

RECLAIMING ACADEMIC PRIMACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF

**Working for Reform in
Intercollegiate Athletics and
Engineering Education**

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Northwestern University

Foreword by Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.
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The Drake Group has endorsed this publication and is serving as a sponsor. Their mission is to help faculty and staff defend academic integrity in the face of the burgeoning college sport industry.
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DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the memory of the late Arthur J. Schmitt, the inventive industrialist who founded the Amphenol Corporation in 1932 and the philanthropist who established the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation in 1941. Concerned that engineers were being too narrowly educated and that industrial leadership was going by default to those with backgrounds in general education, he became the educational innovator who founded the Fournier Institute of Technology in 1943. Mr. Schmitt's quest was for leadership. His aim was to provide effective industrial leadership via electrical engineers skilled not only in their profession, but in business administration and communications as well. His vehicle was education. Mr. Schmitt often paid tribute to America's engineering genius and cited the importance of engineers in America's future. He believed there was no field with richer rewards, none more intriguing, and none more important to the growth and defense of our nation. His mission continues through the work of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation



Arthur J. Schmitt

(Photo courtesy of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation)

For more on Arthur J. Schmitt, see Schaefer, Arthur J., *Quest for Leadership: The Arthur J. Schmitt Story*, Cathedral Publishing, Chicago, IL.

“Telling the truth about a given condition is absolutely requisite to any possibility of reforming it.”

– Barbara Tuchman

“Do not be contemptuous of that which you do not understand.... Just as a tall man will stoop to listen to a shorter person for whom he deeply cares, so I urge you to bend from the lofty perch of your own disciplines and to listen with high regard to disciplines not your own. If you are an engineer, listen to the artist; if you are a physicist, listen to the philosopher; if you are a logician, listen to the religionist; if you are in a position of power, listen, listen. We need to listen to one another if we are to make it through this age of permanent apocalypse and avoid the chaos of the crowd.”

– Chaim Potok

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FOREWORD

As University of Washington Emeritus Professor Irene Peden stated in her Foreword to the author's trilogy on engineering education reform, "In a changing environment and under pressure we do what we can to avoid being left behind or dealt out. We fall back where we can on the status quo to maintain our comfort zones. So it is with our professions and with undergraduate education reform." So too it is with reform in the domain of higher education occupied by intercollegiate athletics. Simply stated, abuses in intercollegiate athletics continue to threaten the very integrity of higher education; the stakes are already too high. Maintaining the status quo with business as usual is not a viable option.

Over the years our universities adapted to changing times and circumstances, evolving into today's research institutions and centers for athletics-based entertainment. There were consequences attendant to this evolution. The serious nature of the problems and threats posed to the university and its educational values by the commercialization and corruption of revenue-producing activities are well documented. Reports by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and books by Harvard Emeritus University President Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*, and University of Michigan President Emeritus Jim Duderstadt, *Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University: A University President's Perspective*, paint a bleak picture in this regard.

I recall that at the time when Duderstadt's book was first appearing in the fall of 2000, University of North Carolina President Emeritus Bill Friday and I as co-chairs, along with other members of the Knight Commission, decided to reconvene to assess what had happened to the reform movement we attempted to launch a decade earlier. Had the situation improved or worsened? Were there new problems that warranted attention? We asked Duderstadt to provide the members with advance copies of the book as well as testify at one of our first meetings to convey his concerns about the current state of intercollegiate athletics. His testimony was to the point and indeed illuminating but not the best of news. He said it was now essential that higher education go further and translate the Knight Commission's principles into strong actions that both reform and regain academic control of big-time college sports. I thanked him for expressing his concerns and for sharing his deep insights, as well as for providing a firm basis for the first draft of our forthcoming report (published in June 2001).

Today, some three years later, I remain concerned with the fact that increasing media-derived revenues and expanding research funding continue to dominate the thinking and decision making within the academic enterprise. They also continue to not only undermine the legitimate and proper role that intercollegiate athletics can play in college and university life, but compromise the integrity of undergraduate education as well. Supporting university infrastructure has also grown in a so-called arms race characterized by the seemingly incessant building of new and/or improved stadiums, arenas, and research facilities, requiring evermore funding. University presidents, administrators, and faculty have to spend much of their time and energy as fundraisers and managers. Without the media-derived revenues and federal funds on which most universities now depend, some athletic and academic units could not be sustained. Many have concluded that little can be done to rein in the arms race or to curb the rampant excesses of the market. As we stated in the 2001 Knight Commission Report: "Worse, some predict that failure to reform from within will lead to a collapse of the current intercollegiate athletics system."

This brief stems from the author's research on the present state of affairs in higher education reform movements and his work with Duderstadt and others to support the current faculty-driven and senate-based movement to reform intercollegiate athletics led by University of Oregon Professor Jim Earl, University of Indiana Professor Bob Eno, and Northwestern University Professor Carol Simpson Stern. The author focuses on intercollegiate athletics reform while illuminating parallels to undergraduate engineering education reform. He first provides a sense of current happenings, setting the stage for several observations. He goes on to provide a suggested plan for reform that addresses the long-standing problems that compromise the academic missions of our colleges and universities, focusing on the faculty initiatives that led to a proposed set of principles for the athletic programs conducted by their institutions.

I certainly agree with the author's view that: "recent common-cause efforts to align faculty-driven initiatives by the American Association of University Professors and the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, with those of the Association of Governing Boards, can help catalyze successful reform with the potential to ignite a remarkable revolution in intercollegiate athletics." My own experience indicates that bringing about really serious change in intercollegiate athletics will be very hard work indeed, requiring a well-focused investment of substantial time and energy by the faculty who choose to become involved.

As we noted in the 2001 Knight Commission Report, “on many campuses, faculty indifference prevails even when informed critics make their case.” Some dedicated faculty members are already overburdened as they invest considerable time and energy in teaching and research, as well as professional and other worthy activities. So it is quite encouraging to see the emergence of faculty with the will to act and what appears to be a robust faculty initiative.

In the end, the ability of the faculty movement’s leadership to motivate and sustain widespread faculty interest, as well as dedicate requisite time and energy to reform, will be critical to their success. So too it will be their ability to maintain a close working relationship with the Association of Governing Boards. Governing boards have the wherewithal to not only influence, but also provide guidance and support for beleaguered university and college presidents who will be the final key to successful reform.

Needless to say, this effort will not be for the faint of heart. Faculty members need to know that their time will be well spent with a reasonable expectation of success. Though they may not know it, for some it will be the most important work of their professional careers. Unfortunately, faculty work on reform will likely be the least recognized or rewarded by their universities.

As with his work on systemic engineering education reform, the author approaches the subject of reform in intercollegiate athletics with passion and with a spirit reminiscent of his early benefactor, the founder of the Fournier Institute of Technology and my good friend, the late Arthur J. Schmitt. He draws from his work on engineering education reform and his extensive personal experience with paradigm shifts and reform movements that addressed challenges in a wide variety of social and business contexts, arguing that much can be learned from the efforts of change agents in quite different areas.

The perspectives in this brief should prove to be of value as “grounding” material for all those taking on the formidable task of driving serious and comprehensive reform in intercollegiate athletics requisite to preserving its role in the academic enterprise. It is a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on reform efforts in higher education ... most worthy of widespread distribution, as well as serious attention and discussion by all those involved, or, that ought to be involved in higher education reform movements.

Like the Knight Commission Reports, this brief serves as a clarion call to university presidents, trustees, administrators and faculties. It should help to not only enhance their collective awareness, but stimulate debate, and prompt a more determined search for workable solutions and collaborative action as well. It is my fervent hope that readers will go further and ultimately become involved with facets of the reform movement that lie within their respective spheres of influence. As we stated in the 2001 Knight Commission Report: “Change will come, sanity will be restored, only when the higher education community comes together to meet collectively the challenges its members face.”

Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.

President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame, Indiana

December 2, 2003

COMMENTARIES

“Let me first say that I am very impressed with the author’s efforts in responding to this crisis in higher education. The corporate model of governance adopted by most institutions in the age of political assessment and bottom-line accounting has damaged America’s colleges and universities in almost all areas—outsourced research agendas, curriculum development, general education requirements, as well as the integrity of a college degree. How to return academic authority to the faculty is a problem, and I commend the author and the COIA for their efforts in that matter. Perhaps that is why I strongly urge all academics to read this brief. Most importantly, we need to awaken and engage those who understand the dire consequences for our culture of letting higher education be corrupted by corporate motives. For true reform to occur, faculties need to take the academic authority away from the NCAA as well as from the captains of industry, the many big-money donors, and boosters that populate most Boards of Trustees.”

—**Linda Bensel-Meyers**, Director, The Drake Group, Professor of English, The University of Denver

“Intercollegiate athletics, as currently practiced by many universities, compromise admissions standards, weaken the curriculum, and threaten other essential academic values. Neither coaches nor athletic directors, nor presidents, nor trustees can bring about real reform without help. Faculty members have the most at stake in upholding academic values; they represent the best hope of achieving genuine progress in making the kinds of changes required. As a result, I warmly endorse the arguments contained in this brief for involving faculty in a campaign for integrity in college sports.”

—**Derek C. Bok**, the 300th Anniversary University Professor and former President, Harvard University

“A Great Brief! I’m staggered at the complexity of the total problem. Frank Splitt does an excellent job of organization and explanation. After reading the entire document, I believe that achieving the stated goals would not only be a boon to colleges and universities in the long run, but would also provide a tremendous, and needed, national challenge to primary and secondary education. The challenge would be to improve the quality of their graduates, and in the process, enable many school districts to emerge from a morass of continued mediocrity. This is a must read for university trustees.”

—**Stanton R. Cook**, Retired Chairman, Tribune Company, Life Trustee, Northwestern University

“Theodore Hesburgh’s powerful foreword sets the stage for Frank Splitt’s thoughtful and provocative brief. They chart the perverse impacts on our universities as they ‘follow the money’ that flows from commercial pressures and opportunities and offer a call to arms for anyone concerned about the future of the academic world. If you want to know what is wrong with universities today and how to restore public trust in the scholarly world, read this brief.”

—**Devra Lee Davis**, Visiting Professor, The H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University, former Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Health and member of the Chemical Safety Hazard Investigation Board

“Frank Splitt’s brief on reform in higher education could not come at a more timely moment. The reform-pushing Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics reconvened yet again in late November to focus on the escalating assault of athletics on our academic institutions. I concur with Splitt that the current faculty-driven, senate-based, reform movement can ignite a remarkable revolution in intercollegiate athletics, challenging the mad rush of college sports over the cliff of commercialism. The brief ought to be high on the reading lists of university presidents, trustees, administrators, faculties, as well as students and their parents.”

