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The only landscape that feels like it's changing as quickly as college athletics is higher education and the technologies available to "assist." Learning tools that felt new and novel just three years ago are now old and dated. As professionals working in athletics academic services, we work in the intersect of both of these ever-evolving industries, which means we also must be innovative, resourceful, and adaptable. While many of us are having conversations on our campus about artificial intelligence, academic integrity, and other best practices, it's crucial that we lean on our counterparts across the nation.

Though we span different campuses and parts of the country, most of our concerns are not unique, and collaboration makes all of us better. That's one of the many reasons organizations like MOAA are key pieces of our professional journey. The access to other professionals in this space who truly want to connect for the betterment of each other is evident in

everything MOAA does. It doesn't matter if you're serving on a MOAA committee or attending the Annual Symposium, currently in an entry level position or an athletics director, we each have valuable knowledge and experiences. It's only when we collaborate and lift each other up do we reveal the potential in each of us.

Personally, MOAA has connected me with professionals within academics and other areas, both who have been equally as impactful. Learning about the new trends in fundraising may feel like a far stretch from academics, but it's important that we know how this impacts our student-athletes and the overall department. We don't (or at least shouldn't) operate in a vacuum or a silo, so to create true synergy we should first understand each other. This is where organizations like MOAA, which are not unit-specific, thrive. Symposium sessions on leading different generations and retaining talent during the "Great Resignation" impact every department. The wisdom shared during these sessions have helped me grow

and develop as I've taken on leadership roles at my institution.

I've also found that the MOAA family extends far beyond MOAA as well. The people who welcomed me into MOAA as a Rising Star were the same people championing me during year one of the NCAA's Leadership Institute. I look forward to doing the same for those who come after me. It truly doesn't matter who you are, how you identify, or what unit you work in, you will find a family in MOAA.

McLendon



UMass McCormack Department Partners with McLendon Foundation on Graduate Program Scholarship

The Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management and The McLendon Foundation are proud to announce the creation of the McCormack-McLendon Scholarship, an academic enrichment opportunity that will provide a selected McLendon Scholar tuition-free enrollment in UMass Amherst's No. 1 globally ranked sport management master's program. The selected student from the McLendon community will have the option of pursuing either an MBA/MS dual-degree, or one-year MS in Sport Management degree.

The partnership seeks to reinforce the impact and exemplary work already in place via The John McLendon Postgraduate Scholarship Program, which offers eight postgraduate scholarships to underrepresented candidates planning to pursue a master's degree in athletics administration/sport management. To date, the program has awarded over 145 scholarships, totaling over \$1.5 million.

Adrien Harraway, senior vice president of NACDA and director of the McLendon Foundation, commented, "The McLendon Foundation is thrilled to collaborate with The Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management. This partnership paves the way for a unique experience for a McLendon Scholar, granting the recipient access to The Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management master's program, resources, faculty, and alumni. Together, we're fostering the next generation of sports industry leaders."

"We are excited to partner with the McLendon Foundation, which consists of a talented and impressive group of future sports industry leaders," noted Professor Will Norton, McCormack's Director of Graduate Programs. "These students represent the values and work ethic that are staples of our industry-leading master's program, and we believe that investing in scholarship programming for underrepresented groups helps enhance our classroom learning outcomes and strengthens the value of our program. We feel a strong, historical alignment with the stated values of John McLendon – integrity, education, leadership, and mentorship – and I am excited to get to work with past and present McLendon torchbearers."

The scholarship recipient will be placed in a graduate assistantship at UMass Amherst, which will not only further their understanding of the sports business but will also offer hands-on learning opportunities to supplement their academic growth in the classroom. The McCormack Department currently facilitates assistantship opportunities with UMass Athletics, the Oak View Group (which operates UMass' Mullins Center), and research/teaching roles in the Isenberg School of Management.

Additionally, McCormack will help facilitate a case study competition at the annual McLendon Leadership Weekend. The case study is an educational and engaging 'pitch' style competition that provides McLendon torchbearers a practical, experiential learning assignment amidst a weekend of speakers/panels, networking, and community building.

The initial three-year partnership between McCormack and the McLendon Foundation officially began this fall, with scholarship applicants looking towards fall 2024 enrollment in Amherst. Applications for the 2024 Scholarship are now open through February 1, 2024, at minorityleaders.org.