Testimony of

# Mr. Harvey Pearlman

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STATEMENT OF HARVEY S. PERLMAN
BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am Harvey Perlman, Chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I have held that position since April 2001 and served as Interim Chancellor of the University for several months before that. I received both my undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I have served on the faculties of both the University of Nebraska and University of Virginia Law Schools and was dean of the University of Nebraska College of Law from 1983-1998. As a member of the group of University Presidents who oversee the Bowl Championship Series ("BCS") arrangement, I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today to discuss this matter with you.

In its short history, the BCS has provided college football fans with an annual national championship game and enhanced the excitement of the other bowls and the regular season. The BCS has created these benefits while preserving the great traditions of the college football bowl system and maximizing the number of post-season games for both student-athletes and fans. It offers greater opportunities for all teams to play in major bowl games than has ever existed in the history of the game. In short, given the development of college football over a century and the realities facing our student-athletes, our fans, and the traditional bowl games, the BCS is the fairest and most sensible way to determine a Division I-A national champion.

Those who seek to impose a radical restructuring of the college football landscape have raised three broad points in opposition to the BCS. First, they claim that a Division I-A playoff would be a better and more equitable way to decide a national champion. Second, they claim that the BCS creates a class of "haves" and a class of "have-nots" in college football and contributes to the financial difficulty in which some athletic departments find themselves. Third, they claim that the BCS is "unfair" because it denies certain institutions "access" to certain bowl games. I will address each of these points in turn, but none of these claims has merit.

THE BCS IS SUPERIOR TO A MULTI-GAME, NFL-STYLE PLAYOFF

A Division I-A playoff is almost always portrayed as a panacea for college football and its fans. It is nothing of the sort, whether from the perspective of the institutions that would most likely play in the games, student-athletes, the bowl games that have supported and helped nurture college football for more than a century, and the fans of the game.

Impact on the Academic Missions of Universities. The vast majority of university presidents whose institutions play Division I-A college football have consistently opposed the creation of a multi-game, NFL-style playoff because of the impact such a playoff would have on the academic missions of their universities. Those of us charged with administering our nation's universities are caretakers not simply of football programs but of the broader academic missions of our

institutions. In my own case, I am responsible not only to the Board of Regents who oversees the University of Nebraska but also to the people of the State of Nebraska, who support our university through their tax dollars.

One of my responsibilities is to fit the athletic department, including the football program, within the academic program of the university as a whole. We at Nebraska are very proud of our rich football tradition. We have won 5 national championships since 1970, including 3 in the last 10 years. We have won at least a share of 17 Big Eight or Big 12 championships and finished in the top 10 of the final Associated Press poll 24 times in that same period. Since 1970, we have produced 63 first-team All-Americans, 8 Outland Trophy winners, 4 Lombardi Award winners, 3 Heisman Trophy winners, and one Congressman, Tom Osborne, who so ably represents our state in the House of Representatives. Our team won at least nine games every year between 1970 and 2001, and we have appeared in a bowl game for 34 consecutive seasons. Yet despite all of those accomplishments, what happens on the football field is not as important as what takes place in our lecture halls and laboratories. We do not exist to field a football team. We strive to instill in all our students, including our student-athletes, a love of learning that will last a lifetime. We have been successful there as well. Our athletic program has produced more Academic All-Americans generally and in football than any other university. Of the 24 student-athletes in football who completed their eligibility last year, 23 of them left the University with a diploma. Our mission at Nebraska, as it is at every institution, is to educate young men and women, to help them develop their minds and their critical thinking skills, and to prepare them for the world beyond the university. While intercollegiate athletics plays a role in the development of students, it is but a small part of our overall educational aims.

