The Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) Student-Athlete Advisory Committee met in November at the University of Lynchburg for their annual fall meeting. There were 51 SAAC representatives and advisors in attendance for the meeting, with all 15 member institutions represented. The highlight of the day was a workshop conducted by Jen Fry of JenFryTalks about social justice and the intersection of race, inclusion, and diversity within athletics.

Jen Fry is a former volleyball student-athlete and coach, with experience at all three NCAA divisions. While coaching at the collegiate level, she realized that her passion is social justice work, so she now conducts workshops with various constituencies within intercollegiate athletics, while pursuing a PhD in geography at Michigan State.

The workshop with the ODAC SAAC was conducted in a way to educate the group about the historical origin of racial inequalities and societal systems that inherently disadvantage certain groups. Everyone had opportunities to reflect on their own identities, privileges, and power, while views on different topics were challenged. Jen facilitated conversations with the full group, as well as with partners, where difficult topics were discussed in a vulnerable setting. In addition to having an opportunity to self-reflect, the attendees gained a better understanding and appreciation of others who are different than themselves and how their experiences are impacted by their identities and associated privileges or disadvantages. Overall, the group learned skills and strategies to engage in conversations that will help push the needle in developing an antiracist culture.

For more reflections on the day please see the video summary of the workshop:
https://odaconline.com/general/2019-20/videos/ODAC_Fall_SAAC_Meeting_%7C_Jen_Fry_Talks