—**James J. Duderstadt**, President Emeritus and University Professor of Science and Engineering, University of Michigan

“How can one begin anywhere except to compliment the author in the strongest and most sincere terms for the time, effort, and insight he brings to the issue. As one who shares his interest in the subject, I much appreciate his entry into the arena. Anyone serious about reform should refrain from using the term ‘student-athlete.’ Reform will come only when faculty apply to themselves what they so freely demand of others. In other words, reform must begin with truth-telling: Disclosure of the courses including the name of professor with course GPA that athletes take. No disclosure; no reform.”

—**Jon L. Ericson**, Ellis & Nelle Levitt Professor emeritus and former Provost at Drake University

“Every thoughtful sports fan knows that intercollegiate sports are in serious difficulty. The Knight Commission has led the effort to bring about major change and fundamental change has occurred. Much remains to be done and Frank Splitt’s Brief signals the role faculties must play. The challenge is great; I believe the faculties will respond.”

—**William C. Friday**, President Emeritus University of North Carolina, Chairman of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics

“Frank Splitt’s brief provides a refreshingly candid view of college sports as well as some hope for the future. I believe the smaller colleges tend to value academics over athletics and that to be a consistent winner in the big-time, revenue-producing sports of football and basketball requires that athletes put their sports first and academics second. Studies must be squeezed in even during the off-season when a large part of the athlete’s ‘education’ takes place in the weight room. Schools with high academic standards are at a real competitive disadvantage. Doing the right thing for their students usually costs a school the big money associated with the top bowl games and participation in ‘March Madness.’ With few exceptions, greater than fifty percent graduation rates will all but guarantee sitting out post-season play, or, post-season play by virtue of an athletic department that knows how to game the academic system. I also believe professional sports set a poor example for college athletes and that the laissez-faire policy of the NCAA allows the big money from commercial interests to buy out our colleges. The end result is colleges that strive to win at any cost. I hope the faculty can rise to Splitt’s challenge, and work with, or, if need be, without the NCAA to curb the abuses associated with college sports and get their colleges back on track.”

—**Russ Grundy**, Former Coach and Athletic Director, Newman High School, Wausau, Wisconsin

“Frank Splitt’s brief is a wake-up call for university faculty who truly care about undergraduate education. If we faculty think that the mindless expansionism of the research universities is somebody else’s business, then we deserve what we get. Splitt is correct to argue that gigantism and corruption in athletics goes hand in glove with gigantism and corruption in the educational process. The system of higher education is out of control. In their own way, the Ivies are just as badly impacted as the Big Twelve. Even well intended university reformist presidents have not been able to stop the trend to financial aggrandizement. Education is too important to be left to anyone other than educators. So faculty must rise up to demand reform of intercollegiate athletics, to reject the hypocrisy of the notion of ‘student-athletes,’ and to assert the primacy of undergraduate education. This is a battle we cannot afford to lose.”

—**Stanley N. Katz**, Professor, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, and President Emeritus, American Council of Learned Societies

“The most recent reincarnations of the original Knight Commission on collegiate athletics are evidence that hope continues to triumph over experience. For nearly twenty years, campus presidents, chancellors, and some trustees have not only fought abuse within the system but have also accepted more responsibility than in the past for oversight of the system—teams and coaches, athletic directors, boosters, and the indispensable vendors and sponsors. The welcome changes in oversight have not, however, reformed a bankrupt system; they have merely shortened several presidential tenures. It is time for other stakeholders to weigh in, if nothing else to give a hand to reform-minded presidents. Frank Splitt makes a strong case for faculty action in this arena. His proposed remedy to a long-standing and worsening problem in higher education is well worth trying. And why not? Nothing else thus far has worked.”

—**Clara Lovett**, President, American Association for Higher Education, president emerita of Northern Arizona University

“Frank Splitt provides the public and academics with a straight-speaking, well-referenced brief describing the ways in which universities are compromising their basic academic mission when they fail to adequately monitor sport and its place in their institutions. More important, he sets forth an agenda for faculty, telling them what they can do. Members of the academy should take the time to read the brief to discover what is happening all around them, become engaged, and go on to contribute to the restoration of academics to its rightful primacy in higher education. I plan on contributing to the promotion of the brief in my own voice and by distributing the publication to AAUP members, first at a January 2004, meeting of our standing Committee C on College and University Teaching, Research and Publications and then in June 2004 when the full membership meets.”

—**Carol Simpson Stern**, Professor, Northwestern University, Past president of the American Association of University Professors, Chair of the National AAUP Committee C

“Frank Splitt’s well-researched brief identifies clearly the distortion of institutional priorities and the threats to academic integrity that result from increasing commercialization and obsession with winning in ‘big-time’ college sports. The situation has developed gradually over the past 100+ years, and now its correction faces major obstacles, both financial and psychological, in particular, the dependence on revenues from football and men’s basketball to fund bonded indebtedness on expensive athletics facilities and to support the non-revenue producing sports, and the over-identification by too many alumni and other supporters of their own value with ‘their’ school’s athletic success. Can the situation be corrected? I believe it can, but with great difficulty. It will demand a long-term, coordinated effort by responsible faculty leaders, presidents, and governing board members who are willing to put aside personal advantage and work together to do what is right for their institutions and the educational enterprise. Frank Splitt has pointed us down the right path. Will we have the courage and perseverance to follow it?”

—**John W. Prados**, Vice President Emeritus and University Professor, The University of Tennessee, and former president, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology

“I believe strongly that trustees need to examine the impact that intercollegiate athletics is having on their colleges and universities, and whether existing programs fit with the values and mission of their institutions. The Association of Governing Boards is dedicated to educating its members about the complex issues of athletics reform, and Frank Splitt does a superb job of making the case for a faculty driven agenda. It will take the concerted efforts of engaged trustees, faculty and presidents to plan for and build a future where athletics fits properly into an academic world, and I am grateful to have this brief as part of the blueprint.”

—**John Walda**, Chairman, Association of Governing Boards

On the Beginning of the Faculty-Driven COIA Reform Movement

“There has been a lot of talk lately about skyrocketing expenditures in big-time college athletics. The ‘arms race’ has become an agenda item for almost any athletics oversight group. It also became an agenda item this year for faculties in the Pacific-10 Conference, and they took steps toward doing something about it.

Faculty concern at the University of Oregon about out-of-control spending in intercollegiate athletics picked up when the university announced an \$80 million expansion project for the football stadium last year. Eighty million? When the university has spent the last decade in the poorhouse? How could we possibly build skyboxes for corporate underwriters to watch football six times a year when academic budgets are skeletal, classrooms are in short supply and professors are fleeing for better pay? But, you’re thinking, the \$80 million is donated—it doesn’t come from academic budgets or the general fund—so what’s the problem?

Consider it from the faculty’s point of view. An athletics program that prospers while academic programs starve is a warning sign: a red flag, a flashing light, a clanging gong. We’re an institution of higher learning, after all, not an arm of the entertainment industry. Our mission statement makes no mention of sports or entertaining the community. Besides, read the fine print: The university has to borrow nearly \$20 million to start construction. That’s a mighty big mortgage to put your name on. Not to mention that the athletics department, for all its robust growth, still needs \$2 million annually from the general fund. To the faculty, that looks like a big red flag.

Ah, but you ask, doesn’t athletics bring the university lots of money? And doesn’t it make sense to court donors with skyboxes? The debate on those questions is complicated, but by and large the faculty are skeptical of both claims. First, all the money athletics makes goes to athletics. Second, nearly all athletics departments, for all their amazing power to draw donors and fans, run in the red. Third, no one has shown that donations to academic programs rise with the football budget. Until recently, universities didn’t worry about such things, but a decade of declining state allocations sent us seeking money elsewhere—from private donors, corporate tie-ins and big-time sports. It’s a dangerous new game, and the nature of the university is at stake. Just look what ceaseless fund-raising has done to politics. It’s hard to hold on to your ideals when you’ve got both your hands out.

College sports are now big business, a growth industry. It feeds on ever-greater sums of money. Everyone involved, including the athletics department, admits that spending is out of control. Competition for players and coaches is so fierce and the stakes are so high that our athletics budget almost tripled in the last 10 years, from \$12 million to \$32 million. But, you ask, it paid off, didn’t it? The football team was so successful last year, one morning the faculty woke up to read in the paper that the coach’s salary was renegotiated to \$1 million annually. There’s an example of out-of-control spending. Another is our beautiful new \$16 million indoor practice facility: now schools around the Pac-10 want to build one too, to keep up with the Joneses.

From the fan’s point of view, of course, bigger is better. There’s no such thing as too much. But the owner (the owners in this case being institutions of higher learning, most of them public, most in financial distress) has to ask, Where will it end? How big is too big? And what happens when the winning streak ends, attendance drops off and donors fade? Who pays the mortgage then? Did you know that here and across the country, student attendance at the games has been dropping steadily? That’s good for business, actually, because we can charge the public a lot more for the same seats – and money’s the name of the game now. So much for school spirit.

From the faculty’s point of view, it’s beginning to look like our ever-deepening investment in sports may be sapping our ideals, our energy and our money, and encroaching on the educational mission.”

James Earl, University of Oregon

Excerpted from: *Faculty voice – Profit quest not worth sacrifice of education*

The NCAA News, June 18, 2001, <http://www.ncaa.org/news/2001/20010702/comment.html>

RECLAIMING ACADEMIC PRIMACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A BRIEF

Working for Reform in Intercollegiate Athletics and Engineering Education

ABSTRACT

It is widely recognized that there has been increasing commercialization, professionalization, and corruption of intercollegiate athletics, and that many efforts to reform and de-emphasize the big-time, TV-media sports have been largely ineffective. As difficult as it may be, it would seem that much more could be done than has been done in the past. But, just who is going to do the doing? Few contemporary university presidents have the capacity, the will, or the appetite to lead a serious reform movement. Also, coaches and their staffs, athletic directors and administrators, and related organizations such as the NCAA, have much to lose with comprehensive reform as do a multitude of derivative business employees who make their living in this domain.

The barriers to change can only be surmounted by the direct involvement of faculty who have been provided with both the responsibility and the status to protect the academic values of the university and the integrity of its education program. Faculties now have the necessary power and relevant guidelines in the form of principles and recommended practices; however, these are not sufficient for success. As with engineering education reform, a holistic approach executed with passion, perseverance, patience, timing, and momentum building will be critical in the long run. Unfortunately, there is likely a widespread perception among faculty that things are okay the way they are—why should they become involved when they have so little free time and working for change will yield little more than the psychic income associated with doing the “right thing” at great personal costs.

