

Interview with AUC Athletics director Rober Bob Reasso.

Robert Reasso (RS): "I have a Master's of education, you know, and I'm a coach by trade, which is, I always consider the purest form of teaching because you have motivated learners, they really want to get better they really want to learn. So rather than somebody just sitting in the class who has to get a grade in the class, so I think it's my purpose in life has always been trying to serve people. And I think I've always tell my players that they should look to serve, they should look to find something they have a passion for, and not chase money. If you do that the best of your ability. The money will follow. So that's how I've lived my life. And you found your passion in soccer. Yeah, I found my passion in, in, in, in football, I mean of offens football soccer my whole life. But I've also been an ad for 10 years, you know, I've taught so you know, and so just being in the athletic environment, I think we The other thing it does do to keeps you young, you know, because I hang out with, you know, 18 to 23 years old every day and basically listen to the same music, you know, I talk the same way etc, etc. So it's, it keeps you young."

So how is your education helps you discover your own convictions and live by?

RS: "Well, I was very fortunate when I got my master's. I got my masters at Springfield College in Massachusetts. What at the time I went there was the mecca of sports education and physical education in the country. And their whole ethos a motto is mind, body and spirit, mind, body and spirit. Yeah. I even mentioned that here when I speak to our ministers about it, when we try to do and what I've tried to do and what people should try and do is train both train or three, their mind, their body and their spirit. And I've kind of used that as a guiding light as I've made decisions and everything I've done in my life. And I've tried to bring that here into this arena. Because, of course, I wear multiple hats, you know, so I have to."

So how has your tradition in engender the sense that you are capable of?

RS: "How is it made me capable? Yeah. I think your educational in to some extent, bachelor's degrees, just tell people your educational your ability to learn. I think your masters gets more finite than you you start at zero and then you come to a point. If you want for a doctor, it's a different thing. I just think that you know, It's, it makes you find out what you want to do and where your passions lie. Some people go through and can't find out where their passion lies. You know what other people find out what their passions lie. And some people like I believe, so they can actually do it without education"

RS: "You know, there's, there's so many young people typically more so than maybe in America and here, you know, I think it happens here. You know, the cost of education in

America is absolutely ridiculous. You know, average schools costs \$40,000 \$50,000, you know, high, high end schools costs 60 to \$70,000. Now, they incur so much debt that a lot of American kids are becoming, they're putting their energy into their, what their passion is, and they're becoming entrepreneurs. You know, so I don't think there's only one way to build the life. You know, I think there's enough examples, whether it's Facebook or Google or whatever the case may be. There's enough examples of that. So there's a future."

So how has your education helps you discover your talent and capacities? Then to bring them to life. So it wasn't like you're starting high school or like college.

RS: "I think it was late college because I was playing ball, you know, mostly When did you play soccer Of course and most the time when you're playing ball, you know, you're so focused on yourself, you know, in your team in that. And I was also I had a 3.1 College at 3.5. My masters so I was always focused on education to I think it was easier than because we weren't, there weren't as many distractions nowadays, there's so many distractions, you know, social media, I think at any one point is is fabulous, and I use it every day. But I think at the same time, it destroys people's mental health because they, they spend too much time looking at what I want. I grew up we didn't have you know, so it was easier to focus on your friends, your education and your focus on your life. Yeah, well, this trying to Show buddy, you're living a perfect life. But will you post on Instagram or it's crazy? So behance"

So how is your education forces acceptance of yourself?

RS: "I don't know a few year education really forces acceptance of yourself as much as your lifetime experience forces."

RS: "I think this is why a lot of young people struggle a lot with mental health, not that old people have mental health issues. So many people in the world have mental health issues. But when you're young, and you go through a tough time, you don't have lifetime experiences to tell you, you're going to be okay. That's it. I think as you get older, you have your bumps and bruises along the way, you know, you learn that Okay, I will come back. So I don't know if it's my education, and it's done that as much as my life. Education started me on the way. So 10 lifetime experiences as played more. So it's like a bit of both."

RS: "But the experiences I think as you grow it's mostly experience. I mean, you know, you're you I always say you can't make the right decisions you can be a leader without making mistakes. You learn more from your mistakes than you do your successes."

