SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ATHLETICS DIRECTOR
FOREWORD from Barbara Schroeder

During the 15 years I served as a Division II athletics director, I had the opportunity to mentor and offer guidance to many young administrators who aspired to become athletics directors.

This responsibility was most important when I was in the position of guiding and preparing an associate athletics director at my own institution, Regis University in Colorado. This task was one that I accepted knowing full well it would demand considerable time and energy from me and the associate if we were to gain the results we wanted.

As a self-proclaimed Division II “lifer,” I recognized the importance of training young people so they had the tools to be legitimate candidates when opportunities occurred. My role as trainer and mentor in such situations meant I had to delegate critical areas of my oversight to my mentees and then had to be willing to guide gently and critique the performance and outcomes.

The work was often time-consuming, and I struggled with relinquishing some of the more “delicate” areas of my job, such as budget oversight and staff supervision. In the end, however, I saw great potential in these individuals and knew the process would be worth the time and effort. I know the information in this collection will facilitate the experience for future generations.

Division II has a wealth of aspiring, talented young administrators who can benefit from the tutelage of current Division II athletics directors. Every effort should be made to identify these individuals and to “raise up our own” by giving them opportunities to develop the skills needed to be leaders at the next level in Division II.

FOREWORD from Kathleen Brasfield

I retired in 2012 after a long career as a Division II athletics director at Angelo State University. Despite all that experience, I did not realize until I began my post-retirement assignments with the NCAA and the DII ADA Mentoring Program for Women and Minorities how helpful it would be to have a “road map” of things athletics directors need to know.

As experienced Division II athletics directors, we have an obligation to encourage our promising young administrators to stay in Division II, to offer experiences that develop their skills to become successful athletics directors and to encourage Division II institutions to give those administrators opportunities to advance.

This book will introduce skill sets and job responsibilities that young administrators can develop in preparation for a career as a Division II athletics director. While this workbook is meant to provide that “road map” for individuals with less experience, we hope it can provide helpful information for veteran athletics directors.

The materials included are real-life examples of what others are doing and are meant to initiate conversation and thought, not to provide the right answer for every situation. We hope you find this information helpful and, with your help, we look forward to making this a “living” document.
So you want to be an **ATHLETICS DIRECTOR**

You enjoy working with young people, you enjoy being on a college campus and you are energized by the competitive aspect of sports. What’s not to like?

Your challenge is in the numbers. There are only about 1,100 NCAA athletics directors in all three divisions. If you have a fondness for Division II, there are about 300 member schools – and positions are available at only a few of them at any given moment. To acquire one of those jobs, you will need a strategy and major preparation. To retain your position and to grow, you will rely on vision, resolve, knowledge and a lot of hard work.

This workbook should aid anybody who wants to become an AD. However, the focus is more specific than that. This workbook is directed toward the development of Division II athletics directors. More specifically, it is meant to help current Division II assistant and associate athletics directors take the next step in their careers.

Division II leaders have noted a trend as athletics directors positions have been filled recently. Although Division II assistant and associate athletics directors have pursued vacant AD positions, in several recent cases the successful candidates have been Division I associate athletics directors – usually individuals with meaningful fundraising experience.

There’s nothing wrong with that, either with Division II institutions turning to Division I administrators or with successful candidates having worked in Division I. But while occasional migration from Division I isn’t necessarily a problem, there may be a concern with it becoming standard practice. Administrators who are grounded in Division II purpose should be able to prosper at Division II institutions without taking a philosophical detour.

If you are a Division II assistant or associate AD, you probably have a specific task – for example, rules compliance or communications – without much assistance. If you are the sports information director, you may not have given much thought to compliance, ticket management or drug-testing policies. If you are the compliance person, you may be deficient in promotional skills or how to relate with media.

It’s understandable, but those deficiencies hinder your quest to fill one of the few positions that come available each year. You must be able to set yourself apart by demonstrating a broad skill set, and you especially must be able to present business or fundraising experience.

This book can help you broaden your knowledge. It contains 13 chapters that touch all of the major components of being an athletics director. Nothing can prepare you for every eventuality, but this book draws from the collective wisdom found in three years of the Division II athletics director mentoring program. Not only does it reflect the knowledge of the mentors, but also it is framed by the experiences of the mentees, several of whom have earned athletics directors’ positions.

There’s an abundance of information in this book, enough that a printed version was not possible or desirable. Chapters on institutional control, rules compliance and student-athlete welfare alone total about 750 pages. The idea is not to make you an expert on a particular compliance manual, but rather for you to see how topics are treated in a good manual and how the information is organized. It is not intended to serve as a rules compliance resource; rules-related questions should always be channeled through your institutional, conference or NCAA compliance operations. NCAA bylaws change often, and the examples contained in this workbook may be dated.

