



*Auburn Athletics*

# **Advisory Task Force on Inclusion and Race Relations**

August 21, 2020

## Executive Summary

Auburn University Athletics Director, Allen Greene, commissioned the Advisory Task Force on Inclusion and Race Relations in June 2020 and charged the group to begin its work defining, discussing, and recommending tangible strategies for Auburn Athletics to reaffirm its commitment to positive action in the status of race in America. The 20-member Task Force met twice a week since June, focusing primarily on three principal charges:

- 1) Ensuring a safe space for critical conversations
- 2) Holistic education on historic and current topics
- 3) Sustainable action items that support meaningful change

The Task Force reviewed the charges in small working groups to develop plans that would ultimately support Auburn Athletics coaches, staff, student-athletes, and organizational culture. The Task Force spent significant time discussing organizational culture shifts to drive an openness to diversity that would encourage behavioral changes toward equity and inclusion.

Some of the recommendations are easily achievable; many, however, will take more time. Members of the Task Force understood that Auburn Athletics, similar to the rest of the country, is in a historic moment where race and inclusion are centered. This is an opportunity for Auburn to seize the moment, have a proactive approach, and become a national leader on matters of race and race relations. Organizationally, we strive for Auburn Athletics to foster a culture of unity fueled by empathy and vulnerability coupled with an expanded strategic commitment.

Success in achieving any of these goals depends both on realigning current resources and identifying new resources. With this in mind, the Task Force has set forth its highest priority recommendations (in no particular order) with the hope that they provide insight for the Athletics Director and his executive leadership team.

Note that while the Task Force worked through the recommendation process, Auburn Athletics jumped to action and as of late August 2020, initiated the following:

- ✓ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant
- ✓ Athletic Department Task Force on Inclusion and Race Relations
- ✓ Student-Athlete Advisory Council Diversity Task Force
- ✓ Community Peaceful Protest
- ✓ Sport Specific Educational Sessions
- ✓ Town Hall with Black Student-Athletes & Athletic Director
- ✓ Town Hall with All Student-Athletes & Athletic Director
- ✓ Voter Registration Efforts
- ✓ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training for Administration
- ✓ Fireside Chat on the Black Lives Matter Movement and Other Hot Topics
- ✓ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Webpage on AuburnTigers.com
- ✓ Student-Athlete Designed Unity/Social Justice T-Shirt
- ✓ Team Statements on Social Justice
- ✓ Minority Internship funded by Gus Malzahn and Bruce Pearl

## Task Force Composition

### **Monique Holland**

*Co-Chair, Sr. Associate Athletics Director of Student-Athlete Experience*

### **Garry Morgan**

*Co-Chair, Office of Inclusion and Diversity*

### **Mimi Hill**

*Staff Assistant, Assistant to the Director of Athletics*

### **Brant Ust**

*Administration, Associate Athletics Director of Administrative Operations*

### **Jerry Caplan**

*AuburnYOU, Athletics Academic Counselor*

### **Dr. Adrian Ferrera**

*AuburnYOU, Counseling & Sport Psychology, Director*

### **Meagan Hooshyar**

*AuburnYOU, Assistant Athletics Director of Student-Athlete Experience*

### **Joseph Petrone**

*AuburnYOU, Assistant Athletics Director of Sport Medicine*

### **Janice Robinson**

*AuburnYOU, Director of Student-Athlete Enhancement*

### **Ryan Bliss**

*Student-Athlete, Baseball*

### **Hunter Merkle**

*Student-Athlete, Men's Swimming & Diving*

### **Lindsay Song**

*Student-Athlete, Women's Tennis*

### **Kiyae' White**

*Student-Athlete, Women's Basketball*

### **Chandler Wooten**

*Student-Athlete, Football*

### **Coach Ira Bowman**

*Assistant Coach, Men's Basketball*

### **Coach Melissa Luellen**

*Head Coach, Women's Golf*

### **Dr. Beverly Marshall**

*CIA, Faculty Athletics Representative*

### **Dr. Jared Russell**

*CIA, School of Kinesiology, Assistant Director & Professor*

### **Nosa Eguae**

*Alumnus, Adv. Surgery Business Manager, Baxter International Medical*

### **Michelle McKenna-Doyle**

*Alumna, SVP, Chief Information Officer, NFL*

## **CHARGE #1**

### **Critical Conversations**

The need for civil discourse is essential during times of unrest. We will create safe and courageous spaces for this discourse, focused on listening and learning, which include:

#### **Amplify Student-Athlete Voices**

- Untold Stories: Being a Black Student-Athlete
- Podcasts with Andy Burcham
- Student-Athlete “334 Townhalls”
- Student-Athlete Led Webinars
- Student-Athlete Panels
- War Eagle Productions Videos

#### **Administrative Department-Wide Webinars/Town Halls**

- Coaches Panel
- Allies Panel
- Student-Athlete Panel
- Book/Movie Clubs

#### **Training and Development**

- What it Means to be an Ally
- How to Have Effective Communication
- Workshop on Hard Conversations
- Importance of Peer-to-Peer Interaction at Events/Activities

## **CHARGE #2**

### **Holistic Education**

As part of an institution of higher learning, continued education around a variety of topics is necessary. It will be critical to carve out time to work through a curriculum which includes:

#### **Fireside Chats**

- Black Lives Matter
- Confederate Monuments/Statues
- Defund the Police
- Allyship
- Microaggressions
- Racism
- Bias
- Privilege
- Police Reform
- Election Process
- N-Word
- Any Relevant Hot Topic

#### **Black History Bootcamp**

#### **Historical Bus Tours**

#### **History of Race in Alabama**

#### **Auburn University History**

#### **Legacy Series: Auburn Athletics History**

#### **Educational Resource Guide**

## **CHARGE #3**

### **Sustainable Action**

This issues of diversity and inclusion have evolved over time, and it will take time to arrive in a place that we envision for our country. Below are action items that are expected to be sustained in order to have long-lasting impacts:

**Conduct a Student-Athlete and Administrative Climate/Culture Survey**

**Require Annual Diversity Training**

**Create a Chief Diversity Officer Position**

**Institute a Minority Internship Program**

**Collaborate with University Student-Organizations**

**Collaborate with the Southeastern Conference**

**Collaborate with Other Ally Groups**

**Diversity and Inclusion Web Platform**

**Tiger CommUNITY Walk**

**Solidarity Statement "Auburn Family: Together We Will" Campaign**

**Unifying Jersey Patches**

**Legacy Series: Incorporate Stories and Build a Culture**

**A-Club Enhancement: Inclusive Connection with Current and Former Student-Athletes**