

Diversity and Equity in College Sports: The Need for Change

James J. Duderstadt
President Emeritus
University Professor of Science and Engineering
The University of Michigan

Symposium on the Status of Minorities in Sports:
Current Issues, Problems, and Recommendations
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
May 21, 2002

Introduction

The issue at hand involves the appalling under representation of minorities in leadership positions in college and professional sports. Despite the fact that African-Americans represent almost 50% of student athletes in revenue sports such as football and basketball, they comprise only about 3.5% of college football coaches and 2.4% of athletic directors, a situation I might add that would lead to both major scandal and almost certain litigation and federal intervention in any other area of higher education!

This frustrating dilemma is stated well in Dr. Clarence Underwood's preamble for this meeting:

"Diversity has become the rallying cry of mainstream America including the hallowed halls of academia. Although colleges and universities across America are working to increase the number of women and minority faculty members and students, this push for diversity in higher education seems to stop when it reaches the athletics department or professional sports level, most noticeably in the sport of football."

Before addressing the issue of diversity and equity in college sports, let me first brief you on a bit of personal background to establish my credibility (and likely bias) on this matter. My experience with college sports is primarily limited to that of university leadership, although I did play college football (but with limited talent) and have been a sports fan all my life. However my observations for this symposium were drawn primarily from my experience as provost and then president of the University for over a decade (and over three decades as a faculty member at this institution). During my watch, Michigan teams went to five Rose Bowls, three Final Fours, and won numerous conference and national championships. Despite this success on the field, my own views about the state of college sports have become rather cynical, as evidenced by my recent appearance on *60 Minutes* decrying the exploitation of student athletes and my suggestion that perhaps the threat of unionization is what we need to get the attention of the NCAA focused on student welfare rather than the next network contract negotiation.

My experience with diversity in higher education is somewhat broader. In a sense, it begins with my undergraduate years during the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the commencement speaker at my graduation in 1964, at a time when he had to be released from prison to speak to us. My own deep interest and commitment to diversity in higher education is best symbolized by my leadership of the Michigan Mandate, a major strategic effort we launched at Michigan during the late 1980s and early 1990s to make our university a leader in achieving and serving a community of students, faculty, and staff that mirrored the increasing diversity of American society. During this period we managed to double the enrollments of underrepresented minority students (increasing Black enrollments from 4.5% to 9.5%), doubling as well the presence of minority faculty and staff. Beyond that, and most

relevant to our discussions today, we learned how to break through the barriers that have prevented minorities from moving into power positions in higher education, as evidenced by the fact that when I stepped down as president, 5 of our 10 senior executive officers of the University were African-American, including our two campus chancellors and my immediate successor as president of the University.

Today we are continuing to fight many of these same battles at the national level, as last evidenced by last week's ruling by the Sixth Circuit U.S. Federal Court of Appeals supporting our use of race in college admissions. I might add that this case also illustrates that leading troops into battle to fight for justice and equity is not always risk-free, since I am a named defendant in these cases.

Before diving into details, let me first tell you where I'm coming from: I find it absolutely appalling that the representation of minority head coaches and athletic directors in sports is not comparable to the representation of minority student athletes in our intercollegiate athletics programs. Such a lack of diversity should not—and would not—be tolerated elsewhere in our universities, and it should not be tolerated in intercollegiate athletics.

Why has it happened? Not because there is not an adequate pool of talented minority coaches to draw from. The success of Black coaches in college and professional basketball establishes that. And not because most colleges and universities are not committed to diversity. Many institutions may not be very successful in achieving it, but I believe that most aspire to this goal.

Rather, I believe absence of minorities in leadership positions in intercollegiate athletics is because college sports in general, and the "revenue sports" in particular, continue to be controlled by old, white men who have the power and the perks and are not about to share them with anybody else. In this old boys club I include not just the power football coaches, athletic directors, and NCAA brass, but also the sports press, the television networks, the sports apparel manufacturers, the beer advertisers, and all those others who benefit from the status quo.

Why is this situation allowed to continue? Because most university leaders—particularly university presidents and governing boards—do not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to the appalling hypocrisy of today's highly commercialized college sports which have largely discarded most of the values of educational institutions including, in particular, the value of diversity and the courage and determination to achieve it.