If you make a commitment to understand the range of athletics director responsibilities, your chances of impressing a search committee will improve. But you also should take control of circumstances where experience is there for the taking. If your AD traditionally has handled fundraising for the booster club, ask him if you can handle it this year. If the AD has always headed up the annual summer golf fundraiser, ask her if you can fill that role. You’ll broaden your knowledge, strengthen your resume and please the boss. A little initiative can go a long way!

You also should be seeking personnel supervision opportunities. That’s a major part of the AD’s role, and any search committee is going to be partial to individuals who have conducted effective performance reviews, administered work-improvement plans and conducted job searches themselves. Find opportunities in this area, even if they are limited.

Finally, take advantage of developmental programs offered through organizations such as the NCAA, National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA), Minority Opportunities Athletic Association (MOAA), and others. Most of them are quite good, and participants often emerge better prepared to advance their careers.

Even if you touch all those bases, you might still need a little luck to get the position you’re seeking. But you know the saying about luck: It’s when preparation meets opportunity.

Congratulations on beginning your journey. You’ll be better for the effort.
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The term “institutional control” sounds ominous, perhaps because it is the core of the expression that is associated with the worst of NCAA violations: “lack of institutional control.”

But institutional control itself is a good and essential concept that links varsity athletics programs with higher education. Without it, any college athletics program is not much more than a bunch of kids playing games.

The concept of institutional control is at the center of the Model Division II Athletics Department document developed several years ago by the Division II Athletics Directors Association. That model, which is included in this chapter, has been revised several times over the years, but the core message has remained the same: Any athletics program must reflect the ideals of the institution it represents, and it is up to the athletics director to constantly inform the president (or the person to whom the athletics director reports) of all relevant developments within the program.

As you prepare to pursue a career as an athletics director, you must seriously consider this important responsibility. The president of the institution is ultimately responsible for the integrity of the institution, and that includes compliance with NCAA rules. If you are not comfortable delivering potentially bad news to your boss, then perhaps being an athletics director is not the best career for you.

In fact, things will go wrong at times, often in ways that are routine or understandable. That’s why the NCAA has a secondary violation process that encourages the athletics leadership of each institution to monitor and report small problems before they become big ones. As far as the NCAA is concerned, that vigilance is regarded as a sign of a well-monitored athletics program. A program without secondary violations might be considered as one that is willing to sweep problems under the rug.

In addition to building trusting relationships with institutional leaders, athletics directors must understand and value the role of the faculty athletics representative, who plays a primary role in ensuring student-athlete welfare, especially with regard to academics. The athletics director also should be involved in the formation and oversight of an effective athletics advisory board, which can provide valuable counsel if administered properly.

However tedious it may be, anybody considering a career as an athletics director must learn the relevant sections of the NCAA Division II Manual. If you come from a rules compliance background, then you have a head start. If not, then you must read it and – more importantly – get the help you need to fully understand it. If there’s a problem later on, ignorance of the rules will not be a sufficient explanation – and it certainly will not be an adequate defense.

This section provides a wealth of documents to help you understand how effective athletics programs document important components of institutional control. Among those documents are sample compliance manuals. It is important to understand that these manuals appear here only to illustrate how they are organized and the level of detail that is addressed. Any actual rules compliance questions should be dealt with directly through institutional, conference or NCAA channels.

Other documentation includes sample faculty athletics representative job descriptions, NCAA Bylaw 6 (which covers institutional control issues), the make-up of two athletics advisory boards (along with agendas and minutes from actual meetings), and the make-up of compliance committees (along with agendas and minutes from actual meetings).

Here are some questions to consider:

- Are you comfortable being directly accountable to the president of the institution, even when things go wrong?
- Do you need to develop organizational and communication skills to keep supervisors informed about all aspects of athletics department operations?
- Do you understand and respect the role of the faculty athletics representative?
- Would you value counsel and oversight from an athletics advisory board?
- Are you willing to commit to finding and reporting secondary violations within your athletics program (in addition to major infractions)?
- If you are not already familiar with NCAA legislation, how do you plan to learn it?
ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT OVERSIGHT

You might think that a chapter on athletics department oversight would give you the distilled version of what you need to know to become an athletics director. There is indeed a lot of material in this chapter, and you need to understand all of it. But the kind of AD you become likely will be determined not merely by the knowledge, but rather by how well you are able to keep all elements at the forefront of your job.

Documents in this chapter include the following:

• The Model Division II Athletics Department (developed by the Division II Athletics Directors Association and approved by the Division II Presidents Council).

