



## Kira Hein

**Pacific University**  
Head of Athletics Facility Operations

No matter how you look at it, 2020 has been a crazy year for everyone as the COVID-19 pandemic affects all of us on some level. Organized athletics programs at universities are no exception as we scramble to find our way back to some safe semblance of “normal,” whatever actual shape that may eventually take. During some of the inevitable down time, I’ve had the opportunity to reflect upon my progress as a professional in the world of college athletics, more specifically, a young female professional.

Looking back a few years, I remember having just a vague idea of where my educational and professional path might take me. Starting in 2015, I started work as a seasonal parks & recreation worker at a sports complex, awaiting college. It was largely physical work involving field maintenance and repairs. As the only

female employee, I made a point of taking the “grunt-work” in stride, sometimes surprising my peers who maybe expected less from me. Later that fall, I studied at

Oregon State University (OSU) and worked as an intern for the event management & facilities department, where I earned a promotion due in part to my reputation as a versatile hard worker. Two years later, I earned my master’s degree at the University of Washington (UW), interning in the event management department. This progression in the scope of my responsibilities allowed me to grow and welcome new challenges. It also exposed me to mentors, including extremely accomplished female professionals who seem completely unaffected by stereotypes that might still persist in traditionally “all-male” arenas.

This is not to say the problem has disappeared and it’s suddenly all smooth sailing for females filling typically male positions. Oftentimes, I have run into situations where my newfound counterparts have shown surprised facial expressions or changes in body language when they realize I am the person they need to report to or communicate with. There’s rarely an actual comment, but rather subtle expressions of condescension, or maybe amusement. It’s

almost comical when something gets over-explained to me as if I might need help understanding what they’re saying.

Despite encountering various nonverbal reactions, I have worked hard to normalize working relationships by interacting with the people as if I noticed nothing, focusing instead on mutual trust and cooperation. Despite whatever mindset about gender roles one may bring to the workplace, the primary focus has always been delivering prompt, detailed, quality results.

Today, with nearly two years at my present position as the head of athletic facility operations at Pacific University, I am consistently impressed with the presence and professionalism of other women I meet in the world of sports facility management. I am happy and proud to be part of a new generation, representing strong, capable women in a historically male career field. It is an honor, and I look forward to upholding high standards - and raising the bar. At the end of the day, professional results come from setting clear goals, expectations and action steps. And much of that means putting initial gender stereotypes aside.



## Doug Vance

**CoSIDA**  
Executive Director

We all work on behalf of an industry driven by the element of competition. That’s the nature of sport.

Away from the field, court or water, however, it’s not competition but collaboration that serves as a bridge linking us all in partnership towards that mutual finish line/objective of helping our programs, teams and student-athletes achieve success.

Collaboration has served as a meaningful tool in CoSIDA’s growth for many years. We welcome opportunities to help our friends throughout the industry; in return, we’ve profited from their involvement when CoSIDA needs support in addressing our pursuits and problems.

The old fund-raising adage – you raise money

by raising friends – holds true for our organization.

Clearly, that’s why the CoSIDA Executive Board of Directors was excited recently to share the news with our members of the renewed partnership agreement with NACDA, through 2029. This relationship has proved valuable in enhancing our collaborative opportunities while also growing respect for our organization throughout college sports.

Our NACDA partnership is unique as CoSIDA is not under the membership umbrella. It’s built in what our agreement terms a “hybrid” relationship that is similar, yet different, from others in the NACDA family. We function with our own independent full-time management staff and board governance structure while also developing our specific educational calendar. Without question, the relationship with NACDA serves our purpose both on the collaboration and advocacy fronts.

CoSIDA has been successful in leveraging that NACDA involvement into collaborative efforts with other organizations such as NACMA, N4A, MOAA and also Women Leaders in College Sports. CoSIDA has built a strong alliance with national governing bodies, the NCAA and the NAIA, in support of its Academic All-America program. We have nurtured relationships with national governing bodies representing

two-year colleges and with U Sports in Canada. We have nearly 50 corporate partners who support CoSIDA in a variety of ways. They include conferences, bowls, national networks, coaches associations, college football award organizations and other national stakeholders of influence such as the National Football Foundation (NFF), College Football Playoff (CFP) and USA Basketball.

Recently, CoSIDA partnered with both the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) and United States Basketball Writers of America (USBWA) to develop pandemic-related protocols in media operations. It was important for our groups to work together in a collaborative approach for all to effectively function under the current challenging climate.

We face numerous challenges in the months ahead as we support the dreams of student-athletes; it will take the collective effort of everyone to make the college athletics enterprise rise to meet the difficulties resulting from our extraordinary conditions.

Borrowing a term associated with competition, this is clearly a moment where teamwork among all of us representing college athletics associations is essential in facing these new challenges.