



THANK YOU, JASON

We appreciate your friendship,
service and dedication to our
Association and Division II
over the last two decades!



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As we end this academic year and season, I have been reflecting on where we were in 2020-22 and where we are now in 2023. We have all changed in some way with a greater appreciation of life and the opportunities presented for our conferences, member institutions, and, most importantly, our student-athletes, who afford us the privilege to work and lead in college athletics. I hope the state of isolation experienced with COVID has forced all leaders to be more inclusive in communicating, more diverse and flexible in their thinking, and more equitable in fostering a sense of belonging for the people with whom we work and serve.

We have become very creative in staying relevant and building a culture where we are not just surviving but thriving to get the best from the people we work with and for. We all know

that college athletics has shifted tremendously, and we, as practitioners, are prioritizing the challenges we face in the industry while advancing our brands and trying to sustain what is good in college athletics. But as leaders, we must recognize that sustainability starts with culture, and your greatest asset to deliver what is good about college athletics starts with you.

Whether your organization is small or large, where you work and play every day is important to how you and your team thrive in this ever-changing landscape. Creating culture matters to sustain mental, physical, and intellectual well-being for you and your staff. Our flexibility as leaders to listen and learn from mixed generations is necessary for everyone's growth. Managing up and down is a must, and as leaders, we cannot lose touch with the morale needed to thrive. As we end the year, we should all do an inventory of our teams to make sure we have players who see the bigger picture and understand that this business is not self-serving but that it is an industry that includes purposeful work and human resources to ensure growth and the greater good of intercollegiate athletics. What I continue to learn as a leader is that flatlining leadership, where voices across generations make a difference despite titles and

age. If not careful, successful, skillful and deserving employees are halted in their careers without forward momentum.

Just like a championship team, team members must value each player's differences and what each brings to build a winning culture. My goal is not to simply focus on the taskmasters in this industry but also on the masters who can manage tasks and help develop a culture that builds trust, values honesty, and integrity, understands the importance of different voices, offers support, and communicates in a way that builds up and does not tear down.

We must not ignore how important culture is to who we are, what we do, and who we serve. Each one of us is responsible to help build, change, and create a workplace where we not only survive but thrive for the greater good of all as we work together to advance the mission we were chosen to lead.