

Bryan Patterson  
February 27, 2006

Association of Leadership Educators, Inc Call for Papers.

1. Bryan Patterson,  
Career Counselor/ Life Skills Coordinator,  
University of Florida Athletic Association, Inc.  
P.O.Box 14485 Gainesville, FL 32604-2485  
352-375-4683 ext 5871

2. Fostering student-athlete leadership through the Student Athlete Advisory Committee  
SAAC Leadership Retreat.

3. Presentation Track - Practice

4. This practice paper will discuss the mission of the SAAC Leadership Retreat for the student-athletes at the University of Florida. SAAC's purpose is to serve as a forum to openly discuss issues that may affect students on their campuses and in their communities, while providing opportunities which enhance personal leadership, communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills.

5. Bryan Patterson is currently a career counselor and CHAMPS/ Life Skills Coordinator for the University of Florida University Athletic Association. A native of Lynchburg Virginia, Bryan has been at UF for the past five years. In his current role, he coordinates the five developmental areas of the NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills program and co-facilitates three undergraduate courses through the college of education that are geared toward career and personal development. Additionally, he advises the Student Athlete Advisory Committee and serves as an advisor to other student groups on campus.

Bryan has served as a NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills orientation team leader and servers as a volunteer mentor to new Life Skills coordinators. Prior to working at UF, Bryan was employed at James Madison University where he worked in career development and student activities. He has received his masters and undergraduate degrees from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA and an educational specialist degree in Special Education from the University of Florida. Currently, Bryan is completing a doctoral degree in Leadership from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in the dept of Agricultural Communication and Education at the University of Florida.

## SAAC Leadership Retreat

Throughout the United States businesses and government organizations are finding it difficult to fill leadership positions because of a lack of trained leaders. It has been described as a leadership void (Bisoux, 2002; Burns, 1979; Figura, 1999). Industry leaders seek new employees who can lead quickly after they join an organization. College graduates who can exhibit leadership and life skills early and often as a new professional will be hired and advance quickly in their career. Employers want and value competence in communication, adaptability, problem-identification and solving, self-management, teamwork and leadership skills (Spille, 1994).

A goal of higher education is to prepare graduates for real world leadership experiences, yet few courses are offered to assist students in developing many of these leadership skills. In efforts to address this apparent need for leadership, the University of Florida Student-Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) Leadership retreat was created to assist in this development. The purpose of this leadership retreat was to explore the various behavioral factors that influence student-athletes use and development of leadership skills within their respective teams and fellow student-athletes.

As a result of participation in this leadership retreat, each student-athlete will have a better understanding and apply a basic leadership model. Student-athletes will become more self-aware of leadership strengths and opportunities. They will build a network with other student-athletes and become a confident agent of change. Student-athletes will be prepared to complete a self-directed project that will address a critical campus issue. Finally a student-athlete will make the commitment to sharing this experience with other student athletes, coaches, advisors, and other collegiate students.

In an effort to strengthen leadership instruction and practices in collegiate athletics, the National Collegiate-Athletic Association (NCAA) has developed various educational programs under the CHAMPS/ Life Skills program. Specific programs such as the national and regional leadership conferences have recently come together to develop another leadership opportunity for student-athletes to strengthen their academic and athletic experience.

The national leadership conference is an outreach of the successful CHAMPS/Life Skills Program and involves close to 325 student-athletes each year who compete in fall, winter and spring sports in Divisions I, II and III. Many of the student-athletes who participate are members of their conference and campus Student-Athlete Advisory Committees (SAACs). Each NCAA member institution that has a CHAMPS/Life Skills Program is encouraged to nominate student-athletes from their campus for the annual leadership conference.

In turn, the University of Florida Athletic Association's Office of Student Life provides student-athletes with the foundation to make a transition from college life to the professional world. Leadership is fostered through the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. This organization is comprised of student-athletes from all participating varsity sports. The purpose of SAAC is to serve as forum to openly discuss issues that may affect them on their campuses and in their communities, while also providing them with the opportunity to enhance their leadership, communication, decision-making and

problem-solving skills. UF's SAAC leadership conference also promotes better communication among student-athletes, coaches, administrators, faculty and communities.

By determining the factors that influence leadership in college student-athletes, administrators can put into practice personal leadership strategies. Pre-service programs could be tailored to motivate future student-athletes to enhance their personal leadership skills. Students could benefit by receiving high quality leadership instruction in college and university leadership programs that have the potential to broaden their leadership skills, increase their personal growth and enhance their career success.

### **How it works**

The SAAC Leadership Retreat requires a highly motivated group of student-athletes. At least two representatives from each varsity team are selected by their coaches to attend this leadership retreat. The student athletes will prepare in a full day of leadership training and activities. The goal is to empower participants and other athletes to take ownership in the SAAC organization, the OSL, UAA, and the University of Florida community. The student-athletes will gain a full understanding of what SAAC is and what its purpose is on the UF campus. Student-athletes will also discover that they are positioned to be visible and vocal leaders. Therefore, they can use their leadership and teach others. A sample agenda of activities are included see ex. A.

