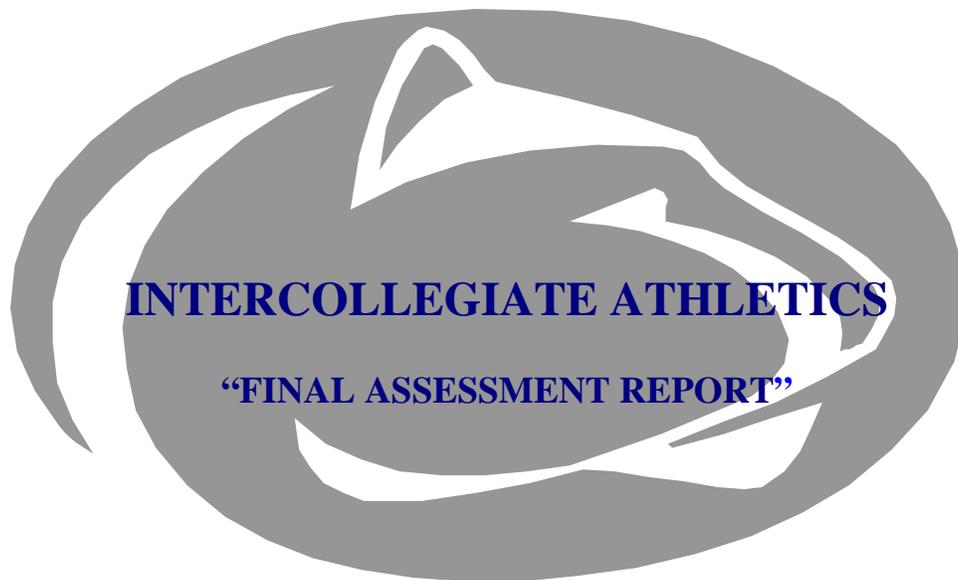


# **A FRAMEWORK TO FOSTER DIVERSITY AT PENN STATE**

**1998-2003**



**INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**

**“FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT”**

Penn State  
Intercollegiate  
Athletics

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For the past six years, Intercollegiate Athletics has been proactive in implementing and progressing on the seven challenges of the *Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003*. We look forward to continuing our diversity efforts by implementing the newly developed *Intercollegiate Athletics Diversity Strategic Plan: A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2004-2009*. Below is our final report and assessment on the seven challenges of the 1998-2003 Framework:

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

#### **1. A. How does your unit define or describe diversity?**

Cultural diversity is a term descriptive of an environment where persons of different color, creeds, sexual orientation, age, physical ability and ethnicity function as a homogeneous group, free of rancor and prejudice.

#### **B. How is this understanding demonstrated in areas of emphasis within your unit?**

Each unit within the Athletic Department strives to create an environment that values and respects individual differences and challenges employees and student-athletes to maximize their full potential. Primarily through the efforts of the Intercollegiate Athletics Diversity Council, unit supervisors and certain Student-Athlete Advisory Board team representatives receive diversity information, educational material, university-wide diversity activity listings, and information on diversity workshop opportunities.

#### **2. How has your unit distributed and discussed information to staff about the University's diversity initiatives?**

Each staff member of Intercollegiate Athletics receives copies of the University's diversity initiatives. Circulated materials include the following publications: 1.) *Fostering Diversity at Penn State*, 2.) *Diversity Efforts at Penn State: More than Meets the Eye*, and 3.) *the Penn State Athletics Diversity Plan*. In addition, issues of diversity and information on programs are routinely discussed at staff meetings. The Intercollegiate Athletics Diversity Council has created a departmental listserv in which departmental employees receive updates on the activities of the Council and information related to university-wide and departmental program offerings.

#### **3. A. Does your unit have a diversity committee?**

Intercollegiate Athletics does have a Diversity Council. The Council was originally created in 1993-94 and consists of an executive steering committee and unit representatives from each unit within athletics.

The current steering committee consists of six (6) university employees: three (3) Athletic Administrators (Sue Scheetz, Bob White, Mark Sherburne), our Big Ten Advisory Commission representative (Bruce Ellis), one departmental Staff Assistant (Patty Nellis) and one member of the Morgan Academic Support Center Staff (Shawna Bowyer).

Regular Council members (unit representatives) serve for two-year terms and are recommended by their unit supervisors. At the end of their two-year service on the Council, the representatives are replaced by the unit supervisors with another employee from their area. Currently we have eighteen (18) representatives serving on the council in addition to the six (6) steering committee members (**Attachment A**). Our goal is to have all department employees serve on the council at least once. This will enable everyone to participate in departmental diversity planning and diversity training.

