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Report calls for integration of athletics, academics

By: Nolan Hicks

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Citing growing tensions between athletics and academics at universities nationwide, a group of professors from around the country released a report Monday detailing recommendations to "re-integrate" college athletics and academics.

The group, known as the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, made recommendations that include establishing the primacy of education in all university endeavors, ensuring student athletes receive the same education as non-athletes and giving faculty a voice in athletic matters.

"Students come to college to get an education. We need to make sure that the education college athletes get measures up to the education that non-athletes receive. We are here to prepare them for life after sports," said Nathan Tublitz, a co-chairman of the committee which issued the report and biology professor at the University of Oregon.

The report specifically calls for an end to specialized classes and majors with lower academic standards for athletes, helping them to remain eligible.

"There is no reason for a student athlete's education to be less rigorous than a non-athlete," Tublitz said. "Many non-athletes have to work their way through college and are involved in campus activities which take just as much of a commitment as sports do."

The report contains 28 recommendations for reform of intercollegiate athletics focusing on admissions and recruiting policies, athletic scholarships and the "primacy of academics" in all university activities, among other things. "These reforms are reasonable and positive and represent an important step in the right direction for intercollegiate athletics," said David Hillis, a member of the Task Force on Curricular Reform.

Hillis said that none of these reforms were targeted at UT specifically, and are instead more broadly aimed at NCAA programs in general. Still, Hillis warned, it will probably take years for the University to implement the recommendations, if they are ever fully implemented.

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