

Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009
Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) states that it has specified new unit goals that are synergistic with the University's goals. The Review Team recommends that additional effort be concentrated on developing specific strategies to meet all of the Challenges in the *Framework*. These efforts should include systems of accountability and clearly defined outcomes. A statistical breakdown of all ICA positions should be provided in future updates. The composition of ICA's leadership and management – including high level coaching and administrative positions – deserves a very aggressive plan of action beyond that which was reported in the 1998-2003 report in order for the unit to be recognized as a workforce leader in diversity.

Routine exit interviews are conducted with student-athletes transferring out of the University to gain a better understanding of their experiences at Penn State; however, it is unclear whether the focus specifically relates to experiences of underrepresented athletes. The development of mission and vision statements is to be commended. However, the vision statement, "operational procedures focus not only on economic efficiency but on developing inclusive attitudes" requires further elaboration. Also, the Review Team recommends consideration of a dedicated position, such as a multicultural coordinator, to enhance coordination of diversity-related initiatives within ICA.

ICA reports it has been active in the Big Ten Advisory Commission, which addresses climate and gender equity issues. It is unclear whether service on the Executive Steering Committee of the ICA Diversity Council and the Student-Athlete Advisory Board (SAAB) are new ventures. It will be important to provide additional information and data in the next update.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ ICA's definition should be expanded to be more inclusive of all populations. The Review Team recommends that ICA refer to the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity's Web site (<http://www.equity.psu.edu>) to develop a more inclusive description of diversity.
RESPONSE: The definition has been expanded to include gender and gender identity and has been updated within the revised 2004-09 Diversity Plan.
- ❖ Creation of a "Commitment Poster" is commendable; however, more information on the diversity content of the poster would be helpful. The unit is encouraged to include the revised definition of diversity.
RESPONSE: This particular goal of creating a "Commitment Poster" is in a developmental stage. It is an action item that the Diversity Council will focus on this coming year (2004-05). The Council will brainstorm ideas and ultimately decide on a final design that will hopefully capture and communicate the diverse make-up and diversity goals of ICA.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The report indicates that the Diversity Council has a rotation of representatives every two years. It is important to stagger membership on the Diversity Council so that the entire council does not turn over completely in each two-year cycle.
RESPONSE: While we have stated that each member serves a two year cycle, historically we have been sensitive to the importance of maintaining continuity and as a result not all council member's service ends at the same time. In addition, many of our advisory board members have agreed to serve lengthy terms in support of maintaining consistent leadership of the group.
- ❖ The creation of a "Diversity Brochure" is positive; however, it is unclear how the brochure will be implemented to reinforce ICA's commitment to diversity. More information on the development (who is developing it and why), content (its purpose and audience), and anticipated impact should be included.
RESPONSE: The idea of a "Diversity Brochure" is in a developmental stage and is a project that the Diversity Council and the Morgan Center staff will focus on for completion during the 2005-06 academic year. The idea of developing a brochure was suggested by the Morgan Center staff as a way of communicating the diversity goals of the Athletic Department and Morgan Center to current

students and prospects while exposing them to the various diversity resources available to Penn State students.

- ❖ Mechanisms to identify and address climate issues were not included. Further, approaches for enhancing climate were not included. The Review Team recommends ICA develop a systematic approach to measuring climate issues and developing appropriate responses.

RESPONSE: At the moment, some of our primary mechanisms used to identify and improve climate-related issues are through dialogue within the Diversity Council and our exit interviewing procedures that are performed by our senior-level administrators.

- The Review Team recommends encouraging representation and involvement from ICA within the unit and at a University-wide level on commissions that foster diversity and equity (e.g., the Commissions, Forum for Black Affairs, etc.)

RESPONSE: Any University-wide commissions that request Athletic Department representation are shared with the Athletic Director. In response to the any specific university-wide commission requests, the Athletic Director will assign staff and resources to support such efforts. At two department-wide meetings each year, once at the beginning of the year and once at the end of the year, the Athletic Director encourages all athletic department employees to participate and serve on such committees or commissions when asked.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ It is positive that the Multicultural Resource Guide will be given to all new athletes and staff from underrepresented groups.

RESPONSE: The multicultural resource guide is updated annually by the student-athletes who are members of the SAAB Diversity Committee. Our goal is to add to the quality of the resource guide.

- ❖ It is unclear how creation of a “Diversity Brochure” will assist with recruitment and retention.

RESPONSE: The idea of developing a brochure was suggested by the Morgan Center staff as a way of communicating the diversity goals of the Athletic Department and Morgan Center to current students and prospects while exposing them to the various diversity resources available to Penn State students. The brochure will add to the recruiting process and ensure that prospects and current students are well informed and aware of the various resources that can help them be successful at Penn State.

