



SENIOR WOMAN ADMINISTRATOR 101

This resource was written about institutional SWAs. Some information may be applicable to conference SWAs.

Are You Maximizing the SWA's Impact?

Open communication is critical to clarify expectations and optimize the SWA's role. Athletics directors, SWAs, and conference office personnel should discuss the following topics and questions with each other, and include presidents/chancellors or athletics direct reports as appropriate.

1 Capitalize on Diverse Leadership Perspectives

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What are the most significant priorities for athletics and how is the SWA engaged in leading related initiatives?
- How are the SWA's strengths and interests leveraged to provide leadership in the department?
- How is the SWA engaged in senior-level discussions and decision-making?
- How is the SWA engaged in leadership opportunities outside the athletics department (e.g., across campus, external community)?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The AD and SWA collaborate to define the SWA's leadership role and to manage critical departmental issues impacting men and women.
- The SWA makes meaningful decisions on the senior management team (e.g., budget oversight, sport supervision of men's and women's sports, external relations, key personnel decisions and strategic planning).
- The SWA has time and access to information and resources to fulfill the leadership role accompanying the designation.
- The SWA's job title reflects her administrative and leadership responsibilities.
- The SWA's leadership impact and visibility extend beyond the athletics department.

2

Share Commitment to Equity and Well-Being

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Which athletics department employees have specific responsibilities for gender equity, diversity and other advocacy work? Is this team appropriately diverse and inclusive?
- Which athletics department employees have specific responsibilities for student-athlete or staff well-being? Is this team appropriately diverse and inclusive?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The responsibility for gender equity and diversity oversight is shared across the athletics department, including senior management.
- The responsibility for student-athlete and staff well-being is shared across the athletics department, including senior management.
- The AD and president/chancellor support SWA engagement with issues and initiatives important to male and female student-athletes, coaches and staff.

3

Support Training and Mentoring Opportunities

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What professional development resources and opportunities are available to the SWA?
- How will the professional development advance the SWA's impact in her administrative position?
- How is the SWA exposed to potential mentors and encouraged to mentor others?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The SWA receives training specific to this leadership designation (e.g., navigating NCAA and conference committee service, grant opportunities, SWA networking, etc.).
- The SWA engages in professional development opportunities specific to her professional position.
- Athletics department and conference leadership support opportunities for SWAs to receive and provide mentoring.

4

Involve SWAs in Conference Governance

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Do SWAs in the conference meet regularly? Does this group have a formal role in the conference governance structure?
- Do the SWA meeting agendas reflect the range of expertise of the SWAs in the conference?
- How else are SWAs engaged in conference committee service (e.g., sport committees, championships committee)?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Conference commissioners, ADs and SWAs collaborate to ensure that SWAs have clear and significant responsibilities in conference governance.
- Agendas for SWA meetings reflect the varied job responsibilities held by each SWA and address a wide range of conference issues.
- SWAs participate on a variety of conference committees.

5

Engage SWAs in National Issues

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- In what ways does senior leadership (AD, athletics direct report, president/chancellor) empower the SWA to pursue national leadership opportunities or exposure?
- How is the SWA engaged in institutional discussions about legislative issues or other national hot topics?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The SWA receives information and stays up to date on NCAA communications and important national issues.
- The AD and president/chancellor support SWA participation on national committees and attendance at national conferences.
- The institution considers the perspective of the SWA in its position or vote on national issues.