



31 October 2011

Dear President Emmert,

The Steering Committee of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) wishes to strongly support the general position articulated in the October 19, 2011 letter to the NCAA Board of Directors from a group of conference commissioners, athletics directors, and others deeply concerned with the welfare of intercollegiate sports. Many statements in their letter are consistent with long-term positions endorsed by COIA, an alliance of fifty-eight faculty senates at BCS Division schools.

We agree with the authors of the letter that the NCAA deserves praise for undertaking a fresh attempt at reform in response to increasing problems related to integrity, fiscal sustainability, and the service of athletics to the missions of our academic institutions. However, we also agree that the initial proposals emerging from this effort fall far short of what is necessary to “re-connect Division I athletics to our core values.” We endorse the suggestion that the agenda of the upcoming NCAA Convention be devoted to consideration of these fundamental issues, including specific policy goals specified in the letter.

Certain of these goals are particularly close to many positions COIA has proposed or supported over the past decade, including:

- A governance approach that prioritizes academic values guiding the general educational mission of U.S. higher education over conference and institutional self-interest
- A sustainable approach to finances that will maintain a broad range of men’s and women’s athletics throughout Division I, consistent with institutions’ academic and other financial constraints
- Strong recognition of athlete academic success in the distribution of NCAA and BCS national and conference revenues
- Implementation of simplified and effective rules, and consistent enforcement that clearly values integrity rather than mere compliance
- Establishment of a national culture and incentive structure that will promote ethical behavior by institutions, coaches, administrators, and athletes

It has been COIA’s position since its inception that the path to long-term reform must include elements of immediate change, but also many elements that must be implemented over a number of years, allowing schools in different positions time to adjust and reducing unwillingness to support reform that ultimately benefits all. It will require strong leadership and persistence to implement significant and sustained reform in this way.

Given the current environment, we agree that it is urgent that the Board and membership of the NCAA address these issues now. As a broad coalition of faculty senates committed to athletics reform, COIA remains ready and very willing to contribute to this effort in any way it can.

Sincerely,

John S. Nichols

COIA national co-chair, on behalf of the COIA national Steering Committee

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Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics

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