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WMU Bronco *Night at the Museum*

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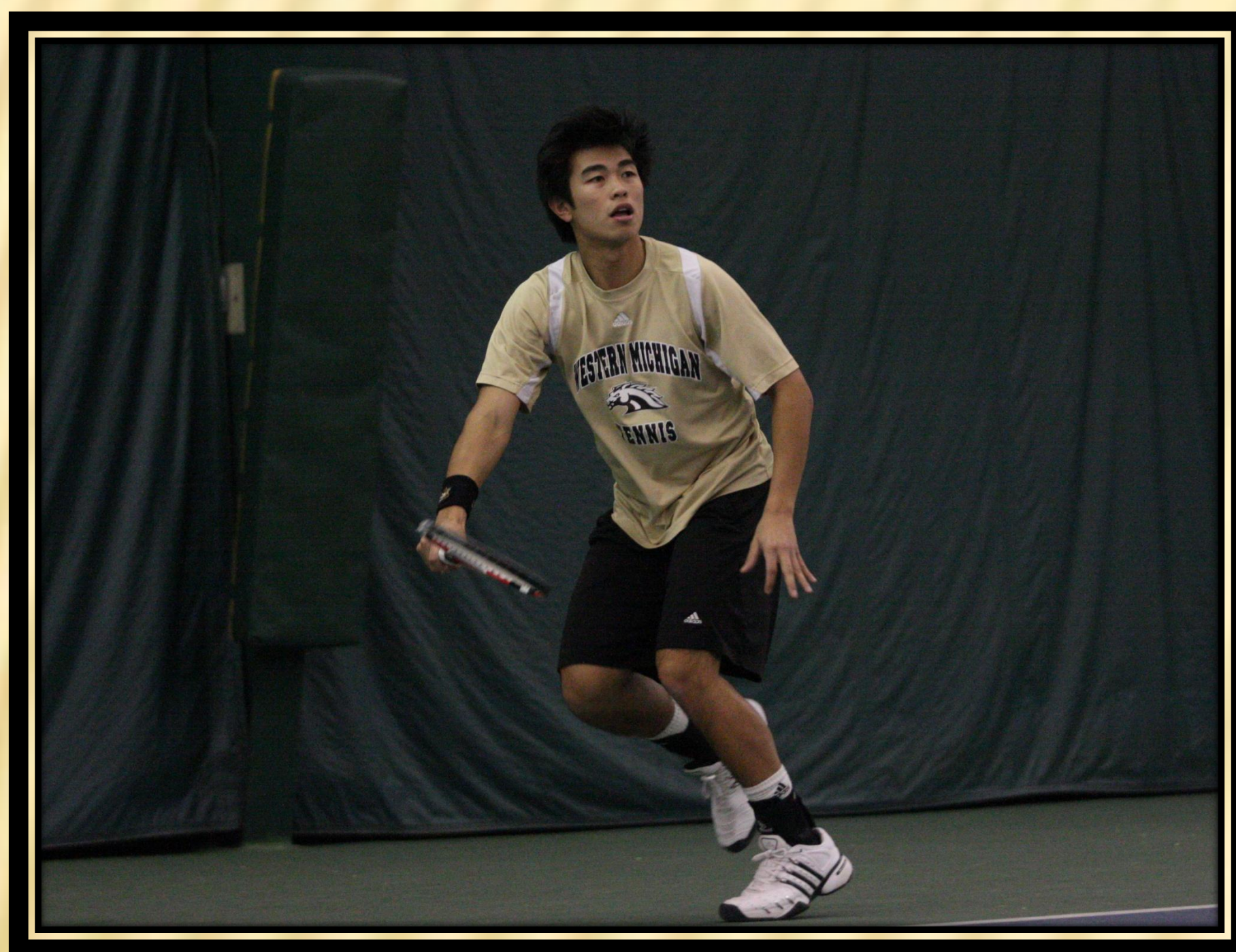
WMU Bronco *Night at the Museum*

Jody Brylinsky, Dannie Alexander, Jeffrey Stone, Dennis Corbin



Purpose of the Project

Knowing that healthy team dynamics make for healthy teams, all Bronco athletic teams were encouraged to visit the exhibit *"RACE: Are We So Different?"* and participate in a follow-up discussion facilitated by a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Council. The **RACE** exhibit facilitated conversations were to extend participant learning through self-reflection on their personal experiences with racial identity, race issues and racism, as well as the experiences and perspectives of others.



