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18) "Life On and Off the Field", moderated by Len Elmore

MR. ELMORE: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the third and final panel of today's proceeding. And the title of this panel is Life On and Off the Field. Now, we've had an opportunity to delve into the critical issues as they pertain to student-athletes and we've done so because it's that important.

And as Myles Brand once articulated, student-athletes must be the center of the attention, the focus.

Now, the discussions that we're head today in the panels Value and Choices, [Recruiting] Ethics and Athlete Welfare, those two panels were enlightening and they were provocative. Now, we learned that we have miles to go in creating environments where we can be confident that student-athletes possess appropriate core values that reflect respect and propriety and decision making capabilities. We also learned about the good, the bad and the ugly of the recruiting practices in college sports.

The pressures, mostly undue pressures, placed on recruits and families and the lengths to which programs will go to attract talented student-athletes were some of the things we learned about and, sadly, often the practices are not reflective of the university principles, their values and their missions.

Again, we have miles to go before we can be rest assured that the processes entrusted to educators and, yes, coaches and athletics administrators are educators, are conducted in a manner that communicates ethics, honesty and the values to the young people to whom they are so responsible.

Now, the panel Life and Off the Field is intended to be the culmination of this program to discover what student-athletes are experiencing on a day to day basis. What do they think of all this, what do they believe their welfare is all about and should it be at the forefront and what can be done to enhance their experiences. These and other areas are the things that we'd like to explore with this particular panel.

Now, joining us today to discover exactly what Life On and Off the Field is all about, we have a panel of distinguished former student-athletes and current student-athletes. And beginning to my immediate left, we'll begin with Mike Aguirre, former Arizona State University football player and former chairman of the NCAA Division I Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Mike holds bachelor's, master's, and J.D. Degrees from Arizona State University and he was a football player from 1997 to 2000. Managing editor of the Arizona State Law Journal, Mike is now a lawyer with a firm in Phoenix and he served on the national Student Athlete Advisory Committee from 2000 to 2003.

And next to Mike, and you've known her from the last panel, is Ruth Riley. I don't know if I need to go through Ruth's accomplishments, but you know what, I will. Ruth is a 2001 graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where in her senior year

she was on the basketball team and they won a national championship and she was named the MVP of the NCAA final. A psychology major, Ruth was named one of the NCAA's Top Eight student-athletes and in 2003, as a member of the Detroit Shock WNBA squad, they won that league's championship and she was named MVP of the final and she also won a Gold Medal in the 2004 Olympic Games.

To Ruth's left we have Tye Gunn. Tye is a graduate student at Texas Christian University and he's pursuing his master's degree in liberal arts there. He earned his undergraduate degree in speech communication. He was also the Horned Frogs' starting quarterback for four seasons and, despite a variety of injuries, he led TCU to an upset of the University of Oklahoma this season.

To Tye's left is Molly McLaughlin. And Molly graduated with honors in 2005 from Ohio State. A four-year starter on the lacrosse team she is now working with a club team in Baltimore. She also served as president of Ohio State's Student Athlete Advisory Committee and also served on the Big Ten Conference and national Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

To Molly's left is Ian Gray, who is the past chairman of the NCAA Division Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Ian is finishing his master's in sport administration at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln where he earned his bachelor's degree and was on the varsity track and cross-country teams. He chaired both the Division I and the Big Conference Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

And, finally, Shari Taylor, a senior here at the George Washington University and Shari is majoring in international affairs. She's the Captain of the Colonials soccer team and she was named to the Atlantic All-Conference second team and a member of the league's All-Academic team in 2003. I don't know if you want the rest of this. As a defender she started 15 games and she led the team in shots taken.

SHARI TAYLOR: Why is that relevant?

MR. ELMORE: Welcome to everyone. Well, let me begin by a little bit of ground rules. This is the panel where the audience will have an opportunity to participate. We are going to discuss a couple of things and try to get the conversation going, but at some point I will be able to take questions from the audience and also take questions from those of you who are viewing us via webcast. So, send your e-mail and I'll get the signal at some point in time and we can open it up to you guys, as well.

But first let me say that, you know, all of the things that we've discussed here are so vitally important and, you know, I think that, you know, we need to start, really, by asking one important question and that is, to me, you know, as student-athletes how did you value your experience on campus? Let's start with you, Mike.

MIKE AGUIRRE: That's a great question and I think that everybody values it in their own unique way. For me, playing football was always something that I wanted to do, but it was never the end goal that I had in my life or going to college. And so, I really tried to take advantage of the opportunities that being a college athlete afforded me outside of the experience of just on the field.

And I think that's really important for student-athletes to do, is to actively find ways to engage and to take ownership in their experience because that's how you grow and that's how you really take advantage of everything it gives you.

The opportunities to play and to be a student-athlete are outstanding, but it opens up so many doors for you that you could never anticipate when you decide to play a sport. And, you know, I valued it and I hope I did it justice for the people who gave me the opportunity by, you know, just trying to expose myself to everything that I could.

MR. ELMORE: Shari, you were here for the discussions this morning, were you not?

MS. TAYLOR: No.

MR. ELMORE: No, you weren't?

MS. TAYLOR: I had practice.

MR. ELMORE: Okay. Then I'll skip you for a second...

MS. TAYLOR: Okay.

MR. ELMORE: ...and I'll go with Ian on the morning discussions. Which of the issues that were discussed, talking about values, talking about recruiting, which resonated with you the most?

IAN GRAY: I think we can most effectively start with what you just said in terms of values. And touching on one of the Knight Commission member's comments in term of the code of silence.

That's something that is very prevalent and a large issue amongst all student-athletes. I think that beginning with kind of what Mike said about actively engaged in one's athletic and educational opportunities and endeavors, I'm coming from a perspective as a representative and former Chairman of the National Student Athlete Advisory Committee that has had the opportunity to hear a lot from student-athletes and have a more global view of kind of the things that are going on—have gone on.

And from many discussions, engaged discussions with hundreds and hundreds of student-athletes throughout the three years of my tenure on the SAAC, this code of silence and the issue of values is a very key issue and a very prevalent issue on campuses.

And where I'm going with the code of silence is this. We heard about the recruiting issues that go on on campuses, we've heard about integrity, we've heard about programs such as the MVP program that allows student-athletes to gain access, unfettered access, to opportunities that will allow them to become better individuals.

And so, they have these opportunities and they're asked to carry these forth when they're representing a university and such. Well, at the same time, having the conversations with the many student-athletes that we've had the opportunity to have those conversations with, they've said about the recruiting process that that integrity, those values that they are taught are not carried forth and that these things are real issues on their campuses, that coaches, regardless of the number of these programs they put them through, still say get that recruit, get that recruit at any cost, get that recruit at the cost of potentially violating your own integrity. And that is a serious issue and that's one that I would open to all the other panelists to be either engaged in and one that really resonated with me.

