

## A Trojan Horse Assault on the Ivory Tower

By Frank G. Splitt

To be sure the financial crisis and turmoil on Wall Street, along with seized-up credit markets, shrinking endowments, and reductions in state funding, are literally shaking the financial foundation of higher education—described by Craig Karmin and John Hechinger in "Crisis Shakes the Foundations of the Ivory Tower," [*The Wall Street Journal*, p. A9, Oct. 17, 2008].

Not mentioned in the Karmin-Hechinger article is still another assault on this foundation—a stealthy byproduct of big-time college athletics programs. This Trojan-Horse-like assault comes in the form of debt incurred via enormous investments in football stadiums, basketball arenas, and academic (eligibility) centers for their athletes, all of which are part of the runaway athletic-facilities arms race.

With but few exceptions, America's colleges and universities are in the process of deteriorating while on their government subsidized quest for sports related revenue 'gifts'—compromising their integrity and warping their academic missions along the way..

There are no visible means to reverse what appears to be a downward spiral into a pervasive 'beer and circus' modus operandi at many of these schools. This scenario and its long-term, potentially catastrophic, consequences are either invisible to, or ignored by, the general public as well as those in the highest circles of the US Government.

Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) once said: "Big money, tax free, and no oversight have created a cesspool in too many cases." So, just who besides Senator Grassley understands the problem and is going to help address the related threat to the promise of higher education for the youth of America as well as squelch the corruptive influence of the college sports entertainment business on America's system of higher education?

*October 23, 2008*

NOTE: Comment was posted on 10/24/08 in response to the Karmin-Hechinger article at [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122420679058043423.html##articleTabs\\_comments%26articleTabs%3Dcomments](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122420679058043423.html##articleTabs_comments%26articleTabs%3Dcomments). It also appeared as a supplementary comment following the October 24, 2008 summary of the Karmin-Hechinger article on College Athletics Clips