

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW  
ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES  
JANUARY 18, 2019

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## **I. Executive Summary**

The University of Iowa's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics ("Department" or "Athletics Department") fields 23 teams that compete in the Big Ten Athletic Conference. The Department's mission states:

The mission of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is to provide the administrative and coaching support, facilities, resources, and equipment necessary for student-athletes to graduate from The University of Iowa while competing successfully in broad-based championship caliber intercollegiate athletics. The overall well-being of the participant and integrity of the program are paramount in all that we do.

To fulfill its mission, the Department employs 231 people,<sup>1</sup> including 84 women and 27 employees who self-report as racial minorities, and has been successful in hiring a similar or greater percentage of women and minorities than apply for the Department's open positions. For example, in fiscal year 2017, 18 coaches were hired. Women made up 19 percent of the applicant pool and 39 percent of hires. Racial minorities made up 21 percent of the total applicant pool and 22 percent of hires. Also in fiscal year 2017, 20 administrative positions were filled. Women made up 32 percent of the applicant pool and 50 percent of hires. Racial minorities made up 17 percent of the applicant pool and 20 percent of hires.

In April 2018, the University released Fredrikson & Byron's report reviewing University and Athletics Department policies related to equitable treatment of employees.<sup>2</sup> To complete the Athletics Department phase of the external review, Fredrikson & Byron<sup>3</sup> reviewed the Athletics Department's implementation of its policies. The review showed the Athletics Department does a good job in most areas and needs improvement in others.

Athletics Department employees we interviewed clearly understood the importance of recruiting and retaining employees who will increase diversity within the Department. They actively reach out to grow their professional networks and recruit women and minority candidates. Human Resources personnel in the Athletics Department are recognized for their expertise in the hiring process. Supervisors we interviewed understood how to recognize and respond to an employee's potential need for leave or accommodation. They also knew what to do if someone reported discrimination or harassment.

The review also showed the University and the Athletics Department are continuously reviewing and improving policies and practices related to equitable treatment of employees. The University has recently implemented new hiring, leave management, and disability accommodation protocols. In each case, the process is more centralized within University

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this report, employees are classified as Professional and Scientific or Merit and work 20 or more hours per week. More information regarding employee classification at the University of Iowa is available at: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/careers>.

<sup>2</sup> The report covering University and Athletics Department policies was released on April 18, 2018, and is available at: [https://hr.uiowa.edu/sites/hr.uiowa.edu/files/university\\_of\\_iowa\\_report\\_of\\_external\\_review\\_04182018.pdf](https://hr.uiowa.edu/sites/hr.uiowa.edu/files/university_of_iowa_report_of_external_review_04182018.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> To facilitate easier reading, Fredrikson & Byron, the outside firm that conducted the external review, will be referenced as "we" in this report.

Human Resources, and employees in the Athletics Department are trained to recognize issues and facilitate the process.

Interviews also showed some areas where improvements are necessary. Some employees who interviewed job applicants said no one followed up to collect feedback about the applicant once the interview was over. This could lead employees to perceive their input in the hiring process is not valued or necessary. While search committee chairs were generally knowledgeable about the process and their compliance responsibilities, others involved in the search process require more information and training to meet the requirements of the Department's policies.

Importantly, the review did not uncover any inequitable treatment of applicants or employees on the basis of protected class. We interviewed employees who self-reported as being of different races, genders, and sexual orientation. Multiple employees expressed a desire for more diversity in the Athletics Department, but none had personally experienced harassment or discrimination on the basis of protected class in the course of their employment.

## **II. Background and Overview**

### **A. Statement of Work**

The Statement of Work agreed to in May 2018<sup>4</sup> described the scope of work that resulted in this report:

#### **Step 3 — Review and Report of Employment Practices Related to Published Policies — University of Iowa Athletics**

- a. Meeting(s) with University designees to review goals and strategy for Step 3.
- b. Review documentation and data to assess Athletics Department compliance with identified employment laws and policies concerning equitable treatment of employees. Interview Athletics Department personnel as necessary.
- c. Report findings and provide recommendations related to Athletics Department compliance with identified employment laws and policies concerning equitable treatment of employees.
- d. Meeting(s) with University designees to review goals of future project phases: University Academic and Operational Units, and University of Iowa Health Care.

