

Notes on Independent Study and More

Inside Higher Ed

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Independent Study Courses for Athletes

As reported, an Auburn University panel has found that independent study courses that gave many athletes major boosts in their averages were apparently quite easy for non-athletes as well. While the report found key flaws in the way the courses were run, it didn't find special treatment for athletes [Inside Higher Ed, Nov. 6, 2006, <http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/11/06/qt>].

The finding of the Auburn panel should come as no surprise. Athletic Support (Eligibility) Center staff need only work with compliant school administrators and faculty to assure that these courses are open to all students and that there is no evidence that athletes are given special treatment. So, everybody gets an A and it's all 'legal.'

Sadly, this kind of academic corruption is not limited to Auburn. Nonetheless, it provides a salient example of why there will never be meaningful reform in big-time college sports without disclosure that can illuminate this and other clever forms of academic corruption that are employed to obtain and maintain eligibility for athletes pretending to be students. This kind of disclosure may very well be forced upon the NCAA and its member schools by congressional action. For more, go to URL <http://thedrakegroup.org/splittessays.html>.

Frank G. Splitt, Member at The Drake Group, at 10:25 am EST on November 7, 2006

DAILY HERALD

Fence Post

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Time to reform NCAA athletics

Given the enormous broadcasting revenues at stake, the NCAA faces a conflict between its sometimes-contradictory roles as promoter and governor of intercollegiate athletics.

The NCAA cartel is incapable of reforming itself. And who is going to reform the tax law that benefits sports-crazed multimillionaire donors, many of whom are influential trustees who use their school's athletic programs as playthings?

I believe that NCAA President Myles Brand is 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 NCAA uses Brand to tout their phony "collegiate" (as opposed to professional) athletics model, the oxymoronic "student athlete," and lofty-sounding academic reform measures.

The latter are not only superficial, but also apparently designed to cover-up 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.

For sure, the NCAA has not provided Brand with a mandate and the means to affect really serious reform, that is, empowered him to emulate the actions taken by Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis to cleanup MLB in 1919.

Furthermore, Brand has been used by the NCAA cartel to dismiss the commonsense proposals of reform-minded individuals and organizations as "extreme" or "radical."

But why?

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.

Our only hope for significant reform in big-time college sports is via government intervention – beginning with the congressional action described by George Will in his Oct. 25, column "Time to question tax-exempt status of college football factories."

Frank G. Splitt
Mt. Prospect

The following appeared as a comment on Doug Lederman's Nov. 14 Inside Higher Ed column, "Putting the 'Lame' in Lame Duck Session," URL <http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/11/14/congress>.

Congress needs to keep up the heat on the NCAA

As readers have likely surmised from my essays and commentaries, <http://thedorakgroup.org/splittessays.html>, I believe meaningful reform in big-time college athletics will have a positive impact on America's long-term domestic as well as international economic outlook. Therefore, it should be a bipartisan issue, particularly with regard to the broad legislation designed to strengthen American competitiveness, see URL <http://insidehighered.com/news/2006/10/11/compete>.

It would be sad to see the House Committee on Ways & Means effort be abandoned or given a low priority. Chairman Thomas' questions in his Oct. 2 letter to NCAA President Myles Brand deserve truthful answers — that is to say, not the usual NCAA PR blather about their phony "collegiate" (as opposed to professional) athletics model, the oxymoronic "student athlete," and lofty-sounding academic reform measures that are ineffective to say the least. This past Sunday's editorial in the Boston Herald, "Time for Congress to quiz the NCAA," got to the heart of the matter, URL <http://news.bostonherald.com/edit...ew.bg?articleid=166842&srvc=home>.

The favorite questions of the Herald's editorial staff were: "Are the NCAA's member institutions accepting athletes who would not otherwise be admitted but for their athletic prowess?" and "What actions has the NCAA taken to assess the substance of the courses athletes are taking, and, more generally, the quality of the education athletes receive?"

The NCAA's answers will throw some light on the phenomenon of students getting course credit for making the team, or, even without class attendance. These are but two of the many examples of academic fraud utilized by America's football and basketball factories 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.

Their answers may also tell how the NCAA is able to verify the evidence of academic achievement of a school's athletes when it is in the vested self interest of the self-reporting schools to just plain cheat to remain eligible to play in the big money games with the best team they can get away with.

[Frank G. Splitt](#), Member at The Drake Group, at 2:25 pm EST on November 14, 2006