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Revenue is key to an athletics business office. Every athletics department has varying streams of revenue, ranging from ticket sales to university support to media rights deals to fundraising. As university support continues to be a topic of contention and ticket sales fluctuate as fans come and go, many departments are looking for ways to continually increase revenue. Fundraising is an ideal area to look at for alternative revenue because there is no ceiling in private dollars a department can bring in.

While some athletics departments are focusing their fundraising efforts towards capital projects, many smaller schools are relying on those funds to supplement the department operating budget. Many Division II and III schools depend on fundraised money for more than a third of their overall budget. The relationship between the business office and fundraising arm is critical and should be constantly evolving. Communicating the financial needs of the

department is vital to ensure the development team knows what the priorities need to be.

At Richmond, we are often juggling many campaigns at the same time. These can range from funding a sport specific international trip, to upgrading a sound system for a facility to supporting a new leadership initiative. We are in constant communication with our development team to make sure everyone is on the same page and timeline to bring in these dollars. One component to launching successful campaigns and initiatives is making sure the brand of your institution is at the forefront. This helps tie together the money 'ask' with the promise of impacting future generations of student-athletes.

Working with donors and potential donors, it is extremely important that the athletics department has strong branding in place. Your brand can symbolize the institution's history, mission and character. It can unite a campus community with a clear sense of pride. For alumni, who are also a strong donor base, that brand reminds them of their experiences at their alma mater.

Here at the University of Richmond, both athletics and the campus as a whole have put major resources into branding. It is nearly impossible to go anywhere on campus and not see our Spider logo. Our newly renovated athletics facilities all have a strong theme

of Spider Pride. As current student-athletes become alumni, and potential donors, we want them to think back on the wonderful experience they had as a Richmond Spider and give to the generations to come.

The areas of fundraising and branding are inextricably tied to maintain a balanced budget. Operating expenses continue to be on an upward trajectory, making the need for private gifts that much more important. As we look towards the future, athletics departments will continue to remain focused on development because it holds the most potential for revenue generation.

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