



P-ISSN: 2394-1685  
E-ISSN: 2394-1693  
Impact Factor (ISRA): 4.69  
IJPESH 2016; 3(1): 209-212  
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www.kheljournal.com  
Received: 20-11-2015  
Accepted: 23-12-2015

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## Women in NCAA athletic administration positions after title IX

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### Abstract

Since the passage of Title IX, a federal law that promotes gender equity in educational programs that receive federal funding, the number of women in athletic administration has decreased in comparison to men (Pasque and Nicholson, 2011). Recently, Carpenter and Acosta's longitudinal study (2012) found a significant disparity between male and female representation in top leadership positions at the college level. In the latest study by Acosta and Carpenter (2014), women comprise 36.2% of the athletic administration of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (henceforth NCAA) compared to 63.8% of males. Bower and Hums (2013) explained that these declining numbers began to drop after the passing of Title IX. The purpose of this paper is to review the representation of women in athletic administration positions in the NCAA. The longitudinal studies by Carpenter and Acosta (2012, and 2014) and Lapchik (2013) will be used as a content analysis to examine the status of women in NCAA leadership positions after Title IX.

**Keywords:** Women, Athletic Administration, and Title IX

### 1. Introduction

Title IX is the federal law passed in 1972 that requires that males and females receive gender equality treatment in all educational programs that receive federal funding (Burton, 2009) <sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Before Title IX was adopted in 1972, more than 90% of head athletic administrators of women's programs were females (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012) <sup>[33]</sup>. The purpose of this law was "to promote gender equity in all areas including access to higher education, career education, pregnant and parenting students, employment, learning environment, math and science, sexual harassment, standardized testing and technology and athletics" (NCWEG, 2012 as cited by Parnter *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[25]</sup>. Nevertheless, Burton and Parker (2010) <sup>[8]</sup> explained that, since the passage of Title IX, women's representation in athletic administration positions began to decline in the NCAA. Pasque and Nicholson (2011) <sup>[26]</sup> noted that, when this law was implemented, women were demoted to secondary leadership positions or were removed from administrative positions entirely.

Furthermore, Parnter *et al.* (2014) <sup>[25]</sup> found that Title IX caused that many men's and women's athletic departments be merged to become one department. These actions therefore contributed to the decrease in the representation of women in administrative positions, especially at the college level. The effects of Title IX, combined with many challenges and barriers that women face, have hindered their advancement in athletic administrative positions. Several studies such as Armstrong (2014) <sup>[3]</sup>, Burton *et al.* (2011) <sup>[7]</sup>, Buzubis (2015) <sup>[9]</sup>, Dean *et al.* (2009), Galloway (2012) <sup>[14]</sup>, Schneider *et al.* (2010) <sup>[28]</sup> and Wright, Eagleman, and Pedersen (2011) <sup>[32]</sup> have identified the lack of resources, proper guidance, mentoring, along with stereotyping perceptions as barriers that affect women's representation at the administrative level. Other research in the fields of gender, race (Galinsky, Hall, & Cuddy, 2013) <sup>[13]</sup>, stereotyping (Lopiano, 2014) <sup>[19]</sup>, and dominant groups (Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013) <sup>[30]</sup> have also sought to explain the scarcity of women in athletic departments from other perspectives. Previously conducted studies, as is the case of Carpenter and Acosta (2012) <sup>[1]</sup> and Lapchick (2013) <sup>[18]</sup> confirmed the disparity between males and females in the athletic administration field.

## 2. Carpenter and Acosta (2014)

Recently, Carpenter and Acosta's (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> longitudinal study concluded that women's representation in athletic administration positions in the NCAA was 36.2% which represents an increase from 35.8% in 2012. However, although these numbers reflect a slight increase of women representation in the field of athletic administration, men still occupy most positions. According to Carpenter and Acosta (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> 11.3% of the NCAA athletic programs do not have any female representation in their administrative structure. Moreover, they also reported that only 239 females are holding the position of athletic director at the NCAA intercollegiate sports level.

