




COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

TO: CSU Community

FROM: Joyce McConnell, President 

DATE: November 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Independent Investigation Report
Racial Climate Review Recommendations and Implementation

To implement the recommendations of the Independent Investigation Report of the racial climate in CSU athletics, CSU will take the following actions:

Recommendation 1

Develop a system for student-athletes to report concerns to an employee outside of Athletic Department (e.g., Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX), and actively encourage reporting.

Action 1

The Report recommends that CSU establish a system for student-athletes to report concerns to an employee outside the Athletic Department. The Recommendation does not distinguish concerns stemming from behavior that may violate university policy, Title IX or other laws from other serious student-athlete concerns, such as the impact of actions that can create a climate of racial insensitivity, but may not violate policy or law. To address both types of concerns, we will develop a unified reporting system with a single committee to review reports and direct them to the appropriate offices for investigation or other response.

- The reporting system will be a web-based platform like that used by Residence Life. Just as the site from Residence Life states, we cannot necessarily guarantee anonymity, but every effort will be made to ensure best practices and anonymity will be maintained if possible and to the extent allowable by law.
- The reporting platform will be created and monitored by a committee comprised of university representatives external to the Athletics Department. Committee members will include the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs over Student-Athlete Support Services; the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative; the Chair of the Faculty Council Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics; the Vice President for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX; the Executive Director for Human Resources; and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel.
- The committee will be independent and impartial, empowered by the President.



- The committee will develop a regular review process of concerns submitted to the web-based platform, will work to resolve problems that do not rise to the level of violations of policy or law, and refer complaints that signal possible violations of policy or law to appropriate university offices.
- The committee will develop a social-norming campaign that encourages reporting, educates on the reporting process, and makes clear there can be no retaliation for filing a complaint or concern.

Recommendation 2

Continue or supplement diversity and inclusion training University-wide, with a special focus on the Athletics Department, to advance empathy-building, racial sensitivity and cultural understanding.

Action 2

- Athletic Department employees (including leadership) staff and student athletes will receive training on the university's discrimination, harassment and Title IX policies and corresponding laws, including but not limited to education regarding the prohibition of retaliation as soon as possible. The Vice President for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX, the Assistant Director of DEI in Athletics and the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Compliance for Athletics will identify or develop training, including the process for filing complaints and the non-retaliation policy (see more on this under Action 3 below).
- Many campus units, academic and non-academic, including Athletics, currently provide diversity training. The Vice President for Diversity will continue and expand its work to inventory what we are currently doing campus-wide, including in the Athletics Department. The inventory will be complete by December 31, 2020.
- An outside consultant will evaluate the efficacy of the trainings and recommend what we need to do as an institution to provide frequent, effective and regularly scheduled, campus-wide training, including in CSU Athletics, by March 31, 2021.
- Diversity training in Athletics will be expanded as recommended by the consultant in spring semester 2021.
- Diversity training campus-wide will be expanded as recommended by the consultant in fall semester 2021.
- In the process of Strategic Transformation, we will align budget allocations with priorities, including campus-wide training.



Recommendation 3

Amplify the University's policy statement against retaliation within the Athletic Department.

Action 3

Prior to issuance of the Husch Blackwell reports, the University's Office of Policy and Compliance was in the process of creating a non-retaliation policy that extends prohibitions against retaliation, which already exist in certain university policies, more broadly across the university. That work is ongoing.

- The Athletics Department, in consultation with and the approval of the Office of the General Counsel and the Vice President for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX, shall create a non-retaliation statement consistent with university policy that will be shared with Athletic Department employees and student athletes on a regular basis. Athletics Department leadership shall create and foster a culture of non-retaliation.

Recommendation 4

Create a comprehensive Communication Plan for Actions 1-3 above:

Action 4

- To make implementation of 1-3 known and effective, University Communications, led by the Vice President for University Communications, will work with communications teams throughout the University, including in the Athletics Department, to create, implement and assess a communications plan to raise awareness of the issues addressed in response to the investigation recommendations.
- The communications plan and its effectiveness will be assessed through an annual campus survey targeted at non-student employees, student employees, students and student-athletes.

We are committed to implementing these Recommendations from the racial climate review report quickly and effectively. To track progress, the Office of the Vice President of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX, in consultation with other Vice Presidents, Athletic Department Leaders and the Student Athlete Advisory Council, will report to the President three times per year: fall, spring semesters and summer session. These reports will be the basis for constant evaluation and further action.