An alignment of common-cause, faculty-driven initiatives by the American Association of University Professors, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, and the Drake Group, with those of the Association of Governing Boards for Universities and Colleges as well as with other like-minded organizations, is seen as a strategic initiative that can help catalyze successful reform—having the potential to ignite a remarkable revolution in intercollegiate athletics. Building strength in numbers via compelling arguments and massive networking can build momentum—facilitating substantial change. In the end, strong transformational faculty leadership needs to be developed and exercised to assure a sustainable effort against the daunting and sometimes devious efforts to maintain the status quo.

I. BACKGROUND

On May 10, my wife Judy and I attended Northwestern University’s Waa-Mu 2003 Show, “This Just In”—a musical created around the idea of breaking news. How ironic it was to receive “this just in” news the next day concerning the epilogue to what was then the upcoming paperback edition of Jim Duderstadt’s book, *Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University: A University President’s Perspective* [1], hereafter referred to as the Epilogue. Duderstadt, President Emeritus and University Professor of Science and Engineering at the University of Michigan, wrote the Epilogue with the aim of updating readers on the progress of reform since the original publication of the book in 2000.

Some months earlier I found that the hardcover book provided a penetrating analysis of the ills besetting Intercollegiate Athletics from his unique perspective. I was especially impressed since Duderstadt was also the author of the visionary book, *A University for the 21st Century* [2] that I had been recommending as a “must read” in my writings and talks on systemic engineering education reform. By virtue of his preeminent background and experience he is now serving as the “tip of the spear”—breaking a path that can be walked by the present and next generation of reformers in multiple domains of higher education as well as our nation’s knowledge infrastructure

The Epilogue’s header took the form of the following quote from Thomas Paine’s “*Common Sense*” ... a quote from 1776 that applies equally well today to writings on reform in engineering education as well as college sports: “Perhaps the sentiments contained in these pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favour; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.”

Over the years, efforts to reform and de-emphasize college sports have been largely ineffective. For example, a 1929 report by the Carnegie Foundation found serious fault with college football—generating debate but no significant progress to reform or control college sports [1]. A colleague recalls reading that in the 1930s, the NCAA commissioned a blue-ribbon panel to recommend ways to stop college athletics abuses. The panel, headed by the famous sportswriter Grantland Rice, came up with a simple recommendation – stop charging admission! And that was long before the advent of the really big money from television and product endorsements, today’s unprecedented series of scandals and threats of law suits, as well as meetings of university presidents, legal infighting, and Congressional scrutiny aimed at resolving dollar-pie-slicing issues under the guise of reform.

More recently, the Knight Commission and the Drake Group [3] have urgently portrayed the threat to American higher education posed by the ever-increasing commercialization and corruption of big-time college sports. The Knight Commission had this to say in its 2001 report [4]: “After digesting the extensive testimony offered over some six months, the Commission is forced to reiterate its earlier conclusion that at their worst, big-time college athletics appear to have lost their bearings. Athletics continue to threaten to overwhelm the universities in whose name they were established. Indeed, we must report that the threat has grown rather than diminished.”

Yet big-time, TV-media college sports are apparently still operating unabated on the flimsy fictions that all athletes come to college to earn degrees, that all athletes are students first—amateurs participating for love of the game—and that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulates college sports to make this really happen. Linda Bensel-Meyers, the president of the Drake Group, says: “There are reform movements, mostly trying to work through the system in different ways. All of them come up against the endemic problem: the values of a commercialized and professionalized playing field, not the values of the university, have become dominant. They become our national values. Might makes right. Scapegoat women. Win at any cost” [5]. The truth is that sports rule in a world of delusions where many university administrations are in denial with some even worse, while the public and many others would just as soon look the other way. All of this is a far cry from Duderstadt’s vision of universities for the 21st Century and further yet from John Cardinal Newman’s expressed idea of a university [6]. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask: Just where are we now, what can be done, and how much time will it really take to bring about serious and comprehensive reform?

This brief begins a response to these questions via a chronicle of some recent activities stemming from related stories in the press and on the Internet. The aim is to provide a sense of current happenings and to set the stage for additional thoughts and observations—including a suggested game plan for reform that addresses the long-standing problems that not only compromise the academic missions our colleges and universities but undermine the contributions athletics can make to academic life as well. Certainly, Duderstadt’s Epilogue, and hopefully the perspectives in this brief, will prove to be of value as “grounding” material for all those taking on the formidable task of driving serious and comprehensive reform in intercollegiate athletics.

“In the history of the peace, civil rights, environmental and women’s movements, there was a similar period of many different groups with different names and agendas starting out with a network of meetings and the sharing of interpretations of problematic situations” —Rob Benford [5]

II. PARALLELS IN REFORM

The Epilogue re-illuminated the striking parallels between Duderstadt’s effort to reform intercollegiate athletics and the Systemic Engineering Education Reform Campaign (a.k.a. the SEER Campaign) described in Appendix 1. The Duderstadt “connection” stems from the fact that the SEER Campaign is part of his larger ‘campaign’ to reform/transform our nation’s higher education enterprise with an aim to make it relevant to the needs of the 21st Century. These campaigns are informal—by and large, loosely coupled, like-minded organizations and individuals united by the force of compelling arguments for change and a common “enemy”—money that colleges and universities can’t, or, won’t give up.

Like the intercollegiate college athletics reform movement(s), one of the chief obstacles to the undergraduate engineering education reform movement is money. There is an apparent addiction to the huge amounts of money that come via the media on the one hand and by the federal government as well as corporations on the other. In his recent book, *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education* [7], Derek Bok illuminates the extent to which universities have succumbed to commercial pressures in both athletics and research, while Stanley N. Katz not only questions what some of today’s universities are about in

his article, *“The Pathbreaking, Fractionalized, Uncertain World of Knowledge”* [8], but also has something to say about money-driven mission warp at our nation’s universities.

Most major universities have been engaged in an academic arms race and now have the equivalent of athletics facilities of professional-caliber in their expensive “research stadia”—housing facilities dedicated to advanced research in the hot areas in medicine, science and technology. Multimillion-dollar grants are given to universities by biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies on a regular basis [9]. Similarly, there is competition for big-name researchers and corporate sponsorship. The debt service on related revenue bonds must be paid by revenues that are mostly generated from government-funded research, state allocations, revenue campaigns, alumni giving, or, come out of educational funds. It’s all about money—thinly veiled with cloaks of progress and reform.

III. SOME PERSPECTIVES ON RECENT ACTIVITIES

A. The ‘Beowulf’ Scholar

In late May, the *Chicago Tribune* published a *Tempo Section* article *“The ‘Beowulf’ scholar vs Big-time college sports”* [10], written by staff reporter Robert K. Elder, concerning the work of University of Oregon professor Jim Earl on intercollegiate athletics reform. Earl’s aims are: first to support academic reform among student athletes and develop a greater integration of the academic and athletic sides of college life, and second, to halt what he calls an “arms race” in collegiate sports—the trend of colleges to build bigger, more expensive facilities and stadiums to compete for coaches, players and corporate sponsorship. As discussed in Section V. B, what Earl began, as faculty senate president at the University of Oregon, has become a national movement; see the box on page x for a related background comment. The movement includes the faculty Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), and the NCAA. Earl credits University of Indiana professor Bob Eno for follow-up on his initial efforts to engineer the tri-partite alliance between the AAUP, the AGB, and the NCAA. This movement, when combined with the earlier, and still ongoing efforts of the like-minded Drake Group, would portend the coalescing of a powerful faculty-driven force for reform.

An earlier report, in Sam Walker’s *WSJ On Sports* column [11], on the positive actions taken by university presidents Gregory Geoffroy (Iowa State) and Mary Sue Coleman (University of Michigan), provided evidence of a new breed of leadership. These actions, coupled with Elder’s *Tribune* article and several other press pieces [12-15], led to an affirming discussion with Duderstadt that triggered further writing on the subject of reform—tapping into my experience with the SEER Campaign.

B. The NCAA study: “The Effects of College Athletics”

The August 14, *USA TODAY* headline screamed, *“College sports: Bigger isn’t better,”*—focusing on a new study by the NCAA, *“The Effects of College Athletics.”* The study says that college sports really don’t do much better than break-even moneywise. Put another way, there is apparently no justification for the arms race in college sports—colleges need all the athletic related income they can get just to cover athletic related expenses. However, it was Steve Wieberg’s *IN FOCUS* column [16] that teed up a point for the following (unpublished) comment [17]:

In his *IN FOCUS* column, *“Big spending no guarantee of big revenue, but sports no drain on schools,”* 8/14/03, Steve Wieberg reported on the new NCAA study, *“The Effects of College Athletics.”* Although he illuminates the fact that the study lacks vital information on capital (building) projects, no mention is made of the significant costs to our universities and their students attributable to “draining” intangibles. For example, the degradation of the university’s integrity and warping of its mission as an academic enterprise by the underlying culture of commercial entertainment, the damage done to the reputation of a university by scandals and revelations of corruption, and the lost opportunity costs associated with related administrative/faculty distractions and the drain on capital budgets.

Although the NCAA study may be “the most comprehensive examination of the issue to date,” it is but a small first step. Over the years, efforts to reform and de-emphasize the big-time, TV-media sports, NCAA Division I-A college football and basketball, have been largely ineffective. Unless and until truly comprehensive studies are performed by our universities will they have a basis for saying sports are no drain on their schools and go on as they are, or, find that the drain is intolerable in light of the role of their university as an institution serving a knowledge-driven society—and change.

Curtis Eichelberger focused on the growing use of endowments to address the financial imperative in college sports, where athletic departments face the rapidly rising costs of fielding athletic teams and paying athletes’ expenses—spending as much as \$12 million

a year for scholarships alone [18]. According to Eichelberger, endowments are now seen as the best guarantee for a sports program's survival and, moreover, athletic programs with the biggest endowments will eventually gain a competitive advantage on the field. He quotes John Montgomery, a University of North Carolina booster club president as saying: "It's easier to raise money for football fields and basketball arenas, because people show up Saturday and the band is playing and fans are pouring in and it's exciting, but in the future endowments are going to become a priority for everyone. It's the only way to stem the rising costs." The salient question is: What is the drain on the university's academic endowment as the athletic department taps into wealthy donors, loyal sports fans and ex-athletes to grow their own endowment? This leads one to ask a more fundamental question: Are our colleges and universities here for athletics-based entertainment and minor-league training for the NFL and NBA, or, for increasing our knowledge of the world and finding answers to its most pressing problems? One need only follow the money to see what donors value most.

