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NEAC HOSTS WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP DAY AT ANNUAL RETREAT

GANSEVOORT, N.Y. – The North Eastern Athletic Conference (NEAC) hosted 24 women on May 30 at the Hotel Bethlehem in Bethlehem, Pa. for NEAC Women’s Leadership Day, which served as the kick-off event for the NEAC Annual Retreat.

In the second year of the leadership event, twelve Senior Woman Administrators (SWA) were joined by 12 NEAC female student-athletes for a variety of programming. Student-athlete attendees opened the morning with a DISC assessment provided by the NCAA, which allowed each attendee to evaluate their personal behavior and learn how to work with behavioral differences in a team setting.

With the behavioral assessment tool setting the tone for much of the day, SUNY Cobleskill women’s soccer player Michelle Giordano felt the DISC Training session was an incredibly useful tool as a member of any team.

“I would consider the DISC training one of the highlights of the event,” Giordano reflected. “Identifying my own style of leadership and understanding characteristics of other styles taught me the skills necessary to successfully work in a variety of group settings.”

A working lunch session provided attendees with basic dining and business etiquette. The afternoon featured presentations that provided an in-depth evaluation of your DISC assessment and discussed social media best practices. Student-athletes also participated in two career panel discussions led by the NEAC SWAs, which proved to be a highlight of this year’s event.

Kristin Hawley, who is the SWA and Head Women’s Basketball Coach at Penn State Berks, felt the ability to network and hear about the experiences of others was a valuable part of Women’s Leadership Day.

“It was great to listen to positive female role models and learn the path others have taken to get where they are today,” Hawley said.

Jackie Klahold serves as the SWA, Head Softball Coach and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Advisor at Penn College. Klahold echoed the sentiments of Hawley, noting that student-athletes had a chance to learn about many different routes to a career in athletics.

“We had a number of student-athletes in attendance with different career interests,” Klahold added. “Each student-athlete was able to gain knowledge and insight to a variety of experiences and career pathways from the NEAC SWAs.”

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After just completing her junior year at Wells College, Anna Bozeat was surprised to learn of the diverse backgrounds possessed by the conference SWAs.

“I learned that there are so many different job opportunities in athletics and anyone can pursue a career in this field, even if you graduate from college with a Chemistry degree,” Bozeat shared. “I would recommend attending this event because you will learn so much in one day that could change your outlook on yourself and your future.

The evening concluded with a dinner for the conference SWAs in attendance, serving as professional development in the areas of Title IX and budget management.

With the second year of the event in the books, Lancaster Bible SWA Sarah Wilcox encourages student-athletes with a desire to grow personally and professional to seek out their athletic department’s SWA to apply for the 2018-19 event.

“Women’s Leadership Day is an opportunity for female student-athletes to come together as a conference in order to promote career development, team comradery and leadership enrichment,” Wilcox said.

NEAC Commissioner Candice Murray is proud to see the continued growth of Women’s Leadership Day and commends the conference SWAs for their commitment to the development of young women throughout the league.

“I am pleased to see NEAC Women’s Leadership Day have continued success due in part to the efforts of the NEAC SWAs,” Murray said. “The event provides female student-athletes within our conference a chance to develop their leadership skills while learning from numerous female professionals throughout intercollegiate athletics. It is my hope that the event will continue to grow while providing our student-athletes with skills they will use throughout their collegiate careers and beyond.”

Women’s Leadership Day, which was supported in part by NCAA Division III Diversity Funding, was held in conjunction with a three-day retreat that is organized annually by the NEAC. The retreat includes annual meetings for Athletic Directors, Athletic Direct Reports, Faculty Athletic Representatives, SWAs, Athletic Trainers and Sports Information Directors. The NEAC also hosted Dr. Jarrod Spencer from Mind of the Athlete to conduct a “Mind of the Athletic Administrator” professional development session with administrators from all levels throughout the conference, which highlighted the importance of self-care, mental health and well-being for campus administrators.

The North Eastern Athletic Conference (NEAC) has fourteen NCAA Division III member institutions which include: Bryn Athyn College, Cazenovia College, College of St. Elizabeth, Gallaudet University, Keuka College, Lancaster Bible College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Pennsylvania State University – Abington, Pennsylvania State University – Berks, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Morrisville State College, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, Wells College, and Wilson College. Associate members are: Cedar Crest College (W Swimming), D’Youville College (M Volleyball), Hilbert College (M&W Lacrosse), Medaille College (M&W Lacrosse, M Volleyball), Pennsylvania State University – Altoona (M Volleyball), and Rutgers University – Camden (M Golf). The NEAC has partnered with the North Atlantic Conference in the sports of field hockey and men’s tennis. For more information, please visit: www.neacsports.com.