NACMA

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Ole Miss

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Anyone associated with the sports industry remembers this month vividly. As March 2020 arrived, I challenged our staff here at Ole Miss and asked them to research Zoom, GoBoard and any other needed technologies should our campus shut down. At that time, we did not truly envision it happening on our campus. Two days later, the news came. We were shutting down and going virtual. The adjustment to COVID-19 for my staff and student-athletes began.

COVID-19 has changed our normal and it has been challenging and emotional for all of us. Fast forward to the fall 2020 semester, we are still living in a COVID-19 world and continue to adjust to meet our student-athletes' needs. This adjustment has necessitated the use of various technologies to meet our student-athletes' needs.

As we planned for the fall 2020 semester and over 90 percent of our student-athletes enrolled in classes with online components, we had two overwhelming areas of concern: 1) How do we effectively continue to support our student-athletes academically and pre-professionally; and 2) How do we keep our student-athletes and staff safe from contracting COVID-19. In addition to the normal use of computers, laptops, iPads and traditional technologies, the following are some of the ways we are currently using technology to accomplish 1 and 2:

• *Pop ID Face Scanner* – Used to scan student-athlete and staff temperatures as they enter the academic center; supervised by part-time staff at front desk, ensuring that all visitors do not have a temperature above 100 degrees.
• *Picktime* – Online free appointment scheduling software; this helps us know who is in the building to ensure we do not exceed capacity; our center is by appointment only this semester due to COVID-19 concerns with only one entrance.
• *Zoom (Pro account)*
  o 1:1 virtual sessions
  o Structured virtual team study hall sessions
  o Proctored team study hall sessions
    - Student-athletes share screens with

counselor – show what is being worked on
    - Zoom breakout rooms – allows two people to talk/share screens privately
• *Microsoft Teams* – Staff 1:1 or small group meetings, sharing planning documents, list of outstanding assignments, football road trip study hall planning, etc.
• *Retain* – This is our newest academic software (replaced Grades First) that we use to track all academic appointments that occur in our center or virtually by any of our staff; also used to communicate with faculty about academic updates, grades and travel letters for teams competing away from campus.
• *Loom* – Resource that staff have used to record: LinkedIn, resume workshops and a "Professional Document" webinar to prepare for life after sport.
• *Calendly* – New resource that our staff uses for planning and scheduling.
    o Structured virtual student-athlete enhancement sessions (career development, leadership development, community engagement, diversity/equity & inclusion)

I am proud of my staff and the student-athletes with their adaptation to the varied technologies we are using to assist them with their academic progress and their plans for life after sport.

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R. Brent Harris

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Like other athletics administrators around the country, I wondered how the changes in scheduling for the fall would affect my day-to-day duties. Stories of other communications directors facing layoffs or furloughs, and even the dismissal of some positions in our business caused me concern.

The answer to my questions on how my time would be spent during the fall semester came on a July afternoon. Wabash President Scott Feller and Athletics Director Matt Tanney creatively decided to use my skills as a statistician in a new and unique way –- tracking COVID-19 testing data for the campus.

The Wabash administration enrolled me in a certification program as a contact tracer through Johns Hopkins University. I also began working

with our athletic trainers, student health team and IT department to create a database which would record information similar to the sports data I normally collect. The preliminary data came from testing results prior to the students' arrival to campus. As classes began I continued to collaborate with the student health team to verify whether students were showing symptoms of the virus.

My days of tracking passing yards, cross country times, and soccer goals were suddenly replaced by examining trends in symptomatic responses. When an outbreak occurred in the early portion of the semester, I spent a Saturday afternoon analyzing data from contact tracing. I exchanged emails with members of the COVID task force and compared data of contacts across all residential living units.

The process came full circle back to athletics when Wabash began its resocialization plan to start practices. I worked with coaches to verify their athletes regularly tracked symptoms using our campus app. When contact tracing showed two members of a team had close contact with a positive COVID case, our pre-practice plan was put to the test. Each coach saved a roster of small practice groups in the college's cloud

storage system, which prevented us from having to shut down an entire group. We isolated the particular individuals and reduced the risk to other members of the practice pod. The data needed to assess the situation was readily available, the coaching staff followed proper social distancing and resocialization guidelines, and the contact tracing information developed in August provided rapid connections with those involved.

President Feller raised a question during one of our phone calls in September during the first outbreak. "I bet you would much rather be tracking your regular statistics than working on the data I'm asking for?" While covering Wabash sports teams and writing about students' accomplishments on the field and in the classroom has always provided a thrill for me, being part of a team that has kept in-person classes going throughout the fall has been one of the biggest wins of my 22-year career.