



Carolina Women's Soccer and the Importance of Core Values

Author : Mike Smith

Categories : [Organizational Change](#), [Strategic Planning](#), [UNC-Chapel Hill](#)

Date : May 27, 2009

Did you ever wonder why Carolina's women's soccer team has been so successful—the most successful collegiate sports program in history? Richard Whisnant recently shared an interesting [document](#) on our Blackboard strategic planning site that provides at least part of the answer. It lists and explains the core values that have shaped the culture and behavior of Anson Dorrance's soccer teams over the years. Many of the values are drawn from books on leadership, and they are illustrated by a diverse set of symbols and quotations. For example, the first core value is “we don't whine.” It is paired with the following quote from George Bernard Shaw: “The true joy in life is to be a force of fortune instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.” It would make you think twice before complaining about a lack of playing time, or anything else. Other values are more inspiring—the truly extraordinary do something every day, we choose to be positive, and we care about each other as teammates and as human beings. Each year the players grade themselves and their teammates on the extent to which they embody the core values. He also requires them to memorize the core value quotations and he tests them in front of the team and in every player conference. Dorrance challenges his players to commit to accomplishing something great—for the team and for themselves—and following a set of common values has helped to create a winning culture. The School's [framework strategic planning document](#) identifies a set of core values that have been just as important in our success. They include responsiveness, reliability, and a non-partisan and non-advocacy approach to our work. Our values have shaped our culture over many years, and now we just need to illustrate them with some nice quotations for everyone to memorize.