

The Drake Group

A Voice for Faculty Charged with Educating College Athletes

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THE DRAKE GROUP RESPONDS TO THE RELEASE OF *The Second Century Imperatives: Presidential Leadership-Institutional Accountability by the NCAA*

The Drake Group, a consortium of faculty, staff, and others concerned about academic integrity in college sports is predictably unimpressed with the release of the above named report yesterday. In short, it is simply a document that briefs well, but does not address an action plan to solve the issues, and it hinges on groups (college presidents) who have shown an extreme aversion to really solving the problems in college athletics, specifically those regarding academic integrity.

We believe NCAA President Brand to be a sincere person of high integrity with the best of intentions as well as an understanding of the perilous future faced by college sports unwilling to undergo serious reform. However, he must also be an incredibly naive person if he accepted the highly compensated NCAA presidency not knowing that he was going to be used as the academic front for the cartel's ever expanding commercial interests.

The current academic reform measures are not only superficial, but also apparently designed to cover academic fraud (required to recruit and maintain eligibility for professional athletes pretending to be students) as well as to deceive the government so as to maintain the NCAA's tax-exempt status as an institution of higher education. The NCAA's financial reform measures outlined by President Brand at the National Press Club yesterday will be extremely difficult to implement at best, and complete nonstarters at worst. While Dr. Brand and the Presidential Task Force are touting some sort of financial disclosure, albeit minus penalties or enforcement for not following some arbitrary guideline, the task force conveniently did not address the real transparency issue of academic disclosure—the first and most crucial step to academic reform.

Furthermore, Brand has been used by the NCAA cartel to dismiss the commonsense proposals of reform-minded individuals and organizations such as The Drake Group as "extreme" or "radical." Although these proposals would work to reclaim academic primacy as well as restore academic and financial integrity in America's institutions of higher education, the NCAA no doubt considers these proposals to be detrimental to the financial interests of the cartel's big-time commercialized college sports entertainment businesses.

Jim Duderstadt, former President of the University of Michigan, cut to the quick on the NCAA's latest attempt to clean up big-time college sports, saying: "he had reluctantly reached the conclusion that neither individual college presidents nor sports groups like the NCAA can "take on the dragon of college sports." Perhaps Congress, he said — with its threat of changing the tax code — "is our last hope to do something."

The only hope for significant reform in big-time college sports is via quid-pro-quo government intervention — beginning with the congressional action described in "Ball's in NCAA's Court," URL <http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/10/06/ncaa> and by George Will in his Oct. 25, *Washington Post* Op-ed "Time to question tax-exempt status of college football factories." For more on quid-pro-quo government intervention, see "What Congress can do about the mess in college sports," URL <http://thedrakegroup.org/splittessays.html>.