



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mountain West Board of Directors and Joint Council.

**FROM:** Mountain West Staff.

**SUBJECT:** 2017-18 MW Sportsmanship Initiative.

**DATE:** July 31, 2017

Since its inception in 2001, the Sportsmanship Initiative has been a focal point of the Mountain West Board of Directors, and entering the Conference's 19<sup>th</sup> season the emphasis on appropriate conduct is as strong as ever. Institutions are encouraged to raise the level of awareness of the Initiative's components through websites, social media, institutional Student-Athlete Advisory Committees and support from Faculty Athletic Representatives.

The purpose of this memorandum is to review the various elements of the program and provide you an inventory of the items in the Sportsmanship Initiative packet, so you may once again effectively implement (along with the other 12 institutions and the Conference office) this effort for the upcoming competitive/academic year. The goal is to create enhanced awareness of sportsmanship and ethics issues, develop a sense of responsibility among various constituencies, and foster a positive environment at all athletic events. **Please review this material carefully.**

You may copy the original documents as necessary to reach your various constituents. Each of the documents in the Sportsmanship Initiative packet is available online through the Conference's "Members Only" website [Dropbox](#), thus allowing you to modify and customize these documents to the particular needs of your institution.

The elements of the program and items in the packet are as follows:

1. **Mandatory Meeting Component.** One of the key elements of the Sportsmanship Initiative is the requirement that each institution conduct a mandatory annual meeting with all athletic department constituencies, at which the President shall deliver a message. The sheet in the packet outlines the particulars of this requirement, which is included in the MW Handbook under Rule 4.

The President may utilize whatever language and information he/she desires (from within the packet or from other sources), although the statement outlined in No. 2 below is intended to serve as the basis for the President's remarks. Understanding the busy schedules of institutional presidents, it is not suggested that the President speak to individual teams or constituent groups. It is imperative, however, that the President participates in the mandatory large group athletic department meeting, in order to set the appropriate tone for the institution and the initiative.

2. **Ethics and Sportsmanship Statement.** The statement reflects the Conference's basic position as outlined in Rule 4 of the MW Handbook. This document is intended to serve as the basis for the President's remarks at the mandatory meeting, but may be utilized at your discretion in conjunction with other portions of the Sportsmanship Initiative or as part of additional efforts your institution may undertake.
3. **Public Address Announcement.** The PA announcement must be read prior to each athletic event/competition, and throughout the contest as necessary, for all sports that utilize a public address system. For those sports without PA, an institution may consider distributing written copies of the information.
4. **Code of Conduct Statements for Athletics Administrators, Coaches and Staff and Signature Documents.** The documents are to be distributed to each athletics administrator, coach and staff member, generally in conjunction with the mandatory meeting. Each individual should also sign the Confirmation of Receipt and commitment documents verifying the statement has been received and read. The signature document should be kept on file at the institution for one year, subject to a records request from the Conference office.
5. **Code of Conduct Statement for Student-Athletes and Signature Document.** The document (as developed by the MW Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) is to be distributed to each student-athlete. Each individual should also sign the Confirmation of Receipt and commitment document verifying the statement has been received and read. The signature document should be kept on file at the institution for one year, subject to a records request from the Conference office.

- Each SAAC representative will make a statement to all student-athletes at their respective institution's annual preseason meeting to confirm the value of the Code of Conduct Statement. The FAR at each institution will be responsible for tutoring the SAAC representative and attending the meeting.
6. **Code of Conduct Statement for Spirit Groups and Signature Document.** The document is to be distributed to each cheerleader, dance squad member, band member and mascot by the appropriate coach, leader or administrator (subsequent to this individual attending the mandatory meeting and completing the documentation themselves) in conjunction with a group meeting or other activity. Each individual should also sign the Confirmation of Receipt and commitment document verifying the statement has been received and read. The signature document should be kept on file at the institution for one year, subject to a records request from the Conference office.
  7. **Letter to Boosters.** The letter is to be distributed to your boosters, season-ticket holders or other appropriate parties and can be customized from the template found within the "2017-18 Sportsmanship Initiative" on the Conference's "Members Only" website [Dropbox](#). It can be utilized in letter form and distributed on either the institution's letterhead or on Mountain West stationery. If you elect to use the latter, please contact the Conference office for the necessary paper. Commissioner Thompson's signature is available in electronic form for inclusion on the letters, if necessary. The text of this letter could also be incorporated into another form of booster communication (e.g. social media outlets, brochure and mailer) your institution may utilize.
  8. **Letter to Student Body President.** The letter is to be mailed to your student-body president on behalf of the MW Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. It can be customized (to fill in the blank information) from the template found within the "2017-18 Sportsmanship Initiative" on the Conference's "Members Only" website [Dropbox](#). It may be mailed on the institution's letterhead or on Mountain West stationery. If you elect to use the latter, please contact the Conference office and it will provide you with the necessary paper.
  9. **Letter to Student Body.** Please customize the letter from the template found within the "2017-18 Sportsmanship Initiative" on the Conference's "Members Only" intranet website ([Dropbox](#)) and ensure its distribution through whichever medium(s) you deem most effective (e.g. insertion in student newspaper, fliers, radio spots, social media outlets, etc.). The letter, from the MW Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, may be mailed on the institution's athletic department letterhead or on Mountain West stationery. As noted above, please contact the Conference office for paper if you elect to use the latter.

**10. NCAA and MW Sportsmanship Awards.** Each institution is charged with nominating two candidates (one male and one female student-athlete) for the annual NCAA and MW Sportsmanship Awards. The NCAA is requesting the assistance of institutional SAAC committees in generating nominations. These institutional nominations will be considered by the MW Recognition Committee for both the NCAA and MW awards. Please make sure your athletic staffs and SAAC representatives are identifying potential candidates throughout the academic year.

**11. Additional Supporting Elements.** The MW will produce a number of other items designed to promote sportsmanship and appropriate conduct (e.g., television public service announcements). Your cooperation in facilitating the distribution of these elements (e.g., running PSA spots on stadium video board) is much appreciated and will be important toward advancing the Sportsmanship Initiative.

Thank you for your continued support of this important initiative.

Cc: MW Student-Athlete Advisory Committee