



Summary - 17th Annual Meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA): *How Athletic Departments Function and the Faculty's Role in the Process*

Louisiana State University (LSU)

February 14 – 15, 2020

Athletics Department administrators and staff detailed their responsibilities and role at LSU, and shared their experiences on best practices to support recruitment, academic success, retention, graduation, and personal and professional development of student-athletes. They highlighted the value of transparency in intercollegiate athletics, and the importance of their relationships and collaborations with campus staff who are their counterparts, and with faculty. Transparency included sharing the actual value of services provided to student-athletes, including those not on scholarship. An LSU student-athlete described the significant positive impact and value of her experience. She stressed that the more you put into it, the more you get out of it, and she reminded faculty that even though student-athletes receive many resources, they are still human and they are young. They still have many choices to make and must live with their decisions. A past faculty senate president for LSU detailed impressions of interactions with the Athletics Department and encouraged faculty to form collaborations, insist on transparency, especially related to budgets, and make sure that academic successes are mentioned as often as athletic successes.

Representatives from the NCAA, The Drake Group, and the Knight Commission talked about current issues where reform is needed, recent and pending state and federal legislation on Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL), efforts of the NCAA to investigate problems that had been identified and solicit feedback from stakeholders, and finances of university athletic programs.

Common themes centered on past reforms in intercollegiate athletics and current best practices that have enhanced student success, including the value of having the director of the academic center report to an academic administrator, a guest coach program that included faculty and staff, weekly academic reports of student-athletes to coaches, student assessments to develop academic programs. Presenters shared a commitment to the importance of a quality education for student athletes. They recognized components of the college experience for non-athletes that were difficult to duplicate for student-athletes, including study abroad and internships, as well as job placement after LSU, and the pros and cons of online courses.

Opinions among presenters and participants varied, but there was general agreement that reforms are needed in intercollegiate athletics, and the final outcomes on NIL will require continued communication between groups interested in the welfare of student-athletes. To this end, *David Ridpath (The Drake Group) urged support for federal bill, HR4428, known as the Shalala Bill, to establish a 2-year Presidential Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics to investigate athletics funding, the antitrust exemption, Name, Image and Likeness, limits for coach salaries and booster donations, and more.* <https://www.thedrakegroup.org/tell-congress/read-the-proposed-bill/>.