**B. What is its role?**

The Council's primary purpose is to cultivate a supportive and inclusive environment within Intercollegiate Athletics and the University. The council holds monthly meetings, offers educational workshops, promotes the University's diversity calendar, encourages unit participation, communicates calendar of events, identifies departmental barriers that negatively impact diversity, provides leadership and vision in planning, and works jointly with certain members of the Student-Athlete Advisory Board to assist in helping them achieve their diversity goals. For a summary of some past and future council activities see (**Attachment B**)

**4. A. Which strategies or "best practices" have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

The strategies or "best practices" that have been most successful in developing a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity has been sponsoring and involving unit supervisors, coaches, administrators and student-athletes in department-wide diversity education. In addition, the Diversity Council provides a unique vehicle by which diversity related activities and educational opportunities are promoted. Having every unit supervisor in athletics select a representative to serve a two-year term on the Council allows for each representative to become involved in departmental planning and professional development.

The current council is participating in a progressive diversity education program that includes 4 workshops (**Attachment C**). The first workshop was held on October 21, 2003, the second was November 18, 2003, the third is scheduled for January 20, 2004 and the final session will be February 17, 2004. The training is being provided by outside consultant, Don Sheffield, President and CEO of TAME, Inc. Similar training will be part of the Council experience for each group of employees that serves.

**B. Which strategies have been least successful?**

The least successful strategies are those in which attendance and participation is mandatory. We have found that making people aware of educational activities and encouraging their involvement leads to increased participation and more interactive discussion. This results in a more beneficial experience and usually leads to future participation in other programs being promoted and offered.

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

### **1. How does your unit's leadership demonstrate visible support for diversity?**

The Athletic Department supports diversity through the involvement of coaches, administrators, staff and student-athletes in diversity related activities and educational workshops. In addition, the Diversity Council is very active in providing diversity events, collaborating with various groups, and publicizing diversity activities. A departmental list serve is used regularly to update the department employees of the activities of the Council and the diversity events that are scheduled on the University's diversity calendar.

Examples of our visible support for diversity are reflected in the activities and programs that we offer our student-athletes and staff. A few examples of programs that embrace diversity and facilitate cultural development are programs such as our Pen-Pal program, Speaker's Bureau, Second-Mile Volunteers Program, Student-Athlete Diversity Council, National Student-Athlete Day and participating in various activities celebrating the historical accomplishments of former leaders such as the former Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Another example of our efforts is our joint collaboration with the Big Ten Conference and the Morgan Academic Support Center to maintain annual internship opportunities for minority students interested in the profession of academic athletic advising or athletic administration.

In addition, the Athletic Department is very successful in promoting our athletic teams through TV exposure, various websites, WPSX broadcasts, and weekly in-season television broadcasts of the Penn State Football Story and Penn State Hoops. These activities promote the diversity of our athletic programs and highlight the successes of all of our student-athletes.

### **2. How does your unit identify climate issues?**

Climate related issues for staff and student-athletes are identified through specific climate assessment surveys and/or conversations conducted by the Diversity Council or the Big Ten Advisory Commission representative. In addition, the Student-Athlete Advisory Board's "Diversity Committee" examines and discusses climate related issues and considers ways to resolve problems or address issues. The Athletic Department also asks diversity related questions to graduating seniors as part of their exit interview process to assess climate and plan for the future.

The Athletic Department staff and students also receives a multi-cultural resource guide (**Attachment D**) that is put together by the Morgan Academic Support Center in cooperation with the Diversity Committee of the Student-Athlete Advisory Board that lists various resources and special service groups on campus that can assist staff and students when dealing with diversity related issues.

### **3. How does your unit respond to climate issues?**

Response to climate issues is dependent upon consultation to determine facts and seeking information from appropriate resource offices within the university when necessary.

**4. What unit-wide and individualized approaches have you developed to enhance overall climate and satisfaction with the environment?**

Intercollegiate Athletics is a very active unit participating in a variety of diverse events throughout the year including: United Way, Red Cross, National Student-Athlete Day, THON, Read Across America, Big Brother/Big Sister, Second-Mile, Community Outreach programs, MLK celebration, etc.

