

The MIAA...WE CARE about Student-Athletes!



The MIAA cares about its student-athletes. To bring greater attention to the great things happening on MIAA campuses, the MIAA SAAC has launched the “WE CARE” initiative.

Each letter in WE CARE represents a “pillar”, or foundation, in the comprehensive program of learning and development, which is at the heart of the MIAA student-athlete experience. Each pillar is important, and helps illustrate the commitment MIAA institutions make in developing students who are prepared to be successful in college and after graduation.

Here is a summary of the areas of focus for each pillar in the MIAA:

1. **Wellness**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete wellness, with a focus on mental health and physical well-being. The MIAA expects student-athletes to have knowledge about health and fitness. The MIAA expects student-athletes to be open to seeking help or assistance if there are wellness issues which need to be addressed.
2. **Education**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete educational opportunities, and their path to graduation. The MIAA expects student-athletes to be successful in their educational goals. The MIAA expects student-athletes to be aware of campus resources and assistance to help achieve these goals.

3. **Compassion**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete compassion and community service, and opportunities that they have to serve others and help in the community. The MIAA expects that student-athletes will interact with and assist their community. The MIAA expects student-athletes will think beyond themselves, be good role-models and serve those with need.
4. **Athletics**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete skill development, and opportunities to excel and achieve in their chosen sport. The MIAA is one of the nation’s best NCAA conferences. The MIAA has outstanding coaches, great facilities and nationally competitive programs. The MIAA expects student-athletes to use these resources to achieve their athletic goals.
5. **Respect**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete respect and sportsmanship, and opportunities to display this to teachers, students, coaches, administrators, teammates, opponents and officials. The MIAA expects that student-athletes will demonstrate behavior that is appropriate as part of an activity sponsored by a higher education institution.
6. **Engagement**---The MIAA cares about student-athlete engagement at their institution and in their community. Engagement and involvement is the key to success for college students. The MIAA expects that student-athletes will have opportunities to take advantage of the hundreds of activities, clubs, events and leadership programs throughout campus and in their community.

The MIAA SAAC will take a leadership role in working with institutional SAAC's to make sure that these "pillars for success" are being discussed and enhanced on each campus.

For example, a SAAC may want to focus their semester work on WELLNESS and enhance "mental health services for student-athletes". The SAAC could study at what rate are student-athletes seeking out Counseling and Psychological Services compared to the student body. If the rate is lower, is there an awareness issue? If so, what can SAAC do to make student-athletes more aware of campus services? Is the rate lower due to student-athlete schedules? If so, could the Counseling Services' hours be extended or modified to better serve student-athletes? Is the problem that there is a "stigma" in athletics where student-athletes believe they do not need help or assistance from "outsiders"? If so, perhaps a speaker or a designated liaison to the Counseling Services could help address this issue.