

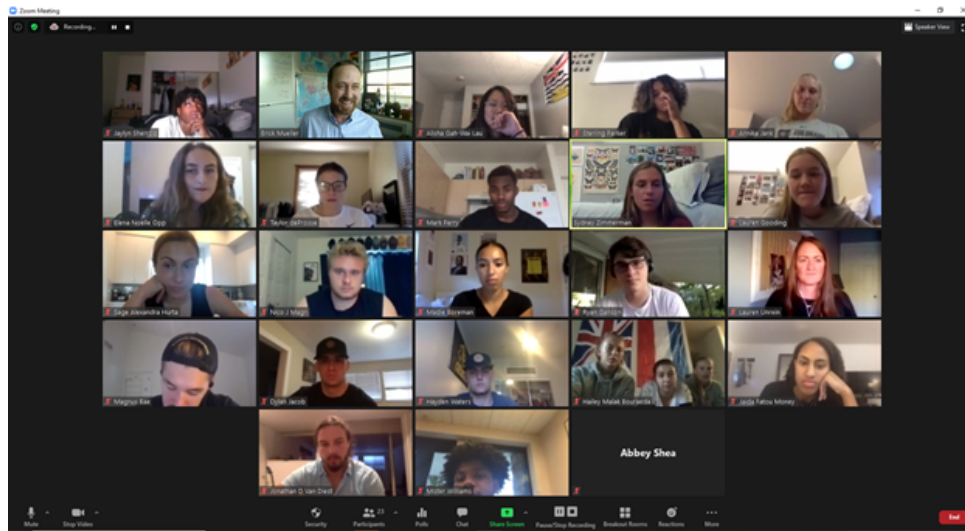
# University of Colorado Boulder - Leeds School of Business, Deming Center for Entrepreneurship

## — DEMING — ENTREPRENEUR

GCEC Awards Application

Category: **Exceptional Activities in Entrepreneurship Across Disciplines**

**Title: Buffs with a Brand**



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# **BUFFS** **WITH A BRAND**

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1. **Clearly state the activities' purpose, strategic goals, objectives and intended target audience.**
  - a. **Purpose:** To better prepare our student-athletes to take advantage of the new Name, Image & Likeness (NIL) legislation wherein athletes can monetize their overall brand. And, most importantly, to provide the entrepreneurial way of thinking to our student-athletes, that will help them in whatever path they choose.
  - b. **Strategic Goals:** As featured in [Sports Illustrated](#), Buffs with a Brand (BwaB) aims to educate student-athletes on managing their personal brands, being entrepreneurial, and financial planning through workshops, videos, meetings, and mentoring. Our goal is to educate student-athletes from all 17 varsity sports. (We accomplished this in our launch year in 2020!)
  - c. **Objectives:**
    - i. Empower our student-athletes with the entrepreneurial mindset to leverage the NIL opportunity and help create the “whole athlete”.
    - ii. A recruiting tool for CU Athletics
    - iii. Amplify our campus goal of creating innovative leaders who create positive impact in the world
  - d. **Target Audience:** Current and future student-athletes interested in learning the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and how to leverage the NIL opportunity. Students from every college (Business, Engineering, A&S, Music and others) have participated. In addition, athletes from all 17 sports are invited to participate. (In our inaugural year in 2020, we had participants from all 17 sports!)
2. **Explain how the center has been proactive in enabling entrepreneurship education opportunities for those who identify as a member of a traditionally underrepresented population such as but not limited to Black, Latinx, indigenous, women, LGBTQIA and students from low-income backgrounds.**
  - a. Helping our underrepresented students is a core goal of the BwaB program. We have and are accomplishing this through the following systematic process:
    - i. Meeting personally with each head coach and assistant coaches
    - ii. Sharing the benefits of the BwaB program for their student-athletes and ultimately gaining buy-in for their athletes to participate
      1. This in turn assures they don't schedule practices or other team duties during the BwaB program times
    - iii. Presenting to all 500+ CU student-athletes to participate in the program with guest mentors from underrepresented groups.
    - iv. Working directly with the Athletics Advisers to target underrepresented athletes to sign up, including Persons of Color, LGBTQIA, women, LatinX and students from low-income backgrounds.
    - v. Recruiting guest speakers and mentors from underrepresented groups to help teach the program and mentor the students
  - b. The above process and focus resulted in 48% of our 2020-2021 BwaB cohort coming from underrepresented communities! This is higher than the CU Athletics percentage. Our goal for the 2021-2022 cohort is 60%!
3. **Explain how the center has leveraged strategic partners from diverse backgrounds, resources and networks to develop a comprehensive program.**

