

I-AAA ADA



Chris Reynolds

Bradley University

Vice President for
Intercollegiate Athletics

Staying Connected

Higher education and particularly, intercollegiate athletics, is experiencing an unprecedented time, fraught with many unknowns and challenges that come without a playbook or blueprint for a guaranteed plan for success. Each day comes with its own set of never-before-seen issues, and the call for strong and unwavering leadership in the face of uncertainty is needed in a manner unlike any time we have witnessed in our generation.

However, with all that has happened and is happening, from deaths and sickness to closed businesses and unemployment, what we do know for certain is we must stay connected, remain optimistic and use every day as an opportunity to put our staff, coaches, and student-athletes in the best position possible to carry out our department's mission and objectives.

Staying connected goes beyond scheduling non-

stop Zoom meetings and sending an endless amount of text and email messages. Meaningful connectivity during these times means to be direct, uplifting, empathic and consistent, while leading with a pulse on the present and an eye on tomorrow. Consequently, making impactful connections requires, at a minimum, the following three C's:

1) Communication - As the leader of your unit, the people connected to you need to hear from YOU. Certainly, there are times when your assistant or designee will suffice. However, keep in mind that your most valued assets and resources are people. As executives in higher education, we are in the people business. The number of constituents touching an athletics department is seemingly endless. Now, with preferred communication methods being impacted, we must become creative and resilient in our efforts to reach out to others so there is not a sense that anyone is forgotten. Ultimately, athletics departments thrive because people, at a variety of levels, positions and points of contact, are executing at a high level.

2) Courage - Addressing head on, day-to-day issues in the face of a global pandemic is challenging, particularly in light of the fluidity of circumstances on the international, national, state and local levels. All the more, as leaders,

we must demonstrate strength and resiliency in a timely manner every step of the way in leading our athletics departments; standing tall and making hard decisions when situations arise with seriousness of purpose and remaining indifferent about getting credit for simply doing the right thing. Our roles as athletics administrators require us to execute effectively while under intense scrutiny, and as a result, possessing courage becomes a basic requirement for the role of a leader in athletics.

3) Care - Care comes in two forms: care for yourself and care for others. As leaders, we cannot help others if we are not healthy ourselves mentally, physically and emotionally. During the times we are experiencing, it is important to practice sound habits that enable you to care for yourself so you are able to give others your best self.

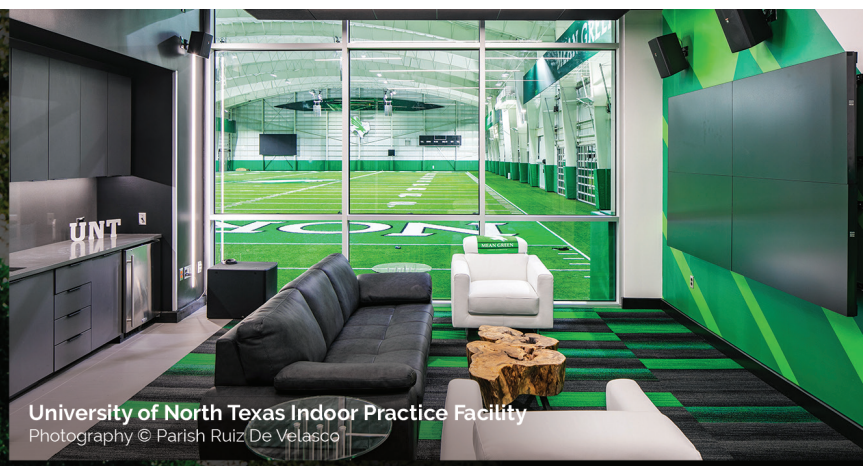
Finally, as we proceed forward during the coming days, weeks and months, let's remain positive and optimistic, knowing that there is strength in numbers only if we stay connected.

HEERY DESIGN a SLAM studio

HEERY Design Sports Group is excited to now be part of the SLAM family

Architecture
Programming & Planning
Interior Design
Structural Engineering
Pre-Construction Services

Emily Burton
EBurton@slamcoll.com
678 362.5448
www.slamcoll.com



University of North Texas Indoor Practice Facility
Photography © Parish Ruiz De Velasco



Georgia Tech Football Locker Room
Photography © Karl L. Moore