



Keisha Dunlap

Conference USA
Senior Associate
Commissioner/COO
2021-22 President

What a Year!?!

Oh what I wouldn't give to see your smiling faces soon. We all deserve a pat on the back because we've all survived what is hopefully the most challenging year we will ever witness again in our lifetime. I'd like to take some time to say 'Thank You.' Thank you all for pushing through this year. Thank you for trusting the process and thank you for staying engaged with us - even though I'm sure you're suffering from Zoom fatigue like I am! But, we made it through! There are many who aren't as lucky as we are, but it's important to take some time to count our blessings.

Who would have thought we would have managed one game or event this past year, and here we are finishing up an entire sports year.

There's something to be said for that.

I also want to thank our members for hanging in there with us as we tried to deliver as much virtual content as we could. Hopefully we Zoom a lot less moving forward, but we did find ways to engage our membership in the digital space. Hopefully you had an opportunity to participate in one or all of the general webinars (Return to Play During COVID-19, CEFMA Mentorship Program Forum and Putting the Puzzle Together: Playing Fall & Spring Sports in the Same Semester).

We also kicked off our Listen & Learn Series this past year with our most recent event in June. We have received a ton of positive feedback on our CEFMA All Access Podcast - how great is the dynamic duo of Derek Doolittle and Megan Larson?!

And lastly, thank you to LSU and Grand Canyon for hosting virtual regional conferences in January. While we are likely to continue some of these virtual offerings, let's hope we can get back to in-person events next year.

So here's to "surviving" the 2020-21 year and flourishing in 2021-22. Be kind to yourself and others, show a little grace and don't forget that pat on your back. We all deserve it!

Vegas - here we come!! (crosses fingers)



Jessica Poole

Chicago State University
Executive Senior Associate AD
for External Operations and
Revenue Generation/SWA

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

In March 2020, a working group was put together consisting of CoSIDA staff, President Sam Atkinson, Past President Herb Vincent, Executive Board Member Denise Thompson, longtime CoSIDA member and Cotton Bowl staffer Scottie Rodgers and Second Vice President Jessica Poole. This group was tasked with putting together yearlong programming for a Racial and Social Injustice Initiative brought forth by CoSIDA's Executive Board of Directors.

To assist our members, we put together a series of Critical Conversations with top industry leaders. These conversations focused

on topics geared toward the intersection of race and athletics communications, activism, crafting diversity plans and allyship. We leaned on our friendships with industry leaders to make these conversations personal while also providing tangible things members could bring back to campus and conference offices.

Not only did this initiative focus on aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion that touched our day-to-day working life, it also focused on our members and how the current events affected them.

CoSIDA also debuted a new video series "Though My Lens," focusing on the first-person stories of our members while highlighting who they are inside athletics communications and outside. This feature showcased some prominent members of our membership, including Past President Rob Knox (UNC Greensboro), Thompson, Rodgers, as well as Phylcia Short (Queens College), Peter Remier (Royal Military College of Canada) and Kevin Queliz (New Orleans). The goal of this series was to highlight our membership celebrating all that makes us different, yet the same.

We also put a resource list together on

CoSIDA.com to provide education to our members on this topic. The resource list includes podcasts, webinars, essays, movies, documentaries and shows, sermons, lectures and perspectives pieces meant to educate people on race relations from a historical perspective.

CoSIDA's work in the DEI field is not new. Our national Association was one of the very first intercollegiate athletics groups to have a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Committee and has been active in this area for some time. During a past in-person Convention, Dr. Katrice Albert participated a fireside chat on diversity and inclusion, leaving us some powerful words of wisdom about DEI work. Dr. Albert reminded us that diversity, equity and inclusion work is "long game work" and something that will take time and effort from everyone to change.

The most poignant reminder that Dr. Albert gave us is that "we all have to carry the water" in order for us to make a difference - not only in our field but in the world. If we wish to move the world forward, it will take all of us learning, growing and understanding.

Take care of yourselves and each other.