

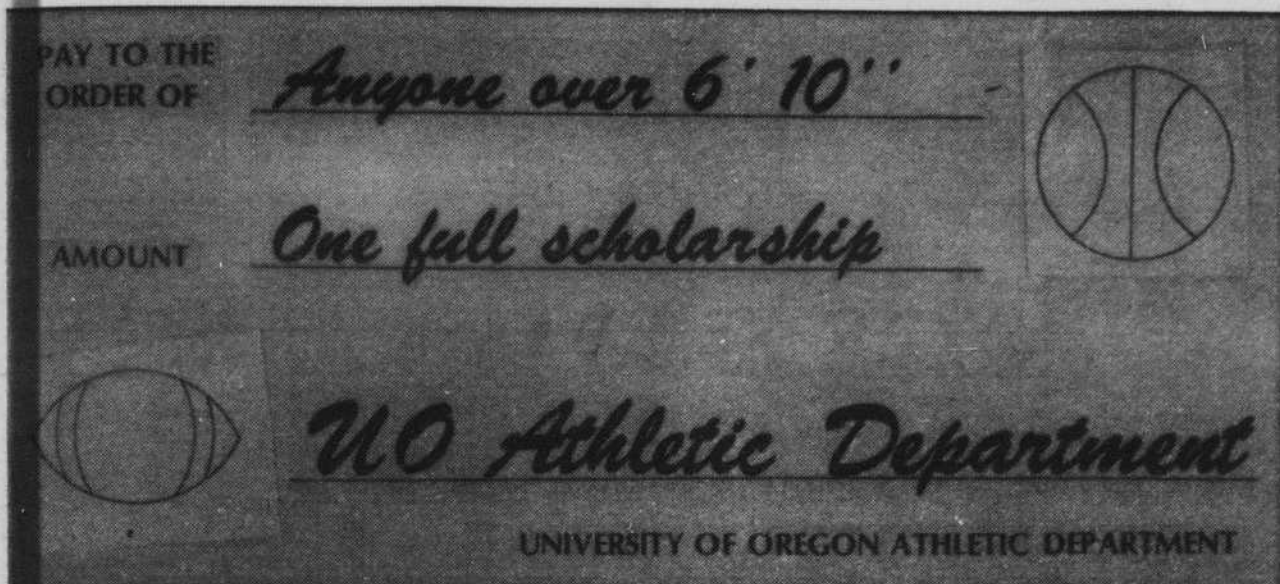


Photo by Ken Sands

Pictured above from the left are student-athletes Saul Chessin, Pat Mullen and Dave Villaseñor. The trio share an apartment, and although none of them are on scholarships, they manage to survive. (They believe) that if scholarships are given, the money should be evenly distributed.

Athletes survive despite absence of scholarships

The Villaseñor-Chessin-Mullen household is broke most of the time. All three are athletes and none of them have athletic scholarships.

Dave Villaseñor was recruited last year as a parallel bars specialist in gymnastics. Coach Bill Ballester awarded the Los Angeles native with a scholarship last year, but this year Villaseñor has to make it on his own.

A senior in eligibility, Villaseñor went to Pasadena City College for two years. Right now gymnastics is his life. "The only reason that I came here was for gymnastics," he says.

Rent is cheap when a two-bedroom apartment is split three ways, but money is scarce. Out-of-state tuition is not cheap and Villaseñor relies on financial aid to get by. He gets a \$700 grant, a \$1300 loan and is eligible for \$1050 in work-study money this year.

His parents can't afford to help him. "My parents are not helping — they get Social Security and Welfare," he says. In fact, this summer Villaseñor had to help out his struggling family financially. "They took away the Welfare and my father can't get his pension until he is 65."

So the diminutive gymnast survives on his work-study job and food stamps.

Saul Chessin was the second-rated tennis player on the University of Montana team last spring. This year he decided to attend the University of Oregon and sit out a year of eligibility.

The University's biology department is what drew Chessin to Eugene, but he is also determined to compete after the year lay-off. "Next year I'll try out for the team, but the big problem is not being able to compete until then," he says.

Chessin is enrolled at the University through the National Student Exchange, so he is paying in-state tuition. This quarter though, he is getting no financial aid from the University.