C. Presidential Coalition for Athletics Reform (PCAR)

In early September 2003, a *Chicago Tribune* commentary and news article [19, 20] focused attention on the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) and the competition for big money. In a related commentary, sent to Dan McGrath, Associate Managing Editor at the *Chicago Tribune* [21], I said the fact that the 63 BCS schools shared in a \$104 million BCS-bowl pot, while the non-BCS schools shared only \$5 million, was the likely basis for a teleconference this past July, hosted by Scott Cowan, president of Tulane University and a leading critic of the BCS system. Thirty-six Division I-A presidents and chancellors—the so-called Presidential Coalition for Athletics Reform (PCAR)—were joined in the teleconference by NCAA President Myles Brand and representatives of the Knight Commission. The aims of the teleconference were to seek: 1) Greater access and equity in college football's post-season play, 2) Higher academic standards for student-athletes, and 3) Lower operating costs for intercollegiate athletics. The key point to my commentary relating to the PCAR effort is that this "reform" ought to be compared to more specific reform ideas, e.g., those listed by Duderstadt [1, p.322]:

- 1) Elimination of freshman eligibility for varsity competition,
- 2) Replacement of "athletic scholarships" ("pay for play") by need-based financial aid,
- 3) Mainstreaming of coaching compensation and employment policies,
- 4) Establishment of firm faculty control over all aspects affecting academic integrity such the admission of student-athletes,
- 5) Assessment of student progress toward degree, and
- 6) Constraining of student participation and competitive schedules to a single academic term.

Really serious work by PCAR, aimed at higher academic standards for student-athletes, would embrace Duderstadt Items 1, 4, 5 and 6 while similar work to achieve a significant lowering of operating costs for intercollegiate athletics would embrace his Items 2, 3, and 6. However, one is left to wonder about the relevance of PCAR's first-listed aim—involving greater access and equity in college football's BCS related post-season play—to the fundamental academic mission of their universities. In an interview with USA Reporters and editors prior to his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on October 29, 2003, Cowan, who favors a playoff system, said he's not swayed by objections he's heard to that format [22]. He also said the notion that a playoff might place undue demands on student-athletes is unconvincing because "basketball is already more intrusive than football" and he's not impressed by worries that a playoff might make college football seem too much like the pros: "I don't think anything could be more commercialized than what we have right now." In a follow-up meeting on November 16, the non-BCS presidents suggested a short postseason playoff to replace the single title game [23]. It would seem that Whitley had it right: "The non-BCS schools are wrapping this movement in "reform," a buzz word for returning academic priorities to football factories" [19].

IV. A PERSPECTIVE ON REFORM

The non-BCS PCAR effort brought to mind a September 13, *New York Times* article, "*Overseers Missed Big Picture as Failures Led to Blackout,*"—an anatomy of a disaster. Although the article was of interest in its own right, it could also be likened to an ultra-high-speed version of a story about what is happening to higher education in America vis-à-vis the debilitating effects of university addiction and abuses related to the huge amounts of money associated with intercollegiate athletics and government (federal and state) supported research, particularly re: undergraduate engineering education.

To illustrate the seemingly unbounded nature of the problem in college sports, we need only note that:

- 1) Graduation rates at Division 1 football and basketball schools are still shamefully low [24];
- 2) The Baylor University Board of Regents had just voted retain their president, notwithstanding the urging of five (of 36) regents and faculty members to oust him via a no-confidence vote based on his questionable leadership after the fatal incident involving players in their basketball program and the subsequent disclosure of major NCAA violations;
- 3) Baylor, the world's largest Baptist university, now shaken by scandal, is not alone as Ohio State was contending with a federal complaint against them by a suspended running back—asking for a \$2.5 million fine, Fresno State begins four years of probation for violations including academic fraud, and Penn State has to deal with a mounting number of off-field arrests and incidents involving members of the football team;
- 4) *WSJ* Sports Editor Sam Walker revealed a return to an end-around play in his September 12, column, “*The Last Days of Juco*”—describing the increase in “juco” (junior college) transfers to powerhouse football programs. Walker states that “the majority of junior college transfers are football mercenaries who don't graduate.” This, despite all the talk of academic reform in college sports;
- 5) Meanwhile some parents are pondering the trickle-down effect: at Rainier High School in Washington where a lavish welcome was provided for their new volunteer football coach, a fired University of Washington football coach, and at Detroit's Butzel Middle School where a controversial U.S. District Court sentencing of a former University of Michigan basketball player requires him to spend 150 hours in each of the next two years helping students with, among other academic pursuits, “living skills;”
- 6) On October 30, a Memphis businessman and Crimson Tide booster was indicted by a grand jury for allegedly paying \$150,000 to have a promising football player attend the University of Alabama—pleading innocent to charges, which include conspiracy, crossing state lines to commit racketeering and arranging bank withdrawals to cover up a crime. His co-conspirator has pleaded guilty and is currently awaiting sentencing;
- 7) Lastly, on November 4, the *Indianapolis Star* announced: “Tonight's Mid-American Conference game between No. 20 Bowling Green and Miami (Ohio) will mark the start of five consecutive days of televised college games.” It also reported that the Knight Commission would examine the situation.

“I was both steaming and laughing to myself after flipping on the TV last night, a Thursday night close to 11 Eastern Time. The Maryland-Virginia football game was just concluding on ESPN, the St. John's-Marquette basketball game from Madison Square Garden was not yet at half-time on another ESPN station, while the Murray State-Tennessee Martin football game was a couple minutes into the fourth quarter on a regional FOX affiliate. Damn, for the life of me I couldn't find a pro game anywhere at this hour—but plenty of sports from college campuses.”—Mike Fish, Senior Writer, Sports Illustrated (SI.com), personal communication, November 14, 2003.

One is left to wonder: How bad does it have to get before a really serious effort is made to reform American Universities? And: Have the problems been allowed to increase to the point where substantial remedies are no longer possible? In their landmark empirical study, *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*, James Schulman and William Bowen presented findings concerning the admission gaps and growing academic underperformance among athletes at Division III schools—tearing away the myths shrouding selective colleges and universities [25]. In the preface to the paperback edition, the authors responded to a critic, who liked the book but hated their “tepid” suggestions for reform, by saying: “Time will tell whether he, and others who feel that the system is so badly broken that there is no way to fix it are prescient.”

Niccolo Machiavelli had something to say about the difficulties resulting from these situations: “By making provisions in advance, princes may easily avoid such difficulties; but if they wait until they are near at hand, the medicine will not be in time, for by then the malady will have become incurable. In this matter the situation is the same as the physicians report concerning hectic fever: in the beginning the disease is easy to cure but hard to diagnose; with the passage of time, having gone unrecognized and unmedicated, it becomes easy to diagnose but hard to cure. So it is with a state: when ills are recognized in advance (and only the prudent can do this) they are quickly cured. But when, having gone unrecognized, they are allowed to increase until everyone may recognize them, then remedy is no longer possible” [26].

V. WHAT TO DO ABOUT REFORM

A. Working in the Real World of Reform

Although the recent NCAA study, “The Effects of College Athletics,” may be the most comprehensive examination of the issue to date, it is but a small first step. A few of the remarks I made to the reform-minded attendees of the NSF Engineering Education Coalitions Conference this past March seem apropos to NCAA reform efforts of late. The remarks were spun-off a quote from John Mitchell: “Watch what we do, not what we say.” The variant was: “Listen to what is said, but watch what is done and not done.” An example from the SEER Campaign: Engineering school deans, faculty, and administrators who oppose change could be unwittingly undermining the long-term viability of their engineering schools in the engineering education marketplace. Nevertheless, behind-the-scenes opposition to change came from some of those ostensibly advocating and/or supporting change—not surprising, since most people ultimately act in accordance with what they see as their near-term, vested self-interest.

Duderstadt suggests that “working through athletic organizations such as the NCAA, the conferences, or the athletic departments is futile since these are led or influenced by those who have the most to gain from the further commercialization of college sports” [1]. It is his belief that we would never achieve true reform or control through these organizations, since the foxes are in firm control of the hen house. He also says university presidents are trapped between a rock and a hard place: “between a public demanding high quality entertainment from the commercial college sports industry they are paying for, and governing boards who have the capacity (and all too frequently the inclination) to fire presidents who rock the university boat too strenuously.” He went on to say: “It should be clear that few contemporary university presidents have the capacity, the will, or the appetite to lead a true reform movement in college sports.”

But there can be exceptions – Vanderbilt University for one. In his September 9, announcement concerning the restructuring of the school’s athletics program, Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordon Gee said: “For too long, college athletics has been segregated from the core mission of the University. As a result, we have created a culture, both on this campus and nationally, that is disconnected from our students, faculty and other constituents, where responsibility is diffuse, the potential for abuse considerable and the costs—both financial and academic—unsustainable. Nothing short of a revolution will stop what has become a crisis of conscience and integrity for colleges and universities in this country. Let there be no misunderstanding of our intention: Vanderbilt is committed to competing at the highest levels in the Southeastern Conference and the NCAA, but we intend on competing consistent with the values of a world-class university” [27].

Bob Verdi, illuminated the problem with some very strong words in a *Chicago Tribune* commentary [28] – saying: “what’s sad is that Ohio State and the NCAA and all those other mopes in the intercollegiate sports sewer system think we are so stupid ... if the people who run Ohio State ... really cared about doing what’s right, they would forfeit their championship.” He goes on to say: “Once upon a time, after he became famous for roughing up Bob Knight at Indiana, Myles Brand got the big job in the NCAA. But his sick little domain is not having a banner year. Georgia, St. Bonaventure and Fresno State got nailed in basketball. Dave Bliss, a cur of a coach at Baylor, tried to portray a murdered player, Patrick Dennehy, as a drug salesman. Then there was Larry Eustachy and now there is Maurice Clarett. This stuff would never have happened if Myles Brand were still alive.”

“Higher education must draw together all of its strengths and assets to reassert the primary of the educational mission of the academy. The message that all parts of the higher education community must proclaim is emphatic: Together, we created today’s disgraceful environment. Only by acting together can we clean it up.” —The Knight Commission [4]

Although Verdi would appear to be overly harsh with respect to Brand and the NCAA, he certainly makes the point while reflecting deep cynicism concerning Brand’s getting the “big job” at the NCAA after he fired Bobby Knight when he was serving as the president of Indiana University. The choice of Brand, the first university president to lead the NCAA, appears to say it wants to put academics ahead of athletics. Only time will tell if he will be allowed to affect stringent reform measures with very sharp teeth, or, really do nothing more than nibble at the margins while avoiding core problems—picking the low-hanging fruit, e.g., the over three dozen Division I schools that have not graduated a single men’s basketball player in five years. Two core problems that undermine reform are the huge financial incentives to maintain the status quo and the “legally-concealed” academic performance of athletes.

