

opinion

A perspective on athletics

The National Collegiate Athletic Association has moved toward setting priorities between "college" and "athletics." "College" headed the priority list last week in the association's adoption of a measure to require NCAA athletes to meet minimum admission criteria.

The requirements were set at a 2.0 grade point average, a high school "core curriculum" of math, English, social and physical sciences and a SAT score of 700 or ACT score of 15.

The association's ruling was an acknowledgement that the business of colleges and universities is to teach, not to be an entertainment industry or a training program for professional sports. As Pres. Paul Olum said in a recent interview, "We're an academic institution first."

The NCAA's ruling is a good first step toward putting academics and sports in perspective.

The final ruling also stipulates that athletes must declare and fulfill course requirements toward a degree to remain eligible. This means they can not take a series of "Mickey Mouse courses" to remain eligible.

The NCAA has provided a loophole for the new admission requirements. It enables Division I (Pac-10 and other conferences) to offer scholarships to athletes who do not meet the minimum criteria. The athletes must sit out their first year and prove they can handle college coursework.

The ruling has been called racist by black educators — mostly from small state universities. They consider the measure discriminatory against black athletes. They argue these athletes come from poorly-funded school districts and hence will be ineligible for recruitment because of their poor grades and SAT scores.

The ruling should help these athletes. Traditionally, the athletes who did not have the background to attend a major institution of higher education (like the NCAA's Division I schools) have been used by these institutions.

They are captured by recruiters, driven to excel, overplayed and then discarded at the first major injury, series of poor grades or recruitment of a better star. They leave college in their early twenties — without degrees and usually without a ticket into professional sports.

The University has had its own handful of athletes like former Oregon quarterback Dana Hill who was unprepared for life at a major university and ended up leaving.

As University athletic director Rick Bay noted last week, universities have a responsibility to ask "who has a realistic chance of succeeding in college?"

And those athletes who do not have a realistic chance should not be recruited and scholarshiped to play for a school which they would never have attended without their athletic prowess and from which they will never be able to graduate.



'CHARLENE, THE FEDERAL TEENAGE CONTRACEPTIVE POLICE SAY YOU'VE BEEN INQUIRING ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL — NOT THAT AWFUL DEPO-PROVERA, I HOPE!'

letters

Interdiscipline

I would like to compliment the Emerald's recent series of articles by Sandy Johnstone on interdisciplinary research. The articles did a good job of showing the value of overlapping disciplines in both education and research.

Since 1974, a rare opportunity has existed at the University for undergraduates of all majors to participate in an interdisciplinary program at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology near Coos Bay.

The program is called People and the Oregon Coast (POC) and students participating in it live and study in the small fishing community of Charleston, only a jog away from the ocean.

POC offers a means of studying biology, political science, geography and landscape architecture in a way that integrates all four disciplines; students apply what they learn in an interdisciplinary research project of their own choice.

Topics for projects are limitless, and usually students choose projects which focus on local issues and problems.

It's often easy to feel that academic responsibilities on the main campus in Eugene pull one away from possibilities of community involvement, but the project work done by students in POC encourages involvement with local people and in community problem-solving.

Equally valuable, these projects also crystallize the fact that few problems are approached and solved effectively from only one viewpoint. Whether a biologist, a journalist, a physicist — all come to realize that environmental, political, geographical and economic angles of a problem must be examined carefully before wise and sensitive decisions can be made.

The program happens each fall term. Additional information can be obtained in Suite One, EMU.

Linda Mutch
senior biology

Superdiscipline

It might be easier to digest Sandy Johnstone's thought-provoking series on interdisciplinary studies if we sharpen the semantics a bit.

The everyday phrase of "interdisciplinary" is used to describe two different concepts.

In the first we talk about a disciplinary narrow field of study which, however, happens to fall in between two of the traditional disciplinary designations, or constitutes a region of overlap between two traditional disciplines which came about in

the course of the evolution of these disciplines. Of the examples given by Johnstone, chemical physics is in this category of literally *interdisciplinary* efforts.

The second concept pertains to a usually problem-oriented research effort in which the nature of the problem calls for ingredients from a large number of disciplines. International studies could serve as an example. We should really call this category *superdisciplinary* studies.

The characteristics of the two types of studies are quite different. The first is quite similar to the conventional fields, the second quite different, with a research methodology of its own.

The first type continues in the direction of specialization of knowledge, while the second type moves toward integration of knowledge.

Instances of the first type have been in evidence throughout the history of knowledge, while the second type has been on the upswing only in recent times when our interest has been increasing in the "systems approach" to knowledge.

Instituting the second type is much more difficult in the university environment, and therefore it has, in general, been relegated mainly to the best private universities in the country which have a suitable faculty and a relatively light bureaucratic overstructure.

It is to the credit of the University that it has also begun to develop in this direction.

Michael Moravcsik
professor, physics

letters

Leading cheers

Why doesn't the University rally squad lead cheers or at least show up at the Women's basketball games?

Kathleen Downey
member, pep band

Death penalty

A lot of myths exist concerning the death penalty. Since Gov. Vic Atiyeh favors its reinstatement, I'd like to cover several points:

Myth Number One: Capital punishment doesn't prevent crime.

Fact Number One: There is a high rate of recidivism (return to violent crime) among paroled murderers. If these convicted murderers were given the death penalty there would be no chance for them to hurt anyone else. For instance, Gary Gillmore, after being executed several years ago, certainly hasn't been able to kill anyone else.

Myth Number Two: The death

penalty is cruel and unusual punishment and therefore unconstitutional.

Fact: Before, during and after the Eighth Amendment was adopted in 1791 execution for murder was common. In Gregg vs. Georgia, 428 U.S. 153 (1976) the Supreme Court, through Justice Stewart, wrote: "We now hold that the punishment of death does not invariably violate the constitution." He further stated: "The imposition of the death penalty for the crime of murder has a long history of acceptance both in the United States and in England."

Myth Three: The death penalty is a ritual which merely serves to satisfy "barbaric" lusts for vengeance.

Fact: The primary purpose the death penalty served throughout history was to eliminate murderous elements and to protect innocent citizens. Isn't it better to execute 100 murderers if there is even the slightest chance it could protect just one innocent person's life in the

future?

That's certainly more than sufficient justification in my opinion.

Let's stop freeing murderers and, instead, give them the punishment they deserve. It's more civilized to maintain capital punishment than to allow murderers the chance to prey on society again.

Michael Cross
senior, political science

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