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THE ENTERTAINMENT REALITY

All the mission statements for the universities noted earlier talk about serving the public, the community, or the people of their states. Service may come in various forms and may respond to many sorts of needs or perceived needs. Surely it is service to its state and community for a university to provide the basic research that drives the economic engines of those regions. Technology transfers from the university to the private sector are an important service. The University of Tennessee summarizes service with the following in its mission statement: "Continue and expand efforts, in cooperation with other institutions, to extend its people and programs to help meet the educational, intellectual, cultural, economic, governmental, and business and industrial needs of the people of Tennessee in furtherance of the institution's major public service role."

The mission statements of the athletic departments of universities typically include, as does the statement of the University of Texas Athletic Department, "to support the community through public service." But how do the athletic departments at these Division I-A institutions intend to fulfill that service mission other than by supporting Thanksgiving dinners for the poor? One way that is mentioned in virtually all the statements of the state universities is by being "a source of pride" for the citizens of their states by winning sports contests, presumably against universities representing other states in their region, and gaining national ranking for their teams.

The University of Texas mission statement, however, is more to the point and less shielded in the mythological rhetoric than most of the others. It specifies that successful sports teams in Texas will "benefit the State economy." The statement provides no hint as to how that is likely to happen. Insofar as some of the rivals of the University of Texas in athletic contests are other major in-state universities, Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University, it is something of a puzzle as to how a winning team at Texas that beats Texas A&M and Texas Tech is supposed to benefit the state's economy. I suppose that winning teams can be expected to draw more fans to the stadiums, and that requires the hiring of more personnel to handle security, sell programs and hot dogs and beer, park cars, and then clean up the mess after the game. Those folks then have more money to spend than they would if only a handful of people attended the games, and so, presumably, the economy is improved. There is, however, a rather likely alternative: were all those people not going to the games, they will spend approximately the same recreational or entertainment dollars in some other way, such as going to the movies or to a professional game, and the same sort of economic benefit should be realized with the university playing no positive role.

In any event, the University of Texas Athletic Department should be commended for its honesty in its mission statement, and, lest we forget, honesty is one of the virtues that the supporters of the idea that athletic participation is a form of moral education typically include in the catalog of virtues that athletes will habituate. But what is of special and commendable note is what the Texas Athletic Department is honest about, what they, alone among the cited athletic departments, proclaim unabashedly: their mission "is to be a source of . . . entertainment" for the community. They hit the nail squarely on the head. Big-time intercollegiate athletics is big-time entertainment, and it is about time that those in the business of producing it were honest about what they are providing.

The business of entertainment and all that entails is what football and men's basketball, and, to a lesser degree, women's basketball is really all about. Once that is understood, virtually everything else about the way the elite sports are run on the Division I campuses across America makes perfectly good sense. If that primary mission of those programs is denied or masked in the rhetoric of academics or ethics education, nothing makes much sense at all.

The apparel and other companies that have contracts with athletic programs and universities are well aware of the real mission of the elite sports

programs. On its website, the University of Miami provides testimonials from some of its current sponsors, including the following from Nike:

> The University of Miami was the first of Nike's All-School Partnerships—those where we outfit all student-athletes, teams and coaches head-to-toe. The same qualities that first brought Nike and Miami together are still in evidence today—a commitment to competitive excellence and integrity. . . . Through the good efforts of coaches, administrators and the University's Sports Marketing Department, Hurricane teams have captured the imagination of fans throughout South Florida and beyond.[1]

Also on the website, Gatorade provides the following:

> There are very few collegiate properties that can offer a partner the type of national exposure that the University of Miami delivers. Gatorade is proud of its long-standing partnership with the University and could not be more pleased with the valuable return we have received on our investment.[2]

Clearly, and without apology, the elite sports and the athletic departments that administer them are in partnerships with major commercial companies because those sports provide an audience, an exposure, to sell their products. They provide that audience not only in 100,000-seat stadiums and 20,000-seat arenas (those numbers, even if every seat were filled for every game, would probably not be worth the while of the corporate partners) but also in the most sought after audience: multimillions of television viewers. Television and cable television network contracts drive intercollegiate athletics at the Division I level. In order to get more and more revenue and exposure on television, long-standing conferences have been demolished as their most prominent member institutions work out deals to join more prestigious conferences. The Southwest Conference (SWC) was a mainstay of intercollegiate athletics for nearly a century. It included Southern Methodist University, Texas Christian University, Rice University, the University of Houston, Texas Tech University, the University of Texas, Baylor University, and the University of Arkansas. Then the former Big Eight Conference of midwestern universities, such as the University of Oklahoma, the University of Nebraska, and the University of Kansas, and the Southeastern Conference (SEC) came calling to pick off from the SWC its most lucrative institutions. Arkansas went off to the SEC, and Texas, Texas Tech, Texas A&M, and Baylor bolted to what then became the Big 12. The remaining schools were left to find homes in lesser conferences, and the SWC was destroyed.

