The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) recently published their annual report investigating the hiring practices of major sport leagues in the United States. The 2019 Racial and Gender Report Card revealed that only the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) received an overall grade of an “A” or better with respect to their diversity and inclusive hiring practices (Lapchick, 2020). While the Racial and Gender Report Card is illuminating, it confirms what research has reported for years; women—especially women of color—face more barriers to entry for a career in sport than their white and male counterparts.

In higher education, the job requires faculty to prepare students for careers as sport management professionals; however, it is imperative that faculty take steps beyond presenting theory and application in the classroom. In the current political and social climate, faculty must make an intentional effort to create equitable opportunities for students in the areas of networking and career advancement, with the goal of improving career opportunities for women and women of color. These efforts must focus on these specific populations as they face the greatest barriers to entry into the field of sport.

As such, this presentation aims to provide information, with respect to the current barriers that women and women of color face and facilitate a discussion that explores what sport management programs can do to help address this issue. While we aim to offer the audience specific suggestions as to how faculty can brainstorm, identify, and create events and/or programs intended to impact issues related to diversity and inclusion in their program and the business of sport, we believe group discussion among equity-minded educators is where true growth and progress occurs.

We hope that, by presenting our ideas for discussion with our peers, we can build together to develop a strategy to ensure those from traditionally underserved or underrepresented communities in sport have the opportunity and information they need to participate fully in the field. The discussion will promote all forward-thinking in our area to empower and engage students.