

Athletics vs. Academics in America

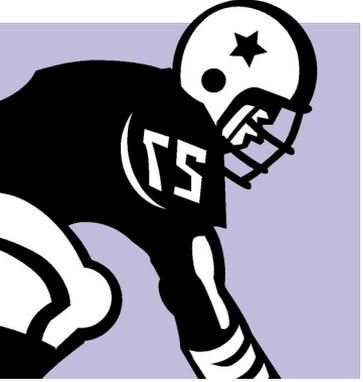
The tremendous popularity of college sports, in addition to the American fascination with sports at all levels from K-12 through to senior competitions for people over 50 or more, produces a host of often conflicting expectations and attitudes. Most, but not all, people think that competitive sports are, in general, a good thing. Good for physical and mental health, good for building friendships and associations, good for the bonding that leads to better community life.

At the same time, this enthusiasm also leads many people to think of themselves as sports experts, as people with a special claim on the operation or values or spirit of various kinds of sports.

This is especially true of college sports because so many people have acquired an identify and a loyalty to college institutions through their associations with sports competitions.

So we look first at the question of what does society want from colleges and college sports.

Who Are Society's College Sports Constituents?



Athletics Constituencies

Participants:

Students
Staff

Institutional Constituencies:

Students
Staff
Trustees
Faculty
Alumni
Donors
Parents

Other Constituencies:

Fans
National Television
Agents
Newspapers
Product advertisers

Outcomes:

Professional Careers

Academic Constituencies

Participants:

Students
Faculty, Staff

Institutional Constituencies:

Students
Staff
Trustees
Faculty
Alumni
Donors
Parents
Research, Instruction

Other Constituencies:

State, Federal Government
Private Employers

Outcomes:

Grad - Professional School
Professional Careers

What Does Society Want from College and Sports?

- Public campaigns around names and mascots, institutional pride through sports program.
- Sports program leverages pride in other institutional achievements.
- Highlight student athletes non-athletic success .
- Events in locations away from campus for alumni and friends.

Take Two: Something Really Cool in the Pool

Ohio State swimmers return to the pool to raise funds and awareness for clean, safe drinking water



Identity



The NCAA, reflecting the expectations of their college and university membership, offers a set of expectations for college sports. These expectations, describe the idealized version of what colleges believe their primary constituencies of students, parents, faculty, staff, governing boards, and society in general want or should want from their intercollegiate athletic programs.

The governance, organization, and regulation of college sports is built around these principles, and as is the case with all fundamental principles, the college sports enterprise sees these as goals to be achieved and reference points for the management of the intercollegiate sports.

The following slides review some of these principles.

What Does Society Want from College and Sports?

NCAA:

PRINCIPLE OF AMATEURISM

Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises.

Amateur College Athletes.

This is a constantly challenged core principle.

Challenged definition marked in Red

To achieve this principle, the colleges created:

- Eligibility Rules,
- Recruitment Rules,
- Pay for Play Rules
- Outside Employment Rules,

What Does Society Want from College and Sports?

Legitimate College Students

The NCAA Division I membership has adopted a comprehensive academic reform package designed to improve the academic success and graduation of all student-athletes. As part of the academic reform movement, the NCAA is committed to helping institutions find educational resources to help student-athletes succeed in and out of the classroom

- Programs to enhance and enforce academic focus of college athletic programs:
- Academic Progress Rates (APR)
 - Graduation Success Rates (GSR)
 - Academic Success Rates (ASR)
 - Academic Support Services and Resources

In 2020-21, 15 teams will be ineligible for the postseason due to their low **Academic Progress Rates**. The penalties were assigned based on student-athlete academic achievement between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

- Postseason ineligibility**
- Alabama A&M:** men's basketball, men's track and field, women's soccer
 - Alabama State:** men's basketball
 - Coppin State:** women's track and field
 - Delaware State:** men's basketball
 - Grambling State:** men's track and field
 - Howard:** football
 - McNeese State:** football
 - Prairie View A&M:** football
 - Southern:** men's cross country, men's track and field
 - Stephen F. Austin:** baseball, football, men's basketball

What Does Society Want from College and Sports?

