



MSUS Culminating Experience Final Report

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4/10/18

Pac-12 Changemaker Program

Project client: Pac-12 Conference, Arizona State University

1. Abstract

In sports, there is a decades long history of athletes using their platform as sports icons to open discussions into societal issues. While people like Muhammad Ali and LeBron James are the most well-known, college athletes have a similar platform that can be used for change. This project explored the question of how to engage student athletes in sustainability on a more consistent basis from an institutional level within the Pacific-12 (Pac-12) Conference. Student athletes are notoriously time constrained, and therefore an adequate value proposition had to be developed to drive participation. The Pac-12 Changemaker Program was formed around the value proposition of allowing student athletes to speak up about causes that they are passionate about, and using sustainability as a lens to promote the cause and advocate for systemic change through the university's social media. A model was formed that could be replicated across multiple campuses, and be flexible enough to take advantage of existing opportunities. The model was piloted on Arizona State University's (ASU) campus, in conjunction with University Sustainability Practices, the Zero Waste Department, and Sun Devil Athletics. Major outcomes from the pilot include a handbook outlining the model, guidance for engagement, and recommendations for implementation. Feedback from student athletes indicates that the process has to be as efficient as possible, as athletes are too constrained to carry the burden of the effort. Student athletes are also worried about having a polarizing opinion, indicating the need for a robust collaborative process before speaking out.

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2. Background and Context

During the 2017 National Football League (NFL) season, athlete activism emerged as a prominent force in the national media, as "...athletes and teams continued and increased their previous efforts to effect change – and received more attention than ever before" (MacIntosh, Martin, Williams, & Williams III, 2018). The most publicized occurrence was when former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial inequality (Hsu, 2017). This is not a new occurrence, as athletes have used their platform as sports icons to open discussions into societal issues for decades. In the 1960s, "World champion boxer Muhammad Ali used his worldwide star power to take a stand against the Vietnam War by refusing to enlist in the military" (Miller & Jacobo, 2017). At the 1968 Summer Olympics medal ceremony for the 200-meter dash, American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos both held up a gloved fist during the national anthem to protest discrimination against African-Americans in the United States. Recently, National Basketball Association (NBA) players Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James, Chris Paul, and Dwayne Wade opened the 2016 Excellence in Sports Yearly Award (ESPY) show by speaking out against police brutality and calling for unity (O'Neal & Spears, 2018). In 2018, LeBron James created and wore a pair of Nike LeBron 15 shoes during games, with the word "EQUALITY" emblazoned across the heel of each. These are just a few popular examples among thousands of smaller ones. James has been the premier athlete activist to date, by using his platform as the 6th most followed athlete on Instagram in the world (Kutz, 2017) and his "...overall brand perception of being smart, deliberate, and purposeful in his statements and actions" (Coombs & Cassilo, 2017) to speak out. The role of athletes as activists has been embraced by some administrators, such as NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, who stated that "...there is enormous amount of racial tension in this country, enormous amount of social injustice, and I do see a role for this league in addressing those issues." (ESPN, 2018).

This often referred to "platform" of sports is one that is unique within society, with the ability to reach a global audience. Soccer boasts an estimated 3.5 billion global fans (Arthur, 2016). During the 2010 soccer World Cup, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) reported that "...nearly half the planet tuned in to at least one match of the 2010 World Cup, with an estimated 1 billion viewers watching at least part of the final" (Klein, 2014). In the United States, a 2013 poll from ESPN found that "88% of Americans age 12 or older are fans of at least one sport" (Klein, 2014). The power of athletes to reach these fans has increased in recent years, as we are currently in "an era in which athletes, especially in the NBA, have both financial power and the ability through social media to connect with millions worldwide." (O'Neal & Spears, 2018). In college athletics, student athletes possess a similar platform. According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), "More Americans follow college sports than ever before, and its popularity continues to grow" (Henly, 2013).

The student athlete platform can be utilized to vault sustainability into the national discussion. Ciletti et al. states that "With its unique emotional appeal to diverse audiences and broad media coverage, the sports industry is uniquely positioned to facilitate communication

about sustainability.” (Ciletti, Lanasa, Ramos, Luchs, & Lou, 2010). In terms of following, a poll found that “only 13 percent of Americans follow science, but 61 percent call themselves sports fans” (Beinecke, 2013), providing an opportunity to strategically increase the reach of sustainability. Currently, the student athlete platform is an untapped resource, as one article states that “...there seems to be buy-in among many C-level sports executives... But athletes are a powerful constituency who are largely sitting on the sideline when it comes to supporting environmental and sustainability causes” (Madkour, 2016).

Student athlete involvement usually comes from self-started initiatives. For example, the Beaver Athlete Sustainability Team (BAST) at Oregon State is a group started by 4 men and women who sought “to make Oregon State Athletics cleaner, more efficient, less wasteful and sustainable” (Oregon State University, 2017). The team completes a range of sustainability projects related to topics like recycling, composting, and energy. Other examples include a group of student athletes at Yale University who created a green team and provided the first sustainability certification for all teams on campus, and a group of student athletes at the University of Pennsylvania who created an “Eco-Reps” green team to help each team on campus adopt more sustainable practices (Henly, 2013). These initiatives center around a few motivated student athletes who drive progress, without much top-down facilitation.

This project sought to answer the question of how to engage student athletes in sustainability on a more consistent basis from an institutional level within the Pacific-12 (Pac-12) Conference. As the first collegiate conference to join the Green Sports Alliance (GSA) – an alliance of professional sports teams, venues, leagues, and partners – the conference “is committed to using the power of sport to promote healthy, sustainable practices to its campus communities and among Pac-12 fans” (Pac-12 Conference, 2018). These efforts include a zero-waste competition between member schools and “green” games to highlight efforts, as well as a focus on integrating with campus sustainability, expanding collegiate athletics departments’ spheres of influence with operations and staff, and harnessing the power of student pride to influence the impact of green games (Pac-12 Conference, 2018). These efforts are focused on environmental sustainability, and this is the trend across the rest of collegiate sports. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) published an article about a “greener gameday” in 2013, in which they cite energy efficiency, waste programs, or water conservation as examples of sustainability projects (NCAA, 2013). In a report by the NRDC about green trends in campus sport, sustainability is only mentioned in an environmental context (Henly, 2013).

In continuing the pioneering spirit of the Pac-12, there is an opportunity to redefine the term sustainability to encompass all three pillars (environmental, social, and economic) and therefore take a more holistic approach. Currently, the conference already has initiatives that could be classified as solutions-oriented sustainability initiatives. One is the partnership with the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE), which is “a nonprofit organization dedicated to harnessing the unifying power of sports to improve race relations and drive social progress... RISE uses sports as a vehicle to bring people together to promote understanding, respect, and equality.” (Pac-12 Conference, 2016). Another initiative is the “It’s On Us” campaign, which is

“focused on preventing sexual assault by inviting everyone to realize that the solution begins with us.” (Pac-12 Conference, 2014). These initiatives each focus on improving the world we live in, while leaving a better world for the next generation. A central message can be developed that unifies each of these, with a focus on the responsibility to the next generation - the student athletes that are the backbone of the conference. In addition, a holistic approach provides more opportunities to engage student athletes outside of a traditional environmental context.