MR. ELMORE: Well, Tye, let me ask you. I mean, as a Division I football player, how do you reconcile what you heard this morning with regard to recruiting, with regard to values with the way you were recruited coming out of high school into college, as to the values that were or maybe not were instilled by your coaches on the collegiate level?

TYE GUNN: Well, I think a lot has changed in the past five years. I never had a text message and I was recruited pretty heavily. I was fortunate enough to deal with some schools that were very honest. They didn't do a lot of bashing of one another. So, as far as values are concerned, all the schools that I dealt with were high on my list because they did have good values.

MR. ELMORE: Now, let me switch gears for a second unless somebody else wants to comment on the idea of the issues that resonated this morning, particularly as they pertain to values and to recruiting.

Well, we'll switch gears now and go to probably what is the core of your essence in being at the universities that you attended and that's academics. And all of you, obviously, are scholar athletes.

I mean, you've distinguished yourselves in the classroom as well as on the playing surface and let me begin with you, Molly, and ask you, what do you think of the NCAA academic reforms, I mean, do you think that it's going to be a benefit, do you think it's going to be a hindrance to student-athletes considering the pressures of studying as well as performing?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Well, I'm definitely a proponent for it and I think it's going to be fabulous for the academic realm of student-athletes. I feel that being a student-athlete we were always, though, held to higher standards and we always had meetings with counselors, with academic advisors about our degree or about our progress towards degree—or, sorry, progress towards graduation. We would always be aware of how we were—what classes we were taking, making sure that they were accumulating towards our degree and our education.

I think that that is something that is crucial. Athletes, sometimes like they'll get stereotyped that, oh, you're not here for your academics, you're here because you are an athlete. And being in a program where student-athletes were taken care of with their academics, I feel as if we were—it was our true essence was there for our academics.

MR. ELMORE: Now, Ruth, obviously Notre Dame would never have to experience this, but as everyone knows, the Knight Commission has called for making schools that have failed to graduate at least half of their students, or more, if they don't graduate them within a prescribed time, that they be ineligible for post-season play.

Now, combined with the new academic reform that the NCAA has instituted, do you agree that that's the way it should go, that if you can't graduate your students you don't participate in post-season and do you think that if you were at a school where that happened, you know, would you consider that to be fair?

MS. RILEY: I guess, I don't know. My first question is, is this per sport or is this per university because I'm not really...

MR. ELMORE: Well, let's say, let's go for basketball.

MS. RILEY: Okay.

MR. ELMORE: Okay? Usually the impact is on the revenue sports, football and basketball, that's where the unfortunate stories that we hear about lack of graduation rates that are mirroring the normal graduate rates of non-student-athletes. That's where we have the tragedies. So, let's look at basketball, for instance.

MS. RILEY: Well, I think this is a very difficult topic to handle because of the influence, obviously, of going professional. I think that affects the graduation rate guys leaving earlier, not finishing a couple of credits that they might need in order to get their degree, but I think a lot of responsibility, and I don't know how much is focused upon the coaches who are teaching these kids in the university level, somebody said earlier this morning, your coach really is a father and mother figure in your life.

And they regulate everything that you do on the court, and I know for me at Notre Dame, you know, my coach placed a strong value not only the success that I had in athletics, but academics, as well.

So, my question is, I'm wondering, coaches who aren't graduating a certain percentage of their students, I know that it's a very high risk job, it's a very high turnover for these upper echelon coaches. Therefore, when they go to another university are they still held to the standards that they didn't appear to in the university before?

MR. ELMORE: Well, it seems like you're bringing up another issue. You know, on one hand the question that I threw out had to do with holding the schools accountable and it sounds like you're suggesting that the coaches should be held accountable.

MS. RILEY: Well, I think it goes—the coaches are reporting to the schools. So, I think that there should be accountability, but I guess another question, my question is where is that accountability being held, and I think that you should have to, obviously, graduate a certain percentage of your students.

And, like you said, I haven't really experienced that at Notre Dame, but I also see, foresee the problem not only in the NBA, but in the WNBA where players are leaving early and that is going to affect your graduation rate which might, in turn, affect your recruiting if knowing these kids are coming into a program where they're not going to be able to compete in a post-season competition. So, I think it's a pretty large topic.

MR. ELMORE: Well, that's a good point. I mean, if, in fact, they are held accountable and they don't graduate a prescribed number and they don't make it to a post-season tournament it will affect their recruiting, but it's my understanding, based on the new academic reform measures, that if someone leaves in good academic standing and goes to the pros that they won't be penalized and, you know, I could be wrong, but that's what I recall.

So, assuming that, Mike, what do you think about that, is that fair, is that fair to hold the schools accountable, do you agree with Ruth that maybe the coaches should be held accountable, as well?

MR. AGUIRRE: Well, I think Ruth brought up a lot of great points. I think part of the problem is, and I was able to participate in some of the discussions on the initial phases of determining how to tie in the academic requirements with something that would work in the type of system we have in the NCAA.

And, you know, what was really important to student-athletes and still, I'm sure, to those on the campuses today is equally as important, is that they aren't unfairly punished due to activities of others.

And I think that that sometimes can create a challenge when you're looking to create penalty structures for graduation rates, for rules violations, is that should always be in the forefront of the minds of the people making the rules. And I know

that it is, but it can be a challenge to make sure that we're really targeting those offenders.

Part of the problem, and this goes to coaching accountability that I've seen, is that we need to hold our coaches more accountable to recruiting those student-athletes who fit the profile of the institution to which they're being recruited. And by that I mean, you don't recruit a student-athlete who might not have the opportunity to succeed if you don't give him the right resources to be there. And I think that we look sometimes when we're recruiting, too much at academic—or excuse me, at athletic potential and athletic fit with the institution and not enough with social fit, academic fit and some of the other circumstances that lead to success at the institution.

And once we have schools that are able to commit their coaches to recruiting with that kind of a whole foundation of what a student-athlete looks like that will be successful at that institution, then you can get at some of the recruiting problems, but also at some of the academic issues, as well.

MR. ELMORE: Shari, what do you think of what Mike said with regard to the responsibility of coaches to recruit the right people to come to a school, but also add in the fact that if you do get the right people in the school, what about personal responsibility and then compare it to the accountability, should coaches be accountable to schools or is it basic individual accountability?

MS. TAYLOR: I think this is actually really funny that this is coming up right now because I actually did an interview with my coach this morning...

MR. ELMORE: Good timing.

MS. TAYLOR: ...asking her to measure what her feeling of success was. And she actually told me this morning that, to her, succeeding is the fact that she graduates all of her athletes and that she knows that when they graduate they're going into the world as people who are prepared to involve themselves in a community, that they're not only graduating with outstanding athletic successes, but that also they've prepared in the academic realm, that they'll be able to succeed in the world.

