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Diversity Incentives and Education Targeted to Coaches

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The success of in-service diversity programs increases in relation to the perceived utility of the information presented to the user, respect for the expertise of the presenter and whether there is an emotional connection between the presenter and the audience. Coaches are often the most literal among athletic department employees with regard to needing to see the practical application of theory. Traditional diversity workshops are often led by presenters who do not connect with coaches with regard to the practical realities they face. Thus, the Director of Athletics should consider designing in-service diversity training sessions that are specifically targeted to meeting the needs of coaches. These sessions should also should be attended by student life skills, athletic training, strength training and academic support personnel. Suggestions for programs include:

- Successful Coach of Color. Identify a minority coach recognized for his or her minority recruiting success to participate in a presentation and discussion with head and assistant coaches on successful practices and priority considerations when recruiting minority student-athletes. This program should also include successful practices to increase minority retention.
- Male Coach Who Has Hired Female Assistant. A respected male coach of a men's team who has successfully hired a female assistant and can comment on the value and utility of such gender diversity should present on this topic.
- Minority Alumnus. A highly respected minority student-athlete graduate of the institution or a panel of such graduates should be asked to present a session on the minority athlete experience and recommendations for improving that experience.

Each of the above sessions should be staggered and offered once every three years and then repeated with different speakers.

The Director of Athletics should also consider whether establishing all or some of the following practices would encourage diversity in hiring, recruiting and retention:

- In sports in which the maximum limit of NCAA scholarships is not awarded, make known the availability of additional athletics financial aid to recruit minority student-athletes who might

otherwise not be able to afford to attend the institution.

- Publicly recognize and express appreciation in staff meetings to coaches and staff who have contributed to employment diversity or increased student-athlete diversity on their teams.
- In sports in which head or assistant coaches are not full-time, permit increased percent time appointments for minority coaches as necessary for hiring or retention. For all coaches and staff, seek institutional approval for salaries necessary to compete in the marketplace for minority employees.
- When funding the attendance of staff at professional conferences, insist that the staff member attend diversity sessions and share such content with all staff upon his or her return to campus.
- Each year, plan an event at which the athletics director meets with a team and all coaches (for one team per season/3 per year) to have an informal conversation ("Cokes with the AD" or "Milk and cookies with the AD") to specifically address the value orientation of the program: diversity, respect, integrity, leadership and service and how each student-athlete can contribute to these values. Never underestimate the leadership power of the athletics director.
- Annually review an analysis of staff and student athlete diversity at a meeting of the full department each year, with the Director of Athletics leading discussion on specific ways to improve diversity.
- In the case of employees who have not yet achieved success in increasing staff and student-athlete diversity, consider use of the following mechanisms:
    - asking for the reconstitution of a finalist pool with more and better qualified minority applicants
    - not recommending a cost of living or merit increase
    - no offer of multi-year employment agreement

If your athletic department is challenged in addressing diversity issues, consider retaining a consultant to do a comprehensive analysis of student-athlete recruitment and staff employment. The consultant will assist the athletics director in establishing measurable goals and objectives and determining specific policies and practices on how to get there. Athletics administrators are often so overworked that there is not enough time on their plate to address this issue. Diversity does not belong on the back burner.

Topics

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