3. Methodology

Considerations

There were a few factors to consider when answering the question of how to engage student athletes. The first is the current NCAA rules concerning the use of an athlete’s time. According to the NCAA, the time restrictions on athletes depend on the classification of the activity; “Countable athletically related activities include any required activity with an athletics purpose, involving student-athletes and at the direction of, or supervised by, any member or members of an institution’s coaching staff (including strength and conditioning coaches) and must be counted within the weekly and daily limitations.” (NCAA, 2009). Administrative activities, such as academic and compliance meetings, do not fall under this classification. Countable athletically related activities are subject to a 20 hour per week and 4 hours per day maximum, and athletes are required to have one day per week totally free of them (NCAA, 2009). Second is the existing time demand on student athletes, which leaves many feeling overwhelmed. According to a 2015 survey of Pac-12 athletes, “athletes spend an average of 50 hours per week on their sport and are often “too exhausted to study effectively”, and “more than half (54 percent) say they don’t have enough time to study for tests” (Dodd, 2015). In addition, “Lack of sleep was the No. 1 drawback to participating in athletics, the survey concluded. More than half of the respondents (55 percent) said sleep would be the No. 1 priority if they were granted an extra hour during the day.” (Dodd, 2015). This survey prompted a review of the rules through “Flex 21”, an adjustment to the rules which mandates more off time for student athletes. They now have an additional 21 days off from these countable athletically related activities, amongst other changes (Pac-12 Conference, 2016). Overall, the time restrictions and survey of student athletes shows that time is a precious resource for them, and engaging them would require a serious analysis of time commitment.

Value Proposition

Accounting for this lack of time, the value proposition to the athletes had to offer something that athletes would want to participate in. The main question in developing this was: what would interest the largest number of student athletes? The limited involvement of student athletes in traditional sustainability initiatives meant sustainability had to be strategically positioned to appeal to a larger group of people.

What if every student athlete could impact the world like LeBron James? There is a saying that every athlete has a story, a set of circumstances they grew up in that molded them into the person they are today. Part of their story includes issues that are fundamental to them,

whether this is poverty in the neighborhood they grew up in, racial discrimination, or a lack of clean water. These young men and women, while not yet professional athletes, still have a platform that garners media attention. The power of sport as a means for change is not reserved for a select few, meaning they could also use their platform to speak out about a cause and become a leader.

Program

Considering this value proposition, the Pac-12 Changemaker Program was formed, which allows student athletes to speak up about causes that they are passionate about, and sustainability is then used as a lens to promote the cause and advocate for systemic change through the university's social media. Part of speaking out means not limiting the causes to just environmental ones, to encourage more participation from student athletes. As Golden State Warriors player Draymond Green said in an interview at Harvard University, "athletes should only champion issues that they are passionate about" (O'Neal & Spears, 2018). Instead of acting as a spokesperson for an assigned topic, the athletes have the ability to choose, finding the cause that is right for them. To ensure that content maintains a connection to sustainability, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were chosen as the criteria for what constitutes a sustainability issue. With 17 goals and 169 goal-specific targets, the SDGs cover all three pillars of sustainability, and provide the opportunity to present sustainability outside of the traditional environmental context. However, this is not presented up front. Sustainability was moved to the background, with change as the main idea. Instead of having to learn sustainability from the start, change is a concept that people fundamentally understand to some degree, which helps to simplify the purpose of the program.

This focus on the athlete is backed up by RISE, who stated in 2016 report on athlete activism that "The athletes' most effective tools for speaking out for justice and equality are their own authentic voices and personal stories. Our analysis also found benefits to creating increased opportunities for athletes to learn about policy reforms and solutions to issues they care about" (MacIntosh, Pierce, Taradash, & Erickson, 2017). By using sustainability as the promotional lens, the athlete's story and cause can be tied to a larger narrative and incorporate storytelling techniques to simplify abstract concepts.

The focus on systemic change comes from a need to move past raising awareness and provide a pathway for change for issues. The same RISE report from 2016 states that while "Protest can call attention to an injustice and capture national attention... the act itself is inherently ephemeral. For protest, or any form of activism, to lead to sustainable change, it must be coupled with tangible next steps that are informed and supported by the communities in which athletes work" (MacIntosh, Pierce, Taradash, & Erickson, 2017). This need was reflected in the most recent RISE report from 2017, stating that "...raising awareness was the primary purpose of nearly 70% of the activism done. Athletes used these actions to draw attention to some perceived injustice or social cause that was either neglected or not receiving the attention they felt it deserved" (MacIntosh, Martin, Williams, & Williams III, 2018).

Social media was chosen as the promotional platform because of its popularity amongst Americans. According to a Pew Study about social media use in 2018, 73% of adults use YouTube, 68% use Facebook, and 35% use Instagram, with other apps close behind (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Among younger generations, adults 18-24 years old are the highest users of Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter, at 78%, 71%, and 45%, respectively (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Platforms like these provide the opportunity for easily accessible visuals and text and require little resource commitment outside of collecting information and writing the post, unlike a commercial or video shoot. In addition, the target audience of the social media campaign is younger generations. They are more likely to idolize these athletes, and they use social media much more proportional to other generations, with 88% of adults 18-29 years old using at least one social media platform (Murnane, 2018).

Unlike the professional athletes with millions of followers, not every collegiate athlete is a sports icon. Not everyone plays a sport like football or basketball, which attract the largest crowds and are broadcast on primetime television. With this program, though, they don't have to be. By partnering with the university, their voice can be amplified to provide the same opportunity to be heard in national discussion as a pro athlete would. At the same time, the promotion of these causes also provides a chance for the university to highlight existing initiatives happening on campus and discuss what they are doing to solve the problem.

Polarization in society

However, the opportunity to speak up brings a range of potential problems into play. The first is the polarized political climate that currently exists. With strong opinions on each side of certain issues, there is the potential for an athlete to have a divisive opinion that could reflect poorly on the university and conference, and contradict the goals of the institution. An athlete could potentially select a hot-button issue, such as gun control or immigration, which may upset a portion of the fan base and cause them to not follow the university or conference anymore. This type of reaction was evident in the fight over kneeling for the national anthem in the NFL. In the months following Colin Kaepernick's protest, a few NFL players did the same, and this form of protest became a political issue that divided the country, with most of the conservative media calling it disrespectful to the flag and the military. When President Donald Trump referred to the protestors as "sons of bitches" during a rally, his statement sparked a massive protest across the NFL, with entire teams kneeling during the anthem in response to his comment. There was enough media exposure that entire articles were written listing which players protested and exactly what they did (Hoffman & Booth, 2017). While the protest started in football, it moved to other major sports as well. In September of 2017, Bruce Maxwell became the first MLB player to kneel during the anthem (Lacques, 2017). With the potentially negative response to certain issues, a careful approach has to be taken to not polarize fans. At the same time, however, you do not want to totally limit the athlete's ability to speak. If done incorrectly, the impression can be given that the university or conference are trying to silence certain opinions by "filtering" them out. While they want to give their athletes an opportunity, there has to be some type of

agreement that if the university and conference are going to use their own assets, they should get a say in the matter, especially since some opinions may contradict policies of the institutions.

