April 9, 2008

President Myles Brand National Collegiate Athletic Association 700 W. Washington Street P.O. Box 6222 Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Dear President Brand:

The undersigned NCAA college presidents and athletic directors write because of our concern for the values of higher education and sports and the health and safety of college students who we seek to mentor and protect. This communication reflects the views of our colleagues at more than 280 NCAA schools that alcohol advertising and college sports are a bad mix. We respectfully request that the issue of televised beer advertising during the NCAA tournament once again be considered by the NCAA's Division I Board of Directors and the Executive Committee in their upcoming meetings. The most recent discussion of the issue occurred in 2005, with no change in NCAA policy. Since then, beer advertising during the games continues to undermine the many positive attributes of college sports and taints the NCAA's status as an inspirational youth brand.

We find it odd that the NCAA's advertising and promotional standards purport to "exclude those advertisements and advertisers...that do not appear to be in the best interests of higher education and student-athletes," yet allow beer advertising. We note that NCAA policies explicitly exclude alcohol advertising, yet permit ads for beverages with alcohol content of 6% or less. NCAA policies also impose limitations on the number and running time for ads during the final tournament games. These "restrictions" favor form over substance. Given the persistent problems caused by underage and excessive college drinking, much of it in the form of beer, we find it inconceivable that the NCAA's profiting from beer promotion during the telecasts of college basketball games comports with the best interests of higher education, sports, or student welfare.

Recent data on advertising expenditures during last year's NCAA tournament, released by TNS Media Intelligence, cast significant doubt about the effectiveness of the NCAA's beer advertising limits and strongly suggest that beer advertising is embarrassingly prominent during the NCAA basketball tournament. According to TNS, advertising expenditures by two brewers ranked fourth and fifth among top tournament advertisers. Among the top five, the beer category ranked second, behind automobiles.

We are troubled by this finding because it sends the wrong message about college sports and the mission of the NCAA and higher education. The heavy dose of beer ads also sends the wrong message to the millions of impressionable young viewers, whose use of alcohol research confirms, is influenced by their exposure to televised ads. Most troubling, however, is the realization, based on TNS advertising data, that NCAA allowance of beer advertising serves to enrich broadcasters unnecessarily at the expense of the values of sports and higher education. TNS data suggest that the NCAA tournament has strong and broad support among advertisers; and demand for advertising time has steadily increased revenues for the CBS television network. With 300 different advertisers since 1998 and revenues going up, it is difficult to believe that the NCAA tournament would suffer from the absence of beer advertising.

The NCAA's mission is to promote the values of sports in higher education. Beer advertising subverts that cause, and a growing number of NCAA member-school officials support eliminating beer advertising from NCAA sports telecasts. That group includes large Division I athletic programs, such as Ohio State, Texas Tech, and the Universities of Florida, Minnesota, and Nebraska, as well as numerous

Division II and III schools. Those schools recognize the hypocrisy of airing commercials for the very product that causes college administrators, coaches, and parents so much distress. Alcohol ads demean the NCAA, student athletes, college prevention efforts, and help put young people at risk.

We believe that the NCAA's alcohol advertising policy must again be reviewed following this year's NCAA tournament. We strongly urge you to take action to end all alcohol advertising – including beer advertising – on NCAA sports telecasts. We look forward to working with you toward that end. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Royce Money, Abilene Christian University

Robert A. Scott, Adelphi University

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Lex O. McMillan, III, Albright College

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L. Randolph Lowry, Lipscomb University

James E. Collins, Loras College

Jean A. Scott, Marietta College

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