Okay, so in what ways would you say, sir? So would you say that your education helps you discover schools that extended beyond your academic and professional life?

RS: "Yeah, I think set me on a path again. I think it's set me on the path you know, you know, I got my masters when I was I went right away and got my masters which was you know, I wouldn't I'm not the kind of guy that would go back and have a full time job so I knew I had to do it. So I took two years as I was coaching to and so my set goals for myself that I you know, I wanted to be a division one coach, which is very hard to do, but it's actually when I was when I was in the States. I was have coach Nathan coordinate. You like he was a pretty close coach. And because he's The one who brought me from it was like, it was like watching the games like the FIFA World Cup games. There wasn't the World Cup It was like the semis to go to the World Cup and he actually saw me and he's like come over and play so so as I was like talking to he was a Juco coach and community colleges in college but he said the like his dream was like to become a demon go with but he kept explaining how extremely difficult really is or not really hard. I I set a goal for myself that was going to be won by 30. And I was never to lose. Now really isn't nobody I did it at 30."

RS: "I became a division one coach at age 30. But then, you know, then my, my growth spurt and my learning had it had to jump off the roof because I I learned so much. It's just a short period of time, but it was you know, I didn't really ever have an ambition to be in that just came to just you know, but the problem was when I left Rutgers in the same dorm room, Recent actually a coach a coach, I've tried off for them, they just meditate

and go. But I coached at Rutgers with 21. Judges for 29 years. And we feel we're at this, we jumped all over the place from it. Yeah, it was how the education discover your schools, and the lie, of course, and everything had to accelerate. And that was I was talking about that beginning you learn as you go. I mean, you know, you know, being a division one coach. We talked about being an idea I was in it. I've been in it for 10 years. But the reason why I became an idea is there were no soccer jobs open. You know, when I started at Rutgers, there were 190 Division One programs, and there were 60 women. Now because of gender equity in Title Nine, there's 360 women, and two, one and format. Anybody that has an American college football team has some they believe they care about gender equity, because they give at 85 football scholarships. So they don't delay in women's soccer sport, and they don't need men. Soccer. So right now Arizona, Arizona State Miami, Florida, Florida State, Georgia, Tennessee, Southern Cal, none of men's soccer. So when I left and I was looking for another job, there were no jobs. You know, so if I was a woman's coach, I could just I could have gotten a job in a heartbeat because it's 360 opportunities was a football coach. I got American football coach and we got a job and working but you know, so the people always want to be a good administrator. So I applied for a job I got a day job so probably some passionate like, wow, I'm selling athletics but then I've been an ad for a decade and I think you know, all but to those years I've coached to Yeah, so trying to coach and athletic director is."

It's pretty hard. Because like when I was in the States, our AD used to my cadence because we were like everyone, especially the students on scholarship.

especially with students on scholarship, like because they know the cards like for the meals and all attached to the We always like I was honestly, I always had to rush to the end like every one day two days, ask him for help, like, Can you give me that? I have something in my classes, can you help out with that?

RS: "he used his they must had a really small shop or he's not organized. Because if he's organized as a bigger shop, he's not dealing with that. Now he was and I always say with leaders, leaders can't look at their toes and do the minutiae, or do the little things like that. Because if they're doing that they can't look out into the horizon and pick out the big things as always those after my first year, I was kind of like confused, why is the AD."

So in what ways would you say education enrich or added to your life beyond the classroom?

RS: "You know, I think there's a point where, like I said, I think Mike your education sets you up. And I think, as I said before, they really drill into your head at Springfield, mind, body and spirit and enjoy Your head every day mattify to their their crested a triangle which represents the mind body and spirit, you know. So I think it's set you up but you know it's down to your own passion. It's I mean everybody 10 people could have gone through the same education I did. And and maybe someone more driven, maybe some are less driven, maybe some found a passion, maybe some didn't find a passion. I think

to some extent it all can be put down on your education has been put down in your personality and what you value and how badly you want to be the best. And I wanted to be the best for everybody.”

So digitisation affect how you view yourself in relation to the world around you?

