Fifty-One Years Later: A Case Study on Title IX Implementation Practices of the NCAA

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ABSTRACT

FIFTY-ONE YEARS LATER: A CASE STUDY ON TITLE IX IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES OF THE NCAA

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Since the implementation of Title IX, the law has increased opportunities for female participation in intercollegiate athletics and changed the perception of women's sports. The purpose of this study was to examine the practices that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented to support Title IX. The methodology of the case study was to create research questions and an instrument that was utilized to guide the researcher when collecting data. The findings of the study concluded that the governmental structure of the NCAA lacks the necessary power to implement policies that support Title IX, but the committees within the organization work effectively to increase opportunities for underrepresented individuals. The resources provided to member institutions in supporting Title IX are difficult to access. It is recommended that the NCAA includes stipulations in membership agreements with universities that include Title IX compliance reports and surveys of female students and athletes.

Keywords: Title IX, intercollegiate athletics, NCAA, implementation, compliance, women’s sports
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Background of Study

Intercollegiate athletics is a focal point in the United States that provides young adults the opportunity to compete in sport at a high level while pursuing a college degree. With most intercollegiate athletic events being accessible through televised broadcasts, many children grow up watching college sports and dream of the day when they get to represent their favorite university as an athlete on the biggest stage. For most girls, those dreams could not be fulfilled before June 23, 1972. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2014), in 1970, only about 16,000 intercollegiate athletes were female, and the average number of female teams offered at colleges/universities was 2.50. Before the early 1970s, intercollegiate athletes were predominantly male, and there were not many avenues that allowed women to continue playing sports into college.

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed Title IX into law. Title IX read, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (United States Courts, 2023). The civil rights law, known as Title IX, had a profound effect in many industries, but it arguably had one of, if not its biggest impact, on the advancement of female sports in intercollegiate athletics. The implementation of Title IX enforced that women had as many rights as men to participate in sports, which created a massive shift in the scope of intercollegiate athletics. The shift was so significant that Title IX and
intercollegiate athletics have been linked together despite there being no mention of athletics of any kind stated in the law.

With the recent passing of the half-century mark since the inception of Title IX, it is critical now more than ever to understand the role that the leading governing body of intercollegiate athletics plays in supporting the principles of the law. The purpose of this study was to examine the practices that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented to support Title IX.

Review of Literature

Research for this review of literature was conducted at Robert E. Kennedy Library on the campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. In addition to books and other resources, the following online databases were utilized: SPORTDiscus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Gale Academic Onefile, Elsevier Science Direct, Heinonline Law, and Proquest). This review of literature includes the following subsections: history of Title IX, compliance of Title IX, and modern applications of Title IX.

In the pre-Title IX era of intercollegiate athletics, male and female athletics were perceived quite differently. Suggs (2005) noted that men’s intercollegiate athletics was a commercial model that treated sport like a business, whereas female athletes played intramural competitions which was merely an extension of their education pursuits. Buzuvis (2023) agreed with Suggs’ assessment that male and female athletics were valued differently. Buzuvis then added that enrollment levels played a factor in the valuing of sport. “Women’s opportunities to attend college arose more slowly than
men’s, and the institutions that accepted them did not promote women’s sport to enhance their brand” (Buzuvis, p. 76). At the time, male enrollment was higher than female enrollment, therefore, institutions would only promote male athletics.

Title IX’s passage into law in 1972 was a long time coming for many people who fought for anti-discrimination legislation that protected women. Bell (2007) credited the new wave of feminism, that sprouted out of the civil rights movement, for pushing for legislation that improved equality in athletics. As more sectors within society slowly became more equitable, the push for groundbreaking changes in intercollegiate athletics made waves. Barnett and Hardin (2011) further expanded on Bell’s notion about the importance of new wave feminists by examining their impact. Barnett and Hardin stated, “Second wave feminists challenged traditional gender norms, claiming that women's presumed secondary status to men kept them from fully achieving personal satisfaction and professional success, and called for changes in women's roles in both the private and public spheres” (p. 182). By challenging traditional gender norms through Title IX, a change in the female stereotype was seen in athletics. Lopiano (2000) noted that sports were traditionally viewed as unladylike, but as female participation in athletics increased, society was able to see sports as a way to empower women to be strong and competitive.