However my focus this morning is not to complain about the current, appalling state of affairs. Instead, I would like to suggest some possible steps that might be taken to challenge and change the status quo. In doing so, I have divided my remarks into three components:

1. First making some comments on the importance of diversity in higher education;

2. Then sharing with you the observations of at least one has-been university president on the sad state of college sports; and
3. Finally focusing on a series of actions aimed at addressing the current woefully inadequate representation of minorities in leadership positions in college sports.

Diversity and Excellence in Higher Education

One of the most enduring characteristics of higher education in the United States has been its ever-broadening commitment to serve all the constituents of the diverse society that founded and supported its colleges and universities. As our nation enters a new century, it grows even more diverse, transformed by an enormous influx of immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. By the year 2030, demographers project that approximately 40 percent of all Americans will be members of minority groups, and by mid century we may cease to have any majority ethnic group, a milestone reached by California in 2000. As we evolve into a truly multicultural society with remarkable cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity, this new society will clearly require major changes in the nature of social institutions such as the university.

Though such diversity brings remarkable vitality and energy to the American character, it also poses great challenges, both to our nation and our social institutions. We once viewed America as a melting pot, assimilating first one group and then another into a homogenous stew. Yet, in reality, many people tend to identify both themselves and others in racial and cultural terms and to resist such assimilation and homogeneity. Our universities especially need to understand and accommodate the ways new, nontraditional members of our communities think and function, in order to span racial and cultural divides. Universities should not simply react passively but rather take decisive action to build more diverse institutions to serve an increasingly diverse society.

Universities are created and designed to serve society at large, both by advancing knowledge and by educating students who will, in turn, serve others. Therefore, beyond creating knowledge and educating students, our universities are responsible as well for perpetuating those important civic and democratic values that are essential to our nation: freedom, democracy, and social justice. To achieve this, our colleges and universities may be required at times to take affirmative action to overcome the social inequities imposed on people who have historically been prevented from participating fully in the life of our nation. Higher education has an obligation to reach out to make a special effort to increase the participation of those racial, ethnic, and cultural groups who are not adequately represented among our students, faculty, and staff. This fundamental issue of equity and social justice must be addressed if we are to keep faith with our values, responsibilities, and purposes.

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, our nation's progress towards greater racial diversity in our society and in our social institutions has been made, in part, through policies and programs that recognize race as an explicit characteristic. For

example, universities with selective admissions have used race as one of several factors in determining which students to admit to their institutions. Special financial aid programs have been developed that address the economic disadvantages faced by underrepresented minority groups. Minority faculty and staff have been identified and recruited through targeted programs.

Yet today's political climate raises serious questions about the nation's commitment to equity and social justice for all Americans. Segregation and exclusivity still plague many of our communities and our social institutions. An increasing number of Americans oppose traditional approaches to achieving diversity such as affirmative action. Federal courts are considering cases that challenge racial preference in admissions, and in state after state, voters are taking aim through referenda at an earlier generation's commitment to civil rights. It is increasingly clear that new approaches will be required to achieve our long sought goals of equity and justice. And this will require major change on the part of our colleges and universities.

Yet here we cannot fool ourselves into thinking that our institutions will change anymore quickly and easily than the societies of which they are a part. Achieving the democratic goals of equity and justice for all has often required intense struggle, and we remain far from our goals as a nation. In confronting the issues of racial and ethnic inequality in America our universities are probing one of the most painful wounds in American history.

The Michigan Mandate

Here it may be useful to consider the University of Michigan's experience in its effort to achieve diversity because it led to measurable progress and because, since it happened on my watch, I can describe some of the victories and pitfalls that occurred along the way.

Although the University sustained its commitment to diversity throughout the 20th Century, its progress reflected many of the challenges facing our society during the years of discrimination based upon race, religion, and gender. The student disruptions of the 1960s and 1970s triggered new efforts by the University to reaffirm its commitments to affirmative action and equal opportunity, but again progress was limited and a new wave of concern and protests hit the campus during the mid-1980s, just prior to the appointment of our administration. In assessing this situation, we concluded that although the university had approached the challenge of serving an increasingly diverse population with the best of intentions, it simply had not developed and executed a plan capable of achieving sustainable results. More significantly, we believed that achieving our goals for a diverse campus would require a very major change in the institution itself.