NCAA Fundamental Principles

The Principle of Student-Athlete Well-Being
The Principle of Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct
The Principle of Rules Compliance
The Principle of Amateurism
The Principle of Competitive Equity
The Principle Governing Recruiting
The Principle Governing Eligibility
The Principle Governing Financial Aid
The Principle Governing Playing and Practice Seasons
The Principle Governing the Economy of Athletics Program Operation

Level Playing Field

These principles are all complex in their definitions and difficult of implementation. The NCAA manual for each division illustrates the complexity of delivering on these principles. Note below the items, from what could be a much longer list, in the process of change.

In process of change

- Divisions,
- Conferences,
- Rules of Play,
- Rules on Scholarships,
- Rules on Student Support,
- Rules on Transfer to Another School

What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?

Winning Programs

Provide best facilities possible



Recruit and support best student athletes

Recruit, support, retain winning coaches, fire losing coaches,



Seek financial support

Mobilize fan base



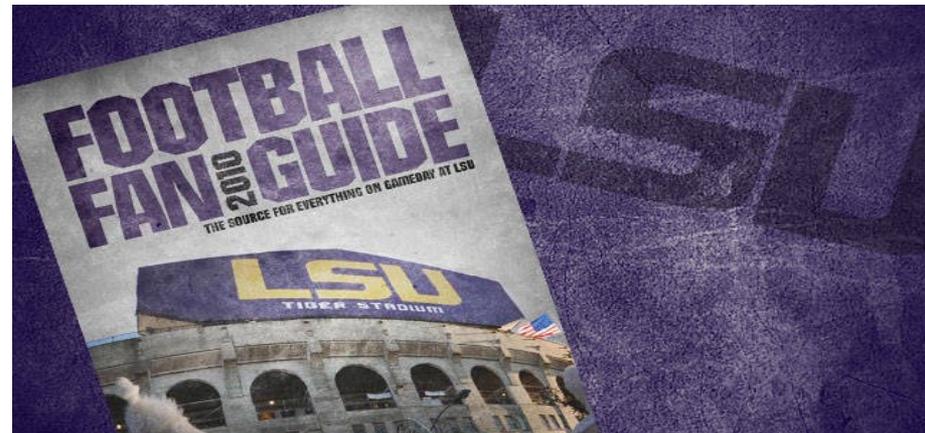
What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?



Quality Players

Provide academic, athletic, and personal support for student athletes with:

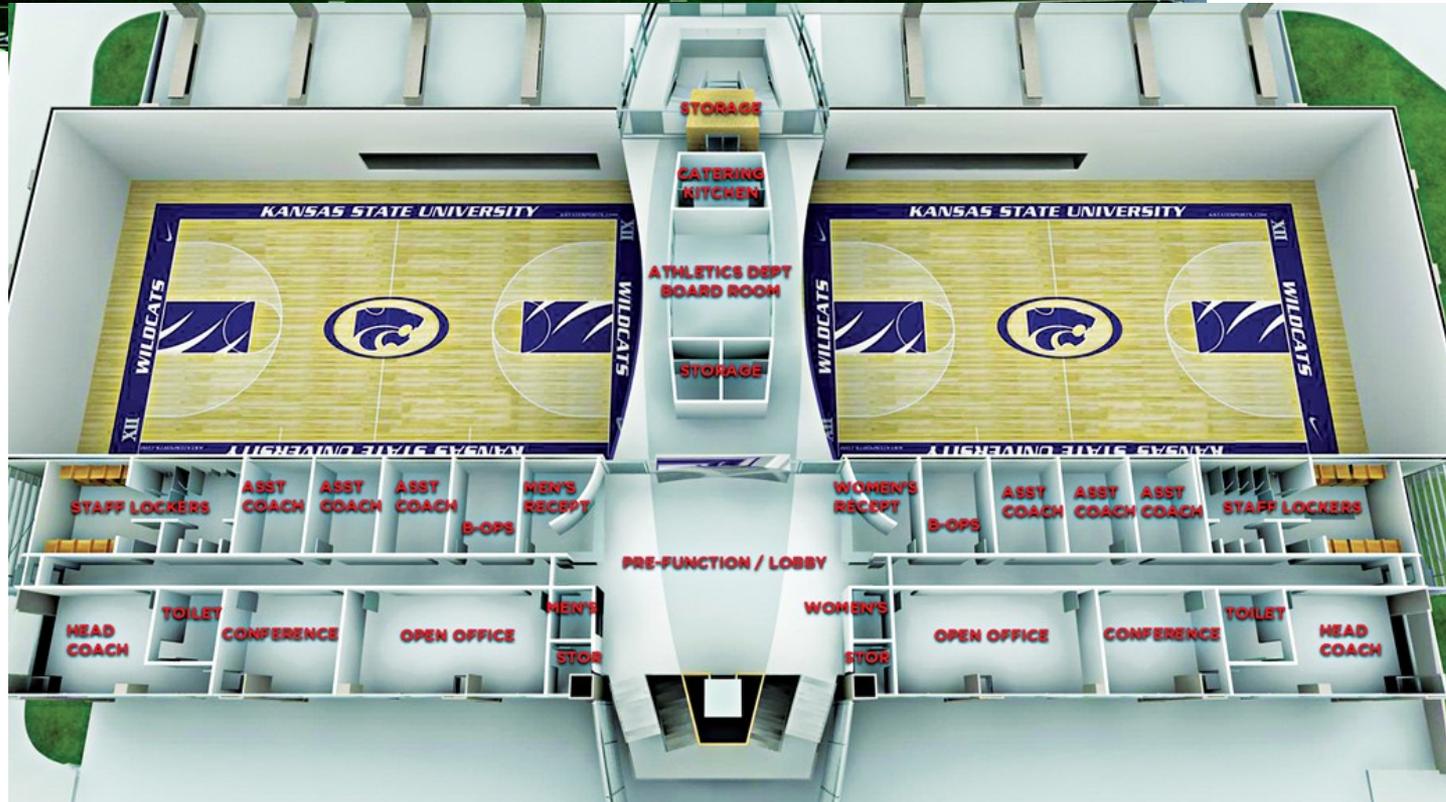
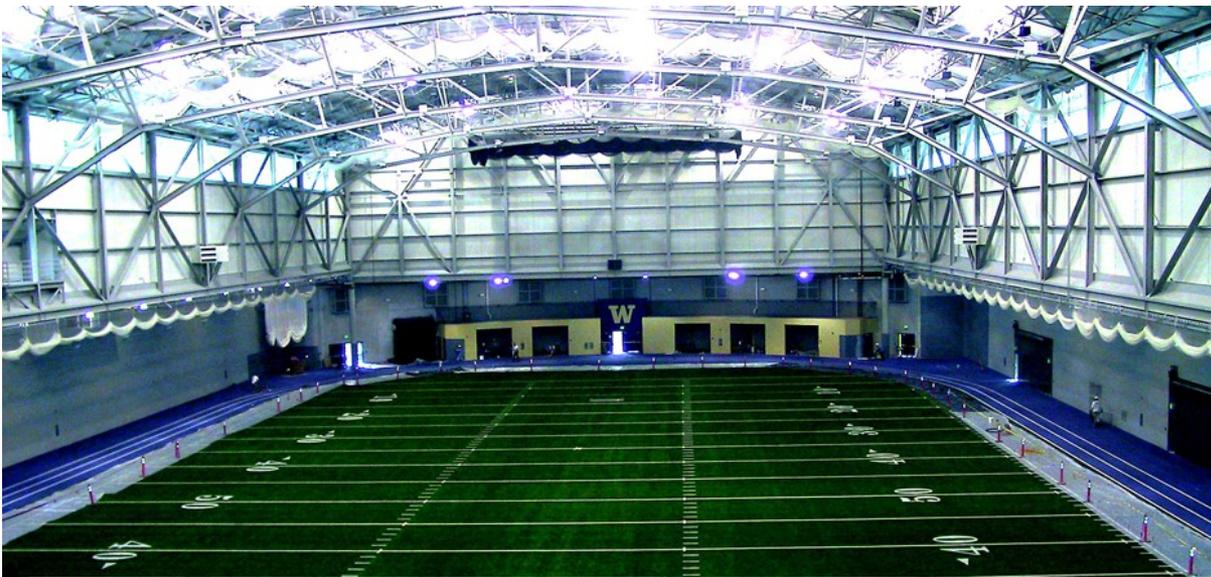
- Scholarships (in process of change)
- Additional pay for college athletes (in process)
- Tutors,
- Trainers,
- Weight rooms and exercise equipment,
- Competition spaces,
- Coaches,
- Media promotion and publicity
- Opportunity to transfer to better school
- Opportunity to gain endorsement revenue



What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?

