



VERMONT
CATAMOUNTS

Athletics Inclusive Excellence Action Plan
2023-2028

Introduction

The Department of Athletics shares this statement as a reflection of its mission to promote equity and diversity, to facilitate personal growth, and to sustain excellence in all activities.

We recognize and celebrate the unique opportunities that sport provides in uniting disparate groups in a common goal. We embrace the essential value of unity that is so important for team success, as well as the vital educational value of diversity of backgrounds, experiences and ideas.

Therefore, the Department of Athletics strives to create a diverse, inclusive community in which all students and staff members feel safe, respected, and valued—regardless of any aspect of one's identity, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, ability or age.

Central to our commitment is a sustained effort to increase participation by students and staff from historically underrepresented groups. This effort is integral to the department's mission to cultivate in all of our student-athletes the intercultural competency they need to excel personally and professionally in our increasingly diverse society. To this end, we not only challenge attitudes and behaviors that are hurtful or disrespectful; we strive to become a model of success—for UVM and other colleges and universities—in creating an environment in which multicultural diversity, inclusion, and mutual engagement are central departmental values and hallmarks of excellence.

Background

In 2018, the Athletics Inclusive Excellence Committee was formed to recognize and celebrate the unique opportunities that sport provides in uniting disparate groups in a common goal. We strive to create a diverse, inclusive community in which all students and staff members feel safe, respected and valued—regardless of any aspect of one's identity, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, ability or age.

UVM Athletics commits to **ACCEPT** all members of our community and **EMBRACE** the unique identities that make us who we are. UVM Athletics is dedicated to **PROTECTING** these unique identities and **EMPOWERING** all those in our community to live a holistic version of themselves.

The Plan

The following plan was a team effort in design and reflects the collective efforts of the Athletics Inclusive Excellence Committee (AIEC), the Department of Athletics, and Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This plan is organized under the following six umbrella areas:

- a. Athletics Inclusive Excellence Plan Rollout
- b. Integrative and Co-Curricular Learning
- c. Staff and Student-Athlete Recruitment and Retention
- d. Staff Professional Development

- e. Accessibility
- f. International Inclusion and Global Education
- g. Infrastructure and Operational Sustainability

While the areas above are largely reflective of that which was set out by Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the corresponding 19 goals and 60 actions are reflective of the Department of Athletics unique strategic objectives. These corresponding goals and actions were created by the Athletics Inclusive Excellence Committee (AIEC), are informed by existing [NCAA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Review Framework](#) recommendations, are informed by Division I schools with robust, public-facing inclusive excellence plans, and have been reviewed by the Department of Athletics staff at-large.

This plan is considered to be a living document and will be updated frequently to add, remove, or refine goals as the Department of Athletics makes progress in meeting its DEIB goals. This plan will be updated at least once per year to celebrate milestones within the plan as these action items are accomplished and to update staffing changes.

This plan was last updated on: August 2023

Athletics Inclusive Excellence Committee (AIEC)

| Name | Title | College/Division/Department/Unit |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Cailin Campbell | Student-Athlete | Athletics |
| Cathy Rahill | Assoc AD | Athletics |
| Ellie Martin | Student-Athlete | Athletics |
| Eugene Santos | Athletic Trainer | CHWB/Athletics |
| Kelly Thorne | Dir. CSPC | CHWB/Athletics |
| Matt Gonzalez | Asst. AD/CSPC | Athletics |
| Namik Sevlic | Assoc Dir. Academic Services | Athletics |
| Shelby Hinkle Smith | Sr. Assoc. Director/Campus Rec | Athletics |
| Jessica Cassotis | Asst. Dir of Academic Services | Athletics |

* ‘completed by’ dates are aspirational

A. Athletics Inclusive Excellence Action Plan Rollout

Goal #1A: Engage in didactic feedback refining this plan’s goals and action steps.