In approaching the challenge of diversity as an exercise in institutional change, we began by engaging as many of our constituents as possible in a dialogue about goals and strategies with the hope of gradually building widespread understanding and support inside and beyond our campus. Throughout 1987 and 1988 we held hundreds of

discussions with groups both on and off campus, involving not only students, faculty, and staff, but alumni and state and civic leaders as well. Meetings were sometimes contentious, often enlightening, but rarely acrimonious. Gradually understanding increased and support for the effort for the evolving plan grew.

It was the long-term strategic focus of our planning that proved to be critical. The University would have to leave behind many reactive and uncoordinated efforts that had characterized its past and move toward a more strategic approach designed to achieve long-term systemic change. In particular, we foresaw the limitations of focusing only on affirmative action; that is, on access, retention, and representation. We believed that without deeper, more fundamental institutional change these efforts by themselves would inevitably fail—as they had throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

The challenge was to persuade the university community that there was a real stake for everyone in seizing the moment to chart a more diverse future. More people needed to believe that the gains to be achieved through diversity would more than compensate for the necessary sacrifices. The first and vital step was to link diversity and excellence as the two most compelling goals before the institution, recognizing that these goals were not only complementary but would be tightly linked in the multicultural society characterizing our nation and the world in the future. As we moved ahead, we began to refer to the plan as *The Michigan Mandate: A Strategic Linking of Academic Excellence and Social Diversity*.

The mission and goals of the Michigan Mandate were stated quite simply:

- 1) To recognize that diversity and excellence are complementary and compelling goals for the University and to make a firm commitment to their achievement.
- 2) To commit to the recruitment, support, and success of members of historically underrepresented groups among our students, faculty, staff, and leadership.
- 3) To build on our campus an environment that sought, nourished, and sustained diversity and pluralism and that valued and respected the dignity and worth of every individual.

A series of carefully focused strategic actions was developed to move the University toward these objectives. These strategic actions were framed by the values and traditions of the University, an understanding of our unique culture characterized by a high degree of faculty and unit freedom and autonomy, and animated by a highly competitive and entrepreneurial spirit. The first phase was focused on the issue of increasing the representation of minority groups within the University community. Our approach was based primarily on providing incentives to reward success, encouragement of research and evaluation of new initiatives, and support for wide-ranging experiments. Here it is important to note that the plan did not specify numerical targets, quotas, or specific rates of increase to be attained, nor did it modify our traditional policies for student admission.

To cite just one highly successful example, we established what we called the Target of Opportunity Program aimed at increasing the number of minority faculty at all ranks. Traditionally, university faculties have been driven by a concern for academic specialization within their respective disciplines. This is fundamentally laudable and certainly has fostered the exceptional strength and disciplinary character that we see in

universities across the country; however, it also can be constraining. Too often in recent years the University had seen faculty searches that were literally “replacement” searches rather than “enhancement” searches. To achieve the goals of the Michigan Mandate, the University had to free itself from the constraints of this traditional perspective. Therefore, the central administration sent out the following message to the academic units: be vigorous and creative in identifying minority teachers/scholars who can enrich the activities of your unit. Do not be limited by concerns relating to narrow specialization; do not be concerned about the availability of a faculty slot within the unit. The principal criterion for the recruitment of a minority faculty member should be whether the individual could enhance the quality of the department. If so, resources will be made available by the central administration to recruit that person to the University of Michigan.

But there was a stick as well as a carrot to this program. Since we did not have any new resources to fund the target of opportunity program, we simply totaled up our commitments throughout the year, and then subtracted this amount from the University-wide budget for the following year, before allocating the remainder to traditional programs. In effect this meant that those academic units that were aggressive and successful in recruiting new minority faculty were receiving base budget transfers from those programs that were not as active. It took some time for this to become apparent, and during this period some of the more successful academic units made very significant progress (e.g., our departments of English literature, history, and psychology) at the expense of other units that chose a more passive approach to diversity (e.g., our school of medicine).

