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When we wake up as external athletics administrators each morning we have the amazing opportunity to do things many people dream of. The job to lead, serve, and impact lives is a blessing bestowed upon us and a privilege not to be taken lightly. More often than not, it is incredibly rewarding and becomes something that is woven into the fabric of our being. For me, this is a relentless pursuit of excellence for our student-athletes and the institution as a whole.

Does a community partner notice your logo/branding and does that branding/logo tell a story about your brand? I believe it can and it should be what you strive for. Here at Jessup, we have been very intentional with our community partners and they fully understand what our brand is about, what the brand stands for, and the people who serve behind the brand. These

are the things I have put my heart, soul and energy into as we continue building our brand each day.

Do the people we sit and share stories with look at our branded apparel and feel the way we do? I believe they do. When your partners get ready to attend one of your contests and they open their closet to put on your brand, does it connect to a story that has impacted and inspired them to want to be a bigger piece of what you are doing? If the answer is yes, or you are striving to get that individual to that space, you are on the right track. Remember, our goal is to raise funds, but I have learned through some incredible mentors (which are imperative for all of us - regardless of how good you think you are) that the next part is the most important!

Is your community partner invested in your program simply for ROI purposes or have they bought in to the institution as a whole? Have you been able to turn their marketing dollars into community partners who are staring at that branded shirt or hat thinking of the influence they are having because of the gift they have given beyond their marketing budget? If so, I would bet they are telling others more about your impact vs. their quarterly profit due to your

reach for their business. This is where your branding and story have the greatest effect on overall fundraising!

Here at Jessup, I have found the most effective way to grow the donor base is to tell our story, serve the community, and be intentional in building relationships. If these three things are executed authentically, the brand will sell itself. Marketing and branding combine together, telling a story of authentic community partnership!



Kristen Schuth

Genesee
Community College

Assistant VP of Student
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For the first 17 years of my career, I worked in athletics departments coaching, teaching and helping student-athletes in countless ways to be successful both on and off the field, eventually being named the director of athletics in 2013 at Genesee Community College (Genesee). After enjoying much success in that position, the college saw an opportunity to apply my strengths to a greater capacity. In 2019, I was named assistant vice president of student engagement and inclusion while continuing to serve as director of athletics. In this new role I have the opportunity to impact the entire student population at Genesee - everyone that steps on our campus and those who are part of our family while learning remotely.

Colleges across the country have faced challenges in enrollment and retention, inevitably reducing their athlete population as

well. Through creative programming and activities, we can design learning and engaging experiences that bring everyone together the same way our athletes come together as a team.

In an effort to attract new students, the branding of athletics departments has become more important than ever. In the fall of 2019, Genesee orchestrated a change on the athletics department's social media platforms boasting our bright, bold new branding, using athlete photos and GIFs to increase engagement. As a result of this work, the #CougarPRIDE was born - representing Passion, Resilience, Integrity, Dedication, and Excellence which firmly reestablished the connection between Genesee and its athletes. These efforts led to filled team rosters and increased participation in programs across campus. This put the college in a good position to withstand the challenges that came in the months to follow.

Using athletics as the model, the Student Engagement and Inclusion team plans to expand the culture built by the coaches and athletics staff even further throughout our physical and online campus environments. With a highly experienced and well-rounded team of

faculty, coaches, counselors, advisors and staff we have begun to focus on several key objectives. Objectives that have made the athletics department highly successful and will be used as we continue to brand the student engagement and inclusion department; building the social media presence and most importantly growing the personal connection with our students.

Genesee Community College's athletes, and perhaps yours as well, graduate feeling as though they are part of something, forever. We see it year after year - that passionate sense of belonging, of community and of pride that we want to see in every student. It's as clear as ever that our staff knows that the quality of the experience at Genesee is not based on a win, but instead comes from the mentoring of young athletes to accomplish their academic and athletic goals. While our logo or our sophisticated technology may have drawn someone to look at Genesee, it is our people, our history, our character and our success that makes someone join the Cougar family. It's who we are and that is something I will always be proud and passionate about.