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|-------------|--|--------------|
| Confirm responsible parties (individuals and/or units) for each action item | AIEC | Confirmations and/or adjustments to the plan | Fall 2023 |
| Confirm accountable senior staff for each action item | AIEC | Confirmations and/or adjustments to the plan | Fall 2023 |
| Confirm feasibility of projected timeline for each action item | AIEC | Confirmations and/or adjustments to the plan | Fall 2023 |
| Confirm general feasibility for each item (i.e., budgetary concerns, logistics, etc.) | AIEC | Confirmations and/or adjustments to the plan | Fall 2023 |

Goal #2A: Finalize Athletics Inclusive Excellence Plan

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|--|--|---|
| Assign each unit respective goals and action steps after confirmation of timelines and general feasibility | AIEC | Assigned action steps within this plan | Spring 2024 |
| Display finalized plan on Department of Athletics website (nested under Diversity & Inclusion webpage) | Joint effort between AIEC and External Relations and Communication | Plan uploaded to website | Spring 2024 |
| Update plan yearly with completed dates and any adjustments | AIEC | Plan updated and re-uploaded | Summer 2024; On-going yearly thereafter |

B. Integrative and Co-Curricular Learning

Goal #1B: Design and offer easily accessible life-skills programming for Student-Athletes

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Review current life-skills programming offered to student-athletes | Student-Athlete Services | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2024 |
| Coordinate with university and/or community resources to bolster life-skills planning offerings for AY 25-26 | Joint effort between Student-Athlete Services and AIEC | Develop finalized schedule of life-skills offerings for AY 25-26 | Summer 2025 |
| Send schedule of openly available life-skills offering to student athletes for AY 25-26 and host offerings | Joint effort between Student-Athlete Services and AIEC | Hosted offerings for AY 25-26 | Start of Fall 2025 |

Goal #2B: Design and offer mental health programming for Student-Athletes

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Review current mental health programming offered to student-athletes | Catamount Sport Psychology and Counseling (CSPC) | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2024 |
| Coordinate with university mental health resources to bolster mental health offerings for AY 25-26 | Joint effort between AIEC and CSPC | Develop finalized schedule of mental-health offerings for AY 25-26 | Summer 2025 |
| Send schedule of openly available mental health offerings to student-athletes at the beginning of AY 25-26 | Joint effort between CSPC and AIEC | Hosted offerings for AY 25-26 | Start of Fall 2025 |

Goal #3B: Design and offer robust internship opportunities out of the Department of Athletics

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Continue to offer wide range of internship opportunities out of the Department of Athletics available to the entire student body | | Spring 2023; Ongoing yearly | ongoing |

C. Staff and Student-Athlete Recruitment and Retention

Goal #1C: Increase Department of Athletics structural efficiency of DEIB mission

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|--|---|----------------------|
| Hire (or assign) a DEIB officer in the Department of Athletics | Director of Athletics | Completed hire | Summer 2027 |
| Maintain Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designees (ADID) as recommended by the NCAA | Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and Academic Affairs | Completed assignment | Spring 2023; Ongoing |
| Create working groups/sub-committees in AIEC with independent responsibility to oversee progress of each area | AIEC | Re-organized working groups germane to this IE plan | Summer 2024 |

Goal #2C: Increase DEIB intent and focus of staff recruitment

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|---------------------|---|--|
| Increase ease of access of hiring guidelines to Athletics staff | AIEC | Online access to hiring guidelines in accessible location | Summer 2024 |
| Evaluate staff on-boarding processes for opportunities to enhance DEIB | Business Operations | | Summer 2024 |
| Maintain procedure of search committees including one member of AIEC either embedded on the committee or within the interview process | | Documented change in hiring policy | Spring 2023; Ongoing thereafter |
| Generate easy to access list of identity-focused professional networking groups where jobs can be posted in addition to the NCAA's website | AIEC | Generated list | Summer 2024 |
| Provide education every other year for hiring staff on best practices for recruiting diverse staff members | Business Operations | Delivered education to hiring staff | Summer 2025; Ongoing yearly thereafter |

