



LEARNING AND SERVICE: OUR SHARED JESUIT MISSION

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## USING STUDENT HELP – ECAC-SIDA TABLE TOPIC

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*Since December 1999, I have served as the Sports Information Director at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y. The Dolphins have made 21 NCAA tournaments, won two national championships and hosted numerous championship level events over the past seven years. As a one-person shop responsible for the publicity of 16 successful programs, it has been essential that student help is found and cultivated. Below, I have summarized my top ten thoughts for utilizing student help.*

### Top Ten Thoughts for Succeeding with Student Help

**1. Find students who are interested in the profession, and help them succeed at it** – At Le Moyne, I have been lucky to have students who have wanted to start their professional careers in athletic communications. I don't think there is any better way to recruit quality students than to let them know that you'll help them start a career in athletics. Networking in this profession is not just for your career – you can help your students find positions through your contacts in the profession. In my seven years at Le Moyne I have been lucky to have students move into college and professional sports [Barbara McHugh (NY Mets), Kristen Parody (Loyola), Todd Merriett (Army/Bucknell), Jonathan Maggart (Navy), Amanda McClure (Virginia Tech)]. Now, my peers in the athletic department understand that there is a purpose to giving responsibility to student help and it has become something that makes the entire department proud.

**2. Teach your students, it is part of the mission** – Remember, we work at educational institutions. Our schools boast of the learning that takes place both in and out of the classroom. This is the opportunity to teach them outside the classroom. Whether it's learning to use a fax machine, update a web site or write a press release, this is your opportunity to play a part in the education of your student workers that can impact them for the rest of their lives.

**3. Trust your students, give them a chance to do the job** – If you want to succeed with students (especially those of us with limited or no full-time help), it is important to trust your students. As a one-person shop, it is essential that I teach students to input statistics into StatCrew, update web sites and design publications each year. Without them, events would not get covered. Statistical software may be intimidating at first, but each of us has the capacity to pass along our knowledge and it makes the event management much more efficient. Make them the contact for one of your sports for a day – have them see the event from start to finish, posting it to your web site and contacting the media. That way, if you can't be there your event will get covered as if you were. Delegating will also get you home earlier.

Le Moyne College Sports Information  
Visit us on the web at <http://www.lemoynedolphins.com>



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**4. Know their strengths and weaknesses** – Not all of your students will want to learn how to score a game, but all can help you in some way. Put your students in a position to succeed and they will.

**5. Instill pride in your staff, give them some publicity** – As you gain more trust in your students, give projects to them which will put them in the spotlight. Put their names on the projects they complete, especially the releases that land on the Internet. Tell your coaches, administration, etc. how much they are helping your office.

**6. Be flexible** – We have lots of events and lots of hours. However, we can't expect every student to be at every event and make every office hour. Give them a chance to experience college life. Make them accountable when you truly need them (games, tournaments, etc.), but if they have a big campus event, lots of papers or tests, try to be flexible enough that they can attend or you may turn off your best students.

**7. Let them travel** – Give your student assistant a chance to travel. For those who are expected to travel and "keep the book" for the basketball teams, and recognize that they can do more of the essential work from home instead, give your student assistant a chance to experience the sport at another institution. For us, this has been essential because in the last four seasons I have had to send students to the National Championship tournament for softball, parts of the National Championship for men's lacrosse and the MAAC Baseball Tournament because I needed to be at conflicting athletics events.

**8. Take care of them, build your own team** – By the spring, our student assistants become a team. They may not hang out outside the office, but inside it is important that the group gets along and understands our common goal. Fostering camaraderie among your students will help them enjoy coming to work each day. If there is a way to get them some free gear or free food – do it. They will repay you 10 times over.

**9. Remind your students about confidentiality** – Our first rule in the office is that what is said there by coaches, athletes, media, etc. stays there. Based on the nature of an SID office - people will walk into my close quarters and spill their guts about their players, other coaches, parents, referees, members of the media, etc. Don't let your students spoil that freedom because you need to know what is going on the world whether students are in there or not.

**10. Call them student assistants** – A title can make anyone feel important. Don't call your students work-studies, or student workers. Call them student assistants to coaches, members of the media and other administration and remind them to put it that way on their resume. It fits the essential nature of their positions.