NCAA LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
Background

In January 2016, the NCAA Board of Governors reviewed data on the racial/ethnic and gender representation of individuals in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics. Noting the underrepresentation of people of color and women in these positions, the board adopted a resolution to reaffirm the Association’s commitment to diversity and inclusion in athletics leadership and requested supportive action from both the membership and the national office.

The board also created an ad hoc committee charged with reviewing, researching and providing recommendations about matters of diversity and inclusion that impact the Association. The committee is composed of presidents, conference commissioners, athletics directors and liaisons from the Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, the NCAA Committee on Women’s Athletics and the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee. The ad hoc committee determined one of its first actions would be to engage senior leaders at NCAA conferences and schools through a voluntary pledge for diversity and inclusion.

The NCAA respects and promotes the autonomy of its member institutions. Therefore, the pledge is a voluntary commitment that invites chancellors, presidents and conference commissioners to publicly express their support for diversity and inclusion efforts within intercollegiate athletics. By signing on behalf of your institution, you acknowledge that diversity and inclusion are core values to the Association and that efforts to create inclusive environments positively impact the welfare of student-athletes, administrators and coaches.

The Pledge

Consistent with our mission and values and as a member institution of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), we pledge to specifically commit to establishing initiatives for achieving ethnic and racial diversity, gender equity and inclusion with a focus and emphasis on hiring practices in intercollegiate athletics to reflect the diversity of our membership and our nation.

We recognize and value the experiences individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to intercollegiate athletics. To that end, we will strive to identify, recruit and interview individuals from diverse backgrounds in an effort to increase their representation and retention as commissioners, athletics directors, coaches and other athletics leadership positions. As part of this commitment, we also will engage in a regular diversity, inclusion and equity review to inform campus policy and diversity initiatives.

We understand this to be a collective responsibility we owe to student-athletes, staff, our athletics programs and the entire campus community.
Focus Areas

- Value the diversity (individual similarities and differences) of everyone.
- Create an inclusive environment and culture (leverage diversity by accepting, welcoming, respecting and engaging co-workers).
- Support the Pledge by committing to promote diversity.
- Work toward gender equity (treating cultural, social and physical identifications without bias or qualification).
- Increase the visibility of the need for greater diversity and inclusion.
- Mission attainment through the efforts of a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.
- Demonstrating zero tolerance for exclusionary behaviors.

Outcomes

- A diverse, equitable and inclusive organization that achieves its mission.
- Support for, and significant increase in, people of color and women in coaching and administrative positions in athletics departments of NCAA member institutions.

Pledge: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Values: Vision, Accountability, Learning, Understanding and Empowerment

So that STAFF WORKFORCE reflects the diversity of our membership and our nation, we will suggest initiatives for achieving ethnic and racial diversity, gender equity and inclusion in leadership – commissioners, athletics directors, coaches and other senior athletics positions(1). These initiatives will create public acknowledgment that the NCAA and its member institutions are committed to creating greater diversity and inclusion throughout their ranks. In addition, these initiatives are designed to send a strong message that there are extraordinary opportunities in intercollegiate athletics.

So that our organization’s values, culture, training, community involvement and supplier diversity reflect our membership’s diversity, we will proactively support the Pledge through the SYSTEMS that maintain our relevance and sustain our mission(2). These systems and approaches, and their deployment, are designed to integrate and apply best practice.
Real-world suggestions on making your commitment to diversity and inclusion a daily reality.

RECRUITING
- As leaders meet potential diverse candidates in various settings, inviting them to an event on campus or a professional conference will create an opportunity to get to know them better and build relationships.
- Consider expanding your recruiting pool to include individuals currently working at Minority Serving Institutions. Quite often, individuals from these and other institutions with lower media profiles have nontraditional portfolios, but are well-positioned to be successful.

DEVELOPMENT
- Bringing diverse employees to conference athletics directors’ meetings and allowing them to get to know the other athletics directors on a personal level fosters the development of relationships and the ability to welcome diverse perspectives.
- Create job shadowing and cross-functional opportunities for diverse candidates. For example, allowing a diverse coach the opportunity to participate in development and fundraising meetings can expand his/her understanding of program management while exposing him/her to additional career opportunities.