A Division I-A playoff would intrude on our core academic function. To avoid dragging the football season into the second semester of the school year, playoff games would have to be played in December when we at Nebraska and a number of other universities conduct final examinations for the first semester of the school year. Thus, playoff advocates are suggesting that we hold what would undoubtedly be the most significant and highest profile intercollegiate athletic event of the school year - and for most of our players, the most important games of their athletic careers - at precisely the time when we are engaging in the most important academic exercise facing all of our students. I have no doubt that a Division I-A playoff would attract enormous media attention. Our student-athletes would face enormous external pressure to perform at their highest level at precisely the time when we expect them to be devoting their full attention to their academic pursuits. In addition, other students would want to attend or participate in the playoff games. Even the potential disruption of final examinations in order to accommodate a Division I-A playoff is, in my view, putting the athletic cart before the academic horse. Most of my counterparts at other universities have reached precisely the same judgment, and frankly, while I respect those who disagree, those of us most closely associated with the issue and responsible for balancing these interests have concluded that a playoff is not in the interests of our athletes.

Impact on Student-Athletes. A multi-game, NFL-style Division I-A playoff would also, in my view, have a substantial detrimental impact on student-athletes. Today, those student athletes who play college football at the highest levels are bigger, stronger, and faster than those of any previous generation. Football is an extremely physical game. There is a limit to the number of games we can reasonably ask 18, 19, and 20 year-old young men to play. Those student-athletes who play Division I-A college football already make an enormous time commitment to the sport. Practice begins in the August sun and will continue until early December for some teams. For

those playing in bowl games, it will resume after an examination break and continue until completion of the bowl game. It then recommences in the spring with spring drills.
The most successful teams may play as many as 15 games in a season. Because of the physical nature of the game, football can exact a toll on young men who are still developing, and I, along with a number of my colleagues, recognize there is a physical limit to the number of games that student-athletes can reasonably be asked to play. Indeed, in recognition of this fact, the NCAA has long limited the number of games any Division I-A institution may play in a particular season. A multi-game playoff could require teams advancing to the championship to play as many as 18 games in a season, a number that exceeds the length of an NFL regular season.
Our athletes are not professionals; they are students. Even at Nebraska, where we have had great success over the years, only a relative handful of the young men who play football will ever be considered sufficiently talented to play professional football. An even smaller number will actually sign a professional contract, and even fewer will ever actually make a professional roster. Our job is to provide student-athletes with the best educational opportunities that we can and to put athletics with an overall framework consistent with the welfare of all of our students. The additional demands of a multi-game, NFL-style, Division I-A playoff are, in my view, simply too great a burden to impose on these young men. The bowl system provides rewarding post-season experiences for far more student-athletes than will ever play in a playoff. We should continue to nurture that system and to permit our student-athletes to enjoy the many benefits of the bowl experience without requiring them to play what is, in effect, the equivalent of an NFL season
Impact on Bowl Games and Fans. A multi-game, Division I-A playoff would also substantially harm the existing bowl games and their communities that have been such great supporters of college football over the years and impose unacceptable burdens on the many fans of the game. The bowl games simply cannot be ignored in any consideration of a playoff. Each game is run by a bowl committee that is itself an independent economic entity. Bowl committees do far more than sponsor football games. Each year, the bowls sponsor major events that showcase local communities and celebrate college football. Bowl committees underwrite youth sports programs, educational initiatives, and a host of charitable activities. They have returned millions of dollars over the years to scholarship programs and other activities that directly benefit student-athletes. Many of these bowl committees function because hundreds of volunteers donate time and talent to make these many benefits possible. These superb programs are funded by ticket sales and other revenues generated by ancillary events related to the bowl games themselves. In addition, bowl games work closely with community business leaders to generate enormous economic impact in the host areas. Bowl games lure college football fans to hotels, restaurants, and many other local attractions. A playoff would threaten all of these benefits.
Bowl games also provide unique experiences for a number of student-athletes. Today, there are 28 bowl games that provide post-season opportunities for approximately 5600 student-athletes. For many of these young men, participation in a bowl game is a highlight of their athletic careers. The bowl experience is not limited to three hours on a playing field in a different stadium but encompasses much more. Bowl committees generally treat student-athletes to several days of events and activities designed to give them a flavor of the local community. These events permit student-athletes to enjoy attractions near the host city and often give them the opportunity to participate in charitable activities sponsored by the bowl committee. A playoff would reduce the number of student-athletes participating in the post-season to no more than 1600 and deprive them of the rewards that come with earning a trip to a bowl game.

