Assessment and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

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What role and responsibility do we have to respond to the demand for diversity, equity and inclusion (EDI) within the institutions and structures we lead? Moreover, how might this be accomplished? (Cunningham, 2011, 2015, 2019) (Cooper, et.al, 2020). This presentation will investigate how we can put EDI at the heart of our sport management educational endeavors, specifically in the realm of assessment.

Since assessment involves multiple levels of interaction between colleagues, all dynamics that exist in the wider world also exist within assessment organizations. In addition, including the “judgment” of accreditation – based on what criteria? – and the demands an accrediting body places on sport management programs, it is critical to ensure the process is fair and equitable. COSMA has taken a number of steps to ensure its foundational structure puts EDI at the center.

First steps included discussion among current leadership about how to respond to the Black Lives Matter movement, particularly in light of the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, GA; David McAtee and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, KY; James Scurlock in Omaha, NE; and George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN. It was not a question of whether we would respond, but how – and specifically, to take action (Kendi, I. X., 2019). We developed a list of action steps, and critical to accountability, posted them on the home page of the website, updated as steps concluded. Actions taken will be discussed, at length, during the presentation.

To COSMA, it is critical to move beyond mere “statements of solidarity,” but to come together to influence change, raise the standard and establish meaningful professional relationships across all sport management program levels and institutional types. Our strength and growth as a profession is in our hands. It is our hope for COSMA to be a professional network that provides much more than the ordinary higher education collaborative – to put EDI at the heart of our endeavors. We must push the present theory, ideas and assumptions about assessment practices, quality assurance and student learning experiences and hold a space for candid, vulnerable dialogue for the purpose of affirmation, uplift, strategizing and support (Williams et al., 2020). For example, it is up to COSMA to understand how MSIs – specifically Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) – are structured and assure that they are the subject matter experts within sport management program review and assessment. Do COSMA’s assessment practices allow MSIs to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of their circumstances and history?

It is our moment as professionals to reflect, question and disrupt current assessment infrastructure and practices, with the goal of emerging better positioned to create new pathways that reflect our commitment to EDI. We are witnessing a call for greater accountability in our institutions, as students demand administrators move beyond lip service and messages of support to actual systemic change (Whitford & Burke, 2020). This presentation outlines how sport management might do that as an example within higher education.