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Experience of Coaches at NACWAA National Convention Is Transformational

Asha Jordan and Sahar Nusseibeh went to the 2015 National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators convention as guests of NACWAA and returned feeling a greater sense of connection between women coaches and women administrators.

Their transformational experience took place Oct. 11-13 in Tampa, Fla., during meetings, socializing with other women in college sports and hearing the inspirational stories of women in leadership such as Sheila Johnson, the NACWAA Honor Award recipient.

Johnson is the only African-American woman to have ownership in three professional sports teams, the WNBA Washington Mystics, NBA Washington Wizards and NHL Washington Capitals.



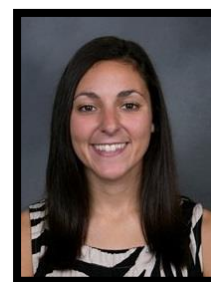
Jordan

“The experience was unbelievable,” said Jordan, who begins her second season as women’s basketball coach at Portland, Oregon’s Lewis and Clark College in November. “It was nice to be in a large space with hundreds of women there – it was a feeling of just connectedness and empowerment being in groups of women who were really passionate about college athletics.”

Which is exactly what NACWAA hoped she would experience, said Gina Krahulik, its director of leadership and education.

“It’s important for us just to be able to expose more women to our industry, to connect,” Krahulik said. “We champion women leaders. Our partnership with the Alliance is important for both of us to be able to grow. We are in this business together.”

Jordan and Nusseibeh, who is beginning her third year as an assistant women’s basketball coach at Ohio’s Bowling Green State University, are recent graduates of the NCAA Women Coaches Academy. They attended the convention on scholarships as part of its growing partnership with the Alliance.



Nusseibeh

“I had my eyes opened,” Nusseibeh said. “The number of women in coaching positions is dwindling, and the people who hire coaches are administrators. It’s extremely important for

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coaches to look outside our coaching silos and connect with administrators. They want to help women in coaching and they have the power to do that.”

Jordan said her takeaway was that both the Alliance and NACWAA have similar philosophies.

“Both see themselves as organizations of change,” she said. “We’re working for the same causes. At end of the day, we’re all on the same team.”

At the forefront of both organizations’ concerns are that women reverse their declining numbers in college coaching, Krahulik said. One of the ways NACWAA hopes to do that is by helping women into more leadership positions such as athletic directors and conference commissioners.

“When you’re on college campus,” Krahulik said, “women tend to be in the minority in athletic departments. We want women to leave our convention knowing they are a very vital part of collegiate athletics and to change them to be better.”

Nusseibeh said the convention made her aware of her role beyond coaching a team.

“I realized ‘Hey, I’m a woman. This is what’s happening to women,’” she said. “Years from now when I am a head coach somewhere, that will be my soapbox. I will use my position to continue to educate and make young women aware of what we need to do and be.”