Implementing Title IX in athletics was anything but smooth sailing. In the past half-century since Title IX became law, many legal developments have been made in the enforcement of Title IX in athletics, but two developments stand out. One of the first impactful developments was a 1979 document created by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), titled “A Policy Interpretation: Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics” United States Department of Education (USDOE, 2023). The purpose of the document was to
show institutions how to comply with Title IX athletics in three categories: financial assistance, other program areas, and interests and abilities of male and female students/athletes (USDOE). Before the document was released, there was a considerable lack of clarity on how Title IX directly applied to athletics, so the document needed to be thorough. According to Wong and Ensor (1985), the OCR focused on the implementation of intercollegiate athletics and covered its basis by meeting with university officials, legal experts, and members of the public who would be impacted by the guidelines. By examining who would be most impacted by Title IX, the OCR created a blueprint for athletic departments to follow to be compliant with the law. Anderson (2012) noted that while the document has been subject to controversy and contention, the OCR clearly mapped out a step-by-step process of how athletic departments could comply with Title IX. The OCR did not waiver from the guidelines set in the document, and the ways to comply still stands.

The other legal development that set a precedent to protect Title IX in athletics was the passing of the Civil Rights Restoration Act. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 was legislation that specified that if any part of a college or university receives federal funding, then Title IX must be applied to the entire institution (United States Publishing Office, 1988). Before the passing of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, private universities argued that because they did not receive federal funding they did not need to comply with Title IX. While the many of the legal battles did not hinge on sport, the act still had a significant impact on intercollegiate athletics. As Anderson (2012) stated, “The Act makes clear that if any part of a school or university receives federal financial assistance, then Title IX compliance should reach the athletic department as well” (p.
The passing of the act was seen as a major victory for female athletes. Chudacoff (2015) noted that athletic departments could no longer claim that they did not have to comply with Title IX. Chudacoff would also go on to state, “In the minds of many people, Title IX and the power given it by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 represent one of the truly significant reforms of modern college sports” (p. 104). Title IX practices and the landscape of intercollegiate athletics would look much different if the Civil Rights Restoration Act did not become a law.

The path to Title IX compliance hinges on the three-part test. The three-part test was introduced in the 1979 guidance to compliance document, mentioned above, in the section about serving the interests and abilities of both male and female athletes. Athletic departments comply with Title IX by meeting one of the three parts of the test.

(1) The number of male and female athletes is substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or

(2) The institution has a history and continuing practice of expanding participation opportunities responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex; or

(3) The institution is fully and effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. (o, 2023, para. 5)

The path to compliance has been a treacherous journey for many athletics departments. Traditionally, many athletic departments have chosen part one (substantial proportionality) to meet the compliance standard. However, part one of the test has stirred up controversy. Goplerud III (2003) stated, “Obsession with proportionality has led to the creation of women's teams for the purpose of developing numbers only and not
to truly address the interests. Schools have, needlessly in some cases, eliminated men's and women's teams in an effort to satisfy Part One” (p. 139). Also, some athletic departments have used part one of the test as a way to fix budgeting issues within the department, not to be more equitable. Honse and Meyer (2022) noted that besides reporting minimal data under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, athletic departments do not have to reveal other data unless they are under investigation by the OCR. Honse and Meyer later stated, “when a school announces a change to its athletics program that impacts student athletes-such as canceling a team due to budget concerns, the first and often prohibitive hurdle that concerned stakeholders face is that they cannot access the data necessary to assess Title IX compliance” (p. 103). The lack of transparency within athletic departments has led people who are greatly impacted by Title IX to question whether equity is a priority in intercollegiate athletics. Given the controversy of part one of the three prongs of compliance, Goplerud III argued that part three (accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex) would be the best way to reach athletic equity if done correctly. Goplerud III noted that athletic departments could use part three to be compliant with Title IX if they showed genuine effort and provided data to meet the needs of underrepresented athletes by conducting thorough interest surveys, analyzing/evaluating programs, and having the ability to legitimately implement programs of interest. Concerted effort to serve the needs of underrepresented athletics can be the answer to solving the athletic compliance problems that many institutions face.