And I also feel like it has a lot to do with the student-athlete. Like, for me, if I didn't come—I did not come to George Washington University just to play soccer. I came here because it's a very well respected international affairs community and I felt that I could succeed here in soccer and succeed here in academics. And I think that's really important for the student-athlete to realize that you have to know where you're going and you have to know what's going to be expected of you once you get there and it's your personal responsibility to feel that you need to succeed in this area, not only for yourself, but for the people that are around you and the people who are counting on you.

And I think it's also really funny that it happened this weekend, this is really odd, that we had—I asked about a recruit that was coming in. I really liked this young lady when she came in the first time and I was really excited that she was coming, and someone told me that, well, she didn't get in, her academics weren't good enough.

And for me, I think that's one thing that I really respect about my institution, is that they put a very hard emphasis on academics and that if you're not—if they don't feel that you can succeed in this environment, then they're not afraid to tell you that you're going to have to look somewhere else.

MR. ELMORE: Well said. Now, let's look at the poll that was recently done at the Knight Commission release. One of the points in that poll was that Americans believe that college sports have become more like professional sports. And that poll indicated that Americans by a two to one margin believe that college sports are more like professional sports than amateur sports. And I will ask you first, Ruth, since you have played both, both as a professional and as a collegiate athlete, do you think that college sports has become more professionalized, is that a good thing, a bad thing?

MS. RILEY: I have actually seen the benefits of it becoming more professionalized and commercialized, I guess you could say, because in women's basketball, I've been able to witness the growth from when I entered school to when I graduated in 2001 and now it's just amazing how far women's basketball has grown.

So, for me, I guess I would say that it has become a good thing. I would also attest that my experience at Notre Dame and my experience on the professional level are two completely different things.

And I think that you could talk to a lot of professionals and say that they value their experience in college just because of how absolutely different it is once you get out in the world of the professional ranks. So, I haven't really seen, I guess, the negative side of it on the women's basketball front. I've seen the positives.

MR. ELMORE: Well, by professionalism I think, and it wasn't really, that's the problem with polls, it wasn't really defined as to what professionalism meant, but I'm going to take a guess that, you know, far less class time, more time on the practice field, on the playing court, you know, people getting benefits almost to the point where they might be being paid to play, things of that nature I think is what the myth might be. And so, you know, let me throw that question out to you, Tye, I mean, again, do you think it's become more professionalized? And we might throw commercialism in, although that might be a little bit of a different animal.

MR. GUNN: Well, I think it has, more so at certain schools. You look at Matt Leinart who decided to stay his senior year at USC. I think most people in his shoes, coming out his junior year he had a chance to make literally millions of dollars. He chose to stay his senior year. So, he must be enjoying himself at USC to turn down that amount of money. He had confidence in his coaches because it's not like the old days where they practice you until you are dead tired, and he had a chance to come back and graduate.

I think college sports have moved more towards the professional side of things, more so at certain schools than others.

MR. ELMORE: When you say "they've moved towards professional sports," how do you mean, how so?

MR. GUNN: Well, he's been on the front page of Sports Illustrated, he's been on every talk show, 10 years ago you didn't have that. So, he's getting the notoriety that maybe an NFL quarterback gets and he's getting an education.

MR. ELMORE: Now, let me ask a quick question of Mike and then I might ask you, Tye, to follow up. You know, a lot of people think that in scheduling that it's the TV networks who will buy the rights and then they make the schedules. And aside from playing on Saturdays, you now have, in some instances, Tuesday through Saturday where a team might be playing football. I mean, do you think that's a good thing, that the networks should be doing this? And I say it's a perception because I suspect

that the schools and the network have to agree to wind up doing that, but is that more like the professional game where the networks control when and where you play?

MR. AGUIRRE: I think to some extent. I mean, there's a fine line that you crossed there and I think the institution is juggling a lot of factors in determining, you know, what is in the best interest of their university. I mean, to one extent they have the possibility to bring in an additional revenue stream that might not be there and that might allow them to take care of other sports or student-athletes that they might not otherwise do if they turn down an opportunity to play on a Tuesday evening, but at the same time, you know, they also have to juggle the responsibility of the fan base and people coming out to the game as well as the student-athletes with their scheduling.

And so, there's a variety of factors that go into it. You know, I guess I don't know that there's any one answer whether it's good or bad. You just hope that you keep the people in mind that really are going to be, you know, affected by those changes and allow them to participate.

I think the best thing to do is to engage student-athletes in that conversation about whether or not, at your particular school before the season starts, because once you are asked with that question about whether to move a game, it might be too late to then figure out what the priorities of your student-athletes are, but prior to that season you can have that discussion and get their feedback and determine what is in the best interest of your student body.

MR. ELMORE: Well, Tye, I know you've played on Thursday night because I've seen you. Now, how did you feel about playing on a night other than a Saturday afternoon, what impact did that have on your study schedule, on essentially your student life?

MR. GUNN: Well, obviously, you want to play on Saturday afternoon or Saturday night. Unfortunately, I played on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, every day except Sunday I was, I played it. Going to play, say, San Diego State on the West Coast and then flying back the same night and the next morning having an 8:00 o'clock class, when you get back at 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning, you're expected to get up and be on time for that class. And, say, you have a test, well, when you go on a football road trip there isn't much studying for class. It's all watching film, getting prepared for this game and as soon as you're done with the game, you get back on the plane, you fly home.

So, it is a huge stress on you as far as academics go and, I guess, on one side the good thing is that a smaller school like TCU gets the notoriety and a lot of people see what your program is about.

But, on the other side, it really is putting a big stress on your student-athletes because I know most student-athletes like getting a schedule, and if you can get in a schedule and play every week and not have any off weeks, that'd be great. So, weeknight games, in my opinion, aren't the best thing.

MR. ELMORE: Well, let me get another perspective on this professionalism question. Molly, Ian, Shari, you guys play for the so-called nonrevenue sports and you have a chance to look at football at your schools, Nebraska, Ohio State, boy, do you get to watch football, and here at George Washington University you're got basketball. What do you guys think, do you think that these sports have become more professionalized as opposed to maybe your sports which people think of as the more idyllic amateur-type sports? Let's start with you, Shari?

MS. TAYLOR: Professional-wise, I would say that any sport that you play is your profession. I would say that you're expected to perform as a job in any sport that you do. I feel like here at GW our basketball team has emerged as a national, on the national scene within the last two years and I think they are held to a higher—or are held accountable because now they're a higher representation of our school and that they have a lot more things that they need to take care of on a professional level I guess you would say.