One of the cornerstones of sustainability is stakeholder engagement and bringing everyone to the table on issues. With this in mind, a constructive approach to speaking out would bypass the polarization in national discourse and provide a chance for open dialogue that is solutions oriented. To facilitate forming a constructive opinion, the program offers the chance to meet with professionals on campus to educate themselves on multiple sides of an issue.

Program Model

To facilitate this program from a conference level, a model process was formed for replication across multiple campuses, and was built to be flexible enough to take advantage of existing opportunities. For example, if a student athlete has already found their cause and gotten involved, this process can simply collect the information and use the program to highlight what has already been done. The model is built on 4 pillars:



The approach pillar outlines the pitch to give to athletes, in the form of talking points that can either be sent via email or given in person. The talking points include an overview of the program, context for why the program is available, and a brief introduction to what sustainability is and where it fits within the program. The engagement pillar involves a meeting with the athlete to discuss what they care about and ask a series of questions that get the athlete to think about if they want to champion a cause. The involvement pillar includes the athlete (1) consulting with people on campus to form their opinion, (2) answer a series of questions about themselves, their cause, and what they want to see changed, and (3) the social media post is written and given to the athlete for review. The post includes the athlete’s bio and cause, a connection to sustainability and a pathway for change, as well as a bit about university or conference initiatives. The promotional pillar involves utilizing a social media strategy to post the athlete’s story, along with either a picture or video. Depending on the platform, character limits have to be considered. Twitter only allows 280 characters per tweet, and Instagram has a max of 2200 characters per caption. Therefore, posts need to be concise but detailed enough to tell the story. With multiple forms of social media able to be used, the form that the posts take can change.

Pilot testing

The model was tested on the Arizona State University (ASU) campus in conjunction with University Sustainability Practices, the Zero Waste Department, and Sun Devil Athletics to discuss procedures for pilot implementation and to gauge interest for the program. These organizations were chosen due to an existing partnership through the Pac-12 Working Group, for

initiatives such as “green games”, which are games focused on being zero waste. Typical activities for these games include social media hype prior to the game, an in-game announcement, a halftime promotional video, and tailgating engagement with fans. USP also offers a sustainability certification, in which teams can fill out a checklist to check off certain practices that they do or plan to do. The green games and the certification both served as good existing platforms to build upon, especially since the green games are a point of focus for the Pac-12’s sustainability efforts.

This partnership was also used to reach out to current athletes to pilot the process or receive feedback through the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), which is a group of student-athlete representatives from each sport that meet monthly. The purpose of SAAC is “...to serve as a local student-athlete voice in addressing issues of student-athlete welfare at their respective institutions” and engage in building a community between teams and engaging in community service projects (NCAA, 2018). The pitch from the approach pillar was given in person at their March 12th, 2018 monthly meeting.

The other avenue pursued was the Office of Inclusion & Championship Life. Associate Athletic Director Alonzo Jones leads this and works exclusively with student athletes through a “life skills programming” program that teaches athletes how to balance their time. After pitching the project idea to him, he agreed to put out a request for a focus group to all student athletes. This culminated in a conversation with two athletes, a wrestler named Austyn Harris and a former softball player named Margaret Stahm, who formed the focus group, and agreed to answer some of the questions. The purpose of the focus group was to pilot the engagement pillar, ask a few other probing questions, and receive feedback on the program. The structure for the focus group was as follows:

- Welcome
- Overview of agenda
- Introduce yourself
- Overview of program
 - o Program description
 - o Political and sport context
 - o What systemic change and sustainability are
 - o The process of engagement
 - o Ground rules

Once this was finished, a series of questions were asked:

- Think back to your upbringing and college experience - what issues or causes do you care about from this time?
- How comfortable do you feel about having your voice heard in the national discussion of issues?
- On a scale of 1-5, 1 being none at all and 5 being very frequently, how much do you talk about current/political events within your teams?

- What do you commit yourself to outside of class and sports? How many available hours do you have aside from this?
- What attracts you to the program?
- What things would you change about the program to make it more attractive?
- How likely is it that you would participate in building a program like this?

4. Findings

Multiple themes emerged from the focus group. One is a dislike of polarization within society, especially in politics. Being forced to take a side on an issue is not something either of the athletes want to do because they both want to be mediators who learn something from others. Both athletes were comfortable with having their voice heard in this capacity, to varying degrees. Austyn's main reason has to do with a sense of personal responsibility and walking the talk. He said that this program would provide the opportunity for athletes to be a part of a "bigger vision" than just their sport, and make people back up what they are speaking out for with action. Margaret was a bit more cautious. She said that she would only want to speak out about something that she knew enough about, and that it depends on the issue. However, she was excited about the prospect of being able to choose to speak out for a certain charity. Regarding the discussion of politics within their teams, both responded with a score of 1, and said that most political conversation is sporadic and outside of their sport. Austyn said that the team tends to avoid them because of the potential to divide themselves, usually sticking to jokes. He also mentioned that the only time political issues are discussed is when there is buildup of emotions that interfere with the sport. Margaret, while apolitical herself, mirrored these comments. She said that most conversation takes place personally, outside of practice time. While both of them have been very involved in their time at ASU, they made the point that the amount of free time in their schedule is limited at best. Austyn has a 20-hour per week internship with his church, with not much time to spare outside of class, practice, and his church. Margaret indicated that with her level of involvement in organizations like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and SAAC, she was limited to 5 hours of free time per week maximum.

Feedback was also given on what was attractive about the program, and what they would change or want to see added. Austyn said that he liked the idea of an athlete using their voice, because there is only so much that one person can physically do. He said that "We don't have enough time to create the idea, ignite it, and fuel it", and the fact that the university would offer a program that enables you and does not take away all of your time was good. He also liked the simplified version of sustainability that I provided, since was not familiar with it prior to the meeting. Margaret generally liked the idea of being able to speak up for charitable causes and things you believe in. As for changes, Austyn thought that having very clear action steps is important to drive participation, so that student athletes know what potential options are in addressing their issue. He expressed concern about approaching certain issues to avoid getting in hot water, meaning that he wanted to avoid dealing with a negative backlash from teammates, coaches, administration, etc. While he liked the program idea, he thought that there needs to be a very clear method of empowering athletes to make a difference, essentially laying out in spades what kind of impact they can have. His last point was that he thinks athletes, including himself,

would be interested if they knew that the resources were there, and they could just get behind the cause. This stems from his lack of resources and time to make change in a large-scale way. Margaret's concerns were similar. She expressed a level of concern over speaking out about certain issues, and said she would like to see a coaching process created that takes an athlete through "how to go public with this opinion without pushing away half of your audience". She mentioned that because of time constraints, the process needs to be very efficient, with discernable action steps of how to engage with the program. She said it would be helpful to show examples of what they can do as well. According to her, once you show examples, people think "Oh I can do that", and it demystifies the process.

