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For the past six months, I've been trying to keep the pace. At work, trying to balance our campus response and our athletics department response to COVID-19. At home, trying to balance my work, my family and my own physical and mental health. It's exhausting.

In March, we all made a hard left turn at Coronavirus Way. We were moving at a pace that wasn't unfamiliar to us, but a lack of credible information about the virus made our decision making process difficult. With my educational background, campus responsibilities, and committee service this was my jam! But, alas, it wouldn't matter as this was an unfamiliar road. Here is what I learned.

Everyone wants to feel safe, and safety is as much mental and emotional, as it is physical. For us, this meant our staff being vulnerable with our student-athletes and each other, expressing the disappointment and pain of the abrupt end.

We demonstrated to our student-athletes that it's OK to be angry, disappointed and sad, and then move forward; we gave them space to do the same. As we look forward to the fall, I'm now sharply focused on how my staff views their own safety. Their routine has been shattered and combined with our declining enrollment and no competition, I know the university's finances, and their job security, are on their minds.

Communication must be honest, timely, accurate ... if you do not fill the gap with the information, someone will fill it for you. We worked together as a staff to ensure our student-athletes understood we were doing what was in the best interest of DePauw, but it was really hard for them to stay focused on 'us' as opposed to everyone else they followed on social media. Looking forward, we will be intentional about engaging our Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and Student-Athlete of Color groups about what is best for our student-athletes and our department, and using these groups to help communicate the messages.

The health and safety of our student-athletes and staff will drive our discussions about how to respond to the coronavirus. I'd like to remind everyone that no one, not even Dr. Fauci, has all of the answers related to the coronavirus so be cognizant of the soap box you stand on and the words that come out of your mouth.

Earlier this summer I received an email from a parent that told me to do what was best for our student-athletes, and not what was safe. I'm still wondering why they hit 'send' so fast.

We have to take time for ourselves and our families ... we are still at home during a crisis and trying to work, home school children, and provide care for loved ones who have been isolated over the past several months as a protective measure. Being at home has helped with my nutrition, but my days have grown much longer and my sleep shorter. I look forward to the day when 'zoom' is once again a verb, my children hang out with kids who are their own age and getting my 10,000 steps a day isn't an issue.

While I never would have predicted a pandemic in my career, I know that my life in athletics has prepared me to be resilient and adapt. My interactions with others now lead with patience, kindness and gratitude. This is the ultimate 'we' moment and I'm in it to win it.

McLENDON



change in our corner of the world, said John Calipari, Head Men's Basketball Coach at the University of Kentucky.

McLendon Foundation launches Minority Leadership Initiative

The John McLendon Minority Scholarship Foundation announced a partnership with more than 35 collegiate coaches to launch the McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative (MLI). This coach-driven initiative will provide minorities a jump-start to their careers through practical experiences, opportunities to build their network, and instilling the values of John McLendon: Integrity, Education, Leadership, and Mentorship. Participants in the initiative will be known as MLI Future Leaders.

"The MLI is about access and opportunity: real-world experience and networking platforms designed to elevate talented young women and men of color who have previously been ignored by a system that lacks diversity and inclusion. For this work, I couldn't think of a more appropriate vehicle than the McLendon Foundation. I'm excited about where we're headed and feel this is a great first step toward affecting measurable

"It is a true honor to serve as an ambassador for the McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative under the umbrella of the John McLendon Foundation," said Tommy Amaker, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Harvard University. "Coach McLendon's name is synonymous with education, teaching, service, excellence, and leadership. I am incredibly proud to be associated with his name through this initiative. I cannot think of a better way to honor Coach McLendon's legacy than by providing young minority women and men with a pathway into athletics administration. Through this program, we will make significant progress in increasing diversity in athletics departments throughout the country and will support many more people of color in pursuing their passion."

"The McLendon Minority Leadership Initiative is a huge step in the right direction for enhancing the pipeline within our industry," said Andrea Williams, Chief Operating Officer at the College Football Playoff (CFP) and McLendon Foundation President. "There are many qualified minority individuals who are prepared to make their mark and begin their careers in college athletics, and

this program, jumpstarted by Coach Calipari, is a great foundation to build on."

The McLendon Foundation, along with G3 Marketing and ProLink Staffing Services, will be assisting in the solicitation of collegiate coaches, administrators, and corporations to build this program and provide opportunities within athletics departments at all levels, with the ultimate goal of expanding and enhancing the pipeline for minorities interested in pursuing careers in athletics administration. As an added benefit, the Joel Cornette Foundation will assist the Future Leaders with corporate mentorship, development, and job placement.

More information regarding the MLI, including applications for interested and qualified individuals, can be found at MinorityLeaders.org. In conjunction with this announcement, the McLendon Foundation unveiled a newly designed website to showcase the efforts of the Foundation, highlighted by its mission to empower and develop minorities who aspire to be principled leaders in athletics administration by providing educational resources and access to a life-long community of mentors.