Highest Quality Facilities

University of Washington
Indoor Football Practice Facility



Iowa State
Men's and
Women's
Combined
Basketball
Practice
Facility

What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?

Celebrity Recognition for Star Student-Athletes and Star Coaches



Statues of Florida Heisman trophy winners (left to right) Tim Tebow (2007), Steve Spurrier (1966), and Danny Wuerffel (1996) stand outside Florida Field

Michigan's Bronze Statue of Bo Schembechler



What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?

Celebrity Recognition for Talented Student Stars

Shaquille O'Neal, LSU



September 30,
2010

What Does Society Want and How Do Colleges Respond?

High Production Values



LSU Sports Television Network
Home | Affiliates
Inside LSU Football
Inside LSU Basketball
Inside Lady Tigers Basketball
Inside LSU Baseball
Tiger Talk
Tiger Tracks on CST

LSU Sports Radio Network
Home | Affiliates
The Les Miles Show
LSU Sixty Radio Show
Subway Fresh Take by Les Miles
The Johnny Jones Show
The Nikki Fargas Show
The Paul Mainieri Show



Build bigger and fancier facilities,
Provide high quality visuals for game on TV or in stadium,
Employ professional media services for websites, streaming video and audio,
Offer professional level radio and television support for games and publicity,
Develop elaborate activities for game day and event day.



**Divergent Expectations Between Sports and Academics:
It may help to look at the high level values of sports
compared to those of academics**



Performance against national norms
Higher for sports

Intellectual value
Higher for academics

Penalty for failure to perform
Higher for sports

Academic reputation value
Higher for academics

Commitment to national competition
Higher for sports

Professional career outcome of process
Higher for academics

Publicity for student performance
Higher for sports

Pay for prof/coach based on student talent
Higher for sports

Post-graduation education
Higher for academics

When we read the many critiques of intercollegiate sports we can compile a checklist of what many observers don't like about how college sports works.

- time commitment of student-athletes to practice and competition reduces academic opportunities
- priority commitment of student-athletes and the institution to sports
- special treatment for student-athletes not available to regular students
- bad behavior of some student-athletes appearing in the news
- high visibility of celebrity athletes exaggerates their importance to the university
- high salaries of big name coaches exceed any reasonable academic or administrative compensation
- professionalized character of televised games make the college games appear professional rather than amateur
- excessive media attention of TV, radio, Internet, and press that undermines academic values as it promotes competitive sports values
- over emphasis on winning at every level that contradicts the college purpose of making every student a success
- operation outside of faculty or most university administrative control makes sports appear as a rogue element in college life
- the high cost and drain on school budget that prevents the development of academic programs

Athletic Budget Subsidies from Public University General Budget Ten Largest Subsidy Institutions

SCHOOL	CONF	TOTAL REVENUE	TOTAL EXPENSES	TOTAL ALLOCATED ▼
Houston	AAC	\$75,049,955	\$73,678,308	\$48,372,196
Connecticut	AAC	\$80,900,404	\$80,814,173	\$43,856,484
James Madison	CAA	\$52,704,654	\$52,704,654	\$42,086,075
Delaware	CAA	\$47,945,793	\$47,947,933	\$41,863,972
Air Force	Mt. West	\$60,009,782	\$54,192,115	\$40,851,962
Massachusetts	A-10	\$49,461,013	\$48,445,234	\$38,931,699
East Carolina	AAC	\$59,970,346	\$56,281,920	\$37,692,722
California-Davis	Big West	\$40,988,440	\$39,562,673	\$32,261,928
Buffalo	MAC	\$45,977,952	\$45,933,053	\$32,128,806
South Florida	AAC	\$55,045,769	\$53,569,756	\$32,033,551

Fundamental Difficulties In Reconciling College Sports with Academic Mission

Intercollegiate Athletics is **not an Academic Activity.**

It is **an Extracurricular Activity**

Colleges defined college sports as a temporary specialized skill requiring no formal, academic training, unlike music or creative writing that were seen as a programs focused on specialized skills requiring serious academic study and training.

Intercollegiate athletics is run on behalf of the universities, but because it is franchised by the NCAA, with the support of the universities, it is not fully controlled by the university. Academic programs, while subject to accreditation, are managed and controlled by the institutions.

