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Onward and upward -- A growth mindset approach to branding and fundraising

Slow, sustainable growth and long obedience in the same direction have been our approach to many things, both personally and professionally, at Dallas Baptist University (DBU). Branding and fundraising are two areas where this approach has yielded consistent growth and positive results for our campus.

In her book *Mindset*, Dr. Carol Dweck describes a growth mindset as "thriving on challenge and observing failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as a heartening springboard for growth and stretching our existing abilities." The competitive landscape of intercollegiate athletics provides endless opportunities to learn as a team, grow as a team, and collaborate to achieve goals and overcome obstacles. I will share one of the simple annual exercises we have used to help our team at DBU.

Our Three Questions

One exercise our DBU Athletics Leadership Team goes through each year is submitting and then discussing responses to three simple, open-ended questions. We use these questions to review and evaluate several different areas of our department and then engage in a series of discussions to talk through the responses:

1. What are we doing that we need to stop doing?; 2. What are we doing that we need to improve on?; and, 3. What are we not doing that we need to begin doing?

While these annual questions can welcome challenging and unique discussions, they have also helped foster an environment of growth, creativity, innovation, and forward-thinking. Furthermore, they have helped us polish our brand messaging, evaluate our performance, and develop effective practices.

Branding and Messaging

As is important with any organization or business, we strive to possess consistent messaging, clarity of mission, and a relentless pursuit of enhancing our brand in the marketplace. Several years ago, we developed our four foundational pillars as a department:

1. Academic Excellence; 2. Leadership and Spiritual Development; 3. Community

Engagement; and, 4. Athletics Success.

We consistently speak on these four foundational pillars at our institution and within our department. We have them prominently displayed on signage in our department, use them to formulate questions or create discussion topics for new hires, integrate them into our external messaging (across multiple platforms and mediums), and review each one in our meetings with coaches, staff and student-athletes. Lastly, the development of our four pillars has helped us define our purpose, influence our actions, and develop best practices to evaluate our progress.

Fundraising and Revenue Generation

We use the same three questions mentioned above (in addition to our metrics and data) to evaluate our fundraising and revenue generation efforts each year. For DBU, this includes our Patriot Athletic Fund initiatives and events, corporate sponsorships, facility rentals, camps and clinics, licensing royalties, streaming, concessions and ticket sales. We continue to expand our alumni engagement initiatives, working with our head coaches to ensure every program has at least one alumni event each year. This has been a priority as we strive to grow our relationships with alumni, share our vision for the future, and communicate the many ways they can continue to support DBU athletics.

D2 CCA



Jay Poerner

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Celebrating Past Success to Build Your Brand's Future

It is often said that celebrating past success is essential to building your brand's future. With that in mind, the Lone Star Conference (LSC) recently kicked off its 90th season of competition, celebrating the decades of incredible history in our league.

Since the LSC's founding on April 25, 1931, the league has grown from a five-team conference of Texas-based schools to an 18-member league that now spans four states, including Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arkansas. As the oldest collegiate athletics conference in the southwestern United States, the LSC has a rich past to draw from as we look forward to the bright future of our league.

The conference is home to 123 team national championships, including 76 NCAA team national titles since the league joined Division II in

1981. In addition, student-athletes from the LSC have also won over 475 individual NCAA national championships, accounted for over 2,000 all-American awards, and earned nearly 400 academic all-American honors.

As we have looked back on the last 90 years of success, I have been reminded of the impact that connecting with your past has on shaping your future. During this process, we had the opportunity to reconnect with one of the most famous alumni in league history in former Texas A&M University-Kingsville Javelina and NFL Hall of Famer Darrell Green through our 90th anniversary public service announcement.

Green, a two-sport all-American in college and a 20-year NFL veteran, was the LSC Football Outstanding Back of the Year in 1982 and was named the Outstanding Male Track Athlete of the Year in back-to-back outdoor track and field seasons in 1982 and 1983. But it is his LSC and NCAA Division II 100-meter dash record of 10.08 seconds that truly bridged the past to the

present. The record stood for nearly 38 years, from 1983 until it was broken by LSC student-athlete Benjamin Azamati (West Texas A&M University) in March 2021, when he became the first NCAA Division II runner to break 10 seconds in the event.

The release of our 90th anniversary public service announcement marks the start of a year-long celebration of our past success.

Our plan is to recognize those that helped build the foundation of the LSC through social media, online stories, video, and interviews. Through this broad-based celebration we will share the stories and achievements of the teams, student-athletes, coaches, and administrators who have paved the road that will lead the Lone Star Conference into its next chapter.

After all, celebrating the success of our past is essential to shaping our future.