Event Logistics

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum reserved a special showing of the RACE exhibit for Bronco athletes on Dec. 5th from 5-9 pm.

Coaches were asked to assist athletes in scheduling 45 minutes to explore the array of interactive displays at the exhibit. Additional 45 minute sessions were also scheduled for participation in small group discussions, to be held immediately after visiting the exhibit in the museum auditorium.

Mission of the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics

The mission of the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics at Western Michigan University shall be to produce NCAA Division I-A programs for men and women characterized by excellence in Athletics and Academics while being recognized as a leader among ethical, non-discriminatory, and fiscally well-managed departments. Excellence in athletic programs is determined by academic achievement, the development of character, maturity, and a sense of fair play by student-athletes while being competitive. Excellence in athletic programs is also intended to engender support for the institution among many constituents, including student, faculty, alumni, and friends at the local, state, and national levels. In striving to become a leader among peer institutions, the department subscribes fully to the philosophy and regulations set forth by the Central Collegiate Hockey Association, the Mid-American Conference, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The Division of Intercollegiate Athletics operates within the regulations and non-discriminatory procedures established by the Board of Trustees of Western Michigan University.

Diversity related goals:

- To provide effective direction according to University policies, including its Affirmative Action policy, and a commitment to minority representation at the University;
- To promote a climate of mutual respect with an appreciation for gender and cultural diversity;



Student Athlete Advisory Committee

The Student-Athlete Advisory Board consists of representatives from each team, and meets every month during the academic year in order to discuss academic and athletics issues that affect student-athletes. Coaches nominate two upperclassmen from each team to the board, the members of which are also active as a group within the MAC.

Jody Brylinsky, professor in the Department of HPER, met with the Student Athlete Advisory representatives to discuss facilitating follow-up group discussions.

Discussion questions:

- What was your general impression of the exhibit?
- What did you think was most interesting?
- How did the exhibit make you feel?
- Are there any personal stories you wish to share about race?



Participants

Student athletes (n = 140) from 8 teams participated in the after hours event at the museum. A number of other athletes participated with classmates as part of their regularly scheduled class activities. There were two small group discussion sessions for the athletes in attendance.

Sample Feedback from Students*

General impressions of RACE exhibit:

- *"The exhibit definitely helped my understanding of race..."*
- *"I liked the interaction but the reading content became overwhelming..."*
- *"A lot of variety...each part could be made personal..."*
- *"A bit overwhelming... could have used some structure to the order ..."*
- *"informative and unique..."*
- *"really eye opening..."*

Most interesting parts of the exhibit;

- *"Discussion on Native American mascots..."*
- *"Information on slaves..."*
- *"Map on floor charting descendants from Africa..."*
- *"Quiz on knowledge about race..."*
- *"Historical accounts of 'Race-based science..."*
- *"wall of quotes (Hapa Project)... sheds new light on how people see themselves"*
- *"discussion of race and genetics..."*
- *"Who's talking display..."*
- *"information on housing and GI Bill disparities..."*
- *"Jim Crow era display..."*
- *"medical exhibit....prescription drug issues..."*

The exhibit raised feelings of:

- *"disgust...., I felt somewhat ignorant....not very proud of my country"*
- *"it tore me up to see how students were tormented about race by other students..."*
- *"I laughed at the poor science....amazed at the census debate..."*
- *"new awareness of white privilege ..."*
- *"guilt... what it means to have unearned privilege..."*
- *"need to be more aware of my actions..."*
- *"As a White male I know I won't encounter this (Race) bias...but I hope I am never part of it either."*
- *"I should never assume...I realized I was judging people..."*
- *"Frustration on how we (the government) treat people... especially veterans"*
- *"the Jim Crow experience made me feel uneasy..."*

Content of Personal Stories;

- *"High school experiences with Native American mascots..."*
- *"High school coaches believing that Black athletes are just better..."*
- *"made me remember watching police treat Black friends unfairly..."*
- *"reminded me of a time I wasn't trusted by a fellow student member of a student association...based on my color..."*
- *"I can remember when I saw my first Black person... 3rd grade..."*

*Feedback provided by combined student groups attending the exhibit, not just athletes.