

# SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC CLUB

## ATHLETICS *Newsletter*

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## *From the SUAC President*

If there is one thing for certain as we close out 2020, it's that I'm very "Thankful To Be A Ram!" On behalf of the SUAC and the Shepherd University Athletic Department, we'd like to give a BIG thanks to our exceptional student-athletes, coaches, alumni, business partners, family and friends of the program, and staff for making this year's campaign a huge success. What's most exciting was the spirit of competition coupled with great teamwork and collaboration that enabled us to drive success; in spite of major headwinds posed by the ongoing global pandemic. Your efforts helped us raise more than \$45,000 which is critical to our mission to elevate and increase our annual athletic fundraising so that our student-athletes have the best facilities and are able to compete at the highest level. We are well on our way!

As always, my call to action remains the same. Please continue to give annually and help us promote SUAC and Shepherd University Athletics. Again, we've made great progress, but imagine the success of our programs with every former student-athlete, family and friends,



**Scott Bradford-Doleman '95 and '99**  
*SUAC President*

faculty, and staff contributing annually at their highest level. The future is bright, and we appreciate you in advance for your continued support!

## *SUAC Board Member Spotlight*

Kelly Colbert '87 grew up in Shepherdstown, graduated from nearby Jefferson High School and became a homegrown Shepherd College Ram. Kelly was a four-year standout on the Shepherd College men's tennis team during his academic time here. Kelly now sits on the Board of the Shepherd University Athletic Club and chairs the Marketing initiative for the organization. His desire to help bring further success to his alma mater is very apparent in his activity on the Board and attending athletic and university functions throughout the year. Kelly and his wife Jill reside in Hagerstown, MD.

RIGHT: **Kelly Colbert '87**



**Shepherd University Athletic Club**  
[www.suathleticclub.org](http://www.suathleticclub.org)

# Q&A with Assistant Athletic Director

## ANDY FERGUSON

***What enticed you to apply for the opening here at Shepherd and what were you expecting when you arrived here for your face-to-face interview with VP Chauncey Winbush?***

As with most career moves, initial thoughts center around selfish reasoning. I was looking for a move that would advance my career as well as provide me with additional experience and a place to continue to grow professionally. At some point in the process your mindset changes toward looking for a place where you can not only contribute, but also where you'll feel comfortable and be able to grow real relationships. In this case, I had actually had a few other interviews and was getting ready to pursue another course when Melanie Ford gave me a call and asked me to interview at Shepherd. I hopped on Google and did as much research as I could and it looked like a great institution and athletic department. I made the trip out to Shepherdstown a few weeks later to interview in person and I left totally impressed with not only the physical area, but also with Chauncey, Melanie, Chip Ransom and everyone else I had spoken with. I try to not "expect" anything specific during an interview process because I think it can create bias in your head one way or another, but I will say that when I left I knew it was a place I would like to be moving forward.

***What was the first agenda item that Chauncey wanted to address when you accepted and came on board in March 2019?***

Man, that seems like such a long time ago! If I remember correctly, the first major item I jumped into was the planning of the 2019 "Beer and Brats for Sports" event with the SUAC and the Rotary Club of Shepherdstown. When I got here we were roughly two months away from that event, so I had to catch up quickly. Luckily it was a very successful event, which has turned into an event we'll hold annually.

***After your first full year in the position, COVID-19 has dominated the news. Give us some perspective on what has been the most challenging issue for the athletic department since sports were shut down earlier this year?***

The most challenging thing to me is that nothing is ever set in stone. It is extremely difficult to plan ahead because information changes rapidly. From a career aspect, I think year two in



a position is really when a person can settle into their role. The first year on a job, everything is new. You're basically just trying to keep up and take notes. Year two is when you start to feel like you've seen everything before so you can really just begin to become more efficient, put your own twist on things and grow. COVID-19 has really disrupted not only our athletic events, but also our fundraising events and alumni outreach. Instead of using year two to perfect and grow on what I learned in year one, it almost feels like it's year one all over again! Overall it has taught me to always keep a positive mindset and to always be flexible.

