Q. What type of experience should someone gain early in their career if they want a job in college athletics?

A. A candidate looking to pursue a career in college athletics would be well served by initially working in an environment that requires strong people skills. The ability to effectively read others and successfully communicate with those around you is crucial in college sports. Athletics at the intercollegiate level is filled with competitive and strong-willed people. To give yourself every advantage, you should be very comfortable interacting and working with people of all different types of personalities. A willingness to engage with a group of very driven people, rather than choosing to stay in the background, is important.

Q. Is it necessary to be a former student-athlete to work in college athletics?

A. It certainly helps. Former student-athletes have an understanding of the athletics environment and the people in it. However, it’s not a necessity. As long as the candidate is broadly knowledgeable about the issues, thrives in a competitive environment, and can appreciate the intensity of effort that this environment demands, they can achieve success in the field.

Q. What skills are the most essential for working in college athletics?

A. The ability to effectively multitask is a critical skill for an athletics administrator or coach. There is rarely a moment when you are focused on or responsible for just one thing. In addition, the ability to connect with others, hold their attention, and effectively express yourself is equally crucial. Athletic officials frequently work in the public setting — speaking with, presenting to, advocating for, or encouraging others to support a certain idea. Therefore, being confident while publically expressing yourself or your ideas is a critical skill to possess.

Q. What's your advice for someone who wants to work in college athletics?

A. College athletics, as an industry, is tremendously competitive. Therefore, if you wish to be an athletic director, head coach, or another type of senior administrator, you must be fully dedicated to working for years toward that objective. I would also strongly encourage candidates to be willing to tackle any relevant job within the industry. At the senior administrative level, work days are filled with a multitude of tasks. These duties may require a background in event management, personnel and staffing, contract negotiation, recreational and fitness, facility management, and fund-raising. Therefore, say “yes” and be willing to take on all sorts of related roles early in your career. You may not see how selling tickets for a professional franchise or running a summer sports camp for youth will help you achieve your professional goals. However, a college president will. Develop an array of talents and experiences. This will aid you greatly down the road.

A Record Year for Athletics Program

CUA Athletics had one of its most successful years in the history of the program — six conference championships, two Elite Eight appearances, eight teams in the NCAA tournament (the most ever in CUA history), and one in the NACAC tournament. The program had five All-Americans and four Landmark Scholar-Athlete of the Year awards, and was the winner of the Landmark Conference Presidents’ Trophy, which recognizes the conference’s best overall athletics program. These successes and accomplishments landed CUA-Athletics in the number 43 spot of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) 2014–15 Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup Rankings. The 43rd place ranking is the highest in University history and puts CUA in the top 10% of all 450 NCAA Division III programs for the 2014–15 school year.

“Director” Cup rankings are a highly visible indicator of the overall quality of an athletic department,” said CUA Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics Sean Sullivan. “Though there are many different ways to assess a program, these rankings get right to the heart of intercollegiate athletics — gauging the competitive success of all participants. CUA student-athletes and coaches confirmed that the extremely talented they are — among the very best Division III has to offer. I couldn’t be more proud of those who represent us on game day.”

Visit cuamagazine.cua.edu to read more about the Cardinals’ big year and to view a photo gallery.