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Madison College sets a two-year college standard



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Madison College sets a two-year college standard

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by [Beau White](#) – *College Sports Communicators, Director of Creative Services*

If you look at the [staff directory](#) of the Madison College athletic department you will see something unsurprising for a small two-year college – one person listed under athletics communications, [Adam Eichstedt](#).

It's misleading. Adam is far from on his own.

Madison College, which shares its Madison, Wisconsin location with the University of Wisconsin, is able to produce at a high level because of tremendous teamwork by the WolfPack staff to support and promote their nine teams and more than 160 student-athletes. Director of Athletics [Jason Verhelst](#) – a former SID – believes in investing in the professional development of his staff.

Although only Eichstedt has an official “communications” title, Madison includes seven staffers in its CSC All-In membership. At the regular two-year All-In rate, that's just over \$35 per person, and they are free to add more staff at any time throughout the year at no extra cost.

“When CSC created the All-In program for memberships, we were ecstatic about the possibilities it could mean for our department and our student-athletes,” said Eichstedt. “The variety and quality of the professional development opportunities is something we wanted to ensure that as many people on our staff had the chance to take advantage of.”



Adam Eichstedt leads the communications and marketing efforts for Madison College Athletics.

Eichstedt provided a glimpse of who the team is and how each person who is included in the CSC membership helps shape their brand at Madison.

- **Eichstedt** – Athletic Communications & Marketing Coordinator, Assistant Golf Coach – Oversees athletics website, produces recaps and features, creates and maintains social media content and accounts, PA announcer
- **Verhelst** – Athletic Director (and former SID)
- **Kris Mills** – Athletic Administrative Coordinator – Oversees department financials, travel arrangements, and office management
- **Jamal Palmer** – Student-Athlete Development, Success, & Equity Coordinator – Creates opportunities for student-athlete success and development beyond the field of competition through DEI initiatives
- **Bill Kegler** – Athletics, Fitness, and Recreation Facilities & Enterprise Operations Manager – Develops and promotes non-Madison College athletic events hosted at Madison College facilities
- **Angel Whetstone** – Head Women’s Basketball Coach, Eligibility, Compliance, & Game Management Coordinator – Aside from coaching women’s basketball, assists our AD with eligibility and compliance, and helps lead one of the best game management crews in the NJCAA
- **Jeremy Van Mill** – Student Employee – Aids with video and photography content

“We are always looking for ways to give our staff access to professional development opportunities and the CSC department membership option was a perfect opportunity for us to provide a great opportunity for growth and development,” added Verhelst.



the 1990s, provide more insight below.

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"First off, I think it is incredibly important for any college, no matter their size or division, to have a dedicated athletic communications professional on their staff. If ADs don't have someone in that position it often falls on administrative assistants, coaches, and the AD. If that is the case, having a CSC membership can give them support from an opportunity to nominate for Academic All-American, access to resources, and the ability to connect to athletic communications at other like institutions." – Jason Verhelst



Director of Athletics Jason Verhelst at the Madison College Wolfie Awards

Why is it important to have a strong communications team in place and how can ADs at two-year schools maximize their limited resources?

Verhelst: As a former SID and athletic communications professional for over 20+ years I have really seen the college sports industry change but the one thing that has stayed constant is the importance of a strong communicators. I have long believed that the athletic department is the front yard of the college. People stop to take notice because athletics is incredibly visible.



professionals on staff so they are able to p LOGIN JOIN/RENEW PROFILE note the achievements of student-athletes and teams on their campuses. In turn, the impressions and promotions benefit the college as a whole and generate interest from recruits.

What are some of the unique challenges faced by SIDs in your role at two-year schools?

Eichstedt: I think the biggest challenge is resources, both in terms of department size and financials. I feel very lucky and blessed here at Madison College to have an administration that believes in this work and its value, as well as to be in a department that works so well together. Like many other schools, however, we're always trying to reach new heights and/or keep up with growing trends. That can add a lot of demands on SIDs when they are already pretty maxed out. Plus, we simply can't always afford to have the manpower or latest tech that other larger departments do.



Angel Whetstone is the head women's basketball coach, handles eligibility, compliance and "leads one of the best game management crews in the NJCAA"

CSC has expanded the Academic All-America program in recent years to create more recognition for two-year student-athletes. Is student-athlete recognition something that is important at Madison, and would you encourage more two-year colleges to nominate their student-athletes?



year out and they deserve to be recognized

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Eichstedt: Student-athlete recognition is extremely important at our level, especially when it comes to success in the classroom. We've seen our overall department GPA rise significantly over the past few years, and make sure those who have earned the recognition receive it. We don't get a lot of coverage beyond our own walls, so that adds to the importance of taking every opportunity to highlight those accomplishments. We're really excited about the changes and expansion to the Academic All-America program for our student-athletes, and for the NJCAA. These student-athletes work just as hard, if not harder, than their counterparts at higher levels.

