

June 2014

Valuing Diversity and Equal Opportunity

DVD Review: A Basketball Lesson: Embrace Diversity, Win the State Championship!

Affirmative Action On-Site Review – Destination: Fresno!

A true story, an outstanding documentary. A winning mixture of sports action and cultural give-and-take – a little victory for embracing diversity and inclusion. Seen on PBS a couple years back, this is the story of a Black high school teacher, Jerry Richardson, who takes a job at a largely Navajo high school in Shiprock, New Mexico. (How he got the job is an interesting little sidebar that's brought out during the video.) Their cross-town rivals, a large well-funded mostly white high school had won the girls' high school state championships eight years in a row. They were well coached, had a lot of talent and a well-established system that worked. The largely Navajo Shiprock High School, by contrast, had been the doormat of the region. But there is a happy ending.

On June 23 the UC ANR Affirmative Action Office conducted an Affirmative Action On-Site Review for Fresno County.

On-site reviews are a requirement of the USDA and each state must review all their counties at least once every five years. California is a big state and the goal of the AA Office is to review five to six counties each fiscal year; once all the counties and multi-county partnerships are covered, we begin again. The USDA wants the states to review their counties in order to ensure they are following all federal civil rights laws and specific USDA regulations that apply to Cooperative Extension.

The DVD gives excellent looks at contemporary and traditional Navajo culture – contrasted with Richardson's black culture and the inevitable clash when two very different minority groups have to suddenly work together – plus a mixture of gender issues, too. Slowly, the journey of the documentary is how the two very different minority outlooks adjust and work toward a better understanding of each other's attitudes and values. One way or the other, diversity is embraced . . . the Navajo girls work hard; Coach Richardson was able to instill a little of his attitude towards winning – modifying his approach to accommodate not only a Navajo world view so different from his own but also the generational/gender differences . . . some especially exciting basketball scenes – including the state championships – great stuff. Learn a little about Navajo culture and life on the reservation, learn a lot about how hearts win in the end.

During a review, the advisors headquartered in that county are interviewed, also, any program managers/coordinators in that county who do not have advisors supervising their program are interviewed as well – usually with the County Director in attendance. The advisors are asked about their clientele groups and how they determine the needs of their clientele. They are asked about the overall goals for their program and their outreach efforts. Among other things, they're also asked about minority participation in their program and disability accommodations.

The name of the DVD is "Rocks with Wings."

If you would like to check out this DVD, the link to the loan form is below:

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/files/184133.pdf>

The other materials available at the AA Resource Library can be seen at:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative_Action/Resources/

The ANR approach to the on-site review is to treat it as a training opportunity for the counties. We stress that an on-site review is a *review* and not an audit. The whole point is not to find fault but to prepare, to train, the county and ANR personnel about issues that would be important if the USDA should come and perform an actual civil rights audit in their county.

At the opening session, the county's entire CE staff along with those who are to be interviewed are invited to attend a presentation about how Affirmative Action and inclusion are important parts of ANR's goals and mission.

The reviewers for Fresno's on-site were Linda Manton, Affirmative Action Contact and Executive Director of Staff Personnel, John Sims, the new ANR AA Compliance Officer, and David White, Affirmative Action Analyst. Karen Ellsworth came along as a trainee who will be helping out with future on-site reviews.