

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Board of Directors of the Commission on Athletics engaged in a strategic planning retreat on January 25-26, 2002 in Dana Point, CA. The purpose of the retreat was to create a preliminary draft strategic plan to guide the Board in its future allocation of effort and resources. To assist the Board in developing a strategic plan and to provide balance and perspective to the deliberations, a number of individuals in addition to the Board were invited to participate. These additional participants included representatives of the Management Council, Athletic Directors, and Coaches. The COA Commissioner and COA staff also participated in the process.

The goal of the retreat was to develop draft statements outlining guiding principles, vision and mission and a priority list of strategic goals for the next three years. The retreat utilized consultant facilitators who led participants through an accelerated strategic planning process.

The content of this report is based on information provided by Board and Management Council members and staff working in task groups. The material is presented with minimal editing in order to preserve the integrity of discussions and decisions. Working task groups were reconfigured at intervals throughout the planning process to give each participant an opportunity to benefit from the full range of board, council and staff experience and expertise. While the report captures much of the detail of the retreat, it is important to note that further wide ranging discussions occurred on the issues of gender equity, Title IX, and intercollegiate and intramural athletics.

Prior to finalizing the plan, the COA Board will seek review and comment by COA affiliate groups. To facilitate this input, the COA Board will share the draft Strategic Goals and Action Steps at the COA Reno (NV) conference in March 2002. Feedback will be considered by the COA Board with the goal of final adoption of the Strategic Plan at the May 30, 2002 board meeting.

### **1.1. DESIRED OUTCOMES**

Desired outcomes for this retreat were determined by COA participants and included:

- Establish and strengthen relationships among board members and staff
- Define a clear COA vision
- Affirm, revise, clarify, communicate and apply COA statement of ethics, values and principles

## **1.1. DESIRED OUTCOMES (Continued)**

- Emphasize central focus on student athlete
- Focus on gender equity education--NOW organization--plan strategy and communication
- Three-year plan--identify things to change and things to keep
- Clarify roles/responsibilities/working relationships of COA and constituent groups
- Form governance structure-organization reflecting nature and mission of COA
- Identify strategies for maintaining the "importance" of athletics/sports among member colleges "in times of economic stress"

## **1.2. THE PROCESS EMPLOYED DURING THE SESSION**

- Board, council members and staff are the planning team
- Board, council members and staff are experts--they supply the content for planning
- The consultants/facilitators manage the process
- Future success is based on (ensured by) the full participation of all present
- The process encourages and benefits from different points of view
- The process is driven by a sequence of interactive assignments
- Planning results are always considered a work in progress

## **2. OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

### **2.1. TRENDS LIKELY TO INFLUENCE THE FUTURE OF THE COA**

As the eyes and ears of State of California Commission on Athletics, board and commission members and staff were asked to identify the major “helping” and “hurting” trends likely to influence the future of the COA. Participants listed and then prioritized trends in the categories of government/legislation, the economy, technology, competition, social/demographic, and markets/customers/products. The top-ranked trends follow.

## **2.1. TRENDS (Continued)**

- Economy--Hurting (20 votes):
  - Greater competition for resources
  - Shifting educational priorities
  - Greater demand for fewer resources
  - Fewer opportunities for external funds
- Governmental/Legislative--Helping (11 votes), Hurting (3 votes):
  - Title IX enforcement
- Markets/Customers/Products--Helping (11 votes):
  - Ability to adapt to changing markets
- Social/Demographic--Helping (8 votes):
  - Increased diversity of populations served
  - Change in ethnic/racial composition
  - Aging population
- Social Demographic--Hurting (6 votes each):
  - Increase in part-time students
  - Unprepared/under-prepared students

## **2.2. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

Prior to the planning retreat, participants each anonymously submitted their individual analyses of COA strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOTs). These submissions were compiled into master lists that were reviewed by work teams during the retreat. The teams identified those items most significant to the future of the COA. The results are listed below.

### Strengths

- Communication in a variety of ways, throughout the organization
- Leadership and involvement at all levels
- Visibility and quality of activities

## 2.2. SWOTs (Continued)

### Weaknesses

- Clarify roles, responsibilities and authority
- Enforcement of regulations (consistency, roles)
- Improve communication throughout the organization
- COA staff resources vs. vision
- Gender inequities

### Opportunities

- Gender equity--progress, expansion of programs, facilities, etc.
- Shift COA focus from state finals/championships to conference level success
- Work closer with K-12 and community to promote community college athletic participation, program awareness, etc.
- Program review (in progress)

### Threats

- Membership inattentiveness to COA information/activities
- Fiscal pressures (Title IX compliance)
- Failure of the general population to support community college athletics and sports
- Lack of effective communication

Because the issue of communication was identified on three of the prioritized lists (as a strength, a weaknesses and a threat), the group discussed their interpretation of communication in each of the three contexts. Participants acknowledged that one-way distribution of information *from* COA *to* college, coaches, the media, etc. is a strength. More challenging to the future of the COA will be to promote *two-way dialog* among stakeholder groups.