For two-year schools who do not have dedicated SIDs, would you encourage other ADs to get a CSC membership so they could nominate for Academic All-America? Are there any other reasons to be connected to the organization?

Verhelst: First off, I think it is incredibly important for any college, no matter their size or division, to have a dedicated athletic Communications professional on their staff. If ADs don't have someone in that position it often falls on administrative assistants, coaches, and the AD. If that is the case, having a CSC membership can give them support from an opportunity to nominate for Academic All-American, access to resources, and the ability to connect to athletic Communications at other like institutions.


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Bill Kegler is the Athletics, Fitness, and Recreation Facilities & Enterprise Operations Manager, and develops and promotes non-Madison College athletic events hosted at Madison College facilities

Adam, can you describe how the Madison staff works together to support student-athletes even though your colleagues may not necessarily consider themselves communications people first? We know that at small schools a lot of times it is coaches and others that have to help with game ops and promotion. Is there value in being a CSC member even if communications is not your “main thing”?

Eichstedt: One thing we have successfully done at Madison College is give our coaches full access to their team’s social media accounts, which both allows them to control the message to supporters and recruits and offers relief to myself in trying to handle everything on social media. Additionally, all staff members and coaches aid in helping run our athletic events outside of their own season. Being a CSC member has given many of our staff opportunities to build upon their skillset and knowledge base, as well as develop an understanding of how many of our individual roles overlap and work better together.

Adam, what do you enjoy most about working at Madison College? And working with student-athletes at that level.

Eichstedt: I’ve been in the Madison College Athletic Department for nine years, and it has truly been the best work environment of my professional life. Jason and our former AD Steve Hauser took a chance on me after I spent a decade in sports radio, and they have allowed me to not only put my stamp on things, but also to learn and develop my craft. Jason has been an invaluable mentor in this line of work, and recognized where my strengths were coming in, while sowing patience as I picked up the rest of the gig. As far as working with the student-athletes, I have the joy of not only watching them grow as athletes and people,



Former men's basketball coach Jamal Palmer accepted the position of student-athlete development, success, and equity coordinator in 2022, the first of its kind position at Madison.

What is some work that has been done at Madison that you're proud of?

Eichstedt: An obvious answer is our "[AHEAD OF THE PACK: A Title IX & Madison College Story](#)" video feature that won 1st prize in the 2YSIDA 2022-23 Publications & Digital Design Contest. The video and our night of celebration of Title IX was a full department undertaking and was a huge success.

Additionally, I take tremendous pride in the full-scope and quality of work we do as far as athletic communications. Many departments over the years seem to pick and choose what they want to focus on, such as their website or social media or video content. We have not only found ways to do all of it, but I believe we do it extremely well for the resources available to us. And yet, we're still always trying to get better.

Jason, you've been connected with CSC for a long time and remain so as you have risen in your career. Why has staying connected to the organization been important to you? Can you describe how you've evolved in your career from SID to AD?



country in all those years coming to converge. [LOGIN](#) [JOIN/RENEW](#) [PROFILE](#) on. I have always pushed myself to find better, more efficient solutions for communications. When I could not find an efficient solution for quick delivery of results I created a result reporting platform to report scores and distribute results to media outlets, fans, administrators, and more. In 2019, [SportReporting.com](https://www.sportreporting.com) was launched as a business entity and received the Innovation of the Year award.

I was hired at Madison College in the fall of 2000 as a sports information director and moved to assistant athletic director, then associate athletic director, and then director of athletics. Having been a student-athlete and coach, I'm able to relate on a different level and then combine that with a background in communications and business. I have been able to evolve in my role and focus on what is most important... the student-athlete's experience!



Athletic Administrative Coordinator Kris Mills oversees department financials, travel arrangements, and office management.

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<p>◀ All +</p>	<p>10/15/23 / 11:59 P.M. Deadline for 30 Under 30 Nominations</p>	<p>11/07/23 / 12:00 P.M. M/W Soccer Academic All-America Nomination Period Opens (NCAA, NAIA)</p>	<p>11/08/23 / All Day Membership Appreciation Week (Nov. 8-14)</p>	<p>11/09/23 Members Week (Nc) ▶</p>
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