

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, December 16th, 2020
Contact: Hannah Dewey
hannah@lead1a.com
On the Web: <https://bit.ly/3nnCyfI>

LEAD1 Conducts National Survey In Partnership with Shenandoah University Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices

Survey conducted by LEAD1 and Shenandoah University reveals significant efforts made by LEAD1 athletics departments to enact change around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The LEAD1 Association, which represents the athletics directors of the 130-member schools of the Football Bowl Subdivision, and Shenandoah University, a private, Division III institution located in Winchester, Virginia, surveyed more than 120 FBS senior athletics administrators on recent actions taken in light of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts within their respective athletic departments.

“It is an honor and privilege to have partnered with LEAD1 on this critically important research,” said Dr. Fritz Polite, Assistant Vice President of Opportunity Development at Shenandoah University. “Our point research team (Jacob Shaffer, Zackary Mathis and Ivan Cruz) did a fantastic job and we are extremely proud of them. We look forward to our continued partnership with LEAD1.”

The survey highlighted the athletic departments within the LEAD1 membership who have taken action to initiate change with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as those who have not. Senior athletics administrators were asked to answer a number of questions around two specific areas: 1) the development of groups/committees within athletics to examine issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and; 2) the creation of new positions for individuals with a sole responsibility of combating injustice around diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is important to note that the data presented was designed to capture actions taken by athletic departments between January 2020 and November 2020.

“As an Association, we are striving to remove barriers in collegiate athletics to enable success, and build an inclusive community where people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to learn and contribute to their departments,” said LEAD1 President & CEO, Tom McMillen. “I am grateful to the individuals at Shenandoah University who volunteered their time and effort to produce this project, and look forward to working closely with them in the future as they identify issues and engage with our members.”

Below are important takeaways from the LEAD1 & Shenandoah University “FBS Taking Action: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” survey.

Creation of working groups and/or committee in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Of the athletics departments surveyed, 87.1% created at least one or more group/committee designed to discuss matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Conferences that generated 100% participation in these efforts included the Pac-12 Conference, Southeastern Conference, American Athletic Conference, and Sun Belt Conference.

Development of positions specifically designed around diversity, equity, and inclusion

32.78% of athletics departments surveyed developed at least one or more positions specifically designed to address and advise diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within athletics.

Formation of groups/committees versus new positions (by conference)

When comparing the formation of groups/committees versus new positions around diversity, equity and inclusion, the overwhelming majority (99 schools, or 81.15%) of those surveyed elected to form groups or committees. A breakdown of the 99 schools who chose to form groups or committees were as follows: 50 Power Five schools, 46 Group of Five schools, and 3 Independents.

For more information about survey results, please contact Hannah Dewey (hannah@lead1a.com).

About the LEAD1 Association: LEAD1 represents the athletics directors of the 130 member universities of the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). Key to the LEAD1 mission are influencing how the rules of college sports are enacted and implemented, advocating for the future of college athletics, and providing various services to our member schools. For more information, please visit www.LEAD1Association.com.