



## Beth Pickard

**University of Michigan**  
Director of Strategic  
Partnerships & Marketing

*NACMA Member Beth Pickard discusses marketing collaboration with Facilities Project Manager Steve Donoghue, and how to align efforts to produce successful results.*

With varied demands for athletics spaces, arenas and facilities, the University of Michigan has prioritized creating spaces that are flexible and adaptable to changing market needs and satisfy various stakeholders from student-athletes and support staff to partnerships and media.

Over the past 10 years, the University of Michigan has completed renovations to Michigan Stadium, Crisler Arena and Yost Ice Arena totaling approximately \$350 million. Most recently, Michigan moved into the \$130 million Stephen M. Ross Athletic Campus – South Complex which is home to half of its 900 student-athletes. This campus is the main training and competition venue for men's and women's lacrosse, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's track & field,

and the women's rowing team.

While the landscape of construction of collegiate athletics facilities continues to evolve, these facilities must primarily serve the needs of our teams and coaching staffs, thus most of the resources are focused on those areas. However, it's also important to consider the experience of our dedicated fan base and the partnerships that are key to financing our operations.

Internal constituents like marketing, event presentation and video production drive the creation of great experiences, but partners are an important piece of our fan experience, and the additional feedback from Big Ten Network, Sodexo, M-Den, Jordan, and Learfield IMG College was crucial in designing spaces to meet our goals. Many of these collaborative spaces lead to revenue generation and enhanced experiences for fans.

For example, as part of the Crisler Arena renovation which was completed in 2013, there are many flexible spaces where marketing activities, fan interactions, and concessionaires can be housed. This allows for ever-changing gameday setups, whether Michigan is hosting a basketball game, a women's gymnastics meet, or university graduation. The success of these spaces is created by a collaboration with designers, athletics department representatives and select vendors and

partners. The time invested during early planning sessions can lead to low-cost, high-value ideas like locating electrical power and data infrastructure in alcoves for point of sale set-up and other vendor options. At the new South Complex, the design was very intentional to create a single "hub" where concessions, marketing, merchandising and other fan amenities could be shared as a way to save on square footage, as well as streamline operations.

All of these facilities projects have also included TV Network partners such as the Big Ten Network, ESPN and CBS. The goal has been to create spectator facilities that are attractive for partners, allow for operational efficiency and offer the best production possible for both spectators in the stands and for those watching on TV. This has been achieved by involving key stakeholders early and often in the design process and then creating a "plug and play" set up for the networks where infrastructure is already in place.

Collaboration during the planning and design process across multiple stakeholder groups within an athletics department ensures new and renovated facilities have more successful outcomes as the venues come to life.



# ATHLETE-FOCUSED PLANET-FRIENDLY

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO, ALFIE NORVILLE PRACTICE FACILITY  
2019 USG NACDA Sustainability Award Winner



[www.rdgusa.com/sports](http://www.rdgusa.com/sports) | [sports@rdgusa.com](mailto:sports@rdgusa.com)

architecture. planning. interior design. lighting design. landscape architecture. environmental branding.