RS: “Yeah, it helps. It helps with that question. It helps without question, but you know, again, my education was a long time ago, that if I say that my education helped me all through my life that shaped everything around me or to some extent you Yeah but you know at the end of the day me You know, I've lived a long rich life if I was just relying on what I got to college I wouldn't have lived that long it's like you know you have to go out there and make mistakes and figure things so you like education is like what puts you it's a jumping off point it's a job.”

RS: “Like I said, your bachelor teaches, you know, tells your future employers your ethical, you can listen you can learn and you can carry out test your masters means you're very very good at listening and telling you whatever your discipline is, but at the end of the day, that you know you still got to go out there and figure out how to do your job.”

RS: "The even though I got a masters of education I had, I had to take Exercise Science, biomechanics, physiology of exercise, so on learned how the body reacts to activity. I just didn't become a teacher. I became a master teacher in my discipline. One of the other major problems in the world today is, is that, especially in America, so many coaches who used to be educators and used to learn all the things I learned, physiology, exercise, biomechanics, etc, etc. They're there, they're gone now, because everybody is a business major, a marketing major and so when they train their teams, they don't really know what's going on in the body. They don't know about recovery and periodization and those kind of things. You can read about it, but it's so much different studying there. My athletic trainer and dear friend who was the athletic trainer at Rutgers, Princeton, San Diego State and now is the athletic trainer for the navy seals and San Diego. He says now, all everybody all coaches try to do is beat the kids up. They don't realize it rest and mental rest and physical rest of my life. Oh, We said well we're taking the day off today they're doing a shoot around but they you know, but we're not doing anything else I said that's not a day off. Anytime the kid has to come to the gym, it's a workout."

So you're saying you given them a day off you're not really giving people a break when I was in when I was in basketball like a shoot around can be like you just walking around you know getting your shots up and just to not lose the sense for the game

RS: "without question, but it's still the I said it is going to give you a day and I'm not talking about the beginning of season. I'm talking about near the end of the season when

everybody's burned down to get ready for the NCAA Tournament. You want to give them a day off. They still need to shoot guess what they don't have to shoot. You know what they need that time they need to rest their minds and bodies and relax and get ready because you know how it how it is in America. You play and you get to a point specially hoops. You play Saturday you play Tuesday you play Friday and Sunday. So, let me see you forgot how to shoot at the end of the season now. So sometimes just not coming to the gym. That's, that's really, it's mental and physical."

RS: "I'm pretty, pretty sure you seen how coaches are needed. They're not the brightest, to be honest, most of them are the brightest. That's why I actually stopped playing basketball because when I played pro here, I was like, No way I'm doing this it was awful."

RS:" I only had the experience of coaching kids that have been coached by Egyptian coaches. And they tell me what they do they run a power bar. I mean, this is off topic, but I can really talk about this all day. It's sort of like how to coach music. We were dying and we just need water Yeah, like hydration is like essentially any sort like no, you're not gonna start excited for like the where the message is that no, you're not ridiculous. He. He gets fired from here"

What Yeah, of course. What do you think water like I can't like it when I was in like when I was in practice, like I could whenever I wanted to just go there's like a waterfall when they're always pushing rolling.

Like, I don't even have to ask for drinking. So yeah, so the like, the thing is these kind of questions, they're kind of very redundant, but I still have to ask them there's only three more left. So the next question is what would you say education equipped you with you that the tools you needed to help you navigate life's challenges and uncertainties

RS: "Yes, exactly. So it's no platform it's just starting off in a lifetime experience of something more. Exactly. So yeah, like what I what I really learned from you is that the the through what the what the BS is and what the Masters is and how it sets you off for life and how you experienced really enrich your life and how really helps you like go through each milestone. If I graduated with my masters and walked in this job, I can never do it. Yeah, for institution experiences. I believe that to be honest, I believe it. But do some issues over your education has affected your sense of confidence in your abilities.

I think it does when you start out then Okay, every coach every person has has feelings of Where we were never good enough for the team's good enough you know but I think your experience again you know gives you the advantage you know it's going to get done and and the other thing is too is continuing to study your craft especially especially in sports education because you can just like studied sports and all that the biology stuff

when you're just going to be confident playing basketball for example. No you gotta have to play the game you're gonna have to code if you want to be a coach you're gonna have to actually coach continue your education I have studied in and look at this pay for you to study at Barcelona Real Madrid Chelsea Manchester United see the pictures you know but so I but I continually strive to learn about still striving learn about my game. So you know, it's see To me, this is expert players and it's not about your education that education is a life long project. It doesn't stop me with w college or your masters or your It's a life long thing and the people who stop learning that people stop learning are doomed to fail."