***I understand that this pandemic has also provided a major challenge in a special event planned in May for you and your fiancée, Farima. Can you elaborate more on that as well?***

Yeah, crazy times we live in! Farima and I were supposed to have our wedding in early May, but obviously that was put on hold. We actually rescheduled it to early August, but that was also postponed. Right now we are looking at next July, so we'll see what happens then.

***What is the one accomplishment to date that you take the most pride in since becoming an integral part of the athletic department here at Shepherd?***

That's a tough question for me, as I tend to focus on where we came up short or where we can improve. Maybe that is a bad habit, but that's me. I think the thing I am proudest of would be the annual SUAC Membership Guides that we mail

out every year. Those take a lot of time and effort to organize and design, not only on my end, but also with our friends over at Progressive Printing in Martinsburg. I think the membership guides have really enhanced the SUAC brand and what we want to accomplish from a communication standpoint. You see Division 1 schools put together membership guides every year, and I think ours is right up there with theirs in terms of design and functionality. I'm proud that we are growing in that regard.

***What do you think will have the biggest impact on Shepherd athletics over the course of the next 3 to 5 years?***

I think growing our annual giving base will have the biggest impact on Shepherd Athletics in the near future. Sometimes I think people believe that the only impactful gifts are those that are like \$1,000 or more. That couldn't be further from the truth. The most successful programs have a strong annual giving base. If we had 300 people each give \$100 per year (that's like \$8 a month), that would be program changing. Major gifts and capital gifts are certainly important to immediate large-scale growth, but having that annual giving base will allow Shepherd Athletics to support our programs, coaches, and student-athletes in ways that we have never been able to before. If we can do that on our end while our programs can continue to be successful on the field and in the classroom, then we can accomplish some pretty awesome things here in Shepherdstown.

***Thanks again, Andy! Keep up the great work you are doing! ■***

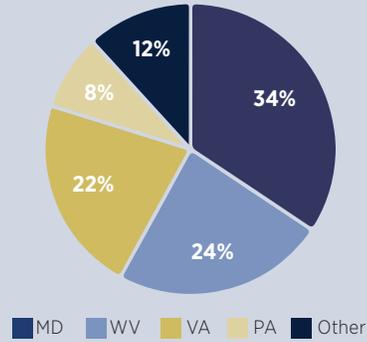
**Thankful**  
  
**to be a RAM**  
**2020**



More than 1,000 donors and more than \$45,000 raised for our programs.

**TOP THREE PROGRAMS:**

- Women's Lacrosse (reached 400% of their donor goal)
- Softball
- Women's Basketball



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Donations give us the flexibility to cater to our needs on a year-to-year basis, whether it be to help with our everyday operating budget, scholarship funds, or recruiting needs. We want to give our student athletes the best experience both on and off the court. It is the support from our fans and donors that make this possible. The Shepherd Women's Basketball team appreciates all the you do to help our family and program.

-Coach Eckleberry

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Chauncey Winbush '95 and '00

## *Catching Up with the Vice President for Athletics*

***Chauncey, we appreciate you taking the time to answer some questions and helping our fans understand the current status of Shepherd Athletics.***

***On November 11, the PSAC meeting of Presidents came out with some decisions on the current season and that group will make some decisions over the next week or so on winter sports. What were those decisions regarding the fall sports and what, if anything, changed in regard to what was originally laid out earlier this fall?***

So, the original decision with regard to fall and winter sports is that they're not going to have any mandated games or schedules. They're not going to mandate any championships for those sports. The caveat to that is that they did just announce that men's and women's swimming and men's and women's cross country are going to compete. There were at least six institutions within the league that came together and said that they were willing to allow those sports

to compete, so the PSAC will put together schedules for those four sports and there will be some activity for them on a more formal basis from a league standpoint next semester, but football, soccer, volleyball, field hockey, basketball, wrestling: those sports will not have any mandated games or championships. If there are institutions within the league and even outside of the league that are interested in competing in any of those sports, institutions do have the ability to schedule directly with another institution that may want to compete.

***Is there any further information that you can elaborate on in regard to the spring and what it will take to play games this spring?***

The department will need to focus on ramping up our safety protocols with regard to the wearing of masks and social distancing and things of that nature. We're really going to need to be more focused on making sure that we're keeping our student athletes and our coaches safe from that standpoint, but we're going

to continue to move forward. We're going to have activities for those sports that are not necessarily having a traditional season. We're still going to practice. We're still going to work out. Hopefully, we'll have a few competitions in some of those sports.