The final result of this project was a program handbook for the Pac-12 and ASU. University Sustainability Practices and the Zero Waste Department agreed to adopt the program, as this program comes at a time when they are looking to move past only green games and traditional sustainability. The handbook outlines a new sustainability vision encompassing all three pillars, each pillar of the model with recommendations for how to implement them, how to incorporate the program into the existing sustainability certification and green game engagement, and considerations for implementation. In doing so, they will have a guide for the fundamentals of the program and a resource ready for when they are ready to expand to other member universities.

5. Conclusions

This project represents a first step in understanding how to tap into engaging student athletes in sustainability. The feedback from student athletes indicates that while they are excited about the idea of using their platform and voice to champion a cause, the most prevalent issue is a lack of time in their schedule. People like Austyn and Margaret, who are most likely to speak out, tend to be already involved in other activities, further limiting the amount of work they can put into taking themselves through this process. As mentioned earlier, though, this model was designed for to take advantage of existing opportunities. With their involvement in organizations like FCA, there is a chance to frame their current involvement as a pathway for sustainability solutions. While NCAA rules have cut back on the amount of time student athletes are accountable for in their sport, the university will most likely have to bear the brunt of the workload, and provide a clear set of action steps if they want to see a continuous increase in the number of participants. The presentation to SAAC supports this, because while it is easy to talk to a group of student athletes, the challenge lies in achieving activation. However, with the example of FCA above, there is an opportunity to minimize extra time commitments by taking advantage of existing efforts. This connects back to the value proposition, which must continue to be adjusted based on what athletes want, whether it is a donation to certain charities or delegating resources to hold events surrounding the cause.

Student athletes are also worried about having a polarizing opinion, and putting themselves in hot water over their views. This indicates the need for a robust collaborative process prior to posting on social media, to ensure that the athlete feels educated and knows their position. While the word "constructive" is subjective, it is crucial that this process stays solutions oriented, and does not become a place for uncontrolled venting. Sustainability must also be defined clearly,

and presented in a way that the athlete can grasp and fluently talk about publicly. Once the athlete finds their cause during the engagement process, some examples should be provided that connect key sustainability concepts to familiar situations.

From an institutional level, the results of the ASU case study completely reframed the fundamental question that this project aimed to address. Instead of this being a program that was focused on student-athlete involvement in sustainability, the question became “how can an institution not just allow but *facilitate* athlete activism?”. In producing the handbook for the Pac-12 and ASU, it was clear that this project was not just about sustainability; rather, it’s about using sustainability to change the status quo of an institutional fear related to athlete activism. By housing activism under sustainability within the conference and university, they can become comfortable with the idea that activism can be a positive force that drives real change. With the foundation of the program laid, this project represents the first step in that process.

6. Future Directions

While the foundation has been laid for the program, the process now needs to be carried out. There is potential for another student to serve as the project manager, and coordinate each step to take the pressure off of campus sustainability and athletics. This includes reaching out to athletes, holding exploratory meetings with them, and collecting information from the athlete to write their story. Research can be collected on common causes and issues to have a repository ready for when the athlete comes forward. More focus groups can be held, and surveys distributed to those who have participated to gauge what their experience was like, or to collect more data on if student athletes feel the need to speak out and why.

7. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people for their help in the creation of this program. First, I want to thank the Pac-12 and Gloria Nevarez for allowing me to work on behalf of the conference. Second, thank you to Lesley Forst, Kelsey Gaude, and Bill Kennedy for corresponding with me over the past six months and providing guidance for my idea. Third, thank you to Alonzo Jones and Margaret Stahm, who helped me reach out to student athletes and provide feedback to improve the program. Fourth, thank you to the Green Sports Alliance for allowing me to present my idea on a monthly webinar and talk to a larger crowd about this opportunity.

Thank you to the MSUS Committee and the School of Sustainability for allowing me the opportunity to pursue an idea that I am truly passionate about, and explore an uncharted area.

A big thank you to Colin Tetreault, who served as my sounding board throughout the entire process and acted as a constant megaphone for my idea. I am forever grateful for the time you have put into mentoring me.

Lastly, I want to thank my family, especially my parents. Your support does not go unnoticed, and I am thankful that you are always there when I need it.

8. Appendices

See attached report below for deliverable given to the Pac-12 and ASU.

9. References

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Pac-12 Changemaker Program

ASU PILOT HANDBOOK

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Background

During the 2017 National Football League (NFL) season, athlete activism emerged as a prominent force in the national media, as "...athletes and teams continued and increased their previous efforts to effect change – and received more attention than ever before" (MacIntosh, Martin, Williams, & Williams III, 2018). The most publicized occurrence was when former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality and racial inequality (Hsu, 2017). This is not a new occurrence, as athletes have used their platform as sports icons to open discussions into societal issues for decades. In the 1960s, "World champion boxer Muhammad Ali used his worldwide star power to take a stand against the Vietnam War by refusing to enlist in the military" (Miller & Jacobo, 2017). At the 1968 Summer Olympics medal ceremony for the 200-meter dash, American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos both held up a gloved fist during the national anthem to protest discrimination against African-Americans in the United States. Recently, National Basketball Association (NBA) players Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James, Chris Paul, and Dwayne Wade opened the 2016 Excellence in Sports Yearly Award (ESPY) show by speaking out against police brutality and calling for unity (O'Neal & Spears, 2018). In 2018, LeBron James created and wore a pair of Nike LeBron 15 shoes during games, with the word "EQUALITY" emblazoned across the heel of each. These are just a few popular examples among thousands of smaller ones. James has been the premier athlete activist to date, by using his platform as the 6th most followed athlete on Instagram in the world (Kutz, 2017) and his "...overall brand perception of being smart, deliberate, and purposeful in his statements and actions" (Coombs & Cassilo, 2017) to speak out.