You learn every day of your life. so in what ways would you say your education affected your ability to communicate your ideas with other but now it's your like, your you've been a coach and been a student athlete, it's all about communication.

RS: "It's all about Well, yeah, but some people are blessed with the ability to move people and some people are some people are blessed with the ability to speak to people some people want people that are leaders some Yeah, some are not so you know, your education could get you there. But eventually you either have to have what it takes so you don't have to Texas You know, I've you know you I always tell them you have to be able to move people your words, you have to be able to measure actions. Yeah, well, you always have that's what you try and tell your your players and I tell all my assistant coaches, you need to walk and talk and act in a way that makes your players want to

emulate of who you are when they go. You know, when you when you lead young men or young women, you know, they look at you and they, they, they say, Okay, I want to be like that. It's like you look at your father, I want to be like that, you know what I mean? And so you have to carry yourself in a certain way you have to, you know, that's why that's part of teaching.

So my question, you've been a student athlete and a coach, you've been an ad, you've been all over the world for sporting event. And I've only had, I've been a student at the I played at a pro for a couple of years. You need it. So one of the things that I was troubled with was my education like, so I really was. I loved sports. I played basketball since I was five years old. So basketball was my go to like I would like to skip out on outings a night out just to go shoot the ball all the time. So now keep shooting. Wait until one to wear that go home. I have like 30 minutes left just like study or like, and I actually couldn't. So in high school days, I really, like failed a lot of classes because of that, not because I was stupid. I was like, like, late. If you're not aware, I mean, it's pretty. It's pretty dumb. So yeah, I mean, how did you like go through that, like me? I didn't?

RS: "I didn't, I didn't, I didn't because growing up my father, you know, if I didn't get my academics done, and again, I didn't have the distraction you don't have. I mean, you know, I think the worst thing that older people can do is look back and hearken back to the good old days when you know, the life was better. You know, I'm not saying life was better before technology because it wasn't even I couldn't function without technology.

You know, I'm on Instagram, Twitter, you know, Facebook, I'm on my on everything. But I think you're the issue in the 21st century is I think that kids a to distract them analysis manchester united with Jesse Lynn Gordon Pogba and all them all are going to sell scar just told them look, calm down your social media you can't be doing associated with big pros can't be doing social media and doing your job you need to live eat and sleep football is plenty of time. Obviously for you, that's it, but you can't get that message across like the other night. When I asked kids to put their phone away. I thought they were going to like panic. You know, like put your phone away. Oh, there you go. And everyone should they finally put them away. But I even noticed that my staff you know, I even noticed that when I go into meetings here. Everybody has a bloody phone now. You know, like if I had my phone out right now and my phone's paying. If I turned around and checked it out and I'm doing an interview, you know, I'm not paying attention you people have lost the art of communication. You know, your generation and A lot of people my generation because they become addicted to their phones to are losing the art of actual communication and personal feelings because they think tweeting somebody or, or send an Instagram post or Snapchat or is communicate is not being communicated. You're not communicating and how many likes you get, it's not communicating. You know, and if you put it when people post something they don't get any likes, it hurts, it hurts their self esteem. Like you know, it's a vicious cycle. So you know, it it was easier than it was easier than trying to focus on playing and being an athlete and because you say you would do this this and this and you should you know, we would go into gym play and play whatever sport you're playing at the time really late at night and then we went home know what our buddies we weren't looking at our phones. There's a guy said and yet, like because like I believe the phone consumes

more than five please five hours of your waking day like when you are your phone.