The Statement of Work also required a report of all Phase I findings and recommendations. Consistent with the Statement of Work, this report<sup>5</sup> provides information regarding the Athletics Department's compliance with University and Athletics Department policies concerning equitable treatment of employees. It also includes recommendations for improving compliance and for making progress toward the Department's goals for diversity and inclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> Statement of Work available at: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/practices-review/statement-of-work>

<sup>5</sup> Fredrikson & Byron attorneys Emily S. Pontius and Kendra D. Simmons prepared this report.

## **B. Access to Information**

### **1. Personnel Information**

In consultation with the University, we initially determined our compliance review of Athletics Department practices would include analysis of salary data, personnel files, recruitment files, and other records concerning key stages of the employee experience. Interviews would be conducted only as necessary to gain clarification regarding these sources of information.

After development of the initial work plan, the University decided to exclude confidential personnel records from the review to protect employee privacy. The work plan was revised to focus more on interviews, and the external reviewers also were provided with the following information from fiscal years 2015-2017:

- Starting salaries;
- Training and orientation information; and
- FMLA leave usage.

### **2. Interviews of Search Committee Members, Recent Hires, and Supervisors**

Nineteen current Athletics Department employees were interviewed. The interviewed employees were members of three groups: (1) employees hired during fiscal years 2015-2017; (2) employees who served on search committees or assisted with interviewing potential employees during fiscal years 2015-2017; and (3) employees with significant supervisory experience (based on number of employees supervised and/or years of experience). The interviewed employees were diverse with respect to race, sexual orientation, and gender.

To facilitate the selection of employees to be interviewed, the University provided to Fredrikson & Byron lists of all employees who were hired during fiscal years 2015-2017, all employees with search committee experience during fiscal years 2015-2017, and all employees who supervise other employees. We selected employees diverse in the areas of race, gender, salary level, and job responsibilities. The list of selected employees was provided to Suzanne Hilleman, Associate Athletic Director for Human Resources, to facilitate interview scheduling. All selected employees agreed to be interviewed.

Athletics Department employees selected to be interviewed received e-mail messages from Ms. Hilleman requesting they contact her to schedule their interviews. Interviews occurred in October and November of 2018. All but one interview was conducted in person at the Athletics Department administrative offices at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. The remaining interview was done via video conference.

The interviews covered each employee's respective experiences as a new employee, a search committee member, or as a supervisor. In many cases, these categories overlapped because most supervisors with significant experience have served on or chaired a search committee, and some recent hires are also supervisors. Employees in multiple categories were invited to provide any information relevant to the review.

Employees hired in fiscal years 2015-2017 were asked about the following topics:

- Information received about the job opening
- Prior knowledge of the University, the Athletics Department, and Athletics Department employees
- Concerns about working at the University and in the Athletics Department
- Application process
- Interviewing
- Offer and Recruitment
- Onboarding, Orientation, and Training
- Environment for women, minorities, and other protected classes

Employees with search committee and interviewing experience were asked about the following topics:

- Role and expectations
- Reviewing the job description
- Creating the advertising and recruitment plan
- Evaluating candidates
- Interviewing candidates
- Checking references
- Offering the position
- Onboarding new employees

Supervisors were asked about their involvement as a supervisor in the following areas:

- Recruiting and Onboarding New Employees
- Discipline and Performance Management
- Leave Management
- Separation of Employment

Each interviewee was provided information regarding classes of employees protected from harassment and discrimination and was asked about their own experiences and observations.

### **3. Request to Athletics Department Employees**

Even though interviewed employees were given the opportunity to provide information about any concerns regarding treatment of protected class employees, each could only share the information they had experienced, observed, or otherwise learned. To mitigate the risk of missing out on relevant information, all Department employees were asked to contact Fredrikson & Byron if they had information, insights, or concerns regarding equitable treatment of employees in the Athletics Department.

An e-mail to employees was sent by Cheryl Reardon, Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President, on December 19, 2018, and invited employees to contact the external reviewers on or before January 9, 2019.

No Athletics Department employees contacted Fredrikson & Byron in response to this message. If employees have concerns, they are encouraged to contact the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator, the Office of the Ombudsperson, or Human Resources so the University may provide assistance and take any necessary action regarding the employee's concerns.

### **III. Athletics Department Employment Practices and Analysis**

#### **A. Recruiting and Selection**

The current Athletics Department Recruitment Manual provides instructions to ensure equitable treatment of protected classes in the recruiting and selection process. The process is aimed at recruiting a diverse applicant pool, fairly considering applicants regardless of protected class, and selecting employees who will work successfully with diverse employees and students.

