

Committee on Equal Opportunity in Athletics

Minutes from the November 20, 2013 Meeting

Present: **Katie Baer** (Trainer for Athletics); **Bridgett Brugger-McSorley** (Director of Compliance and Athletics Title IX); **Jed Castro** (Producer for Video Broadcast in Athletics); **Michele Deramo** (Representative from Diversity and Inclusion/Director of Diversity Education and Initiative); **Reyna Gilbert-Lowry** (Assistant Athletics Director for Student Life); **Chris Helms** (Associate Athletics Director for Olympic Sports); **Jermaine Holmes** (Representative from the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Director of Student-Athlete Academic Support Services); **Larry Killough** (Faculty Athletics Representative/KPMG Professor, Department of Accounting and Information Systems); **Pam Linkous** (Chair of Committee/Director of Human Resources and Diversity Initiatives for Athletics); **Patrick Mason** (Head Baseball Coach); **Karisa Moore** (Representative from University Human Resources/Director of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity); **Carol Robertson** (Head Women's Golf Coach); **Terry Swecker** (Representative from University Athletics Committee/Professor and Associate Department Head, Large Animal Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine)

Absent: **Kelly Williford** (Student-Athlete Representative/Women's Tennis Student-Athlete)

Pam called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. (**Motion: Terry/Larry**).

Pam reviewed the **charge and purpose** with the committee, indicating the Committee's mission is to review and approve the current Minority Opportunity Plan and to establish future initiatives for the department. She asked that discussions be informal and membership feel free to offer suggestions and recommendations. Pam also addressed a couple of issues relative to the Committee's process:

- Current status of **NCAA certification** – NCAA has changed the name of certification to Institutional Performance Program; program will be a dashboard system; NCAA not putting forth a lot of information at this point; not sure who is going to be responsible for inputting information; August 2014 implementation date; schools are to continue with their Plans for Improvement
- Status of VT athletics administration – new **Director of Athletics** will be named February 1; new administration may be more involved in diversity initiatives; new direction; until new Director is named, committee will continue with charge and amend as necessary

Roundtable **introductions** were made.

Pam asked the membership to take a few minutes to **review the Minority Opportunity Plan**. Motion was made and supported to approve the Minority Opportunity Plan (**Motion: Michele/Karisa**) with the following changes:

Karisa asked that the Minority Opportunity Plan be changed to indicate the new name for the Office of Multicultural Affairs to Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Pam asked the membership to openly discuss ways to improve our diversity efforts.

Terry - define outcomes, how do we know this is working, survey after graduation?

Reyna - we survey seniors

Pat – agrees with value of survey; we can get access 5 years but 10 would be tricky

Pam – reunion survey could be handled through the Monogram Club

Chris – we shouldn't reinvent the survey; use career services survey

Chris – if we administer career survey will we be able to assess our initiatives?

Michele - is our (general) effort students based versus personnel based

Pam – The annual April workshop provides training for department personnel; in the past workshop attendance has been mandatory; topics covered include sexual harassment/discrimination, LGBTQ education, etc.

Michele – suggested staff attend the Diversity Development Institute (DDI); courses can be taken when scheduling doesn't conflict; a report can be provided to Athletics at the end of year; also suggested a 3-2-1 assessment which provides data

Pam – to Michele, what is the general overall university attendance for the DDI

Michele - capped at 25; usually 20 or so employees register; staff who receive training can then take it back to the department to train their staffs

Reyna – perhaps we can set a goal to have directors attend diversity development

Pam – to Terry, how is vet med handling diversity management

Terry –there are directives to attend diversity training that is provided

Michele – our area can help staff understand how you should proceed

Pam – coaching staff depends on me and Reyna but it has to be mandatory, which is why April workshop works so well

Karissa – A dean of a college made it mandatory for his department

Terry- culture to compliance is deeply embedded, is there an outside entity we could bring in similar to Title IX

Pam – I researched consultants on line; need references; Director of Athletics chose to have committee rather than consultant. Should we look at this in the future?

