

A close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones stacked on top of each other in a circular formation, symbolizing unity and teamwork. The hands are positioned in the upper half of the image, with fingers pointing towards the center.

NCAA LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

We recognize and value the experiences individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to intercollegiate athletics.

Background

In January 2016, the NCAA Board of Governors reviewed data on the racial/ethnic and gender representation of individuals in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics. Noting the underrepresentation of people of color and women in these positions, the board adopted a resolution to reaffirm the Association's commitment to diversity and inclusion in athletics leadership and requested supportive action from both the membership and the national office.

The board also created an ad hoc committee charged with reviewing, researching and providing recommendations about matters of diversity and inclusion that impact the Association. The committee is composed of presidents, conference commissioners, athletics directors and liaisons from the Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics and the NCAA Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee. The ad hoc committee determined one of its first actions would be to engage senior leaders at NCAA conferences and schools through a voluntary pledge for diversity and inclusion.

The NCAA respects and promotes the autonomy of its member institutions. Therefore, the pledge is a voluntary commitment that invites chancellors, presidents and conference commissioners to publicly express their support for diversity and inclusion efforts within intercollegiate athletics. By signing on behalf of your institution, you acknowledge that diversity and inclusion are core values to the Association and that efforts to create inclusive environments positively impact the welfare of student-athletes, administrators and coaches.



The Pledge

Pledge and Commitment to Promoting Diversity and Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics

Consistent with our mission and values and as a member institution of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), we pledge to specifically **commit to establishing initiatives for achieving ethnic and racial diversity, gender equity and inclusion** with a focus and **emphasis on hiring practices in intercollegiate athletics to reflect the diversity of our membership and our nation.**

We recognize and value the experiences individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to intercollegiate athletics. To that end, **we will strive to identify, recruit and interview individuals from diverse backgrounds in an effort to increase their representation and retention** as commissioners, athletics directors, coaches and other athletics leadership positions. As part of this commitment, **we also will engage in a regular diversity, inclusion and equity review** to inform campus policy and diversity initiatives.

We understand this to be a collective responsibility we owe to student-athletes, staff, our athletics programs and the entire campus community.



Presidents, chancellors and senior administrators inspire meaningful action, consistent with vision and mission, producing desired impact (results).

Focus Areas

- Value the diversity (individual similarities and differences) of everyone.
- Create an inclusive environment and culture (leverage diversity by accepting, welcoming, respecting and engaging co-workers).
- Support the Pledge by committing to promote diversity.
- Work toward gender equity (treating cultural, social and physical identifications without bias or qualification).
- Increase the visibility of the need for greater diversity and inclusion.
- Mission attainment through the efforts of a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.
- Demonstrating zero tolerance for exclusionary behaviors.

Outcomes

- A diverse, equitable and inclusive organization that achieves its mission.
- Support for, and significant increase in, people of color and women in coaching and administrative positions in athletics departments of NCAA member institutions.

Pledge: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Values: Vision, Accountability, Learning, Understanding and Empowerment

So that STAFF WORKFORCE reflects the diversity of our membership and our nation, we will suggest initiatives for achieving ethnic and racial diversity, gender equity and inclusion in leadership – commissioners, athletics directors, coaches and other senior athletics positions⁽¹⁾. These initiatives will create public acknowledgment that the NCAA and its member institutions are committed to creating greater diversity and inclusion throughout their ranks. In addition, these initiatives are designed to send a strong message that there are extraordinary opportunities in intercollegiate athletics.

So that our organization's values, culture, training, community involvement and supplier diversity reflect our membership's diversity, we will proactively support the Pledge through the SYSTEMS that maintain our relevance and sustain our mission⁽²⁾. These systems and approaches, and their deployment, are designed to integrate and apply best practice.



The Pledge in Action

Real-world suggestions on making your commitment to diversity and inclusion a daily reality.

RECRUITING

- As leaders meet potential diverse candidates in various settings, inviting them to an event on campus or a professional conference will create an opportunity to get to know them better and build relationships.
- Consider expanding your recruiting pool to include individuals currently working at Minority Serving Institutions. Quite often, individuals from these and other institutions with lower media profiles have nontraditional portfolios, but are well-positioned to be successful.

DEVELOPMENT

- Bringing diverse employees to conference athletics directors' meetings and allowing them to get to know the other athletics directors on a personal level fosters the development of relationships and the ability to welcome diverse perspectives.
- Create job shadowing and cross-functional opportunities for diverse candidates. For example, allowing a diverse coach the opportunity to participate in development and fundraising meetings can expand his/her understanding of program management while exposing him/her to additional career opportunities.

