In September, Pulitzer Prize-winning author/journalist David Maraniss lectured and fielded questions from 160 sport management and journalism students. In his remarks, Maraniss focused on his current book, *Rome 1960: The Olympics that Changed the World* (Simon & Schuster), which brought enduring fame to such U.S. athletes as Rafer Johnson, Wilma Rudolph, and Cassius Clay. “Everything was contested through the lens of the Cold War, in which the U.S. positioned itself as a beacon of liberty,” he observed. But the accomplishments of U.S. black athletes juxtaposed against unequal treatment of blacks and whites at home presented the U.S. with an “unanswerable question” that the U.S.S.R. was happy to exploit. “The Cold War and the Olympics forced the U.S. to confront that hypocrisy,” he emphasized.

Several weeks later, economics columnist and scholar David Warsh, in a lecture in the School’s Finance Seminar series, explored “mysteries” associated with the current financial crisis. The author of *Knowledge and the Wealth of Nations* (W.W. Norton 2006) and of the independent web weekly, www.economicprincipals.com, Warsh covered economics for *The Boston Globe* weekly, www.economicprincipals.com, Warsh, who is a law graduate of the Isenberg School and a scholar, in a lecture in the School’s Finance Seminar series, explored “mysteries” associated with the current financial crisis. The author of *Knowledge and the Wealth of Nations* (W.W. Norton 2006) and of the independent web weekly, www.economicprincipals.com, Warsh covered economics for *The Boston Globe* weekly, www.economicprincipals.com, Warsh explored a variety of issues. Passing and merging behavior on highways, he noted, exemplify how individual and collective behavior can conflict. Traffic systems have nonlinear aspects. When the first and second autos in a line of cars brake suddenly, an increasing shockwave may cause collisions down the line. Perceptual distortions can also make trouble. When we drive in fog, which reduces contrast, we may be driving faster than we think. And signage can prove counterproductive. Drivers, emphasized Vanderbilt, adapt their behavior more to the road that they see than to signs. Fewer or no signs at all require drivers to be more attentive.

In November, Tom Vanderbilt, author of the best-selling book, *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do* (Knopf 2008), spoke at the Isenberg School as a guest of the campus’s student chapter of INFORMS (the Institute of Operations Research and the Management Sciences). In a program illustrated with photos and film clips of traffic configurations and driving behavior, Vanderbilt explored a variety of issues. Passing and merging behavior on highways, he noted, exemplify how individual and collective behavior can conflict. Traffic systems have nonlinear aspects. When the first and second autos in a line of cars brake suddenly, an increasing shockwave may cause collisions down the line. Perceptual distortions can also make trouble. When we drive in fog, which reduces contrast, we may be driving faster than we think. And signage can prove counterproductive. Drivers, emphasized Vanderbilt, adapt their behavior more to the road that they see than to signs. Fewer or no signs at all require drivers to be more attentive. Vanderbilt explored a variety of issues. Passing and merging behavior on highways, he noted, exemplify how individual and collective behavior can conflict. Traffic systems have nonlinear aspects. When the first and second autos in a line of cars brake suddenly, an increasing shockwave may cause collisions down the line. Perceptual distortions can also make trouble. When we drive in fog, which reduces contrast, we may be driving faster than we think. And signage can prove counterproductive. Drivers, emphasized Vanderbilt, adapt their behavior more to the road that they see than to signs. Fewer or no signs at all require drivers to be more attentive.

Halloween for a visit by Perry G. Mehrling, an economics professor at Barnard College and author of the award-winning book, *Fischer Black and the Revolutionary Idea of Finance* (Wiley 2005). Living up to his self-description as a monetary economist, Mehrling displayed and dissected the Federal Reserve System’s current and recent balance sheets. “We’ve been moving the private financial system onto the balance sheet of the Fed,” he remarked. “Right now, the Fed, which has gradually widened its overall criteria for lending, is about $500 billion in the hole in borrowing from the U.S. Treasury and lending to the private sector. The Fed, in fact, is on its way toward becoming the world’s central bank.” And what, according to Mehrling, is the weak link in the financial system? It’s casting AIG and the insurance monolines in the role as the bottom-line insurers of credit risk. “That should be the government’s job. We need to get AIG out of that business,” he told the seminar.

In his final analysis, Wong explained that the current system may be the best option. Perhaps “the sky is not falling,” he told the commission, but the uneven landscape of collegiate sports does little to simplify matters: “There isn’t one organization that controls the collegiate sports industry, with rule-making and decision-making authority. Drawing a straight consistent line between amateurism and commercialism is very difficult with these vast differences in interests,” he said.