



Published on Sports Management Resources

[Implementing the Mechanisms of...](#)

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Faced with recent multi-million dollar court judgments and the potential of increased Title IX litigation, gender equity has become a more compelling issue for many institutions. But it's easy to 'miss the forest for the trees'. Value leadership is not about doing something because of being afraid of what might happen if you don't. Rather, value leadership is about doing something because it is the right thing to do.

The athletics director, head coaches and senior staff members have a responsibility to think about institutionalizing values so that equality is a larger and richer filter – about gender but so much more than gender. How does the athletics director make sure that the fabric of the athletics department culture contains value learning mechanisms that maximize the possibility of student-athletes and athletics department employees being able to say, “This is a place where I want to work” or “We always do the right thing and I’m proud of it”?

Think about the following checklist. How many of these mechanisms are used by the leaders of your team or athletics program?

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1. **Leader Delivers Clear Message.** Value leadership starts with the voiced and policy statements of the athletics director. Addressing gender or racial equity or issues of integrity in public and at staff meetings are powerful acts of leadership. “We believe...”, “Our organization values are...” and “Our policy is...”, are strong statements that establish expectations for all staff and students.
 2. **Repetition.** Saying something once doesn’t do it! Repetition of messaging is essential. Is something said about a values issue at every staff meeting? Is it clear that these values are priorities?
 3. **Having Others Teach.** Lecture is the poorest educational tool. Requiring others to teach is the best educational tool. Preparing to teach is almost a guarantee of retention. Does the athletics director require coaches or other senior staff members to make presentations on value issues – from diversity to sexual harassment?
 4. **Personalization of Message.** Does the athletics director personalize the importance of the value position in such a way that he or she ignites meaning and passion for that value? “If this person was my son or daughter, how would I feel about such treatment?” Are testimonials from those adversely affected by disrespect or discrimination a part of staff meetings or programming?
 5. **Value Utility.** Has the athletics director presented information on the utility or benefits of diversity, equality, honesty or other values? For instance, has discussion of values like diversity been tied to the ability to recruit or retain more talented minority athletes or similar outcomes that enhance a coach’s program or efforts?
 6. **Disincentives.** Do staff members experience negative consequences for failure to conform to department values (i.e., poor evaluation for failure to hire a diverse staff, not approving a hire when the finalist pool of assistant coaches contains no minorities, no salary or budget increases until improvement is demonstrated, etc.).
 7. **Incentives.** Does the athletics director reward those who demonstrate effort toward the achievement of important value-based outcomes such as using such incentives as merit increases, good evaluations, compliments in staff meetings, letters for personnel files or raises?
 8. **Institutionalization.** Has the athletics director installed a ritual, structure, or other mechanism that celebrates the value? For instance, is there an award for the team that does the most community service, an annual celebration during Black History Month or on National Girls and Women in Sports Day, a department diversity subcommittee and/or regular recognition of the coach or staff member that does the most to advance equity, diversity or integrity?

If all of the above mechanisms were regularly operating, what would the values fabric of the athletics department feel like? Would this athletics department be a place where you would like to work?