Yeah, that's this at least. So like you You actually like less like it's impossible to say like take them all the whole five away to safety like just two hours away a day then you have the chance to like maybe socialize communicate normally you get a chance to study like to actually like study for your especially for student athletes because they're the people that struggle a lot. That stuff goes to time management most people I'm very good assignments you when I when I need to be good at time management to be successful. To give you an analogy to what I was really bad at let assistant at at Rockers, just posted on Instagram. I'm very interesting. Two pictures. It says weight room in 1975. And everybody's in there like it was from 75 pumping weights. Just going after weight room 2019 everybody's on five people are sitting on machines looking at their phone. I mean, you know, come on. I mean, if you can't get through a workout, I look at your bloody phone, you know, and why do you have to pick A certain song, you know, pick, pick a song set, you should have a workout set, you know, well but the you know, the problem is it's it's it's a, it's not going to be realized until 1020 now with their pity and change and maybe five years, it's destroying art. It's destroying the world. But what do you end up?"

I was a victim really bad time management. I was I was horrible at it. So I like the only thing that actually made me kind of decently know how to work it out is that many times I failed because of time management. Like I would like crack everything. Now I'm not young, like that, I'm saying that because like, when I was a student athlete, really, it was really hard for me to like to get my work, right. And then I have to go to the gym before practice, then shoot around after practice. And then I have to go to the library to study tables. And it was like, it was a lot. It was so I

couldn't I was like, I was 16. When I went to college. I was very young when I first started college. So I was Young and I had problems with time management and I believe that's like a problem with a lot of student athletes, especially the ones we're not really taking it that seriously they're here it's all here It's worse than that it's much worse but you know why? Maybe Why don't they kind of tell you why I think so my opinion because in the states you only get to play if you get good grades. In Egypt, you get to do even if you're not going to be like it doesn't really have

RS: "this funny perception of problem I mean, you know, when you talk about pro ball and kids here I have wondered basketball players tell them they are men's soccer players. Yeah, I'm a professional player. I said Really? He said my thought What do you get paid you get paid anything. You know so like you get to but you're calling yourself professional. Because that's what the club's idea. And the club's you're just you're just a piece of merchandise to them. You're not getting you know."

You know. I played for one of the one of the teams you need and I actually got 5000 pounds a month which is like worth \$50 a month. That living in your professional like professional athletes. They get minimum 100 k a month. That's professionals.

RS: "That's, that's why I laugh when kids say that, but it's okay"

So, so one of the things that, like student athletes really face like all over the world is, like I said, some people, some, most of them lack the education because they put their focus on their sports. And some actually, like studies have shown that unconsciously they gain mental

disorders, they're not severe. They're not big, but there's like stress disorders. And there's disorders where you're really competitive, which is bad sometimes, like extra competitive and there's disorders was like sleep disorders. Were very can like really like, like I said, sleep nights and all the types of you get ice cream sodas, Jennifer with all its minor minor mental disorders, but when they all add up, they really result in like a small mysap obstacle in your life where you like, like I said it was time management on top of all those because I've been to a sleep disorder.

RS: "the issue is that mental health issues are more in the forefront now, which is a good thing. People are more willing to talk about than he used to be, which is a good thing, okay? Because you speak a stigma anytime you say mental health is no longer a stigma as much when they say mental health. But I think you know, when I'm coaching when especially when I was coaching in America, you know, I constantly tell my players, you know, an hour before you go to sleep, you can't turn off all your devices. You can't go to bed with your laptop, you can't go to bed with your phone. You really hate cell phones don't you know, I don't want to hate them. But I'll give you an example on my phone. Well, because let's put it this way. You could waste an hour, your phone could ping and you could waste an hour but just Scrolling through your Instagram, you get eat and I call it getting lost in you get lost. And the next thing you know an hour goes by. And I, people here were very weird hours because they they drink so much caffeine during this most caffeinated society in the world. They always said we don't drink alcohol, but we drink caffeine. Well, yeah. Instead of sitting out all night and having a few beers and have a

