

SPORTS

Presidents had their way at NCAA convention

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Presidents of colleges and universities across the country came to last week's NCAA convention in Nashville, Tenn. with a long list of reforms and something to prove to the rest of the nation.

They left with smiles on their faces, just about everything on their list enacted and the knowledge that they were, once again, in charge.

"If they offered legislation, it passed," Bill Byrne, Oregon's athletic director said. "They were there in force and they were organized."

"They wanted to show that they were the boss," Byrne said. "I always thought they were."

The legislation that Byrne is talking about falls into three

main categories: cost-cutting, limiting time commitments on athletes and a restructuring of Division I athletics.

The biggest and most controversial area of reform involves cost-cutting, with coaching staffs and scholarships absorbing the hardest hits.

By August of 1992, Division I schools will be allowed no more than eight full-time assistant football coaches. Oregon's football staff currently has nine full-time assistants, so Duck Coach Rich Brooks will have to get along without the services of one full-time coach.

Scholarships were cut by 10 percent for all Division I sports over the next three years. Oregon's 95 football scholarships will be trimmed to 85 over the next three seasons while the men's basketball scholarships will be lowered to 13 over the

next two years, two fewer than they have now.

Byrne isn't happy about the cuts, but he said something had to be done.

"You hate to see this happen," Byrne said, "but only 12 schools in the country are operating in the black and we're not one of them."

'I get angry when people take cheap shots at the athletic department. College athletics gets a black eye that it doesn't deserve.'

— Myles Brand

"There are two ways to reduce expenses — cut personnel and cut scholarships — and we did both," he said.

The NCAA also took a big step toward putting the student

back into student-athletes at the convention by approving a 20-hour limit for playing and practicing per week for in-season athletes and an eight-hour a week limit for off-season athletes.

"I was very interested and supportive of reducing time requirements for student-ath-

letes," Byrne said.

The time limits won't dramatically affect programs at the University, Byrne said, because, "the sports most affected by the time limits are swimming, water polo, diving and gymnastics, and we don't have any of those sports," Byrne said.

Byrne said another reason for the stronger effort by the 44-member NCAA Presidents Commission was that they had lost key votes in previous conventions and weren't going to let it happen again.

University President Myles

Brand agreed with Byrne's statement saying, "In 1987, a similar attempt to reform was made but the athletic directors of some schools and conferences managed to derail the agenda. There was some concern that this could happen again."

"There was a feeling that if the presidents couldn't control the agenda that Congress would," Brand said.

He was quick to note that the athletic directors and conferences who opposed these reforms didn't include most of the schools on the West Coast.

"The Southeastern Conference and other southern conferences do not share the same opinion as the Pac-10 and Big 10 conferences," Brand said.

In addition to the threat of intervention by Congress and the ghost of conventions past, the commission also faced their tarnished reputation.

"I get angry when people take cheap shots at the athletic department," Brand said. "College athletics gets a black eye that it doesn't deserve."

"Everytime UNLV, Oklahoma, Florida, Illinois or Maryland does something wrong, the other 105 schools pay for it."

human services organizations sponsoring informational sessions on tax reform in Salem this weekend. A "tax and budget teach-in" will be held at Willamette University Law School on Saturday morning before a march and rally on the steps of the Capitol at 1 p.m.

The Heart of Oregon Coalition, which includes groups such as the Oregon Public Employees Union and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, should also provide support for higher education this session, Pinckney said.

By presenting a united front, coalition members hope to convince legislators of the importance of all state and local government services, she said. "We're agreeing to not say, 'cut them, not us,'" she said.

But most of all, student power is "absolutely critical" for success in the Legislature, Pinckney said.

OSL is sponsoring a statewide student lobby day in the Capitol on Feb. 5, when it plans to have teams of students visit legislators and present them with petitions.

Stickel and Manning said they are trying to arrange transportation for 1,000 students from the University to "fill the steps of the Capitol" at a rally to be held that day.



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ney said. At the University, tuition increased 35 percent during the last recession, and several programs were eliminated or consolidated with others.

"Preserving quality is becoming very difficult," Manning said.

Despite the gloomy figures, Manning and Stickel said they share Pinckney's optimism for the current legislative session.

"It could be a positive change for the system," Manning said. "Property taxes were an unfair burden on property owners and also made it difficult to fund K-12 education and higher education."

OSL's top priority will be to find replacement revenue to make up for the property tax funds that will no longer be available for higher education funding, Pinckney said.

Among the options for replacement funding are a gross receipts tax on business revenue, an increase in state corporate income tax, a change in the structure of the state's personal income tax and a sales tax.

"I have concerns about going strictly to a sales tax," Pinckney said. "The poorer you are the more you pay," which would especially affect students, she said.

OSL is part of a coalition of

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