- ❖ No retention strategies were identified. The unit is encouraged to develop strategies to support retention and success of student-athletes from underrepresented groups.

RESPONSE: We will continue to provide quality resources and services to our student-athletes that will enable us to continue recruiting, retaining and graduating our student-athletes at rates that exceed national averages (attachment)

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ There was no mention of methods or strategies for retaining a diverse workforce.

RESPONSE: Attempts to better measure progress in this area will be a future focus.

- ❖ The Review Team could not evaluate recruitment strategies based on the limited information provided.

RESPONSE: Intercollegiate Athletics makes a strong effort, each time there is an available position in the department, to identify and encourage minority candidates to apply. Using professional contacts in the field of athletics along with minority databank services offered by the NCAA, Big Ten Conference and various Coaching Associations, we make every effort to strengthen the pool of candidates by trying to identify potential minority candidates as part of the candidate pool. As an example, the Senior Women’s Administrator/Associate Athletic Director for Women’s Sports and the Assistant Athletic Director for Men’s Sports include women and/or minority representation on each search committee when filling Head Coaching positions.

- ❖ PSU minority internship experiences will continue to be available; however, it is unclear whether this is a recruiting or retention tool.
RESPONSE: We believe that minority internships focus both on recruiting and retention. Offering minority interns enables us to recruit students interested in working for and learning about Penn State athletics. In some cases, it can also lead to an opportunity to retain the student as an employee.
- ❖ Demographic data on the ICA staffing composition would be helpful.
RESPONSE: (Attachment J)

Education and Scholarship

Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies

- ❖ Freshman enrichment will continue on an annual basis. The Review Team questions why there are only two components in the curriculum. Assessment measures should be provided to facilitate evaluating the success of the program.
RESPONSE: First-Year seminars for incoming freshmen student-athletes are required and provided by the Morgan Center. BBH 148S, Coping with College, is a 2 credit academic orientation class and BBH 048, Contemporary Health Topics Affecting Student-Athletes, is a 1.5 credit health education class. The courses are designed to assist student-athletes as they transition from high school to college. All student-athletes are enrolled in both courses during their freshmen year. The curriculums for each course explore diversity related issues throughout the semester. Student-Athlete participants are asked to assess their values, knowledge and behaviors related to academics, personal health, diversity and career choices. Students learn that part of the college experience is to stay open to new ideas and to increase their understanding and acceptance of individual differences. While these messages are at the core of each lecture and class discussion, guest presenters from various groups (i.e., faculty from African & African American Studies, Multicultural Resource Center, Center for Women Students, and the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgender Alliance) make appearances throughout the semester to discuss specific diversity-related topics. A syllabus for each course is attached (Attachments – 148S & 048).
- ❖ The Review Team recommends that ICA continue to work with diversity specialists to infuse diversity into the enrichment curriculum in meaningful ways.
RESPONSE: Sandy Meyer is the Freshmen Program Coordinator in the MASCOSA and is responsible for the establishing the assessment tools for evaluating the curriculum. Based on the assessment feedback, the curriculum is adjusted when appropriate.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ ICA does not address the question of “how has your unit assisted staff/students from underrepresented groups in developing leadership/management skills.” The Review Team recommends that ICA track the composition of staff by position over time. In addition, strategies to identify staff mentees with leadership aspirations, and support them in developing leadership skills and opportunities should be developed.
RESPONSE:
 - *Staff - The Athletic Department is supportive and encourages all departmental employees to take advantage of opportunities to participate in skill building workshops (professional conferences, HR seminars, professional development workshops, etc.) that focus on improving leadership and management skills. An example of this type of support was demonstrated this past year (2003-04) in which our Athletic Director supported John Greene, Associate Director of Athletic Development, to participate in the NCAA Leadership Institute for Minority Males (Attachment K). The Institute is led by a diverse group of recognized leaders in business, higher education and intercollegiate athletics. John was our first to participate in the three-year old Institute and he graduated this past June. In addition, Jenn James, Assistant Athletic Director, and Amy O’neil, Assistant Event Coordinator, have been supported to attend the*

National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators Institute for Administrative Advancement (Attachment L)

- *Students – Intercollegiate Athletics and the Morgan Center provide a variety of opportunities for students to develop leadership skills. One fine example of this is the annual “SAAB Leadership Seminar” for student-athletes (Attachment – SAAB LEADERSHIP SEMINAR) in which student-athletes participate in a 2.5 hour leadership workshop.*

In addition, all ICA employees are encouraged to provide mentorship to staff and students when opportunities arise. The department offers plenty of opportunity for both students and staff.