Ex. A

### **SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Energizer: Upside-down fruit basket, Zip-Zap-Zoom, Age/hometown lineup

Welcome

Getting into groups – Boundary breaking exercise

### **Expectations of the retreat**

#### **Leadership Module 1: INDIVIDUAL – What makes you tick?**

- Define leadership – What is leadership?
  - o Helen S. Astin and Carole Leland – “leadership is **a process** by which **members of a group** are **empowered to work together synergistically** toward a **common goal or vision** that will **create change, transform institutions**, and thus **improve the quality of life**”
- Roles of a leader – You are a leaders both on and off the field. **Who are you when nobody is looking?**
- A leader must have values!
  - o The six pillars of character
    - Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibilities, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship
  - o What are some of your values?

- Small group breakout – Values Exercise

#### SAAC Module 1: Challenge the Process

- Define the purpose of SAAC at UF
- Expectations of the organization
- Who are the key players in SAAC?

Snack and break

Titanic

#### Leadership Module 2: **GROUP – Coach K’s fist concept**

- The concept of TEAM – “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – Henry Ford
  - Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Adjourning
- Communication and groupthink
  - Communication activity
    - Blindfolded alphabet
  - Defining groupthink
- Delegating – Creating a sense of ownership
  - Analyze the Task
  - Select the Delegates
  - Discuss the Task with the Delegate
  - Coach the Delegate
  - Follow-up
  - After Delegating

#### SAAC Module 2: Inspiring a Shared Vision

- What resources do you have as SAAC members?
- Expectations of the E-board and members
  - Fishbowl
    - E-board expectation of the e-board
    - Members expectations of the e-board
    - E-board expectations of the members
    - Members expectations of the members

#### Leadership Module 3: **COMMUNITY**

- Diversity, beyond skin color
  - What is diversity – Is UF a diverse campus?
  - Archie Bunker’s Neighborhood
- Being an inclusive organization

#### SAAC Module 3: Enabling Others to Act

- Programming
  - What do you want to do/change?
  - Who do you want to target?

Snack and break

FISH! Philosophy – Watch video

- Choose your attitude
- Play
- Make their day
- Be present

Leadership Module 4:

- Time management
  - o Big rocks, little rocks
- Setting goals and **making action plans**
  - o SMART planning and the problem solving process

SAAC Module 4: Modeling the Way

- Plan the semester
  - o Prepare a calendar

FINAL DESTINATION: Encouraging the Heart

- Tie it all together
- Feeling it emotionally

### **Results to date/ Implications**

As a result of the leadership workshop, the UF SAAC group has made tremendous progress in becoming a stronger organization. The overall student-athlete attendance has increased over the fall semester and there is student-athlete representation from each of the 18 variety sports. Poor attendance and representation from each team has been a challenge in the past. Increased participation has increased productivity of the group and broadened the scope of its goals. SAAC has participated in numerous service events, including participating in a university wide Hurricane Katrina Relief activity. SAAC has also held its own Student-Athlete field day, where local elementary school aged kids were invited to come and play games on campus with the student athletes.

The SAAC executive committee holds their own planning meeting prior to the general body meetings. These meetings have helped maximize the productivity of the group and provide strong leadership. Overall, the development and organization of the SAAC is fulfilling its purpose and has become a model for the future.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

In reviewing the mission and purpose of SAAC, this leadership retreat has created a strong organization, but also had some other positive outcomes. Student-athletes have been equipped with the tools to build a long-lasting network of future leaders and become confident agents of change. They have also been able to identify issues that are critical to student-athletes and their fellow students on campus. Through

SAAC, student-athletes have completed a self-directed project and taken steps to address a critical issue facing the campus.

The recommendations for the future are to continue to conduct the SAAC student-athlete leadership retreat. The individual potential benefits for student-athletes, as well as, the organizational benefits are numerous. Minor adjustment to times and curriculum will be considered to maximize the effectiveness of the program. Additional training and workshops will be conducted throughout the year as enrichment for the concepts and training.

## References

Bisoux, T. (2002, September). The mind of a leader. *BizEd*, 26-31.

Burns, J. M. (1979). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.

Figura, S. Z. (1999, September). Leadership void. *Government Executive*. Retrieved October 2, 2003 from [www.govexec.com/news/index.cfm?mode=report&articleid=16021](http://www.govexec.com/news/index.cfm?mode=report&articleid=16021)

National Collegiate Athletic Association NCAA (2005). [www.ncaa.org/education](http://www.ncaa.org/education)

Spotauski, D. R., & Carter, R. I. (1993). Self evaluation of leadership practices and behaviors used by department executive officers in agricultural education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 34(3), 17-25.

University Athletic Association, Office of Student Life. [www.Gatorzone.com](http://www.Gatorzone.com)

Van Linden, J. A., & Fertman, C. I. (1998). *Youth leadership: A guide to understanding leadership development in adolescents*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.