

Keynote Speaker



Wednesday, April 1, 2009

8:30 AM—9:30 AM

Jonathan Davis "JD"
New Mexico State University
Previous Affiliation: Feather River College

Jonathan Davis "JD" is currently a junior defensive tackle carrying a 3.0 GPA for New Mexico State University football. Playing for an NCAA Division 1 football program has been a lifelong dream for JD, but the journey has been challenging and uncertain at times. JD has persevered against the odds, and now he is helping his younger brother follow in his footsteps.

Originally from Marion, South Carolina, JD grew up in an environment where a college education was not necessarily an option. Although his high school football team was extremely successful, boasting 300 wins in 30 years, JD is only the seventh player from his high school to play college football and only the third to play at a Division 1 university. In high school JD earned a 1.7 GPA and completed the minimum amount of academic work in order to play football. From his high school principal to his head football coach, JD heard the message that "college isn't for everyone," in other words don't bother. JD had never even heard of community college until he was in 10th grade when his cousin played for a community college and eventually transferred to a university.

In JD's senior year, he received a couple of offers from Division 2 schools, but his dream was to play D-1. His test scores were high enough for D-1, but his low GPA held him back from his dream. Then JD heard of Feather River College from other South Carolina players and decided to try it out. After arriving at Feather River College, JD soon learned of the high expectations on the field and in the classroom and rose to the occasion. In addition to starting for FRC, JD kept his grades up in order to transfer and was a leader on the FRC Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team that finished 5th in the nation in 2007. During his service with SIFE, JD branched his friendships beyond athletics, actively participated and served in his community, and even found a part-time job tutoring a boy with developmental disabilities. The nurturing environment at Feather River College allowed JD to expand his horizon of options for his life.

After transferring to NMSU, JD realized his younger brother's exposure to negative influences would hinder his chances at a college education. While attending college full-time and keeping up with the rigors of football, JD took custody of his brother to ensure that he would prioritize education during his last year in high school. JD plans to graduate with his BA in Individualized Studies in Spring 2010. Then continue on with a Master's of Business Administration while he completes his last year of eligibility in the 2010-11 season.