"I'm getting by on funds I'd saved and food stamps," he says. He hopes to receive financial aid for the next two terms, but will also try to find employment. "I'm hoping to get a part-time job and that means I won't play tennis very much," he says.

Until he finds a job, he admits, there is no room for frivolous spending. "All I have left is a couple hundred dollars at home, but I was hoping to save that for tuition next quarter," he says.

He believes that a 15-20 hour-per-week job will not hinder his studies. "I worked last year when I played tennis and went to school," he says.

Next year Chessin will have to pay out-of-state tuition, which is about triple what he is paying this year. "Next year I think I'll get aid, borrow from my parents or get a student loan," he says.

Pat Mullen, a sophomore gymnast from Missoula, Montana, knows Chessin from home, and knows Villaseñor from last year's team. Mullen, a walk-on, is without a scholarship.

Last year he was the number five man on the high bar and this year is "somewhere in the top seven." Oregon provided a challenge for Mullen, who wanted to go to a good school that had a good gymnastics team. "I wanted to see what the team was like and give it a shot to see how I could do," he says.

Mullen is also strapped for money — and time. He not only carries a full load of classes, but he works out every day with the team, and works in the Athletic Department in a work-study position. Since he pays out-of-state tuition and his parents give little support, Mullen is forced to take out loans as part of his financial aid.

Last year Mullen got an \$1100 loan, in addition to a federal grant. This year he is receiving a \$1,500 loan, a \$1,050 grant and is eligible for \$1,200 in work-study.

"I'll make it this year for sure, but next year I'll try to be independent. I don't want any more loans," he says. Again, the utilization of food stamps by the household helps out. "Last week we ran out of food stamps, and didn't have any food for three days," says Mullen.

Despite the inconveniences, all three believe their efforts are worthwhile and the money they need will come from somewhere.

They do believe that it could be easier. Scholarships awarded to football and basketball players are very rare in the "minor sports" and they believe this is unfair. "Athletes should be helped in some way for the time they put in, and scholarships should be divided a little more evenly," Mullen says.

Chessin agrees. "Every athlete puts in just as much work." He also believes that students who put in extra time in their specialties be given a financial break. "People like band students should get a break too."

The difference in what two schools offered could be substantially different," he states.

Need would be determined initially, by an outside source (such as the Financial Aid Form), the university would make-up the difference between student's needs and all expenses.

That might have been a valid argument 10 years ago, but every institution can now determine from an outside source what the need is," says Basye.

Many people point out that the NCAA once tried this philosophy, promptly lost its dominance in football. The difference is that it was a "unilateral disarmament," it created an imbalance with the rest of the NCAA schools.

Other people say that some athletes could not afford college without a scholarship. This is untrue. Under current NCAA rules, a school can pay only tuition, room, board, books and fees. Under the need system, the student is eligible to receive total living expenses, which includes tuition and personal expenses.

Anyone that qualifies for aid would receive enough to get by

and in some cases will receive more than a full athletic scholarship.

Football coach Rich Brooks believes that as many as 50 percent of his athletes would qualify for more than an athletic scholarship and no money would actually be saved.

Basye disagrees. "It has been proven that the student-athlete is very representative of the student body as a whole," he says.

"Athletes in some cases can get more money by not being on a scholarship. There are a lot of injustices both ways," says Brooks. Injustices should be dealt with and the need funding system would do so effectively.

Haney went to the University of Pennsylvania before they gave scholarships and he believes the need system is fair, but it would place him in a difficult situation. "If we got down to morality, I'd have a hard time saying that I did not feel uncomfortable giving scholarships. But I have two ways of looking at it. When I have to go out and recruit, I can make a great reason for it," he says.

Such are the pressures of a

"big-time" college coach. With so much pressure to win, a coach's job may depend on his recruiting ability.

The need system will not change recruiting. Each school would have the same financial aid available to the incoming athlete and strong sanctions against offenders would stop cheating.

The Ivy League has always been on the need system, and although its schools are not major competitors, the level of competition within the league is great. When the entire NCAA goes on the need system, the quality of play will remain the same.

The new proposal will cut scholarships down to tuition only in all sports except football and basketball. Although this is only a half-hearted attempt to achieve equality, it is a step in the right direction and should be supported.

Sometime soon the change will occur. It is only a matter of time until the financial crunch forces the last few dollars out of the athletic department's scholarship budget.

