BALTIMORE, Md. – Last week, the Notre Dame of Maryland University department of athletics celebrated their first OneTeam Week – a week dedicated to the Division III LGBTQ OneTeam Program. In August of 2018, the NCAA Division III LGBTQ working group started an initiative called OneTeam - which promotes the inclusion of all genders, races, and sexualities. According to a 2017 membership survey, more than 80% of athletic and school administrators identified themselves as LGBTQ+ allies, and roughly 60% of student-athletes identified themselves as allies of the LGBTQ+ community. With the LGBTQ+ community growing, and the allies supporting its growth, the NCAA Division III is putting a huge focus on schools, and teams showing their support as well.

NDMU first demonstrated their support of the OneTeam Program in spring 2019 with both their softball and lacrosse programs sponsoring a OneTeam Game. At their games, they decorated their facilities with OneTeam signage, ribbons, and passed out information about the program. Helping to bring to campus the powerful messaging of the OneTeam Program was then senior Samantha Kastner. Now graduated, Kastner continues to serve on the National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) for the Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) and Empire Eight Conference. As a member of National SAAC, Kastner has served on the NCAA Division III Management Council, Committee on Women’s Athletics, and Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS). All of these committees vocalized and discussed the importance of the DIII OneTeam Program and how to best incorporate programs on their campuses.

In continuing support, Notre Dame’s director of athletics Renee Bostic became a OneTeam Program facilitator, having been trained to teach OneTeam trainings on campuses across the country. She is now one of 30 trained facilitators nationwide. Prior to the start of the 2019-20 season, the department decided in order to best support the Notre Dame of Maryland University’s theme of diversity and inclusion, that Bostic would first facilitate a OneTeam training for all student-athletes, athletic administrators, and coaches.

On Sept. 16, 2019, the Gators kicked off OneTeam Week. Daily OneTeam training sessions were scheduled, incorporating all sports, classes, and majors. The diverse groups in each training session yielded open conversations and provided each student-athlete the educational tools to continue the OneTeam messaging. Throughout the week, roughly 120 student-athletes, administrative staff, and coaches received the OneTeam training, which included engaging conversations and thought provoking exercises.

On Thursday, Sept.19, the department held a special OneTeam training, sponsored by NDMU’s SAAC. After their bi-weekly meeting, AD Bostic offered a training to NDMU’s student-athlete leadership. SAAC President Hannah Amodia said, “I thought the OneTeam Week was a perfect way to bring all the student-athletes together. It did not matter which team you were a part of,
during OneTeam Week, we were all one team.” Amodia continued, “The trainings held throughout the week really helped student-athletes be more aware and helped us learn how to become better allies for the LGBTQ+ community.”

The student-athlete population at NDMU was receptive to the week-long celebration. AD Bostic said, “Not only did our student-athletes sign up for our trainings, they showed up and were engaged and responsive to the material.” At the conclusion of the trainings, they asked for more. Throughout the year, NDMU Athletics intends to continue the messaging of diversity and inclusion. On Oct. 1, 2019, the Department of Athletics and Student Life is sponsoring Social Justice speaker, Jen Fry for a campus-wide talk. Additional programing is being added throughout the winter and spring terms.

At the conclusion of the week, the Notre Dame soccer team hosted their first OneTeam Game on Saturday, Sept. 21. In celebration of the OneTeam programing the NDMU student-athletes wore ribbons, hung signage, passed out information about the program and spoke about what they learned.

The student-athletes at Notre Dame are excited to celebrate the messaging of diversity and inclusion in the future. With the NDMU student population being 40% students of color, diversity and inclusion becomes more and more prevalent inside and outside the classroom. The NDMU Department of Athletics remains dedicated to proving student-athletes with a well-rounded educational experience.

**NDMU OneTeam Teaser**

For more information about the Division III LGBTQ OneTeam Program and how you can facilitate programing at your institution, contact athletic director Renee Bostic at rbostic@ndm.edu.