

**A critical race theory assessment of the hiring processes of NCAA Division IA and IAA football programs**

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Abstract 487**

In April of 1998 the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) aired a special town hall meeting entitled, "Race & Sports: Running in Place?" (This meeting was the second of two such meetings in a 14-month period). According to Bob Ley, the host and moderator of the meeting, we have reached a time in American sports where minorities have become increasingly involved in sports on the field of play, but have continued to lag far behind in regards to access to those jobs where decisions are made and where the power lies (i.e., upper management and head coaching positions). For several years Dr. Richard Lapchick has published the Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC), which is a definitive assessment of the hiring practices in major college and professional sport organizations in the United States. The 2003 report reveals that although women and people of color have made some progress in the sport industry in general, there is still a great deal of room for improvement. These institutions have very poor records when it comes to hiring people of color in the positions of athletic director and head football coach.

Several scholars have explored issues of racial discrimination in college sport, specifically as it relates to the exclusion of racial minorities (particularly African Americans) from positions of power such as head coaching and administration positions (e.g., Brooks, Althouse, & Tucker, 2000; Brown, 2002; Davis, 1999). According to Sage (2000), "Those who control access to the high levels tend to employ subtle ways of maintaining discriminatory practices. Thus, the oppressed group typically has a difficult time penetrating the higher paying and prestigious positions" (p. 8). Sport management scholars have specifically discussed issues pertaining to access discrimination in college sport and the need for those who are in decision-making positions to value and embrace diversity in these positions of power (Cunningham & Sagas, 2005).

The purpose of this paper presentation is to critically analyze, assess, and address the hiring processes of NCAA Division IA (FBS) and IAA (FCS) college football programs. In particular, this study is most concerned with studying the openness of the hiring process, as opposed to the actual outcomes. We specifically look at the hiring processes of all schools that had vacancies during four consecutive academic calendar years. In response to Singer's (2005) challenge to sport management scholars to consider race-based epistemologies (i.e., critical race theory) in conducting research in the field, we will utilize critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical and analytical framework with which to set the foundation for our study, and to interpret the data. In brief, CRT challenges the ways that race and racism (i.e., white supremacy) impact on organizational structures, practices, and discourses. CRT asserts that racism in society and its social institutions and organizations (e.g., sport) is a normal occurrence, and is not aberrant. Moreover, it challenges the dominant ideology by challenging white privilege and refuting the claims that organizations make toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity.

In terms of interpreting the Black Coaches and Administrators (BCA) Hiring Report Card (HRC) data (four years), the CRT framework and lens will be applied to the five methodological components of the BCA Hiring Report Card that are calculated individually and collectively for an overall grade (i.e. A, B, C, D & F): Communication, Search Committee, Final Candidates, Time Frame and Affirmative Action Policies and Procedures. Each school is measured on the number of direct telephone communications with the Executive Director of the BCA and/or the Chair of the Minority Opportunity Interests Community (MOIC). The Hiring/Search Committee measurement consist of two components. The first component is the number of people of color on the search committee. The second component is the total number of members of the hiring/search committee. The ratio is converted into a percentage by multiplying it by 100. After the percentage of people of color on the search committee is determined, it is then converted into a letter grade. The Candidates Interviewed category is measured similarly to the way the Hiring/Search Committee is measured. The number of candidates of color who earn on campus interviews are recorded. This total is divided by the total number of candidates, yielding a ratio of candidates who are people of color to total candidates with on campus interviews. The duration of the Time Frame during the hiring process is recorded and graded. Finally, the affirmative action hiring policies and procedures for each institution were requested. Researchers critically evaluate the level of documentation of affirmative action hiring policies and procedures the institution has. Since the evaluation of the policies and procedures is open-ended, double blind evaluations are conducted to ensure accuracy and prevent biases. Each institution earns a letter grade for their documented compliance with the affirmative action policies and procedures.

The CRT framework will be used to analyze the five methodological components above based on the data of the past four years. In the four years of the BCA HRC, there have been a total of 119 vacancies out of 217 (55%) schools. There have been a total

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of 70 vacancies out of 119 IA schools graded (58%). There have been a total of 98 IAA schools graded (50%). Over a four year period, the most prevalent grades have been A or F grades, indicating positive institutional accountability and negligent institutional hiring processes.

This presentation will discuss these results and implications for research and practice.