

21 June 07

Dear Dennis, FARA executive committee and FARA members:

Thank you for sending us your press release about our recently issued white paper "Framing the Future". As you know, the white paper was the result of substantial discussion within our membership including many FARs. We also solicited input on early drafts of the paper from numerous outside groups including the NCAA and the Knight Commission as well as from FARA and the Division IA FARs. The final version was substantially strengthened by the comments we received from FARA and other groups, and we deeply appreciate the time and effort expended by you, your FARA colleagues and others.

We understand and respect your position regarding the white paper. Given that some COIA members disagreed with certain parts of the paper in spite of giving their overall approval, it was fully expected that outside groups would also not agree with every point and proposal. Our continued goal is not to insist upon 100% acceptance of the white paper but to work closely with each group to identify and move forward on issues of common interest. Towards that goal, we point out the following for clarification purposes only:

1. The COIA is a grass roots organization of Division IA faculty senates from across the country. Our papers and reports speak only to issues surrounding DIA athletics. Within this population, we have the support of almost 50% of faculty senates (55 out of 114 D1A institutions with faculty senates), strongly suggesting that faculty leaders believe there is a need for reform.
2. As the stewards of the academic mission, campus faculties through their faculty governance systems have an inherent responsibility not to understate the serious problems athletics now poses for academic integrity. A strong and unified faculty voice on these issues is imperative.
3. The COIA has always shown a respectful awareness of and deep appreciation for the work done by FARs. We acknowledge FARs' superior knowledge of many aspects of athletics operations and their essential role on campus regarding intercollegiate athletics. The COIA's hope is to continue to work together with FARs to strengthen the relationship between FARs and the rest of the faculty, and not to fragment the contribution of faculty to reform in athletics.
4. The COIA understands and is grateful that many FARs work hard to mitigate the problems facing college sports on their campuses. However, the current magnitude and complexity of these problems require consensus-driven solutions achievable only by input from all campus stakeholder groups including but not limited to the University President, Athletic Director and staff, FAR, student-athletes and campus faculty leaders. We all must work together because we will all be held accountable for how we respond to the current challenges facing intercollegiate athletics.

We appreciate your comments regarding our white paper and look forward to continued close interactions between the COIA and FARA.

Best wishes,

Virginia Shepherd
Nathan Tublitz
COIA co-chairs

This statement was approved by the COIA Steering Committee