

Charlotte Westerhaus Named NCAA Vice-President for Diversity and Inclusion

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INDIANAPOLIS---Charlotte F. Westerhaus, currently the assistant to the president and director, equal opportunity and diversity at the University of Iowa, has accepted a leadership position on the NCAA staff as vice-president for diversity and inclusion. Westerhaus will assume her new duties in August at the NCAA national office in Indianapolis.

In her new position, Westerhaus will report directly to NCAA President Myles Brand and lead the newly created office for diversity and inclusion. In this capacity, she will work with the national office staff and with member institutions to develop and implement strategies that will increase representation of women and minorities in intercollegiate athletics leadership positions.

Prior to her position at the University of Iowa, Westerhaus was the manager of diversity and equal employment opportunity at Rockwell Collins, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She also served as the director of Purdue University's affirmative action office and as the assistant to the chancellor for equity and diversity at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

"Charlotte's experience and commitment to working with organizations and institutions in developing programs of inclusion are ideal for this new NCAA initiative," said Brand. "She is a proven leader with a reputation for working with people to create opportunities," he added.

"I'm looking forward to continuing the important work the NCAA and its member institutions have been doing to increase diversity and inclusion and welcome input from all groups who have been working these issues for years," Westerhaus said. "I plan to hit the floor running, however, this race is more like a marathon than a sprint," she added.

According to Brand, the success for achieving more diversity and inclusion in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics does not rest on this new NCAA office alone or the shoulders of this one person. "I expect that at least 80 percent of Charlotte's efforts will be national in scope – that is, addressing campus-based issues. I want the office to help college sports recognize how much more powerful its workforce can be when we seek out and include diverse points of view," he added. Bernard Franklin, NCAA senior vice-president for governance and membership, who also served as chair for the vice-president for diversity and inclusion search committee said the pool of candidates was stellar. "Each candidate brought an impressive array of experience and energy to the table, however, Charlotte was the unanimous choice," Franklin said.

According to Westerhaus, diversity and inclusion are concepts that have become an academic necessity and her focus is to ensure that diversity and inclusion positively enhance the experience of all student-athletes.

Floyd Keith, executive director of the Black Coaches Association, and member of the search committee said Westerhaus is a perfect fit for the new position. "She brings a multitude of skills to this position, which is needed to challenge old mindsets and ensure the value of diversity and inclusion is fully leveraged," he added.

Judith Sweet, NCAA senior vice-president for championships and education services praised Westerhaus' selection for the new post. "Charlotte has dedicated her career to ensuring diversity and inclusion is at the forefront in both the business world and academia. She is a great fit for the NCAA as we work to ensure an inclusive environment for our student-athletes, administrators, coaches, and the national office," Sweet said.

Westerhaus earned her bachelor of science degree in journalism from Ohio University in 1976 and her master's of education degree, also from Ohio University, in 1986 as well as her juris doctorate from Indiana University, Bloomington in 1991. In addition to her experience working with diversity and inclusion issues, Westerhaus was an attorney with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee and an associate attorney with the Milwaukee law firm of Foley & Lardner. Additionally, she was a law clerk to the Honorable Justice Brent E. Dickson, Indiana Supreme Court.