From the outset, we anticipated that there would be many mistakes in the early stages. There would be setbacks and disappointments. The important point was to make a commitment for the long range and not be distracted from this vision. This long-range viewpoint was especially important in facing up to many ongoing pressures, demands, and demonstrations presented by one special interest group or another or to take a particular stance on a narrow issue or agenda. This was very difficult at times as one issue or another became a litmus test of university commitment for internal and external interest groups. While these pressures were understandable and probably inevitable, the plan would succeed only if the University leadership insisted on operating at a long-term strategic rather than on a short-term reactive level.

By the mid 1990s Michigan could point to significant progress in achieving diversity. The representation of underrepresented minority students, faculty, and staff more than doubled over the decade of the effort. But, perhaps even more significantly, the success of underrepresented minorities at the University improved even more remarkably, with graduation rates rising to the highest among public universities, promotion and tenure success of minority faculty members becoming comparable to their majority colleagues, and a growing number of appointments of minorities to leadership positions in the University. The campus climate not only became more accepting and supportive of diversity, but students and faculty began to come to

Michigan because of its growing reputation for a diverse campus. And, perhaps most significantly, as the campus became more racially and ethnically diverse, the quality of the students, faculty, and academic programs of the University increased to their highest level in history. This latter fact seemed to reinforce our contention that the aspirations of diversity and excellence were not only compatible but, in fact, highly correlated. By every measure, the Michigan Mandate was a remarkable success, moving the University beyond our original goals of a more diverse campus.

The Current Concern over Diversity in College Sports

In part, it is from my perspective in leading efforts to achieve diversity elsewhere in higher education that I find it not only absolutely appalling but totally unacceptable that there is such a woefully inadequate representation of minority coaches in college sports. I furthermore find this to be the height of hypocrisy on the part of universities that presumably value diversity (and, in the case of my own institution, are prepared to spend tens of millions on lawyers to defend it in certain areas).

However I am not in the least surprised. College sports has been controlled for over a century by those who benefit most from its commercialization and its status quo—the celebrity coaches, power hungry athletic directors, the sports media, and those commercial interests, whether they sell athletic apparel or beer, who profit most from these activities.

And, for the most part, these are old white guys who are determined to preserve their power and control of the sports establishment. In the end, diversity in the college coaching ranks will be a battle fought among power relationships, between those that currently control and profit from big time sports—and are willing to sacrifice the integrity and values of the university to protect their personal interests—and those seeking change, whether in the interests of diversity, equity, and social justice, or in the interests of realigning college sports with the educational values of the university.

Let me put this a different way: While there may indeed be some evidence of racism in the clear discrimination against minorities in gaining access to leadership roles in college sports, I believe this is basically a power issue. Those that have the power and the perks—most of whom are members of an old white boys club—are not about to allow these to be shared and diluted by letting others join their club. They have got it good, and they are determined to keep it that way! It's worth noting that many of my presidential colleagues used to regard A.D. as an abbreviation for "athletic dinosaurs" for good reason!

But there may be changes on the horizon! Perhaps even cosmic extinction! In this regard, consider the report of the reincarnation of the Knight Commission released last year.

The Knight Commission

The Knight Commission began their report with the conclusion:

We find that the problems of big-time college sports have grown rather than diminished. The most glaring elements, academic transgressions, a financial arms race, and commercialization, are all evidence of the widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports.

On the issue of integrity, they noted:

During the 1990s, 58% of Division I-A colleges were penalized by the NCAA.

On academics:

Big time athletics departments seem to operate with little interest in scholastic matters beyond the narrow issue of individual eligibility. The graduation rate for football players in I-A fell 8% in the last five years, while basketball fell 8%. The NCAA reports that only 48% of Division I-A football players and 34% of basketball players earn college degrees.

This lack of academic connection is the fundamental corruption of the original rationale for both sports and coaches on campus: that they are integral components of a well-rounded student life and a useful complement to the universities' other central pursuits.

And on commercialism:

At the core of the problem is prevailing money madness. Sports programs have created a universe parallel to, but outside the effective control of, the institutions that house them. They answer not to the traditional standards of higher education but to the whims and pressures of the marketplace. To say it again, the cultural sea change is now complete. Big Time college football and basketball have been thoroughly professionalized and commercialized.

