

REPORT ON MEETING OF THE COALITION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS (COIA) AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, DEC.2-3, 2005

By Richard Penaskovic, Chair-Elect
[Full Report from the Meeting](#)

The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) is an alliance of faculty senates, welcoming membership from all Division 1A schools. It was established in 2002 to effect long-range, comprehensive reform in intercollegiate athletics. About 28 representatives from 24 member senates of the COIA met at Washington State University to discuss the work to date of the NCAA Presidential Task Force. The purpose of the meeting of the COIA was to provide recommendations to the Pres. Task Force of the NCAA. The Presidential Task Force is comprised of univ. presidents and has 4 sub-committees: 1. on issues of values and standards; 2. on presidential leadership; 3. on fiscal responsibility; and 4. on student-athlete well-being. My report today deals with four main points.

1. Issues of Values and Standards- There is a crucial distinction between college and professional sports, one often overlooked today. The absence of financial rewards for athletes distinguishes the collegiate model from professional sports. In the collegiate model the goals usually associated with athletic competition (winning and excellence in athletic performance) should complement, not supercede, the goals of educational accomplishment and personal growth. Because the idea of limited commitment to athletics is integral to the collegiate model, it is in tension with the goals of coaches and athletes to seek the highest level of performance standards.

2. Presidential leadership- The COIA can be a great help to university presidents as they maintain institutional control of athletics. Tenured faculty members have power because they can say what they think. The NCAA Presidential Task Force wants faculty to keep track of what happens on the local level so that decisions aren't made by outside groups such as trustees. Faculty is the best bulwark for this for 3 reasons: (a). they are stable (whereas presidents come and go on average every 7 yrs.), (b). faculty is in touch with the university's mission, and (c). faculty has no vested interest in athletics. The COIA supports the NCAA Subcommittee on Presidential Leadership in its desire to develop model contracts for coaches and administrators including language that rewards contributions to the academic and personal development of athletes.

Commercialism presents a threat to the integrity of intercollegiate sports, just as it does to academic departments. Academic departments have responded to increased commercial activity within the university by instituting controls to define conflict of interest and conflict of commitment. There has not been the same level of oversight to determine these conflict issues in athletic programs. The COIA recommends that each campus appoint a committee (with a substantial number of faculty on it) to monitor and review university-wide corporate connections. The focus should be on what we are compromising in our values when we establish corporate relationships.

3. Fiscal responsibility- Part of the rise in athletic spending derives from spiraling coaches' salaries. We have a disconnection between our coaches and the academic enterprise. Universities themselves, (not professional leagues, not the entertainment industry), are driving the coaching market. The rising coaching market reflects the extraordinary value schools place on winning in football and basketball. This is a distortion of the true purpose of intercollegiate athletics and the collegiate model. The COIA recommends that financial incentives for winning be eliminated from coaches' contracts. Contracts should reward effective training in athletic performance, leadership, integrity, discipline, and sportsmanship. Contracts should focus on academic success and the all-round development of athletes and the recruitment of athletes who will exemplify how athletic and academic successes complement each other.

Head coaches must share accountability for the academic achievement of the athletes they select for admission. Data on continuing eligibility and graduation rates of each recruiting class brought by individual head coaches to their institutions should be maintained, relevant to the period during which the coach was employed at that institution and according to uniform standards, to establish a public record of the acad. success of each coach. This record should follow a coach from institution to institution. Such a process will increase the likelihood that

a coach's commitment to appropriate academic-athletics balance will have an impact on the assessment of his/her success and the shape of his/her careers. It will also help ensure that in seeking team success, coaches are less likely to recruit students who are not likely to succeed academically at their institutions, a practice that damages schools, students, and intercollegiate sports. The COIA strongly supports the initiative of the NCAA Committee on Presidential Leadership to address the gap between salaries for coaches from the rest of the institution's personnel. Compensation for outstanding coaches should not be in excess of rewards for outstanding academics, esp. in fields such as (medicine, law, and business) where substantial external markets exist.

Many of the issues pertaining to coaches' contracts also apply to other athletic dept. personnel, e.g., Athletic Directors' incentive clauses related to winning should not be a feature of such contracts.

The university officers responsible for budgetary decisions about athletics should include the President, the Athletic Director, the Provost, and the Executive Vice President. Major athletic department decisions (e.g., the hiring of head coaches and the AD, changes in the total no. of intercollegiate sports, initiation of major capital projects) should be made in consultation with faculty leaders and through faculty governance channels. The Athletic Director should be appointed *ex officio* to the institution's Faculty Senate.

4. Admissions- The admission of athletes should be based on their potential for academic success and not primarily on their athletic contribution to the institution. Students should not be enrolled if they do not have reasonable prospects of graduation. General admission policies should be the same for all students. Special admissions should be balanced for all student groups including special admissions for athletes. Institutional efforts to promote diversity should be applied consistently to the entire body of applications and should not be used to justify special admission for athletes.