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HEADLINE → Penn State rebranding promotes student athletes

SUBHEAD → Branding Director Higgins publicizes student success, benefitting their futures

Over the past year, Penn State's Athletics Department has made strides towards improving branding, spearheaded by Creative Content and Branding Director Sarah Higgins. All work towards adding consistency and modernity to the University's public image, she ^{said} says, publicizes student athletes in hopes of benefitting their college experience and future careers.

"We really took a deep dive into our brand," Higgins ^{said} says, "pushing it forward to be sure it really represents us."

One of the largest efforts that the Athletic Department currently expends towards that end is through social media, ^{according to?} By posting content on students' personal backstories, Higgins hopes her work will promote Penn State athletes for national awards and careers after college. Higgins ^{gave (NEWS is in past-tense)} gives one example of a football player whose skill was not fully reflected by his on-field play, and thus her team's work was integral to him winning an All American Award.

"We leverage social ^{...} it's how we connect with our audience," Higgins says. "I think it has a lot of power in our world."

The Branding Department's work to publicize such content also allows them the opportunity to prepare students for their futures in the sports industry. Higgins feels that her team's efforts to interview Penn State

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athletes has allowed her to educate many in developing their own brand, while offering experience to alleviate the potential stressors of future encounters with the media.

"There needs to be a little bit of education and explanation on the benefits of talking in front of a camera," she said. "We serve as a training ground for that."

The branding team has also begun researching and revitalizing aged-out logos and colors from what they call the vault, which they feel benefits the university and its students by honoring past traditions. These efforts are an attempt to garner school pride and remind community members of Penn State's history. Most recently, Higgins branded a wrestling match with the university's original pink and black color scheme.

"We tell an alternate story that people may not know," she says. "It's really fun to push Penn State forward with a nod to the past."

In order to promote all aspects of Penn State athletics, Higgins has also made a point to pursue equity between sports, since she regrets that football receives much of the attention. She therefore works to produce content regarding less acknowledged gameplay, and feels that this publicity will support athletes in those "sidelined" sports for pursuing careers after college.

Higgins ^{stay in past tense} believes that these efforts promote Penn State as a brand



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and as a community.

"Finding ways to connect with the brand and push it forward is exciting," she says "and a challenge I feel we really embrace."