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Athletics

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olution, and added that University athletics have also been part of the school's overall mission.

Faculty senates at the Arizona State University, University of California at Berkeley, Washington State University and Oregon State University have approved versions of the resolutions. The University of Oregon Senate will decide on the resolution at its meeting today at 3 p.m. in 123 Pacific.

The resolution states that athletics at National Collegiate Athletics Association Division I schools are "undergoing rapid expansion and commercialization," which is resulting in an "arms race" that is becoming difficult to control. To help solve the problem, the resolution calls for "serious discussions" by presidents and chancellors of Pac-10 universities to develop an "appropriate strategy and its implementation."

Momentum for the resolution grew out of a larger call for reform initiated by Indiana University President Myles Brand, who served as the University of Oregon president from 1989 to 1994. In a speech delivered to the National Press Club in January and in other essays, Brand has asked other university presidents to protect the benefits of athletics from the negative influences of the entertainment industry. Brand has stressed that universities often enter into a spending race to field the most competitive athletic teams.

Contacted at Indiana University, Brand said he applauded the efforts of both Earl and President Dave Frohnmayer for providing leadership in confronting the issue.

"Athletics is an important and vital part of Pac-10 universities," he said. "But it should never replace the priority for academics. A sense of proportion is a requirement for all first-class universities."

One part of the resolution to be voted on today is an endorsement of Brand's arguments.

Williford said all of the University improvements in athletic facilities have just been to bring the school up to the same level as other institutions.

"It was an attempt to come up to standard with everyone else," he said.

When the University built the Moshofsky Center in August 1998, Williford said it was simply to combat the rainy Oregon weather, not to outpace other schools. He added that some schools may now feel they also need an indoor practice center, but Williford said this still wasn't an arms race.

The improvements were also all funded by private dollars, Williford said, and he believes the University did not choose between funding athletics and funding academics.

In an interview following Brand's January speech, Frohnmayer, who is the Pac-10 representative to the NCAA, said the issue is highly complex when one takes into account the lure of professional sports, the large amounts of money generated by collegiate athletics and the emphasis placed by the media on athletics. But he said he has already been working on the issue with other presidents.

"There's a lot of activity at the cooperative level," he said. "It's one of those issues you don't solve on your own."

Frohnmayer said University athletes already enjoy a high graduation level because coaches place a strong emphasis on ensuring their athletes study as hard as they play.

"My sense is that athletics is better integrated here than in other states," he said.

Recently, Frohnmayer has reaffirmed his support for some levels of reform, but also warned that anti-trust laws may impede some joint efforts initiated by the Pac-10.

Earl said he understands anti-trust laws may prove to be an obstacle, but he said there are some steps that can be taken now. He said these could include scaling back the media hype and commercialism that frequently surround major athletic events and

also ensuring those events do not conflict with the players' academic schedules.

At its April 11 meeting, the University Senate approved a resolution that criticized the athletic departments of both the University and OSU for scheduling this fall's Civil War game at the end of Dead Week.

The reforms could work if all the institutions involved took the steps together, Williford said.

"It appears to be the sentiment among all schools that if everyone would take these actions, it could succeed," he said. "I think you'd find few administrators or athletic personnel who'd disagree with that."

He said the resolution is one more example of how the Pac-10 has "attempted to be a leader in keeping athletics in control."

While Earl said solving the problems with collegiate athletics is just common sense, he said he was pleased to see the joint effort by faculty taking shape.

"The faculties are in a good position to step out front and call the meeting to order and bring the issue under control," he said.

Henry Sayre, a professor of art history who serves as OSU Faculty Senate president, said "there was very little discussion" when the OSU senate voted nearly unanimously to approve the resolution May 3. He said there is so much support for the resolution because while faculty members do appreciate the value of athletics, they also believe it is quickly getting out of control.

"The thing most of us are concerned about is that increasingly, universities are thought of and identified by athletics and not their academics," he said.

In addition to the growing glamour of collegiate athletics, Sayre said schools need to prevent their athletes from losing sight of the primary reason for attending college—to receive an education.

"If we're a minor-league franchise for the professional teams, then we're in trouble," he said.



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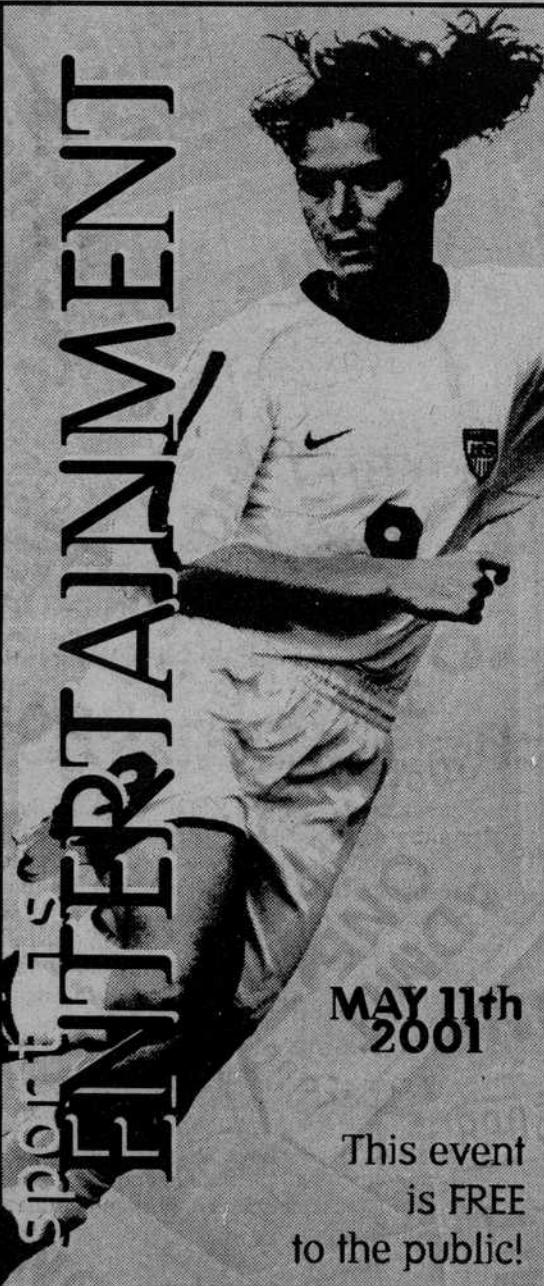
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