We interviewed recent hires, supervisors, search committee members, and interviewers regarding their experiences with the process. We did not review recruitment files, but Athletics Department recruitment files are subject to review by the University's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

The University recently implemented a more centralized recruiting process and has designated and trained recruiters within each department. Those recruiters are responsible for several functions that were previously handled by search committee chairs and they are included in all interviews. The Athletics Department has conducted just two complete searches using the new system and we interviewed an Athletics Department Recruiter as part of our review.

#### **1. The Search Committee**

The Athletics Department requires search committees to be diverse with respect to gender and race, and to seek faculty and staff outside the Athletics Department if needed to achieve diversity. In addition, search chairs and recruiters are responsible for preparing committee members and other interviewers regarding legal and illegal interview questions, and must seek feedback from all interviewers. Based on interviews, some improvement is needed in these areas.

First, based on interviews of search committee members and interviewers, it is unclear whether search committees are consistently diverse with respect to race and gender. It is possible that a search committee may lack diversity but candidates meet with a diverse group for interviews when they come to campus. Though this situation is not ideal, especially if not all interviewers are involved in decision-making, it would comply with the diversity requirement.

Secondly, some employees involved in search committees need additional training. Search committee *chairpersons* reported receiving very thorough training from Human Resources regarding the recruitment process. They recognized former and current Human Resources staff for their extensive knowledge and assistance. Other employees involved in searches did not recall much, if any, instruction outside of the anti-harassment training required

for all employees. The involvement of trained recruiters in more aspects of the search process will be helpful here.

Finally, interviews indicated that there is not a consistent process for gathering feedback from employees who interview candidates. In some cases, employees were asked to interview candidates but were never asked to contribute their observations after the interview. Even with the introduction of trained recruiters in each department, search chairs continue to be responsible for getting feedback from the committee so this remains an important area for improvement.

## **2. The Recruitment Plan**

Diversity issues are a key component of developing a recruitment plan in the Athletics Department. The current Recruitment Manual requires search chairs to present a diverse applicant pool or provide a written summary of recruitment efforts to the Director of Athletics before proceeding with interviews. This approach has been problematic because search chairs do not necessarily know if the applicant pool is diverse when the time comes to schedule interviews.

### **a. Identification and Recruitment of Women and Minorities**

Search chairs and supervisors understand they must actively seek out women and minority applicants. They shared the following strategies they currently use to identify candidates:

- Outreach through the Minority Opportunities Athletic Association; the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics; professional organizations; and campus cultural centers and committees.
- Carefully-tailored job descriptions to attract the broadest possible pool of qualified applicants.
- Developing and maintaining a large network of colleagues to learn about potential applicants.
- Participation in affinity groups for women and minorities and mentoring programs.
- Direct communication with contacts at other colleges and universities including Big Ten and Big Twelve colleagues and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to find personnel ready for advancement.

The above efforts have been effective. Recent hires said they learned of opportunities at the University through their professional connections with existing employees, by following industry connections on Twitter and Facebook, and because someone reached out to encourage them to apply. There is a perception, however, that if an applicant does not learn of an opening through this type of outreach, they may not be a good candidate. Even though collegiate athletics is a relatively small community, it remains important for every applicant to be evaluated based on their qualifications for the position. The involvement of trained recruiters will be helpful in eliminating the perception, if not the reality, that all the good candidates are known quantities before the hiring process begins.

## **b. Approval Requirement**

As mentioned above, the Athletics Department has required search chairs to present a diverse group of candidates to interview for each position. This requirement has made a valuable impression on Department employees. It shows that leadership is adamant about recruiting for diversity. The requirement is, however, difficult to implement because applications do not include (and should not include) information about race and gender.

One employee suggested a solution: “Don’t go back to get diversity. Do everything to achieve it the first time.” This suggestion is reflected in our recommendations and recruiters have been trained to develop recruitment plans that give the Department the best chance of recruiting a diverse pool of applicants. The University’s new recruitment platform also provides access to a “job aggregator” that automatically posts jobs to specific websites and job boards to attract diverse candidates.

## **3. Social Media**

The University and Athletics Department policies state social media should not be used to look for or screen applicants. Current practices do not comply with this policy. Most of the people who had served on search committees or as interviewers reported using candidates’ social media in the recruitment process.

No one indicated that a candidate’s social media presence had been disqualifying, and the reasons for checking social media were well-intentioned. For example, one person stated social media is used to make sure the candidate is not seeking to work with student-athletes for the wrong reasons. Pictures of student-athletes on a social media page, for example, would be concerning. Several indicated that social media was fair game, and did not understand why it could be problematic.

