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## Intercollegiate Athletics in the 21st Century

If you have been in our industry for awhile, there are only a few times in our history where the prevailing feeling of uncertainty has been felt by everyone. Executive leaders, administrators, coaches, student athletes, officials, donors, fanatics, and the casual fan are all wondering what in the world is happening in intercollegiate athletics? The seismic shift that is occurring right before our eyes is not a surprise to many of us in the industry. What is jarring and what we could not predict, is the series of unfortunate events colliding at the same time: the pandemic, the death of George Floyd, the transfer portal, NIL, and possible federal governance. Welcome to intercollegiate athletics in the 21st century!

MOAA is intentional in providing a holistic approach to navigate the changes occurring in our profession. We are trying to build resilience in our membership and are here to help navigate the rough waters ahead. There are the technical aspects of what we do in the industry that keep us employed and there are the

functional aspects of what we do that help our members remain valuable to the enterprise. We must build up our members in both aspects.

This is where the programming during the year by Dr. Angel Mason, Director of Athletics at Berry College, and the Chair of the Education & Professional Development Committee, culminates at our Super Bowl, the MOAA Symposium. Being back in-person this year is needed more than ever. We are grateful for the technology that kept us connected over the last three years, but we are an industry that is better when we can engage with each other face-to-face. Nothing can replace human interface in athletics.

We kick-off the entire NACDA & Affiliates Convention with a celebration of 21 years as an organization! We are grown and we are going to act like it! Everyone is welcome to join us at the Skyfall Lounge on Saturday, June 25 from 7-10 p.m. for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. On Sunday, June 26 at 10 a.m., the energy continues with opening speaker, author and thought leader, Dr. Derek Greenfield, followed by our annual Awards Luncheon sponsored by the NCAA. A host of industry professionals will provide practical tips to navigate this transformational period of intercollegiate athletics in our breakout rooms in the afternoon. At 2 p.m., Lee Reed, director of athletics at Georgetown University, will moderate a spirited and fun-filled conversation with first time athletics directors, Michael Bazemore, Montana State University-Billings, Candice Storey Lee, Vanderbilt University, Jaunelle White, Point University, and Eric Wood, Louisiana Tech University, in our signature

closing event called "The Chair." For the first time in our history, we will have an event dubbed "MOAA Overtime" that will cater to the recent graduates, new professionals, and those looking to transition into the profession. This event is one of the ways we hope to replenish the pipeline of talent in our profession. Members and leaders in other NACDA Affiliate Associations will be present to help the "rookies" learn about the profession and prepare to enter the industry in a way that can be sustained. If you are looking for talent and want to conduct informal interviews in Vegas, you want to be at "MOAA Overtime."

Past attendees of the Symposium have described it as thought-provoking, eye-opening, exciting, and career changing. Whatever positive adjectives will be used to describe this year's Symposium, we will embrace them. I hope one of the adjectives is high-energy, because that's what we'll need for the pace of the journey in our industry.

Vegas here we come!



**Jasmin Wooten**  
University of Florida  
2021 McLendon Scholar

Being a part of the McLendon Scholarship program has changed the trajectory of my career path. From the moment I became a part of the program, I felt something special about this organization and its mission. Over the past year, I've been able to immerse myself in top-tier professional development opportunities, including hearing from some of the best and brightest minds in college athletics. Having partners at McDonald's and Gatorade introduce us to a diverse set of career opportunities, many still within the realm of athletics, was also incredibly insightful.

When I think of what the McLendon program means to me, the two words that come to mind are opportunity and community. Aside from our monthly professional development meetings, I

had the opportunity to attend the inaugural McLendon Leadership Weekend this past fall in Lexington, Ky. Being a part of such an intimate event where we heard best practices and wisdom from executives at the NCAA, CBS Sports, NFL, and several universities and conference offices was inspiring. One of the things that stuck with me most was hearing from a young professional panel. One of the speakers who recently was an intern talked about the importance of taking ownership of your experience and cultivating experiences in that role that will prepare you for where you want to be after the internship. I took this advice back to Gainesville, where I was able to intentionally cultivate student-athlete development programming that I was passionate about and saw a need for with the support of my supervisors. This event set the tone for what was to come throughout the year. In addition, the guidance and support of amazing mentors like Adrien Harraway, Curtis Holloman, and Bruce Wimbish have empowered me to confidently shape my career path and evolve as a leader.

The McLendon program also gave me a community filled with the next generation of

brilliant individuals who will undoubtedly change the landscape of collegiate athletics. We are future game changers and culture shifters. Having this community to lean on while we navigate the early stages of our career has been invaluable. I had an accountability partner, Erica Hanserd, whom I spoke to often throughout the year. It was so comforting having someone who was also working in the student-athlete development space at the same conference that I could lean on for support and bounce ideas off of.

The values that have been instilled in me through the McLendon Foundation: mentorship, leadership, integrity and education, have prepared me for the next role as assistant director of student-athlete development at the University of Arizona. It's been a blessing to be a part of an organization that intentionally creates pathways for minorities in athletics. The McLendon Foundation Postgraduate Scholarship Program has shaped me as a leader, a professional, and most importantly, as a person. I can't wait to take each of the lessons and values learned into the next stage of my career and beyond.