

I-AAA ADA

**Ed McLaughlin**

VCU

Vice President &
Director of Athletics

Throughout the last five years or so, athletics departments across the country have invested in mental health services for student-athletes. We have hired sport psychologists, mindfulness coaches and licensed clinical psychologists, all to help our student-athletes perform at their best, graduate and manage the stress of their daily lives.

What have we done for ourselves as administrators? The difficulty of our positions increases every day, as job security for athletics directors has become nearly as tenuous as for head coaches. Messiah one day, pariah the next. Over one 24-hour period last year, nearly 10 Division I ADs no longer had a job due to termination, resignation or retirement.

Think about the challenges of our last 22 months: keep generating revenue during COVID and no fans; NIL; impact of Alston ruling;

Constitutional Convention; supply chain issues for facility projects. Some changes moved our business in a positive direction, like Title IX awareness and social justice, giving the student-athletes and staff a voice and coinciding with more members of underrepresented groups becoming ADs. But, we all have stakeholders who resist change and dangle their financial involvement over our heads in attempts to keep the status quo.

As we approach this holiday season and the second semester, athletics administrators across the country need to make our own mental health and well-being a priority. Use these five tools to keep yourself performing your best for the people in your professional and personal life. Greg Graber, the author of *Slow Your Roll* and a mindfulness coach who works with several athletics departments, helped me identify these ways to keep me at my best.

Stay where your feet stand: Remain mentally present in the moment rather than think about a stressful situation ahead of you in an hour, a day or a week. Worrying about what you cannot control gets you nowhere.

Regroup, replenish, recharge: Schedule time for yourself. The holidays give us an excellent chance to read, workout, hike, spend time with

loved ones, rest or ... do nothing. Going 100 miles per hour all the time only leads to crashes.

Significance of transitions: Use transition times to get your mind ready for what lies ahead of you. When you're in the car or walking to a meeting, use that time to prep. A big meeting with a Board chair and president, a dinner with a donor or a championship game appearance all need mental preparation as much as intellectual readiness.

Don't take on other people's energy: When a stakeholder wants to give you negative energy, you don't need to accept it. You wouldn't drink someone else's poison and expect them to die.

Positive self-talk: We would never criticize other people the way we criticize ourselves. In an effort to achieve greatness, we say cruel words to ourselves. Practice being kind to you and acknowledge your successes.

Let's all make sure we invest in ourselves so we can invest in our student-athletes and coaches to help them become the best versions of themselves in the new year.



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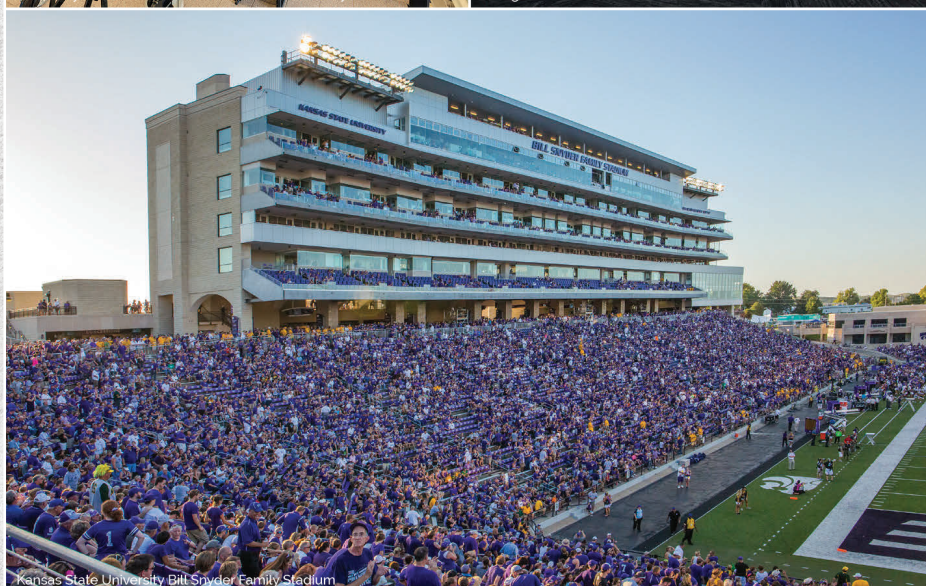
Emily Burton
eburton@slamcoll.com
678.362.5448



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