All of our spring sports will have mandated seasons, which is great. Our concern as athletic directors was making sure that those student-athletes didn't miss two years in a row. With spring sports, the logistical concern is going to be testing. The NCAA requires us to do a significant amount of testing, and I think that's going to be a challenge but we're going to work together as a department and as a university to make sure that we take care of our student athletes from that standpoint and I'm excited. I definitely think that having to shut down early this semester has been difficult, but I think it'll be a learning experience for us all.

***We all have seen the effects of COVID-19 on the sports world with MLB and now the NFL.***

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***Give us a feel for what navigating this at a university level has been like with students and administration.***

Yeah, it's been a challenge but I think for the most part it's something that our department and our university has stepped up to. When you're dealing with a pandemic on a university campus, there's so many moving parts. There are so many different departments and so many people on campus that you have to be conscious of. We can put out all of the policies and procedures and things of that nature and you just really hope that, our students and our staff pull together as a community and do the right things. Unfortunately, you're going to have people who make poor decisions or you're going to run into hiccups and challenges. That's why we've been meeting as a university task force since January, preparing these different policies just in case things happen. So, when they did, we knew what to do. I think that's a testament to the leadership of the university for sure. We didn't want anybody to get COVID but I don't think that was realistic and when we did have some cases pop-up, we handled them appropriately and did everything that we had planned to do. We've basically gotten through the semester and there are institutions that did not get through the semester or didn't even try to so, you know, I think we should give ourselves a pat on the back. Certainly, it wasn't perfect but I think we did a pretty good job at the end of the day.

***On to a positive note, at the time of this***

***newsletter, the athletic programs just finished a monthlong campaign called "Thankful to be a Ram." Tell us how this campaign worked and just how successful this campaign was.***

The campaign is a basically a competition among our sports and our teams for a \$1,500 dollar prize at the end of the campaign based on the number of donors that you are able to get to donate to your program. I think year one we had 350 donors and about \$8,000 raised, year two we had just shy of 500 donors and about \$15,000 raised. We just blew it out of the park this year. More than 1,000 donors and \$45,000 raised. I mean, it's just mind-boggling.

We've had tremendous support from our alumni, parents, and friends of the program. It's really a blessing at the end of the day. Considering what's going on with the pandemic, considering what's going on with our economy, for people to give money out of their pockets says a lot about those individuals. Obviously, our student-athletes really did the legwork with regard to spreading the word. My staff, Andy Ferguson and Carlos Calderon, set up the program and that's what it's about. We're in this as a team. We are 400 people pulling in the same direction to try and make things better for our department and I just think that the "Thankful to be a Ram" campaign was a complete success and it's a testament to everybody's hard work.

***Lastly, the students will finish up on campus the week of Thanksgiving and won't return***

***until mid to late January. What is the biggest hope and the biggest fear that you have when they return for the spring semester?***

Well, two months off is a long time. Obviously, when we ended the semester in the spring, they had been out for six months and we were obviously really worried about their health and safety upon return. So, I'm hoping that they have an opportunity to decompress from the semester. I'm hoping that they remain diligent in staying safe with regard to the pandemic. I hope that they are able to find some opportunities to maintain their activities and the physical readiness if you will, so when they get back, we can hit the ground running. We're going to go through the same process that we did at the beginning of this semester with regard to testing and re-socialization and all of those policies and procedures. I'm hopeful that they come back ready to compete whether it's in a couple of scrimmages or obviously in some regular season games. Again, we know it's going to be a challenge, we know this pandemic is real, and we are going to really need to ramp up our safety protocols in the spring so that we can make it through the entire year without any issues.

***As always, Chauncey, the SUAC appreciates the time you spend with us each quarter. Thank you for your leadership and dedication to Shepherd University. We hope you and your team of coaches, students and administration have a safe and happy holiday! ■***

## SUAC Information

The SUAC board wishes all of our members and fans continued health and peace through this time. We also want to thank you for your generosity to all of our sports and their facilities. It goes without saying that when we all support a vision in pursuit of the university's athletic goals, it will be successful! ■



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