The newly enlarged SEC and the Big 12 set up divisions for football and instituted an annual championship game between the winners of their two divisions. Why? Because in doing so they provide more "meaningful" television games for the networks and higher revenues for themselves.

Recently, the University of Miami, Virginia Tech, and Boston College bolted from the Big East Conference to join the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). The ACC is a noted basketball powerhouse with such schools as Duke, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Maryland, and Georgia Tech, but except for Florida State University, it has not been noted for football. By adding Miami, Virginia Tech, and Boston College, they are a much more attractive football conference for the television networks.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), rather than holding the amateur student-athlete and noncommercial line, has in fact taken the lead in intercollegiate athletics in selling out to commercialism and the entertainment industry. The NCAA auctions off its logo and image to corporate sponsors, and because it runs the annual men's basketball tournament that culminates in the Final Four weekend of March Madness, it was able to sell the television rights to the tournament to CBS for $6 billion over eleven years from 2002 through 2013. The money paid on the contract to the NCAA rises annually from $300 million in 2002 to $710 million in 2013. The NCAA funds 90 percent of its expenses from the television contract and other income from running the tournament and pays out money to the conferences on a complicated formula. The $75 million in 2002 was distributed on the basis of tournament performance to the conferences. The formula takes into consideration how many tournament games their teams played in over the past six seasons. A further $50 million is distributed on the basis of the number of scholarships a university offers athletes, and $25 million is doled out on the basis of the number of sports the university offers. "The formula favors the six major conferences (ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-10, SEC) because they have the resources to put four or more teams in the field on a consistent basis."[3] Little wonder that some of the conferences are expanding by raiding major athletic institutions from other conferences.

CBS is not at all concerned about what looks on the surface to be an enormous amount of money to be paying out to televise what is, from a skills perspective, undeniably a far inferior basketball product than is provided by the National Basketball Association, the professional league. The reason, as reported by *USA Today*, is that "CBS' ability to cover the costs has been measurably increased through the inclusion of the NCAA's marketing, radio, licensing and Internet rights. . . . 'With the bundle of rights

we've packaged . . . this is a financially responsible deal that should be profitable for CBS,' CBS Sports President Sean McManus said."[4]

Duderstadt summarizes the current situation in Division I intercollegiate athletics when he writes, "Today we find that big-time college sports most closely resembles the entertainment industry. . . . While universities 'own' their athletic franchises, they are far from actually controlling these activities in the face of intense media, market, and political pressure."[5] He goes on to note that the games are actually staged more for television production than they are for the campus community or those in attendance in the stands. He is certainly right about that. The actual flow of the game, especially during the NCAA men's basketball tournament games, is altered by the demands of television producers and their advertisers. Time-outs are stretched well beyond the usual ninety seconds to accommodate more commercials. The *Kansas City Star* reported in 1997 that viewers saw eight minutes of commercials per twenty minutes of playing time. The normal flow of the game and indeed its outcome can be radically disrupted by long time-outs. Teams that have deep benches are less able to use their players to advantage against teams with weak benches because the starters get more time to rest without being taken out of the game. This could account for a number of the upsets in which so-called Cinderella teams beat powerhouses and disrupt the expectations of oddsmakers and pundits. Coaches complain that they run out of advice to give to players who are forced to wait for the commercials to conclude before retaking the floor.

But why did the networks buy up the elite sports and why did the universities willingly go along with the conversion of those programs into big-time show business? The obvious answer is, of course, money. But why is the money there? Who, other than an alumnus or a couch potato with virtually no imagination, would watch an intercollegiate football or basketball game when one could be doing so many other things or watching a professional game? It cannot be because of the appreciation of the skills displayed. If you want to watch genuine athletic skills honed to the highest perfection, you should concentrate on the pros. Very few college teams in the elite sports even have one athlete who has the ability to "make it" in the professional leagues of his sport. Why then is the fan base so large that the entertainment industry has jumped at the opportunity to fill a significant portion of its airtime with intercollegiate football and men's basketball games?

The answer may not be as simple as money, though money lies at the heart of it. In the first place, the expansion of television networks, particularly on cable, means that airtime must be filled. Producing new dramatic shows is an expensive proposition, and, with some exceptions, there is

much money to be made only by rebroadcasting old shows from the past over and over again. Live sports programming requires somewhat less of an investment for the networks, and it certainly fills commercial airtime. But the real draw for the audience is the fact that many have a betting interest or a future betting interest in the teams and the game. Gambling has been the foundation of sports fan interest since the first humans began testing their athletic skills against one another. It now is endemic in America. It is the beast that the networks feed, and by doing so, they feed themselves, the NCAA, and the universities.