ADVANCE

- Provide opportunity for diverse candidates to present quarterly reports regarding athletics to chancellors and presidents cabinet meetings. Such exercises can increase diverse employees' familiarity with important business-related issues, and give them experience with presenting in these and similar environments.

RETAIN

- Providing diverse candidates with a stretch assignment and rewarding them for success demonstrates appreciation and value for their professional contributions.
- Example of a "difficult conversation": Provide role-playing scenarios for practice in giving—and receiving—career feedback that is honest, objective, unbiased, and helpful to one's career development.

MONITOR AND PROVIDE OVERSIGHT

- Those in leadership positions can consider hosting regular lunches or meetings with diverse staff, where key points on progress regarding creating and sustaining a climate and culture of diversity and inclusion are discussed. This exhibits the leader's availability and engagement, and sends a message of commitment through consistency.
- Be clear about giving expectations concerning diverse searches to all involved (such as a search committee or external search firm). This may include the request for a strategic plan from the search team detailing how the members will ensure the review of a diverse candidate pool.

COMMITMENT

- Model for staff the importance of inclusion in operational discussions. For instance, asking questions, such as, "How did the marketing strategy work? How diverse was the crowd?" makes staff aware of the expectations of their supervisor.

CULTURE

- Show visible signs of diverse professionals engaged with the athletics department, minority faculty, business leaders, civic leaders and alumni. This practice allows student-athletes to see administrators engaged with diverse groups outside of the athletics department.

COMMUNICATION

- To demonstrate that the issue of inclusion is top of mind for leadership, major speeches and presentations given to the campus/workforce community should feature a diversity and inclusion-related message.

COMMUNITY

- Create real opportunities to engage with diverse groups beyond community service; e.g., offer a side-by-side work experience with minority or women business owners. An effort like this creates an opportunity to gain appreciation for the diversity in the community.

NEXT: A GUIDE TO HELP YOU PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUITY.



1 | Creating Value Through a Diverse Workforce

RECRUIT

(HUMAN RESOURCES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, HIRING MANAGERS)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Evaluate hiring practices (how diverse? equitable? inclusive?).
- Evaluate current candidate sourcing practices.
- Assess current interviewing strategies and practices.
- Assess makeup of candidate finalist pools; determine if the level of diversity is acceptable and if additional effort may be needed.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Seek new sources of candidates (e.g., INROADS, historically black colleges and universities, National Association of Black MBAs, etc.).
- Adjust timing of recruiting to attract larger pools.
- Offer expanded internships to increase inclusion.
- Seek input from Affinity Employee Resource Groups and Association committees, task forces and working groups dedicated to diversity and inclusion (such as the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and Committee on Women's Athletics).

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Strengthen the pipeline and improve knowledge of prospects.
- Increased percentage (year over year) of diversity, gender equality and inclusion to work toward attaining national standards in these key indicators.

DEVELOP

(SUPERVISORS, HUMAN RESOURCES, EDUCATION AND TRAINING)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Evaluate the onboarding, mentoring, coaching and performance processes.
- Seek input from Employee Resource Groups, Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, Committee on Women's Athletics or other affinity groups to learn strengths and opportunities for improvement in the development of diverse employees.
- Develop programs to enable candidates to be successful in their careers.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Conduct listening sessions to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in each process.
- Review best practices and adopt approaches that will improve results.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Greater availability of, and access to, best practice development opportunities for all employees.
- Increased workforce participation in training, development and career advancement programs.

Creating Value Through a Diverse Workforce *CONTINUED*

ADVANCE

(HUMAN RESOURCES, OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Evaluate the succession-planning process.
- Evaluate the 'stretch assignment' process.
- Evaluate the process of mentoring/sponsoring employees with the potential and desire to advance.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Identify which approaches to recognition and promotion have the greatest success among diverse employees.
- Deploy structured processes to equitably mentor and sponsor all employees.
- Consult with the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee and Committee on Women's Athletics on best practices and most effective approaches to advancing diverse employees.
- Engage the People of Color, Women, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Questioning Transgender/Advocating and Disabilities Employee Resource Groups in process improvement.
- Actively mentor those in the pipeline.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Higher percentage of diverse employees offered stretch assignments.
- Higher percentage of diverse employees mentored and sponsored.
- Increased percentage of diverse employees promoted on an annual basis.

RETAIN

(SUPERVISORS, HUMAN RESOURCES)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Evaluate talent retention strategy.
- Analyze insights from exit interviews of regretted-loss diverse talent/departure protocol.
- Evaluate employee engagement levels; compare to diverse employees and address gaps.
- Engage Employee Resource Groups, Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, and Committee on Women's Athletics to learn strengths and opportunities for improvement in current retention processes.
- Be willing and able to have the 'difficult conversations' that tackle diversity and inclusion among members of the workforce.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Conduct interviews with 'regretted losses' to learn 'beyond the exit interview' what changes may have made a difference in former employees' careers.
- Identify what changes to the retention strategy will produce improved results.
- Deploy new approaches, tailored to segments with lowest retention.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Higher percentage of diverse talent retained.
- Increase in average tenure for diverse employees.
- More employees are engaged in the workplace and report high career satisfaction.

