

**Feedback on A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010–15 and  
2014–15 through 2018–19 Diversity Initiatives**  
Fall 2014  
**Intercollegiate Athletics**

The review team found it difficult to identify, and thus evaluate, progress made and efforts planned in Intercollegiate Athletics' (ICA) 2014–19 strategic plan regarding each of the seven *Framework* Challenges, as was requested in the strategic planning guidelines. As a marketing plan, it is visually appealing and easy to read. As a strategic planning document, it is difficult to assess. The plan lacks a sense of development from the past or direction for the future. The review team found no identified articulation between the ICA 2010–2015 *Framework* diversity strategic plan and either the current plan provided or information available on the unit's website. The plan lacks specific content, action items and metrics to measure success, and does not specify who will be responsible for implementing and/or tracking initiatives.

ICA is advised to better contextualize its strategic plan, especially in light of the numerous transitions in leadership since the Sandusky scandal. Enough time has now passed to more thoughtfully apprise the impact of the scandal and the actual, structural improvements ICA has made in its wake on issues like transparency, ethical behavior, prevention of child abuse, education, and so on. Elements within the plan that reflect an ability to acknowledge and learn from mistakes would be well received.

On a positive note, diversity and inclusion are specifically identified in the Purpose, Vision, and throughout Goal 3. Good work is being done surrounding issues of diversity and inclusion within ICA that is worth celebrating. ICA's endorsement of diversity themes can be very powerful, as its much lauded involvement in the national "You Can Play" campaign illustrates.

Finally, ICA is commended for hiring Sandy Barbour to lead the unit. It is noteworthy to see leadership making efforts to integrate diversity endeavors into how they think about and do their work at the highest level. The review team encourages the recently arrived director to review the current plan and revise it based on her vision for ICA and the recommendations provided here.

***Intercollegiate Athletics Response to the University's Framework Review to Foster Diversity at Penn State:***

***This response is particularly timely as it comes at a very important phase for Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA). We have recently launched a new strategic planning project, which is an inclusive and collaborative process that is engaging ICA's multiple stakeholders – within the department, the university and the broader community – over the next several months. As such, the topic of diversity already has become part of our early discussions, and we will be exploring further how best to embed diversity and inclusion in our strategic plan and its implementation and ongoing activities over the next 5 years. Per the evaluation of ICA's previous plan, this new plan will not only be informed by the suggested guidelines, but will have action items, timelines and metrics and its objectives, and will be well-communicated.***

***---Sandy Barbour, Director of Athletics***

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

***Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- The following definition appeared in the 2010–15 Plan: "The highest priority will be to establish a climate of mutual respect and support of individual differences where persons of dissimilar color, creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical/mental ability, and ethnicity (among others) can maximize their full potential and function as a cohesive group, free of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment." This strong definition of diversity, however, was not carried over into the 2014–2019 plan.
- The plan does not indicate where information about diversity in ICA might be found.

***Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

- The plan reflects an understanding of the powerful visual impact of ICA’s leadership role both on campus and in the community when appearing at diversity events.
- A communications plan is mentioned as forthcoming. The review team looks forward to more information about that plan and how it will work in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

***Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

- The emphasis on Title IX is positive.
- Although not detailed in this plan, ICA has an excellent track record in achieving student success and undoubtedly employs best practices. However, when these practices are not developed in the plan, they go unrecognized and cannot be leveraged across the University.

***Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

- The review team did not find any planning for this Challenge.
- The review team is hopeful that new hires throughout ICA continue in the direction set by recent high profile diversity hires.

**Education and Scholarship**

***Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies***

- The review team did not find any planning for this Challenge.
- While ICA is not an academic unit, there are multiple opportunities for informing and educating student athletes and staff around cultural competencies.

**Institutional Viability and Vitality**

***Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management***

- The review team did not find any planning for this Challenge.
- It is noteworthy that ICA has made two high profile diversity hires recently with the addition of Sandy Barbour and James Franklin. The review team is hopeful that future management and leadership hires continue in this direction.

***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***

- The Athletics Council for Diversity and Inclusion (ACDI) is well structured and highly productive. The review team is pleased to see that ICA plans to continue to support their efforts and is eager to see the synergies that will result when ACDI’s issues and initiatives are brought into the overall unit decision making process.
- Diversity accomplishments have historically been tracked through ACDI, and the group has a strong Web presence; however its website does not appear to have been updated since 2012.