

# FCS ADA



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Vice President and Director of Athletics

Facilities are our values made visible.

In my journey to the AD chair, this statement served as an anchor - both when I had the chance to participate in the development of facilities at the University of Oklahoma (OU) and at the University of North Carolina (UNC) - and as I responded to the inevitable facilities interview question.

As a psychologist, I used to remind student-athletes and coaches that we spend more time listening to our own voice than anyone else's. Therefore, it serves us well to ensure our voice is dishing up words that build, guide and inspire - not words that demean, confuse or deplete. In many ways, our facilities "speak" to our people as well. They suggest to recruits how much athletics is valued on a campus. They convey a level of expectation to our current student-athletes. They speak of support

and commitment to our coaches. They evoke memories and stories among our alumni. And, they either welcome or discourage our fans from entering in and sharing their school pride and enthusiasm with our teams and with one another.

So, we know that facilities are an important facilitator of our mission. How do we advance the building or renewal of facilities?

I have found that developing competency and a degree of comfort with the language and process of facility development has helped me to proceed with confidence in this area. My first real foray into this world was at OU when we designed, built and activated Headington Hall - a new residence hall. I recall sitting week after week in construction meetings listening to the various professionals speaking in what seemed like a new language, having little comprehension at first of what was going on. However, little by little, I caught on and found ways to contribute. We built an amazing facility that became a recruiting juggernaut, and a thriving residential community. The lesson: any chance you get to be involved in a facility development project - take it!

At UNC, the challenges were different. We were practically landlocked, with quite a few facility

development needs, and it eventually became clear they would all have to be initiated simultaneously, and in very close partnership with the campus in order to move. It was there, under Director of Athletics Bubba Cunningham's tutelage, I learned how to work with campus colleagues to form true partnerships and to plan for shared use spaces. Such learning has proven invaluable now, as the AD at Colgate, where optimizing the use of our facilities and future facilities on our small campus by students, for campus events, and by the community has been a critical component of advancing the needs of athletics.

If new facilities are not in your immediate future, developing a strategic list of renewal projects in partnership with coaches is a great place to start. Energy efficient lighting, painting, branding and rearranging can go a long way to make a facility feel energized.

Your facilities are speaking - what are they saying, and how can you help shape their message?

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