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Boy oh boy, do I miss my people!

This year is the first since 2014 that CEFMA has not been a part of my everyday thoughts and responsibilities in my professional life. Having served on the Board of Directors for the last nine academic years, it's been quite the change to no longer be intimately involved in the leadership of the organization. Just when I thought I was ready to take a breath and concentrate 100 percent of my time to my "day job," I find myself immensely missing the monthly Board, Officer and subcommittee calls, the mentorship check-ins, brainstorming sessions and most importantly the daily texts and phone call interactions with my fellow Board members. Thank you again, Tim Wise (Notre Dame) for recruiting me back in 2014!

When I first heard about CEFMA, I had no idea the organization existed. I was aware of NACDA and all the different Associations under the main organization's umbrella. I was first introduced when I was working in championships at the conference office level. I knew academics had N4A, business managers had CABMA, and so on, but never really thought there was a fit for us conference folks who work with our member institutions day in and day out planning and executing conference championships, creating conference schedules, managing regular season play, working with officials coordinators to assign games, etc.

And here was CEFMA – this organization is the perfect place for conference staffers. Although some of the day-to-day responsibilities of on campus event and facility managers don't intersect completely, it is amazing how much crossover there actually is. Nine times out of 10, as a conference championship liaison, you are working with the event and facility managers at your institutions to plan championship events, review facility conflicts to create and produce conference schedules, conduct monthly calls and communicate daily with institutional game management staff, coordinate game officials' arrival and access to

their areas, etc. We're all working together moving in the same direction to ensure coaches, staff, fans and most importantly the student-athletes have a great gameday and championship experience. Being involved with CEFMA not only highlighted that, but helped to improve the day-to-day operations of our conference championship staff.

Don't let the opportunity to join this organization slip through your fingers. There is a place for championship staff personnel to grow, learn best practices, develop professionally and network with industry leaders in this space – aligning directly with the values and mission of CEFMA. Get involved in the leadership of the organization – and no, you don't have to sign up for a nine-year run, but it is definitely an avenue to get more involved and break out of your comfort zone in doing things you may normally not have the chance to do in your everyday job.

Put me back in, coach! Sign me up for nine more – I'm ready!



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Transformational change is occurring within intercollegiate athletics. We have seen college athletics evolve previously, but rarely have we seen the seismic shift that is currently underway. With these new challenges comes an opportunity to position ourselves for success today and in the future.

For the past several years, CSC has taken numerous proactive steps in this direction, including overhauling our governance structure, providing expanded leadership opportunities, and adopting an "All-In" membership model. And, recently, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of our comprehensive organizational re-brand.

Our All-In Membership has resulted in unprecedented growth in the organization. At this point, we are nearly 400 more members stronger than we were in December 2022 with an active membership of more than 4,100. CSC

remains vigilant in attracting and expanding opportunities for strategic communications professionals

from underrepresented populations and attracting the creative and digital professionals working in college sports. Expanding membership to an unlimited number of athletics staffers has resulted in many of you now being part of our organization. We are glad you are with us!

As we continued our strategic work, we turned our attention to modernizing our signature program – the Academic All-America® program. Through surveying our membership, establishing a working group in consultation with our CSC Executive Board of Directors and CSC staff, we have made important changes to the prestigious Academic All-America® program: strengthening eligibility criteria, establishing a new timeline for nominations, and creating a smaller, more exclusive national ballot. We listened intently to our members and acted to meet our overarching goal to ensure the most elite student-athletes are selected for Academic All-American status. Additionally, we engaged a new software provider - RhythmQ Inc. - to develop a more efficient nomination and voting platform.

Notable changes to the program include:

- Athletics eligibility criteria changing from

"starter or key reserve" to more stringent participation percentages for competitions, and where applicable, games started for team sports.

- Advancement for Academic All-District honorees to the Academic All-America ballot becomes more selective; accomplished by a sport or division-specific committee that reviews submissions and determines finalists to advance. The goal is to showcase the most elite student-athletes on a more manageable ballot, both in the number and quality of nominees.

- Based on the evolution of the transfer rule, the 12-month residency requirement for undergraduate transfers was eliminated.

Clearly, the program's longstanding success in bringing attention to the impressive hard work of student-athletes in the classroom and in competition is based on the dedicated commitment of CSC members to nominate and vote.

While CSC has made numerous adjustments to our signature program to ensure it better reflects the intercollegiate athletics of today, our focus remains unchanged – honoring the best and the brightest student-athletes, just as we have been doing for more than 70 years.