I mean, they have more sponsors and more, you know, more dates to go to, more events to go to. And I think that in that manner it's good because it brings, you know, acknowledgment to your institution, but at the same time I think sometimes that they may be spread a little thin, that there may be a lot of things going on that they're not quite prepared to handle.

But at the same time I think, and for I guess a nonrevenue sport which I participate in, that even soccer is growing as a really, really influential sport in the United States.

And they were actually talking about it in the panel this morning with recruiting processes with soccer that they are starting to get these kids when they're, you know, years old and they're starting to, you know, look at them in their camps, they're starting to look at them in their travel soccer and it's starting to become a much more important process for my sport, personally, but...

MR. ELMORE: Ian, let me ask you quickly, as you think about your answer. Again, Shari mentioned the things that come along with this professionalism, more responsibility and also there are more perks.

I mean, as someone on a nonrevenue sport who works probably just as hard to get in shape and to perform your best in your sport and you see these guys in football and basketball, in particular, getting certain perks that you wouldn't, I mean, does that make you feel envious, did you feel some type of anger?

MR. GRAY: Well, I think that your point is excellent. What it does, it expands on something Ruth said earlier by her own experiences with the commercialism of women's basketball and the so-called elite sports. And that is that the increased revenues that our school sees, like Nebraska and Ohio State and Arizona State and such, have a watershed affect, as dollars begin to subsidize other programs and be able to allow the cross-country team to now fly to more meets rather than taking a ten-hour bus trip.

So, I don't know if envious is the word as much I envy the fact that we are now able to do things that we were unable to do without those dollars, and that is definitely an increased benefit for us.

In terms of the professionalization of intercollegiate athletics and that experience, not only just these sports that we're talking about now, but in terms of basketball and football, as well, it's that the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, on which several of us have sat on, from a national perspective has always taken a very firm stance on amateurism.

And as the legislation is continuously written to redraw that line, maybe making it closer to a professional model, we've always said, no, this must stop here.

And we say no because that's what we hear from student-athletes across the country, that's what, from a representative standpoint we've heard is that amateurism must be preserved. And so, that's really my take on it.

MR. ELMORE: But you didn't have any resentment at all with regard to seeing them get the perks? You know, there's also the increase in attendance at summer

school, more practice time on the field, as I mentioned before, I mean, none of these things really bothered you, you recognized that, you know, the benefits of it were kind of spread throughout the Athletic Department?

MR. GRAY: Not only the benefits spread throughout the Athletic Department but, as you said, increased practice time and such. I think that things really stayed on the same playing field. I think that those sports that we are deeming at this moment professionalized, which I would say are still maintaining hard amateur status, they still follow the rules and practiced the amount of time that they were supposed to.

Yes, we've seen from this morning's first two panels that there are outliers, there are struggles that we still need to continue to strive to alleviate, but at the same time, I think that things are going really well and that my own animosity was never really present towards either other student-athletes or those other sports.

MR. ELMORE: And, Molly, Ohio State University has one of the more successful athletic departments in the nation. Did you see this creeping professionalism in the revenue sports, did you find the benefits that Ian found filtering down to your sport?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: You know, being a lacrosse player, nonrevenue, I definitely would say that we are able to reap the benefits that football and basketball, even men's hockey which is really big at the Ohio State University, we were able to reap those benefits. And something that, I guess, prevented the jealousy or the envy had to be that we were all Buckeyes, we were all student-athletes.

I might not have had the same schedule as a football player, but we still, we had our academic classes, the responsibilities of being a student, we had our practices. We would see each other at the student-athlete support center, doing out study tables. We all had sort of that same schedule and those same responsibilities.

And so, there was never a—there was never a big difference on that level. What they were able to bring in, I can say the entire student-athlete population was appreciative of and there was never any jealousy or animosity.

MR. ELMORE: Now, let's talk about some of the common grounds and probably the most common ground, whether it's even partial or full, is the scholarship. And as you guys know that the scholarship really is a one year renewable grant.

Now, what would you think of, instead of a one year renewal grant, that it would be kind of a four year package, that once you sign you're there for four years, you get your full grant, you never have to worry about anyone taking it away from you for whatever reason, do you think that would work, do you think that student-athletes would appreciate that? Let me start with you, Mike.

MR. AGUIRRE: You know, it's interesting because on an intuitive level sometimes it seems like the answer would be a resounding yes, that that's a good thing. What's been really interesting, though, as I served on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee a few years back, and it might have changed in the last couple of years, when I approached other student-athletes with this topic, the results of the conversations were really mixed as to whether or not they thought it was a good thing. And, you know, I could never fully get my arms around the reasons why everybody came to such a different conclusion.

But at the core of that I think what is important, is that you maintain a system where student-athletes are not treated unfairly, and there's a couple of ways that you can do that. One is to have your coaches, if you're going to have a one year system, understand the intent and the spirit of the rules that govern how you notify student-athletes that their scholarship's not going to be renewed and when you do.

Because you really need to understand those rules and have them reflect a system where student-athletes get the benefit of time or courtesy or however that comes so that they can make the decisions that they need to make with their life.

The other side of that is if you're only going to ask students, or only going to guarantee a one year scholarship for student-athletes, then you really need to give them an opportunity to leave with—to be able to transfer without penalty, because if you're not committing to them for any more than one year, why is it fair for them to ask you to commit for more than one year when coaches aren't asked for that commitment and no other person is asked for that commitment. So, there's not necessarily a problem with the one year scholarship, it's how its implemented and how you maintain a balance that benefits student-athletes.

MR. ELMORE: Tye, I see you shaking your head.

MR. GUNN: I totally agree, I totally agree. I think it's really unfair for us to sign a scholarship and be expected to stay there four or five years and then they can turn around and take that from you. The coaches can leave whenever they want. I think if we were given an opportunity, that would give us a little more pull, if you could say that.

MR. ELMORE: You mentioned four or five years and, you know, studies have shown that on average, the average college student needs a little more than five years to graduate, and that obviously would include student-athletes and for some that might even be a baseline. Now, do you guys agree or disagree that maybe you should get five years of eligibility, again, to mirror what the needs of the average college student to get a degree might be? What about you, Molly?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: It's interesting, I did five years. I participated my first four years in varsity lacrosse and my last year I had obviously exhausted my eligibility and I used that time to, I studied abroad. Took a semester and I studied abroad in Spain and I have to say it was probably one of the best decisions that I had ever done. I could have graduated in four years had I not been pursuing an extended major in Spanish.

So, I feel as if four years, though, of being eligible to compete and to play is where student-athletes are and not necessarily giving them a fifth year to have to make a decision to maybe feel pressure to be forced to stay or to be forced to play. I think that that's something that student-athletes have felt four years is sufficient for them.

MR. ELMORE: Ruth, what about you?

