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

A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 1998-2003
Progress Assessment Responses
Intercollegiate Athletics

Challenge 1. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

1. How does your unit define or describe diversity? How is this understanding demonstrated in areas of emphasis within your unit?

"Cultural diversity is a term descriptive of an environment where persons of different colors, creeds, sexual orientations, ages, physical abilities, and ethnicities function as a productive group free of rancor and prejudice".

Distribution and circulation of diversity information, instructional materials, workshop opportunities, and activity listings.

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

This information has been shared with the 200+ staff members by the distribution of "Fostering Diversity at Penn State" and "Diversity Efforts at Penn State, More than meets the eye". Other information and diversity activities are noted in department and University communications.

3. Does your unit have a diversity committee? What is its role?

There has been a Diversity Council since 1993-94 composed of six to eight core members. This group includes senior administrators, staff, staff assistants, and "tech service" employees who served for two-year terms.

The mission of the council is to cultivate a supportive and inclusive environment within Intercollegiate Athletics and the University. (See Appendix A)

4. 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

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

At the beginning of each year, the Athletic Director advises all employees of special service groups such as Student Athlete Advisory Board, Cultural Diversity Council, Sexual Harassment contact, etc. Throughout the year, weekly executive staff meetings provide a forum for related discussion. In the Fall of 01, the executive staff, including the Athletic Director, took part in the Diversity Workshop.

Climate issues are identified through surveys, anecdotal reports from Human Resources personnel, Diversity Council, and Sexual Harassment contact.

2. How does your unit identify climate issues?

Climate issues are identified through surveys, anecdotal reports from Human Resources personnel, Diversity Council, and Sexual Harassment contact.

3. How does your unit respond to climate issues?

Response to climate issues is dependent on 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 individual's satisfaction with the environment?

Refer to Appendix A to review individual and group efforts.

5. On a scale of 1 to 10 how do you rate the climate for diversity in your unit at present?

Rated 6 (awareness is rising)

6. 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.

Challenge 3. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

1. Does your unit contribute to recruiting and retaining a diverse student body? If so, how? And, what practices have been most successful?

Intercollegiate Athletics through the varsity sports program provides one of the more effective recruiting tools. Recruiting for sports teams involves in home visits, campus visits, as well as constant follow-up with recruits by coaches. Once on campus, minority student-athletes are made aware of the many support services available to them. Of the student-athlete population 16% are minorities
(See Appendix B)

2. 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

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

For coaching staff recruiting, the development of a diverse pool has been the highest priority. Using databank services of the NCAA, Big Ten Conference, Sport specific coaching organizations and professional contacts have been most helpful.

2. What recruitment strategies have been most successful?

Being sure to provide a welcoming environment in the University and State College area. We are truly dependent on minority staff already employed to help in this regard. Money must be available for salaries.

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

Attaining and retaining a positive quality of life for the staff and their families/significant others.

4. What retention strategies have been most successful?

We are still working at this. At this point, the quality of life for family, professional challenge, and salary have been most successful.

5. 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.

Challenge 5. Developing a Curriculum that Supports the Goals of our New General Education Plan

1. Does your unit contribute to a curriculum that supports the diversity goals of the University? If so, how? What practices have been most successful?

Not applicable to staff, except when workshops and other training are made available to the staff.

Within the Morgan Academic Support Center, course work includes topical areas to assist on developing sensitivities to climate issues, coping skills, and other related issues.

Challenge 6. Diversifying University Leadership and Management

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

This is an area where additional programming must be developed. Other than directing staff to leadership classes and/or workshops, this is not an area of strength.

2. Impending retirements will provide increased hiring opportunities which here-to-fore have been unavailable because of great stability in the ICA administrative ranks.

Challenge 7. Coordinating Organizational Change to support Our Diversity Goals

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

It appears that for staff development the intern program put in place, with the help of designated funds from the Big Ten, will be the most successful strategy. Over the past several years, interested student-athletes who have completed their competitive eligibility, and who are enrolled in graduate school, have been supported financially with ICA matching funds. These former athletes have participated in internships in the Morgan Academic Support Center, Athletic Directors Office, Student-Athlete Services, Operations, Development, and Events. Because they know the area, the University, and ICA environments, the probability is high that, if jobs are available, they will stay.

The second most successful strategy has been to "track" minority graduates who leave the area and then express a desire to return at a later date. Several recent minority hires on the staff ranks have occurred in this manner. Finally, coaches have been sensitive to the diversity of the teams and have hired personnel to facilitate a diverse staff. The coaches professional contacts have been the most effective strategies along with the assistance of University funds for hiring minorities.

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