College professional sports careers are not linked to any academic programs, nor do they require any academic credential. The only exceptions are professional careers in administration, finance, operations, and the science of athletic performance. Some student-athletes participate in these non-playing academic programs, but that activity is not included within their sports activities.

Athletics operations in some ways resemble sponsored research and academic medicine or teaching hospitals. These are also separate in many ways from the normal operation of the university, especially in finance. Nonetheless, although not completely controlled by the regular university, they are directly linked to a wide range of academic programs and degrees.

Why Do College Sports Have Difficulty Meeting Society's Expectations for a Collegiate Program?

Colleges could not regulate sports, and gave up authority to an external organization that franchised sports back to them, further separating sports from the core academic mission.

Grew so fast and successfully that they exceeded the ability of colleges to integrate sport competitions and training into their academic programs as they integrated music and art, commerce, architecture, or agriculture.

The value of Winning in athletics for almost all constituencies proved more important than any effort to subordinate sports to academic rigor or integrate it into the ordinary business of the university as evidenced by the way sports appears in the separate and distanced web space of almost all American colleges and universities web pages.

Paying the Super Stars: Why We Should Do It

Premise: Big time college sports generates very large amounts of money from TV, ticket sales, shoe contracts, and endorsements and uses that money to pay high compensation to coaches and sports administrators.

Big time college sports depends on student-athlete talent to succeed, and exceptional revenue earned by top programs is derived from the performance of the student-athletes.

Student-athletes now receive some payment in the following ways:

1. **Scholarships** that are worth as much as or more than \$60,000 at major private universities (Stanford for example)
2. **Free endless academic and athletic support** systems with trainers, coaches, weight rooms, medical attention
3. **Very high profile publicity** that enhances their name brands and celebrity recognition for possible professional career after leaving university or for networking in a job search after college.

Argument: Student-athletes should be paid more in recognition of their value to the program and their contribution to the financial rewards of others in the system who earn high salaries.

Issues To Be Resolved If Universities begin Paying Student Athletes for their Athletic Performance

- 1. Which athletes should we pay?** All student athletes, only those in money making sports? Differentially depending on the importance of their performance?
- 2. How should we decide who to pay?** Use draft system like pros?
Create union for players in money-making sports? Allow student athletes to have agents to negotiate compensation with the university?
- 3. How do we reward quality players in sports that do not make money?** Golf, tennis, swimming, track and field, soccer, lacrosse, all women's sports?
- 4. Do we pay players on teams that lose money** as well as those that make money?
- 5. Will we need to move all sports where we pay players out of the university** so that gender equity will not be an issue and so that the not-for-profit nature of college sports competition will be preserved even as we pay student-athletes a market rate?
- 6. Will we create a parallel structure to the NCAA** composed of players and their sports where payment is required, leaving non-paying sports inside the NCAA and managed by the university?
- 7. Will the paid players be required to attend college** or should we just make them age limited to 18-24 years, thereby creating a contained college sponsored minor league?
- 8. How will we maintain identity** between paid sports players and the university when the players are paid, unionized, and governed by an outside agency?
- 9. Will the ability of student athletes to sell their images** and other endorsements create a major significant financial market?
- 10. Can the sale of images and endorsements be isolated** from recruitment and other potential forms of manipulation and corruption?

When we evaluate society's expectations for college sports and the institutional responses, a number of additional questions require careful analysis

- To what extent are society's expectations of college athletics conditioned by the operation of the various professional sports leagues both in the US and internationally?
- To what extent are society's expectations of college athletics confused by the transformation of the Olympics that eliminated any pretense of amateur competition?
- To what extent are society's concerns about college athletics unfair as the university has other enterprises that seek funding outside, pay very high salaries to competitive participants. Take, for example, commercialization of technology invented by students and faculty, intense focus on acquiring external funding for research and providing high salaries to those who are successful (with the support of low paid student work), heavy investments in clinical medicine with hospitals and drug development that produces large profits and high salaries, and the obviously large salaries paid to academic superstars, medical administrators, other university administration, and university presidents when regular faculty and student workers paid relatively low compensation.
- How do the very few institutions without intercollegiate athletics avoid participating and what do they create for students in the place of intercollegiate sports?

As always, issues of money complicate much discussion about values and fairness.