Eloquent and forceful rhetoric about the urgency of change by Brand and other well known spokespersons can easily lead to a sense of security even though meaningful action is not or will not be taken by these folks to affect significant change. As university presidents John L. Hennessy of Stanford and Nannerl O. Keohane of Duke have said: “Given the enormous broadcasting revenues at stake, moreover, the NCAA faces a conflict between its sometimes-contradictory roles as promoter and governor of intercollegiate athletics” [29], Appendix 2. Also, Cedric Dempsey, Brand’s predecessor, has said, the NCAA “has regulated itself into paralysis” [4, p. 24]. Now by all accounts, Brand is a sincere person of high integrity with the best of intentions and an understanding of the perilous future faced by college sports unwilling to undergo serious reform. However, it is doubtful that the NCAA has provided him with a mandate and the means to affect really serious reform, that is, empowered him to emulate Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Landis, baseball’s first commissioner, took control of major league baseball when its integrity was in question—restoring integrity by banning eight members of the 1919 Chicago Black Sox.

B. Faculty-Driven Reform

Strong transformational faculty leadership needs to be developed and exercised to assure a sustainable effort against the daunting and sometimes devious efforts to maintain the status quo. The academic interests of higher education rather than the commercial values of the entertainment industry would characterize this faculty effort. The good news is that such efforts are already underway. The years 1999 and 2000 saw the formation of the Drake Group [3] with its mission of helping faculty and staffs defend academic integrity in the face of the burgeoning college-sport industry. Jon Ericson, the founder of the Drake Group is an emeritus professor and former provost at Drake University. He believes that disclosure is the key to reform—contending that revealing athletes’ test scores, grades and courses—kept hidden through federal privacy statutes—can change the closed society of college sports. The Drake Group works to support faculty whose job security is threatened for defending academic standards, disseminates information on current issues and controversies in sports and higher education, and seeks to form coalitions with other groups that share its mission and goals. It also lobbies for proposals that insure quality education for college athletes. Allen Sack, a sociology professor at the University of New Haven, summed up the Group’s mission this way: “Our role is to dig in our heels and take back our classrooms. We should have the same territoriality as coaches. Right now, we’re bending too much” [30].

The emergence of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) is seen as really good news. Numerous contacts with the leadership have proved to be most encouraging. Presently, the mantle of the COIA leadership has been taken up by Bob Eno and Jim Earl, now serving as the COIA Co-chairs, and Northwestern University professor Carol Simpson Stern, an AAUP past president who is currently serving as Chair of the National AAUP Committee C on College and University Teaching, Research and Publication. In October 2002 this committee published a set of principles and recommended practices titled, “*The Faculty Role in the Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics*,” that covered Faculty Governance, Admissions and Financial Aid, Academic Services and Support Services, and Finances [31].

As mentioned previously, the COIA is a faculty group advocating for reform in intercollegiate athletics—formed in 2002 as a consequence of Earl’s initial efforts at the University of Oregon. It is comprised of faculty leaders from over fifty Division I-A schools in Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conferences, including the Atlantic Coast Conference, the Big-12, the Big East, the Big Ten, the Pac-10, and the Southeastern Conference. The COIA is representative of faculty senate leaders at conference schools and functions through a Steering Committee of thirteen members, nominated by faculty leaders in each conference.

The COIA works with the AAUP, the NCAA and the AGB, a national organization representing college and university trustees, to promote serious and comprehensive reform of intercollegiate sports. Their stated aim is to preserve and enhance the contributions athletics can make to academic life by addressing longstanding problems in college sports that undermine those contributions. A more detailed description of the Coalition’s goals is developed in a document titled “*Framework for Intercollegiate Athletics Reform*” (see Appendix 3). This document, hereafter referred to as the Framework, maps onto the AAUP’s document, “The Faculty Role in the Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics.” It spells out the central directions for reform in language designed to be flexible enough to allow for debate and local differences without weakening the drive for national consensus.

The COIA Steering Committee published the Framework document in August 2003. It has been proposed for adoption by faculty governance groups at schools involved in the Coalition. According to Earl [32], the Coalition’s short-term goal is to obtain agreement on clear, achievable, practical, enforceable and meaningful reforms starting with academic standards and governance practices—relying on well established faculty governance procedures—while the ultimate goal is to bring about comprehensive

reform—including adjustment of season length, and team size, cost-cutting, re-commitment to amateurism (particularly in revenue producing sports), and reduced dependence on commercial contracts by working with the AGB, NCAA and others.

Most recently, the COIA collaborated with the NCAA in the planning for the intercollegiate athletics focused 2003 AAUP Governance Conference that was held in Indianapolis October 9-11. The plenary addresses were given by Brand, Earl, Stern, and John Walda, AGB Chair, and chair of the tripartite alliance—delivering NCAA, AAUP, COIA, and AGB perspectives on Intercollegiate Athletics reform. Earl said that the COIA is “eager to see reform take place under NCAA leadership if possible” [32]. However, as time goes on, the AAUP, COIA, and the Drake Group leadership, as well as other proactive faculty, will likely feel the really heavy weight of their lances—risking burnout when they face the defensive efforts of the foxes (at the NCAA and elsewhere) and university presidents to minimize reform. The reform task is formidable and the related work is really not the faculty’s “day job”—faculties were certainly not hired to worry about college sports. Bob Bowsby, the athletic director at Iowa and the president of the NCAA Division I-A athletic directors has said: “those groups cannot manage the logistics of change; they don’t know what questions to ask. They can define parameters, but it will have to come back to faculty athletic representatives, university presidents and athletic administrators. We know where the bodies are buried” [33].

*“Sometimes, the knottiest dilemmas, when seen from the systems point of view, aren’t dilemmas at all. They are artifacts of ‘snapshot’ rather than ‘process’ thinking, and appear in a whole new light once you think consciously of change over time.” —Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline—The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization**

Furthermore, the faculty will have to cope with false friends and the foxes guarding the hen house. Salient examples of this problem can be seen in the questioning of the need for groups outside the NCAA to become involved in solving the problems in college sports by Joseph Castiglione, president of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics [34] and in close examination of Bryan Gruley’s investigative “case-study” report on the compromised effort to mount a serious drive to curb student alcohol abuse at Florida State University [35]. The faculty will also need to cope with their sports-crazed colleagues, alumni, boosters and other avid sports fans that are quick to forgive and forget popular athletes and coaches accused of serious crimes but will likely resent any intrusion into their entertainment venue. Consider the following mindset via an admittedly dated comment by a former California Superintendent of Schools: “Critics of college football are kooks, crumbums and commies—hairy, loud-mouthed beatniks. Football is war without killing . . . [and] football players possess a clear, bright, fighting spirit which is America itself” [36]. College sports are not only embedded in our national culture, but they seem to be hard-wired into our genetic structure as well—stemming from our pre-historic zest for the chase and kill as well as for the later-day winning of the “games” and the “prize.”

On the other hand, college sports is the day job for the coaches and their staffs, athletic directors and administrators, related associations, and a wide variety of derivative business employees who make their living in this domain, not to mention governors and state legislators anxious to please their devout-sports-fan constituents. Taken together, these folks comprise a large cohort of the potentially endangered species of foxes. These defenders have much to lose if their “empires” are downsized, while those working for change realize little more than the psychic income associated with doing the “right thing” at great costs in terms of personal time, vilification and the potential for retribution among other tribulations.

VI. A SUGGESTED GAME PLAN FOR REFORM

A. An Operating Strategy

As discussed, despite the difference between athletic and academic drivers, there are striking similarities in the barriers to be surmounted to bring about reform in intercollegiate athletics and in undergraduate engineering education. These similarities stem from their common university setting and the large amounts of money involved in each area. So, it would not be surprising to find similarities in approaches to solving related problems as well. Perhaps these would involve following the operating strategy for the SEER Campaign (see Appendix 1 for the background and approach to systemic engineering education reform), that is, employ massive networking via the Internet to accelerate diffusion of the idea of comprehensive reform in Intercollegiate Athletics. Widespread promulgation of the ideas related to reform should tip the diffusion process at this opportune time. The aim would be to move faculty and other stakeholders to awareness-to-understanding-to-commitment-to-action with the reform efforts of the AAUP, the COIA, and the Drake Group well served by support from the Knight Commission, the American

Association for Higher Education, the Association of American Universities, the National Institute for Sports Reform, and the American Council on Education.

For reform to be successful in the long run, a holistic process must be “engineered” ... a process involving education, relationship building, ongoing communications, and collaboration with other like-minded constituencies. Also, the Gordian-knot-like dilemma in college sports may best be cut with Occam’s Razor—a guiding principle that points in the direction of simple solutions that go to the core of the problem, usually with a high likelihood of being correct, more robust, and easier to enforce than (paralyzing) complex ones.

B. Working with the NCAA and the AGB

The NCAA and university governing boards appear to have been unwitting facilitators and major actors in what *WSJ* Sports Editor Sam Walker calls “the continuing absurdist drama of college sports” [11]. To paraphrase Roderick Chu, if the NCAA and university governing boards just keep on doing what they have always done, we will keep getting what we always got.

Faculty will likely find that working with the NCAA is akin to working with a double-edged sword. Robert Lipsyte illuminates the dilemma faced by reformers: “Without the NCAA, its supporters say, college sports would be Afghanistan. Its critics say the NCAA maintains a hypocritical system and that expecting reform from the NCAA is like waiting for the evildoers to voluntarily disarm” [5]. There are obvious benefits associated with the NCAA’s human, financial, and networking resources, as well as its national span of control. But, on the other hand, there is the risk of losing faculty control while providing academic cover for weak national-level reform and an abundance of material for associated NCAA public relations. However, the NCAA door should be left open as Brand could rise to the occasion and really press a serious “reform-or-else” agenda—confounding cynics by outwitting the “foxes” on (or who influence) the NCAA Executive Committee and/or the various boards and councils representing NCAA Governance. The NCAA will likely not want to risk the likely consequences associated with terminating such a well-known reformer—high heat from the press and congress as well as the loss of NCAA control inherent in a potential faculty fallback strategy based on strictly academic organizations.

For example, efforts to achieve substantial reform could proceed effectively if such efforts are directed and controlled solely through academic faculty-group organizations, such as the AAUP, the COIA, and the Drake Group, with the AGB in a supporting role. Overtime, these efforts would focus on upgrading academic admission, retention, and graduation standards at individual schools and conferences as well as on mechanisms for reporting the academic performance of athletes—thinking nationally but acting in local concert. These academic organizations can learn from the NCAA, but would not altogether rely on it to put a significant curb on the rampant money madness, corruption, and academic mission warp associated with today’s form of college sports.

