good. But the good news is that the four-year
13 averages are up. For all of Division I, all teams are 961 --
14 that includes women's as well as men's. And they are up one
15 point from last year. Doesn't sound like a lot, but one point
16 for such a large end does matter.

17 The four-year average for football is up by three
18 points to 934 in Division I.

19 JOSH CENTOR: It's pretty sizable.

20 DR. MYLES BRAND: Three points is a lot. But also the
21 good news is for baseball. We've seen baseball go up for
22 three points to 938. The number of men's teams below 925 --
23 and remember 925 is when we started accessing sanctions such
24 as loss of scholarships -- and that's trending downward,
25 that's good. And the same is true for those below 900.

1 Remember 900 is the cutoff point at which we start accessing
2 what we call historical or long-term penalties.

3 So all that is good news. And if you break out the
4 two parts of the APR, which is eligibility and retention --
5 retention to coming back, we continue to see improvements on
6 average.

7 Also, good news is that the number of 0 for 2s which
8 in accounting parlance means the young people who flunk out --
9 they aren't retained and they weren't eligible when they
10 left -- has been reduced in Division I by nearly 700
11 student-athletes, another big number.

12 And finally I want to mention something that is a side
13 benefit of all that we are doing. We had put an incentive for
14 teams to bring back student-athletes who hadn't completed
15 their degree. And if they do that and that student-athlete
16 completes his or her degree, you get a bonus point for APR.

17 Well, since this started four years ago, we've had
18 4,000 student-athletes come back and graduate -- 4,000
19 student-athletes who probably would not have gotten their
20 degree otherwise. So that incentive has really helped as
21 well.

22 So I think overall there is some great news out there.

23 JOSH CENTOR: Why are those student-athletes, those
24 who have left school, coming back? I mean, you said the
25 incentive. Obviously we can understand the incentive for the

1 school to bring them back. But if these kids are playing
2 professional sports and have left for that reason -- maybe not
3 all 4,000 -- but why are they coming back at this point? Why
4 does this matter to them?

5 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think part of the reason
6 they are coming back is personal. They wanted to get a
7 degree, and they've learned how valuable having a degree is.
8 But I think also the schools wanting them to come back has
9 played a role too. The coaches are inviting them back. The
10 schools are making it easier for them to transition back into
11 the university. And the schools say that not only are they
12 serving their former students well, which I'm sure they feel
13 good about, but it also is adding points to the team, whether
14 it is basketball, football or some other sport.

15 So the point is that I think there is a win-win
16 situation for the student-athlete who left early but also for
17 the schools.

18 Now, before we get too excited, Josh, there is some
19 news that I would put in the "not so good" category, where we
20 need improvement. And we announced a total of 216 teams --
21 that's about 3 and half percent of all Division I teams from
22 122 different institutions that are receiving penalties
23 because of substandard academic performance. Most of those
24 will be contemporaneous penalties -- loss of scholarships.
25 But we also have 26 teams that are going to receive what we

1 call Occasion 2 historical penalties -- that means additional
2 restrictions on scholarships and recruiting and practice
3 times.

4 The Occasion 3, if these 26 teams don't improve, is
5 that next year they can't play in any postseason games. And
6 if the year after they still don't improve, what we do is we
7 have Occasion 4, which means that the entire athletic program
8 or the institution is put on restricted membership. So those
9 26 teams need to get their act together in a big hurry.

10 JOSH CENTOR: We've seen some articles, and we have
11 spoken about this before. The media says that these penalties
12 that we put out there aren't that harsh -- that programs
13 really aren't getting penalized that forcefully.

14 What you just outlined doesn't seem to sync up with
15 that. These seem like harsh penalties.

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: These are harsh penalties. Many of
17 these penalties, in loss of scholarships and soon additional
18 practice time and potentially not being able to participate in
19 postseason play, say, as compared to major infractions, which
20 we take as very serious penalties -- these are equal to or
21 worse.

22 The idea, though, is not to punish and punish as hard
23 as we possibly can. The idea really is to change behavior.
24 And so when I started, I said, this past year we have seen
25 some increase, and indeed in baseball and football very strong

1 increase in APR, and we have seen increases on average over
2 the whole four years. So we are changing behaviors. We are
3 seeing, on average, these teams, these institutions doing
4 better and better. And that's what really counts, not how
5 badly we can hit somebody with a club.

6 JOSH CENTOR: Well, you've mentioned baseball and
7 football. Are there any problematic sports that we are
8 focusing on?

9 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think one of the sports we still
10 need to do better in -- and I would say the one that we have
11 seen, frankly, the least improvement -- is in men's
12 basketball. We have seen eligibility scores go up. So when
13 the young men are in school, they are doing better. But we
14 have also seen retention scores go down, which means more and
15 more student-athletes, male student-athletes, are leaving
16 basketball programs. That is not good.

17 So we do have a lot of work to do there. And what we
18 are doing there is pretty much what we do in baseball, which
19 is why we are starting to see improvement. Namely, we put
20 together a committee consisting of all the major constituents,
21 and we have said, What is special about basketball that is
22 leading to this problem? What do we have to do to assist
23 basketball in doing better academically? How can we help the
24 players?

25 And we think we have some ideas. They are radical

1 ideas, and we'll talk about them another time, as it would be
2 premature to mention them. But I want to be very
3 complimentary of that group. They are very thoughtful.

4 A lot of basketball people, coaches, ADs,
5 commissioners, as well as NCAA folks who are on this
6 committee, and we seem to be making some progress.

7 JOSH CENTOR: We have spoken about the Academic
8 Progress Rate, Graduation Success Rate, a number of times now
9 over the past number of couple of years. And you had said it
10 a few minutes ago changing behavior.

11 I want to get your final thoughts on that, because
12 that's the overarching purpose of these reforms, to change
13 behavior in the athletics programs, isn't it?

14 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's exactly right. Our overall
15 measurement, of course, is graduation. We want students to
16 graduate. We want to count it correctly -- not exclude from
17 our measurement transfer students. That's why we use
18 something called the GSR, rather than the federal rate, and we
19 want to tie it all to graduation.

20 So the 925, you'll recall, Josh, correlates with a
21 graduation rate of 60 percent when you count it accurately. A
22 900 correlates with a 45 percent graduation rate.

23 So we want our student-athletes on average to graduate
24 when you count transfers around that amount, around 60
25 percent. That's what we want to do. We want to change the

1 behaviors of the teams, the schools, the support systems in
2 the institutions, the athletic program, so we are all headed
3 towards success of athletes on the field and in the classroom.

4 JOSH CENTOR: Well, it seems like the numbers are
5 going the right direction at this point. Obviously, you laid
6 out that there is a lot of work still to be done, but we
7 appreciate this conversation.

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Very good.

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