

The commitment  
exists at all levels of  
our



The welfare and development of today's student-athlete is central to the administration of Big Ten Conference intercollegiate athletics.

Providing opportunity for young men and women to mature in a wholesome and healthy way is critically important to our universities. A commitment exists at all levels of our universities to providing the resources to support the welfare of Big Ten student-athletes.

At the 1996 NCAA Convention, the Division I membership debated a number of issues related to financial assistance for student-athletes. Limitations on Pell Grants, stipends awarded by the federal government for educational purposes, were removed. Discussions took place, and continue to occur, on ways to liberalize rules on how student-athletes can earn money from work done during the off-season. Around the same time, the NCAA Executive Committee increased the annual funding of the special assistance fund from \$3 million to \$10 million. Big Ten institutions provide more than 6,400 young men and women opportunities to play on 250 intercollegiate teams. These young people receive more than \$42 million annually from Big Ten institutions in grants-in-aid (tuition, room and board, books).

While receiving the opportunity for a world-class education, they compete with and against some of the finest amateur athletes in the country. Needy student-athletes in the Big Ten may receive up to \$2,000 annually above the value of their grant-in-aid via federal aid and are eligible for cash payments from the special assistance fund for items like clothing, emergency trips home and other special needs. Big Ten universities also assist student-athletes in identifying summer employment opportunities, career placement and catastrophic-injury insurance plans. They also assist with a \$1 million

insurance plan that financially protects student-athletes with professional sports aspirations in the event they suffer a disabling injury.

Today, the system that served so many so well and for so long is being called into question by the media, the public and even by some coaches and student-athletes. They assert that some student-athletes in football and basketball should be paid for their participation. They believe that the market forces that drive professional sports, or any other private-sector activity, should provide the controlling principle for the relationship between the student-athlete and the university. This issue of financial assistance for student-athletes is critical to defining and examining the relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education as we approach the 21st century. While we must be open to novel approaches and new ideas, paying student-athletes to play is not supportable within the context of Big Ten intercollegiate athletics — now or in the future. In my view, revenues derived from intercollegiate athletics are the sole property of the institution and should be expended in support of the broadest array of men's and women's educational and athletics opportunities.

Thus, revenues are earned in private-sector activity and spent within the confines of the university for appropriate educational purposes. Some critics of college athletics cite the economic and educational exploitation of the student-athletes who participate in our major revenue sports as a major flaw in the system. We believe the educational and the lifetime economic benefits associated with a university education are the appropriate *quid pro quo* for any Big Ten student-athlete, regardless of the sport. For many decades, Big

Ten intercollegiate athletics has been funded largely by revenues from men's basketball and football programs.

This situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Our institutions have sponsored sports programs that enabled outstanding athletes such as Magic Johnson, Isiah Thomas, Red Grange, Archie Griffin, John Havlicek and Dick Butkus (the list is endless) to obtain an education and play their sport, in turn providing resources for educational and athletics opportunities for such people as Suzy Favor, Jesse Owens, Mark Spitz and Jack Nicklaus. Under this system, people like John Wooden and Gerald Ford played alongside student-athletes much less famous, but equally deserving of an intercollegiate athletics experience. Intercollegiate athletics has provided, and will continue to provide, opportunities for social mobility through education for future generations of young men and women. We must ensure that all young people admitted to our universities are prepared to compete academically so that the overall student-athlete academic outcomes are compatible with their peers within the general student population. Recent efforts to raise NCAA initial-eligibility standards are attempts to counter the argument that unprepared student-athletes are being admitted and then exploited for their athletics contributions. About seven million fans annually attend Big Ten men's basketball and football events and more than 300 million Americans watch these sports on television.

Ticket and television revenues derived from those sources are shared among our members so that each university can sponsor the