Given all of the above, it would seem that the best strategy for a coalition of faculty groups re: working with the NCAA would be based on desired outcomes—avoiding the detailed mechanisms and logistics of change. First, the NCAA needs to be asked to walk the talk—to really do what it says it is going to do—getting it to specify the measurable action(s) it will take to ensure that:

- 1) Intercollegiate athletics serves as an integral part of the athlete’s undergraduate education;
- 2) The financial influences and ethical pressures associated with the economics of intercollegiate athletics are not allowed to influence the ideals, sense of community and public recognition of its member institutions;
- 3) Member institutions realize systemic academic and athletics integrity;
- 4) It will work to catalyze the successful institutional integration of intercollegiate athletics with the undergraduate experience—positioning the ideals of collegiate athletics as a positive force in our national culture;
- 5) It will work to maintain a proper balance between the pressure to win and the academic achievement of athletes;
- 6) The COIA Framework for Reform is reflected in a time-lined NCAA Plan of Action—including severe penalties for infractions, i.e., adequate to the task of attaining serious and comprehensive reform, and;
- 7) Rules and regulations are aggressively enforced with infractions/violations dealt with in a timely fashion.

The next step would be to provide oversight by designees of the faculty groups and the AGB to assure compliance. The ability of the faculty groups to work together will be key. Obviously, the devil will be in the details of any NCAA flesh-out of the COIA Framework for Reform. Reflection by all parties on the reform ideas outlined by Bok [7, Chapter 7], Duderstadt (see III C, page 4), Hennessy and Keohane [29], as well as in current NCAA Division-level reform legislative packages and proposals, would make

for a good start. Also, highly recommended is the sequel to *The Game of Life* [25] by William Bowen and Sarah Levin. Their book, *Reclaiming the Game*, provides a detailed reform agenda worthy of serious discussion and debate [37, pp. 243-316].

Like corporate board members, the role of university trustees has never been more crucial. The lead article, “*How to be a Good Director*,” by Carol Hymowitz [38] in the *Wall Street Journal Report on Corporate Governance*, offers guidance that is equally applicable in a university setting. What makes a good director? The answer to that question certainly involves being more informed, more skeptical and more independent. But Hymowitz goes on to question whether directors have the time required to do a good job—asking how can directors get all the information they need to understand a company’s core issues, and how can they review a company’s financial performance and assess strategy without taking on the jobs of executives?

“Although leadership is essential at the presidential level, it is also crucial for trustees, alumni, faculty, and athletic administrators to be proactive in pursuing new directions.”—William Bowen and Sarah Levin [37]

Bok, [7, Chapter 7], offers several pertinent suggestions in this area. For example, the AGB could be urged to undertake a program to educate trustees about the effects of intercollegiate athletics in conjunction with agreements on the part of NCAA divisions or individual athletic conferences to require presidents submit an annual report to their trustees detailing relevant facts on their athletic programs and their financial as well as academic impacts. The AGB could also be urged to have the presidents of Division I schools work within their respective conferences to reduce the financial incentive to corrupt the system and erode academic values by phasing in ways to share athletic revenues more equally. Ultimately it will be the presidents, working in collaboration with all stakeholders that will determine the extent to which reform in higher education can take place. Their faculty senates would be a good place to begin to dialogue on the COIA Framework document—discussing admission standards, academic performance oversight, recruitment, athletic scholarships, and the real financial costs of athletic programs.

C. Going Forward

An informal link between the reform movements in Intercollegiate Athletics and Engineering Education, represented by the AAUP/COIA/Drake Group and SEER efforts, should prove to be of value re: cross learning and sharing for continuous improvement of the reform process. My personal experience with paradigm shifts and reform movements in areas spanning religious, sociopolitical, and technological endeavors has taught me that you can learn much from the efforts of change agents in quite different areas than your own—sometimes in surprising ways. For example, in her book, *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution* [39], Devra Lee Davis tells how the connections between relatively low levels of pollutants and chronic health problems finally became the grounds for a significant change in the auto industry. Davis says: “What’s scandalous is how many years had to pass, how often the results had to be replicated; how stubbornly, consistently, and brazenly some in the industry fought against their acceptance; how easy it was to buy experts who would weigh in on the side of delay; and block important studies from proceeding; and how many people had to get sick and die before the necessary actions were taken.”

How easy it would be to rewrite Davis’ statement in the vernacular of higher education reform—intercollegiate athletics and undergraduate engineering education being two cases in point. Additionally, Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner tell a similar story in their book, *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*. There is literally no end to the efforts that will be exerted to maintain the status quo when big money is involved, and big money is involved with both Intercollegiate Athletics and Sponsored Research.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is my view that Derek Bok, Jim Duderstadt, Stanley Katz, the Knight Commission, and others have correctly diagnosed the ills of our American Universities. Recommended cures abound. However, it will be hard, if not impossible, to develop a perfect cure for these ills. Perhaps all that can be done is what can be done. After all, isn’t politics all about the art of doing the possible? Again, the perfect can be the mortal enemy of the good. Bottom line, resistance to change is indeed formidable, but not altogether impossible, or without issues. For example, in Vanderbilt’s restructuring program, departments that handle varsity and intramural sports were merged while eliminating the position of athletic director [40]. However, this initiative evoked problems as the former athletic director turned down a job as the special assistant to the chancellor for athletic and academic reforms while criticizing the

reorganization of the athletic department. Chancellor Gordon Gee who orchestrated the merger said: “Other universities have called and said: Good, you jump off that cliff, and if it works get back to me. I suspect they’re sweating bullets with all this national attention.... If I were to try this at Ohio State, I would end up pumping gas” [41]. Nonetheless, as difficult as it may be, I believe that much more can be done over time than heretofore, however, it will take substantial time and energy on the part of those committed to reform.

“Problems cannot be solved in the context in which they were created.” —Albert Einstein

The barriers to change can only be surmounted by the direct involvement of faculty. They may very well be the best hope for the future of higher education. As Duderstadt has said, the faculty members have been provided with both the responsibility and the status (e.g., tenure) to protect the academic values of the university and the integrity of its education program as outlined in the AAUP statement on principles and recommended practices. Although the faculty have the necessary power, it is not sufficient for success. Passion, unity of purpose, perseverance, patience, timing, and momentum building will be critical to success in the long run. Unfortunately, the athletic tail has been wagging the academic dog for so long that there is likely a widespread perception among faculty that it is right or that is just the way it is. Put another way, the warping of the academic mission of our colleges and universities by athletics, and the fact that faculty have the power to remedy the situation—to reclaim academic primacy in higher education—seems to be beyond the realization of most faculty. Also, many faculty will say they don’t have the time or inclination to become involved with reform—it’s not their job/responsibility, or they are just too busy with many more urgent commitments on their time, while others do not see the long-term, debilitating impact of a two-culture academic enterprise. So, the work of the faculty-group leadership will be difficult indeed.

Beyond interaction with faculty senates on the COIA Framework document, the COIA leadership must also work in concert with the AGB and other faculty-based reform leaders, as well as with a variety of stakeholders to achieve maximum impact. They need a broad base of support to make the difficult move from statements to action, and finally, to faculty-senate legislation. Hopefully, their near-term efforts will lay the foundation for changes consistent with their Framework document ... changes that can be agreed upon within the next year or so. In the long run, the success of this faculty-driven initiative depends not only upon growing academic and public pressure for reform, but also on the dynamics of proposals and negotiation. The faculty must get to the core of the problem—resisting least-common-denominator legislation while skillfully avoiding pitfalls in the form of dead-end changes that would be in violation of anti-trust law and federal privacy statutes as they stand today.

Unless and until truly comprehensive studies are performed by our universities will they have a basis for saying sports are no drain on their schools and go on as they are, or, find that the drain is intolerable in light of the role of their university as an institution serving a knowledge-driven society—and change. Non-BCS schools that want a bigger piece of the BCS pie would have to continue arguing for improved equity at meetings like those held in the Fall of 20003, or heed David Whitley’s advice: “Stop complaining and earn it” (by investing ever more in their athletic programs). The latter path has all the hallmarks of an easy road to glory for the school’s athletes and a road to perdition for their academic missions. A recent Chicago Tribune Editorial [42] said it well: “It’s time to drop the pretense that all athletes are in college to get an education College classrooms are intended for those who want to be there, not to help potential football stars pretend to be serious students.” Faculty senates can work collaboratively to minimize abuses in this area.

In the Preface to her book, *When Smoke Ran Like Water*, Davis reaches back a half-century for a reform-related tale from her Jewish Midrash (story-telling) tradition. It goes as follows:

“A group of workers is asked to do something quite difficult and complicated. They protest, The day is short! The work is too difficult! The project is too big! We do not have the right tools! And anyway, we are too tired! We will never finish this job! Their teacher replies, It is not for you to finish the task. But—you must begin.”

Faculty-driven reform is off to a great beginning—proceeding through academic organizations, characterized by the academic interests of higher education rather than the commercial values of the entertainment industry. Although it is only a beginning, it has the potential to ignite a remarkable revolution in intercollegiate athletics. The faculty needs to achieve strength in numbers via compelling arguments and massive networking to build momentum and facilitate substantial change. Critical to their success will not only be their ability to dedicate requisite time and energy on this vital task, but to work holistically with many other

groups as well. Their collaborative mode of operation can set an example for university and college presidents as well as trustees to work in a like manner.

In the end, strong transformational faculty leadership needs to be developed and exercised to assure a sustainable effort against the daunting and sometimes devious efforts to maintain the status quo. The faculty groups will need all the support they can muster. Education and collaboration will be key. Their efforts would benefit from support by like-minded organizations: the Knight Commission, the American Association for Higher Education, the Association of American Universities, the American Council on Education and the National Institute for Sports Reform, as well as from higher education's distinguished elders. Finally, all of higher education—academics as well as intercollegiate athletics—will be well served by close oversight of the reform effort by the AAUP, the COIA, the Drake Group and the AGB, as well as by the watchful eye and the intense scrutiny of the press.

AFTERWORD

The unabated scandals and abuses associated with intercollegiate athletics triggered a reconvening of the Knight Commission on November 24 to launch a third major study of college sports. Shortly thereafter, came the BCS computer-determination of this year's football-bowl pairings. The pairings renewed clamoring for a playoff game to determine the best team in the land with an associated extension of the football season.

“... let the networks bid on those (the traditional pre-BCS, bowl-conference games) if they want to and then sit down and review the possibility of the winner of the four major bowls in a playoff. The only drawback to that system is that the two teams in the ‘title’ game would be playing at least 14 games. They might as well forget school. It’s a tough thing. But as you well know, presidents can be bought.” – Bo Schembechler [43]

In a related article in the December 21, *Detroit Free Press*, “Great football vs. graduation,” Ron Dzwonkowski reported that after a review of the graduation rates for football players over the last four years, the Knight Commission found that with a minimum 50% graduation rule, 26 of this year's bowl games could not be played, because 32 of the 56 teams would be ineligible. The Commission Chairman William C. Friday was quoted as saying: “It is unacceptable ... that nearly two-thirds of the teams participating in bowl games fail to graduate at least 50% of their players. It is a reasonable, indeed, minimum, standard for demonstrating that academics are valued in big-time college football.” Dzwonkowski says: “Nobody's listening, of course. Football fans are more worried about who's carrying the ball in the big games than whether anyone on the team will ever carry a diploma.” However, some people really are listening.