• Organizational charts

• Gender-equity plans

• Diversity plans

• Recruiting policies and procedures

• Equipment management and rotation

• Strategic planning information, both for Division II and for on campus

Each of those components will enter into the daily life of an athletics director. The temptation may be to dwell on responsibilities that relate directly to competition – items such as recruiting and equipment management, or maybe glitzier tasks such as scheduling. However, the best athletics directors build their jobs around factors that will lead to the best possible student-athlete experience. That demands constant attention on academics (addressed in other chapters) and equitable treatment of all personnel and student-athletes.

Your expectations will frame what kind of coaches you hire and retain, and what kind of student-athlete you recruit. Those expectations should clearly fit your institution’s goals and the strategic plan for Division II, which represents the collective wisdom and purpose of about 300 schools.

This chapter does not include everything an aspiring athletics director will need to know about running an athletics department, although the Model Division II Athletics Department document touches most of the bases. Certainly there is no substitute for the learning that comes from actually being in the role. Still, a careful reading of the material in this chapter will help you think about how you would juggle all the balls that are tossed each day to an athletics director.

Here are some questions to consider:

• How would you ensure that your athletics program reflects the goals and priorities of your institution?

• How would you create an equitable climate, both for student-athletes and for coaches/administrators?

• Are you sufficiently knowledgeable about recruiting regulations to develop or enhance institutional recruiting policies and procedures?

• Do you have enough management skills to construct an organizational structure in which staff members are able to work efficiently toward the achievement of departmental goals?

• Are you familiar with planning processes and, if not, how to you plan to acquire the knowledge?
So you want to be an AD

ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT OVERSIGHT

Nothing you do as an athletics director is more important than ensuring the well-being of the student-athletes for whom you are responsible.

Winning and losing matter, of course, but the ultimate goals are the safety and the academic/social development of your student-athletes. As such, this chapter requires special attention.

Segments in this chapter include the following:

- Student-athlete handbooks
- Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) bylaws and minutes
- Student-athlete exit interviews
- Student-athlete employment forms
- Drug-testing policies and procedures
- Missed class time policies and procedures
- Emergency action plans for travel, including team travel, individuals traveling to competition on their own and individuals traveling to practice
- Travel policies
- Transgender policy

Student-athletes function best when they clearly understand what is expected of them, so a concise, communicative student-athlete handbook is essential. This isn’t something you can do once and scratch it off the list; your student-athlete handbook needs to reflect constantly changing times.

The handbook will take you only so far, however. Questions and occasional conflict will arise, and those problems are best addressed, if possible, through an effective Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Any campus SAAC is likely responsible for community outreach, but good programs also rely on SAACs to discuss small problems before they become large ones. They should be capably staffed – many programs use the senior woman athletics administrator in this capacity – and should be able to rely on the willing assistance of the faculty athletics representative.

Questions can get complicated. Your student-athletes need to understand institutional and NCAA drug-testing policies, not only because of how their physical and mental well-being may be affected but also because of what could happen to their eligibility. Likewise, they should understand the conditions under which they can earn extra money and, perhaps above all, the policies and procedures governing missed class time. They should know what they are permitted to do with social media and what the consequences are for violating those policies.

Ensuring a quality student-athlete experience is the reason any athletics director has a job. Legitimate ongoing accountability in this area – as described in the chapters on institutional control and athletics department – is essential for the success of your program and your career.

Here are some questions to consider:

- What does “student-athlete well-being” mean to you?
- What priorities would you put in place to ensure a high-quality environment for your student-athletes?
- How would you use your senior woman athletics administrator and faculty athletics representative to create a better climate for student-athletes?
- What sort of training or professional development would you provide for SWAs, compliance officers and faculty athletics representatives?
- How do you make certain that coaches, who have more day-to-day contact with student-athletes than anybody, focus not only on competition but also on student-athlete social and academic development?

STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING
Your career as an athletics director depends on how well you manage personnel.

It is a difficult task. You do not want to micro-manage, constantly directing your administrators and coaches by annoying them with every imaginable detail. At the same time, as we discussed in the chapter on institutional control, the responsibility for the administration of the program rests with you. You must know how to hire good people, how to develop them, how to reward them and (occasionally) how to terminate their employment.

The following documents are included in this chapter:

• Sample employment contracts
• Volunteer coaching agreements
• Employee improvement plans
• Sample performance and personnel evaluations
• Job descriptions

Hiring good people is vital. That means you must have a firm understanding of what you are looking for, be able to read resumes critically and interview with a purpose. Those skills don’t necessarily come naturally; formal instruction could help.

Once you have found the best person for the job, you may be responsible for signing them to a contract. Multiyear contracts are the exception in Division II, but annual contracts are still important, and it will be your responsibility to execute them in a way that is fair to the employee and protects the interests of your program.

