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**< <http://www.equity.psu.edu/framework/updates> >**

**Feedback on Progress Implementing  
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998-2003  
University Athletics**

While it is difficult to assess progress in implementing the *Framework* due to lack of information, University Athletics (UA) might consider an objective audit of their diversity initiatives. The assessment team felt that perhaps a multicultural resource person at a high and visible level of organization would be very helpful in conducting such as an audit and crafting a plan for those areas in need of attention.

***RESPONSE: Someone within ICA with appropriate credentials will be appointed to conduct the suggested audit.***

University Athletics offers student athletes a wide variety of support services that have contributed to a laudable graduation rate among students from underrepresented groups. It is a University unit that has potentially the highest impact on these students due to the focused attention and commitment to education practiced by UA through its programs and support mechanisms. Less clear, however, are the organizational initiatives that should be aimed at recruiting and retaining a diverse staff and creating a positive climate for all members of the unit.

***RESPONSE: Intercollegiate Athletics is completing its second year of Big Ten and ICA sponsored internships for currently enrolled minority student-athletes. These internships have included experiences in administration, event management, sports management, development and selected areas in the Morgan Academic Support Center for Student Athletes. The hope, of course, is that these exceptional people will find a career interest in these areas. Additionally, an executive staff training session was completed in December and plans are underway to complete a department-wide, unit by unit training session that will ultimately engage each unit in diversity programming tailored to that specific unit. This training will occur in the Summer of 2002.***

Identifying specific contact people responsible for diversity action implementation is a model that could be used by all colleges (indeed, all units); however, some of the information is not current and many activities seem to be in progress long past their expected completion dates. The report is also unclear as to the progress that has been made toward earlier goals or the nature of the initiatives that have been put in place in the last three years to achieve the goals.

Observations and suggestions relating to each challenge are listed below:

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

- ❖ There is a desire to enhance understanding of diversity; however, development of an understanding seems to depend solely on discussion.
- ❖ Rotating membership on the Diversity Council brings fresh perspectives and a variety of experiences to the work of that group.
- ❖ The Diversity Council focuses on employees; there is a Diversity Advisory Committee within the Student Athlete Advisory Board.

***RESPONSE: In the past decade, ICA has implemented diversity workshops, circulated articles through newsletters, and presented panels to the staff and administrators to enhance an inclusive understanding of diversity. The Cultural Diversity Committee viewed the film, "Color of Fear", as a prelude to its use with the Diversity Council. The plan is to show the film for the purpose of examining attitudes and feelings experienced by underrepresented groups and to elicit feelings of the viewers. Follow-up experiential activities will provide the viewers with opportunities to express feelings and choose actions they would take in various situations related to diversity. Council members will be encouraged to consider a similar use of the film and activities with their units.***

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

- ❖ Athletics recognizes that there are problems with climate and attitudes.
- ❖ Results of the climate survey that has been conducted would be helpful for identifying specific responses and actions to help.
- ❖ Participation in workshops is a good beginning; however, leadership's demonstration of visible support for diversity can take many additional forms.
- ❖ Athletics' mechanisms for responding to climate issues could be clearly stated.  
***RESPONSE: Each year, the membership and purposes of the Cultural Diversity Committee are announced and circulated to the ICA personnel via electronic means. At the annual Fall staff meeting, those offices/personnel whose responsibilities involve dealing with climate concerns (personnel, diversity committee, sexual harassment contact, affirmative action and MASCSA personnel, as well as the Athletic Director) are introduced as resources for addressing related concerns.***
- ❖ Athletics meets regularly with the Commission for Women's Athletics Committee to discuss issues among female student athletes.
- ❖ There was no mention of activities related to improving the climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members of the athletics' student or staff communities.  
***RESPONSE: The Cultural Diversity Committee examined the results of the Climate Survey piloted by the Office of Educational Equity to identify initiatives for the future. Consideration is being given to re-offer workshops on the topics such as LGBT issues and racial understanding. Other workshop topics include Mentors in Violence Prevention, communication and concerns facing international student-athletes.***
- ❖ A "Mentors on Violence Prevention" program for students was conducted in conjunction with University student units.
- ❖ The organization understands the need to dissuade the popular perception that employees who are members of underrepresented groups have been employed using criteria other than their qualifications.