In conclusion, the Knight Commission warns:

College sports as an enterprise with vested commercial interests contradicts the NCAA's own stated purpose: to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program, and the athlete as an integral part of the student body, and to retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports."

Some predict that failure to reform from within will lead to the collapse of the current intercollegiate athletics system. Early warning signs of just that are abundant and should not be ignored. If it proves impossible to create a system of intercollegiate athletics that can live honorably within the American college and university, then responsible citizens must join with academic and public leaders to insist that the nation's colleges and universities get out of the business of big time sports.

My Own Views

After over three decades as a faculty member, provost and president of the University of Michigan, and member and chair of the Presidents' Council of the Big Ten Conference, I have arrived at several conclusions: First, while most intercollegiate athletics programs provide both valuable and appropriate activities for our university, big-time college football and basketball stand apart. They have clearly become commercial entertainment businesses. They have little if any relevance to the academic mission of the university. They are based on a culture, a set of values that, while perhaps appropriate for show business, are viewed as highly corrupt by the academy and deemed corrosive to our academic mission.

Second, although one can make a case for relevance of college sports to our educational mission to the extent that they provide a participatory activity for our students, I find no compelling reason why American universities should conduct intercollegiate athletics programs at the current highly commercialized, professionalized level of big-time college football and basketball simply for the entertainment of the American public, the financial benefit of coaches, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and NCAA executives, and the profit of television networks, sponsors, and sports apparel manufacturers.

Of course, these two statements are nothing new. Many of you have voiced them, and I can assure you that most of our faculties have long expressed them. But beyond that, I have also reached a third conclusion: That big-time college sports do far more damage to the university, to its students and faculty, its leadership, its reputation and credibility, that most realize--or at least are willing to admit.

The examples are numerous. They have been articulated at length by many, many others, and I will only briefly summarize them here.

1. We have exploited young athletes for the direct financial benefit of coaches and institutions, luring them with the promise of professional contracts (which only a few percent ever achieve), abrogating our commitment to provide them with the opportunity for a college education (which less than half ever complete), and exposing them to the risk of permanent physical injuries, not to mention the mental anguish of lost dreams.

2. We have damaged our reputations (as the recent experiences of most Division 1-A universities, including my own, have demonstrated).
3. Big time college football and basketball have put inappropriate pressure on university governance, with boosters, politicians, and the media attempting to influence governing boards and university leadership.
4. The impact on university culture and values has been damaging, with inappropriate behavior of both athletes and coaches, all too frequently tolerated and excused.
5. So too, the commercial culture of the entertainment industry that now characterizes college football and basketball is not only orthogonal to academic values, but it is corrosive and corruptive to the academic enterprise.
6. Now add to this the almost total disregard for the value of diversity in the leadership of our college sports programs, a value that presumably is valued by the university as an educational institution.

The Goals

It is important to first set firm principles for the conduct of intercollegiate athletics. The Knight Commission made a good start on this in its earlier effort a decade ago when it suggested as priorities: student welfare, institutional welfare, and the dominance of educational values over competitive or commercial objectives.

But this is not enough. We must go further and translate these into strong actions that both reform and regain academic control of big time college sports. In this spirit, let me suggest several examples of such actions that seem obvious if vigorously avoided by those who currently govern intercollegiate athletics:

1. Freshman Ineligibility: All freshmen in all sports should be ineligible for varsity competition. The first year should be a time for students to adjust intellectually and emotionally to the hectic pace of college life.
2. Financial Aid: Eliminate the "athletic scholarship" or "grant-in-aid" and replace it with need-based financial aid. Note this would not only substantially reduce the costs of college sports, but it would also eliminate the legal risks of continuing what has become, in effect, a "pay for play" system.
3. Mainstream Coaches: Throttle back the salaries of coaches, athletic directors, and other athletic department staff to levels comparable to faculty and other

university staff. Subject coaches to the same conflict of interest policies that govern other faculty and staff (e.g., eliminating shoe contracts, prohibiting the use of the university's name and reputation for personal gain, etc.)