### The Many Faces of Communication

- Distribution of information—announce, publicize, disseminate
- Promotion of two-way dialog—listening, talking, hearing—to encourage feelings of ownership and participation
- Producers and consumers of communication related to California community college intercollegiate athletics:
  - COA
  - Coaches
  - ADs
  - Internal academic/student services structure

- Presidents
- Affiliate organizations
- Conference commissioners
- Sponsors
- Fans
- Broader community

### 2.3. COA GUIDING PRINCIPLES/VALUES

Participants discussed and prioritized guiding principles for the COA. Based on these elements, a draft statement of values was prepared by the facilitators. Guiding principles or values are statements of the organization’s philosophy and culture—essential beliefs shared by members which frame how the organization operates and relates to key stakeholders. Values describe how we carry out the mission of the organization and how we treat our clients and each other to get things done. Values help maintain organizational integrity and guide in distinguishing between activities and directions that will enhance or maintain integrity from those that will not.

#### COA Guiding Principles

The COA Board values equity and student success. In practice the COA Board is guided by the following principles:

Honesty, integrity and ethical behavior,  
 Mutual respect,  
 Quest for excellence,  
 The practice of exemplary leadership,  
 Teamwork, cooperation and competition, and  
 Accountability.

### 2.4. COA MISSION

Working in small groups, the board and management council members and staff discussed the mission of the COA. A mission statement answers the questions: what business are we in? Whom do we serve? Why do we exist? Each group brainstormed elements of the COA mission. The facilitators combined these elements in the following draft mission statement.

### **COA Mission**

The COA Board provides leadership in the administration of the California Community College intercollegiate athletic programs with the goals of promoting student educational success and providing high quality competitive opportunities for all student athletes.

### **2.5. COA VISION**

A vision statement is best when it inspires, motivates and challenges the organization to bold, “heroic” accomplishment. It answers the questions: What do we want to become? What do we aspire to? Participants were asked to consider their desired future for the COA and brainstorm words and word phrases to describe it. Using the brainstorming results as raw material, the following draft vision statement was developed.

### **COA Vision**

The COA Board is a champion for community college athletics, responding to all constituent groups by providing strategic leadership for the future.

## 2.6. Vision in Action—Accomplishing the COA Vision

Participants next brainstormed answers to the following question: “What future achievements by the COA would demonstrate that the COA had realized its vision?” Following the brainstorming, participants voted on their top five future achievements. The following list is the result of the group’s prioritization. As a result of tie votes, six were chosen. These six now form the basis of major strategic goals (in draft form) for COA.

- Clarify relationships between the COA Board and affiliate organizations and groups (15 votes)
- Develop a strategic response to gender equity (12 votes)
- Establish COA leadership as visible experts re: athletics—the “bully pulpit” (9 votes)
- Develop the capacity to conduct, interpret and disseminate research on the student athlete now and in the future (9 votes)
- Reconsider eligibility (9 votes)
- Review equity in competition model (9 votes)

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The following were also listed, but were not considered by the group to be of first tier priority.

- Staffing
- Commercialism vs. development (clarity and consistency with member college efforts)
- Emphasizing sportsmanship (student and coach leadership, community involvement)
- External funds to assist in training of coaches and students
- COA to be more aggressive in speaking for statewide issues (i.e. success of student athletic programs, increased user-friendly communications)
- Embrace the concept that "we" are the COA
- Celebrate and demonstrate student success

### 3. COA MAJOR STRATEGIC GOALS & ACTION STEPS

Major strategic goals should be limited in number and include only those that contribute *most* significantly to realizing the vision. The accomplishment of each goal requires a number of carefully considered action steps with timelines, resources required, and measurable results. Goals can stretch and challenge the COA and must be:

- enthusiastically endorsed
- manageable within the context of resources (time, money, people)
- aligned with COA's urgent and important daily-weekly-monthly operations

**\*Asterisks below indicate multiple recommendations for the same action step. The number of asterisks equals the number of participants who "voted" for that action step.**

#### 3.1. Clarify relationships between the COA Board and affiliate organizations and groups.

##### Action steps to be accomplished:

- Include this as a discussion topic at the convention
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Conference Commissioners as they relate to the COA\*\*
- Consider if Conference Commissioners work for COA rather than their respective conferences\*\*
- Allow for input based upon expertise rather than the hierarchical model
- Conference Hearing Boards and Northern and Southern California Boards should publish decisions statewide\*\*
- Conference Commissioners should have the same platform as the COA (i.e. be an arm of the COA)
- Develop job descriptions and an evaluation procedure for commissioners
- COA Board should meet with Conference Commissioners to review and standardize enforcement
- Review relevant sections of the constitution to clarify ways the affiliate organizations link to the COA (i.e. list of duties, responsibilities to COA)
- COA Board review and provide feedback on all program reviews to establish the COA Board's role in monitoring statewide consistency
- Have Conference Commissioners work/meet with COA Board