MS. RILEY: I guess my question would be a little bit about the budget of the five-year scholarship. Knowing, obviously, that's an additional cost that it would take from the Athletic Department, whether that would take away from the available scholarships. I know we read a little bit about the information, about the Athletic Departments in a deficit managing, you know, they're not having enough money to provide the scholarships they have.

So, I guess I would, as an athlete I would say that would be great, you know, I would love that fifth year to be able to plan out and to know, but is that going to be at the cost of somebody else coming and getting an athletic scholarship.

MR. ELMORE: So, obviously, you're worried about the cost and the impact as a whole on the Athletic Department, that would be maybe one of the drawbacks of a fifth year of eligibility. Does anybody agree with that, do you think that's legitimate?

MR. GRAY: Well, what Ruth even was articulating in that point is opportunity. And if you have five seasons of eligibility for all student-athletes or even for a particular sport, the turnover on the number of scholarships has decreased because now individuals are getting scholarships for those five years. And so, the number of individuals that are allowed to come in as freshman is reduced by a year.

And so that's something that student-athletes have said at leadership conferences. Chris Malley articulated throughout their campus SAAC's, their conference SAAC's and then all the way up to the national level have said keep it the way it is right now. And there are some that have articulated the perspective of five seasons of eligibility being a good thing, but those are the outliers and not the base.

MR. ELMORE: Well, at this point I think it's probably appropriate that we call any of the audience members who might have a question for our panelists to please step forward and, as well as those of you who are watching via webcast, if you have a question, just send some e-mails. Can we get anybody to ask a question? Yes, sir.

MR. EPSTEIN: I'm...

MR. ELMORE: Please introduce yourself.

MR. EPSTEIN: My name is David Epstein, I'm a freelance writer and a reporter with Inside Higher Ed and I cover NCAA issues. I was formerly recruited in a nonrevenue sport to an Ivy League institution which is, you know, obviously on a different world from some of you, and still found that I was lied to and never spent a day on the same campus as the coach that recruited me, and I was curious as to whether you think there's any use for the recruiting process at all as opposed to just allowing students to choose where they want to go to school like normal students do or maybe having some kind of sponsored trips to campuses, but whether there's any utility to the recruiting process at all?

MR. ELMORE: Anybody want to tackle it?

MR. GRAY: I—go ahead, Mike.

MR. AGUIRRE: Well, first of all, I would reject your premise that non-football or non-athletes, student-athletes are not recruited. I walked onto Arizona State University, but I was recruited by more schools for an academic purpose than I was for athletic. So, I think it happens in music, in performing arts, in sports and in academics and in various other areas.

I think there is a utility to it. I think it's just creating a system that really takes care of student-athletes. So, there's absolutely a utility to the recruiting process because it gives student-athletes opportunities to figure out where they want to go and to have the institution maybe pay for a cost to come visit that they might not otherwise do, but it's all about how you shape and mold, you know, the rules and the determinations that the administrators do and ethical conduct in getting them to their institution.

MR. GRAY: I think that the question posed is excellent and in demonstrating and in response to it, it's not a unique situation. We hear stories all the time about student-athletes that felt lied to or whatnot or felt some deception in the process.

And I think we heard a wonderful story this morning from several individuals about their experience in the recruiting process and, really, it's about taking all this information, regardless of its exact fact or its your perception, sifting through that information and making the best decision possible.

And so, I think that the recruiting process, as Mike articulated, is the best way to gather all that information and to take in all that information I think is an inherent part of the collegiate experience of a recruited student-athlete and, in the long run, benefits the majority, the far majority of student-athletes that are recruited for that institution.

MR. ELMORE: Another question.

MR. SHINKMAN: My name is Christopher Shinkman from Stanford University and I'd like to follow on your comments about scholarships. Here in the Washington area, recently a Division I university had a student-athlete who came to the head coach and said, I have an excellent educational opportunity that's going to take me away, in fact, out of the country for two weeks during the middle of the season.

And so, the coach said, you have, you're on full scholarship, you've made a commitment to me, to the team, to the university, to the sport, you can't do this. And the student said, well, I'm doing it. And the coach said, well, you're not on the team anymore.

So, who was right, was it the coach or was it the student?

MR. GRAY: I don't know anyone on this panel that wouldn't say the student-athlete is right in that situation but, I mean, the student-athlete is there to get an education first and foremost. We're student-athletes. And the coach, while that's an interesting situation, I think that the coach was lacking foresight there on the real purpose of the student-athlete being at that institution. I don't know, I...

MR. ELMORE: Anyone else have any thoughts?

MS. TAYLOR: Yeah, well, at the same time, I also think that the student-athlete, yes, that the educational opportunity is very important, that they should be able to pursue that, but at the same time they've made a commitment to the institution and they've made a commitment to their team, and if they feel that this opportunity is that important to them, then by all means that they should be able to pursue it, but at the same time I think they should take into account the commitment that they've already made to their team and to their teammates.

MR. SHINKMAN: Let me suggest it might be different if you're a cross-country athlete or if you're the starting quarterback on the football team.

MR. ELMORE: That's a good point there.

MS. TAYLOR: Oh, that's completely different.

MR. ELMORE: Go ahead.

MR. GUNN: I think the coach, his livelihood depends on you as a player. I think maybe depending on what part of the season, if it was pre-season, sure, go, but if

you signed your name on a piece of paper saying I'm going to do everything in my power to make you win, I think it's the athlete's duty to maybe pass on that, even though it's a great opportunity, but he's got to make a decision which is going to help me out later in life. And it may be going on the academic side, but you can't get mad at the coach when he says, sorry.

MR. ELMORE: Was the scholarship renewed?

MR. SHINKMAN: The scholarship was maintained, yes.

MR. ELMORE: In that case, I don't know how you guys feel, but maybe they're both right.

MR. GUNN: Right.

MS. TAYLOR: Yes.

MR. ELMORE: Maybe the student pursued the priority and the coach recognized that I'm not going to have this student-athlete, so maybe I've got to put a space here where I can put somebody else in to fulfill the responsibilities that person did and they both kind of served their own needs. I don't know.

MR. GRAY: One important point, though, that you make at the end of that statement, is that we almost articulated that football is more important than cross-country and that it doesn't matter if you're the seventh man on the cross-country team and you take that, then you could be putting your cross-country team in a situation where they can't actually score as a full team, whereas if your quarterback of your football team leaves, then you don't have that starting—the starting quarterback, you don't have that starting individual to lead that team. And so, in either situation it is a kind of a precarious situation in and of itself and I think, Len, you articulated it in the sense that they both could possibly be right in that situation.

MR. ELMORE: Next question?

MR. ROBBINS: Is this on?

MR. ELMORE: Yes.

