

**THE FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION (FARA)  
OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO COIA'S "FRAMING THE FUTURE: REFORMING  
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS" WHITE PAPER  
18 JUNE 2007**

**FARA supports vigilant eye on intercollegiate athletics not reform**

Vigilance--yes, reform--no! The Faculty Athletics Representatives Association (FARA) voiced robust opposition to a recently released white paper by the Coalition for Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). "Citing problems at a very limited number of institutions, the report leaves the reader believing that intercollegiate athletics is in need of a total overhaul," stated Dennis Leighton, President of FARA. FARA is made up of over 1200 members, representing faculty athletics representatives from each NCAA member institution in all three divisions. COIA organized five years ago, is an alliance of 55 Division IA faculty senates representing less than five percent of NCAA member schools.

"We applaud the work of COIA as a separate constituency group working for the integration of athletics and student athletes into the overall structure of academic life, but are not convinced by the report there is an urgent need to reform intercollegiate athletics," said Leighton. By their own admission, COIA calls for reform of a system that is not broken. As stated by COIA, the goal of the white paper "is to ensure that athletics remain fully integrated into the academic mission of our universities." According to Leighton, "This is exactly the diligent work faculty athletics representatives (FAR) have been engaged in for over three decades. Faculty must remain vigilant in their direct oversight and review of athletic program procedures to be prepared to respond to an ever-changing environment, but it does not necessitate rampant or immediate reform as called for in the report. As faculty athletics representatives (FARs), we are held accountable for just that."

"Serving as an institution's FAR requires full knowledge and deep understanding of athletic programs. FARs receive professional development provided by FARA and the NCAA to stay up-to-date and effective in their oversight role; few faculty senators could devote the time necessary to oversee athletics in this way," Leighton said. "Without full understanding of athletics operations, calling for direct faculty senate oversight of athletics, campus student-athlete recruiting policies or hiring of the athletic director, as called for by COIA, is illogical," said Leighton.

FARA does support several recommendations described in the report including a broader effort by the FAR, athletic director and the campus athletic board to inform the faculty governance body on APR, GSR, graduation rates and progress of student athlete special admits. FARA has already begun work on this recommendation. "This will be one of the primary objectives of FARA's Annual Meeting and Symposium this November. Our goal is to assist FARs in preparing reports for their faculty senates," said Leighton. "We want our members to remain the principle source of information on athletic academic integrity issues on their campus," said Leighton. "Faculty governance bodies should be keenly aware of intercollegiate athletic matters, and most importantly, they should have several key individuals, such as the FAR, they can trust for the reassurance that intercollegiate athletics has not gone array. The

COIA report recognizes the opportunity that lies ahead for increasing dialogue on all our campuses, but better communication does not necessarily require major reform” Leighton said.

FARA also believes that academic advising for student-athletes should be integrated into the campus academic advising structure to prevent the chance that student-athletes are ill advised to simply maintain their athletic eligibility. FARA is encouraging its members to support these issues at the campus and conference level.

The call to increase faculty involvement in academic integrity in intercollegiate athletics was made in *The Second Century Imperatives* report issued in October 2006 by a 50-member presidential task force, commissioned by the NCAA. FARA, founded in 1989, has long served as the faculty voice on issues of intercollegiate athletics at the campus, conference, and national levels and has been working most recently with the NCAA to expand faculty engagement on the integration of athletics on campus. FARA is uniquely positioned to carry out this task as it is the only organization representing faculty from all 1200 member institutions in all NCAA divisions.