In his November 29, *New York Times* article, “From Discordant Notes, Reformers Hear One Song,” Robert Lipsyte said there is likely to be a revolution in college sports: “Among the increasingly vocal, yet frustrated and fragmented, reformers of sport, the only point of agreement seems to be that sometime soon, perhaps between the Bowl Championship Series and the Final Four, something will happen to alert America to its runaway athletic culture.” He goes on to say: “There is no consensus on what form that wake-up call should take. Conservative reformers hope that the National Collegiate Athletic Association will pinch and weed its wild garden of rules and enforce violations more aggressively. Centrists see college presidents reining in their warlord coaches by the purse strings. The more progressive envision mild civil disobedience that will include consciousness-raising teach-ins. Radicals predict college athletes will threaten a sit-down strike moments before the big game unless television producers come up with cash, or at least a benefits package.”

Lipsyte mentions a few groups and individuals not mentioned heretofore, with his comments in quotes, these are:

- 1) The National Institute for Sports Reform (NISR), <http://www.nisr.org>—“a new umbrella organization that will try to bring coaches, athletes, academics, parents and community leaders into a clearinghouse for such interrelated issues as early specialization, athletic scholarships, drug use, violence, sports injuries and the crisis in fitness”;
- 2) The Center for the Study of Sport and Society at Northeastern University—“best known for groundbreaking studies on race and gender”;
- 3) The Positive Coaching Alliance at Stanford—provides guidelines for leadership of youth sports;
- 4) Single Issue Champions—Kathy Redmond, who founded the National Coalition Against Violent Athletes; Hank Nuwer, who writes about hazing and bullying; and Ramogi Huma, a former UCLA linebacker who has lobbied for increased health and welfare benefits for scholarship athletes.

According to Lipsyte, NISR founder Bruce Svare, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at the State University at Albany, is not enthusiastic about the possibility of civil disobedience saying: “unless there is full involvement by athletes, former coaches, former players, etc., and a well-thought-out plan that is articulated to the media well in advance and executed with the kind of precision that the NCAA blitzes us with during March Madness.” Lipsyte also quotes Rob Benford, a sociology professor at the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale, as saying, “I think we are seeing the early stages of a movement, what we call the ‘micro mobilization context.’ Right now it’s loose, amorphous, federated, which is typical. It has to form a collective identity, which hasn’t happened yet. I haven’t given up on the faculty, but that’s not where the hearts and minds of people will be won. Fans are interested in athletes, not professors.” True enough, but presidents, trustees, athletes, coaches, and the NCAA should be profoundly interested.

During the past several months, I have been reminded often of prior work on reform movements that began some forty years ago. No matter the area or object of reform, the movements had one thing in common—fragmentation of effort. This fragmentation is driven by the desire of involved parties to do their own thing for their own good reasons. Apparently not recognized is the real challenge—mutual support—working together for a cause that is larger than the self interest of any one person or organization, for a greater good if you will. Perhaps the difficulty in doing this is simply a manifestation of the human condition. Most certainly, it could be an impediment to surmounting the formidable barriers that have heretofore shielded intercollegiate athletics from serious reform.

And now for a final word that goes back to a beginning—way back to Sunday, June 12, 1955. The occasion was the last commencement exercise at the Fournier Institute of Technology in Lemont, Illinois. The late Arthur J. Schmitt, “AJ,” the educational innovator who founded Fournier in 1943, gave the welcome address.

The president of the University of Notre Dame, Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., gave the Commencement Address. It was just three years since he took over the reigns from his predecessor, Father John Cavanaugh, C.S.C., to become Notre Dame’s youngest-ever president. It was four years since Father Cavanaugh gave the Commencement Address to the Class of 1951—Fournier’s first graduating class.

Among the many guests in the audience that day were two recent Fournier graduates, Richard C. Becker, Class of 1953, and the author, Class of 1952. After a distinguished career in industry, Dr. Becker went on to serve as the president of Illinois Benedictine University. He now serves as the Chair of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation.

Fr. Hesburgh served as the president of Notre Dame for 35 years, the longest term in the school’s history. He also served as a counselor to seven U.S. presidents and several popes, as the founder of the Peace Corps, as chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, as co-chair with William C. Friday of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, and as a role model for all the weak who work to confound the strong. He continues to be active in retirement, chairing the advisory committees of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, both housed at the Hesburgh Center for International Studies at Notre Dame.

As fate would have it, I was never able to have a one-on-one with Fr. Hesburgh through all of the ensuing years. In the fall of 1988, I was invited to visit Notre Dame by Tony Michel who was then Dean of Engineering and a fellow director of the International Engineering Consortium. The purpose of the visit was to give the Industry-Day banquet address to the engineering students at Notre Dame. I missed visiting with Fr. Hesburgh since he was off campus at the time. However, we were in paper contact in early 1990 after my wife Judy and I presented the 1989 Chicago Area Beyond War Foundation Award to a mutual friend, Bishop William McManus for his work on peace and justice.

At the time, Fr. Hesburgh was a member of the International 1989 Beyond War Award Selection Committee and had great interest in the work of the foundation to build a world beyond war. A few years later we tried to arrange a visit and dinner at the Guide’s Inn in Boulder Junction when my wife and I were at our summer residence in Star Lake, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, circumstances at the time and thereafter were such that we were never able to get together; he was not spending much time at the Notre Dame Conference Center in Land O’Lakes. I was in the beginning stages of some serious health problems that provided ample opportunity to read as well as be inspired by his autobiography, *God, Country, Notre Dame*. All of that is now history. This brief presented yet another opportunity for our paths to cross ... for sure.

In early November, I wrote to Fr. Hesburgh to ask for help in the way of comments and suggestions relative to the brief. Input from the perspective of a co-chair of the twice-convened Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics was considered to be a most valuable addition. Shortly thereafter we had a wide ranging telephone conversation, ending with his offer to help in any way he could. My response to his offer came the next day in the form of an invitation to write the Foreword for the brief along with a request for a follow-up meeting to discuss his views on the future of higher education in the United States. With all agreed, my wife and I made plans to visit Fr. Hesburgh on December 2, in his office at the Hesburgh Library. Good news came when his assistant, Melanie Chapleau, called the evening before to say all was ready: "Father has finished the Foreword."

I must say that it has been one of life's greatest pleasures to be able to "come together" after some 48 years. Working and meeting with Fr. Hesburgh proved to have its own rich rewards. It also brought back fond memories of "AJ" and a sense of deep gratitude for my educational experience at Fournier, an experience that profoundly influenced my thinking, career, and direction in life.

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Over the past several months, many organizations and people contributed to the work described in this brief at different times and in a variety of ways. Ultimately, people, and not organizations, really helped to make things happen. My appreciation and thanks go to all those who contributed to the development of this brief, each in their own way. Early on, Jim Duderstadt provided encouragement as well as valuable insights via his books and personal communications. The leaders of the faculty driven reform movement, Jim Earl, Bob Eno, and Carol Simpson Stern were particularly helpful as well as encouraging, as were Devra Lee Davis, Jon Ericson, Bob Janowiak, and Stanley Katz.

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Fr. Theodore Hesburgh and Frank Splitt

Photo by Melanie Chapleau, University of Notre Dame

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APPENDIX 1 – Systemic Engineering Education Reform: It’s About Time

An Overview of Remarks at the Opening Plenary of the 2003 National Science Foundation Engineering Education Coalition’s Share the Future IV Conference, adapted from the March 22 overview covering presentation viewgraphs

A myriad of articles, papers, books, workshops and conferences have made a compelling case for systemic engineering education reform and a new paradigm for engineering education. The new paradigm goes beyond the need to keep students at the cutting edge of technology and calls for a better balance in the various areas of engineering school scholarship. Commitment to the realization of the new paradigm will yield renaissance-engineer graduates with the tools to face an unpredictable future with confidence in their abilities and yield untold benefits to the world in which they will live.

Although there has been progress, resistance to change continues unabated, in spite of the numerous calls for action, increasing competition from alternate service providers, as well as student-pipeline and job-security issues. A survey conducted by the Boyer Commission indicated that research universities have invested considerable effort in improving undergraduate education in recent years, but it also suggests that most efforts have been directed at the best students.

Achieving change via engineering education reform presents a formidable challenge, given academe’s bias toward preservation of the status quo, in which publications and research funding drive rewards and recognition. This is a complex age of rapid change in which different points of view and conflicting interests characterize the stakeholders who often resemble disconnected parties. Recent times have seen no clear path forward and an apparent absence of focused, action-oriented leadership. Also, the engineering education reform movement has been clouded by mixed, and sometimes disquieting, messages of equivocation that could be interpreted as saying that there need be no sense of urgency about engineering education reform. So systemic change continues to proceed at geologic speed.

Although most change unfolds gradually, this seems to be a time when conditions are right to create a breakthrough—to tip the scales. After providing a brief historical background on engineering education reform, this presentation, via a sequence of storytelling viewgraphs, summarizes related barriers to change, presents background on the diffusion of innovations, and summarizes the current status of various reform efforts aimed at accelerating the pace of change—in particular, diffusing the idea of systemic reform via a Campaign for Systemic Engineering Education Reform (SEER). The SEER Campaign is international in scope, but with primary focus on undergraduate programs in the United States—aiming to provide students with significantly better preparation for the 21st-century engineering workplace and to help attract and retain more of the “best and brightest” students on campus as well as involve some of the best minds among our faculty. All of this is expected through the realization of the new paradigm for engineering education. Some additional background on the SEER Campaign follows.

It is believed that pacesetting engineering schools, engineering department heads associations, societies, and organizations, as well as government and business leaders can play significant roles in bringing this reform about. The reform effort is all about educating the stakeholders and motivating them to play their respective roles. To this end, the International Engineering Consortium sponsored a publication titled *Engineering Education Reform: A Trilogy*¹ as a service to academia, government, and industry. The *Trilogy* is now serving as the SEER Campaign white paper. Distribution of the *Trilogy* and discussion of its aims has been planned for the various stakeholders in the future of engineering education—including, but not limited to: academic administrators, faculty, students, parents, professional societies, as well as industry and government leaders. This distribution represents a crosscutting, bottom-up/top-down approach to promoting debate of the issues surrounding systemic engineering education reform. Thus far, contact has been made with over sixty institutions, organizations, and professional societies.

