Lynch Named a Division I Athletic Director of the Year

Michael Lynch was named the 2010–2011 Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year for the Division I Northeast Region on June 18, boosting the University’s national recognition for its athletic programs.

Lynch calls the honor a staff award. “It’s something that BU is receiving because of the hard work of a lot of people here,” he says. “I just happen to be in the lead chair right now.”

Lynch, who also is an assistant vice president, received the award during the James J. Corbett Awards Luncheon at the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) 46th annual convention, held in Orlando, Fla., in June.

The NACDA created the Under Armour award to recognize athletic directors “for their commitment and positive contribution to campuses and their surrounding communities.”

To qualify, athletic directors have to have served a minimum of five academic years, demonstrated a commitment to higher education and to student-athletes, emphasized teamwork, loyalty, and excellence, and been an inspirational leader.

Lynch fits that bill. As athletic director for the past seven years, he has encouraged BU athletes to perform their best on the court, on the ice, on the field, and in the water while emphasizing that sports is just one aspect of their BU experience. (The GPA of BU’s student-athletes recently exceeded 3.0 for the first time in more than a decade.)

Each year, Lynch gives the same speech to freshman athletes, reminding them that “99 percent of the young people that come here to participate in our program are not going to continue professionally;” and that “to come to BU and have the opportunity to wear the uniform is not something that everybody can do. It’s a gift.”

Lynch recalls that as an undergraduate student-athlete at Rollins College, his baseball coach gave him and his teammates similar advice, emphasizing the importance of getting a degree in order “to have something to fall back on.” Lynch prefers the phrase “something to build off of” for his BU athletes. He heeded his coach’s advice, earning a bachelor’s degree in political science. After pitching for both the Milwaukee Brewers and the Red Sox, he went on to get a master’s in education administration from the University of Albany.

As BU athletic director, Lynch has emphasized the importance of giving back to the community. He encourages Boston University athletes to fundraise for charities, to offer free clinics to underprivileged youth, and to volunteer at local schools, including Allston’s Jackson-Mann School, as part of the College for Every Student mentoring program.

Community work “is probably in some ways more vital than the actual knowledge they get in the classroom,” Lynch says. “It’s an opportunity for our athletes to visit with kids who may come from different backgrounds than them, to learn what it’s like to be a role model, and learn what type of an impact they can make in the kids’ lives.”

Lucy Hutyra (far right), a College of Arts & Sciences assistant professor of geography and environment, led a class of alums, among them Nancy Leveille (GRS’74) (center), at Alumni College, a three-day urban expedition hosted by the Boston University Alumni Association last June. Some 70 grads showed up for the Sustainability in the City program, which examined the many ways sustainable living affects all aspects of life. Classes led by BU faculty took a walking tour of the Arnold Arboretum and an eco-friendly bike tour.