Finally, there is career development. While you will hire the occasional star who gets better and better without much guidance, in most cases you need to provide direction. It’s important to remember that management is a full-time responsibility, not something to be deferred to a once-a-year review session. If a coach or administrator is not meeting your expectations, they need to know at the moment, not several months down the line.

We have included sample performance-management forms, including one from Lubbock Christian University that incorporates the six Division II attributes – balance, learning, passion, resourcefulness, service and sportsmanship – into the review process. It’s an excellent approach that helps align institutional and divisional objectives.

Division II institutions often rely extensively on volunteer coaches, so they require adequate attention. You will want to consider background checks that are as thorough as those for your full-time staff. Also, you should check driving records for any coach or administrator who will be transporting student-athletes. Remember that it all comes back to you if you forgot to check.

Here are some questions to consider:

• Do you know how to develop a job description and organize a search? If not, who can help you develop those skills?
• What, if anything, do you need to learn to execute employment contracts?
• How would you go about finding the right balance for guiding your staff without being excessively involved in their day-to-day activities?
• Are you comfortable providing employees with information that they need to become better?
• If circumstances warrant, could you document an employee’s failures and, if necessary, terminate his or her employment?
“Communication” can be a catch-all word, one cited when something goes wrong – as in “we did a poor job of communicating.” Sometimes, the failure is actually poor organization or a lack of anticipation. But communication can be a major issue if direction is left unclear or if you fail to share the good news about your program. You should be constantly evaluating the precision, clarity and effectiveness of your communication.

Documents included in this section include:

- How to have difficult conversations
- Staff meeting plans (agendas, timelines and expectations)
- Media plans

The chapter focuses on two kinds of communications: (1) the kind you need for effective management of your staff, and (2) affirmative communication that can rally supporters around the program.

Most of your communication energy will be directed at your associate/assistant ADs, coaches and student-athletes. Do not, however, forget the need to communicate diligently with faculty on your campus. Some are skeptical of the emphasis on intercollegiate athletics and that skepticism becomes acute when travel results in missed class time. It’s up to you, your coaches and the student-athletes to remind them that the athletics experience is a huge part of any student-athlete’s overall development.

As for your staff, you must be as clear and unambiguous as possible at all times. This is especially true in difficult periods, such as when a staff member is not meeting expectations. Being frank and direct at the outset will save headaches down the line. Also, a good relationship with the human resources department can produce valuable assistance with work-improvement plans, performance evaluations and (occasionally) terminations.

Personal communication with staff is important, but it’s only half the game. Effective meetings are the best way for personnel to understand how the pieces fit together. But meetings can be professional quicksand. More than one administrator has lost credibility because of the inability to conduct effective meetings. When you assemble the staff (or segments of the staff), ensure that the meeting has a purpose. That means agendas and, after the discussion, clearly understood timelines and expectations. Without the planning and follow-up, meetings are a waste of everybody’s time.

The “fun” aspect of communication involves interaction with alumni and other supporters. If you want to be an AD, you probably already have ability in this area, but if you need help with social skills, many quality online courses are available. The key is to remember names, people’s jobs, their history, where they live and how they relate to your school. The more of that information you can retain, the easier and more productive conversations will be. And when you don’t know, use questions to guide conversations. Remember that most people enjoy talking about themselves.

You also should sharpen your collective communication skills. In that regard, make certain you have confidence in your sports information and marketing directors. Work side-by-side with them to develop effective media plans. Make yourself available for “Ask the AD” opportunities on social media or other Internet platforms, and don’t be afraid to field the difficult questions. If you don’t know or can’t provide the answers, then find a way to share as much information as possible. Candor usually pays off in the end.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you possess the communication skills you need to manage and lead your staff? If not, in what areas are you deficient and where can you find the means to improve?
- Are you sure you have the ability to have difficult conversations with staff members and student-athletes? This skill is often learned on the job (and often painfully), so whatever you can learn in advance will help.
- How much thought have you given to what your staff meetings would look like? How would you find the balance between broad participation/open discussion and keeping the topics on track? How detailed would your agendas be, and how would staff members be responsible for follow-up?
- How will the nature of your institution and athletics program mold your media plans? An urban institution without football probably has different communications needs than a rural school at which football is king.
MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

The bad news is that, at many institutions, less money is available to support athletics programs than in the past. The good news is that this means opportunities for athletics directors who can build relationships and raise the funds needed to complement the base financial support from the school.

This is a multifaceted responsibility, so this section has a large collection of supporting documentation:

- Alumni-based fundraising examples
- Booster club brochures and policies and procedures
- Information on camps and clinics
- Corporate package sales, signage agreements and endowment information
- Ticket policies and procedures
- Partnerships with the community
- Friend-raising

This section includes several examples of what has worked at Division II institutions. This is an area where it is especially important to remember the Division II context. Larger Division I programs might use other approaches that pay off in their setting, but in a Division II environment, they might mean a lot of work with little to show in return. You need to pay attention to what has worked at similar institutions and communities, and then make the necessary adjustments to make those approaches work especially well for you.

