



Gender Equity Planning

BEST PRACTICES

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“An athletics program can be considered gender equitable when the participants in both the men’s and women’s sports programs would accept as fair and equitable the overall program of the other gender. No individual should be discriminated against on the basis of gender, institutionally or nationally, in intercollegiate athletics.”

NCAA Gender Equity Task Force

UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUITY

The NCAA is committed to fair treatment of all student-athletes and staff and includes as part of its core values: *An inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.* The NCAA Constitution includes the following principles:

2.3.1 Compliance with Federal and State Legislation. *It is the responsibility of each member institution to comply with federal and state laws regarding gender equity.*

2.6 The Principle of Nondiscrimination. *The Association shall promote an atmosphere of respect for and sensitivity to the dignity of every person. It is the policy of the Association to refrain from discrimination with respect to its governance, policies, educational programs, activities and employment policies including on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, creed or sexual orientation. It is the responsibility of each institution to determine independently its own policy regarding nondiscrimination.*

While the NCAA does not enforce Title IX, the NCAA membership expects all schools to have an active gender equity plan. The plan is meant to guide the institution in evaluating, monitoring and improving its gender equity performance. The membership, in addition to federal reporting requirements, participates in an annual financial and demographics reporting system that includes gender equity data.

MEASUREMENT, MONITORING AND REPORTING ON PROGRESS

Assessment should be an ongoing process. Determine a timeline for periodic reviews and progress reports to ensure corrective action is taking place as scheduled. At a minimum, an annual evaluation should take place of progress on the plan and determination of any adjustments that might need to be made. Updated information should be provided to the administration annually. The NCAA has a sample [gender equity plan](#).

- ◇ State measurable goals to address the issues. Goals should be articulated in a manner in which outcomes can be accurately measured. Thus the outcomes should be clearly described in ways that allow for specific means for assessment of success.
- ◇ Identify steps to achieve goals. This is the actual road map of steps that must be taken in order to achieve the determined measurable goals.
- ◇ Determine the costs for meeting these goals and possible funding sources.
- ◇ Identify who will be responsible for carrying out proposed solutions. An individual should be assigned to each goal and held responsible for leading the action required for achieving the goal.
- ◇ Establish a timeline and deadlines. Each goal should have a specific and realistic time frame for completion, and there should be regular monitoring of the progress that will ensure successful implementation in a timely manner.

- ◇ Get institutional approval. The plan should be reviewed and approved by the president's office or the president's designated decision-maker. This approval is critical to the actual implementation of the plan.

- ◇ File all records and identified remedial steps for monitoring purposes. Maintain records of all progress.

The responsibility for evaluation, monitoring progress in implementing the gender equity plan, and meeting the requirements of Title IX should be a shared department, gender equity committee and university commitment and not be left only to the senior woman administrator.

If the expertise and experience related to understanding Title IX and identifying viable solutions does not exist on campus, it may be helpful to contract with a consultant or external review team to assist in assessment and development of a plan.

Even in challenging financial times, an institutional commitment to gender equity must be upheld. A lack of money is not an acceptable reason for not meeting goals of your gender equity plan and eliminating disparities. All other options should be pursued before eliminating opportunities for male or female student-athletes. If there is no other alternative, general counsel and the Title IX coordinator should be involved in assessing the legal implications of dropping sports, especially for the underrepresented gender, before any action is taken. It may also be helpful to discuss implications with public relations personnel and have a communications strategy for any decisions that will negatively affect student-athletes.