One of the most beneficial unit-wide approaches has been the diversity training for staff and administrators offered through the Diversity Council and the sharing of other University diversity events via the Council's listserv.

One of the best individualized approaches has been encouraging each Council member to select one diversity event, with the assistance of their unit supervisor, to participate in as an individual unit. The use of the University's Diversity Calendar is helpful in selecting an activity. At the final Diversity Council meeting of the academic year, Council members report what their unit did together for their activity.

**5. A. Which strategies or "best practices" have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

The strategies or best practices that have been the most successful in addressing this challenge have been the increase in frequency of diversity events offered through the Intercollegiate Athletics Diversity Council. The quality and frequency of activities, programs, workshops and events have had a positive impact on the overall climate. In addition, the collaboration with our Student Athlete Advisory Board's Diversity Committee and involvement of our Big Ten Advisory Commission representative has also improved the quality of climate in Athletics.

**B. Which have been least successful?**

The least successful attempts in trying to assess and impact climate has been through the use of surveys that attempt to pinpoint areas that should be focused on for improvement. Often times, participants in these types of surveys are quick to answer questions and tend to rush responses. This results in a decrease in reliability and accuracy.

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

**1. Does your unit contribute to recruiting and retaining a diverse student-body?**

The quality of education and overall experience that is offered by Penn State has helped Intercollegiate Athletics recruit a diverse student-athlete population. Recently, we have noticed an increase in the number of international students interested in Penn State and more of our coaches are recruiting outside the U.S. This should result in more international student-athletes on Penn State athletic teams in the future.

In addition, more minority students are being exposed to non-revenue sports through community and inter-city youth sport programs. This should have an impact on recruiting in the future as more minority athletes become prospects in sports that in the past lacked minority participation.

Recruiting for sports teams includes in-home visits, campus visits, and constant follow-up with recruits by coaches. This frequent contact allows our coaches to establish a relationship with the recruit and family throughout the recruiting process. This enables our coaches the opportunity to address questions and expose recruits and their families to the university, community, and available resources.

Penn State student-athletes, including our minority student-athletes, do very well in school and as a result graduate at rates that are consistently higher than the national average. Our ability to recruit, retain and graduate student-athletes is a testament to the wonderful job done by the staff of the Morgan Academic Support Center for Student Athletes and our other support personnel who have regular contact with our student-athletes.

**2. What retention strategies have you implemented in your unit to retain members from underrepresented groups?**

The support that we provide the Morgan Academic Support Center represents our commitment to educating, graduating, and placing our student athletes into meaningful professional positions so they can succeed and become valuable contributors to society.

**3. A. Which strategies or “best practices” have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

Our student-athlete recruiting efforts continue to be successful when we have coaches establish and maintain a relationship with the family. This relationship begins during the recruiting process. We are also successful recruiting and retaining our minority student-athletes when our coaches and other support staff take a sincere interest in them not only as athletes but also as students, friends, community members, and future leaders. A mentoring relationship that is embraced by numerous employees in the department, who have regular contact with our student-athletes, results in a developmental growth within each individual that instills confidence and values that help our kids succeed.

**B. Which have been least successful?**

The recruiting and retention situations that have been least successful are those in which our coaches get involved late in the recruiting process and therefore have not had enough time to get to know the athlete and family. The better we know a recruit and his/her background, the better we are able assist and serve the student-athlete once recruited. The better we assist and serve, the more likely we will have success in retaining the student-athlete and seeing the student-athlete graduate.

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

**1. How has your unit actively engaged in locating and recruiting staff from underrepresented groups?**

Intercollegiate Athletics makes a strong effort, each time we have an available job opening, to identify and encourage minority candidates to apply. This effort is a reflection of our commitment to increasing the diversity among our staff.

Our efforts to recruit diverse coaches and staff remain one of our highest priorities. Using minority databank services offered by the NCAA, Big Ten Conference, and Coaching Associations along with our professional contacts in the field enable us to encourage minority job applicants and therefore strengthen the candidacy pool. An effort to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment has proven to make a positive impact on our ability to recruit minority coaches and staff.

**2. What retention strategies have you implemented in your unit to retain members from underrepresented groups?**

We have always tried to focus on making sure that our employees attain satisfaction in the quality of life they have established in State College and at Penn State. This caring attitude has had a positive impact on our ability to maintain consistency on coaching staffs and professional longevity in the department

**3. A. Which strategies or “best practices” have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

Our efforts to strengthen the candidate pool by using the minority databank services offered by the NCAA, Big Ten Conference, and Coaching Associations along with our professional contacts in the field when searching to fill a professional position has been a very beneficial practice.

