



COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS REFLECT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION PROGRAMMING

During the Fall of 2020, the Mid-American Conference (MAC) initiated new programming for its coaches and administrators that consisted of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion educational sessions. The sessions provided yet another opportunity within the Conference to better support the student-athletes in areas such as race relations, social justice and equality.

“Our educational initiatives for coaches and administrators are examples of our on-going efforts in regard to diversity, equity and inclusion,” said MAC Commissioner Dr. Jon Steinbrecher. “We will continue to expand our programs and will encourage conference participation as we move forward. I am thankful for the collaboration and contributions of our faculty, who dedicated their time to lead and facilitate these important discussions that will benefit our student-athletes, coaches and administrators.”



Administrators and Coaches attended bi-weekly meetings to discuss topics such as implicit bias, privilege, and allyship. Over the total of six sessions, the Conference provided attendees with education and conversation on these essential topics to supplement existing institutional programs.

“The opportunity to collaborate and learn alongside our peers in the MAC from the outstanding DEI experts on all of our campuses was truly impactful to me personally, and to our Cardinal staff members,” said Ball State Director of Athletics Beth Goetz. “It reinforced our commitment to breaking down barriers, having meaningful conversations, and creating an inclusive environment for our student-athletes that respects and celebrates differences. In a moment where meaningful action is required, I am proud that the Mid-American Conference continues to be a leader in this important work.”



200 coaches and administrators joined the sessions, dedicating their time and attention to growth and development in an effort to support the student-athletes and their communities.

“As coaches we have a unique opportunity to impact a generation of future leaders in our student-athletes, so our staff has always emphasized professional development and continuing education,” said Western Michigan Volleyball Head Coach Colleen Munson. “What I found in the MAC’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coach/Admin program was so much more than what I would term “professional development” - it was about being a better person and helping to enact change for the good of all. We’re thankful that the conference has helped lead these discussions so that we can help create a better future for our student-athletes.”

The session themes included Implicit Bias, Privilege Recognition, Allyship, Dismantling Microaggressions, Racial Healing and “Moving Beyond the Talk” when it comes to creating actionable change in diverse and inclusive environments. Each of the sessions was hosted by an expert in the field from a MAC Institution.

Northern Illinois Assistant Vice President Monique Bernoudy and Associate Professor Eric Hall were two of the experts who led the discussions this past fall. Following the sessions, they looked back on the opportunity they had to share their expertise.

“The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coach/Admin Program provided a wonderful opportunity for faculty like myself to share their expertise with folks on campus that we wouldn’t normally encounter,” said Hall. “This initiative by the MAC represents an important step toward achieving greater inclusiveness, diversity, and awareness of social justice issues within the athletics community.”

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“I am pleased and proud the MAC continues to develop and administer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs for student athletes, coaches and administrators, said Bernoudy. “The key to success is ensuring an entire athletic department has access and opportunity to DEI education and the MAC provides this opportunity. While sustainable change often comes from grassroots levels it is refreshing the MAC continues to lead the DEI charge by annually expanding their programs and encouraging conference wide participation. Learning is always a two-way street and having the opportunity to facilitate workshops and engage with colleagues, student athletes, coaches and administrators makes me a better person and professional. I enjoyed working alongside colleagues and sharing successes and challenges faced on our campuses and how we are addressing them. This colloquial environment will continue beyond the workshops and creates relationships across institutions which will ultimately strengthen the conference as a whole. The continuous focus on DEI by the MAC is a wise decision and a proud moment.”

Ohio Men’s Basketball Head Coach Jeff Boals was one of the many coaches who took advantage of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program.

“I was grateful for the opportunity to join the ‘Understanding Implicit Bias and Understanding Privilege’ sessions as part of the Mid-American Conference Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coach & Administrator Program,” said Boals. “I want to thank the men and women who volunteered their time to educate myself and others. Listening to them speak on different topics was very beneficial to me as a coach. I encourage other leagues to follow the platform and educational session that the MAC has provided for our coaches and administrators.”

Central Michigan Lacrosse Head Coach Sara Tisdale and her staff made each topic a priority and attended all six sessions.

“As leaders in our communities, on campuses, and for our teams, it’s critical we become better educated and more confident engaging in discussion on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, said Tisdale. “After attending all six DEI sessions, my staff and I feel confident and prepared to take those discussions and move towards action that will result in real and lasting change.”



Tisdale went on to talk about some of the teaching points and how she plans to use them in the future.

“My biggest takeaway was the importance of using my power and privilege to empower others,” said Tisdale. “I became much more aware of the need to slow down and truly listen.”

Eastern Michigan Director of Athletics Scott Wetherbee weighed in on what stood out most to him during the sessions. Wetherbee looks forward to seeing how administrators, coaches and faculty will build on another piece of quality programming from the Conference office.

“I want to thank the Mid-American Conference for its leadership in setting up this program,” said Wetherbee. “It was great to see the interaction between our conference peers and from our coaches, staff, and administrators. The open and honest conversation and the breakout sessions are what stand out as having the most significant impact on the participants. I hope that we can build off this series and better support our student-athletes.”