Gambling on intercollegiate athletic events is illegal in every state in the union except Nevada. "In 1998, $2.3 billion was legally wagered on sports events in Nevada—40 percent of that on college games. Estimates as to the dollar amounts bet illegally nationwide soar as high as $380 billion."[6] Virtually every major and many of the lesser circulation newspapers across America during the football and basketball seasons carry the betting lines for all the major intercollegiate games and for those games of regional interest. The lines may come from Las Vegas or Reno, but many also are purchased by the newspapers from Mexican gambling operations or offshore and international Internet providers. Cable sports shows are devoted to analyzing the point spreads, the virtues of playing the over and under, and ways to hedge one's bets. Newspapers and radio and television sports shows provide detailed and up-to-date information regarding injuries to key players on the various college teams, information that would be of interest only to the parents, family, and friends of the player unless one were deciding to place a bet on the game or deciding how much to risk.

Were gambling not drawing the interest of the fans west of the Mississippi River to the nationally televised game between Syracuse University and the University of West Virginia, the size of the audience for which CBS is paying so much money would be considerably smaller, and the ability of CBS or any network to sell commercial time would be significantly diminished. Gambling provides the reason why substantial numbers of people living more than a thousand miles from the institutions participating in the game and having no personal ties to the schools develop enough of a rooting interest to switch on the television.

The NCAA has been campaigning for some years to end legal gambling on intercollegiate athletics in Nevada. They were able to induce Arizona Senator John McCain to introduce a bill in Congress intended to do just that. The bill has yet to pass, but even if it were to pass, it would probably have no impact on the magnitude of gambling on intercollegiate athletics, and that is something about which the NCAA should be happy. The pools

that annually spring up in virtually every workplace in the country during the NCAA men's basketball tournament will not be stopped. Any laws that would forbid them would be virtually unenforceable, and that is a good thing for the NCAA and CBS.

The NCAA's hypocrisy with respect to gambling scales monumental heights. As mentioned previously, the television contract that provides the NCAA with $6 billion over the run of the contract is with CBS. CBS SportsLine.com owns Las Vegas Sports Consultants, which is the source of the betting line used by a large percentage of bookmakers, on and off college campuses, as well as gambling websites. CBS owns 20 percent of CBS SportsLine.com and advertises it to its sports event viewers throughout its telecasts of intercollegiate games. Arnie Wexler and Marc Isenberg, in an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, write,

> While the NCAA contends that legalized gambling on college sports in Nevada sends a mixed message, it sends the same convoluted message itself in allowing its corporate partners to promote gambling and gambling-like activities. For example, CBS SportsLine.com offered a free "bracket pool manager," a Web-based software application that streamlines the administration of basketball-tournament pools in offices, fraternities, and no doubt, college athletics departments.[7]

Of course, were the NCAA and the athletic departments actually to succeed in curtailing gambling on their games, they would be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs—and lays and lays.

A point that is worth mentioning is that legalized gambling has proven to be a greater friend to the integrity of the college game than illegal gambling ever could or would. The NCAA should embrace it. To be sure, the history of intercollegiate athletics has more than its share of point-shaving and other gambling-provoked scandals. But there is a very good reason for that, as a professional gambler and former mob member who ran a large book in Chicago told me at a sports ethics conference: you can turn a player to throw a game or shave points only if he is or feels underpaid for his services to the university or the team or if he cannot support an expensive habit. Drugs are not the habit of choice because of NCAA drug testing of athletes and because drugs can also adversely affect the player's game so that the coach may not then use him in crucial situations. Expensive habits that are not detectable by a urine test are more likely than drugs to make a player vulnerable to the inducements of professional gamblers. Getting him hooked on gambling itself is a very good bet. He then runs up a debt that he can repay only by doing what the professional gamblers want. He s[illegible]ly

cannot make the money any other way and remain eligible to play under NCAA rules. It is extremely difficult these days to bribe professional athletes, unlike the days of the Black Sox scandal, because they are well paid and do not want to risk their fortunes or futures. College athletes are quite another story. They are easy pickings for professional gamblers, just as they are for overzealous boosters: witness the University of Michigan Fab Five scandal. By the same token, my ex-mobster friend noted, referees are also easy targets. For most of them, refereeing is a second job and not one that pays very well.

In any event, the reason that the NCAA should welcome legal gambling on its games is that the casinos in Las Vegas, with a major vested interest in the games being played above board, are motivated to monitor the betting action on any games. When the action deviates from normal expectations, as it did with a number of games played by the Arizona State University basketball team in 1994, the casinos will alert the FBI. In the Arizona State case, a subsequent FBI investigation uncovered point-shaving by a number of basketball players. In effect, legal gambling and law enforcement can work hand in glove. Illegal bookmakers are not likely to be motivated to police the integrity of the games for the general public's edification. Were they to do so by involving law enforcement agencies, they would expose themselves to penalties for illegal bookmaking. Their only way of handling losses incurred by point-shaving and the throwing of games where they were not the instigators of the players' behavior might be the breaking of the bodily parts of the offending players or worse.

