THE RIGHT WAY FORWARD
NAIA 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION

# Technology, Data, and Analytics

## Background

It has been a year of restructuring and transition for the NAIA's technology department. With the departure of the former vice president, an internal working group, with the assistance of a technology consulting firm, was established to review the department's work from the perspective of serving the growing technology needs of our members and staff.

The current state assessment identified several key areas for improvement. These include enhancing training and communication support for members, strengthening analytics efforts, increasing internal resources to further develop NAIA systems, expanding capacity and skills to explore new technologies, and upgrading the department's infrastructure.

## Staff Restructuring

Alan Grosbach was promoted to vice president of technology, data, and analytics, and an IT staff restructuring took place, including the merger of the former IT and Return on Athletics® departments.

As part of this restructuring, two existing IT positions were updated within the team, two roles were redesigned, and one new position was created, resulting in a net increase of one staff member. The budget impact of the new position is expected to be nearly neutral due to savings in annual vendor fees.

The redesigned and new roles filled this winter include:

- NAIA Connect Administrator: Responsible for development/enhancements for our NAIA Connect (Salesforce) applications and will manage NAIA Connect help desk support.
- Sr. Manager, Membership Technology Operations: Focuses on improving membership and staff engagement with technology tools through training, communication, documentation, and project management.
- Associate Director, Data and Analytics: Leads the execution of the NAIA's research and analytics strategy, manages the Return on Athletics® initiative, and oversees research projects related to members, intercollegiate athletics, and student-athlete initiatives.

## Short-Term Focus Areas

- Improving NAIA Connect member support through increased resource capacity, better support ticket tracking, and implementing more of an agile development model, enabling staff to deploy enhancements more quickly.
- Analyzing and consolidating technology vendors, including onboarding a new vendor to support InCred more effectively.
- Developing a technology training curriculum for national office staff to boost productivity and technology adoption.

- Upgrading technology infrastructure and support to better equip staff with the tools needed for efficient operations.
- Reviewing opportunities for implementing AI in personal productivity and at the enterprise technology level (e.g., PlayNAIA and NAIA Connect).
- Establish and implement a more intentional process for discovery projects, custom data requests, and helpdesk support tickets.

**Long-Term Objectives**

Although there is still work to do in many short-term focus areas, long-term objectives and strategic thinking are essential. Some of the long-term considerations include:

- Better equip members to use the technology systems needed to operate in the NAIA and establish an intentional process to gather member feedback on enhancements and areas of opportunity.
- Develop updated technology and analytics roadmaps, including evaluating new technology opportunities to advance the organization.
- Implement improved cybersecurity standards.
- Expand analytics efforts by aligning our data and analytics work across the organization.

**IT Project Updates**

| Department | Project | Description | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| ROA | ROA Migration | Migrate ROA to NAIA Connect and enhance member experience | Complete |
| Championships | Cheer & Dance | Update the competitive cheer and competitive dance scoring system | Complete |
| Athletics Communications | Ratings & Polls | Migrate the conference rankings and national polls to NAIA Connect | Complete |
| IT | Infrastructure Enhancements | Implement findings and recommendations from the cybersecurity audit | Ongoing |
| IT | Infrastructure Enhancements | Updated firewall and cloud-based file server | Ongoing |
| Legislative Services | Eligibility Certification Process (ECP) Enhancements | Implement ECP changes and enhancements to support usability and legislative changes | Ongoing |
| IT | AI Opportunity Analysis | Conduct an analysis to understand opportunities for the implementation of AI into Eligibility Center and NAIA Connect systems | Ongoing |