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[Sample Diversity Goal and Objectives](#)

Setting goals and establishing measurable objectives is a key first step in achieving diversity outcomes. In general, a goal should be a broad, narrative, and visionary expression of the athletics program's diversity commitment while objectives are specific, measurable and may include a timeframe for achievement. Typically, a diversity goal is one of many goals established by the athletics department and a part of the athletics program's strategic plan. Alternatively, or in addition, the athletics department may have a separate diversity plan with its own goals and objectives.

Sample Strategic Plan Diversity Goal and Objective. Following is an example of a diversity goal and measurable objectives that would be appropriate for a strategic plan:

GOAL: The composition of the athletics department staff and student-athletes and its organizational climate shall reflect the highest commitment to diversity and respect for individual differences.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Annually, the athletic department shall strive to achieve the following objectives:

1. The racial, ethnic and gender composition within all categories of staff and all student-athlete teams shall annually improve until they generally achieve national census proportions.
2. The recruitment of staff and student-athletes shall ensure an adequate pool of candidates from underrepresented groups and conform to institutional policy, governance association rules and regulations, and state and federal laws.
3. Selection or retention of staff and student-athletes shall be based upon skill and competency criteria and shall not be based on race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or status as a military veteran except as permitted by the offering of sex-separate sport programs or as required by law.
4. The organizational climate of the athletics program shall be perceived by staff and student-athletes as welcoming to all individuals and reflective of fair treatment and decision-making.
5. Athletics department staff and student-athletes shall be knowledgeable of diversity issues and individuals shall be acknowledged for their diversity efforts and initiatives.
6. The athletics department shall support special programs and efforts that demonstrate success in increasing employment and participation opportunities for underrepresented groups.

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7. The athletics department shall annually conduct educational programs for first year student-athletes and new athletics department employees that address the benefits of diversity.

The Issue of Appropriate Comparators. Careful consideration must be paid to the question of appropriate comparators for goal-setting. For higher education institutions who recruit staff and student-athletes nationally, a national census population comparator is recommended. For institutions dedicated to serving local needs (i.e., community colleges or high schools), regional or local population demographics would be more appropriate. Administrators should not utilize the larger institution's current student or faculty demographics as a comparator because it is not uncommon for higher education institutions to have lower than national average percentages of racial and ethnic minorities and female faculty and staff. Thus, setting athletics department goals based on general institutional percentages may be essentially flawed strategy.

The Issue of Overall Versus Distributed Diversity. Typically, racial and ethnic minorities are overrepresented in sports like football, track and basketball and underrepresented in all other sports. Similarly, racial and ethnic minorities and females have higher representations in the lowest paid or lower status positions and employment levels than in the higher paid and more senior professional levels (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Lapchick, 2010; NCAA Race and Gender Demographics, 2010; Sports Business Journal, 2002). Simply computing overall representation therefore hides these serious inequities within sports and senior job categories. Thus, it is highly recommended that the stated commitment to diversity be specified as distributed within all teams and employment categories rather than overall.

Student Population as the Athletics Program Gender Comparator. Title IX establishes the general student body proportions of males and females at each institution as the required comparator for the athletics program at each respective institution under Prong One of its participation requirements. Even if the institution uses Prong Two (consistent effort to increase opportunities for the underrepresented gender) or Prong Three (fulfillment of interest and ability at below the general student body proportion) defense for not meeting the proportionality standard, the institution is still obligated to make efforts to remedy historical discrimination and continue to strive for proportionality. It should also be noted that this proportionality based on institutional general student body comparator is appropriate because Title IX requires this measure for athletics.

EXCERPTS FROM PREPUBLICATION MANUSCRIPT. DO NOT DISTRIBUTE. USE WITH THE FOLLOWING CITATION:

Lopiano, D.A. and Zotos, C. (Publication 2013) The Athletics Director's Handbook: A Comprehensive Practical Guide to the Management of Scholastic and Intercollegiate Athletics Programs. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

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