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Division III athletics departments face unique challenges. We want our staff and student-athletes to thrive, however, balancing academic commitments, athletics performance, and overall well-being for all involved is a daunting task. Fortunately, technology has emerged as a valuable tool to alleviate the administrative and logistical burdens we face.

Scheduling and Communication: One of the primary challenges is coordinating the schedules for workouts, practices, games, and all other athletically related activity for all teams in sometimes limited or shared spaces, especially after the recent expansion of the playing and practice season, with more teams in-season than ever before. Scheduling software can automate facility usage, staffing and travel

schedules, reducing time and effort spent on administrative tasks. Tracking software can make it easier for staff to balance the load on

facilities, to provide the opportunity for student-athletes to schedule their athletics and academic responsibilities, and to ensure every team has an opportunity to train appropriately.

Academic Support: Balancing academics and athletics can be a challenge for our student-athletes. Online tutoring platforms, academic tracking apps, study management apps and digital classroom tools help student-athletes keep up with their coursework and maintain a healthy balance.

Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation: Telemedicine and injury tracking apps allow athletic trainers to closely monitor injuries, and design personalized rehabilitation programs in conjunction with team physicians and strength and conditioning coaches. This not only accelerates the recovery process but also minimizes the risk of re-injury. Wearable technology allows coaches and medical staff to monitor athletes' physical condition during training, to help identify potential injuries and tailor training regimens to minimize injury risks and promote long-term health.

Mental Health and Wellness: The mental health of student-athletes is a growing concern. Technology can be used to provide resources and

support, including mental health apps, educational sessions and online counseling services, to help student-athletes cope with the pressures of competition and academics.

Compliance Tracking: Athletics departments must adhere to stringent institutional, conference, and NCAA rules as well as local, state and federal laws. Technology can assist in monitoring compliance by automating tracking and reporting systems. This can reduce the administrative burden on staff, minimize the risk of compliance violations, and ensure transparency and accountability.

Recruitment and Scouting: Recruiting talented student-athletes is a vital aspect of Division III athletics departments. Technology streamlines the scouting process by creating a centralized database of prospective athletes, providing coaches with access to a wider pool of prospective student-athletes and facilitating efficient evaluation and recruitment processes.

Family, Alumni and Fan Engagement: Live streaming, social media platforms, and mobile apps provide families, alums and fans with access to games and events, even if they cannot attend in person. This not only enhances the department's visibility, assists with relationship building and revenue generation, but also contributes to the overall experience for student-athletes.

FCS ADA



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As a species, we are change-averse. Whether thinking of the old "brick" cell phones of the 1990s or the invention of the automobile in the late 1800s, new technologies (and their inherent flaws) are initially the subject of ridicule and resistance. This is the case with Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well. This transformative technology, even in its current underregulated state, will forever change the way our students learn and employ their knowledge. We, as leaders in higher education, must make the decision to get on the train or get run over.

AI can serve as a mechanism to mediate some of the most pressing obstacles that plague our industry. With post-COVID talent pool deficits and non-Power 5 institutions historically having difficulties with adequately funding academic supports, AI can level the playing field and better promote post-secondary success for our student-athletes.

While tutoring services may differ by institution, the appeal of individualized guidance remains constant.

On my campus, we partner with our University Scholars program to provide a robust and effective peer tutoring experience. However, there are some courses and concepts that even the most adept tutors find challenging. Here's where AI comes into play. By leveraging the power of artificial intelligence, tutors and students can access assistance that can clarify academic misunderstandings in real-time. Whether students are catching a quick bite for lunch or making a 1 a.m. trip back to campus after competing on the road, these educational technologies have the power to greatly assist our students who are yearning to find free time during their busy seasons of competition.

Assistive technologies can promote inclusivity and equal access to education for our at-risk and international student-athletes. AI-driven speech recognition, natural language processing, and text-to-speech technologies enable students with disabilities to access and produce materials more easily. Additionally, AI-embedded captioning and transcription tools can accurately transcribe the professor's or coaches' materials and instructions, allowing the learner to focus on synthesizing the knowledge presented.

Artificial Intelligence can also be leveraged to help us (administrators, coaches, professors, and institutional leaders) to be more efficient,

and to get back to the "human" aspects of our roles as leaders, facilitators, and supporters. AI software and programs have the potential to streamline administrative services, providing much-needed support to underfunded athletics departments and alleviating the burden of time-consuming tasks. Also, AI programs can quickly and efficiently process vast amounts of data and reveal valuable trends, allowing coaches and educators to better understand students' strengths, weaknesses, and growth trajectories. By harnessing the power of AI, we can cultivate continuous improvement and empower students to reach their full potential.

As with any powerful tool, ethical considerations are paramount. Students must be responsible in using AI ethically, ensuring it remains a tool for enhancing their learning rather than a crutch. Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills should take precedence over reliance on AI. Proper training and guidance are crucial in navigating the ethical implications of AI and making informed decisions about its usage. It is an administrative responsibility to educate our students of the appeal and abrogating effects of this new technology. The question for all of us should not be, "if" but rather, "how" we embrace this game-changing technology as a tool which promotes a holistic and valuable collegiate experience for our students.