Playoff proponents often claim that the way to preserve the bowl games is to incorporate them into the playoff structure. The suggestion fails to take account of the realities of college football. Even the National Football League, whose playoff structure is held out as the paradigm for a college football tournament, plays all of its post-season games, except the Super Bowl, at the home stadium of one of the participating teams. An eight or sixteen-team playoff would inevitably require seeding of teams and playing playoff games at on-campus sites. Any other structure would place enormous burdens on the many fans of the game. We cannot expect college football fans to be criss-crossing the country each weekend in December to watch their teams play at distant bowl locations. For example, we cannot expect fans of the University of Washington to go to the Cotton Bowl in Dallas for a first-round game one week, then to the Citrus Bowl in Orlando for a second-round game the following week, followed by a semi-final game in the Orange Bowl in Miami the following week, and a championship game in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena the following week. Requiring fans to rearrange their December schedules and expend the sums necessary for air travel, hotels, meals, and other expenses attendant in such a whirlwind schedule is simply unreasonable.

From the perspective of the bowl games, a multi-game playoff makes no more sense. Today, there are 28 bowl games. Even in a 16-team playoff, only 15 of the bowls at most could possibly host playoff games. The remaining 13 would be left to fend for whatever fan attention and television and sponsorship revenues would be left over after the playoff claimed its share. What happens to those bowl games and the communities benefiting from them? Playoff proponents have no answer because there is none. The most likely result is that these bowls would disappear, depriving large numbers of student-athletes of the opportunity to play in a post season bowl game.

As a matter of economics, even those bowls hosting playoff games would be asked to sell tickets for games whose participants cannot be determined until a week before the game is to be played. Bowl games depend economically on fans from the teams to buy tickets to the game. The matchup may have little appeal to fans locally, and unlike today, the host bowl will not have an expectation that fans of the participating institutions will purchase a substantial number of tickets. Perhaps more importantly, however, the character of the bowl games as events will be lost. Coaches could be expected to treat a "bowl" game as any other important contest, particularly if it were part of a playoff. Instead of spending several days at the bowl site, teams would simply fly in, play the game, and return home. The festivities and events that student-athletes enjoy today would be sacrificed, and the community activities, such as parades, galas, and golf tournaments, as well as the charitable activities of the bowls, would be compromised. We cannot expect that the Rose Bowl, for example, can move its many activities, such as the annual Tournament of Roses parade, to various different weekends in December depending on what playoff round it was hosting in any particular year. Other bowl games would face similar difficulties with their signature events as well. The bowls depend on predictability both in terms of scheduling and participating teams. A playoff system is ill suited to bowl games, and inevitably would substantially weaken, if not destroy, some venerable traditional events that are not only a part of college football but also are woven into the fabric of American culture.

Impact on the Regular Season. Finally, a playoff would have a detrimental impact on the college football regular season. College football is a tradition-bound game. Its great rivalries derive their significance from the importance of the regular season. Today, college football determines its national champion largely on the basis of play during the regular season. One of the attributes that give the game great national appeal is that teams essentially play games of championship

importance every Saturday in the fall. That is why college football fans, at least among the Big 12 and other major football-playing conferences, have for years packed mammoth arenas, many in small towns, every weekend. Insert a playoff and much of the drama of regular season rivalries is gone. When undefeated Oklahoma plays undefeated Nebraska, fans around the country watch with great anticipation because the outcome of that game may have a substantial impact on their favorite team's chances for a national championship. Create a playoff, and the game does not have the same significance. Both teams are likely to be in the playoffs, and the teams may meet each other again in a game that has been invested with greater importance simply because it occurs later on the calendar. The regular season becomes more about seeding and position than about deciding the national championship. The championship will be decided later in other games, which we have arbitrarily invested with greater significance. Indeed, for all its excitement, that criticism has been leveled at the NCAA basketball tournament. While fans undoubtedly enjoy "March Madness," critics have correctly noted that the emphasis on a handful of games in March makes regular season basketball and conference championship races much less significant. As with most other university presidents, I do not believe that the great traditions of regular-season college football should be diminished or sacrificed in order to create a playoff structure that will invest a handful of games with great significance at the expense of many other games.

