



## Martin Salamone

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## Tyler Jones

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### Living in a Virtual World

Raise your hand if you have become an expert in the following over the last couple of weeks: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangout, Jabber, Yammer, Slack!

At Vanderbilt University, like many departments, we have tried to take advantage of this opportunity to engage our stakeholders, from our coaches virtually reading to children, to their sharing of digitally handwritten letters that provide updates on their teams, to private Zoom sessions with their season ticket holders. We are also engaging our fans socially by re-airing past NCAA Championship

broadcasts, interviews with past and present student-athletes and interactive children's activities (i.e. coloring pages, word scrambles). We have also taken this time to relaunch our "I am More Than" campaign which showcases our student-athletes' lives and achievements outside of sports.

I recently had a chance to (virtually) sit down with Tyler Jones, Deputy Director of Athletics for External Operations at Cleveland State University, to find out how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected communication with his staff and stakeholders and here is what he shared.

### In what capacity has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your team?

COVID-19 has affected our team positively and negatively. From a positive perspective, the pandemic has established a stronger emphasis on proactive communication not only internally but broadly with our university stakeholders. We have found ourselves having robust collaborative dialogue with university stakeholders that has helped us cultivate and build stronger synergies which will set us up for success in the future.

### How have you been communicating with your team members?

Zoom calls primarily. We have established a rhythm

of weekly external unit calls while weaving in smaller working groups focused on specific tasks. The cross unit working groups have been valuable to ensure we are having proper engagement and helping us move projects forward.

### Have you done anything fun to lift the spirits of your team members?

Like many teams across the country, we have hosted Zoom Happy Hours. Those have been tremendous for us as a team.

### Any plans to honor healthcare employees once we are playing in front of crowds?

We are fortunate to reside in the No. 1 concentrated area of hospitals and medical research centers in the nation and have tremendous relationships with those employers. We have discussed dedicating specific games and providing complimentary tickets for those local heroes.

I would love to hear about some of the initiatives you have implemented over the past couple of weeks, please share them at martin.salamone@vanderbilt.edu. Stay safe and smile!

# THANK YOU

## ALL ESSENTIAL WORKERS

*teamwork moves us forward . . .*

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