

Report on the COIA 2014 Annual Meeting February 28 – March 2, University of South Florida

Executive Summary

This year's annual COIA meeting included five major topic sessions, followed by the Coalition's regular business meeting.

Academic integrity. Bob Malekoff, a member of the commission that investigated academic fraud at UNC, reflected on the lessons to draw from the case. Lack of clear accountability, or "ownership," in college sports, failure of faculties to take responsibility for monitoring faculty conduct, and lack of financial transparency in athletics are key problems that must be addressed.

NCAA restructuring. Jean Frankel, who is facilitating the NCAA D1 restructuring process, provided an overview of the goals and history of the restructuring process. Organizational goals include moving NCAA legislation from a constituency-based to a knowledge-based process, and clarifying accountability. A focus on basic questions of mission and governance principles has been added. The restructuring initiative was prompted by pressures from the Big 5 conferences for greater autonomy, itself a response to growing public pressure to professionalize some or all college sports. Discussion focused on the role that faculty should play in a restructured NCAA, including expanding faculty influence, both FARs elected senates representatives, since strong operational pressures for success on the field and revenue generation that shape athletics require strong faculty advocacy of academic values as essential to decision making in collegiate model.

Concussions. NCAA Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brian Hainline provided an overview of issues related to sports concussions and student-athlete health, and of essential features of concussion-related policies and management. Dr. Hainline analyzed in detail the preliminary findings of the COIA concussion survey. The results indicate that schools have generally instituted careful concussion-related protocols and have well informed policies in place. Areas with room for improvement include baseline testing instruments, coach education, and return-to-classroom protocols, suggesting ways to improve NCAA best practice guides.

Athletics finances. Amy Perko, Executive Director of the Knight Commission, presented data showing that athletics budgets were growing much faster than academic spending, on a per student/student-athlete basis. While enhanced media contracts allow a few programs to operate athletics programs in the black, almost all rely on subsidies from general funds and student fees. For a few conferences, media contracts will generate enormous new revenues in coming years, but schools seem already to have designated this money for enlarged athletics expenditures.

Antitrust issues. Allen Sack and Gerald Gurney of the Drake Group leadership presented a draft of the College Athlete Protection (CAP) Act, for which sponsors are being recruited in the US Senate. The Act would provide the NCAA with an antitrust exemption, and details a regime that would ensure future NCAA regulation in accord with the academic priorities of higher education. Discussion focused on the practicality of the Act's design.

COIA business session. Leadership for 2014-15 was confirmed. A plan to work on implementing the Coalition's faculty engagement blueprint on individual campuses was endorsed. A decision was made to undertake a study of current campus athletics governance practices, in partnership with the NCAA research division. A new mission statement for the Coalition was approved.