What is wrong with gambling? William Bennett apparently does not think it is a vice. In the casinos that have cropped up on American Indian reservations around the country, it is no longer even referred to as gambling. It is gaming. "Gaming" sounds benign, even healthy, like participating in sports. When gambling becomes a detriment to one's living a worthwhile life or when one's gambling causes pain and suffering for others, one's family, or one's team, then most ethicists would agree it is wrong to gamble. However, it may be very difficult to make a persuasive case that gambling is inherently wicked. It can be a direct cause of a gambler doing things that are morally wrong or wicked. That seems to be what happened in the point-shaving and game-throwing incidents that have damaged the reputation of intercollegiate athletics from time to time.

But the same sort of thing happens in that other "gaming" casino in America, the stock market, and players there have also done things that are morally and legally wrong in order to make things work out their way. In the stock market, we talk of talking a risk, presumably a calculated risk, which

means only that one has made some calculations and decided to back a certain stock, although a player in the market might also just play a hunch. In any event, the assumption that is made by honest investors is that the information about the companies listed on the exchange, their earnings, prospectuses, and so on is honest and that it is available to all investors. In other words, the assumption, the trust of the investors, is that the market is not being manipulated, that they have a fair chance of doing well if they invest wisely. Very similar considerations operate in legal gambling on sporting events, and just as the stock market has an essential interest in maintaining a fair market for all investors or few will put down their money, so do the legal gambling operations have a crucial interest in protecting the integrity of the games on which they make book.

In effect, legalized gambling on intercollegiate sports can be a deterrent to game fixing and probably should be embraced by the NCAA and the universities. If all gambling on intercollegiate athletics were to be "under the table," the gambler has no dependable friend in the industry. With little or no way of assuring themselves that the outcomes of the games on which they are considering betting are not being manipulated against their interests, gamblers are not likely to bet, and interest in the events, other than very local interest, will likely diminish.

There may be innumerable reasons why collegiate athletes are vulnerable to the enticements of professional gamblers who are intent on fixing games. Typically, they are financially strapped for one reason or another. Whatever reason for which a player may need or thinks he needs money may be a reason sufficient in his mind to listen to the deal an unscrupulous gambler makes. As long as players have very limited financial prospects while playing intercollegiate sports, they are potential targets of those bent on fixing games.

Trying to do what it is impossible to do—outlaw all gambling on the games—certainly will not prevent many of the gambling-related scandals of intercollegiate athletics. To lessen the likelihood of such scandals erupting, athletes must be made less vulnerable to the offers of those who seek to rig the games. The only way to do that would seem to be to demythologize intercollegiate athletics and pay the players at a level of compensation that the professional gamblers who would rig the games are likely to regard as not worth beating. In other words, remove the dollar-sign temptation that shines in the players' eyes by making financial gain from rigging the game much less attractive than it now is. This will not, of course, eliminate all corruption from the games, and we can expect that some gamblers will continue to try to influence outcomes in a variety of ways, perhaps man-

not involving money given directly to the players, but it will be a more realistic and less hypocritical approach than that currently being taken by the NCAA and athletic directors. "You're an amateur and must remain so to be eligible, but we (the NCAA and the athletics departments) will reap the financial benefits of your talents and the sweat of your bodies. We officially disapprove of gambling on our games, but were we honest, we would have to admit that without it, we would not be garnering the billions of dollars that we are from your labor." It is absolutely bewildering that so few scandals involving the taking of money by intercollegiate athletes have come to light, whether from boosters or gamblers, and, I suppose, it is a testament to the rhetorical persuasive powers of those in the athletic departments to turn the heads of the athletes away from what intercollegiate athletics in the elite sports is really all about. I must admit to being utterly baffled by the gullibility of many of the athletes in the elite sports who do not question the structure of the very activity in which they are devoting so much of their time and energy. It is worrisome to think that most of them really believe that they are doing what they are doing during their collegiate careers because they will reap substantial financial rewards as professional athletes or that they think that their grant-in-aid packages are adequate compensation for the work they are putting in to enhance the coffers of the NCAA, the conferences, and their university's athletic department. They are the only performers in show business who are forbidden to have agents who have a realistic grasp of the big picture of the sports entertainment industry looking out for their financial interests. They are not allowed, if they want to continue to play for their university teams, to procure the services of a financial adviser who can inform them of their earnings potential and market their services to those who will adequately compensate them for their labor. They are entertainers unlike any others in show business today. As many are teenagers, the issue of exploitation again raises its ugly head.