Goal #3C: Increase DEIB intent and focus of staff retention

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Include pronunciation guide for staff members in online staff directory | External Relations and Communication | Posted pronunciation of all staff names in online directory | Summer 2024 |
| Begin providing on-boarding staff with DEIB resources during orientation | Business Operations | Staff provided with all DEIB resources upon orientation | Summer 2024 |
| Require all managers to have at least one conversation per year with each reporting employee regarding the employee's satisfaction with the job | All Athletics managers | Meeting occurs for each staff member | Summer 2025 |

Goal #4C: Increase DEIB intent and focus of student-athlete recruitment

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|--|---|---|
| Provide yearly educational opportunities for coaches on best practices for recruiting diverse student-athletes | tbd | Educational materials/ workshop/etc delivered to coaching staff | Summer 2026; On-going yearly thereafter |
| Evaluate student-athlete recruitment materials for accessibility (e.g., language) and inclusivity (e.g., representation) | Joint effort between AIEC and External Relations and Communication | Report created by AIEC delivered to Associate Athletic Director for External Relations and Communications | Summer 2025 |
| Evaluate feasibility of engaging or highlighting UVM identity offices and Spread Respect Initiative in recruitment visits | AIEC | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2025 |

Goal #5C: Increase Athletics efforts on diverse student-athlete retention

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Monitor retention rates of diverse student-athletes | Student-Athlete Services | Retention report delivered to AIEC | Once yearly, starting Summer 2024 |
| Host revolving professionals from campus identity centers within Athletics | AIEC | Schedule of visiting professionals by Fall 2024 | Summer 2025; Deploy in Fall 2025 |
| Evaluate current vs. needed support of student-athletes affinity groups (e.g., SAOC, She Roars) | AIEC | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2025 |
| Evaluate the feasibility and potential utility of a DEIB-focused alumni network to support current student-athletes | AIEC | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2025 |
| Include pronunciation guide for student athlete names in online rosters | External Relations and Communication | Posted pronunciation of all student athlete names in online directory | Summer 2025 |

D. Professional and Faculty Development

Goal #1D: Increase collective DEIB education of athletics staff

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|---|---|---|
| Require every staff member to attend one DEIB event/service event (e.g., MOSAIC breakfast)/continuing education per year | All full-time Department of Athletics staff | Each staff engages in one DEIB event | Once yearly, starting Fall 2026 |
| Explore capacity to provide funding to staff to attend DEIB-focused conferences and continuing education | Business Office | Report of capability to provide funding delivered to AIEC | Summer 2027 |
| Host Athletics & UVM collaborative DEIB continuing education within Athletics (Focus Groups and/or Conversation Circles) | AIEC | Events successfully hosted | Fall 2023; On-going twice yearly thereafter |
| Collect assessment data on Athletics-hosted DEIB educational programming to inform and improve future offerings | AIEC | Report of yearly assessment data made available to AIEC | Summer 2025; On-going twice yearly thereafter |

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|---|-----------------|---|-------------|
| Explore capacity to allocate funding for one coach and one staff member to attend annual NCAA inclusion forum | Business Office | Report of capability to provide funding delivered to AIEC | Summer 2027 |
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Goal #2D: Offer opportunities for student-athletes to increase their knowledge of DEIB

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|-------------|---|--------------|
| Brainstorm potential DEIB educational opportunities for student-athletes that could be hosted by Athletics | AIEC | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2024 |
| Design two DEIB educational opportunities for student-athletes in Athletics to be hosted in AY 25-26 | AIEC | Two educational opportunities designed to be hosted in AT 25-26 | Summer 2025 |

Goal #3D: Increase Athletics connection to the community-at-large.