4. Mainstream the Administration of Intercollegiate Athletics: Academic matters such as student eligibility, counseling, and academic support should be the responsibility of the university's chief academic officer (e.g., the provost). Financial matters should be under the control of the university's chief financial officer. Medical issues should be under the control of staff from the university medical center or student health service.
5. Financial Support: We should adopt the principle that if intercollegiate athletics are of value to students, they should be subsidized by the General and Education budget of the university. To this end, we might consider putting athletics department salary lines (coaches and staff) on the academic budget and under the control of the provost. We could then use a counterflow of athletic department revenue into the General and Education budget to minimize the net subsidy of college sports.
6. Faculty control: We need to restructure faculty athletics boards so that that they are no longer under the control of athletic directors but instead represent true faculty participation. It is important to keep "jock" faculty off these boards and to give priority to those faculty with significant experience in undergraduate education. It is also important for faculty boards to understand and accept their responsibilities for seeing that academic priorities dominate competitive and commercial goals, while student welfare and institutional integrity are priorities.
7. Rigorous Independent Audits and Compliance Functions: Here we need a system for independent auditing of not simply compliance with NCAA and conference rules, but as well financial matters, student academic standing, progress toward degrees, and medical matters.
8. Limits on Schedules and Student Participation: We should confine all competitive schedules to a single academic term (e.g., football in fall, basketball, hockey in winter, etc.). Competitive schedules should be shortened to more reasonable levels (e.g., football back to 10 games, basketball to 20 games, etc.). We need to constrain competitive and travel schedules to be compatible with academic demands (e.g., no weekday competition). Student participation in mandatory, noncompetitive athletics activities during the off-season should be severely limited (including eliminating spring football practice, summer conditioning requirements, etc.).

9. Throttle Back Commercialization: It is time to forget about the possibility of Division 1-A football playoffs and drastically reduce the number of post-season bowls. Perhaps we should return the NCAA Basketball Tournament to a two-week, conference champion only event. Furthermore, we need to stop this nonsense of negotiating every broadcasting contract as if dollars were the only objective and chase the sports press out of the locker rooms and lives of our students.

The Process

But how could one accomplish such an agenda? After all, a century of efforts to reform college sports have been largely ineffective. First, it is time to acknowledge that working through athletic organizations such as the NCAA, the conferences, or the athletic departments is futile. These are led or influenced by those who have the most to gain from the further commercialization of college sports. It is my belief that you will never achieve true reform or control through these organizations, since the foxes are in firm control of the hen house.

Instead, I believe one must work through academic organizations such as the American Council on Education and the Association of American Universities, characterized by the academic interests of higher education rather than the commercial values of the entertainment industry. Furthermore, it is important to begin with those academic associations characterized by membership with similar academic standards and objectives, since this is most likely to lead to consensus on extracurricular matters.

A century of ineffective efforts through athletic organizations such as the NCAA has demonstrated that true reform of college sports can only occur through the academic associations that link together our institutions. And I believe that many of today's college and university presidents are sufficiently concerned about the current commercialization and corruption of college sports and frustrated with the ineffective and inadequate reform agenda of athletic organizations such as the NCAA that they would be willing to try a new approach.

The Challenge and Opportunity of Diversity

The Myths

In preparing for this presentation, I read through many of the concerns expressed by some of the participants in this audience such as:

“There is a whole book of excuses of why people don't make it. People are not qualified, they've not had experience, they've not been in the system long enough, they've not networked enough, they've not had the training, and on and on. There are more excuses out there as to why it was not occurring than

strategies as to have we can make it occur.” (Charles Whitcomb at San Jose State).

“It is a funny thing that people can go out and recruit student-athletes of color from around the country. They can track you from the time you’re a junior in high school, but after you graduate and you leave, they somehow can’t locate you when it’s time to be a coach or an administrator.” (Rochelle Collins, Northern Illinois University)

These sound like the old, worn out excuses our faculty used to make about recruiting minorities, ...”We just couldn’t find any Black scholars in the field of 19th Century Victorian literature, so we’ll just forget about diversity.”