- ❖ *Students will continue to participate in the annual NCAA Leadership Conference via nomination. It would be useful to track how many students are nominated, how many are selected, and their demographic profile.*

RESPONSE: The NCAA Leadership Institute began in 1997 and was established to give student-athletes the opportunity to network with their peers while gaining leadership skills. Recognizing the benefit of providing a diverse experience for each participant, the NCAA committee set strict selection criteria. Each institution is only guaranteed representation at the seminar if they nominate four student-athletes, two and two females of which one each are minority, who meet the following criteria: (1) each candidate must have an excellent GPA and (2) be involved in various community outreach activities. In addition, none of the four candidates can be from the same team. The NCAA committee has selected at least one student-athlete representative from Penn State each of the past seven years.

- ❖ *PSU minority internship experiences will continue. Collecting data on the number of internships offered and accepted, as well as the demographic profiles would be useful. How many interns go on to take positions as academic support staff or administrators?*

RESPONSE: The Morgan Academic Support Center and ICA collaborate to provide students with positive professional work experiences that provide them exposure to all facets of the intercollegiate athletics program. During the past six academic years (1998-2004), the Morgan Academic Support Center has been committed to diversity in identifying and selecting its interns/graduate assistants. Each academic year, the Morgan Academic Support Center offers at least two intern/graduate assistant positions. During this six-year time frame, the Morgan Academic Support Center has funded (with assistance coming from the Big Ten Conference) and employed fifteen interns/graduate assistants (nine male and six female) with nine of these positions being filled by African-American students. Of those fifteen interns/graduate assistants, one white male and one African-American male are currently employed by Penn State’s Morgan Academic Support Center, while an additional white male and African-American male are employed in the field of academic support at other institutions. Additionally, ICA offers a minimum of two interns during the fall and spring semesters, and two interns during the summer sessions. Over the last three academic years (2001-2004), ICA has had sixteen minority interns (two international students, six minority student males, one minority student female, six women, and one handicapped male). None of these interns are currently employed by ICA.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ *The Challenge was not addressed.*

RESPONSE: As stated in our 98-03 response to “challenge 7” the following demonstrates our focus on impacting organizational change to support diversity:

- *Organizational Realignment: A few examples of organizational realignments that occurred during the recent past planning period (1998-2003) were: (1) expanding the Athletic Development Office staff to include two minority males and two females out of six administrative level employees, (2) replacing two minority Men’s Basketball staff with two new minority staff members, and (3) replacing a minority male who retired from the Morgan Academic Support Center Staff with another minority male.*
- *Systems of Accountability – The current Chair of the ICA Diversity Council reports directly to the Director of Athletics allowing direct communication for any and all concerns related to diversity related issues within the department. Also, our Big Ten Advisory Representative,*

- Bruce Ellis (Director of Undergraduate Programs, Smeal College of Business), also has direct reporting line to the Director of Athletics and works as a member of the Diversity Advisory Board. Both individuals are afforded numerous opportunities (i.e., weekly staff meetings, monthly coaches meetings, spring coaches' seminar, department meetings, and summer retreats) throughout the year to address and report diversity related information to all Athletic Department employees.*
- *Resource Mobilization/Allocation Strategies – The Director of Athletics provides financial resources for training experiences for departmental employees. Additional funding is provided to support diversity-related activities throughout the campus and community. Some examples include: (1) Diversity Council expenses for certain projects (i.e., Diversity Luncheon, Centre Furnace Mansion Field Trip and sponsoring annual tables for events like the MLK/Women's Commission banquets.); (2) Training departmental employees (Diversity Council Training and Professional Development experiences); and (3) supporting our Big Ten Minority Representative's travel and lodging expenses when traveling to Conference Meetings.*
 - *Long-Term Planning – ICA has provided long-term planning initiatives and strategies for enhancing diversity through their current and past diversity plans.*
- ❖ *Minority internships mentioned under this Challenge seem to be related to recruitment rather than organizational change.*
RESPONSE: By providing quality internships that offer broad exposure to the Morgan Center and ICA, along with the opportunity to make measureable contributions during the internship, the possibility exists to find and hire quality minorities that would result in a positive impact within the organization.
- ❖ *It would be helpful to know how the Certificate Program through Kinesiology will result in an increase in internships and how the potential minority candidates will be identified. It is unclear how this program relates to organizational change.*
RESPONSE: We anticipate that the future Athletic Administration Certificate Program, offered through Kinesiology, will allow us an opportunity to access a diverse pool of students that can contribute to the Athletic Department by participating in intership or volunteer work opportunities while working on the course requirements for the Certificate. This will offer ICA a great opportunity to expose and mentor minority students who have a sincere interest in the profession of athletics administration. This will result in a higher number of potential minority job candidates for positions that become available within athletics which could have a positive impact on the organization.