I am more than hinting, perhaps perversely, that the NCAA's concern with the rigging of games by the athletes is more a fear about losing the gambling audience than it is about whether the players are getting the athletic or educational value that the NCAA, the coaches, and the athletic directors claim is inherent when they play the game solely for its own sake. After all, if it became widely known or believed that most of the games were rigged like professional wrestling matches, who would bet on them, and would people stop watching them on television or sitting in the stands on cold November Saturdays? There are certainly not enough students, faculty, and staff at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, to fill Neyland Stadium (104,000 seats) or at Florida State University to fill Doak Campbell

Stadium (84,000 seats) or at the University of Michigan to fill Michigan Stadium (107,000 seats).

What is the NCAA's real concern about gambling? The bottom line is that intercollegiate athletics as a viable enterprise depends on a number of factors that are not really very compatible: amateurism defined primarily financially, the betting interests of fans (gambling), clean games unaffected by the gambling professionals despite the fact that there are enormous sums of money involved, and subventions from universities to maintain the stadiums and arenas where it all can take place. Lost in the shuffle would seem to be the persons who are absolutely essential to it all: the players who are not supposed to profit from their providing the entertainment.

About fifty years ago, in 1954, Harold W. Stoke, former president of the University of New Hampshire and of Louisiana State University, published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* that surely is one of the better and more provocative pieces yet written on the relationship between university missions and their athletic programs. Since it appeared, other reform-minded critics of intercollegiate athletics have echoed Stoke, without citing him, probably because they never read him. Stoke began by noting that American universities are discovering their "latest and growing responsibility—namely to provide public entertainment."[8] He went on to maintain that in our society the need for entertainment is "an inevitable consequence of the changing conditions of our lives."[9] He had in mind that we are living longer, working shorter hours during the week, and enjoying greater mobility and prosperity than prior to World War II. Those changes, he believed, created a social vacuum and that "filling social vacuums the American system of education—and particularly higher education—is one of the most efficient devices ever invented."[10] Universities have the ability to provide entertainment content in many different formats for the public to consume, including theater, music, and art. "Yet of all the instrumentalities which universities have for entertaining the public, the most effective is athletics."[11]

Who would deny that entertainment is a good and that a healthy community is one that can find time to enjoy a variety of diversions from the "daily grind"? In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., the spectacular seven-game World Series certainly provided a needed entertainment diversion from the somber events that dominated the American scene. Whether being entertained is a basic human need or whether it is just a good that is required to live a full and satisfying life are not issues I am prepared to argue. Intuitively, the fact that a life devoid of entertainments that range from literature to film to games to dinners with friends to sporting events

to hours before the television set would be a less full life than one devoid of those diversions from the "daily grind" seems to me sufficient to accept Stoke's basic premise. More to the current point, undeniably, I think, people use athletic events to escape the monotony of repetitive lives, as a break from boredom and banality.[12] Some no doubt enjoy watching the physical punishment visited on others in games such as football because it provides a cathartic experience for them to release negative reactive attitudes in their own lives, such as anger, resentment, indignation, and the like. In any event, a life without entertainment is hardly a life most people would choose to live. Entertainment, of course, comes in many different forms. One of the things that makes sporting events different from most other forms of entertainment is that the risks run by the athletes are real and immediate for the fans. They do not have to suspend belief to enjoy the contest as they do in watching an action-filled film starring Arnold Schwartzenegger or Vin Diesel.

On the assumption that Stoke was right that most people have genuine needs to be entertained at certain times in their lives and that the mission of a public university must include responding to the needs of the community in which it exists, it should be possible to distinguish a number of different functions within a university that is meeting its mission obligations, including the educational and the entertainment functions. There is also the research function and that may be distinct from the educational function and other service functions distinct from entertainment. Conceiving of all the functions of a university as if they were simply variations on a foundational function—education—and therefore required only one sort of managerial structure and style would be to make what Gilbert Ryle famously called a "category mistake."[13] Stoke's point, and one to which I previously alluded, was that if we conceive of intercollegiate athletics as education, what happens in the athletic programs is "inexplicable, corrupting, and uncontrollable."[14] If we conceive of intercollegiate athletics as public entertainment, it all makes perfectly good sense:

> What educational institutions thus far have not seen is that the responsibility for supplying public entertainment is a responsibility different in kind from those they have previously performed. The failure to understand this fact has led to endless strain in the management of athletics, to bewilderment among educators and the public, and even to outright scandal.[15]

Of course, as we have seen, the supporters of intercollegiate athletics have spent much of their time trying to obscure the distinction between their function and that of the educational element of the university. Hence, we

witness the seemingly endless parade of defenses of sport as character education. Intercollegiate athletics is much more than sport. Intramurals may be sport, and if all one can say in defense of intercollegiate athletics is the character education gambit, then one's argument supports only a vigorous intramural program. The honest and potentially successful defense of intercollegiate athletics, especially including the elite sports, is that they are the way, or at least one way and probably the most visible and successful way, the university responds to its public service obligations in the area of public entertainment. In fact, they likely touch the lives of more members of the public in a positive and effective way than any other service the university may extend in that direction.