MR. ROBBINS: Thank you. I am Eric Robbins, I'm a professor at Baylor University in Texas and I had a couple of questions. We've talked a lot about values and social character and Mike even alluded to social fit for the student-athlete, or perspective student-athlete, coming to university. So, my first quick question is, when you are recruited to come to your university, did you ever have any coaches actually try to inquire about your character, try to determine your social character or your values and, if so, the second part is how did they do that?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: I think that's a big thing that a lot of coaches I've seen who have been successful, you mentioned your coach had the academic standard. A lot of coaches will see personality, do you fit with my team, are you going to fit in the mold that is an Ohio State student-athlete, are you going to jell and mesh well with the team.

So much of when these student-athletes come onto campus and they're here for their recruiting visit and they stay with the team, they get to see how does the team

interact with each other off campus, what is their living situation, what do they do? Not only is that recruit getting a sense for the team and the institution and the Athletic Department, but the team is getting a sense for that recruit. And if you are in a situation where you've got an open communication with your coach, the team is going to be able to go back and say, you know what, we really like this girl, she fit in excellently with our team, she's going to be a great fit and she's going to help us in our coming years, or you're going to have a team that comes back to the coach and says, something wasn't right, you know, she's not necessarily going to fit in with our mold.

MR. ROBBINS: So, if I understand, excuse me. So, it's really that your peers were the ones who tried to assess your social character, is that correct, that when you traveled around with the current student-athletes, they did so more than maybe the coach?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: I think it's a mix of both, I mean, because your coach obviously does a lot of recruiting information on you and does a lot of research on who you are, but the team is also evaluating you while you're there on your weekend.

MR. ROBBINS: So, did anyone else ever have anyone ask you about your social character?

MR. GUNN: I think coaches do it different ways. Sometimes they just come out and ask you, well, what do you like to do in your free time, and you can—that's kind of how TCU would place you with a host. They're not going to place a kid coming in that has no similarities with the host.

So, in going on with what she says, is a lot of times the team will come back and say, sorry, he just doesn't fit and then they'll just cut him off. So, it works both ways.

MR. ELMORE: Bear with me for one second because we've got folks viewing via the webcast and I think they're starting to send in some e-mail. So, Welch, if you could read the question.

WELCH SUGGS: Len, we have several questions coming through on the Webcast. One of them is from a Division I track and field athlete who says, I had a teammate who was severely injured as a result of her sport and had to take a year off from competition.

This year she is making her comeback, but has been told by our head coach that her scholarship is, quote, unquote, on the line.

She was an All American the year she got injured. Are there rules in place to protect an athlete like this from losing her scholarship due to an injury? Returning from an injury is difficult enough without feeling extra pressure from your coach about your scholarship.

MR. ELMORE: If you're asking me for the answer, unfortunately, you know, they are one year renewables and that's the crux of the conversation here, to some extent, you know, is that fair or should it be a blanket four or even five years with five years of eligibility.

I mean, from an equity position, a position of fairness, absolutely not, that it's unfair, that, you know, injuries should not play a part in whether or not you should have your scholarship renewed, and I'm sure you guys probably agree.

MS. TAYLOR: I don't know, the first thing that my coach told me when I got here was that, if anything is to happen to you where you're not allowed to play soccer any more, you're not allowed to participate in athletics any more, that your scholarship is intact. I mean, that's a relationship that you have with your coach and that's a relationship you have with your institution.

MR. ELMORE: Did you get that in writing?

MS. TAYLOR: Did I get that in—I know, exactly. But, luckily, I mean, my coach is willing to be open and up front with me and talked to me about what the realities of my situation were and I think I'm, I was very fortunate that she's willing to maintain my scholarship.

MR. ELMORE: How do you guys feel about it, anybody else with any input? You nod your heads, you don't agree with that, do you? Come on.

MR. GRAY: No, I think you put it very well.

MR. ELMORE: Next question. We'll get another one after we take this one.

MR. CHARLES: My name is Leroy Charles, I'm a vice president here at GW and I also chair the mentoring program for the men's basketball team.

In light of what happened last week at the University of Maryland I've been wanting to find out from each of the participants, what do you feel in terms of the whole issue we talked earlier about, accountability to the coach versus the player when you have the star player on this particular team that is now academically ineligible in his senior year in lieu of the fact of, I guess, an academic support program in place, what is your thoughts on that and is there—did you have a mentoring program at your institution or where you had mentors come to you? I'd just like to get your opinion on that. Also, from you, Len, as well.

MR. GRAY: Can you expand on the issue, what was the issue at Maryland?

MR. ELMORE: Well, the issue was the star basketball player at the University of Maryland, in the middle of the season, you know, they're ranked in the top 25, was found academically ineligible for the remainder of the season. And, you know, obviously what came out, purportedly he just wasn't going to class.

And so, I think the question was, issues of accountability, you know, who is to be held accountable? Is it the coach, the player or a combination? Supposedly there is a lack of meaningful academic support in place, although I find that kind of hard to believe.

MR. GUNN: Is this the same kind of situation as P.J. Tucker?

MR. ELMORE: Yes, exactly.

MR. GUNN: Do you remember that last year?

MR. ELMORE: Exactly, but the problem is, or the sad part about it, this is the young man's senior year, so he's done.

MR. GUNN: Right. And we talked earlier today about, and Mike was alluding to this point just in this panel discussion, about coaches who are there to recruit and coaches that are there to coach and educate and develop the student-athlete. And so, in terms of accountability, I think that the onus is on the coach in certain situations and the onus is on the student-athlete, as well. And I think that, while a coach can recruit whomever they feel fits their team or the academic integrity of that institution, they still need to develop that student-athlete.

And if a coach is aware of that situation on their campus or aware that student-athlete is doing such, then as developer, as an educator and just as a human, they should be making sure that that student-athlete is developing, is getting their education and things like that. At the same time, the student-athlete is there to be a student. And so, I think the accountability issue there lies in both camps.

MR. ELMORE: Well, let me just add a little more fuel to the fire. I mean, how do you get to you senior year and all of a sudden fall down? You've been there three and a half years and suddenly you're ineligible, weren't there warning signs? And then on the other side, you know, again a question of personal accountability. Has anybody ever experienced anything like that with a teammate?

MS. RILEY: Well, I think—I haven't experienced it with a teammate, but I think, you know, you could say a little senioritis has probably kicked in a little bit. You know, in your senior year you're enjoying your basketball season and probably not focused as much. Not to use it as an excuse because I completely agree that as a student you have to be accountable to yourself and, in that case to your team as well, because, you know, that's in effect hurting the team.

But I know personally, to answer the question, that at Notre Dame there's a very structured system for academics, and not only does your coach emphasize the fact that you go to school, and they can mandate that because as we know as student-athletes, our coaches can get us to do a lot of things outside the basketball court.