No matter what techniques are used, make sure you understand the relationship with your institution’s development office before you ask anybody for a donation. At many schools, the development office will gladly support the athletics department’s fundraising efforts. At others, it might exercise more control than you anticipated. Before you take the job, learn as much as you can about this relationship – and also seek to understand what the fundraising expectations will be.

It’s also important to get the sequence straight: “Friend-raising” must precede “fundraising.” One of your first jobs must be to make friends in the community. That would be important even if money were not involved, but it’s doubly important because of the need you will have for financial support. Determining who is willing and able to help should be one of your first tasks.

Likewise, you should build relationships on campus. The Division II model calls for an athletics program that is fully integrated with the school, so you want to build a reputation as a team player starting on Day One.

The section also includes information about camps and clinics. That’s because of Division II’s commitment to give back to the community. If these young people are favorably impressed by your campus and staff, they may return someday as students – or perhaps student-athletes. At the very least, you want them to support your program when they become adults.

But first things first: Make sure you know how to build a great relationship with an institution’s development and alumni offices. If you can discuss that relationship during the interview process, you will have a tremendous advantage.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you know what you need to know about the relationship between the athletics department and the development office at the school where you want to be AD?
- Are you comfortable asking people for financial support? If not, what can you do to become more comfortable?
- Have you volunteered for fundraising assignments in your current position, even if fundraising is not part of your job?
- How would you go about building relationships in your community, within your alumni base and among your peers on campus?
- Do you know what the fundraising expectations are for your new position? What elements of the athletics department will be supported by university funds, and what elements will require fundraising?
- Which sports at your new institution are best suited for fundraising?
When you become an AD, you will be required to work within the budgeting framework of your new institution. As you pursue your new job, take time to learn what kind of budget your target institution uses and what cycle that school is on.

For instance, does the program you’re seeking to join use zero-based budgeting (that is, the process starts from scratch each year) or is it more of an annual rollover process (where the basis is the previous year’s budget)? And what is the cycle? Many budgets run from August 1 to July 31, but maybe your school is different. If so, find out why.

If you have a grasp of how those processes work, then you can talk intelligently about fiscal matters during your interview. People will be paying special attention to see if you’re qualified in this area, so be prepared.

Items in this section include:

• Athletics department budgets
  – Different types of budgets
  – Fiscal year timeframes
• Sample scholarship agreements
• Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA) and NCAA gender-equity reporting requirements
• Links to further your understanding of Title IX

At a typical Division II institution, the budgeting process begins in October and concludes in February. The fact that it takes so long should signal how much preparation is required, along with the amount of review that occurs. As athletics director, it’s not only your job to develop and implement the departmental budget, it’s also up to you to make sure that your coaches understand their budgets and stay within them. As with personnel management, you don’t want to micromanage fiscal oversight. On the other hand, you need to be highly aware at all times about the state of your department’s finances.

You also will need to understand how your athletics grants-in-aid will be funded. In some cases, an endowment may provide annual support. In virtually all cases, however, at least some fundraising will be required. Few people are born with fundraising skills, so seek out opportunities in that area in your current job, even if they don’t directly relate to your current responsibilities.

You also will need to brush up on the National Letter of Intent program, and you will need to learn the proper ways to adjust scholarship money. Most scholarships roll over during the student-athlete’s four-year experience, but the amount of the student-athlete’s aid likely will change over time. Take time to learn institutional policy in this area; also, you should familiarize yourself with NCAA financial aid regulations.

The other items in this section pertain to gender equity. All institutions are required to comply with the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, so make sure you know what forms are required (samples are provided in this section) and who is responsible for executing them. The same goes for forms that support NCAA diversity reports.

This section also provides links that may aid your understanding of Title IX. All institutions are required to meet one of three prongs for Title IX compliance (most Division II schools use proportionality), so take time to learn which one your target school uses.

Here are some questions to consider:

• Do you understand the different types of budgeting processes and cycles? If not, how do you plan to learn?
• Does fiscal management interest you or is it more of a burden?
• How would you hold coaches accountable for their own budgets without micromanaging them?
• Do you understand how your program is funded, especially with regard to scholarships?
• Do you understand what’s involved in adjusting scholarship allocations from year to year?
• Are you prepared to provide the necessary oversight for EADA and NCAA reporting compliance?
• Do you know what you need to know to ensure that your school complies with Title IX?
Without a doubt, the opportunity to manage facilities is one of the coolest aspects of being an athletics director. But as with so many elements of the job, there’s more to the responsibility than is apparent at first glance.