### **3.2. Develop an appropriate strategic plan for implementing Title IX.**

#### **Action steps to be accomplished:**

- Reconstitute the Gender Equity Committee and charge it with providing a creative response to Title IX\*\*
- Update/renew Gender Equity self-study manual\*\*
- Hold drive-in workshops jointly sponsored by COA and other statewide entities
- Make use of recruiting experts; some coaches need to understand what recruiting is
- Use research to identify unique characteristics of community college athletes\*\*\*
- Reconsider policies that result in less than adequate competitive opportunities for women
- Evaluate total athletic program to add/eliminate sports according to interest
- Encourage the recruitment of women athletes and coaches
- Create a data base of potential women coaches
- Embrace the development of "new" sport opportunities for women (i.e. emerging sports)
- Provide vision and leadership—address the need to gather at all levels (grassroots to professional) to identify and strategize how to support emerging sports for women.

### **3.3. Establish COA leadership as visible experts regarding athletics.**

#### **Action steps to be accomplished:**

- Listen to coaches and constituent groups very "artfully"
- Develop strategic plan for conference involvement/coaches in all issues
- Improve "ownership" of COA at all levels
- Develop media relationships (LA Times, etc.) with COA office and board
- Provide funds to allow staff to attend national seminars and media/information conferences
- Become a national "player" (i.e. League for Innovation)
- Conduct quarterly media briefings with editors of cosmopolitan media outlets
- Sponsor media summit annually at COA convention
- Spotlight athletic features weekly
- Utilize alumni to "give back" to system at COA events to generate media interest

### **3.4. Develop the capacity to conduct, interpret and disseminate research on the student athlete now and in the future.**

#### **Action steps to be accomplished:**

- Establish template for data collection throughout the system\*
- Review what is happening in CIF (our future students)
- Gather data on institutional policies/opportunities for campus-based partnering programs
- Integrate CCCF in data collection
- Issue press releases from COA to local papers
- Market community college athletes—current and former
- Use state MIS to select cohort of student athletes
- Increase/encourage/facilitate involvement of public information officers and sports information personnel at college level

### **3.5. Reconsider eligibility.**

#### **Action steps to be accomplished:**

- Full time vs. part time?
- Are there differences in 1<sup>st</sup> time and 2<sup>nd</sup> year eligibility?
- Reduce unit requirement to 8\*\*
- Be creative in making policy
- Create rules to allow for class enrollments in non-traditional schedules\*\*\*\*
- Review, is necessary, but ensure that we keep the field equitable
- Survey our students to identify potential barrier to athletic participation—legislate positive change
- Use 12 month rule to complete 24 units

### 3.6. Review equity in competition model.

#### Action steps to be accomplished:

- Consider competing in a broader, more different mix of sports
- Consider small college vs. large college\*\*\*\*\*
- Structure to highlight conference competition and championships
- Review recruiting rules
- Deal with the issue of post-season competition for football (i.e. bowl games)\*\*
- Charge competition committee with this task
- Consider redistricting in large conferences

### 4. Next Steps

- Draft strategic plan will be submitted for review and comment in mid-February (Jerry, Ellie, Joanne and Tom agreed to serve as the Editorial Committee).
- Seek opportunities for advice and counsel regarding implementation strategies.
- Provide for adoption of the strategic plan with action steps for Years 1, 2, 3 at May 30, 2002 COA Board meeting.
- Following the COA Board meeting, proceed with implementation of major strategic initiatives and action steps for Year 1.
- Share a draft of the strategic plan summary with stakeholders at Reno conference (board members and others to visit and make brief presentations at affiliate group meetings; board to host open forum).
- Recognize the board's responsibility for sharing the plan with affiliate groups face-to-face in Reno—all board members will understand and speak for the plan, the context and process in which it was developed; the participants who engaged; and next steps to be taken. Everyone will be "on message."

## 4.1. Tactical Considerations

- 4.1.1. How are we going to communicate about the COA Board's strategic plan with affiliate groups?

At the Reno conference, board members will make brief presentations at affiliate groups' meetings and host an open forum during which advice will be solicited with regard to implementation.

- 4.1.2. How will the plan be adopted?

Following presentations and the open forum at the Reno conference and a designated comment period, the COA Board will make final refinements and adopt an initial strategic plan at the May 30, 2002 board meeting.

- 4.1.3. How can we best use the convention to advance the "evolution" of the plan?

See 4.1.1. above.

- 4.1.4. How can we clarify roles with regard to planning?

It is the COA Board's strategic plan. The plan will serve as the guide for the deployment of resources and board effort. Affiliate groups and other stakeholders will be invited to provide advice and guidance with regard implementation. Final adoption of the plan is the board's responsibility.

- 4.1.5. How can the strategic planning process be best used to reinforce the new COA structure?

In requesting "advice and counsel" the COA Board is asking: "What has been overlooked? What things need improvement?" It is not an open invitation to re-draft the plan.

**Addendum to be attached to this report by COA: List of retreat participants.**