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## Study assesses EDI practices in UW-Eau Claire athletics department

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's athletics department has a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, but steps can be taken to enhance the experience for student-athletes and staff, according to an independent assessment of the department.

In May 2020, UW-Eau Claire hired consulting firm Stan Johnson & Associates of Kansas City, Missouri, to conduct a study that included surveys, focus groups and interviews with student-athletes and staff. The assessment was conducted in response to concerns raised after racist social media posts were made by members of the UW-Eau Claire football team in November 2019.

UW-Eau Claire shared the [report](#) on Monday with the campus and community.

"Overall, the department has much to be proud of when it comes to its understanding of EDI and its efforts towards developing a more inclusive environment," the report summary states. "Focus groups, interviews and survey responses both point to a department whose members are highly aware of the opportunities and challenges of diversity and inclusion. All acknowledge the efforts on the part of the department to encourage an inclusive environment."

The report states that feedback from student-athletes and staff revealed specific areas of opportunity for the department to improve its EDI practices.

"The content of the assessment reports demonstrate room for growth with clear willingness to engage in recommended changes," says Olga Diaz, UW-Eau Claire vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion, and student affairs. "I look forward to continued efforts to achieve substantive change."

Among the report's recommendations are:

- The athletics department should consider developing a diversity council that includes staff, coaches and student-athletes to provide advice on EDI-related issues.
- All staff, coaches and student-athletes should participate in comprehensive fundamental diversity education.
- The athletics department should develop a diversity strategic plan.

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