



December 13, 2011

Dear Higher Education Community:

Higher education and intercollegiate athletics have been rocked in recent weeks by allegations of pedophilia involving coaches and young boys. Sexually abusive behavior is not confined to intercollegiate athletics or higher education. These are despicable societal ills, as well; but it is especially disturbing when those entrusted with the mission of teaching and guiding young people instead exploit and abuse them.

The truth is none of us knows how deeply issues of sexual abuse run within the education community at any level or society as a whole. But we know that one instance is more than we can bear. It must also be true and broadly understood that sexual abuse will not be tolerated, that policies for awareness and reporting are in place and actively administered, that unsafe environments are eliminated, and that consequences for offenders are as swift and sure as the law and our policies will provide. No individual or component within the broad education community – from grade school to graduate school – is above the expectations for teaching and protecting those in our care.

The recent allegations of outrageous behaviors by sexual predators sadden and disturb us, but they are also reminders of the vigilance we must practice as education professionals. We must establish and have well-understood standards in place for behaviors in and around our programs and premises. We must be aware of and watchful for signs or signals that abuse might be taking place. We must be prepared to bring the weight of organizational sanctions on any who would ignore the signs or impede the reporting of child abuse.

Most importantly, we must encourage those who have been victims and those who may have witnessed instances of abuse or suspect that abuse has taken place to report their concerns to the appropriate authorities. We know that one of the ways to defeat this is by lifting the veil of secrecy around sexual abuse of children. Every campus should have protective policies and a means for anonymous reporting. To help foster an environment in which abuse is reported, the NCAA has identified a national organization, Stop It Now! committed to preventing child sexual abuse. This is one of many fine organizations working to stop such behavior. Anyone who has been a victim, seen abuse or believes there is cause for concern in a particular situation, can and should call their local or state child protection agency or law enforcement. But they can also call Stop It Now! for help when they are unsure about reporting at 1-888-PREVENT or go online to www.stopitnow.org/ncaa. The purpose of the help line is to put those in need in touch with those who can help.

Child sexual abuse is a crime that breaks our hearts. It is the very antithesis of what we in education are charged to do – teach and protect. Please join us in working to put a spotlight on the world of child sexual predators and eliminate the dark corners where they can exist.

Mark Emmert, President
National Collegiate Athletic Association

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