

7-21-2008 Admission Standards

1 (File: 20080721mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Good morning. And welcome to "Mondays  
3 With Myles".

4 Dr. Brand, if the school uses -- I'm going to put my  
5 quotes around this term here -- "special admit" on a  
6 student-athlete. What does that mean? And what is the  
7 school's responsibility?

8 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah. I'm glad you put quotes  
9 around that term, just to start the conversation. That's not  
10 a favorable term to describe a group of students who need  
11 access to institutions. And I prefer, much more, to talk  
12 about the available access or providing access, than I would  
13 to use what I think is a pejorative term, at least in some  
14 circles. So let's move pass that quickly.

15 What it is is that some students who have special  
16 skills that the university wants -- now, those skills might be  
17 skills in music; they might be skills in mathematics; and they  
18 could be athletic skills.

19 Now, of course, we always focus on the athletic  
20 skills, but those aren't unique individuals in institutions.  
21 Those are institutions, well, I'll say are overly focused  
22 early in their career or so focused on one particular area,  
23 like music, that they have neglected others. Although, they  
24 may well have the native talent to do well.

25 So they come into the university underprepared in

1 certain areas.

2           And what that means is the university has to take  
3 special efforts in order to provide an opportunity for them to  
4 fully mature academically and to graduate, and that is what we  
5 mean by providing access, namely, access for individuals who  
6 provide special opportunities for the university in terms of  
7 music or sports, what have you, but assuring that they have  
8 the backup and support they need to do well.

9           JOSH CENTOR: And certainly you can't imagine a school  
10 without musicians, without athletes. That's what makes up the  
11 diversity of our institutions.

12           But when you talk about the responsibility that  
13 institutions have, what are some of those efforts that they  
14 need to provide?

15           DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah. Good question. I think the  
16 university takes on an obligation to those students needing  
17 access when they admit them and enroll them. And that means,  
18 in some cases, providing remediation in certain key core  
19 topics like math or English. Sometimes it means having, at  
20 least for a year or two, an advisor or a tutor to help them  
21 along. It may mean making sure that they have summer  
22 opportunities, like bridge opportunities, going into the first  
23 freshman year that turned out to be very successful. Maybe  
24 there are opportunities during at least a couple of summers to  
25 catch up so that they are on track.

1 All of this is not inexpensive. And -- but it is  
2 important to the academic success of these individuals. And  
3 if you don't provide that, I don't think a university is  
4 meeting its obligation when it admits them.

5 JOSH CENTOR: Well, you raise an important point, the  
6 expense issue. Schools have different resources. Should this  
7 factor into who they admit? Some schools can't necessarily  
8 afford to make those efforts and to provide the appropriate  
9 resources for some of those student-athletes and other  
10 students who have special talents.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah. The world is what it is. You  
12 know, some schools have better access to recruiting the  
13 general student body because they have oceans and mountains.  
14 We don't have oceans and mountains in the Midwest.

15 JOSH CENTOR: No, we don't.

16 DR. MYLES BRAND: But the fact is there are just  
17 differences. Some schools have better endowments and are  
18 wealthier than others. I mean, what it is is not so much how  
19 much money you have, but how you decide to allocate it. And  
20 you have to make choices in the university.

21 Where do you spend the monies? And the point here is  
22 that if you admit students who need access, then you have an  
23 obligation that you're taking on in terms of the allocation of  
24 funds available to you as an institution to be supportive of  
25 those students.

1           So, yes, it is easier for those wealthier schools --  
2 and some are clearly wealthier than others and more difficult  
3 for others, but the institution has been obligation to be  
4 supportive of those students, if they admit them.

5           JOSH CENTOR: Do you think it changes the playing  
6 field?

7           DR. MYLES BRAND: What it changes is the way that the  
8 institutions allocate money, either within athletics or to  
9 athletics, in order to be successful, because nothing counts  
10 more than the academic success of those student-athletes.

11           If an institution decides to invest in suites in the  
12 football stadium rather than providing academic support for  
13 students, including those that need access, there is something  
14 dramatically wrong there.

15           JOSH CENTOR: And that's a good point. But do some  
16 schools admit students who just shouldn't be there?

17           DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, a school has to admit only  
18 those potential players in sports or in music or what have you  
19 who can graduate from that institution. It's unfair to the  
20 student, unfair to the student body, to put someone in a  
21 situation in which they can't possibly be successful.

22           Now, some terms of their early schooling -- perhaps  
23 they came from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. And  
24 they have the native talent academically to succeed, then the  
25 institution can admit them and see them through, through the

1 various ways we have talked about.

2 But if it turns out that there is a person who really,  
3 in that institution, cannot meet the requirements, then I  
4 think that person shouldn't be admitted. This is not -- we  
5 are not talking about open admissions here. We are talking  
6 about admissions when that individual, with appropriate  
7 support and help and making up for deficits perhaps from a  
8 disadvantaged educational environment, can be successful.

9 Some schools, as you know, have higher academic  
10 standards than others. There is nothing wrong with that.  
11 That's the way the world is and that allows for  
12 differentiation of student interest. But to take a student  
13 who can succeed in one type of institution and put him another  
14 that is -- even with all the support in the world they can't  
15 succeed -- you're setting that person up for failure, and I  
16 don't think that's fair or moral.

17 JOSH CENTOR: Thank you, Dr. Brand.

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