

ICLA



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Incorporating Diverse Perspectives: The Other Revenue Generation

Imagine a world where, prior to July 1, 2021, college administrators engaged in name, image and likeness (NIL) deals and metaverse discussions. These branding professionals had extensive experience working with multiple brand identities, administering trademark education and brokering group licensing deals. These same individuals would develop co-branded product in the midst of highly publicized, often fraught legal landscapes. (Spoiler alert...no need to imagine because this world already exists.) Who are these branding utility players? Answer: branding and licensing administrators!

What do trademark licensing professionals do?

Unlike many other areas of sport or college administration, there is not a pervasive knowledge or understanding of trademark licensing within universities. Much of this information chasms can be attributed

to the lack of uniformity in licensing unit organizational placement (across institutions).

This historic disconnect is unfortunate but understandable. However, to capitalize on our industry's quick-moving evolution, the status quo is not maintainable (or advisable). So, as administrators prepare to gather in-person at the NACDA & Affiliates Convention for the first time in three years, I offer a word of encouragement sandwiched between retrospective and a call to action.

Ain't about what's waiting on the other side, it's the climb. - Jessi Alexander, Jon Mabe

The convergence of a world pandemic, national social and civic unrest, supply chain failures and potentially catastrophic environmental challenges has created continued global challenges. In the midst of these very real difficulties, there is also an emergence of new intersections of commerce and education ripe with possibilities, opportunities and new approaches.

Creativity resides at the edge of chaos. - Annelies Gentile

Seismic shifts in college athletics seem to happen weekly and can at times feel overwhelming. Focusing on enhanced strategic processes, as opposed to solving for pre-determined outcomes, can allow administrations to cultivate inventive plans to address the "now," while remaining

nimble in the face of future changes. Bolstering brainstorming sessions and strategic discussions with licensing staff is one way to diversify voices contributing to tactical pathways. Licensing touches all parts of campus and beyond. Prior to NIL, licensing professionals had experience co-branding with students (non-student-athletes), group licenses (professional player associations), content creators and engaging with copious sponsorship agreements. It can feel less than productive to "trust the process" when our industry is so results-driven. But as data points regularly change, leveraging the wide-ranging insights of licensing professionals when assessing organizational direction can prove fruitful and efficient.

For non-branding, licensing and retail administrators, I encourage you to review the ICLA Convention agenda and attend a session. For ICLA members and administrators that oversee branding and licensing, I invite you to fully realize the wonderful and collaborative experience that is Convention.

Cultural theorist, Quavious Marshall, implored the masses to capitalize on this current regenerative moment by turning "a pandemic into a bandemic." This colloquial phrasing highlights the power of leaning into the unknown in new and creative ways to create prosperous and harmonious outcomes.

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