In short, a multi-game, NFL-style playoff solves nothing for college football. It will interfere with the academic missions of Division I-A universities, impose greater burdens on those student-athletes who participate in post-season games, reduce the number of student athletes who enjoy the post-season experience, substantially harm the traditional bowl games and the communities that host them, have a detrimental impact on college football fans, and diminish the importance of the regular season. This is why the BCS arrangement is a sensible and limited response. It provides the opportunity for a national championship game without producing all of the negative consequences listed above.

DISTRIBUTION OF BCS REVENUES
HAS LITTLE IMPACT ON COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Critics of the BCS often claim that the arrangement creates a group of "haves" and "have-nots" in college football because the revenue is not shared equitably. This criticism, too, may be laid to rest because it lacks any factual basis. On its face, the claim that the distribution of revenues derived from four football games out of the literally hundreds and hundreds of games played each season creates classes of "haves" and "have-nots" is simply preposterous. While the BCS generates significant revenues in the aggregate, after the expenses of the participating teams are covered and money is distributed among members of the participating conferences, the total distribution per institution is relatively small. Last year, the University of Nebraska and other institutions in the Big 12 each received about $1.2 million from the BCS arrangement. Our total athletic budget at Nebraska is over $50 million dollars. In other words, revenues attributable to the BCS arrangement contribute less than 2% of our athletic budget. By contrast, we generate $2.5 million to $3 million for every home football game we play. At Nebraska, we generally play a minimum of 7 home football games a season. Those games will generate anywhere from 17.5 to 21 times more revenue than we receive from the BCS arrangement.

The fact is that the differential in athletic budgets among Division I-A schools has nothing to do with the BCS, but rather with the differential commitments of fans and donors and the investments schools decide to make in their athletic programs. Football drives athletic revenues

and football revenues are largely dictated by the size of the home stadium and the willingness of fans to pay to sit in it. The potential revenue from the BCS has a very small part in the overall revenues of any athletic program.

Today, there are 117 institutions competing in Division I-A college football. Even if every dollar netted from the BCS arrangement were shared pro-rata among all of those institutions, the total payment per university would be well under $1 million and probably closer to $750,000 for each institution. The amount of money generated by the BCS arrangement is simply too small to lift any athletic program out of financial difficulty or to cause any stratification of college football teams into classes of "haves" and "have-nots."

THE BCS PROVIDES THE BROADEST BOWL ACCESS
FOR ALL DIVISION I-A TEAMS AND IS
THE FAIREST METHOD FOR DETERMINING A NATIONAL CHAMPION

Critics of the BCS also claim that the arrangement is "unfair" because it denies "access" to certain institutions and does not permit them to play for a national championship. It is also claimed that student-athletes at certain school are deprived of their "right" to have the opportunity to play for the national championship. Let's be absolutely clear on this point. The BCS denies no university or any student-athlete access to any bowl game or the opportunity to compete for a national championship. Any team can play in any BCS bowl or any other college bowl game. There are 28 bowl games this year that will host 56 teams. Those who claim that participation in particular bowl games determines the success of a university football program have cause and effect backward. Bowl game participation does not determine the success of a university football program; it reflects that success.

Sustained success in athletics, as with any other endeavor within a university, is the product of traditions, contexts, and choices made by those charged with governance of the institution. Looking at college football in isolation is like looking at one tile in a mosaic. The tile alone gives no indication of the much larger picture. Each university has a pool of natural and financial resources - some greater than others. One of the great benefits of American higher education - and, indeed, one of the reasons that it is the envy of the world - is that institutions are free to allocate resources in a way that they believe will appeal to the broadest spectrum of scholars and prospective students. These choices have created diverse and rich educational and research opportunities that characterize the college and university system in this nation. No institution is compelled to choose the path chosen by any other. Some institutions are known for excellence in particular areas, which often result from natural advantages. For example, a student interested in oceanography is more likely to choose a university located on a coast than to choose the University of Nebraska. We are located in the heartland, thousands of miles from any ocean. We simply are not in a position to offer scholars or students the type of research opportunities in oceanography that a university situated in a coastal community can offer in that discipline. On the other hand, a student interested in cutting-edge research in agricultural sciences will find Nebraska to be very attractive. Given our location, the economy of our state, and the commitment of the University to agricultural research, we can offer students and scholars a number of educational and research opportunities in agricultural sciences that institutions in urban areas are not particularly suited to offer.