While the OCR sets mandates and enforces Title IX at the federal level, every university is required to have Title IX coordinators, who oversee all factions that apply to the law within the scope of their institution. Pappas (2021) noted that Title IX
coordinators are impacted by policy changes and are tasked with making sure the policy changes are implemented by communicating with different personnel across many areas within the university. Pappas, also stated, “Due to the variety of backgrounds suitable for Title IX work, coordinators frequently hold dual roles. They also operate at lower levels within the institutional hierarchy, execute their jobs with less than adequate financial resources, and experience high turnover rates” (p. 103). Due to Title IX coordinators filling different roles, the lack of cohesion in policy implementation and interpretation has been detrimental to universities. Staurowsky and Rhoads (2020) agreed with Pappas’s assertion that coordinators are stretched thin and have a difficult time staying in communication with all departments affected by Title IX. Staurowsky and Rhoads noted that the lack of communication between coordinators and athletic department personnel results in a lack of knowledge of how to consistently implement Title IX in intercollegiate athletics. Improper communication could prevent proper enforcement and undermine the principles of the law.

In the modern era, Title IX implementation in athletics has become politicized. According to Edwards (2010), during the time of the passing of Title IX in the early 1970s, there were not the same political battle lines that are seen today. Edwards stated, “Title IX would not have passed if it had been legislated much later. Key participants at the time contend that the lack of social and political awareness in the early 1970s helped Title IX’s passage and the shift to athletics” (p. 303). In the past decade, there has been an increase political contention as to how to interpret the language of Title IX. Harry et al. (2022) noted that the inclusion and exclusion of adding gender identity under the umbrella of sex for the purpose of Title IX by the last two presidential administrations
increased ambiguity and fueled more politicization of the law. According to Staurowsky et al. (2022), some sports organizations have stepped in and created rules allowing transgendered athletes to compete, which removed some ambiguity, but governing bodies have failed to set guidelines regarding Title IX objectives. Because of a lack of governing presence, Staurowsky et al. stated, “Advocates must therefore remain vigilant to ensure that this development does not effectively exclude transgender women from accessing the opportunity to participation in college athletics (p. 75). Not only does the ambiguous language in Title IX impact transgendered individuals and others who may be left unprotected, but it also affects the administrators who are tasked with implementing and complying with the law. Harry et al. stated, “Micro-level actors, such as institutions and practitioners, must develop an understanding of Title IX that anticipates continued macro-level change in order to provide a continuity of access and support for students” (p. 335). With so much confusion about the language of the law and its interpretation, there is a call for the OCR and/or upper-level courts to provide clarity and reduce conflict on the matter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented to support Title IX.
Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the governance structure of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)?

2. What role do the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) committees play in supporting the implementation of Title IX?

3. What Title IX resources does the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) provide?

4. How effective is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) government structure?

5. How effective are the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) committees in supporting the implementation of Title IX?

6. How effective are Title IX resources that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented?
Chapter 2
METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented to support Title IX. This chapter includes the following sections: description of organization, description of instrument, and description of procedures.

Description of Organization

A case study was conducted on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA (2023) is a member-led non-profit organization that governs intercollegiate athletics, headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. The organization was founded in 1906 after President Theodore Roosevelt brought university athletic leaders to the White House hoping to make college football safer. In the early 1900s, college athletes were dying on the field, so the NCAA was formed out of necessity to regulate the rules and increase safety. The organization consisted of leadership from 62 football-playing colleges/universities, first called the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS). In early 1906, the IAAUS created a constitution and bylaws which kickstarted the organization. By 1910, the organization was renamed to the NCAA. In the time since, the NCAA established standards as the principles of amateurism known as the Sanity Code, the standards included: financial aid, recruitment, and academic standards. The NCAA also created a system to enforce and investigate colleges and universities that failed to uphold the standards of the Santity Code and other
NCAA legislation. Over a century since its creation, the NCAA is recognized as the leading governing body of intercollegiate athletics, serving around 500,000 athletes across 1,098 colleges/universities in 102 athletic conferences with the mission to: provide a world-class athletics and academic experience for student-athletes that fosters lifelong well-being (NCAA).