## **4. Ensuring Equitable Treatment**

Interviews showed that the Department treats all applicants equally and evaluates them using the same criteria. Interviewers and search committee members recalled that candidates are consistently provided the same interview process. For example, if first interviews are telephonic, even local candidates are interviewed by telephone. Further, interviewers are instructed to ask the same questions of all candidates. Interviewees understood the importance of candidates being interviewed by the same group of people.

This is already a strong area of compliance and we understand that recruiters will be responsible for these aspects of a search going forward. In addition to managing the process and training search committee members, recruiters will initially review all applications to determine whether applicants meet the basic qualifications for the position.

## **5. Recruiting for Diversity Skills**

Search committees are responsible for assessing each candidate’s diversity skills and are provided with a checklist for assessing diversity skills, if needed.

Employees who had participated on search committees or had interviewed candidates understood the importance of hiring people with the ability to work with diverse populations. One employee noted that, during interviews, people ask common question about the candidate's skills for fostering an environment of inclusion and diversity. He said these questions have been more direct in the last few years.

Candidates usually meet with all staff in the area where they would be working. Staff can evaluate the ability of the candidate to interact with everyone. One search chair tries to find interviewers from across campus for the candidate to meet. Most employees interviewed said they ask candidates about their skills and experiences with diverse populations.

## **6. Special Considerations**

University and Athletics Department policies state that applicants with disabilities who are not able to use the electronic application process are to be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. All persons who wish to apply must be permitted to do so. The fact that a disability accommodation is requested is not to be shared with anyone in the Department or the other search committee members. If a veteran has applied and is not selected to be interviewed, the search chair must document the reason(s) for non-selection of the veteran.

The individuals interviewed as part of this review understood the importance of accommodating disabilities and complying with the law requiring preference for veterans. These issues do not arise in every search process so, again, trained recruiters with more involvement in the process will only improve the Department's recognition and handling of these issues.

## **7. Recommendations for Recruiting and Selection**

- Provide training for all employees involved in the search process. Search committee chairs meet with Human Resources to review the steps in the search process and are charged with providing instruction to the rest of the committee, but that is not consistently effective. All employees involved in the process should receive some training regarding equitable treatment of applicants, including information concerning social media.
- Provide a process for screening applicant social media that does not involve decisionmakers. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for checking an applicant's social media. Consider the feasibility of assigning social media checks to someone outside the search committee and decision-making group in cases where there is a legitimate job-related interest in screening social media.
- Require recruitment plans to meet rigorous standards to attract diverse applicants, instead of requiring a showing of diversity to move forward with interviews. The Department appears to be moving in this direction already, and more involvement by recruiters is a positive development.
- Seek formal feedback from, and provide search updates to, employees who meet candidates but are not on the search committee. More than one person said no one sought feedback after the interview. The search committee and decision-

makers should have the benefit of this feedback, especially if interviewers outside the search committee are providing race and gender diversity to the recruitment and selection process.

## **B. Onboarding**

### **1. Starting Salary**

This section addresses Athletics Department practices regarding salaries for new hires. We reviewed starting salaries for employees hired in fiscal years 2015-2017. We also reviewed the Disparate Impact Salary Equity Analysis Reports for fiscal years 2015-2017; the University-wide Professional and Scientific Compensation Philosophy and Pay Practice Model; the University-wide Pay Plans Directory; and other information available on the University's website.<sup>6</sup>

#### **a. Procedures for Salary-Setting**

The University's Compensation and Classification office assigns every position a job classification based on the position's responsibilities and requirements. Using benchmark salary data, Compensation and Classification determines the minimum salary, maximum salary, and median salary zone for each job classification. Some job classifications are assigned to open pay levels that have no minimum salary, maximum salary, or median salary zone.

The Athletics Department has discretion to set starting salaries below or within a job classification's median zone. The Department considers the candidate's credentials, specific duties and responsibilities, and salaries for similar positions within the Department. Salaries above the median salary zone and salaries for open pay levels must be pre-approved by Compensation and Classification. Compensation and Classification and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity conduct a joint analysis of all Professional & Scientific salaries each year and make adjustments if necessary to address identified disparities.

#### **b. Analysis and Observations**

To evaluate salary-setting practices for employees in the Athletics Department, we reviewed starting salary documentation for 86 employees hired in fiscal years 2015-2017. We compared the starting salaries of new hires in similar positions and, where possible, we compared the previous employee's salary to the new hire's salary in the same position.