And so, I think that they check up on you, they do progress reports, especially if you know somebody is, excuse me, is not as strong academically as somebody else, your coach is going to be on top of that. And I think as a university, my experience, as a university they've put every platform forward at Notre Dame to enable these students to succeed. So, in that respect, you know, it on the student a little bit to maintain my GPA.

MR. ELMORE: Do you have another webcast question?

MR. SUGGS: We have a question from a graduate student at Michigan State University who says, do you perceive your college athletic involvement provides greater racial diversity integration than your non-athlete peers and, if so, how do you feel it helps or hinders your college experience? Also, so racial diversity help you win games and why?

MS. TAYLOR: Well, does racial diversity help you win games? I really couldn't tell you, I don't know. I mean, that's, I guess that's team dynamics and that's, I mean, player dynamics, I guess.

But I think me, personally, I guess here at GW, I mean, you know, the student population is, in fact, diverse. So, I think that our Athletic Department is actually, you know, pretty diverse. I think that, I mean, me, personally, I am more recognizable because there are only about four African American athletes that don't play basketball. So, we're kind of, you know, the extras, but I mean, you get

recognized like in your classes, you get recognized, you know, out and about. So, I mean, I don't know, I guess it helps, diversity, to bring in more people.

MR. GRAY: A grad student is probably writing a paper or something.

MR. ELMORE: Well, let me put it another way, I mean, let's broaden the discussion. Let's talk about just, you know, race and gender to a great extent. You know, you understand that, you know, football and basketball are majority populated by African American males in the men's sport and, you know, it's pretty close in the women's sport, but when you look at, say, football coaches where it's more than a majority of white males.

I mean more than a majority, I'm talking about percent. You know, when you think about that and then you think about the fact that the football players are a majority African American, you obviously see the inequities there, I mean, how do you fix that? And I say that as a backdrop against the whole racial experience, you know, not only as, say, an African American woman, but as people who played with people of color, you know, how do you experience that, I mean, what have you seen that makes life for them different, what have you seen that makes life better, you know, how did you interact with your teammates of color and how did you see them or perceive them being perceived by the rest of the student body? Mike, why don't I start with you?

MR. AGUIRRE: I think that it's definitely, part of your college experience should be really grasping and enjoying the diverse views and types of people that you come into contact with.

In the context of a team, you have to have a certain kind of chemistry to be successful and I think at its core what really needs to happen is for the team to come together in a way that, you know, you're not going, especially on a football team of a hundred people or more, you're not going to like everybody on your team, and you don't have to like everybody, but you need to be able to respect them and respect where they come from and respect their views and who they are as individuals.

And so, it's, to my experience, it's no so much an issue of ethnic or racial diversity or getting along along those lines, but so much of just understanding that people come from different backgrounds.

And that may cut across racial lines, it may fall right in line with ethnicities on your team, but as a general point, it's a time for you to really grow as a person and understand that not everybody is going to share your same viewpoint and not everybody is going to feel the same thing or react the same way, and that's your opportunity to respect that person. You don't have to like it, but you should definitely respect it.

MR. ELMORE: Let me make myself clear, I mean, based upon your experiences, the number I threw out about coaches, football coaches, Division I football coaches and, you know, the dearth of athletic directors of color, are athletes, student-athletes of color, are people of color valued in college sports?

MR. AGUIRRE: That might be a loaded question, then. No, but I think...

MR. ELMORE: No, it's a question that has an answer.

MR. AGUIRRE: It's a great question. I mean, I think that it's, there's value to it, absolutely. People of color are valued. You know, I'm of Mexican descent so although I'm not African American...

MR. ELMORE: But you are of color.

MR. AGUIRRE: ...I am of color, exactly. And I think that it's important to realize that those people, you know, people that, people like to feel comfortable in their surroundings and part of that—and this has been really researched and looked into a lot by scholars that are of color. People of color tend to do very well when they see a familiar face or a friendly face in a position of authority.

And so, it's important that if we're going to have a large number of our student-athletes be ethnic minorities, then we have a duty to give them, to make sure that we have some mentors and some people that they can look to and confide in and really feel like they connect with them in a way that maybe you wouldn't if it's not that kind of connection.

And so, it needs to be valued. I don't know whether it's a generational thing as to why we're not there, yet, and maybe we have a lot of assistant coaches that are young and dynamic and great, that in a few years they're going to be head coaches. I hope that's the case. It may be slower than we want, but I think it's a little too early to know whether we're getting there or whether we still have a long way to go.

MR. ELMORE: Let me broaden it to gender. Again, we talk about athletics directors and there's, obviously, unfortunately too small a number of women athletics directors, just to use it as an example. I mean, do you guys feel that women student-athletes that you're treated the same, there's the same equity there as there is with men athletes, male athletes or do you feel something different?

Molly, let me start with you.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: I would definitely say that we are treated equally and I guess to touch on a few other things that we've spoken about. I was fortunate to go to Ohio State which is a large public institution and there was so much diversity, not only in my university, but also on my team. On my team actually we had three African Americans and that—it was interesting going to other schools because that was rare. In the sport of lacrosse it's not common to support more than, you know, one or two African American athletes.

And I, just like Mike was saying, you learn college is a time where you learn so much, not only about yourself, but about the world and about your, how you perceive things, how other people perceive things and it's your time to learn and to take that in. And I feel that athletics provides that, not only in the sense of teamwork, but of working together. Through a common goal of uniting your team, you get to do that through athletics and that's the vehicle for that.

MR. ELMORE: But aren't you guys concerned with the lack of numbers and aren't you concerned that, you know, a lot of schools are using the excuse of Title IX to cut programs when you talk about equal treatment? I mean, I don't know if that affects you, personally, but in a broad sense, aren't you guys concerned at all about those things?

MR. GRAY: Yes, I mean, I can say we're very concerned from a perspective that they're cutting all programs, I mean, all sports, neither female or male, and I think that...

MR. ELMORE: Actually, they're cutting more male sports.

MR. GRAY: They're cutting more male sports. Well, I have had...

MR. ELMORE: But it's an excuse in my opinion.

MR. GRAY: I think that publicly you don't see that as being the excuse, but I think that in the end, privately, in those, the code of silence-type discussions that are happening, yes, they're saying that it is Title IX and that's extremely unfortunate.

That was not the purpose of Title IX, that is not the intent and that should never be the intent of an athletic director's decision. So, yes, we're concerned. I don't know if we have the exact answer of how to do it, but...

MR. ELMORE: Do you have a question?

MR. MAZELL: Hi, my name is Leon Mazell. I guess this is just to get an opinion on this. I've dealt with situations where I've had friends that help universities and other institutions win like national championships and games and playoffs and stuff like that and that, when they have exhausted their eligibility, they have not had a chance to graduate.

