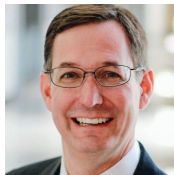


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Sports Medicine, A Convergence of Athletics and Academic Programs

Sports medicine in collegiate athletics has undergone a radical transformation. In the 1970s, training rooms were a place where ankles were taped, and injuries were iced. Staff and their capabilities were limited. Today's sports medicine programs represent much broader services that are expanding to blend with other university initiatives, recognizing that student-athlete success is multi-dimensional and dependent on personal and academic successes. This shift is reflected in the language describing these programs. "Training" has been replaced with the broader term sports

medicine, which is defined by more descriptive words including recovery, treatment, active care, hydrotherapy, counseling, medical services, sports science, athletic performance and injury prevention. The new terminology reflects the current standard in practice for sports medicine programs of a wholistic approach to caring for student-athletes.

Applied Science

At Marquette University, the Jesuit mindset of cura personalis or "caring for the whole person" motivates the athletics department to broaden the programs offered to their student-athletes. In the new Athletic and Human Performance Research Center (AHPRC) which opened in April, student-athletes have access to a world class strength and conditioning space which is equipped with the latest bioassessment instruments such as force plates and 3D motion analysis to capture performance and fitness data analytics on Marquette athletes. Within the Center's 5,400-square-foot dedicated research core, researchers from a variety of academic programs are partnering to develop new fitness technologies, advance the use of data analytics tools and deliver applicable outcomes to the athletics programs to enhance performance, treat and prevent injury. Two of the five pilot research programs within the facility focuses specifically on delivering outcomes to enhance the quality of life for student-athletes.

University Medical Services

If a university has a medical school, athletics departments often get convenient access to service, and the med school can often get paid for the service through insurance. Co-locating some amenities such as hydrotherapy and imaging technology that can serve both athletics and medical functions increases usage of expensive medical equipment. It often creates opportunity for a university to seek research grants that are offered for athletics departments and student-athletes, benefiting both the medical department through exposure of their research and the athletics department with innovative treatment processes and protocol. Having on-site medical services is a sign of the university's commitment to the health and well-being of its athletes.

Nutrition

Part of modern sports medicine programs includes nutrition. It can be a challenge to serve the special nutritional needs and hectic schedules of student-athletes. At the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), campus dining services opened a dining hall in the heart of the athletics campus which is part of the campus-wide dining program where any students can dine. Other universities have dining facilities that are specific to student-athletes, keeping the nutritional needs of the students and the student-athletes separated. The approach depends on the philosophy and amenities of each individual campus program, but the common thread is that athlete nutrition is a focus of the overall well-being of student-athletes.

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CoSIDA CORNER



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Reading a newspaper was as much a part of my youth in Central Arkansas as backyard wiffleball and bike riding. I scoured the *Arkansas Gazette* daily before school and every afternoon the *Arkansas Democrat* was waiting at my front door.

Later the *Democrat* moved to the morning to challenge the *Gazette*, and soon the battling newspapers merged into one. Similar scenarios played out across the country.

Those changes seemed seismic at the time, but pale in comparison to recent changes in the media. The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* later implemented an online payroll and recently announced it would cease printing six days a week, offering subscribers iPads to consume its content.

The lesson here: through it all, the mission of the *Democrat-Gazette* never changed. It adapted its practices to a changing environment. It still delivers news and information, but critical

decisions were made over time about how that news was delivered so that this 200-year-old organization would remain relevant and be more effective.

Such are the decisions college athletics communications professionals face today. Like many media outlets, CoSIDA is a long-established organization that has evolved with time. Founded in the 1950s with a membership of barely 100, it is now a diverse body of 3,000-plus members from all sizes of colleges and universities. Operations range from one-person "shops" to staffs of 20-25 professionals. Departments are called "sports information," "strategic communications" and "external relations."

Yet regardless of size or resources, irrespective of title – we are all storytellers.

We tell the stories of our teams and coaches, and most importantly, our student-athletes. In whole, we are telling the unique tale of college athletics – its people and its impact – where lessons learned through sports are interwoven with our system of higher education.

Whether managing a crisis, producing podcasts or writing press releases, advising a fellow administrator on messaging, mapping out a social media plan or updating a record book, we are telling a story.

Like the media with which we work, our purpose remains the same, but the methods in which we tell our story have changed.

As communications professionals, we evolve our practices and philosophies. We have opportunities to use new technologies, research and analytics and to explore new branding opportunities, all in the interest of telling our story with greater effectiveness.

We cannot be averse to change. We must understand there are workplace attitudes, habits and organizational structures that worked for us in the past but may not be the best way to achieve success in the future.

CoSIDA stands ready to help its members chart a successful course in this evolving communications environment. CoSIDA offers continuing education to facilitate identification and use of new technology, engagement opportunities for members to learn and grow by sharing best practices, mentorship for young people finding their way, and a commitment to developing a more diverse workforce in our profession.

CoSIDA continues to evolve to meet the needs of our profession, one that must be prepared for continued, and likely accelerated, changes ahead in this unprecedented era of communications.

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