This often referred to "platform" of sports is one that is unique within society, with the ability to reach a global audience. Soccer boasts an estimated 3.5 billion global fans (Arthur, 2016). During the 2010 soccer World Cup, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) reported that "...nearly half the planet tuned in to at least one match of the 2010 World Cup, with an estimated 1 billion viewers watching at least part of the final" (Klein, 2014). In the United States, a 2013 poll from ESPN found that "88% of Americans age 12 or older are fans of at least one sport" (Klein, 2014). The power of athletes to reach these fans has increased in recent years, as we are currently in "an era in which athletes, especially in the NBA, have both financial power and the ability through social media to connect with millions worldwide." (O'Neal & Spears, 2018). In college athletics, student-athletes possess a similar platform. According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), "More Americans follow college sports than ever before, and its popularity continues to grow" (Henly, 2013).

Despite the typically positive messaging from athletes, there is a fundamental fear of activism among institutions. In a system where revenue is based on the size of the fan following, any stance taken on an issue – especially hot-button ones – can invoke a negative response in this highly polarized society. Two situations are representative of this; Colin Kaepernick and Chris Kluwe. When San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality against African-Americans, a few NFL players followed his lead, and the protest became an issue that divided the country along party lines. Many conservative media outlets referred to the peaceful, calculated protest as disrespectful to the

American flag and military. When President Donald Trump called protesters “sons of bitches” during one of his rallies, this sparked a massive protest across the NFL, with entire teams kneeling during the anthem in response. It has gotten to the point where anyone who kneels during the anthem immediately makes headlines. As a result of this response, Kaepernick has been unable to find a job, despite his talents. Chris Kluwe, a former punter for the Minnesota Vikings, took a stance in support of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights in 2012. After confrontations with his head coach, general manager, and special teams coach, he was released at the end of the season, despite no drop in performance. When situations like these arise, such as athletes taking a knee during the national anthem, institutions will release a statement saying, “We support our athletes’ right to protest.” Doing so means they do not publicly take a side and defer to constitutional rights.

This is the status quo. This program attempts to challenge that by answering the big question of: “how can an institution not just allow, but *facilitate* athlete activism?”

Some executives from these institutions have embraced this idea. One is NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, who stated that “...there is enormous amount of racial tension in this country, enormous amount of social injustice, and I do see a role for this league in addressing those issues.” (ESPN, 2018). Another is Mark King, President of adidas North America. At the Global Sport Summit in April 2018, King said that “We love athletes who have a platform to make the world a better place” and that “Inclusion and diversity are values of adidas, which also means diversity of thought.” This demonstrates a shift in institutional thinking.

So where does sustainability fit within this? I believe there is an opportunity to house athlete activism under sustainability, because with a rise in activism on college campuses (Mehri, 2016), this is a chance for the Pac-12 to be prepared for it. Sustainability is (1) normative, meaning we it takes an ethical approach to solving issues, and is focused on increasing the livelihood and well-being of people, (2) constructive, meaning it acknowledges complexity and drives for systemic change, and (3) positive through the establishment of common goals that people can unify around, which is important in avoiding polarizing the fan base, which institutions typically fear.

The Pac-12 is one of the most innovative and progressive collegiate conferences in the country. They are the only collegiate member of the Green Sports Alliance, a group of leagues, teams, venues, and others who make environmental commitments. In a tweet from April 2017, they stated an interest in promoting athlete activism at their sustainability conference (Pac-12 Conference, 2017). In combining athlete activism and sustainability, the next section outlines a new sustainability vision for the Pac-12.

Pac-12 Sustainability Vision

Officially, the Pac-12 “is committed to using the power of sport to promote healthy, sustainable practices to its campus communities and among Pac-12 fans” (Pac-12 Conference, 2018).

Through efforts such as waste competitions and green games, the focus has been put on environmental sustainability and reducing the footprint of the league. This is the trend across collegiate sports. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) published an article

about a “greener gameday” in 2013, in which they cite energy efficiency, waste programs, or water conservation as examples of sustainability projects (NCAA, 2013).

The goal of sustainability is to “improve the performance of our social, environmental, and economic systems, while not jeopardizing the needs of future generations.” Each of the systems are equally important. In continuing the pioneering spirit of the Pac-12, there is an opportunity to redefine the term sustainability to encompass all three pillars - environmental, social, and economic - and therefore take a more holistic approach.

I believe the conference already has initiatives that can be rebranded as sustainability initiatives. One is the partnership with the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE), which is “a nonprofit organization dedicated to harnessing the unifying power of sports to improve race relations and drive social progress... RISE uses sports as a vehicle to bring people together to promote understanding, respect, and equality.” (Pac-12 Conference, 2016). Another initiative is the “It’s On Us” campaign, which is “focused on preventing sexual assault by inviting everyone to realize that the solution begins with us.” (Pac-12 Conference, 2014). The values embedded in each of these initiatives are sustainability values. A central message can be developed that unifies each of these, with a focus on the responsibility to the next generation, i.e. student-athletes.

The proposed new sustainability vision for the Pac-12 is: “The Pac-12 is committed to using the power of sport to leave a sustainable world for the next generation”.

Program Description and Message

The purpose for the creation of the Pac-12 Changemaker Program is to facilitate student-athlete activism from an institutional level through the use of sustainability. It allows student athletes to speak up about causes that they are passionate about, and sustainability is then used as a lens to promote the cause and advocate for systemic change through the university’s social media. Part of speaking out means not limiting the causes to just environmental ones, to encourage more participation from student athletes. Instead of acting as a spokesperson for an assigned topic, the athletes have the ability to choose, finding the cause that is right for them. As Golden State Warriors player Draymond Green said in an interview at Harvard University, “athletes should only champion issues that they are passionate about” (O’Neal & Spears, 2018).

Message

Why student-athletes?

Not everyone is LeBron James. To make a difference in the world, though, they don’t have to be.

What if every student-athlete could impact the world like he does? There is a saying that every athlete has a story, a set of circumstances they grew up in that molded them into the person they are today. Part of their story includes issues that are fundamental to them, whether this is poverty in the neighborhood they grew up in, racial discrimination, or a lack of clean water. These young men and women, while not yet professional athletes, still have a platform that garners media

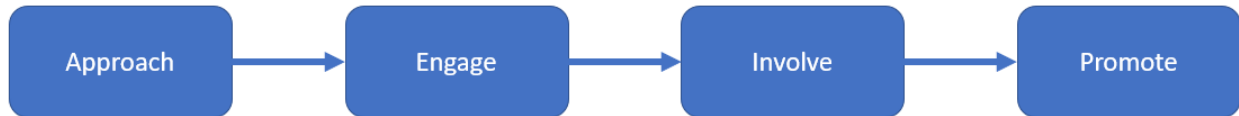
attention. The power of sport as a means for change is not reserved for a select few, meaning they could also use their platform to speak out about a cause.

Where does sustainability fit?

This is where sustainability comes in. While this is traditionally viewed as an environmental field, it's not just trash and trees. It encompasses whole systems, including environmental, social, and economic, with an end goal of livelihood for all while supporting a future for our planet. Think of it as the 40,000-foot view of our world. So how is this relevant to student-athletes? One of the main ideas behind sustainability is systemic change of these systems, where solutions to the root cause of problems are pursued. By telling the story of their background and their cause through a sustainability lens, they can not only educate themselves on potential solutions, but also expand their reach to campus communities and fans through university and conference support.