And I would say that—I wouldn't say they got the boot, but after they have got finished playing.

They necessarily didn't have the athletic ability to maybe go on to the NFL or Canadian League or any other, you know, pro sports or something like that, and these young men and women have looked up to their coaches as like father figures or mother figures because they come from backgrounds that maybe were not as economically, you know, better than some other individuals.

Do you think it's the institutions or is it on the student to, after their eligibility is up, you know, to help them graduate or just give them the boot, like, okay, you're on your own now, you have to do your own thing?

MR. GUNN: Well, I think it depends. If he's been given a fair opportunity to graduate, if he's been given four, four and a half years, I think that's plenty of time to graduate. If you haven't done it by then, you know, are you going to pay for him to go to school for another two or three years? That's one good thing that TCU does. Even if they know that they made a mistake, they recruited this player, he's never going to play, they always make sure they pay for a full four years. So, it will never backfire on TCU, you've been given a fair opportunity to graduate. And I'm not sure of the case and those particular athletes, but if they've been given a fair opportunity to graduate, well, then it's on them.

MR. GRAY: Well, at the same time, I think that as each situation is unique and, I know Len, you mentioned that it's 4.9 years now or 4.8 years for the average student-athlete or student, even, to graduate with their undergraduate degree, and after they've completed that four years of eligibility, I think that the institution does owe it to them to make sure that from a financial standpoint they do finish that degree.

But as each situation is unique, there might be some times where the institution finally has to say, okay, we're done paying. It could be six, seven years down the road or whatnot. I think that the important point that that really raises is institutions have to do a better job of making sure that the student-athletes have the skills once they're done with their student-athlete experience, to then go on into the working world once they've graduated.

We've heard hundreds of student-athletes talking about the lack of programming potentially at their institution, or things like that, that have given them the job set skills. And I know that the NCAA has programs out there such as the Life Skills Program to work towards that, but I think that institutions need to commit to the student-athlete if the student-athlete is going to commit to the institution.

MR. ELMORE: We've got another question here. Thank you.

MS. COLE: Hi, I'm Gabby Cole, I'm a softball player here at GW. And recently this season we had an issue with Facebook and we were actually penalized for an issue like where the coaches were going onto Facebook, and it's actually been heard from other athletes at other schools that their coaches are going on their face book profile and they have certain regulations like outside for their private life.

What do you guys think about coaches, how far they can go into your personal lives and where do you think that boundary is, like what our, as athletes, where our privacy should be?

MR. AGUIRRE: We actually had an interesting discussion about this, some of us on the panel last night and some other people. To some extent, once you put something out on Facebook, I don't know how much that's a personal life or it's so much that you just chose to make it public. I think that coaches should respect the boundaries and the personal privacies of people.

But every action has a consequence and I think that as a student-athlete you need to understand that you, whether you like it or not, are going to have a target on your back or are going to subject to slightly more scrutiny than an individual student at the campus might.

And that may not be a good thing and it may not be right, but it's the reality that we live in as student-athletes, is that there are obligations and requirements and responsibilities that we share that others might not.

And so the easy answer is to say, you know, I wish coaches would kind of respect some boundaries, but at the same time, you know, it's up to us to own what we do. And I don't know the particular situation there, but it's up to us to own the decisions we make and what we put out to the public and be ready to accept whatever responsibilities or consequences that come as a result of our actions.

MR. ELMORE: This may be the last question we can get to, but let me go back to experiences off the field and, you know, everybody knows that there is always tension between non-student-athletes and student-athletes and the perceptions of the dumb jock, et cetera, is out there.

How are you guys received, not only by your peers, but also by faculty. You know, when you went to class, were you able to take the classes that you wanted or were you kind of herded into athletics classes? And then, finally, you know, what kind of impact did that have on your perception of yourself as a student-athlete matriculating at a college? I guess we should go down the line. Let's start with you, Shari.

MS. TAYLOR: Personally, I think that I've gained a lot of respect from a lot of people that I've met at internships or professional things where I've said, you know, I go to GW, I'm majoring in international affairs and I play soccer. And they go, you go to class and you play soccer? You know, people are amazed by your time management skills, they're amazed by the things that you're able to accomplish in such tight parameters.

But, personally, I have never been herded into an athletic class. I mean, everyone knows you go, you know, you go to your academic advisors, you say, hey, I'm taking these four classes that are really difficult and they're really hard, what do you think I could take to balance my schedule to make sure that I'm not overwhelmed.

And, I mean, I think that at the same time it's important to have balance in your schedule, but I don't think it's like, you know, pigeonholing you into an athlete if you take a class that's not nearly as challenging because I think that a lot of regular students take the same classes that we do.

MR. ELMORE: What about you, Ian?

MR. GRAY: I think I have to steal from what Mike said just a minute ago, in that you have to own who you are and I think that you'll be received in the way you present yourself both academically and both athletically.

I mean, yes, you're going to come into a classroom maybe fresh from a workout wearing your workout clothes, your Adidas gear, maybe the Nebraska emblem or an Ohio State emblem or a TCU emblem, whatever it may be, and you're going to stand out and you're going to look different and things like that.

And owning who you are in an academic sense, if you perform academically well or if you take seriously your academic studies or your academic perspective in that classroom, then you're going to be treated as such.

And from a personal perspective, that's the way I always owned it and so was treated accordingly, but as I said, from the way you dress and carry yourself, you're going to stand out to a certain degree on that campus and you're going to be noticed, especially as high profile as athletics has become.

MR. ELMORE: Okay.

Molly, you'll be the last one.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: I'd definitely say when you stand out, though, there's also a sense of admiration, though. I think that your colleagues might, fellow student-athletes, peers, that might have been varsity athletes, it might have been USG representatives, it might have been presidents of different clubs or fraternities and sororities. They respect you for what you do.

You go out there every day when you practice, you go out there on the weekends and you compete and you represent not only who you are, but your team and the university. And I think that along with that comes pride and respect for who you are and what you're doing.

MR. ELMORE: Well, I'd like to thank my panel and I hope you'd want to thank them, as well.

They're among the best and the brightest and it just shows you, student-athletes, they have an advantage.

Thank you.

MR. IBARGUEN: Thank you everybody. This concludes our proceedings for the day, but certainly not the conversation. I really would encourage you all to look at www.knightcommission.org; www.knightcommission.org. It's a website that is launched today, the purpose of which is to continue this conversation. I think we've had some of the best participation that we've had at the Knight Commission on intercollegiate athletics in a very, very long time.

I'd like to thank George Washington University, our co- chairs Clifton Wharton and Gerald Turner and, of course, Len Elmore and I couldn't not thank again Amy Perko, our executive director who put all of this together. And thank you all very much, both here and on the webcast. Have a good afternoon.