ADVANCE
- Provide opportunity for diverse candidates to present quarterly reports regarding athletics to chancellors and presidents cabinet meetings. Such exercises can increase diverse employees’ familiarity with important business-related issues, and give them experience with presenting in these and similar environments.

RETAIN
- Providing diverse candidates with a stretch assignment and rewarding them for success demonstrates appreciation and value for their professional contributions.
- Example of a “difficult conversation”: Provide role-playing scenarios for practice in giving—and receiving—career feedback that is honest, objective, unbiased, and helpful to one’s career development.

MONITOR AND PROVIDE OVERSIGHT
- Those in leadership positions can consider hosting regular lunches or meetings with diverse staff, where key points on progress regarding creating and sustaining a climate and culture of diversity and inclusion are discussed. This exhibits the leader’s availability and engagement, and sends a message of commitment through consistency.
- Be clear about giving expectations concerning diverse searches to all involved (such as a search committee or external search firm). This may include the request for a strategic plan from the search team detailing how the members will ensure the review of a diverse candidate pool.

COMMITMENT
- Model for staff the importance of inclusion in operational discussions. For instance, asking questions, such as, “How did the marketing strategy work? How diverse was the crowd?” makes staff aware of the expectations of their supervisor.

CULTURE
- Show visible signs of diverse professionals engaged with the athletics department, minority faculty, business leaders, civic leaders and alumni. This practice allows student-athletes to see administrators engaged with diverse groups outside of the athletic department.

COMMUNICATION
- To demonstrate that the issue of inclusion is top of mind for leadership, major speeches and presentations given to the campus/workforce community should feature a diversity and inclusion-related message.

COMMUNITY
- Create real opportunities to engage with diverse groups beyond community service; e.g., offer a side-by-side work experience with minority or women business owners. An effort like this creates an opportunity to gain appreciation for the diversity in the community.

INSIDE: A POSTER TO HELP GUIDE YOU IN PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUITY.
1. Creating Value Through a Diverse Workforce

**RECRUIT**
(HUMAN RESOURCES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, HIRING MANAGERS)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Evaluate hiring practices (how diverse and equitable? Inclusive?)
- Evaluate current candidate sourcing practices.
- Assess current interviewing strategies and practices.
- Assess makeup; if candidate finalist pool, determine if the level of diversity is acceptable and if additional efforts may be needed.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Seek new sources of candidates (e.g., INROADS, historically black colleges and universities, National Association of Black Milks, etc.).
- Adjust timing of recruiting to attract larger pools.
- Offer expedited interview to increase inclusion.
- Seek input from Affinity Employee Resource Groups and Association committees aligned to diversity and inclusion to contribute to the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and Committee on Women’s Athletics.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Strengthen these pipelines and improve knowledge of prospects.
- Increase percentage (year over year) of diversity, gender equality and inclusion to work toward attaining national standards in these key indicators.

**ADVANCE**
(HUMAN RESOURCES, OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Evaluate the succession-planning process.
- Evaluate the 'stretch assignment' program.
- Evaluate the process of mentoring/sponsoring employees with the potential and desire to advance.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Identify which approaches to recognition and promotion have the greatest success among diverse employees.
- Deploy structured processes to equitably recognize and sponsor all employees.
- Convene with the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and Committee on Women’s Athletics on best practices and most effective approaches to advancing diverse employees.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Higher percentage of diverse employees offered stretch assignments.
- Higher percentage of diverse employees recognized and sponsored.
- Increased percentage of diverse employees promoted on an annual basis.

**DEVELOP**
(SUPERVISORS, HUMAN RESOURCES, EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Evaluate the onboarding, mentoring, coaching and performance processes.
- Seek input from Employee Resource Groups, Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, and Committee on Women’s Athletics or other affinity groups to learn insights and opportunities for improvement in the development of diverse employees.
- Develop programs to enable candidates to be successful in their careers.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Conduct listening sessions to meet with diverse employees.
- Review training and adopt approaches that will improve results.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Greater availability of, and access to, best practice development opportunities for all employees.
- Increased workforce participation in training, development and career advancement programs.

