

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF NACDA AND ITS AFFILIATES

# ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION

DEVELOPING

# LEADERS

IN COMPETITION,  
CLASSROOM AND  
COMMUNITY

## IN THIS ISSUE

- How Conference Carolinas implements the “Body, Mind, and Soul” approach to help member institutions fulfill their missions on campus
- Using technology to develop a coordinated and integrated mental wellness program
- Cross-department considerations for enhancing support of athletic training staff



NACDA

DECEMBER 2021 | Volume 56 | Issue 4



# IT'S GAME TIME FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Jennifer Domagal-Goldman, Ph.D., Executive Director  
Stephanie King, Director, Strategic Initiatives  
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Civic Nation



*Photo courtesy of Michigan Marching Band Photography*

On September 15, 2018, tens of thousands of fans gathered at the Big House in Ann Arbor to watch Michigan take on Southern Methodist University (SMU). When the Michigan Marching Band took the field at halftime, fans looked down to see the words “We The People” displayed across the field as the announcer read the preamble of the Constitution. As the band played, they marched across the field, illustrating the national voter turnout rate, and the voting rate among college students. The color commentary included quotes on civic participation from past Presidents and a reminder to students of the power of their collective voices.

This unique halftime show was made possible thanks to a partnership between the Michigan Marching Band, the Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Dean Emerita Dr. Edie Goldenberg to support the nonpartisan Big Ten Voting Challenge.

The Big Ten is one of 12 conferences that has partnered with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge as part of the Athletic Conference Challenges, where schools compete against their athletics rivals to increase voter registration and turnout among their students. To date, more than 125 institutions enrolling 2.6 million students have competed in the Athletic Conference Challenges, proving that when colleges compete to increase civic engagement, everyone wins.

The Athletic Conference Challenges are just one way that athletics directors, administrators, coaches and student-athletes can drive civic engagement on their campuses. And their involvement in this issue has never been more critical.





Photos courtesy of the ACC

Currently, approaches to civic learning and civic engagement in higher education are insufficient, inefficient and inequitable. A 2012 report from the Department of Education decried that “civic learning and democratic engagement are add-ons rather than essential parts of the core academic mission in too many schools and on too many college campuses today ... Many, if not most, institutions of higher education now offer civic learning as an elective but not as an integral component of preparing students to compete in a knowledge-based, global economy.”<sup>1</sup>

This statement still rings true today. In fact, given the evolving concerns about mis- and disinformation in the public sphere, the fallout of the 2020 election, and the events of January 6, 2021, there is an even greater need today to ensure that civic learning is at the forefront of the higher education student experience.

As we know, the 2020 election was like no other – it came 237 days into a global pandemic and in the wake of the largest protests for racial justice and civil rights in a generation. But 2020 also saw strides forward as the athletics community deepened its connection to civic engagement.

Last year, the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), proposed and enacted the All Vote No Play legislation which

provides the first Tuesday of November each year – Election Day – as a day dedicated to increasing opportunities for Division I athletes to participate in civic engagement. All Vote No Play empowers student-athletes to prioritize casting their ballots on Election Day, participating in community service and it provides a nonpartisan avenue for them to engage their campus communities in the democratic process.

In June 2020, the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) formed a Committee on Racial Reconciliation that was charged with addressing issues related to racial injustice both within intercollegiate athletics and society at large. This committee partnered with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge to create the inaugural Coaches' Voter Education and Registration Task Force comprised of 120 individuals across all conference types supporting nonpartisan team engagement in the general election. Most notably, the Task Force created a Coaches' Voter Registration and Engagement Pledge that included 1,200 signatories representing 86 percent of Division I programs, 26 percent of Division II and Division III, 11 percent of NAIA teams, and 4 percent of junior college teams in 2020.

There was also an increase in the number of schools participating in the Athletic Conference Challenges in 2020, including the launch of nine voting challenges supporting 90 institutions. While many of the

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education (2012): *Advancing civic learning and engagement in democracy: A road map and call to action.*



**Athletics directors are working tirelessly to meet student-athletes where they are in terms of helping them meaningfully contribute to their communities and giving them the ability to cast an informed ballot in all elections.**

athletics conferences have relationships specific with their respective athletics conference commissioners, others have awareness with the conferences but currently work independently as cohorts of campuses. All of the athletics conference voting challenges have representation from academic and student affairs staff working collaboratively toward increasing nonpartisan student voter registration and turnout rates across their conferences and at their institutions.

Athletics directors are working tirelessly to meet student-athletes where they are in terms of helping them meaningfully contribute to their communities and giving them the ability to cast an informed ballot in all elections. To tie together civic engagement and responsibility to community service goals for an athletics department, here are five things that athletics administrators can do today to engage with civic learning and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts:

**GET TO KNOW YOUR CAMPUS' VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT DATA.**

The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), a signature initiative of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University, offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, for interested campuses, a closer examination of their campus climate for political learning and engagement and correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. Understanding how your campus participates when it comes to voter registration and turnout is the first step toward building a more engaged community.

**ENCOURAGE COACHES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COACHES' TASK FORCE, SIGN THE COACHES PLEDGE OR JOIN THE BUILDING AMERICA'S TEAMMATES PROGRAM.**

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, in partnership with the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) is providing voter education, registration, turnout and advocacy tools to support the

engagement of college athletics in the democratic process. To become a 2022 Coaches' Task Force member or to have your coaches involved by signing the 2022 pledge or to join the Building America's Teammates program, visit [allinchallenge.org/coaches](http://allinchallenge.org/coaches).

**START OR PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN AN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE VOTING CHALLENGE.**

Athletic Conference Challenges are a high-impact way to engage not just your campus, but also your peers, in the work of civic engagement. To create a voting challenge for your athletics conference contact the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge at [allinchallenge@civication.org](mailto:allinchallenge@civication.org).

**MAKE USE OF THE TOOLS IN THE ALL VOTE NO PLAY GUIDE.**

The All Vote No Play guide, available at [allvotenoplay.org](http://allvotenoplay.org), provides coaches with a list of "civic drills" to help all athletes flex and grow their civic mindsets, behaviors and habits. Designed by coaches and informed by research and a diverse coalition of civic partners, this guide aims to make it easy for all coaches – regardless of sport, geography, type of school, or position – to use this day "off" from playing as a day "on" for helping student-athletes be more successful leaders and community builders.

**UTILIZE THE ALLINTOVOTE.ORG PORTAL.**

ALLINtoVote.org is a one-stop shop for campuses and their students to navigate the voting process. As the shifts in regulations around vote by mail, and the needs for absentee ballot requests change, this site is an essential tool for helping campuses navigate support for their geographically diverse student bodies. This free site provides students with tools to pledge to vote, register to vote, confirm their voter registration, determine how and where to vote during both midterm and general elections, and understand what is on their ballot.

Athletics administrators, coaches and student-athletes alike are trusted messengers to get their peers and institutions involved in political and community issues. Taking any of the steps outlined here is sure to help you and your athletics program constituents make their voices heard. ●

