

## NAADD CORNER



**Megan Edwards**

**University of Louisville**

*Executive Director of Development*

The Women of Influence, Empowering Female Student-Athletes program fills a need for high-level mentoring opportunities for female student-athletes as well as creating engaging opportunities for new and current female donors and companies. Over the course of three years, the program has evolved from informal communication with current donors into coordinated efforts between the Cardinal Athletic Fund, senior administrators and the life skills department to execute customized programming and events. What started as a small circle of trusted donors willing to help get this program off the ground has grown into a network of 300 influential Louisville women. This program has allowed us to deepen connections

with current female season ticket holders, provide an opportunity to engage more women outside of sporting events, find new companies to engage with athletics, and build relationships with more individuals within companies already involved.

Female student-athletes have benefited in a variety of ways from participation in the Women of Influence program – several have secured internships and full time positions after graduation. Programming for Women of Influence includes one-on-one mentoring, small group mentoring, speed mentoring, workshops on personal branding, transitioning college wardrobes into professional dress, resume building, leadership retreats, opportunities for studying abroad, etiquette dinners and scholarships for attending national conferences.

To attract these influential women and garner momentum for the program, we intentionally held back from asking for contributions for the first two years. As we set out into year three, we are proud to have partnered with Churchill Downs Inc. to take the Women of Influence

program to the next level. With their support, we will be able to enhance programming, mentoring and professional development opportunities. Additionally, their gift has established a Women of Influence endowed scholarship fund. The professional women who are part of the program have been asked to make gifts in support of the scholarship. We have found these women are inclined to give to this program rather than the general fund or through seating opportunities because they have developed connections and invested in the female student-athletes through Women of Influence events.

Fundamentally, the Women of Influence program works to expose and connect Louisville female student-athletes to careers and women who can elevate their professional aspirations and experiences. The support this program has generated from current and new donors has truly blown us away, and with the support of Churchill Downs Inc., we are certain there are so many exciting things to come. While still in the early stages of year three, the Women of Influence program has undoubtedly been a win for our female student-athletes, administrators, donors and named sponsor.

@NAATSONews

## NAATSO CORNER



**Matt Dewire**

**Vahalla Tickets**

*Co-President*

### What are We Doing to Win Our State?

For those who have seen ESPN's 30 for 30 "The U," winning the "State of Miami" gave rise to one of college football's greatest dynasties at the University of Miami. Going from Tampa, over to Daytona Beach, and southward to Miami, the coaching staff roped off this area as their prime recruiting territory so that any kid with talent should not escape the State of Miami. When thinking of sales within this concept, what are we doing to win our states? What are we doing to expand our state? When identifying your state, it is not a literal state being discussed here. Rather, we are discussing areas that are friendly and conducive to expanding sales opportunities.

Your state can be defined by a few characteristics:

- Town/County where your university is
- Counties that share a border with your home county
- Metropolitan/rural areas with a significant number of alumni/fans

Recognizing your core sales state initially and identifying areas of opportunity for expanding your season and group sales are vital to developing a continual prospect pipeline.

As managers, how can we attack current and new areas for this state effectively?

Assigning territories on a geographical basis to account representatives: A great way to creating ownership for your representatives, assigning a representative to that territory allows that representative to become part of the community.

- Assigning targeted segments within and outside of your state: Allowing representatives to have an "expertise" of a segment creates other opportunities of creating ownership for your representatives, such as Representative A working exclusively with religious organizations.
- Constant updating of group database: Is your group leader's contact information constantly being updated by you or your representatives? Keeping an updated list when transitions occur within a group makes your relationships more effective.
- How often are you and your representatives going out to cities and towns within your state and new potential territories? Are you utilizing your current customers to refer new customers?

- When your department travels for alumni/donor events or away games, does your ticketing staff travel to those cities, too? For those thinking that these events are donor exclusive, shouldn't we be thinking of ourselves as these representatives as well?
- What Chamber of Commerces/Economic Developments Groups is your department a part of? Do you send a representative to these meetings within your community and get in front of decision makers?
- In an area you are attempting to gain, are you going to your competitor's games within those territories to see who they have as groups? Knowing who spends money in territories is an easy opportunity to grow your group and season sales pipeline.
- Does your office order newspapers from within and outside your state? Knowing who is spending money and what is going on in those areas develop a deeper knowledge pool for your representatives.
- Does your department share a mutual CRM or do you operate in silos? Developing strategic plans for companies with multiple departments ensures your prospects grow to their maximum potential.

As we approach the NAATSO Convention, consider what you're doing to win your state, because if you don't own your state, someone else will.