Stoke noted that the university's real interest in its athletes is not at all the same as its interest in its students, a clue to the different functions that the university de facto recognizes in its mission. Universities and academic departments recruit students so that they can "teach them what they do not already know."[16] Athletes are recruited because they are already proficient in the skills desired by the coaches and have shown themselves to be so on their high school playing fields and courts. Furthermore, "students are educated for something which will be useful to them and to society after graduation; athletes are required to spend their time on activities the usefulness of which disappears upon graduation or soon thereafter."[17] The hours he spent bashing into tackling dummies in the heat of August are not likely to have much value after graduation when the player was never good enough to make a professional team.

Stoke pointed out that the spectacle that is a college football game can have no imaginable educational purpose. The marching bands, the baton twirlers, the dance lines, and all the accoutrements are entertainment aids, nothing more. But there is nothing wrong with that as long as we understand that entertaining the public is a responsibility of our universities. Stoke urged that universities take seriously the differences between education and entertainment by managing their academic and athletic enterprises differently and consistent with the sort of functions each performs. This means, on Stoke's account, that admissions requirements should be different for athletes and that grade and course completion requirements should be tailored to the needs of the athlete. The time spent in practice, travel, and so on should not be allowed to count against what is understood to be reasonable progress toward graduation. "No matter what the regulation, if it prevents athletes from supplying the public entertainment for which it exists, a way around must be found."[18] The bald fact is that "athletics requires an atmosphere of academic accommodation to its necessities."[19] Those of us

the academic side of the university may not like to hear that, and administrators may feel the pressure that such accommodation places on them, but the tension in the university, particularly within the faculty, that sets the academic and the athletic sides of the campus at odds is caused by a general failure to appreciate the multiple missions of a contemporary university and on the part of the academic faculty typically to think that only their function is the "real" mission of the institution.

The case of Miles Simon at the University of Arizona in the mid-1990s is but one of what anecdotal reports suggest is a relatively common occurrence as universities wrestle with the academic accommodation of star athletes. Simon was a guard on the University of Arizona's national championship team of 1997. In fact, he was named the most valuable player of the Final Four. But Simon was on academic probation at the university for three years and was kept eligible only because the university was willing to make a string of exceptions to its academic policies in his case.

The *Kansas City Star* report on Simon details his odd journey through the machinations of academic accommodation at the University of Arizona.[20] In brief, Simon was academically suspended from the university because of a D average but was allowed to take a class for credit, then had his suspension rescinded when the director of the School of Family and Consumer Resources wrote a memo to the university officials accepting Simon as a student in his school with a major in family studies. The acceptance into the school and the major was permitted even though Simon had a 1.6 grade point average and was on academic probation. The minimum grade point average for admission to the school was 2.0. The *Star* implies that the fact that the director of the school accompanied the basketball team on a three-week summer tour to Australia in 1996 was not unrelated to Simon's acceptance. Simon, as a junior, was allowed to take a course, "The Human in Humanities," in which he received an A even though the university catalog says that the course is restricted to freshmen. Simon also got an A in Family Studies 401 during the winter 1996 presession. "All 19 other students in the class, including five other athletes, got A's from . . . the adjunct professor who taught the course."[21] The final exam for the course was conducted on the "buddy system." That grade made him eligible to play during the spring of 1997, culminating in the championship and his MVP award. When asked by his father to study harder and improve his grades, Simon, his father reported, responded that "he didn't go to the University of Arizona for an education but to play basketball."[22]

For the coaches and athletic directors of Division I elite programs, by and large, the primary concern is not the education of their players but

rather keeping them eligible in accord with the antiquated NCAA regulations. To do so, the academic component of the university must be brought into an unholy and unnatural alliance with the athletics/entertainment function, a conspiracy that often seems to have something of the flavor of "making them an offer they can't refuse" about it. Were Stoke's proposals to replace the mythologically founded eligibility regulations of the NCAA, the sorry academic case of Miles Simon would never have occurred. He could have gone to the University of Arizona to play under a famous coach, Lute Olson, and never been confronted with the obligation of meeting arbitrary academic requirements that were of no interest to him and that were not a part of his recruitment to that institution.