couple giggles, you drink a cup of coffee and go to sleep, you're not going to sleep, you drink a cup of coffee. But what and so what invariably happens and it's even the administrators here, you know, people send me an email at 130 at night. I mean, you don't get that in America unless it's an emergency. So the example I was going to give you as I didn't turn off my number that I use before I came here wouldn't turn off my notifications. You know, and I would tell my I'm tell people look, you know, if you want to be my sponsor next to my bed, but if you need me if you gotta call me, because, you know, I'm not gonna you know, I'm not going to pick up a text right here. I didn't turn off my notifications for a while. I'm getting emails at 130 at night, you know in a business email. So I turn around and look at it. And then as it always shit, I'm going to answer this now I'm not going to answer this guy, what am I gonna do with this? And the next thing I'm doing? I'm looking at my phone. And then my Oh, my daughter texted me Oh, my daughter sent me an Instagram. You know, like, it's not that I hate cell phones, having a look. I was the first guy in my athletic department to have a cell phone. I was the first guy having a laptop was the first time How donyou it's how you use it. And I tell my athletes what's up. I said you cannot go to bed with a device on because one hour, two hours, three hours will be causing you The problem is you that's what a sleep expert says first. Go to bed the same time it's supposed to be quiet. You might even have ambient noise or something. You're supposed to be calming your spirit down. Those bloody things don't come your spirit down. But that's only the tip of the iceberg. Because a lot of the mental health issues today are caused by the fact that every everybody sits there and thinks that that person that's posted stuff is living the greatest life in the world and and they're getting so many likes and I'm not getting as many likes into our self worth is hurt someone is friends with you on Instagram a your friend. They may know you may have

some friends there. And the other thing too is you we're instead of having common interaction with people, look when you're going through a tough time. You see a psychologist, you know, the psychologist is somebody that listens. You need to sit down with your friends and talk to each other when you're going through a hard time. But everybody's too busy on their bloody phones even talk to each other. So, you know, it's, let's say there was no mental health issues because there was there's always been that elephant. So I like the fact that we're talking about them more now in a 24 hour opening night, but it is so exacerbated by the fact that we're addicted now to a device. We're protected. So thislike, so being addicted to devices, that's that makes it worse. It makes it harder to Worse, because you can't. Now what we did in America, we actually had an app and I tried to solve these people and to do it. We there was an app that we bought we got for all our students and all our student athletes. And the app says it was a multi faceted app. How do I prepare for games? How do I prepare for tests? What do I do if I'm struggling in."

RS: "It was ridiculous. It was very wrong. I couldn't even find anything when I was trying to apply here. But the app that they have also downs deals with social issues. What if I'm not sleeping? What if I'm feeling myself? What if I feel depressed? So a student athlete who's addicted to his phone has his phone in his hand, it's like, all the time he has any stress, he can actually go on the app, look online, okay, here's five or six ways of dealing with that. You know, actually, it's in America, we and I wanted to get the app here. Oh, and, and I feel a little depressed. Well, here's five or six things to take them out you go.

Well, of course we need that, you know, and everybody needs it. But you know that phone is taking the place of talking to your friends. You know, newsy, or when you talk to a psychologist, what they do mostly is asking questions and listening, no football, so you get it out. So you start solving, is it not? you're solving your own problems, but everybody needs people to talk to people that texted him or what's up? Trying to finish with this is"

the last question is so great. So from your life experiences in like sports, education, all that all that type of crazy traveling and all that. So it was like a color colored knife and points. So from your experience? What do you think is the most or like the worst problem or like the obstacle the student athletes or not even student athletes, athletes that our students graduate or anything has to do like it sports like had to face.

RS: "I think there's different stress levels is much more stress in America around college athletics, much more views. They're sick while you're in college, get your college football player. You have to get to the gym at 630 in the morning to lift then eat breakfast at the gym. When you go to classes. Then you come back because you have to have study hall. Then you go to practice then you watch film then you go to music destroyed at 20 hour roll. Then they send gas' to the classes and then at night you go to study study sessions with the GPAs and you leave the gym at 10 o'clock at night and is an American football player. So when is during the summer, so when is preseason camp starting those coats are pieces of Canada. And they finished the ball game on January 5 school

started on January 18, January 19 at 6:30am they were in the weight room. So the obsessive compulsion of dominating every minute of an athlete's time is Much worse in America than it is here. And that's why the NCAA tries to control how much you can do with a student athlete and how many hours you can spend. But the problem is the NCAA turns a blind item to American football and basketball.

They like them. They're only supposed to exit. They're only supposed to do conditioning exercises in the summer. And if you go to the top of any Stadium in America, and you watch the football team practice, this position coaches down and there's running, they're running past patterns, they're running, they're practicing. So you know, I think the biggest thing is that most people think more is better. Yeah. This is what I said about shooting even athletes.”