The Realities

But the realities suggest otherwise. In college basketball, almost a quarter of Division I-A coaches are Black; in professional basketball, this has risen to one half. Yet in college football, there are only four Black head coaches in Division 1-A. But then again, perhaps this is not surprising, since the people hiring football coaches are the athletic directors, and only 2% of them are African-American. As Dr. (and Head Football Coach) Fitzgerald Hill at San Jose State has noted, the barriers erected by the “haves” to keep out the “have-nots” are formidable:

1. Hiring committees and ADs generate leads to candidates from people they know, most of whom typically are also white, thereby perpetuating an old boy’s network.
2. A major barrier is the reluctance of A.D.s to admit there is a problem with present hiring procedures (and their unwillingness to follow university-wide hiring practices and policies).
3. Influential white alumni and fans often hinder the hiring of a black coach or threaten to withdraw financial support.
4. If there is too small a talent pool, it is our own fault because we hire black athletic administrators into staff positions such as academic support rather than line positions such as responsibility for major athletic programs.
5. Many black coaches are hired as racial tokens at 1-A colleges. Or in those few instances where they are hired, the bar is set too high in expectation of failure.

Year after year in football, stories are written about no or few new Black coaches being hired. Out of an estimated 750 openings in Division 1 schools over the past 50

years, there have been less than 20 Black coaches. In the past decade, only 12 schools have hired Black football coaches.

Of course there have been many efforts to address these issues, including conferences such as this one. From within the system, one can point to:

- **Watchdog Groups:** The NCAA Minorities Opportunities and Interests Committee (MOIC) is like the NAACP, kind of the eyes and ears and the conscience of the NCAA in regard to the treatment of minorities.
- **Leadership Development:** NCAA has launched a “Leadership Institute for Ethnic Minority Males”.
- **Advocacy Groups:** Black Coaches Association: This is a nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is to foster the growth and development of minorities at all levels of sports. It has been and can continue to be a powerful voice for change.

But let me suggest that these efforts, while both admirable and necessary, are not enough, as the statistics clearly demonstrate. I believe it is time to consider new strategies, perhaps more radical in nature:

1. To urge those fighting the battle on behalf of minority coaches to join the broader reform movement for college sports, since in the long run this will tear down the walls of the old boys’ club that control intercollegiate athletics. Winning the battles for the primacy of educational values, institutional integrity, and the rights of student-athletes will benefit your goal of equity and justice as well.
2. Forget about the NCAA and the Conferences. These organizations have fought true reform for decades, and I believe they will continue to do so. They are simply devices the old boys use to protect their power and perks and maintain the status quo.
3. Instead, borrow a leaf from the battles for diversity on other front, and build both pressures within and upon higher education to drive change.
4. For example, focus attention on the presidents and governing boards, since here is where you may get the most sympathetic hearing, and, moreover, these represent politically the soft underside of the university—they can’t take the heat. Believe me, while the forces of commercialization now controlling big time college sports are powerful, they pale in comparison with the forces that can be generated in addressing racial discrimination and inequity.

5. It is essential to force universities to mainstream intercollegiate athletics. For example, all personnel searches, including those for coaches and A.D.s, should be held to the same standards and accountability as those conducted elsewhere in the university, including affirmative action and equal opportunity reviews. We would never let a dean simply go out and hire a faculty member or administrator without a quite formal search process conducted within the framework of university, state, and federal equal opportunity employment regulations and reviews, nor should we allow A.D.s to do this with coaches (or presidents to do this with A.D's, I might add!)
6. The athletic department must not be held immune from the policies that govern faculty and other staff, such as conflict of interest. (Actually, I doubt if this will continue much longer in our litigious world. There are legal principles such as due process and equal protection under law that will inevitably be applied to intercollegiate athletics programs.) Of course this may slow down the gravy train that has so distorted coaches compensation, but, after all, we are universities, not entertainment franchises!
7. Let's put some teeth in our diversity policies when we apply them to athletics. At Michigan we tied administrator compensation to success in achieving diversity. Indeed, we went further in some cases and removed several of those administrators impeding progress. People need to understand that there are real consequences for failure to comply with diversity policies and objectives, just as there are rewards for success.
8. Coalition building is essential. Many of the reforms sought by minorities are identical to those fought for by women. You should be allies in the battle for equity and social justice, not competitors. Furthermore, such groups should use all the tools at their disposal, including, if necessary, litigation and even boycotts. Sometimes it does indeed take a 2x4 to first get the mule's attention before you can get it to move.
9. Finally, in the end, true reform of college sports, including reconnecting it with the educational enterprise in such a way as to preserve academic values and protect institutional integrity, is essential. It will accomplish little if, in achieving a more diverse leadership for intercollegiate athletics, we perpetuate its current corrupt and corrosive nature for the university.