We identified some salary disparities between similar positions, but no pattern indicating disparities based on race, gender, or any other protected class. Sizable disparities were self-explanatory, usually based on the employee's duties with a particular sport. Some sports are higher visibility, recruit and support more student-athletes, and involve upkeep of more equipment and facilities.

We also compared the salary for each new hire to the salary of the position's previous incumbent. In some cases a new employee's salary differed significantly from the previous

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/pay>.

employee's salary. These differences do not necessarily indicate anyone is or has been unfairly paid, and notably, as in the first comparison, there was no indication that disparities were based on protected class. There are potential legitimate reasons for differences in salary, but it makes sense to review the prior employee's salary as part of the salary-setting process and, when there is a disparity, document the reasons.

None of the employees we interviewed reported asking about or being asked about salary history in the hiring process. Even though such questions are not prohibited by Iowa or federal law, some jurisdictions prohibit asking employment candidates about their current salary or their salary histories because a previous salary may have been based on improper considerations such as race or gender. The University trains its recruiters and search committee chairs to ask candidates about salary expectations, not salary history. We commend the University and the Athletics Department for removing salary history questions from the recruiting and salary-setting process.

### **c. Recommendations for salary-setting**

- Consistently require documented reasons for a starting salary, even when it is within the median zone. The Athletics Department is not currently required to justify starting salaries within the median zone for the job classification. We recommend requiring written justification for all starting salaries. This documentation should explain significant disparities between the new employee's salary and the salary of the previous employee in the same position. This documentation should also thoroughly document reasons for variations among similar positions within the Department.
- Provide additional salary administration training to recruiters in the Athletics Department. The policies and procedures for salary-setting on the Compensation and Classification website are comprehensive, but we recommend additional training as a way to reinforce this information as well as the importance of contemporaneous documentation.

## **2. Training**

The Athletics Department Policy Manual outlines certain training requirements for employees that advance equitable treatment regardless of protected class. Harassment prevention training within the first six months of employment is required for all staff members with a half-time or more appointment. Coaches and other Academic or Administrative Officers are mandatory reporters and must complete harassment prevention training within the first two months of employment. Training may be in person or online.

The Policy Manual also provides that the Associate Athletics Director for Human Resources will arrange Department orientation for new employees. During the Department orientation, employees receive information about expectations, including regarding equitable treatment of employees regardless of protected class.

To assess the Department's compliance with training requirements, we reviewed the Staff Orientation Checklist, the Orientation Handbook, the Athletics Department Policy Manual, and

training completion records for employees hired in fiscal years 2015-2017. Just three current employees who were hired during that time period failed to complete harassment prevention education within the first year of employment. Refresher training is required after three years of employment. At the time we reviewed the completion data for employees hired in fiscal years 2015-2017, the course had been taken by just over half of those required to take it.

Interviewed supervisors understood they were mandatory reporters and they knew what to do if someone reported discrimination or harassment. Most said they would involve the employee's immediate supervisor (unless the supervisor was the alleged harasser) and Human Resources. They also understood the obligation to tell employees about available resources and instruct employees regarding the anti-retaliation policy. The totality of the supervisor interviews indicate the training provided to supervisors by the University and the Athletics Department has been effective.

#### **a. Recommendations**

- Electronically provide the handbook to new employees after their meeting with Human Resources and monitor receipt and acknowledgment to ensure employees complete their review. If not already in place, develop a method to ensure employees receive and acknowledge the handbook. Follow up if necessary.
- Develop effective methods to remind employees when they are due to complete initial and refresher training on harassment prevention. Some tools are already in place, but we recommend frequent and automated reminders during the first six months and on the employee's third anniversary of employment.

#### **C. Leave Management**

The University recently implemented a centralized process for handling leaves of absence and disability accommodations within the Office of Faculty and Staff Disability Services. Supervisors in the Athletics Department received training on the new system on November 14, 2018, and all staff received information about the new process. Supervisors were trained to recognize when an employee may need medical leave or accommodation for a disability and to reach out to Disability Services when the need occurs.

Under the centralized system, Disability Services staff contacts the employee to provide information and ascertain the need for leave or disability accommodation, and supervisors can access only limited information regarding an employee's leave or accommodation request. Supervisors must, however, monitor the employee's time record and absences. If a supervisor recognized an employee may need additional leave or accommodation, Disability Services is contacted to intervene and evaluate.

Interviews of Athletics Department supervisors indicate they were knowledgeable, even before the most recent training and process change, about how to recognize when employees need leave or disability accommodation and what to do when there is a need. They shared examples of leave that had been granted to employees within the Department. Many supervisors

expressed how they personally, and the Athletics Department generally, support staff taking leave when necessary.