Description of Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study was a case study guide developed by the researcher (see Appendix A). The instrument was utilized to examine how the NCAA establishes best practices for supporting student-athletes based on Title IX principles in intercollegiate athletics. The original instrument was broken down into four categories: committees, resources provided, leadership development, and inclusive initiatives. A pilot study of the instrument was conducted on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), which is the leading governing body of interscholastic athletics. After the pilot study, the instrument was revised to include a compliance auditing category.

Description of Procedures

A case study was conducted on the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The instrument utilized in this study was a case study guide developed by the researcher. During a two-week period, data was collected by evaluating how the NCAA has supported the implementation of Title IX in intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA’s 50th anniversary Title IX report was the basis of the primary research. In addition to the
report, various web pages on the NCAA’s website were utilized for research, including Governance, Inclusion, and Leadership Development. Under Governance, the NCAA Association-wide Committees, Descriptions, and Members pdf was utilized. Under Inclusion, research from the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, and the Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity was examined under the Committees and Task Force tab. Also under Inclusion, the Programs and Resources tab was utilized to gather information on Gender Equity and Title IX from the Gender Equity Planning Best Practices document, and the NCAA’s Inclusion Forum. Under Leadership Development, the Student-Athlete, Coaches, Administrators, Leadership Collective, and DISC Behavioral Assessments were accessed to gain further understanding to examine the resources provided to the people within member institutions governed by the NCAA. A third-party source, the Women’s Sports Foundation, released a 2022 Title IX report that was utilized for information by the researcher.
Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) implemented to support Title IX. A case study was utilized to examine the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This chapter includes the following sections: governance, committees, and resources.

Governance

In most forms of government, a legislative body enacts new legislation and repeals old legislation, but the NCAA has a different approach to governing. The levels of athletics that the NCAA oversees are separated into three divisions (I, II, III), and each division is allowed to create its own procedures and guidelines. For matters that affect the entire scope of intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA’s Governing Body steps in and implements policy within the organization. The governing bodies are tasked with supporting and progressing the organization’s main values of fairness, safety, and equal opportunity for student-athletes. The governance structure of the NCAA consists of two sections: Association-Wide Committees and Board of Governors.

There are seven NCAA Association-Wide Committees: Women’s Athletics, Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, Honors, Minority Opportunities and Interests, Olympic Sports Liaison, Postgraduate Scholarship, and Walter Byers Scholarship. The Association-Wide Committees examine issues relating to health and safety, opportunities for women and minority groups in college athletics, and other topics
that affect the landscape of college sports. Every committee has at least one representative from each of the three divisions, and the committee makes policy recommendations to the Board of Governors that can impact the organization.

The Board of Governors is the highest governing body of the NCAA. The board members are presidents or chancellors from each of the three divisions, two independent governors not employed by a university or athletic conference, and one former student-athlete. The Board of Governors review the recommendations made by the NCAA’s Association-Wide Committees and determines whether to move forward and implement new policies organization-wide. For the recommendations to be approved and implemented, the governors look at the NCAA’s values in determining if the new policy would address a main issue and be able to be adopted seamlessly within the organization.

While the Association-Wide Committees make policy recommendations and the Board of Governors can create and implement policy at the organizational level for the NCAA, neither governing body can make changes to legislation. Each division has its own legislation process that the NCAA does not interfere with. The policies that the NCAA creates organizationally are designed to provide guidance and support for each division. The NCAA can recommend that divisions adopt policies, but it is up to each division to do so.

Committees

The NCAA has four committees: the Gender Equity Task Force, the Committee on Women’s Athletics, the Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee, and the Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity, which were established to support
the implementation of Title IX. Each of the four committees serves specific purposes and emphasizes different aspects of the needs of female athletes, but the four committees unite in supporting initiatives designed to increase participation and leadership in athletic participation and athletic administration. The four committees have collaborated to develop recommendations for the NCAA’s Board of Governors based on gender equity reviews.