This section covers the following topics:

- Access supervision/rotation
- Scheduling
- Renting
- Volunteer management
- Field maintenance

One luxury you have with facilities as you pursue an athletics director position is that everything is out in the open. You can (and should) make your own evaluation of what the institution has to offer – and perhaps draw some inferences from the condition of the facilities.

But you also should do a little investigating about the institution’s philosophy toward facilities. You should know up front who is responsible for what and what plans are in place. The long-range outlook may be as mundane as refinishing the gym floor or as grandiose as building a new football stadium, but you need to know what the commitments are.

Scheduling your facilities is a special challenge. If your school sponsors a large number of sports in a particular season, the gymnasiums or weight rooms might be in use from before dawn until late at night. It will be up to you (or your staff) to schedule access so that each team gets what it needs and so that everybody is treated as equitably as possible.

And you may have to consider more than just your intercollegiate program. The campus recreation department also may have a claim on facilities, so that’s another ball to juggle.

You also should consider revenue opportunities. At many Division II institutions, the football stadiums also serve as the home field for the local high school team. It’s up to you to set a fair price, keeping in mind the community-relations element of the arrangement.

You should also stay aware of opportunities to make your facility available for high school playoff events. Not only does it give you a chance to showcase your institution, it could also mean some extra money for the program. Sample rental policies from member institutions are included in this section.

During off-seasons, your coaches will want to conduct camps to generate more revenue for their programs. Think about the pros and cons of making your facilities available to them at no cost.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Does the institution regard the development and updating of facilities as an overall institutional responsibility (rather than the responsibility of the athletics program)?
- Are fundraising or capital campaigns in place or planned?
- Are your facilities adequate to support the sports that are sponsored? For northern climates, have you considered the degree to which outdoor sports, especially baseball and softball, might have to use gymnasiums until the weather warms up?
- To what degree would you be responsible for raising money for facility development or improvement?
- What is included in the institution’s five-year facility plan?
- To what degree are the facilities used for campus recreation or classroom purposes?
- Are you satisfied with the contracts with vendors to periodically update the scoreboards?
- Does the local high school use one or more of your facilities? What are the ramifications of that arrangement?
- Who is responsible for maintenance of your facilities? At many Division II institutions, for example, baseball and softball coaches are expected to maintain their fields. Do you have the resources to support a full-time facilities manager and, if so, what would that person’s job description look like?
One of the most important components of Division II’s philosophy is community engagement. You are operating in a more intimate environment than most of your Division I peers, so it’s important for your supporters to know – and respect – your student-athletes and coaches.

This section contains several documents to help in that regard:

- Community-engagement plans
- Tailgate policies
- A community-action plan

In general, you will not be able to rely on television or other mass media to promote your program. You’ll need to sell your events locally, probably as a family-oriented, live-entertainment option. Here’s the trick: You need to follow through on your promises. When members of the community attend your games, they need a reason to return. That means creating an entertaining environment, keeping things suitable for families (no profane chants from the student section, limited histrionics from the coach) and making sure the experience is a pleasant one (clean facilities, comfortable seating, quality concessions and so on).

Apart from the games themselves, tailgating may provide your best large-scale means of association. As fun as tailgating is, make sure you develop – and enforce – effective policies. It will save headaches in the future.

If you combine all those elements with competitive teams, you will be rewarded with fan loyalty.

It is, of course, a two-way street. In exchange for the support, your program must be willing to give back. A basic approach is to use your events for food or toy donations, but you’ll probably want (and need) to take more personal approaches.

You should consider outreach efforts to local elementary schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and nursing homes. Your community probably has ongoing beautification efforts, so identify ways your program could help.

And don’t forget the fun stuff. Community service is valuable on several levels, but you also need to think about ways to engage the community. That could be something as big as a community-wide picnic to celebrate the arrival of spring or something as small as having your football student-athletes stay on the field after a game to play catch with kids who attended the contest. Youth camps and clinics are another excellent way to interact.

There’s also the need to engage students and faculty on campus. Your program may derive substantial support from student fees, so make sure student-athletes and coaches show their gratitude. Look for opportunities to interact with sororities and fraternities. As for faculty, they often are required to accommodate travel-related time away from class. Let them know you appreciate their patience.

You should keep one important warning in mind. While most student-athletes are happy to be part of your school’s community-relations efforts, the demands on their time are extreme. All of them must practice, compete, study and attend class, and some of them also have jobs. Be sensitive to their situation when considering required community-relations activities.

You also have individual community-relations responsibilities. As an athletics director, you will want to become close with your Chamber of Commerce, Local Organizing Committee and probably join a service club yourself – not to mention participating side-by-side with your student-athletes and coaches on their community-outreach efforts.