**B. Which have been least successful?**

A challenge that makes it more difficult to succeed in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce is related to our surrounding local communities and the limited resources, services, and options available to minorities. Honesty in providing information to staff and their families about our surrounding communities helps them make informed decisions that are best for them. Using resources like the Centre County Visitors Bureau can assist you in providing accurate information. Efforts to improve the quality of life for minorities in our surrounding communities need to be a collaborative effort between university and local community leaders.

## **Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum that Supports the Goals of our new General Ed. Plan**

### **1. A. Does your unit contribute to a curriculum that supports the diversity goals of the University?**

Not applicable to staff, except when workshops and other activities are made available to the staff. When such workshops and activities are made available, the programs are always supportive of the diversity goals of the University and Athletic Department.

Within the Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes, a critical component of their First-Year Enrichment Program is two required seminars for incoming freshmen student-athletes. BBH 148-S, *Coping with College*, includes classes that focus on differences in learning styles, managing diversity, and understanding and appreciating cultural differences. BBH 048, *Contemporary Health Topics Affecting Student-Athletes*, includes a diverse curriculum that focuses on a wide range of personal health and development issues including sexual orientation.

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

### **1. How has your unit assisted staff and students from underrepresented groups in developing leadership and management skills?**

Staff - Intercollegiate Athletics has every unit in the Department participate in the Diversity Council. Through unit representation, we have a committed group of individuals that ensure that Diversity efforts within the department continue to remain a top priority. In addition, representatives participate in progressive diversity training during their two-years on the Council and become leaders in managing diversity within their respective units.

Students - We encourage our student-athletes to develop their leadership and management skills through participating in various activities such as the Student Athlete Advisory Board, Community Outreach, Martin Luther King, Jr. March, and other activities that can develop leadership and managerial skills.

In addition, the NCAA sponsors a Leadership Conference each May in which a diverse group student-athletes from member institutions are nominated and selected to participate. Since the conference began, we have always had at least one student-athlete participate.

Our joint collaboration with the Morgan Academic Support Center and the Big Ten Conference also enables us to have a minority intern each year who works as a Graduate Assistant in Athletic Department or Morgan Center depending upon career interests. This has enabled us to expose them to the profession of athletic administration and/or academic advising for student-athletes. This is helpful in establishing a more diverse staff because some interns actually become future employees of the University or Athletic Department.

2. **A. Which strategies or “best practices” have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

The best strategy for developing leadership and managerial skills in our student-athletes and staff has been through meaningful programs that require students and staff to get involved and take-on leadership positions during their participation in the activity.

**B. Which have been least successful?**

Not requiring participation but rather encouraging and exposing students and staff to a wide-variety of programs and activities.

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

1. **What organizational realignments, systems of accountability, resource mobilization, allocation strategies, long-term planning strategies, etc. have your unit implemented to ensure the realization of the University’s diversity goals.**

For staff development, the Big Ten Minority Internship Program and our collaboration with the Morgan Academic Support Center is a very successful program and will help us mentor and find potential future employees. In addition, over the past several years, select student-athletes interested in athletics as a profession, who completed their competitive eligibility and are finishing their undergraduate degree or enrolled in a graduate program, have received financial support from Athletics to participate in internships within the department. These experiences often times lead to employment opportunities if jobs are available.

Another successful strategy has been to track minority graduates who leave the area and then express a desire to return. We have had success in hiring minorities in departmental positions using this practice. Using the minority databanks of the NCAA, Big Ten Conference, and Coaches Associations along with professional contacts has also been successful in identifying job candidates and strengthening the candidacy pool.

Finally, coaches have been sensitive to the diversity of their teams and have hired personnel to facilitate a diverse staff. The ability of our coaches to use their professional contacts when making staff hires has been beneficial in finding diverse staff. In addition, the assistance of University funds for hiring minorities has benefited a number of units across the university including athletics.

2. **A. Which strategies or “best practices” have been successful in addressing this challenge?**

The best practices are those that offer minority student-athletes opportunities to get PSU experience in the field prior to or after graduation that can potentially lead to future employment. In addition, always looking to strengthen a candidacy pool with minority candidates when trying to fill a position can help achieve a more diversity staff.

# ATTACHMENT A

# ATTACHMENT B

# ATTACHMENT C

# ATTACHMENT D