In Brief: Food and fun at football games, new ALI cohort begins work

University Communications
September 2022

New food and gaming options are among football game day additions

"Sorry," says Chris Celona, associate athletic director for external relations and revenue generation, as a loud clanging noise interrupts his description of new game day features in Arizona Stadium this season. ""They're dropping off carbon dioxide cylinders outside my office for our T-shirt Gatling Gun."

The gun, which can fire 24 shirts at a time, is one of many new features Arizona Athletics is rolling out to improve the game day experience for fans at home football games.

“Our athletics department continues to enhance the fan experience at home football games to create a tremendous atmosphere," said David Heeke, vice president and director of athletics. "Whether it be new concession items, enhanced efficiency for sales or interactive technology for our fans inside the stadium, we continue to build our game day environment for everyone at Arizona Stadium."

One of the most important aspects of any live sporting event is, of course, the food. So, when the athletics team looked to upgrade its game day offerings, concessions were near the top of the list. New menu items include Sonoran dogs, paletas and mustache pretzels.

Celona says the process of loading up on snacks is also easier, thanks to several speedy checkout stations throughout the stadium.

Another new feature: Fans who download the Arizona Wildcats mobile app can play Bear Down Games, which is a free, prediction-based competition that lets users play against other fans to win prizes including gift cards, game tickets and more. Celona says the prizes will get bigger and better as the season progresses.

Fans can also use the app to participate in Arizona Lights, a light display that accompanies the song "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey between the third and fourth quarters. Fans can follow the prompts in the app to sync their phone's flashlight to blink in time with the song.

Read about more game day improvements below.

- Fans who use the hashtag #RiseWithUs on Twitter and Instagram may see their post on the stadium's video board during the game.
- The Fan Fiesta is moving from the Cole and Jeannie Davis Sports Center to the University of Arizona Mall west of Cherry Avenue. The event, which includes music, food, bouncy houses and more, begins three hours before kickoff.
- The Zona Zoo tailgate has been moved inside Arizona Stadium. The tailgate includes yard games, music, food, drinks and more for Zona Zoo members. Celona says having students in the stadium early will help with the traffic flow into the game as well.

Celona says many of the new features will be carrier over into men's and women's basketball games this spring.

Academic Leadership Institute Strengthens Cross-Campus Collaboration

Early morning in mid-August, with the cool nighttime monsoons still hanging in the air outside, 20 up-and-coming University leaders arrived at the Lodge on the Desert hotel. In person for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Academic Leadership Institute has kicked off the first sessions of its 2023 cohort.

The Academic Leadership Institute is a professional development program for current and emerging campus leaders to develop their leadership skills through active discussions and workshops throughout the academic year.

During their inaugural two-day session for the 20 ALI fellows, the fellows learned about their communication preferences and strengths by taking part in a profile assessment. They then developed action plans for their short- and long-term goals for the program.

Robert Stephan, associate professor of practice in the Department of Religious Studies and Classics, is hoping to learn how he can increase his impact from the classroom level to the university level.

"I think I'm reaching a ceiling in terms of the number of students I can teach in the classroom," Stephan said. "So, becoming a University leader felt like a wonderful way to continue to grow my impact on both students and the University at large."
Others, like Cammy Bellis, education and training specialist at the College of Medicine – Phoenix, are eager for the unique opportunity to network with other University leaders. Fellows are placed in peer-coaching groups of four, which will last for the entire program. Because networking is a large element of the program, opportunities are built into each session for fellows to hear from each other and from campus leaders.

"I would like to learn from others in the cohort and be able to lean on them for advice and support, while also helping them grow," Bellis said. "As the only fellow from Phoenix, I appreciate feeling supported and included in Tucson, and I hope I bring a different perspective to the group."

The Division of Human Resources and the Office of the Provost offer ALI to strengthen cross-campus collaboration and build up the University's repertoire of leaders. With the close-knit community building and networking opportunities the program provides, graduates become more connected to the University and are more aware of the happenings in other areas besides their own.

"Seeing our fellows and our team of facilitators in person during the first session was uplifting, and a great reminder about the value of coming together," said Helena Rodrigues, vice president and chief human resources officer. "Our goal with this institute is to strengthen the skill set of our mid- to senior-level leadership, and this program facilitates a community that members can lean on outside the scope of their own areas, which has enormous benefits for us as a University."

Since its inception, ALI has graduated 292 fellows over 14 cohorts. Of those fellows, 91% have stayed at the University, and 86% have received a promotion. Some alumni have gone on to achieve titles such as vice provost, dean, senior vice president and deputy chief.

To learn more about ALI and its benefits[2], visit the ALI webpage.

The 2023 ALI fellows are listed below.

- Nina Bates, Director, Operations and Strategic Initiatives, Office of the Provost
- Cammy Bellis, Co-Director, Health Equity Longitudinal Curricular Theme, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, College of Medicine – Phoenix
- Brian Berrellez, Director, Intelligence and Data Analytics, Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension
- Vincent Borleske, Director, Engineering Research, Administration Services, College of Engineering
- Zelieann Craig, Assistant Dean for Research, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Associate Professor, School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences
- Brian Cunningham, Director, Project Logistics, Office of Strategic Initiatives
- Sabah Currim, Manager of Data and Development, Office of Budget and Planning
- Jennifer Schultz De La Rosa, Director of Strategy, Comprehensive Pain and Addiction Center
- Amy K. Kennedy, Associate Clinical Professor and Assistant Department Head, Department of Pharmacy Practice and Science
- Amelia Kraehe, Associate Vice President for Equity in the Arts, College of Fine Arts
- Trevor Ledbetter, Director, Office of Sustainability, Business Affairs
- Kimberly Marchesseault, Co-Director, Business Communication Program, Eller College of Management
- Anjani Polit, Systems Engineer and Program Manager, Lunar and Planetary Laboratory
- Mary Rigdon, Research Professor and Associate Director, Center for the Philosophy of Freedom
- Alex Robie Harris, Senior Project Director, Office of University Initiatives
- Robert Stephan, Associate Professor of Practice, Department of Religious Studies and Classics
- Amanda Stevens, Assistant Director, Operations, Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension, and Treasurer, Arizona Experiment Station
- Amanda Tashjian, Associate Professor of Practice, Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies
- Mary Venezia, Chief of Staff, Enrollment Management and University Integrated Planning
- Monica Yellowhair, Assistant Director, Community Outreach and Engagement, University of Arizona Cancer Center