Stories by Ken Sands. Cover photo by Keith Allen.

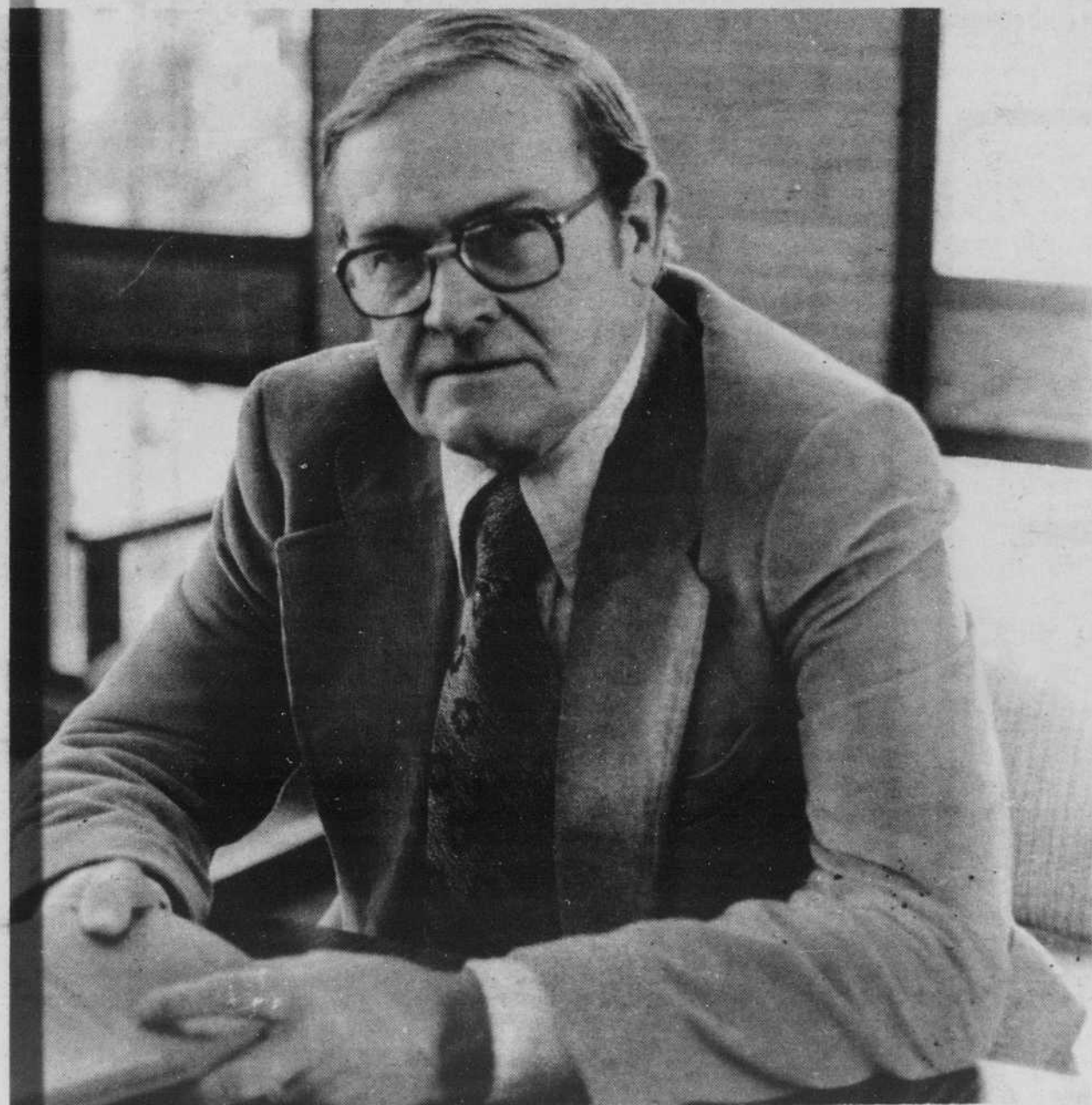


Photo by Keith Allen

Dell Basye, the faculty representative to the NCAA, believes that all athletes should be given financial aid on the basis of their need, rather than because of their abilities. Basye is trying to pass legislation in the NCAA regarding this matter. "... it saves money, and ... it treats all students alike," he says.