The same is true in athletics. At Nebraska, we have some natural advantages in our football program. We are the flagship state university in a sparsely populated area. We have loyal and dedicated alumni with a great love of and passion for college football.. In addition, the closest professional teams are located in cities hundreds of miles beyond our borders. Our fans have

invested in our football program over the years and have allowed us to achieve great success. Students who are interested in playing top-flight college football might well consider attending Nebraska. By the same token, students interested in golf are not likely to find us as attractive. We do not have a climate that is conducive to participating in golf on a year-round basis. Nor do we have the facilities that will help students interested in competing at the highest levels of the sport to develop their games in the same way that universities located in warmer climates and with better facilities do. Every once in a while we attract some hard working student-athletes who make us competitive in golf, but one would not expect this on a sustained basis.

Athletics is just one area out of many in which universities may choose to compete with each other and make strategic choices to do so. Nothing prevents any university from improving its football program, just as nothing prevents an institution from improving its engineering or chemistry programs. As with all choices, some will succeed more than others. If good faculty and good students cannot be attracted, a university cannot build an academic program, regardless of its investments. If the fans in a particular area do not support an athletic program, then that program cannot succeed at the highest levels. Universities have a number of funding sources - endowments, alumni contributions, student tuition, research grants, and, for public institutions such as Nebraska, state taxpayers. Nothing is stopping Harvard, for example, from using some of the massive return on its $17 billion endowment to build better athletic facilities to attract better student-athletes and compete on the highest level of the collegiate playing field except for one thing - Harvard's decision not to compete on that level and to focus its resources elsewhere. The same is true for every other institution fielding a football team.

Every university administration faces similar choices every single day. I spend a great deal of my time promoting the University of Nebraska and our excellent academic programs. For years, I was privileged to serve as the dean of the University of Nebraska College of Law. Much as I would have liked for our law school graduates to have the same "access" to jobs in Wall Street law firms as those of Harvard, Yale, or any other elite law school, that simply has not been the case. I am persuaded that the best students at the University of Nebraska College of Law can compete successfully with Harvard or Yale graduates. But Harvard and Yale and other elite law schools have consistently produced scores of fine young lawyers and other professionals over the years. Attending one of those institutions carries with it certain opportunities that other institutions may struggle to match in certain fields. It may be that a student-athlete who chooses to attend a Tulane or a Northern Illinois has less of a chance to play for a national championship in football. But that is the student's choice. Similarly a student who enrolls in any institution of higher education, accepts the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and the opportunity sets that flow from them. This is not "unfair". It is, indeed, a strength of American higher education that all institutions are not alike and that they offer, in total, a wide variety of opportunities to students. If this is "unfair" does it mean that Harvard and Yale should be compelled to share their extraordinary endowments or substantial tuition payments or nationally recognized faculty, or the top of their admissions classes with other universities? The suggestions are nonsensical. As I mentioned, at Nebraska we have excellent programs in the agricultural sciences. Should we be compelled to share research grants in those areas with other institutions that have not made the same investments in their programs? Should those who charge tuition rates in excess of $30,000 per student per year be compelled to share those revenues with those of us who have more modest tuition rates? Again, the mere suggestion reveals that the argument runs directly counter to our traditional support for independent choice and for allowing those who succeed to reap the benefits of their success. At no time has there ever been any suggestion that resources and

funding should or even could be equalized across colleges or universities or even among certain departments across institutions of higher learning.

