

Building Awareness and Commitment

Recommendation 2

Establish a program to encourage the widespread adoption of the following value statement for maintaining broad-based intercollegiate athletic programs in the United States:

[Insert name of organization or institution] *believes that participation in intercollegiate athletics represents a uniquely valuable educational experience for student-athletes and enriches the quality of campus life generally. As such, there is great benefit, consistent with the academic mission of American colleges and universities, in ensuring that diverse athletic opportunities are available to students, especially in those sports that connect to the Olympic ideals, inspire young people and attribute to a lifelong commitment to fitness. We are committed to doing all we reasonably can to help ensure that those diverse athletic opportunities continue to exist as part of intercollegiate athletics in America.*

Rationale. Any attempt to address the declining sponsorship of the sports identified in this Report must begin with an effort to create greater awareness of the threat and a stronger commitment to address it. Building awareness requires a fundamental change in the tone and tenor of the discussion that surrounds this important issue. The decision on the fate of the at-risk and emerging sports in American colleges and universities lies exclusively with the academic institutions which sponsor those sports as part of their intercollegiate athletic program. As such, the discussion cannot revolve around America's performance in the Olympic Games, the impact of Title IX, or some sense of historical entitlement; it must instead center on the relationship between the sponsorship of these sports and the academic mission of the sponsoring college or university. The Task Force believes that the proposed

value statement effectively makes that connection, focusing as it does on the benefits to the students that result from offering diverse athletic opportunities.

Implementation. In the first instance, this value statement must be adopted by the NCAA and the USOC (through their traditional governance mechanisms). If the two sponsors of this Task Force do not adopt the statement, there is little prospect for others doing so. Assuming adoption by those two entities, an effort must then be made to foster a widespread adoption of the principles throughout the Olympic and collegiate sports families. Beyond adoption by the national governing bodies and NCAA member institutions, every effort should be made to have the statement adopted by important constituent and operating groups within the collegiate and Olympic sports structure (e.g. NGB Council, USOC Athletes Advisory Council, NCAA's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Faculty Athletic Representatives Association, Collegiate Commissioners Association, National Association of Collegiate Athletic Directors, National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators, various collegiate coaches associations, etc.) as well as influential independent organizations like the Knight Commission.

Recommendation 3

- a) Establish an electronic syndication system to identify and distribute to media outlets (including, in particular, campus newspapers and local papers in college towns) news and features related to the at-risk and emerging sports and the student-athletes and coaches who participate in them.
- b) Create a continuing education program to help coaches become more effective advocates for their programs within the university community. This program, although developed centrally for use across all sports, should be