Pam – to Karissa, please provide me with a list of agencies where faculty positions are advertised

Pam asked the membership to shift focus to another area of the Minority Opportunity Plan: Employment Opportunities.

Pam – we advertise with the NCAA and Karissa's office posts our positions with various diversity publications and websites; there is not a lack of applicants but management levels could use more diversity on their staffs; all of this starts with leadership setting the example; something the new Director of Athletics will hopefully address; additionally, we have cut back on search exemptions which opens our searches up to a more diverse population

Jermaine – diverse students need diverse administrators/role models; Athletics has opportunity to set the standard because it is a specialized industry

Pam – to Larry, Terry, Michele – how do you see role model opportunities with faculty?

Michele - Virginia Tech has everything in place for policies and programming, but it does not have a demographic distribution that reflects distribution of the state; we need to create the environment to promote retention; create an inclusive environment; how do we facilitate inclusion inventories in our units? How does it feel and how can we change things within our unit? This membership is probably a better avenue than hiring a consultant

Jermaine – Black Faculty Caucus meets with the President; how can we work together as an institution? How do we attract, how do we retain?

Pam – to Jermaine, do you believe there is progress?

Jermaine – Progress has been made on a small scale. Using the caucuses on campus as part of the interview process can also help make the process feel more inviting

Karisa – There is a huge number of diverse applicants but they are not making it past the preliminary screening/interview process. Problem rests in writing the job description and screening.

Pam – we might eliminate minorities based on initial requirements

Terry- I work in Veterinary Medicine and the student body is 80% female, we need role models so we hire with that in mind; not written in the position description, but we know what we need

Karisa - You made an affirmative decision in your hiring practices

Pam – coaches have a tendency to pick from their peer groups

Karisa – legacy is very important when being accepted at Virginia Tech; legacy impacts accessibility; having Division I experience impacts opportunity

Pat – we just hired a director of operations; we had no idea of his background until campus interview; my job is on the line so qualifications are very important

Jermaine – I would assume at a higher level, we would know candidates personally

Pam – the leadership at the department and university levels sets examples

Michele – suggest creating a “future faculty program” with intention that candidates may be eligible for future positions; Athletics could mentor Division II or Division III candidates which would create access to Division I opportunities; how can you enlarge the pool by doing something proactive

Pam – In Division I athletics, we have a large number of minority candidates for our football and basketball programs and our track and field program; largest number of minorities applying for jobs and largest number of minority student-athletes; quantity of minority candidates in other not as prevalent; not enough role models for the percentage of minority student-athletes

Jermaine – stakes are high; perhaps we can create pipelines as Michele indicated; Southwest Virginia is geographically challenging for attracting and retaining minority candidates; it is still challenging for me as a minority in this area; are community efforts aimed at retention?

Larry – could you share examples of challenges?

Jermaine – for example, something as simple as black hair products; you could not find them available locally until efforts were made to address this issue

Reyna – “future faculty program” is good idea; possibly expose student-athletes to this type of program and open it up as an internship opportunity

Michele – it is systemic and it takes time to see results

Pam – salaries are low in comparison to our conference and other conferences; we need to strive to retain all good employees, but sometimes it is impossible when other conferences can offer incentives along with higher salaries

Terry – Veterinary Medicine has a liaisons program; faculty candidates, during interview / hiring process are assigned to a “conciierge” (who wasn’t on hiring committee); someone who can answer questions the candidate would not necessarily ask the search committee; higher level is missing the importance of this program; realize how different hiring on coaching level differs from academia (head coach is responsible for his or her hiring decision which can affect his or her employment). In response to Pat’s comments, it’s shocking how high the stakes are for athletics with hiring. Nowhere else on campus is your job at stake like it is in Athletics (in

reference to the responsibility head coaches assume based on assistant coaches' decisions). We, as a group, need to recognize that difference

Reyna – how do you get to know a more diverse population

Pat – it's difficult to get diverse population in our sport because as we enter the profession we don't think about developing diversity for future employment opportunities when you are a young assistant coach you establish professional peers and you will hire from that pool later on in the profession. Early in your career, you are not necessarily focused on developing relationships so you will have a diverse candidate pool in the future

Michele – different sport programs (football, basketball programs) need to make efforts for pipeline

Pam to Katie- can you speak about your experiences as an Athletic Trainer with student-athletes, and their perception of role models?

