



The Oregonian

Report proposes college reforms

The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics recommends enacting changes at several levels

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

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The Oregonian

The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics released a report Monday outlining its recommendations for reforming college sports, with issues ranging from admissions requirements to on-campus governance of athletics.

The group, an alliance of 55 Division I-A faculty senates, worked with the NCAA and university athletic directors to arrive at the 28 recommendations, which it now will try to get enacted and adopted at the local, conference and national levels.

"These would have a major effect on re-integrating athletics back into academics," said Nathan Tublitz, a professor of biology at the University of Oregon and COIA co-chairman. "Not one of these proposals by themselves are going to have a big effect. But taking them all together would have a major effect on intercollegiate athletics, and we believe, for the good."

Some of the key proposals of the paper, titled "Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics":

General admission policies should be the same for student-athletes and other students, and the academic profiles of those two groups should be reviewed annually by a "campus athletic board" or the campus faculty governance body, which also would monitor academic progress rates and graduate success rates each year.

Athletic scholarships should be issued on a year-by-year basis, and institutions "should establish criteria and a mechanism for revoking a scholarship" and take that final decision out of the hands of coaches.

Competitions and practices should not be scheduled during final exam periods. This would be implemented at the conference level and would not include tournaments, such as the NCAA men's basketball tournament, which coincided with the Ducks' final exam week.

The budgets of athletic departments should be "transparent and aligned with the mission, goals and values of the institution," and the annual growth rate in the athletic department's operating expenditures should be no greater than that of the university's expenditures.

At Oregon, the faculty and athletic department don't always see eye-to-eye on issues such as admission practices and funding, and the athletic department had no comment on the report. Tublitz said he realizes some of his group's proposals already have been adopted at the university, and others have met resistance.

"It really is a mixed bag," said Tublitz, who once conducted a study at Oregon that showed that 20 percent of the special admits to the university are student-athletes, even though they made up 2 percent of the freshman class. "But the real goal in all this is to get people to start talking about how to make athletics more a part of the university environment than it is at the moment."

"After all, the goal of having student-athletes is to give them an education."

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