

D2 ADACORNER



Chris Ratcliff

Rogers State University

Director of Athletics

As we finalize travel to sunny Orlando for the the NACDA Convention, I am very excited to offer you a glimpse into this year's D2 ADA programming. As our professional organization has grown over the years, the programming has evolved as well. Surveys and discussions took place to ensure we continue to align programming with the needs of the membership. Our goal is that this programming will allow you to become a better leader, and to take a few best practices with you back to your campus.

A recent staple of the D2 ADA programming has been the "Crystal Ball" session. In years past, we have invited the Chair of the Presidents Council, Vice President of Division II (Terri Steeb) and NCAA Chief Operating Officer (Donald Remy). We decided to change it just a bit this year. We will still invite Terri and Donald, but the decision was to ask the chair of Management Council to sit on the panel. Following this panel, we will flow right into the "How to Make

D2 Yours." With a history of knowledge, there will be four Past Presidents speaking on a range of topics that should provide a lot of insight.

Round tables are making an appearance this year. There has been strong dialogue over the last couple of years about the mental health of our student-athletes. We know there is an issue, but how can we, as administrators, help be part of the solution? Kirby Garry will help us navigate this sensitive area in a session on mental health best practices. After a short presentation, we will break out and help identify some best practices that are useful on individual campuses. The day will wrap up with Jeff Kallay of Render Experiences. This session will be a joint session with Division III, NAIA and NATYCAA. Jeff is a renowned speaker and his topic this year will be, "Generational Jeopardy."

Wednesday's programming will be very special. Justin Patton kicks things off with another energetic presentation. Justin has spoken to our group before, and he did not disappoint. This is also an opportunity for us to recognize the mentees in the Mentoring Program. The D2 ADA programming concludes with the recognition of the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award. This year's recipient is Roger Thomas. This has always been the highlight of the Convention. It is our opportunity to recognize a peer who has given so much to D2. After the presentation, Shawn Jones

and Ross Bjork of Ole Miss will have a fireside chat about how D2 shaped Ross. This truly could be one of the highlights of NACDA. You will not want to miss it.

It will be fast and furious, but the programming has something for everyone. Hopefully, you will find something that you can bring back with you to campus. As we wrap up the spring semester and look towards NACDA and summer, I would like to remind you all that your mental health is just as important as anyone's. Find time this summer to get away and recharge, you are worth it.

D2 CCACORNER



Bob Hogue

PacWest Conference

Commissioner

In my dozen years as a NCAA DII Commissioner with the PacWest Conference, I've always looked forward to traveling to the NACDA Convention. Each NACDA Convention is an opportunity – and not just a chance to increase your airline miles. It's an opportunity to expand your knowledge base with the myriad of educational programs and speakers that are offered to the attendees from all of our divisions, it's a chance to state your case on the hot topics of the day in our world of collegiate athletics and it's a chance to enhance your professional and personal growth by reaching out to colleagues.

To me, that networking opportunity is the thing I cherish most. Whether it's a quick conversation in the lobby or a more formal discussion in a meeting room, getting the chance for face-to-face dialogue makes a difference. NCAA DII Managing Director Maritza Jones echoes that

thought. She and the NCAA National Office staff always have time to meet with our D2 Conference Commissioners staff – something that all of us greatly appreciate.

"We really value the collaboration and camaraderie that our two groups have built up over the years," she says. "We're working together to enhance the experience of nearly 120,000 student-athletes – and the ability to dialogue about different topics, whether it's legislative proposals for a DII business session or other hot topics, has always proven both beneficial and insightful."

If I've seen one area where the NCAA has made great strides in building on that collaboration and tackling the hot topics of the day, it's in diversity and inclusion. In fact, our Association has become a great leader, as is seen with the outstanding ongoing work by the NCAA Office of Inclusion. The NCAA has made diversity and inclusion one of its core values – ensuring that our member schools and our Association stand firm in a commitment to ensuring that the athletic, academic and community environment we create is supportive and appreciative of everyone involved.

The message to all of us who make collegiate athletics our life is that the NACDA Convention is there for all of us – a chance to learn and grow and be heard. As DII Commissioners, we are proud to be a big part of it all as we embrace these core values and continue to strive to make a better place for all we serve.