Even when women were still outnumbered by males in administrative positions, Carpenter and Acosta (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> reported a slight increase of 2% (i.e. 22.3% in 2014 from 20.3% in 2012). Furthermore, the report concluded that 1,642 administrative jobs were held by females, a number that represents an increase from 1,503 in 2012. These numbers reflect the efforts of the NCAA to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Yet, the study stated that males are holding 2,893 administrative positions, which represents an increase from 2,700 in 2012. Proportionally, males outnumber women in administrative positions despite NCAA efforts to increase female representation by means of leadership programs, job trainings, and other initiatives. While Carpenter and Acosta (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> found that there are 1,185 administrative jobs more than in the last decade, women held only 267 of these positions.

The disproportion between males and females in athletic administration positions has caused a decline on the NCAA Racial and Gender Report Card from a B to a C+ with 75.9 out of a possible 100 points (Lapchick, 2013)<sup>[18]</sup>. The Gender and Race report found a significant decrease from 81.3 points in 2012 to 75.9 points in 2013 in gender hiring practices. Moreover, the gender of the athletic director seems to have an impact on the gender of coaches for women sports teams (Carpenter & Acosta, 2014)<sup>[2]</sup>. According to Reagan and Cunningham (2012)<sup>[27]</sup>, the gender of the athletic director was statistically associated with the gender of the head coach of women basketball and softball teams. That is, male athletic directors tend to favor the hiring of male coaches because, in theory, they possess the agentic attributes required for this position while women mostly exhibit a set of communal qualities which are presumably not aligned with the duties that this position entails (Eagly and Karau, 2002)<sup>[12]</sup>. The rationale behind the abovementioned imbalance in hiring practices could arguably respond to the gender-prescribed roles and behaviors discussed by the Social Role and Role Congruity theories (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As a consequence, such prejudicial and gender-bound assumptions highly contribute to negatively affect women's opportunities at the beginning of their coaching careers. Traditionally, coaches have been promoted to athletic directors at the NCAA (Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2011). This homologous reproduction of males may cause a decrease of female representation in athletic administration positions.

The latest Carpenter and Acosta study (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> concluded that NCAA Division II reported that 37.5% of the athletic departments did not have any women in their administrative structure when the athletic director is male, an increase of 1.1% from the 36.4% reported in 2012. Likewise, Division II reported a decrease of 35.1% from 36.7% when an athletic director is male but has female representation in his administrative structure. A similar decline was also reflected

when a female is an athletic director in NCAA Division II. Carpenter and Acosta (2014)<sup>[2]</sup> presented evidence of this decline when they reported a very slight decrease of 40.6% from 40.7% in 2012 compared to Division I which reported an increase from 45.9% to 46.8%. In an attempt to mitigate this evident inequality, the NCAA has created leadership programs such as the NCAA Fellow Programs, Minorities Opportunities and Interest Committee, Senior Woman Administrator, Institute for Administrative Advancement, and the Committee on Women's Athletics. Unfortunately, and in spite of the NCAA's efforts to strive for gender equality in leadership positions, neither their initiatives nor Title IX have yielded the results that they originally aimed for. Thus, it is imperative to continue with the development of programs and strategies that strengthen NCAA's efforts to promote women opportunities to become athletic administrators.

Madsen, Longman, and Daniels (2011) explained that many colleges and universities seek to develop the leadership skills of administrators. Tuite (2010)<sup>[28]</sup> argued that every NCAA institution looks for candidates with character integrity, strong leadership and organizational skills, competitive instincts, communication skills, education, and relevant experiences. Through NCAA programs, women are developing the abovementioned skills in order to advance and compete for athletic administration positions. Won, Bravo, and Lee (2013)<sup>[31]</sup> emphasized that leadership skills play a vital role in hiring criteria and success in athletic administration. However, as it was mentioned above, the advancement of women in administrative positions is still a challenge. There is a need to include more women at the administrative level in the sports industry to promote diversity and gender equity (Masterlexis, Barr, & Hums, 2009; NCAA, 2014)<sup>[20, 19, 23]</sup>. Further research must focus on improving NCAA strategies, programs, and efforts to increase women representation in athletic administrative positions.

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