Katie- from my view, it's socioeconomic; there are personnel issues and student-athlete issues; it almost takes two separate committees; student-athletes crave gender role models ; we have at least 90 student athletic trainers in our pipeline

Michele – I agree with you, a critical piece of diversity is socioeconomic

Jed Castro – 50/50 students stay in video broadcast

Pat- we have student workers

Pam – we need to show successes we've had

Pam thanked the membership for their input and turned the discussion to a review of the other areas of the Minority Opportunity Plan.

Pam indicated that under **Institutional and Athletics Department Commitment**, the department is doing really well.

Evaluation is handled well through our report to the Commission and we will include **Enrollment and Comparison of Populations** under this section.

The steering committee had a difficult time assessing **Organization and Structure**. As a committee, we need to think of ideas how to assess this area.

Participation in Governance and Decision Making involves our student-athletes as their schedules will allow. Pam indicated we do have a SAAC member on our committee, Kelly Williford, but she was unable to attend due to class and practice schedule.

Terry asked how we get governance feedback from our student-athletes; Reyna indicated our SAAC membership allows the student-athletes to share information (voice to the conference but

not necessarily campus/department issues); Chris indicated that the SAAC is more initiative based. Our student-athlete survey addresses some of these issues.

Jermaine indicated when there are issues which are brought to his attention by student-athletes, our administration already knows about the problem or concern and have addressed it or is in the process of addressing the concern.

Katie indicated she hears quite a few concerns from student-athletes, but as a professional has to decide what needs to be brought to the attention of administration; usually the concerns expressed by student-athletes are “momentary” problems and the student-athlete needs a sounding board.

Terry asked how is feedback gathered from student-athletes who do not graduate. Reyna responded that data is collected from a survey that Heather Robertson, Athletics Compliance, distributes; survey was developed by Reyna and Jon Jaudon, Associate Athletics Director for Administration.

Pat stated that if he’s making changes, he wants solid data. Give me a matrix that has data which includes makeup of university, staff, GPAs, everything together. Reyna expressed concern that we wouldn’t get accurate data from those who are returning. Pat said that with a survey that included coaching fairness and diversity, you’ll get honest answers regarding diversity.

Pam asked the membership to discuss the last section of the Minority Opportunity Plan, **Program and Activities**. Carol asked if all the programs and activities for student-athletes happen during April when programs are presented to personnel. Pam indicated that Student Life spreads their programs for student-athletes out throughout the academic year. Carol mentioned at her previous place of employment, activities and programs were scheduled for student-athletes and were made mandatory. Students complained, but once at the program were happy with the educational aspect of the presentation. Karisa asked if the entire student-athlete body has the opportunity to be in the same place together. Reyna responded they do (new student-athlete orientation, welcome back picnic, reading day luncheon, end of year banquet).

Other Discussion:

Pam will share a packet of material from the Committee with the new Director of Athletics and will invite him or her to attend our next meeting.

Terry suggested we include a component of this committee’s charge in the Director of Athletics’ position description. Committee agreed to draft questions relative to diversity efforts in Athletics and submit the questions to Ray Smoot, Chair of the Director of Athletics Search Committee. Pam felt it very important to include diversity topics and Principles of Community discussion with Director candidates. Should also ask candidates about their current diversity efforts within their departments. Karisa agreed indicating that Athletics has the largest diverse population on campus so hopefully there would be support from the Chair.

Pam indicated the next meeting will be scheduled in March. Minutes will be sent out within the next day or so for approval.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.