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

- ❖ Graduation rates for student athletes from underrepresented groups are commendable.
- ❖ Colleges could benefit by employing Athletics' model of one-on-one counseling and retention efforts for students from underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Many of the efforts seem to be only in compliance with NCAA and other governing rules.
- ❖ A contact list and information about multicultural resources at Penn State is commendable; however, care should be taken to keep the contact information current.  
***RESPONSE: Staff members whose terms have expired will be deleted to yield a current listing.***
- ❖ Some students may question the appropriateness of the recipes offered (many on the assessment team did). One team member suggested that instead of recipes for food, what is needed is a more developed recipe for diversity.
- ❖ Diversity events are mentioned but not described.  
***RESPONSE: The Student-Athlete Advisory Board participated in the MLK workday this year and its Cultural Diversity subcommittee has held "international" nights when "potluck" dinners were allowed on campus.***

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

- ❖ Retention efforts seem to rely primarily on the distribution of information, not the institutionalization of a philosophy of diversification.  
***RESPONSE: Recruiting and retaining a diverse coaching staff includes developing a hiring pool reflective not only of diversity but also sport specific qualifications to assume safety as***

*well as skill acquisition who can function in a very public environment. ICA continues to access Big Ten, NCAA and national coaching organization data banks to develop diverse candidate pools. Recent coaching hires have included coaches of international heritages as well. Within the staff assistant and technical services staffs, University hiring practices dictate internal review first and those respective pools have little diversity. Another element of demonstrating the diversity of a single unit lies in how and where personnel who are on multi-unit appointments are counted (ICA/development hires, upper level ICA administrators (gender). Within ICA, it seems unclear how the numbers are derived and where and how international personnel who lend diversity are counted. Another area of diversity in ICA involves the male/female coaching staff ratios for women's teams. Nationally, 44% of females head coach women's teams, of the 14 women's teams at University Park 71% are coached by females.*

- ❖ Offering administrative internships may be an effective retention strategy; more information would be useful.

#### ***Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Supports the Goals of Our New General Education Plan***

- ❖ The Morgan Academic Support Center offers some assistance to student athletes in increasing their sensitivities to climate issues.

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

- ❖ Athletics recognizes that this is not an area of strength.
- ❖ No clear plan exists to change the profile of leadership.  
***RESPONSE: Impending retirements will provide increased hiring opportunities which heretofore have been unavailable because of great stability in the ICA administrative ranks.***

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

- ❖ Hiring practices to diversify the staff is the cornerstone of the plan for organizational change. How and when this will be accomplished is unclear.
- ❖ After they graduate, students from underrepresented groups are tracked; when positions come open, they often are asked if they are interested in applying.
- ❖ While there are a number of good initiatives and programs in place to support underrepresented student athletes, the philosophy that is behind those programs is not transferred to the crafting of a clear vision for the organization itself. Clear principles of **what** needs to be accomplished and **how** diversity will be woven into the fabric of the unit are missing or not clearly explained.  
***RESPONSE: As stated in the "Framework for Diversity" document, the mission for Intercollegiate Athletics is as follows: Consistent with the University's mission, Intercollegiate Athletics strives for excellence by offering students model programs to develop meaningful standards of scholarship, athletic performance, leadership, community service and sports like conduct with in the educational and social environment of The Pennsylvania State University.***

#### ***DEFINITION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY***

*Cultural diversity is a term descriptive of an environment where persons of different colors, creeds and ethnicities function as a productive group, free of rancor and prejudice. In a culturally diverse society, such as the one valued by Intercollegiate Athletics, individuals are accepted for who they are and appreciated for their differences. Principles of attaining such diversity must be central to the behaviors of all Penn State employees.*

#### ***VISION STATEMENT FOR DIVERSITY***

*Intercollegiate Athletics is dedicated to conceiving and producing initiatives which promote the*

*principles of cultural diversity. Through workshops, hiring practices, department attitudes and procedures, Intercollegiate Athletics is committed to establishing a workplace free of intolerance.*

***OVERIDING GOALS***

*To continue the process of creating a culturally diverse staff which reflects the student-athlete population and responds to the ethnic composition of the University and surrounding community. To offer numerous club, intramural sports, and recreational programs that can satisfy student interest and afford maximum participation by students and staff.*

*Intercollegiate Athletics relies on the above listed strategic philosophies, vision and goals to achieve organizational aims and objectives.*