It is expected that readers of the *Trilogy* will be able to use the publication to raise awareness of the issues surrounding systemic engineering education reform as well as “what works” and “what could work.” This awareness can lead to campus actions that will stimulate stakeholders in engineering education to support an overall effort to nurture change leading to this reform. An upcoming article for THE BENT of Tau Beta Pi encapsulates important aspects of the *Trilogy*. Titled *Systemic Engineering Education Reform: A Grand Challenge*², the article will provide an introduction to the SEER Campaign to some 90,000 members of the Tau Beta Pi engineering honor society. For the most part, this presentation is based on the material contained in the BENT article and the *Trilogy*.

The title of this presentation, “*Systemic Engineering Education Reform: It’s About Time*,” calls attention to the time dimension of reform efforts. The element of time enters into the SEER Campaign in several ways. First and foremost, it has been a long time

since a downside to the post-Sputnik era was realized—when more money for research became available to academia than ever before and universities adapted and evolved into today’s research institutions; and as Irene Peden stated in the Foreword to the *Trilogy*, “Faculty success is now judged by production of new knowledge, publication in the ‘right’ journals, and procurement of outside funding.”

How long has it been since the realization of the downside? The answer is really unknowable, but it is known that for over the past 20 years or more, there have been varying degrees of effort directed toward systemic reform. My personal involvement spans 17 years—others like Irene, Eleanor Baum, Joe Bordogna, Ed Ernst, Eli Fromm, Jerry Haddad, and John Prados have been involved even longer. So, this reform movement is not a new thing, and however glacial, progress has been made over the years. But exactly where are we on the journey? An encouraging answer—we may be getting close to a big change. Here’s why.

There are about 300 engineering schools and 1500 disciplinary programs—spanning Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, and other disciplines. Ed Ernst conjectures that 80 percent of the schools and the programs remain “unreformed.” The bright side to this conjecture is that twenty percent of the schools/programs are reformed or are reformed to some extent. If only approximately true, we may finally be at, or getting close to, a critical point, Rogers’ 20-percent “takeoff point” where the number of reformed schools/programs will begin to increase at a more rapid rate—growing beyond innovators and early adopters. The 20 percent threshold comes from the study of a large number of innovations by Everett M. Rogers who found that once an innovation is accepted by about 15 to 20 percent of the total involved population, it begins to takeoff and cannot be stopped.

The operating strategy for the SEER Campaign is to work to accelerate diffusion of the idea of systemic engineering education reform—to tip the diffusion process at this opportune time—by the widespread promulgation of the ideas related to systemic reform via massive networking. The aim is to move stakeholders to awareness-to-understanding-to-commitment-to-action. This should decrease the time to avalanche or, equivalently, to Malcolm Gladwell’s “tipping point”—described in his recent popular book on the subject of how new ideas get introduced and achieve widespread acceptance.

Finally, the viewgraphs covered by this overview represent an “upgrade” as they have been annotated to record references, links, contacts and other information mentioned during the presentation at the plenary session on March 16, 2003. It is hoped that they will be of help to the reader in spreading the word to colleagues, students, industrial advisory boards, professional societies, and others as time and circumstances permit.

Notes:

1. <http://www.ece.northwestern.edu/EXTERNAL/Splitt/SplittWebEngrEduReformTrilogy.doc>
2. <http://www.tbp.org/pages/publications/BENTFeatures/SplittSp03.pdf>

APPENDIX 2 – Universities must require athletes to make the grade—in class [29]

MY VIEW, San Jose Mercury News: By John L. Hennessy and Nannerl O. Keohane

The year-end bowl game extravaganza has now given way to the long and winding road to March Madness. As presidents of universities with well-known teams, we are aware of the many ways intercollegiate sports enrich student life and campus spirit. Yet as we move from one athletic season to another, we are not alone among university presidents who feel increasing tension between our educational mission and the powerhouse of intercollegiate sports. We worry that the demands of major collegiate athletics loom so large for some students that they have a disproportionate, unhealthy impact on their lives.

The costs of athletics programs are also increasing significantly. Far from earning money, most intercollegiate programs are now subsidized heavily by their colleges and universities. The NCAA recently reported that the shortfall across 970 NCAA schools exceeds \$1 billion annually.

Although the graduation rate for the latest group of student athletes in NCAA Division 1A schools is close to that for all students, 58 percent vs. 60 percent, the rates in football and basketball are embarrassing. According to a recent NCAA report, male basketball players graduate at lower rates than male students overall at two-thirds of Division 1 institutions. Of the 50 football teams that played in bowl games last season, 36 institutions graduated players at rates lower than those for their male students who were not athletes.

Some championship-caliber teams had zero graduation rates in multiple years, even though virtually all Division 1A programs now have elaborate academic support programs for student athletes. In their thoughtful book *“The Game of Life,”* William Bowen and James Shulman document that two-thirds of male athletes in all sports have grade-point averages that place them in the bottom third of their class. In general, female athletes also have poorer academic records than their non-athlete counterparts.

What is causing these problems? For one thing, time demands on student athletes have increased dramatically. There is little or no off-season. Spring sports require practice and competitive play for much of the fall, and vice versa. In addition to their formal practice sessions, student athletes are expected to spend up to eight hours a week in conditioning and skill instruction.

The NCAA limits “required athletically related activities” to 20 hours a week, but many student athletes say this figure does not come close to their real life experiences.

We have reached a critical juncture. Those of us charged with leading our nation’s major universities have a responsibility to restore the primacy of academics in the lives of student athletes. It is time to take some significant steps, and we suggest several measures that we believe will make a real difference.

First, we must toughen eligibility requirements for entering students. A college-bound athlete is now required to complete only 13 academic core courses in high school and can be eligible for NCAA participation with as little as two years each of math and science. This sets a standard for academic productivity that, if followed in college, makes graduation almost impossible. The current initiative to increase the number of core courses to 14 is a step in the right direction, but college athletes should have passed at least 16 high school courses in core subjects such as math, science, the social sciences and the humanities.

Second, we applaud recent NCAA legislation that toughens eligibility requirements for athletic participation. NCAA requirements for “satisfactory progress” have been stiffened, as have those governing grade-point averages and progress toward completing a major. But more needs to be done. We must develop sanctions with real teeth for programs that fail to achieve reasonable graduation rates. These sanctions should include disqualification from post-season bowl games or tournaments, and a significant reduction in scholarships available to teams that do not meet academic standards.

Third, to deal with spiraling practice requirements, we recommend establishing effective legislation to control the “voluntary” practices, workouts and off-season contests that now take up so much time. Although some student athletes may choose to devote additional time to their sports, the current pattern of activities significantly limits their ability to participate fully in the academic programs of the university. This trend must be reversed.

There will be powerful resistance to such initiatives on the grounds that they would make it harder for some students to hone their skills and pursue a lucrative professional career. Given the enormous broadcasting revenues at stake, moreover, the NCAA faces a conflict between its sometimes-contradictory roles as promoter and governor of intercollegiate athletics.

That resistance will make it difficult to bring about real change. That is why the university presidents who sit on the NCAA governing committees together with Myles Brand, the new NCAA president, must exhibit the resolve and leadership necessary to address these issues and champion reform. So should faculty members, governing boards, athletics administrators, coaches and alumni, as well as national groups such as the American Council on Education.

Most important, we call on our fellow university presidents to step forward. Without our united and aggressive leadership, we will not achieve the significant reforms in intercollegiate athletics that so many of us know are overdue.

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<http://www.aas.duke.edu/development/Miscellaneous/mercurynews.htm>

APPENDIX 3 – A Framework for Comprehensive Athletics Reform

Coalition On Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), August 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reform of intercollegiate athletics is an urgent priority. Successful reform will require a broad consensus and a comprehensive approach. Some issues may be resolved quickly, others may require much more time, but national agreement on a comprehensive plan in the near future is essential to accomplish meaningful reform; the piecemeal approach has not succeeded. The COIA Framework, aimed at Division I-A, outlines essential features such a plan should include, and calls for the NCAA and national academic constituencies to develop detailed, appropriately flexible strategies for implementation. The goal of reform is not negative; it is to bring out the positive aspects of intercollegiate athletics, which contribute to the personal development of athletes and enhance college life on campus and off.

Academic Integrity. Colleges should admit only students with realistic prospects of graduation. Admissions practices should confirm that high schools must prepare athletes to meet such standards. Continuing eligibility standards should ensure that only academically engaged students compete in athletics. Faculty must take responsibility to ensure academic integrity in all programs. Athletics advisors must be closely integrated with academic advising to ensure prioritization of academic goals and integrity.

Athlete Welfare. The design and enforcement of limits on athlete participation in non-academic activities must be improved; assessment of coaches must reflect commitment to athletes' academic opportunities. Optimal season schedules for each sport should be designed and adopted, limiting competition in each sport to a single term. The terms and bases of scholarships should be reexamined so as to support student academics, and athletes should be fully integrated into campus life.

Governance. Shared oversight of athletics between governing boards, administrations, and faculty should involve clear communication and complementary responsibilities. Best-practice designs for the interaction of faculty athletics representatives, campus athletics committees, and faculty governance should be designed nationally, and adapted locally. Uniform reporting standards for athletics budgets should be established, to provide more financial transparency. Stable athletics conferences should support the linkage of athletics and academics, and become the basis for intercollegiate relationships beyond athletics competitions and finances.

Finances. The link between winning and financial solvency undermines the values of college sports and contributes to the athletics arms race. Broadened revenue sharing, and limits on budgets and capital expenditures should be implemented. Amateur goals appropriate to each sport should determine standards of expectations. Cost cutting in the areas of scholarships, squad size, season length, and recruitment should be explored.

Over-commercialization. Excesses in marketing college sports impair institutional control and contribute to public misperception of the nature and purpose of higher education. Schools must step back from over-commercialization by cutting costs and setting clear standards of institutional control and public presentation of college sports.

NOTE: The full text of the framework document is available at url:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~bfc/COIA/Framework-Text.html>.

“Through the ages, every generation of humankind thinks of its own era as the time when things are really ‘done right.’ A good part of this perception is an insistence on our own significance and the work of our time. Sometimes, lost on the way is the significance and merit of the work of those that have gone before us. We simply do not take the time to understand and appreciate the real value of the work done by our predecessors, and, more importantly, the process by which we truly come to wisdom.”

—Frank Splitt, *BIRGE & JUDAY DATA: Application and Reliability Perspectives*, February 2001

“What must underlie successful epidemics, in the end, is a bedrock belief that change is possible, that people can radically transform their behavior or beliefs in the face of the right kind of impetus.”

– Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*

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