2. Supporting the Pledge Through Systems

**CULTURE**
(HUMAN RESOURCES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Identify the key leadership strategies that drive behavior related to the pledge.
- Assess to what degree staff are engaged.
- Study results of staff opinion and perception (involvement, engagement) research to learn ways to create and sustain a culture supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Evaluate the process for senior leaders to honor and support the Pledge.
- Evaluate the process for senior leaders’ reward and recognition.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Include Pledge and fulfillment strategies in onboarding, performance assessment and review, and in greater diversity in the workplace culture.
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**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Increased commitment of senior leaders to honor and support the Pledge.
- Fulfillment of goals and action plans related to the Pledge.

**COMMUNITY**
(HUMAN RESOURCES, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, PURCHASING)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Identify community involvement and select those activities where ‘best work’ or impact could result.
- Assess volunteer intake process and identify community needs for alignment with volunteer capacity.
- Calculate purchasing activity trends with specialty (small, disadvantaged, minority-owned, and women-owned) businesses and vendors.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Review organizational value through the prospectus of activities that drive behavior related to the mission, the work, the organization, the customer, the outcomes, and beliefs that answer, “Why do we do the work we do with diversity, equity and inclusion.”

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Greater alignment and compliance with the Pledge.
- More staff engaged in fulfilling the Pledge.

**COMMUNICATION**
(EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION, MARKETING OFFICE)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Identify core education and training processes support diverse employee advancement and retention.
- Map the communications strategies in place and identify how messages about diversity, equity and inclusion are delivered and engaged with internally and externally.
- Identify the senior leaders and members of management team in ‘walking the talk’ support of diversity and inclusion throughout the organization.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Publicize the Pledge and how the principles are carried out in the organization.
- Offer training/education modules that explore best practice behavior to ‘live the Pledge.’
- Document and publicize key diversity data capturing key internal and external stakeholder groups to position the organization as inclusive, progressive, and a ‘best place to work.’
- Provide an experience for the President’s Cabinet and other NCAA executives that will educate them on their roles as leaders with respect to diversity and inclusion.
- Build human Resources and all hiring offices to develop and maintain a candidate database that is diverse and ‘ready to hire.’
- Develop a broader set of job descriptions/pools; determine if the level of diversity is acceptable and if additional efforts may be needed.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Aim for 100 percent of employees receiving training in supervising diverse employees.
- Aim for 100 percent of diverse employees reporting increased satisfaction with direct supervisor performance-related interactions.
- Aim for 100 percent employee awareness of the organization’s diversity/multi-cultural performance and importance, and retention.
- Select external audiences are best practice in organizational diversity/multi-cultural performance-driving the workplace culture.

**RETAIN**
(SUPERVISORS, HUMAN RESOURCES)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Evaluate the ‘stretch assignment’ program.
- Analyze insights from exit interviews of terminated/diverse talent separation protocol.
- Evaluate employee engagement.
- Engage Employee Resource Groups, Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, and Committee on Women’s Athletics to learn insights and opportunities for improvement in the current retention processes.
- Be willing and able to have the ‘difficult conversations’ that facilitate improvement in the retention processes.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Conduct interviews with ‘regretted losses’ to learn beyond the exit interview what changes may have made a difference in former employees’ careers.
- Identify what changes to the retention strategy will produce improved results.
- Deploy new approaches, tailored to segments with lowest retention.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Higher percentage of diverse talent retained.
- Increases in average tenure for diverse employees.
- More employees are engaged in the work to promote high career satisfaction.

**TRACK PROGRESS**
(CEO, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION)

**WHAT TO CONSIDER**
- Through research, data gathering, data analysis and reporting, monitor trends and ensure adequate action plans are in place to address gaps in recruitment, development, advancement and diverse talent retention.
- Compare quarterly results to goals that demonstrate progress against norms derived from data on levels of diversity of the overall NCAA membership and the United States. Identify insights and opportunities that will identify gaps in knowledge and capability to ensure diversity is achieved and included in leveraging throughout the organization.

**HOW TO PROCEED**
- Conduct interviews with ‘regretted losses’ to learn beyond the exit interview what changes may have made a difference in former employees’ careers.
- Identify what changes to the retention strategy will produce improved results.
- Deploy new approaches, tailored to segments with lowest retention.

**POSSIBLE RESULT**
- Greater alignment and compliance with the Pledge.
- More staff engaged in fulfilling the Pledge.