The Pac-12 Changemaker Program aims to do exactly this. By engaging student-athletes in helping them find that fundamental cause, the program can help to magnify the impact of their involvement. While the power of the individual is often minimized, with many people believing that a limit exists to the impact they can have on large scale problems, this program is rooted in the belief that any individual can empower others to take action towards a common goal and leave behind a legacy that transcends their sport.

Program Model



Approach

This outlines the process of approaching the student-athletes. Talking points for email or in-person contact include:

- The Pac-12 Changemaker Program encourages student-athletes to use their platform to speak up about causes they care about and use the university social media as a way to advocate for change.
- Intent is to amplify student-athletes' voices with the support of ASU and the Pac-12 to enter the national discussion.
- Move past raising awareness of a cause and into fundamental change
- Roughly a 5-hour time commitment *maximum*. This includes the initial meeting, collaboration process, and answering questions for the social media post. Unless the student-athlete wants to involve themselves more, it shouldn't be more than this.
- To learn more about how to get involved, talk with [established point of contact] to schedule a meeting.

Recommendations:

1. When pitching the program, I would not mention sustainability. This program uses sustainability as a lens, and is technically a sustainability program, but the main idea is

- activism and championing a cause. Trying to explain sustainability within a short time frame might confuse those listening.
2. This should be kept to a few short points to attract attention. When putting together a focus group with Championship Life, I initially drafted a one-page document, and was told that this was far too long.
 3. There are multiple avenues to pursue when starting to roll the program out:
 - a. SAAC – I received response from a gymnast named Heather, who said that the program was well received. These student-athletes are typically more involved than others and can take the idea back to their teammates to gauge interest. If Mitch Terrell or Bill Kennedy are on board with the program, it might help if they are the one to pitch to the student-athletes because of their familiarity, with USP or Zero Waste there to support if anything needs to be explained.
 - b. Student-athletes who are already sustainability majors – this was discussed with Bill Kennedy during the past few months, but never materialized. I think the buy-in here is much easier because of their major, and if they participate, there is a chance for their teammates to take notice and ask questions.
 - c. Championship Life – I worked with Alonzo Jones and Margaret Stahm to reach out to student-athletes and organize my focus group, so they are both familiar with the concept and what I wanted from the program. Since they would be helping reach out and refer student-athletes, the time commitment from them is minimal. They would just have to be familiar with the pitch.
 - d. Office of Student Athlete Development (OSAD) – They offer mentoring, tutoring, and other services to student-athletes. I connected with Jacob Blum, one of the academic coaches, at the SAAC meeting that I presented at. He approached me afterwards and expressed interest in helping. I connected with two graduate assistants at the Global Sport Summit, so they should also be familiar with the idea.
 4. Make the activation as clear as possible. Part of the feedback received from the focus group was that very clear action steps need to be provided, to “demystify” the process. The goal is to have a student-athlete talk to someone who can schedule a meeting and get them in the door.

Engage

This pillar includes the first meeting with the student-athlete, to get them talking about something they are truly passionate about. The main question is: *“Think back to your upbringing and college experience - what issues or causes do you care about from this time?”*. When asked, this should be presented in such a way to get people to think about their own story, much like the message of the program. Based on their answer, you can ask a series of follow up questions to clearly narrow down the specific issue and stance on the issue. In a roundabout way, you are getting down to why they chose a certain cause.

This is where you decide whether or not the cause is related to sustainability. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will serve as the fundamental criteria to determine this. With 17 goals and 169 goal-specific targets, the SDGs cover all three pillars of sustainability, and provide the opportunity to present sustainability outside of the traditional environmental context. These

criteria will help to control what issues can be talked about, since both Sun Devil Athletics (SDA) and the Pac-12 are going to be very particular about what they will allow. I say this because there is a chance that certain issues will be prohibited, since SDA and Pac-12 are potentially using their own assets, which they have a final say over. This will need to be established in early meetings to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Discretion should be used on whether or not the student-athlete's issue relates to sustainability. If there is a chance that it does not, ask the student-athlete if they would like to speak out for something similar, but in a different light. For example, the 2016 ESPY opening with NBA players speaking out about police brutality reframed the issue as a call for ending violence, since four police officers were shot in Dallas around the same time. Instead of taking a strong stance on either side, they tried to take the constructive approach by calling for unity. Part of the rationale that should be made clear to the student-athlete is that certain issues, even mundane ones, may invoke a negative response. Both examples used earlier – Colin Kaepernick and Chris Kluwe – show this. They should be fully aware of this, so they are not blindsided after going through the process.

At this point, the student-athlete should also be filled in about sustainability and its role within the program to determine if they are interested in going forward with speaking out. Because this program has certain criteria for how issues are approached, the athletes need to know that there will be some direction given to the statements they make.

A consistent point of contact should be established to facilitate scheduling meetings. Early on, one person can be responsible for this, and more people can be utilized if the workload increases. A note about the time commitment from the approach pillar - while the 5-hour mark is approximate, there is a chance that a very motivated student-athlete might want to expand their efforts, through physical involvement like a panel discussion. There is plenty of flexibility for this to happen, so it should be made clear that going through the basics of the program is just the first step in their activism, if they want it to be. It should be a goal to foster a continuing relationship with the student-athlete, since problems are not solved overnight.

Involve

If the student-athlete decides that they do want to speak out on an issue, the first step for them is to consult with people on campus to form their opinion, through professors, professionals, campus organizations, etc. Because this is a university facilitated program, the student-athlete has to take the time to educate themselves on multiple perspectives of an issue. However, this list of recommended people should be compiled by the university and then sent to the student-athlete. In doing so, a clear set of action steps are put forward for the student-athlete to advance. The university will have the connections and reputation to make this happen and be able to fill in those campus people with what the program is and the purpose of the meeting.

The next step of the process is for the student-athlete to answer a list of questions given to them over email. These should include questions about their background, their cause, and what they want to see changed. Here is an example of what was used during the pilot study:

“To follow up our meeting, here is a list of questions for you to answer. Overall, the purpose of the post is to introduce the world to you and talk about your cause within the context of your life.

Bio: Basic things like where you grew up, your major, what your family is like, etc. A childhood story is good to make you relatable, i.e. "I was always the kid who...". This can relate to your cause if you like.

Cause: You mentioned _____ as your main topic. Why is it so fundamental to you? What life experiences, whether in your upbringing or college experience, have led you to care so much? Stories are great here.

Change: What do you see as necessary to fundamentally change this issue? (Don't worry about it being perfect - just give a summary based on what you've found from your meetings).