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|-----------------|---|--------------|
| Allot pre-determined amount of paid service hours for community service on behalf of Athletics to each full-time staff member (current with existing UVM policy, more vocally supported from the Department) | Business Office | | Summer 2025 |
| Encourage participation in DEIB-UVM service opportunities (e.g., MOSAIC breakfast) | AIEC | Greater marketing of existing DEIB service opportunities at UVM | Summer 2025 |

E. Accessibility

Goal #1E: Monitor and enhance accessibility of athletics physical spaces

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monitor new construction for ADA compliance | Facilities and Equipment Operations | Construction monitored | Summer 2024; On-going thereafter |

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|---|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Audit written and/or electronic media for accessibility compliance | External Relations and Communication | All media audited for accessibility compliance | Summer 2024; On-going thereafter |
| Address physical accessibility concerns in existing Athletics buildings; rectify as needed and feasible | Facilities and Equipment Operations | Needs rectified as feasible | Summer 2025; On-going thereafter |

Goal #2E: Monitor and enhance accessibility of large-scale events (e.g., competitions)

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Audit accessibility of large-scale events across spectrum of accessibility dimensions | Facilities and Equipment Operations | Report on audit findings created | Summer 2024 |
| Address any accessibility limitations as discovered by the audit as needed and feasible | Facilities and Equipment Operations | Limitations addressed as feasible | Summer 2026; On-going thereafter |
| Explore feasibility of providing live stadium captioning services at competitions | Joint effort between AIEC, Business Office, and Facilities and Equipment Operations | Report delivered to AIEC | Summer 2027 |

F. International Inclusion and Global Education

Goal #1F: Develop Athletics practice of acknowledging and respecting important global holidays

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|-------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Obtain list of important religious and cultural holidays that may be observed by student-athletes from DDEI and post in easy to access location | AIEC | Holidays list posted in easy to access location for staff | Summer 2024 |
| Announce upcoming holidays at each full staff meeting; encourage coaches to be flexible with student-athletes who observe these holidays | AIEC | Holidays reported at each staff meeting | Summer 2024; on-going thereafter |
| Announce upcoming holidays with each communication from AIEC | AIEC | Holidays reported in each AIEC update to staff via email | Summer 2024; on-going thereafter |

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|--|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Discuss flexibility for student-athletes to be granted the ability to properly observe important cultural/religious holidays to the most feasible extent possible for each coach | Sport Supervisors | Conversations held with each coach | Summer 2025; on-going thereafter |
| Provide coach education on DEIB athletics webpage regarding athletic experience and fasting | Athletic Medicine | Education posted on Athletics webpage | Summer 2024 |

Goal #2F: Increase sense of belong among student-athletes from international backgrounds

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|---|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Maintain Athletics Liaison to Office of International Education | AIEC | Selected athletics liaison has agreed to the role | Spring 2023; On-going |
| Host international student-athlete dinner | Student-Athlete Services | Host the event | Fall 2022; On-going yearly |
| Conduct focus groups with incoming and outgoing international student-athletes for needs assessment | Student-Athlete Services | Focus groups held and data collected | Spring 2026; On-going yearly |

G. Infrastructure and Operational Sustainability

Goal #1G: Elevate DEIB work being conducted within Athletics

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
|--|---|---|--------------|
| Enhance DEIB webpage to better demonstrate on-going efforts within Athletics to promote and improve DEIB | Joint effort between AIEC and External Relations and Communications | Updated and published webpage | Summer 2025 |
| Enhance DEIB webpage to include educational resources for Athletics staff and student-athletes | Joint effort between AIEC and External Relations and Communications | Educational resources posted to webpage | Summer 2026 |

Goal #2G: Athletics leadership demonstrate commitment to DEIB by example

| Action | Responsible | Measurable | Completed By |
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|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Solicit structured and anonymous feedback about the effectiveness of AIEC and this IE Plan; adjust as informed by feedback. | Associate Athletic Director for Student-Athlete Development and Academic Affairs | Yearly feedback about AIEC efforts delivered to AIEC | Summer 2025; Once yearly thereafter |
| All managers must attend two DEIB event/service event (e.g., MOSAIC breakfast)/continuing education per year | All managers | All managers attend two DEIB events per year | Summer 2025; on-going thereafter |