On first reading, especially by an academic, Stoke sounds like he is writing ironic prose, that he is just being facetious. He could not really have meant it. But Stoke was deadly serious though sadly ignored. He concluded his article with a number of recommendations that he admits his academic colleagues and even those in athletic departments under the spell of the mythology of amateurism and character education will scorn and disregard. The first is that universities and the NCAA admit that intercollegiate athletics are operated primarily as public entertainments and that universities, especially the state-supported ones, have a responsibility to provide such entertainment for the public, something the University of Texas Athletics Department has done. Once universities acknowledge openly that they are in the entertainment business, producing winning athletic teams is a legitimate university operation because only winning teams, according to Stoke, provide adequate entertainment value. Stoke must have overlooked the Chicago Cubs, though the Cubs are a professional team and may be the exception that proves the rule. After all, the Arizona Cardinals professional football team are also losers of long standing but hardly regarded by the public as a great entertainment value.

Athletes, that is, the most desirable because the most proficient ones, according to Stoke, should be paid what it takes to get them to play for the university's team. This will mean that only the economically better off and larger institutions will be able to attract the best athletes, but that should not be a concern because it happens in every department of a university. General competitive equity ought not to be a goal. If Princeton can outbid the University of California, Riverside, for a philosophy student and we think there is nothing unethical or untoward about that, why should we look askance if the University of Michigan can outbid the University of Idaho for a linebacker?

Stoke also championed the construction of a "firewall" between the academic and the athletic functions of the university with respect to all

managerial, financial, and accounting matters. No university general academic budget should ever have to support the entertainment operations of the athletic department on Stoke's account. If intercollegiate athletics is not self-supporting in an institution, it should be terminated. In this, at least with respect to the elite sports, Duderstadt echoes him.

In a paragraph guaranteed to raise the hackles of academics, Stoke writes,

> Why should there be concern about the academic record of a young man who comes to a university primarily to play on a team and whom the university has brought for exactly that purpose? I submit that nothing is lost by relieving all athletes of the obligation to meet academic requirements if they cannot or do not wish to do so. Let us be courageous enough to admit that the university's interest in them is that they be good athletes, not that they be good students.[23]

The recent Saint Bonaventure University scandal that caused the men's basketball coach and the president of the university to lose their jobs, as mentioned earlier, involved the recruiting and playing of a player who had only a welding certificate from a community college. Were Stoke's recommendations to govern intercollegiate athletics, no scandal would have occurred, the Saint Bonaventure team would not have forfeited its season in the Atlantic 10 Conference, it may well have won the conference tournament and landed a spot in the NCAA Tournament, and fifteen or so basketball players would have had a sense of accomplishment for a well-played season instead of a feeling that they were cheated out of what they had worked hard for and now have "a stain that won't wash off," as senior guard Patricio Prato said.[24]

Some forty-seven years after Stoke published his paper, Robert Atwell, the president emeritus of the American Council on Education, contributed a "Point of View" article to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* saying virtually everything that Stoke had recommended.[25] He urged that universities acknowledge professionalism in their elite sports and hire their athletes in what he calls the "entertainment wing of the university." Football and men's basketball, on Atwell's proposal, should exist separately from the other sports, and, like Stoke, he recommends that "coaches could hire football and basketball players who would be students only if they wished to be; there would be no special admissions requirements or arrangements."[26]

Adoption of a Stoke–Atwell approach of acknowledging that universities have service obligations to the general public that include providing entertainment and that football and men's basketball, at least, meet those responsibilities, if no other functions of the university, and using that to justify professionalizing those sports at least has the virtue of honesty. It avoids

the hypocrisy of the current system and the baseless rhetoric of the NCAA and many athletic departments. Nonetheless, many will dispute the basic premise: that universities have an obligation to provide entertainment for the general public. Duderstadt, for example, argues that universities have absolutely no responsibility to provide entertainment for the public and programming for the commercial radio and television networks. "We have no business being in the entertainment business. We must either reform and restructure intercollegiate athletics on terms congruent with the educational purpose of our institutions, or spin big-time football and basketball off as independent, professional, and commercial enterprises no longer related to higher education."[27]

Of course, universities do and have for many decades provided entertainment opportunities for the general public. As Stoke had mentioned, they sponsor theatrical performances, concerts, art shows, and the like. Admittedly, there is a significant, perhaps fundamental difference between the entertainment that the public may garner from attendance at a play put on by the university's theater department or a recital or concert sponsored by the music department and an intercollegiate football game or men's basketball game. Some universities also run the public broadcasting television and radio stations in their regions. With respect to such public entertainment operations, however, the entertainment being provided to the public is directly related to academic programs within the university. They are performances, exhibitions, laboratories, and so on that emerge from the teaching of the subjects that have become a part of the standard curriculum. Intercollegiate athletics are entertainments for the general public without a direct link to the academic programs that make universities institutions of higher learning. To Stoke, that is not an important difference. However, it is crucial to Duderstadt, who would argue that even if one could make persuasive arguments that the university's participation in sports such as football and basketball is morally desirable or at least morally permissible, those arguments would not be sufficient to justify inclusion of those sports within the university in the absence of a direct link of those programs to the academic enterprise of the university that provides the justification for the very existence of the university in the community. Stoke, of course, would argue that the university is not such a single-function entity. It has multiple missions, and in this Stoke seems to have a far better grasp than many who have participated in the debate about intercollegiate athletics of the functions of the university (or multiversity) in contemporary American society and culture. Perhaps it is worth noting that though Duderstadt emphatically denounces the commercialization of collegiate s[illegible]ts,

while president of the University of Michigan he made no noticeable dent in its athletic programs, and, as has been recently learned, the Fab Five scandal occurred during his watch.

