

Integration and the College Sports Project
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Good evening everyone and thanks for agreeing to participate in the first integration institute sponsored by the College Sports Project (CSP). Your interest and engagement are deeply appreciated.

As Gene Tobin noted, this is a very important moment in the life of the College Sports Project. I want to talk a bit about the history of the project and what your presence here means to those of us who have been involved in CSP from the outset.

The College Sports Project began rather humbly as a conversation among a small number of concerned individuals (college presidents, current and former athletic directors, foundation officials from Mellon and Spencer) in the wake of the publication of *The Game of Life* and *Reclaiming the Game*. That conversation was formed around a question: what were the prospects—were there any prospects—for prompting a national dialogue about the role of athletics at Division III institutions? Somewhat further in the background of that question was a faint aspiration that such a dialogue might inspire a reform movement involving a significant part of the NCAA's Division III membership.

This initial question and aspiration were motivated by two realizations: first, an understanding of the importance of intercollegiate athletics to many, perhaps most, of the members of the NCAA Division III universe, and particularly to those public and private residential colleges among us; and second, a deep and growing concern that, in the language of the studies that brought us together, a growing “divide” between our academic and athletic programs was threatening the integrity of college sports and our fundamental educational purposes.

A great deal has happened since those early conversations. One of the first and most important was the effort to share our thoughts and aspirations with other institutional leaders within Division III in order to gauge the appetite for additional dialogue and reform. That sharing took several forms. Some of you were involved in brainstorming sessions that occurred in Chicago and New York a year or so ago. Those sessions led to the decision to pursue two tracks of further study, conversation and initiative: the track of “representativeness” (are student athletes representative of our student bodies, particularly in the area of academic performance?) and the track of “integration” (how well do our athletic programs mesh with the academic programs and purposes of our institutions?). They also led to the establishment of two CSP advisory groups that would guide further progress on the representativeness and integration efforts.

Another very important avenue of conversation involved the NCAA. Some of you attended, as I did, the NCAA convention in Nashville in early 2004. Very important reforms were adopted at that meeting. But there were also signs that many institutions wanted to explore additional forms of study and change. The NCAA organization, and Division III President Dan Dutcher, in particular, have been very involved in subsequent CSP efforts. This partnership has been extremely productive and positive.

Our last step was to identify the universe of institutions that would be interested in pursuing CSP-led initiatives. Last spring the CSP coordinating committee issued an invitation to the entire NCAA Division III membership. To date, roughly 135 institutions have committed to support and further efforts. The CSP now has a formal membership consisting of well over one-third of the Division.

This gathering is the first in a series of workshops devoted to the theme of integration. We hope to engage the entire membership of CSP in similar discussions over the next several years. Simultaneously, and as many of you know, the representativeness initiative is moving ahead. Member institutions will soon be sharing data with the CSP data center at Northwestern University. The analysis of that data will tell us a great deal about how well student athletes are doing at our institutions, relative to our entire student bodies, and particularly with regard to academic outcomes.

Our progress in a relatively short period of time is very gratifying. And it demonstrates, I think, that there is indeed a good deal of appetite, national in its scope, for the kinds of discussions we have are having here. I should note the fine work of Gene Tobin in moving this effort forward. Without his considerable talent and energy, we would not be nearly as far along as we are.

I would like to make one final personal comment on this project relating to my own institutional setting, Colby College, and the work we have done there on the issues of representativeness and integration. I was a three-sport student athlete in college and several years ago I didn't think I had much to learn about athletics. But one of the unanticipated benefits of my involvement has been a considerably deepened understanding of the *institutional* significance of our athletic programs. We all know how much learning takes place outside the classroom, especially at residential colleges, and our athletic programs are especially noteworthy in this regard. That is why there is so much at stake in the reform efforts we are engaged in. If we cannot ensure the alignment of athletics with fundamental educational purposes, then we are missing an immensely rich opportunity. We have too much invested, and too much to lose, in other words, to fail in this enterprise.

I have also learned that success will be a two-way street. As we work with coaches and student athletes to ensure a sense of proportion and balance in the athletic enterprise, we must also remind our faculties of the important educational values of sports. As Myles Brand once said in a talk to the presidents of the New England Small College Athletic Conference, we have to get beyond a certain remnant of the Cartesian dualism that tells us that the cultivation of the mind and the body are opposing enterprises.

Thanks again for being here. I look forward to our conversations.