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ATHLETICS

Webb Connections Panel Discuss Effects of NCAA Name, Image and Likeness (NIL)

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2021



- ▲ The panelists, from left, were Kyle Kallander, Big South Commissioner; Kelli Bartik, Sports Anchor, WCCB Charlotte and a GW alumna; Alex Simmons, Head Coach, GW Women's Basketball; Jim Chester, Head Coach, GW Baseball; Anna Marie Fish, GW soccer player and president of Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC); and Steve Serck, Gardner-Webb University Counsel.

GWU President Hosts Representatives From Conference, Media, Coaching Staff, and Student-Athletes

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A Supreme Court decision in June and actions by Congress, state legislatures, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) enable college student-athletes the freedom to receive compensation for their Name, Image and Likeness (NIL). To examine what these decisions mean for the future of college athletics, Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William M. Downs recently invited an expert panel to discuss the topic for the first Webb Connections event of the semester.

A video of the engaging and interactive discussion—"The Supreme Court, the NCAA and the Future for College Athletics"—will premiere Sept. 30 at 7 p.m. on Gardner-Webb's YouTube Channel and Facebook page. Panel members addressed the legal foundation for the Supreme Court ruling and also talked about what the NIL guidelines mean for student-athletes and how they affect team dynamics.



▲ From left, Jim Chester, Anna Marie Fish, and Steve Serck consider a question from GWU President Dr. William M. Downs.

The panelists were:

- Kyle Kallander, Big South Commissioner.
- Kelli Bartik, Sports Anchor, WCCB Charlotte and a GW alumna.
- Alex Simmons, Head Coach, GW Women's Basketball.
- Jim Chester, Head Coach, GW Baseball.
- Anna Marie Fish, GW soccer player and president of Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).
- Steve Serck, Gardner-Webb University Counsel.

The panelists were excited about the potential benefits of the new rules for students, but also expressed concern about NIL crossing a line into endorsements. Kallander noted two key tenets to the new NIL legislation from the NCAA. "It can't be pay for play and you can't use it as a recruiting inducement," he commented and noted that recruiting inducement is already happening. "It's only been two months. How do we put the genie back in the bottle as far as that goes and how do we control this moving forward so that it doesn't become an unfair situation?"

The other panelists chimed in, mentioning examples of student-athletes from across the United States—as well as Fish from GWU—who are already benefitting from the new rules. Because of her presence on social media, Fish has become a brand ambassador for Celsius energy drinks. Before the NIL rules were put into place, eligibility requirements prevented student-athletes from participating in brand ambassador programs. "I post on Instagram a few times a month and they send me products," she explained. "It's not always about getting cash, which is completely fine. Not having to buy pre-workout twice a month is nice."

The discussion ended with each panelist predicting what would happen to college athletics in five years. While noting how the NIL rules could give the larger schools advantages, the panelists hoped that schools like Gardner-Webb would draw student-athletes who were committed to the school's mission. Fish concluded that she hoped the NIL doesn't go as far as pay to play and that athletes get the opportunities they deserve while giving back to their communities in ways like holding clinics for children. "I hope the athletes' characters stays intact," she shared. "People need to not look at the money but what good sports provides the world."

View the entire discussion below.

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