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Consulting Services

There are many reasons why educational institutions seek the assistance of SMR consultants in addressing athletics department needs:

- **Institutional Integrity**. The stakes could not be higher with regard to public perception of the institution's reputation when there are athletic department failures in the areas of rules compliance, academic integrity, inappropriate coach or student-athlete behavior or gender equity. In NCAA Division I institutions in particular, required peer review certification has elevated this risk.

- **Financial Challenges**. Faced with financial challenges, athletics directors or institutional officers may desire a comprehensive analysis that investigates restructuring the current tiered funding model or implementing a new athletic program model to preserve current men's sports participation numbers, increase the number of women's sports teams and continue to achieve a high level of program excellence in a limited number of priority sports.

- **Visibility and Risk**. The level of scrutiny of the sports media, alumni interest and involvement in varsity sports, faculty concerns regarding academic integrity and an increased number of lawsuits against athletics departments place a premium on prevention and foresight with regard to athletics program management and conduct.

- **Management Training**. Athletic directors may or may not be formally trained managers and there is no required licensure or certification of coaches even though these programs operate in high-risk environments with regard to the potential for physical injury. Outstanding athletics directors may lack the time and/or expertise to address the increased complexities of athletic program management or want help in setting up model programs addressing high risk areas.

- **Inclusivity Concern**. Most athletics directors are faced with overcoming the challenges of an anachronistic culture that has lagged behind society with regard to employment diversity. Expanding employment opportunities for women or other minorities or sharing resources with developing women's sports programs in the manner that the law requires are significant concerns at many educational institutions.

What Services Do SMR Consultants Provide?

Each of the bold sub-titles below link to a more detailed one page description of the service.

- Comprehensive Integrity Assessment. Comprehensive athletics program and management integrity risk assessment conducted proactively or in response to litigation or rules compliance concerns.

- Budgetary and Philosophical Alignment of Sports For Various Program Models. Sport programs are either homogeneous or prioritized with regard to importance to the institution or aspirations for success. Budgets, salaries, policies and organizational structure are analyzed for consistency with sport program priorities and gender equity law.

- Strategic Planning. Development of 3 or 5 year plans with first year priority strategies and action plans.

- Building Fundraising Capacity and Diversification of Revenue Streams. Strategic assessment and planning to enhance revenue generation and increase donor giving from multiple sources: annual giving, direct mail, foundation grants, athletic and fundraising event income, licensing and merchandising, corporate sponsorships, radio and/or television rights or advertising income, planned giving, and major giving.

- Athletics Program Gender Equity Assessment. Title IX and Title VII assessments and development of compliance plans.

- **Athletics Department Personnel Systems: Achieving Diversity and Performance Objectives**. Employment, retention and personnel evaluation assessment with special attention to mechanisms for increasing the employment and retention of underrepresented groups, compensation systems for coaches, and training of supervisors in coach/staff performance assessment and professional development.

- Executive Coaching of Managers or Prospective Managers**.** One-on-one interaction with objective third party athletic director or development director to support a top manager or sharpen the skills of an individual who has been identified as a top management prospect.

- **Sexual Harassment and Misconduct in Athletics Settings.** Title IX includes prohibitions against sexual abuse and harassment and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status. These areas are seldom covered by athletics policy or educational programming, both of which are provided. Customized on-campus workshops focused on risk management and clear definitions of appropriate and inappropriate conduct are offered for athletics staff members and student-athletes. Detailed model policies and educational resources consistent with recent OCR instructions are also provided.

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