

FCS ADA



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Across the country, higher education institutions and their athletics departments are scrambling to respond to what in many cases is a truly existential threat. To this day, universities large and small continue to furlough staff, lay off employees, institute salary cuts, implement hiring freezes and, in the most heartbreaking cases, eliminate sports. Obviously, this is not the way any of us envisioned beginning this academic year, and I think we can all agree that our current operational calculus is less than ideal; however, if necessity is the mother of invention, then we have an opportunity here to emerge on the other side of COVID-19 stronger, more nimble and more versatile than we entered it. These past few months have forced us to get creative with staffing, to find innovative ways to save and raise money, and to look increasingly toward technological solutions for efficiency -- in other words, COVID-19 cracked our business

model. I suggest we break it by keeping versatility and technological solutions top of mind.

Even before the pandemic, I emphasized the importance of versatility to our department heads. At the end of the day, every one of us has to find ways to create value. That was important before the pandemic, and now, during a time when our departments are facing hitherto unforeseen pressure, it is vital to our survival. Being valuable means you have the ability to do multiple things and accomplish multiple tasks to help the department achieve in a time where we know resources -- both staff and financial -- are going to be limited. If you're like me, it's almost hard to imagine a time when Zoom wasn't an integral part of your workday. It went from being an item of convenience to one of necessity. It had already solved a problem that most of us hadn't yet known existed, and now I can't foresee a future in which Zoom or its subsequent iterations aren't part of our daily

routines. Why? Because it affords us a level of operational efficiency we were previously unaware we were missing.

As we move into 2021 and beyond, we have an opportunity to refocus our efforts on being more versatile and using technology to get us there. We have no idea what the future holds, but I am willing to bet that it won't be as bad or as good as any of us think at this time. As collegiate athletics administrators we have the opportunity, and with it, the responsibility to be examples to our campus communities of what the future will look like. To be leaders in adaptation and risk taking. To know that we won't always get it right, but at least we won't be standing still when the future arrives.

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