In addition to the training materials and the relevant policies, we reviewed records of employee leave taken during fiscal years 2015-2017. Forty-seven Athletics Department employees have taken some form of leave related to family, medical issues, or disability during fiscal years 2015-2017. These leaves included both continuous and intermittent medical leave and ranged in duration from a few days to several weeks. We did not review denials of leave, but based on the data provided and the interviews conducted, we understand that leave requests are rarely denied.

The University's decision to centralize leave management and disability accommodations is a positive step. The new process was implemented in December 2018 and our interviews took place before supervisors were trained on the new process. We will have an opportunity to evaluate the results of the new process in other departments in later phases of the review.

### **1. Recommendations**

- Update Athletics Department manuals and handbooks. The current orientation and policy manuals provide little information and should be updated to reflect the new process or reference the University policy statements.
- Correct the definition of “son or daughter” in the FMLA policy in the University Operations Manual. In the definition of “son or daughter” under section 22.7 (Family and Medical Leave Act), there appears to be a typographical error where a “son or daughter” is identified as including “a legal ward of a child of a person standing in the place of a parent who is either under the age of 18; or is age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time of the need for FMLA leave.” (emphasis added) This should be corrected to say “a legal ward or a child of a person standing in the place of a parent who is either under the age of 18, or is age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time of the need for FMLA leave.” (emphasis added)
- Clarify the language concerning concurrent usage of FMLA leave and paid leave in the University Operations Manual. The current policy explanations are not completely clear as to whether paid leave is required to be taken concurrently with FMLA leave.

### **D. Performance Management**

We interviewed employees concerning the Athletics Department's performance management practices. Overall, performance management is consistent and follows University policy. There were no concerns about inequitable treatment. Supervisors had positive comments about the role of Human Resources in evaluation and disciplinary processes, but expressed some concerns about the evaluation form.

## **1. Annual Evaluations**

The Athletics Department has an Orientation Handbook with a complete description of performance evaluation procedures. The Orientation Handbook provides links to online tools and resources for supervisors as well as for all employees. The process and format for performance evaluations are the same for all departments.

Several of the individuals interviewed mentioned that the annual evaluation form is not well suited to the specialized needs of the Athletics Department. For example, the evaluation is not very useful for coaches because their win-loss record is not part of the evaluation process and that can be the most important factor in the decision to continue or discontinue employment. One supervisor said the evaluation is based on competencies and she would prefer to focus on helping employees to develop professionally.

Overall, supervisors we interviewed said they prefer to meet individually with employees to focus on how employees can improve and what they, as supervisors, can do to help. They go beyond the minimum required performance evaluations. Multiple supervisors said they speak one-on-one with their direct reports on a monthly or even weekly basis to discuss goals and progress.

## **2. Discipline**

Supervisors are well supported by Human Resources when disciplinary action is considered. Multiple supervisors recalled getting extensive assistance for disciplinary and performance issues. One supervisor noted that the University does a good job of informing employees of their rights during investigations.

No employee indicated concerns regarding equitable treatment in the area of employee discipline. Interviews indicate that supervisors do not hesitate to involve Human Resources early and often when there are performance or conduct issues.

## **3. Recommendation**

- Continue to provide optional evaluation training. Training would assist evaluators in working with the standard form and may also provide suggestions for setting expectations outside the standard form if necessary. Training should be available at the time it is needed and be short and effective. For employees who do not attend training, consider advice via e-mail.

## **E. Separation**

Separation from employment at the Athletics Department is most often voluntary. Employees retire or leave to advance in their careers. In some cases, however, the employees we interviewed were involved with involuntary separations.

Unique to the Athletics Department is the situation where a coach's contract is not renewed because of the team's performance. One employee said coaches understand the culture, but it is still difficult. Another employee meets regularly with coaches to find out what they need

to improve. If it does not work out, the Department does its best to assist with transitions in a respectful way.

We did not review disciplinary records or performance evaluations of employees who had been separated from employment. However, the employees we interviewed who were involved in involuntary terminations of employment spoke of clear-cut situations of misconduct or performance deficiencies resulting in discharge only after performance improvement plans and progressive discipline failed to correct the deficiencies. In each case, Human Resources personnel were involved and advising throughout the process. The collaboration between the Human Resources personnel and the supervisors in the Department is evident and commendable. We do not have any recommendations related to separation of employees.