Also, don't worry about your answers being pretty or well written, just give me as much information as you are comfortable with, and I will take the time to write it out and incorporate the sustainability stuff. Remember that you are the protagonist in this story, so just try to answer this as if you were taking someone through your journey.

Let me know if you have any questions or need clarification on any of this. I know you are busy, so you can just get this back to me at your earliest time.”

The final step is to take the information given and apply the sustainability lens to write the story while using storytelling techniques. It should put the student-athlete front and center, because as the message of the program says, each of these student-athletes has a story worth telling. It serves as the reason for why they believe in their cause. Here is a quote from Nike's equality campaign back in 2017, featuring athletes like Serena Williams:

“Listen. These are the voices of our athletes. Athletes taking the platform their sport has given them and using it to better the communities they represent. Athletes speaking up to inspire all of us to act. To inspire all of us to get involved. To inspire all of us to create change. We're here to make sure that their voices – and every voice –are heard every time. Listen. Equality isn't a game. But achieving it will be the greatest victory. That's why we're committed to fighting for change until we all win.” (Howell, 2017).

The framework for the story includes:

- Student-athlete bio
- The cause and a relation to sustainability
- A pathway for systemic change
- What are the university or conference doing to solve this?

As mentioned in the questions above, they are the protagonist in their own story. This should be written in a way that makes it authentic, giving the reader the chance to step into the student-athlete's shoes and go on their journey.

The cause and its connection to sustainability should be clearly stated, so readers are not left searching. Some issues, such as poverty or economic inequality, might be talked about in the context of a very specific situation, such as a town or city level since the student-athletes are speaking from their experience. However, when relating it to sustainability, it should be framed as a national and/or global issue, not just local.

Attaching their cause to the experiences the student-athletes have had in their life will help to simplify abstract ideas of systemic change. Consulting firm BSR had this to say about storytelling with sustainability:

“At the Conference, it became clear that sustainability stories are most powerful when they share one of three attributes: They are personal, they connect to the big picture, and they paint a positive picture of the future.” - Storytelling for sustainability can be challenging because we don’t have all of the answers, so the stories are not yet complete. But our stories should have a clear path—a beginning, a middle, and an ending that demonstrates hope for the future.” (Schwartz, 2013).

The last part of the story involves a plug for ASU and Pac-12 initiatives that address this issue. For example, if the student-athlete wanted to speak out against landfills, ASU’s commitment to zero waste or research into source reduction could be highlighted. If the cause is racial equality, the Pac-12’s partnership with RISE or ASU’s Committee for Campus Inclusion. I believe this is a way to achieve buy-in from more people on campus, and a way to promote initiatives through a new avenue.

Here is an example story from the pilot efforts, talking about division and polarization in society, from ASU Wrestler Austyn Harris:

Nothing makes Austyn Harris happier than interacting with passionate people. Once a shy kid from Colorado, he says that “I liked to stick to the things I knew best”. As he grew up and expanded his community, though, the beauty and diversity of passion inherent in people in this world came into focus and captivated him. Now, instead of feeling nervous when meeting new people, he thrives on it. As a Psychology and Sociology double major, this is most apparent with his wrestling teammates at ASU and members of his church. “I love seeing people doing what they love and experiencing that extreme emotion” he says. “Passion is contagious, entertaining, but most importantly, challenging. You really have to get to know people to hear their stories - where they have been, where they want to go, and why they want to get there.”

Austyn has heard hundreds of these stories over the years. While mostly positive, he has noticed a prominent negative theme. Passion, a powerful force that can unify people, often drives them apart instead. When people pursue their passion, such as a cause or solving an issue, others who do the same tend to negatively impact them, even though most of the time they are chasing the same goal. Their division comes not through their goal, but through a different path of pursuing their goal. This is a constant burden on Austyn’s mind. How can we come to terms and solve problems when citizens can’t talk

through issues or even agree that there is a problem? While sometimes an abstract concept, social polarization between classes, political parties, or other groups seems to be greater than ever. With a range of environmental, social, and economic problems that continue to persist, we cannot leave the next generation to shoulder the responsibility. What can be done about this?

A fundamental change in how we approach solving these problems must happen. As a society, “conflict is guaranteed, and we can’t control that”, Austyn says. “What we can control is our response to it. Conflict only produces two outcomes: unity or division. It is our responsibility, and my personal passion to see us use our conflicts to come together.” Not talking about issues leaves them untouched, ripe to grow unabated. Austyn references King T’Challa from the movie Black Panther: “We all know the truth: more connects us than separates us. But in times of crisis, the wise build bridges, while the foolish build barriers.”

As an institution, Arizona State University is committed to the values of collaboration and inclusion, with one of the main goals in our charter being to “Co-develop solutions to the critical social, technical, cultural and environmental issues facing 21st century Arizona”.

Once the story is written, it should be sent to the student-athlete for review.

Overall, brevity should be used when writing the stories. There is inherent complexity in each of these issues that could be talked about at length, but with the use of social media, stories and concepts will need to be kept to a digestible level. Platforms like Twitter and Instagram have character limits of 280 and 2200, respectively, while Facebook has a generous limit of 63,206. I would recommend a few strategies:

- Pick a main platform to post on, and then cross-post on other platforms.
- Using Facebook as the main platform would allow for a longer story, which could be condensed to fit on an Instagram post. Twitter could be used for a short description, and a link to the other platforms.
- Pictures are worth just as much as the words attached to the post. Ask for the student-athlete to provide pictures that they would like attached to the story. You want to have more than just their roster photo to show a more personal, authentic connection. These pictures should be cleared with SDA, as well as the use of pictures in general.
- Avoid including sustainability jargon that might confuse anyone not familiar with the concepts. Simplicity is key here - the easier someone can read through the story, the better understood it will be.

Promote

This pillar outlines the promotional strategy used for the social media posts, and the program in general:

1. Contact Kate Janczewski or Mitch Terrell to have the post reviewed and added to the SDA content calendar.

2. I recommend using topic themes to attract student-athletes. These can align with existing awareness weeks or months, such as those covering domestic violence, mental health, and sexual assault. Doing so will provide some direction for what people might want to speak up about, instead of having to choose from a large range of issues.
3. I recommend pitching the opportunity to student-athletes to speak out as a group. Athletes like Colin Kaepernick and Chris Kluwe - mentioned earlier - took a stand, spoke out on their own, and were ostracized for it. Being singled out is a legitimate fear among student-athletes, as many do not want to jeopardize their scholarship status or their roster spot. During the focus group I conducted, both student-athletes were afraid of backlash from coaches, teammates, or administrators if certain issues were talked about. I spoke with Chris at the Global Sport Summit in April 2018 after a panel on athlete activism, and he said that athletes have much more power in numbers to effect change by presenting a unified front. This holds more weight than just one athlete taking a stance.
4. Themes to emphasize when promoting the program, that can be woven into the posts if:
 - Culture of ASU athletics from Herm Edwards:
 - o “It’s about using football to build men, so these guys are equipped to deal with what’s out there in the real world, with all the issues we have in this world. If they’re not pro football players, they’ll be good fathers, good husbands, good men, good citizens”
 - o “It’s about the young people that live here”
 - o Helping young people develop their potential, building an environment to nurture people
 - o “Will you make a difference for the next generation?”
 - o “What is our DNA of a player that plays for Arizona State?”
 - o Ryan Cohen: He said that “You can play well, do well in school, but it is nothing without the culture” of the women’s basketball team
 - Leadership and the power of the individual
 - Student-athletes as champions for a cause
 - Catalysts for action
 - More than just athletes - play off of Pac-12 Complete program
 - o "Complete" is an initiative that celebrates the complete lives of Pac-12 student-athletes. These student-athletes are known for their success and competitiveness on the field, but their community involvement, off-the-field achievements, and academic interests are just as laudable. Pac-12 student-athletes are able to harness their athletic ability to augment their lives- not define them. They’re impressive, complicated, real, and complete” (Pac-12 Conference, 2018).
 - Leaving a legacy that transcends their sport
 - Sustainability is not just trash and trees
5. Hashtags
 - #Pac-12Changemaker
 - #morethanathlete
 - #thepowerofsport
 - #movebeyondgreen
 - #Pac12Sustainability or #ASUSustainability

- Other hashtags that are specific to the issue, i.e. #equality or #zerowaste
6. Target audience
 - There are a few. The first is ASU and Pac-12 fans generally, who are most likely to consume the content. The second is younger generations of kids who are most likely to idolize these student-athletes and see them as role models. The final is people on campus

Incorporating into Green Games and Sustainability Certification

Green games

1. When starting the engagement process, contact the individual from the team who is in charge of communicating
2. Pitch the team the program by saying that it is a part of the green game marketing efforts
 - a. If you have to simplify, this can be presented as a way for the student-athletes to get involved past wearing t-shirts or sorting trash
3. If any student-athletes agree to participate, their posts can be a part of the pre-game social media hype portfolio
4. To incorporate with the in-game announcement:
 - a. Tell fans to check out the post by pitching the program, i.e. “As a part of the green game today, our student-athletes are speaking up for causes they are passionate about. Check out their stories at _____.”
 - b. Keep this short, and let the stories speak for themselves - if you decide to pitch the program in-game, pitch it by saying “As a part of our support for student-athlete activism, the Pac-12 and ASU have partnered to create the Pac-12 Changemaker program, focused on student-athletes using their platform to create change. The Pac-12 is committed to using the power of sport to leave a sustainable world for the next generation.”
5. If the program becomes popular, or the student-athlete is committed enough to put the time in, a video segment could be recorded and played during half-time. I would be very careful with this one though. Social media posts are one thing but having a video that covers a potentially controversial topic at a game/match/meet may deter people from coming in the future. We do not want to hinder the attendance to these events, so if a video is made, exercise caution and monitor the reactions from the crowd.
 - a. Surveys could be done before and after games, as a part of tailgating engagement
 - b. Two examples of what has been done with videos and student-athletes:
 - i. CU Boulder “created a video featuring student-athletes in collaboration with Ralphies' Green Stampede that encouraged support for the “Water for the West” pledge program. The judges felt allowing the student-athletes to use their voice and their platform to encourage participation was empowering and went beyond merely having them volunteer to work/collect recyclables.”
 1. <https://www.colorado.edu/ecenter/greensports/water4west> This is the link to the video by Taylor Kornieck, CU Women’s Soccer player, giving a brief background about herself and calling for fans to save water.

- ii. One of Stanford's field hockey student-athletes "led her teammates to create promotional videos related to waste and recycling that showed the teammates juggling water bottles on their field hockey sticks and "scoring" by getting the water bottle in the recycling bin. The Office of Sustainability was able to use these videos to promote recycling and composting at the game by posting them to its social media channels." - this is on their Office of Sustainability's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- iii. These are fairly standard sustainability topics, so the risk in posting is low. This is just to give an idea of what has already been done.

Certification process

1. This program can be offered for points as part of the certification. The point value should be sufficient to drive participation. It is not intended to take the place of the other options, but instead add on.
2. If a team expresses interest in being certified, the program can be pitched during the initial meeting through the most convenient avenue for the team contact, whether that is email, in-person, or on the phone.

Important Considerations for Implementation

The first is that student-athlete time is limited by both NCAA restrictions and inherent busyness. According to the NCAA, the time restrictions on athletes depend on the classification of the activity; "Countable athletically related activities include any required activity with an athletics purpose, involving student-athletes and at the direction of, or supervised by, any member or members of an institution's coaching staff (including strength and conditioning coaches) and must be counted within the weekly and daily limitations." (NCAA, 2009). Administrative activities, such as academic and compliance meetings, do not fall under this classification. Countable athletically related activities are subject to a 20 hour per week and 4 hours per day maximum, and athletes are required to have one day per week totally free of them (NCAA, 2009). In addition, the existing time demand on student athletes leaves many feeling overwhelmed. According to a 2015 survey of Pac-12 athletes, "athletes spend an average of 50 hours per week on their sport and are often "too exhausted to study effectively", and "more than half (54 percent) say they don't have enough time to study for tests" (Dodd, 2015). In addition, "Lack of sleep was the No. 1 drawback to participating in athletics, the survey concluded. More than half of the respondents (55 percent) said sleep would be the No. 1 priority if they were granted an extra hour during the day." (Dodd, 2015). This survey prompted a review of the rules through "Flex 21", an adjustment to the rules which mandates more off time for student athletes. They now have an additional 21 days off from these countable athletically related activities, amongst other changes (Pac-12 Conference, 2016). Therefore, USP and Zero Waste should be prepared to bear the brunt of the workload in facilitating the program and the work that comes with it. Athletes do not always have the time to write their story, inherent knowledge to incorporate sustainability, or know how to activate certain action steps if the efforts want to be expanded past just the story.

The second is that SDA will need to be fully on board for this program to be successful. The idea of facilitating activism is a new space, and they have to be comfortable with the process. It is crucial to obtain buy-in from them, otherwise the door to student-athletes will shut and the program will be dead in the water.

The last consideration is the need for data collection during the process. SDA, and the Pac-12 especially, will want to know how the program is going over. While there is research about activism among college students rising, it does not focus specifically on student-athletes. I recommend administering surveys and conducting focus groups to determine if there is an interest from student-athletes in speaking out, and a need for a program like this. As mentioned earlier under the green game strategy, fan reactions to these efforts on social media or in-person should be monitored, so SDA and the Pac-12 can know if the reception has been generally positive, neutral, or negative.

At the end of the day, this pilot is a first attempt at answering the larger question of what an institution's role in athlete activism should be. Don't be afraid to adopt this in phases, so that SDA is not overwhelmed, and early successes can be shown to drive implementation.

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