Here are some questions to consider:

- What would you do to create a better environment at your institution’s athletics events?
- What events could you develop that would, in a fun way, familiarize members of your community with your coaches and student-athletes?
- How does the nature of your community and your program affect your community-outreach efforts? For example, if your program doesn’t sponsor football, do other sports lend themselves to tailgating? How would community-outreach programs differ for urban and rural institutions?
- What initiatives would help build a bridge between your program and faculty/students at your institution?
**PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionalism is a common-sense matter. If you are honest, if you follow through on commitments and if you treat others with respect, then you exhibit professionalism. If you fall short in any of those areas, you probably don’t.

While you must keep your eye on being true to those lofty personal values, you can take practical steps that help sell your personal brand.

This chapter includes relevant information in several areas, including:

- Resume templates
- Mock interview questions
- Suggestions on attire
- Guidance on professional organizations

Resumes are important, so give them the attention they deserve. They should be thorough yet concise, error-free (and free of misrepresented responsibilities or achievements) and easy to read. This section includes several templates that current athletics directors have judged to be good. If you choose to use any of them, you likely would want to add personal touches. But do pay attention to the information that is included in these samples and how it is presented. Resume-writing is an ever-evolving art, and these templates show how a quality resume can help you obtain the job you want.

Those responsible for hiring usually emphasize the job interview in determining who gets the position. The resume can be a great introduction, but the interview reveals how well you listen, what particular ideas you have, whether you have a sense of humor and whether you can be serious when the situation calls for it.

This program will offer the opportunity for mock job interviews for those aspiring to advance professionally within Division II. Current Division II athletics directors serve as faculty for a mentoring program, and the executive search firm of Alden & Associates also will provide assistance.

While people are not hired because of the way they dress, some job candidates fail to land a job because of carelessness in this area. This section provides suggestions for your in-person interviews, but pay special attention to what you wear if you are doing an interview through Skype or other such video programs. And if you do have a Skype interview, pay attention to what’s on the wall behind you and be sure to turn off the ringer on any nearby phones, including cell phones.

Finally, you are known by the company you keep, and that includes the professional organizations with whom you affiliate. If you want to become an AD, that means you are seeking an authoritative position in higher education. You might want to learn more about CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education). NACDA and NACWAA memberships should be givens for someone hoping to become an AD, but you also should consider memberships of associations devoted to fundraising or marketing/promotions. NACMA (the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators) provides excellent digital platforms for brainstorming.

Also be aware of development opportunities. A collection of Division II associations offers an excellent Sports Management Institute every year. Berths in such programs are usually competitive, but you don’t get better if you don’t take risks.

Of course, your development shouldn’t stop once you land your first AD position. Expect to participate in conventions, clinics and ongoing education. It’s all part of being a professional.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Is there a difference between how people perceive you and the way you want to be perceived? If so, what can you do to close that gap?
- Is your resume up-to-date and does it reflect the skills and experience that you have to offer?
- Do you have the typography/graphics skills to make your resume visually appealing and easy to read? If not, who can help?
- Do you have the interview skills needed to pursue a high-level management position such as an athletics directorship?
- Are you secure enough to participate in a mock job interview and then benefit from candid feedback?
- Have you considered how to dress, both for in-person and online interviews?
- Does your membership in professional organizations reflect your gravitas as an athletics administrator?
- Are you paying attention to your ongoing education?
As you seek to become a Division II athletics director, you will frequently hear the term “Life in the Balance.” What does it mean?

The phrase comes from the Division II strategic-positioning platform, which is the basis for Division II’s approach to intercollegiate athletics. Under the section “Who We Are,” the platform states:

“Life in the Balance. Higher education has lasting importance on an individual’s future success. For this reason, the emphasis for the student-athlete experience in Division II is a comprehensive program of learning and development in a personal setting. The Division II approach provides growth opportunities through academic achievement, learning in high-level athletic competition and development of positive societal attitudes in service to community. The balance and integration of these different areas of learning opportunity provide Division II student-athletes a path to graduation while cultivating a variety of skills and knowledge for life ahead.”

The term was used to describe a legislative package, adopted at the 2010 Convention, that reduced playing and practice seasons in most Division II sports in an effort to ensure that student-athletes had more time to have a complete college experience.

The legislation also mandated a midwinter break that prohibits practice and competition during a weeklong period in late December. The purpose of that rule, which has been well-received since implementation, is to ensure that student-athletes and athletics personnel alike have the opportunity to spend time with family (and have some downtime from athletics) during the holiday break.

Although much of the Life in the Balance initiative is directed at student-athletes to enhance their overall educational experience, efforts also are being made to help administrators and coaches with their work-life balance. As an athletics director, you must consider how you will view such matters. One study on the work-life balance of Division I athletic trainers concluded: “Many … factors are not avoidable; however, factors such as support from a supervisor, job sharing between co-workers, and prioritizing time away from the role of the athletic trainer appears to help stimulate work-life balance.”