- a. **Industry Professionals:** The program included workshops led by guest speakers with extensive experience in the industry. Community partners included Jeremy Darlow, a brand consultant, author and former director of marketing for Adidas as well as Chris McGowan, the CEO of the Portland Trailblazers.
  - b. **Personal Venture Coaches:** Athletes were paired with personal venture coaches based on their entrepreneurial interests. These professional mentors, from a variety of industries and backgrounds, helped guide these student-athletes through the process of creating their own businesses. A few mentors from our launch year were Greg Stroh, Founder of IZZE, Robyn O'Brien, Founder of Future of Foods and Koel Thomae, Founder of Nosa Yogurt.
  - c. **Cross-Campus Academic Units:** Numerous academic departments joined together to make this program a success in its inaugural year. Firstly, this program curriculum was curated and taught by the executive director of the Deming Center for Entrepreneurship, Erick Mueller. The program was also constructed in collaboration with Lauren Unrein, the assistant director of the SCRIPPS Leadership and Career Development Program at CU Athletics. In addition, we had guest teachers from our College of Engineering, ATLAS Institute, Wolf Law School and the College of Media & Communications. Finally, the team was joined by Colorado athletic director and original member of the NCAA Board of Governors Federal and State Legislation Working Group, Rick George.
  - d. **CU Athletic Department.** Coaches from all 17 varsity sports collaborated on launching the program last year in an effort to better prepare their athletes for NIL as well as an effective recruiting tool.
4. **Describe the multidisciplinary program and explain why the program is unique and/or innovative.**
  - a. **First-of-its-kind:** We were the first in the country to introduce such a program! We launched last year in anticipation of the pending NIL legislation. The recently approved NIL legislation will allow student-athletes to be entrepreneurial in nature, start ventures and build their brand.
  - b. **Platform for Change:** The Buffs with a Brand program focuses specifically on the concept that students don't have to capitalize on just being a football player or a soccer player, but instead that creating a venture or brand gives them the ability to use their platform to build a voice around issues that are important. By taking a more holistic approach that builds the entire athlete, students learn how to build a venture and media presence around things that are meaningful to them.
  - c. **University + community collaboration.** We're so very fortunate to be a part of the Boulder entrepreneurial ecosystem. We've leveraged this fully for our BwaB program by having local founders, investors and CEOs guest lecture and mentor our student athletes. We had 27 such community members help in our inaugural year.
5. **Provide a list of specific achievements (publications, awards, etc.) to date with a brief explanation, that illustrate the center's impact.**
  - a. **Featured in Sports Illustrated.** Our Buffs with a Brand program was [featured in Sports Illustrated](#), as a "Top School Going the Extra Mile to Hire their Athletes" by "providing their athletes with essential and unique tools and education". We're super excited to share this innovative program as we feel it's elevating entrepreneurship in a unique way by empowering and educating entrepreneurs and student-athletes. Our Center has helped elevate our CU brand as well as help recruit top athletes to choose CU.
  - b. **100% graduation rate.** 100% of the graduating class (22 athletes) built a company during the program duration. Ideas ranged from a Volleyball player with an idea for a hotel on the moon and a Basketball athlete making clothing for Women, to a Track and Field athlete creating a recording studio for inner-city youth. The program culminated with a *Shark Tank*- style venture night, during which the student-athletes presented their business plans and financial learnings to a group of fellow buffs, venture coaches, head

- coaches, and members of the athletic department. The Deming Center created the overall curriculum, taught the program and coordinated mentors and guest speakers.
- c. **48% underrepresented student participation.** We made it a focus to recruit underrepresented student athletes to participate and accomplished nearly half of all participants coming from disadvantaged communities. The Deming Center directly led this focus and recruitment process.
  - d. **100% participation from varsity sports.** We had at least one athlete from each varsity sport participate. This included lacrosse, volleyball, track and field, basketball, football and many other sports. The Deming Center met with each head coach to accomplish each sport participating.
  - e. **22 student athletes are better prepared for life!** Most importantly, our student-athletes will be better prepared for whatever path they choose after college. The Deming Center is proud to have helped develop this program. Our goal for 2021-2022, leveraging the graduates from the launch year, is 75 student-athletes participating!
6. **Explain how this activity distinguishes the center from its peers.**
- a. **First-if-its-kind.** As mentioned above, we're thrilled we were able to innovate ahead of the curve and launch this program in anticipation of the new NIL legislation.
  - b. **Community collaboration.** This has been a key to the success of the launch of this program. We had 27 community members participate in teaching and mentoring our student athletes.
  - c. **Focus on underrepresented students.** Many other centers have this focus and we're proud to have accomplished strong diversity in our inaugural program.
7. **Appendix (not included in the 5 page limit):**
- a. **Provide a center organizational chart to include faculty, staff, other personnel, and strategic partners from other disciplines.**
    - i. Attached
  - b. **Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that best reflect the goals of the interdisciplinary program.**
    - i. Years 1 & 2 Program Framing

**Sports Illustrated Article:**

<https://www.si.com/college/2021/07/01/name-image-likeness-programs-schools-ncaa>