TRACK PROGRESS

(CEO, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION)

- Through research, data gathering, data analysis and reporting, monitor trends and ensure adequate action plans are in place to address gaps in recruitment, development, advancement and diverse talent retention. Compare quarterly results to goals that demonstrate progress against norms derived from data on levels of diversity of the overall NCAA membership and the United States. Leaders: initiate and support efforts that will identify gaps in knowledge and capability to ensure diversity is achieved and inclusion is leveraged throughout the organization.



2 | Supporting the Pledge Through Systems

COMMITMENT

(CEO, EXECUTIVE TEAM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Assess how senior leaders are engaged in supporting the Pledge.
- Review how senior leaders are held accountable.
- Evaluate the process for senior leaders' reward and recognition.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Include Pledge and fulfillment strategies in onboarding, performance assessment and mentoring of senior leaders.
- Tie one or more goals to Pledge outcomes and recognize progress in quarterly meetings, communications and celebrations.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Increased commitment of senior leaders to honor and support the Pledge.
- Fulfillment of goals and action plans related to the Pledge.

CULTURE

(HUMAN RESOURCES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Identify the key HR policies and practices that are key drivers of organizational behavior.
- Assess to what degree staff are engaged.
- Study results of staff opinion and perception (involvement, engagement) research to learn ways to create and sustain a culture supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Review organizational values through the perspective of 'beliefs' that drive behavior related to the mission, the work, the organization, the customer, the outcomes; draft beliefs that answer, "Why we do the work we do with diversity, equity and inclusion."

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Greater alignment and compliance with the Pledge.
- More staff engaged in fulfilling the Pledge.

Supporting the Pledge Through Systems *CONTINUED*

COMMUNICATION

(EDUCATION AND TRAINING, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE,
MARKETING OFFICE)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Identify how education and training processes support diverse employee advancement and retention.
- Map the communications systems in place and identify how messages about diversity, equity and inclusion are delivered and their effectiveness is measured.
- Engage the senior leaders and members of management team in 'walking the talk' in support of improving diversity and inclusion results throughout the organization.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Publicize the Pledge and how the principles are carried out in the organization.
- Offer training/education modules that explore best practice behavior to 'live' the Pledge.
- Document and publicize key diversity data among key internal and external stakeholder groups to position the organization as inclusive, progressing, and a 'best place to work.'
- Provide an experience for the President's Cabinet and other NCAA executives that will educate them on their roles as leaders with respect to diversity and inclusion.
- Enlist Human Resources and all hiring officers to develop and maintain a candidate database that is diverse and 'ready to hire.'
- Develop a broader set of job-posting resources and networks to result in greater diversity in the candidate pool.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Aim for 100 percent of employees receiving training in supervising diverse employees.
- Aim for 100 percent of diverse employees reporting increased satisfaction with direct supervisor performance-related interactions.
- Aim for 100 percent employee awareness of the organization's diversity/equity/inclusion performance and importance, and methods to improve.
- Selective external audiences are aware of the organization's diversity/equity/inclusion performance relative to the workplace culture.

COMMUNITY

(HUMAN RESOURCES, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, PURCHASING)

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Document how the organization is involved in the diverse community (e.g., through ERG community events, volunteering, etc.).
- Document the process to provide inclusive volunteer opportunities and community participation opportunities to employees.
- Document and measure the organization's efforts in economic inclusion through support of diverse suppliers and vendors.
- Engage with search firms and search consultants in ways that require them to bring a diverse candidate pool to campus.

HOW TO PROCEED

- Identify all community involvement and select those action-priorities where 'less work/more impact' could result.
- Assess volunteer intake process and identify community needs for alignment with volunteer capacities/strengths.
- Calculate purchasing activity trends with specialty (small, disadvantaged, minority-owned, and women-owned) business enterprises; set and measure goals moving forward.

POSSIBLE RESULT

- Expanded community involvement to document diversity, equity and inclusion principles in action.
- Volunteers identify their community involvement as a meaningful learning experience and development opportunity that also supports community outcomes.
- Increase in purchasing budget expended with diverse suppliers and vendors.

TRACK PROGRESS

(CEO, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION)

- Through research, data gathering, data analysis and reporting, monitor trends and ensure adequate action plans are in place to address gaps in commitment, culture, communications and community. Compare quarterly results to goals that demonstrate progress against norms derived from data on levels of diversity of the overall NCAA membership and the United States.