Much of that has to do with management, and as athletics director, management is your responsibility.

Athletic trainers certainly are among the busiest of personnel, but coaches, sports information personnel and those responsible for game management also can work extreme hours. The consequence of such a condition can be burnout – not only from a particular job but also from the entire field of intercollegiate athletics. Quite obviously, you want to win, and you want your student-athletes to succeed. But what limits are you willing to place on your professional staff members to protect them from an environment where the job becomes all consuming? It’s something you need to think about before you take any AD job.

Here are some questions to consider:

• What steps would you take to make sure that your student-athletes were taking advantage of the educational and social opportunities that your institution offers?
• How would you help your coaches balance their need to win against the social and educational needs of the student-athletes?
• As athletics director, what steps could you take to help the rest of your institution and your community perceive your athletics program as a fully integrated segment of your college or university?
• How would you judge if your staff members are spending too much time on their jobs and too little time with their families or other aspects of their personal lives?
• Does the faculty athletics representative serve as a voice for student-athletes, especially on matters pertaining to academics and time demands? If so, how would you ensure that voice was heard?
• Is your exit-interview process able to identify whether student-athletes had a satisfactory overall experience at your institution?
LEADERSHIP STYLES

An effective leader understands and appreciates the different ways that people influence other people.

Information accompanying this section includes:

- A sample of a DISC test, which reveals an individual’s personality traits.
- Information about “StrengthsFinder,” a best-selling book by Tom Rath that helps people identify “talent themes.”
- A color assessment, especially good for staff retreats, that helps with the identification of personality styles.
- A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) assessment.

What’s most important, of course, is to understand yourself. Most people know if they prefer to be in control, how analytical they are, the degree to which they use persuasion or how much they value stability. What you probably don’t know is the degree that you rely on each of those traits. That’s what a DISC test, or others like it, can reveal for you.

One important takeaway is that no particular style is required for an individual to succeed. Control can be useful, but plenty of analytical folks have worked their way up the professional ladder, often by complementing their shortfalls with the skills of others. Put another way, if you are a big-picture person but weak on details, then you need to identify people who dot every “i” and cross every “t.” Or if your approach is more mechanical, then you should look for associates who can get others to buy into what the program is trying to accomplish.

The point is to understand, value and use the differences that others have to offer.

Successful leaders also must find means for honest assessments. One especially useful tool is a SWOT analysis, which is a problem-solving process that identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a contemplated course of action. Although it is a common-sense approach to problem-solving, a SWOT analysis has little value without cold, honest input. And the input itself must be followed by the real work, which is to identify how the pieces fit together to achieve the result you want.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you know what kind of leader you are?
- Have you considered how you can use your secondary personality traits to become a more effective leader?
- Do you know the traits of your most valued associates and, if so, have you considered how you could use those traits to your advantage?
- Are you secure enough to hire or promote people different from you?
- Have you considered how you might improve your problem-solving skills?
A vision should describe what you want your athletics program to become. You’ll need a plan to realize your vision, of course, but the vision should be the pole star that points you to where you want to be.

You probably have a vision of some sort as you pursue an AD position, but have you given it as much thought as you should? If you land the job, your vision will determine the personnel you surround yourself with, what kind of student-athletes you recruit, your program’s commitment to playing by the rules and the willingness to attend to the educational and social needs of your student-athletes.

A vision cannot be vague. Once you are sitting in the AD chair, you should be able to describe clearly to your president and board exactly where you expect the program to be in one year, three years and five years. As the leader, it’s then up to you to develop the corresponding plans – to ensure that the goals are written down, to make sure that everybody understands them and to have firm timetables in place. If your president came to you and said, “What would you do with an extra $100,000?” make sure you are ready with an answer.

And if you are not already familiar with strategic-planning practices, take advantage of the many excellent online and in-person classes that are available. All the vision in the world is useless without the framework that comes from a plan.

Finally, at all times, your vision must reflect the vision of the overall institution. That means constant, meaningful conversations with the president, governing board members and the person to whom you report. Athletics programs can drift from the overall institution without effective leadership and vision, and once you become an athletics director, it’s your job to maintain and strengthen the bond between the two.

Here are some questions to consider:

• How would you arrive at the vision for the program you are seeking to lead?
• Do you have the communication and persuasive skills to have others understand and support your vision?
• Do you have the skills you need to develop and implement detailed plans?
• Do you have the discipline to hold personnel accountable for responsibilities identified within a planning timetable?
• How can you ensure that the vision for your athletics program is aligned with the vision for the overall institution?