Concluding Remarks

Intercollegiate athletics are and, indeed should be, an important part of higher education. College sports provide an important educational opportunity to student

participants. They are important as a unifying force for university communities, on campus and beyond. Yet all too often these days we sacrifice these fundamental missions for our athletic programs on the altar of commercial success.

For a century, we have struggled without success to achieve an appropriate balance between the increasingly commercial character of college sports and their more fundamental role as a component of the educational mission of our university. What hope have we of changing things today when so many others have failed.

Well, I would maintain that there is something very different about today's environment. As we enter a new century, higher education in America is facing perhaps the most significant era of change in its history. Every aspect of the university, from our most fundamental activities of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, to our most important values such as academic freedom, diversity, and tenure, are being re-examined to understand whether they will remain relevant to our future. Even the very survival of the university as a social institution is being called into question because of its increasing difficulty in meeting the needs of a knowledge-driven society.

It is my belief that it is essential that each and every aspect, of the university, each of our many activities, principles, and premises, should put on the table for reconsideration. Nothing should be exempt, particularly activities such as intercollegiate athletics that are clearly peripheral to our fundamental academic mission. We are obliged to ask the difficult question of whether it makes sense for the 21st Century university to conduct commercial activities at the current level of big-time college football and basketball. Is there any logical reason for an academic institution, with the fundamental mission of teaching and scholarship, to mount and sustain a professional and commercial enterprise simply to satisfy the public desire for entertainment, and the commercial goals of the marketplace? Why should the university squander its resources, distract its leadership, and erode its most fundamental values and integrity with these commercial activities, particularly at a time when it will face so many other challenges in responding to the changing educational needs of our society?

Higher education has no obligation to conduct college sports in a manner responsive or subservient to armchair America or the minions of sports writers, entertainment promoters, or athletics apparel executives, particularly if this conflicts with the fundamental educational missions of our institutions.

I believe we must reassert and hold fast to the premise that college sports, just like other university activities, must be re-aligned with the educational mission and values of the university. To be sure, diversity is one of the most important of these values. But, then, so too is the educational welfare of the young men and women we recruit to our campuses as student-athletes (and not as pre-professional athletics in training). Only by embracing the educational role of the university and making it paramount in the way that we conduct college sports, can we be successful in embracing other essential values such as diversity.

Clearly this will not be easy, as a century of ill-fated efforts to reform college sports so clearly indicates. Those who benefit most from big-time college sports as an

entertainment industry, the celebrity coaches and athletic directors, the sport media and the networks, the sports apparel industry and the advertisers, all will defend the status quo to the hilt. So too will those millions of fans and boosters who see the American university only as a source of entertainment on Saturday afternoons in the fall resist change. This will be trench warfare, and many university leaders (and perhaps former university leaders) will face considerable risk in the battles with commercial interests that lie ahead.

But the forces of change in our society are powerful, and they are reshaping all of our institutions—our corporations, our governments, and even our nation-states. This unique period of change for higher education may provide an unusual opportunity to reform college sports, to reconnect it with our mission as educators. It provides both a compelling reason and a golden opportunity to extend the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and social justice to all of its programs, whether in the classroom, the administration building, or the football field.

As we enter a new century of intercollegiate athletics in America, it is essential for universities to establish their own priorities, objectives, and principles for college sports that are consistent with their educational purpose. Higher education must then commit itself to holding fast to these objectives in the face of the enormous pressure exerted by the media and the public-at-large. In the end, college athletics must reflect the fundamental academic values of the university. There is no other acceptable alternative if we are to retain our values and integrity while serving the true educational needs of our society.