

We are mindful of the venerable traditions in American intercollegiate athletics. We are also aware that the oldest of these traditions is that of competitions in sport by ordinary students, admitted to their institutions through normal procedures, and pursuing customary educational goals in a manner representative of the entire student body of the institution they attend. This tradition has been eroded over the years, and the practices of subsidized intercollegiate athletics have deteriorated to the point where they often do harm to the reputations of the institutions which house and support them.

The most cursory glance at a newspaper will convince a person of sound judgment that subsidized athletics at American institutions of higher learning is beset by scandals so numerous that it is pointless to try to enumerate them. With each passing day these scandals easily transcend in number and severity the limits of what might reasonably be imagined. What has transpired in our own Southwest Conference alone in recent months should be enough to inspire a feeling of collective shame in the faculties of the member institutions.

The practice of recruiting high school students solely for their sporting skills and then, as is too often the case, admitting them to a university even though their grades and test scores fall below the lowest level acceptable for ordinary candidates for admission, does injury not only to the schools which allow this practice. It also harms those children who are encouraged to neglect the development of their minds and to rely only on their physical prowess, in the vain hope that they will nevertheless be afforded a higher education through sports. The athletes admitted under special conditions are all too often unable to derive meaningful benefit from attendance at an institution of higher learning. We have seen instances at our own university where such athletes have been cast adrift, without prospects and without an education as soon as their speed, strength, agility, or height has been exploited by the athletic establishment, which for a few brief years pays them and cheers them on. Of all institutions found in this republic, universities should be the last to condone the rampant corruption, deceit, and exploitation that saturates the business of intercollegiate athletics. It is not the duty and destiny of this place to serve as a minor league franchise for professional sports organizations or as the provider of vicarious pleasure to those who assign an exaggerated importance to the fortunes of some varsity team. Our mission as teacher-scholars is to teach ourselves and our students in a spirit of free and honest inquiry. We do violence to this spirit when we turn a blind eye to offenses committed in the name of intercollegiate athletics. Nor can we expect morality to be imposed on us by some external agency. We must begin the process of cleaning our own house and reclaiming our goodness.

Be it therefore resolved--

that the University of Houston will stop the practice of special admissions for intercollegiate athletes as of

September 1, 1992;

that no athletic scholarships will be awarded by this institution as of September 1, 1992;

that the University of Houston's Faculty Senate will request that the Student Senate of this institution give consideration to joining us in our resolution;

and that the Executive Committee of our Faculty Senate should communicate our views to representative faculty bodies of the other Southwest Conference member institutions and urge them to join us in the process of reestablishing intercollegiate athletics in the Southwest Conference on a basis that is fully consonant with the aims and traditions of universities.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Walsh (HFA)