Only in the tiny sliver of university life that is college football have critics come forward suggesting that the existence of "haves" and "have-nots" is somehow "unfair." That criticism has no logical underpinnings. At the University of Nebraska our athletic program is self-supporting. It receives no tax dollars and no student fees. It pays for its buildings, its scholarships, its coaches, and its operating expenses. Indeed for the past several years it has also contributed $1.5 million to academic programs within the University. By generating revenue from our athletic program, we are able to fund academic endeavors and provide opportunities for our students that would otherwise require greater tuition payments or additional support from our state taxpayers. Not surprisingly, no critic of the BCS arrangement has ever explained why students at Nebraska should forego educational opportunities that we can offer or that the taxpayers of Nebraska should be called upon to provide additional dollars of support for our institution in order for us to subsidize the athletic budgets of other universities. But that is what those who advocate that the BCS is "unfair" are suggesting.

The reason that there are so-called "haves" and "have-nots" in college football is no different from the reason that there are "haves" and "have-nots" in any university endeavor; some universities have natural advantages or disadvantages determined by tradition, by location, and by funding sources. Some university leaders over time have chosen to allocate resources to intercollegiate athletics, and some have chosen to allocate less. Some have built large stadiums; some have not. Some enjoy fan and donor support; others do not. As with every decision made by a university community, those decisions carry consequences. Those conferences consisting of universities that have decided to compete at the highest levels of college football have developed reputations over the years for producing superlative teams. Other universities, as well as those who are successful in football, often develop reputations for having first-rate chemistry departments, economics departments, history departments, or English departments. Those conferences with football success were able to use these reputations to attract bowl games over the years and to develop close relationships with certain bowl games, just as universities with reputations for certain academic strengths are able to secure federal grants, participate in national conferences, and place their faculty in the National Academies. Those relationships did not develop in a vacuum. The bowl games chose to create those relationships because they perceived themselves to be better off with an affiliation with a particular conference than without one. The architects of the BCS took this landscape as they found it and developed an arrangement that recognizes the significance of these conference/bowl relationships while creating a new product - an annual national championship game - that benefits the fans of college football and yet retains the essential character of the game.

There are four bowl games in the BCS arrangement. Even before the formation of the BCS, and the predecessor Bowl Alliance and Bowl Coalition, four of the eight slots in those bowl games were committed to certain conference champions. The Rose Bowl hosted the Big Ten and Pacific 10 champions annually. The Sugar Bowl hosted the Southeastern Conference champion each year, and the Orange Bowl played host to the champion of the Big Eight Conference, which is now the Big 12, each season. All of those arrangements were individually negotiated. The only effect of the BCS and its predecessors is to bring the champions of the Atlantic Coast Conference and the Big East Conference into those four bowls every year. That was done for two reasons. First, the primary goal of the BCS is to create an annual national championship game between the top two teams in college football. Both the ACC and the Big East have consistently fielded

teams in the national championship hunt. Since 1980, the ACC has produced 4 national champions, and the Big East has produced 5 national champions and two runners-up. There is no way to guarantee a national championship contest without the participation of the Big East and the ACC. Second, the ACC and Big East, like the other conferences in the BCS arrangement, had existing bowl arrangements for their champions or had been offered lucrative bowl slots for their champions. One could not expect that those conferences would abandon those relationships or reject those offers to make an annual national championship game possible unless they had a guaranteed annual bowl slot for their respective champions. Thus, the six guaranteed slots in the BCS simply reflect long-standing, pre-existing bowl relationships between certain bowls and certain conferences and the sacrifice of other bowl relationships or potential relationships by other conferences. In the absence of these guaranteed slots, there simply would not be an annual guaranteed national championship game.