Imagine the following situation: a major state-supported university has developed a reputation for having one of the very best football teams in the country. Its teams are annually rated in the top five in the national polls. It has an enormous fan base, and its games regularly reward the television networks with high ratings, allowing them to command top dollar for advertising minutes. The state, however, is experiencing a major recession, and its legislators cannot continue to adequately support the number of universities that were created in the state when times were good. A legislator who is an alumnus of the university and a former star player on the football team proposes that the state close most of the academic programs of the university but continue supporting the football team and enough academic programs to keep the players eligible according to conference and NCAA rules. Among his arguments is the one that claims that in tough economic times the diversion of supporting a first-class football team is crucial to the morale of the people of the state. Programs, especially research programs, in the standard academic disciplines, however, provide no such communal relief. In other words, gut the academic enterprise of the university but save the football team. I strongly suspect that were such a proposal to be made, the faculty would rise up in arms claiming that football should go before the traditional disciplines are devastated or demolished. Sports are not fundamental to the university. Perhaps they were not to the ancient universities of Europe or to some of our most prestigious technological institutions today, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the California Institute of Technology, but the question of what is fundamental to the multiversities that are today's major state institutions of higher education is not a settled matter regardless of how absurd the legislator's proposal is. The fact that universities make explicit reference in their mission statements to serving the needs of the general public of their states and regions suggests that one of their rudiments may not reside in the traditional academic disciplines or even in teaching and "pure" research.

Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University, champions a reexamination of the most basic conception of the mission of a state university. He urges that state universities must transform from agencies of their states into enterprises serving the needs of the localities in which they exist and reaping the benefits, including the financial benefits, of doing so. Crow writes,

> As we move—fiscally, psychologically, emotionally—away from the paradigm that Arizona State University is only an agency of the state government, we must move towards a paradigm that casts the university as an enterprise responsible for its own fate, an enterprise which the state government charters and empowers, and in which it invests.[28]

Crow, in his vision statement for the university, expanded on his inauguration address comments: "I envision a university that embraces its cultural, socioeconomic, and physical setting; one that is socially embedded and seeks to become a force and not only a place; a university that explores its full entrepreneurial potential."[29] Crow's interest seems to be primarily in the opportunities for technology transfers emerging out of theoretical and applied research in the sciences and engineering, but the Stoke–Atwell conception of the role of intercollegiate athletics as serving the entertainment needs of the general public would seem to fit well within the enterprise model of the state university favored by Crow.

I have tried to show that embracing the entertainment function of intercollegiate athletics, especially with regard to the elite sports, in practice has occurred in Division I universities for some time and that it is not inconsistent with the way such universities understand and articulate their missions. The ethical and other problems, indeed the scandals that regularly erupt in intercollegiate athletics, seem to be due more to the fact that universities, the NCAA, coaches, and athletic directors cling to a mythologically based conception of their enterprise than to the reality that they rhetorically, but not in practice, deny. What they do not do, primarily because it is not in their financial interest, is to carry the entertainment mission model to its proper conclusions with respect to the rights and welfare of the athletes who make it all possible. It is not an ethically acceptable excuse that the athletes will continue to come to the university and provide their services even though they are not afforded the rights of other members of the entertainment industry. The separate dorms, dining halls, training facilities, and travel are all nice, but they amount to little more than fancier plantations than those that existed in the antebellum American South until the athletes are compensated in a manner consistent with the revenue their labors bring to the university.

I must confess that when I first started to think about the intercollegiate athletics situation as it has evolved over the past half century, I was inclined to side with those, like Duderstadt, who believe it has gone wildly off the track of what a university is meant to be and do. I am no longer so sure that football and men's basketball are not meeting an important obligation that

universities have and that their academic faculty members and many administrators tend not to take seriously: to serve real needs of the people who support the very existence of the university, the public. Many of us in academia, including myself, should take that obligation more seriously. But an issue still remains: who gets to define and determine what the public needs from its universities? The challenge is to confront that question without already presuming that only those of us on the academic side of the university campus are better able to answer the question than are the folks who live in the communities that surround the campus and who venture on the campus only to attend a Saturday football game. Academic arrogance can be a moral defect as well as off-putting to ordinary people who clearly have a stake in the matter, and it goes a long way toward blinding academics to the full spectrum of responsibilities that our institutions may incur with respect to their different constituencies.

NOTES

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