The four BCS bowls have two open slots that can be filled by any team in Division I-A. In most every year, a BCS bowl with an open slot chooses what team will play in its game from a pool of at-large teams who have performed exceptionally well during that year. Those decisions are made by the BCS bowl games for reasons unique to each of them. Once again, participation in a BCS bowl game is the product of choices - this time the choice of the host bowls. That is exactly how participation was determined prior to the formation of the BCS or any of its predecessors. There are, however, two mechanisms by which an independent team or a team in one of the five conferences that do not have annual guaranteed slots for their champions may automatically gain one of the two at-large slots. The first is to finish the season ranked #1 or #2 in the BCS Standings. In that situation, the team will play in the national championship game. The second is to finish ranked #3 through #6 in the BCS Standings. In that case, the team will play in one of the other BCS bowls as an at-large team. Today, there are five Division I-A conferences whose champions do not have an automatic annual berth in a BCS bowl. With the exception of a short period of time in the early 1970s when the Western Athletic Conference had an affiliation agreement with the Fiesta Bowl, at no time prior to the formation of the BCS did any of those conferences have guaranteed access to a BCS bowl game. Indeed, before the BCS, none of these institutions has ever had guaranteed access of any sort to the Rose, Sugar, or Orange Bowls. Thus, it is simply false to say that the BCS "excludes" any team from any bowl game. It provides a level of guaranteed access to certain bowl games that has never existed before. In short, there is a greater level of access to the BCS bowls across the entirety of Division I-A than has ever existed.

Much has been made about the fact that Tulane was not picked by a BCS bowl in 1998 despite its undefeated season. The reason for that is simple. Tulane was in the pool of at large teams and could have been picked by either the Sugar Bowl or the Orange Bowl. Both had open slots in their games, but, for reasons of their own, both chose other teams to play in their games. In both cases, the teams picked by those two bowls to fill at-large slots, Ohio State and Florida, were ranked higher than Tulane not only in the BCS Standings but also in the Associated Press and coaches polls as well. Tulane was not "excluded" from a BCS bowl. It simply was not chosen to play by one of the two bowls. Tulane went on to play in the Liberty Bowl and completed its season with a victory over Brigham Young. Its players are to be congratulated on their success. Yet nothing suggests that they were somehow "unfairly" denied an opportunity to play for a national championship. Those student-athletes played 11 regular season games, just as every other student-athlete competing for a Division I-A college football team. National champions are crowned by polls. For whatever reason, the pollsters determined at the conclusion of the regular

season that Tulane was only the 10th best team in the nation and only 7th best at the conclusion of the bowl games. Does that mean that Tulane had no opportunity to compete for the national championship? Again, the suggestion is illogical. Tulane had the same opportunity as every other institution fielding a Division I-A team. The fact that it did not finish in the top spot is not a reflection of a lack opportunity.

Much has also been made about the BCS Standings and their inclusion of a strength-of-schedule component. Again, this criticism is unfounded. Those who criticize this aspect of the BCS Standings are in effect saying that college football should reward those who rack up a series of victories against weak teams over those who play the toughest competition on an annual basis. The BCS Standings encourage each and every team to play the toughest competition possible, thus enhancing and improving regular season college football and providing even more excitement for the fans of the game. Indeed, before its loss over the weekend, this year's Cinderella, Northern Illinois, was ranked higher in the initial BCS Standings than in either of traditional polls. Northern Illinois chose to schedule several historically strong teams at the outset of its season and was successful. Any Division I-A school can choose to play a strong schedule.

CONCLUSION

Simply stated, the BCS arrangement provides fans with an annual national championship game - something that had never existed before - while providing greater bowl opportunities for every Division I-A institution. It has enhanced college football while preserving the great traditions of the bowl system and providing the maximum number of post season opportunities for student-athletes. I have no doubt that it will continue to provide great benefits to college football and its fans in the future.

I acknowledge that on first blush it is often attractive for those who have not achieved the same level of success as others to search for causes beyond their own control. Because the BCS arrangement is poorly understood, it may be seen, by some, as the elephant that is the cause of all the things thought to be negative associated with modern day intercollegiate athletics. There are major concerns in college athletics, which I and my colleagues associated with the BCS share. The conferences associated with the BCS have in fact led the effort toward academic reform currently working its way through the NCAA. We are mindful of our responsibilities as university presidents and also mindful that the NCAA is the organized way in which broader reform must be structured. The BCS arrangement, however, is a limited mechanism of providing a national championship game for post-season football. It neither is the cause of changes in, nor has the capacity to alter, the landscape of intercollegiate athletics.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about these matters.