The Gender Equity Task Force formed in 1992, after a 1991 survey of NCAA member institutions revealed that athletic participation and resources heavily favored men despite male and female undergraduate students having similar enrollment levels. In 1994, the task force recommended that the NCAA and institutional members create a list of emerging sports for women. At the time, a list was created that included nine sports, and now, five of those sports have NCAA championship games (beach volleyball, rowing, ice hockey, water polo, and bowling). The NCAA also used a recommendation given by the Gender Equity Task Force to create the Emerging Sports for Women program to help increase athletic participation opportunities for women, and the program is one of the main programs that the Committee on Women’s Athletics supervises. The task force re-formed in 2014, with members from the original task force and new members to make recommendations to the NCAA’s Board of Governors. The governors enacted a policy stating that institutions should conduct a diversity, equity, and inclusion review based on a recommendation presented by the task force. The Division 1 legislature enacted the policy, meaning all Division 1 athletic departments complete diversity, equity, and inclusion reviews.
The Committee on Women’s Athletics is one of the seven Association-Wide Committees and one of the two that focus on supporting Title IX initiatives. This committee studies and analyzes trends about equity, opportunities, and pathways for women in intercollegiate athletics, then makes recommendations to establish policy. The committee has the mission to: provide leadership and assistance to the association in its efforts to provide equitable opportunities, fair treatment, and respect for all women in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. As mentioned above, the Committee on Women’s Athletics oversees the Emerging Sports For Women program, which focuses on improving opportunities for women in athletics. The committee’s role in oversight of the program is to monitor the application process of how sports can become an emerging sport or get revoked from the emerging sport list. The committee then brings its recommendations to the Body of Governors, who then passes them along to each division for a vote. The current listed sports on emerging sports for women list are acrobatics and tumbling, equestrian, triathlon, rugby, and wrestling.

The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee is the other Association-Wide Committee that focuses on supporting Title IX initiatives along with the Committee on Women’s Athletics. The Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee’s primary role is to examine issues related to the interests and representation of ethnic or racial minorities, members of the LGBTQ+ communities, and people with disabilities. The committee has the mission to: champion the causes of minorities by fostering an inclusive environment, thereby creating a culture that promotes fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources. In 2019, the committee recommended that all athletic departments have a diversity and inclusion designee to be a contact person for diversity
and inclusivity-related information exchanged between the university, athletic department, and the NCAA. All three NCAA Divisions approved the policy, making the designee mandatory across all member institutions. The committee also collaborates with the Office of Inclusion to help make the designee’s role in athletic departments more impactful.

The Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity was created to analyze, promote, and recommend diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NCAA. The committee focuses on diversifying the governance structure of all three NCAA Divisions. In addition to working with the two Association-Wide Committees that support Title IX initiatives, The Committee to Promote Cultural Diversity and Equity partners with the Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports to provide inclusivity guidelines for policy on transgender-athlete participation.

**Resources**

The NCAA has sought to provide resources to student-athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators within the member institutions. The resources emphasize improving gender equity, inclusion, and leadership opportunities. Resources are accessed through documents, seminars, and programs created by the NCAA. The programs and resources are all optional, but institutional members are encouraged to use the tools for guidance.

A gender equity planning document was created by the NCAA, designed to help athletes, coaches, and administrators gain a better understanding of the commitment to gender equity. The document opens by noting that a clear line of communication between
the institution's Title IX coordinators and the athletic department could help with providing equity in athletics. The NCAA calls for universities to designate a member of the athletic department who is knowledgeable about Title IX application in sport to have a reporting chain with the coordinators. The document also outlines a nine-step guide for developing a gender equity plan. The document also outlines a nine-step guide for developing a gender equity plan. The nine-step guide includes:

1. Include gender equity in the university mission statement.

2. Educate people on gender equity.

3. Include gender equity information and speaker forums in the athletic department.

4. Discuss with institutional and community members the importance of gender equity.

5. Evaluate athletic programs objectively.

6. Get a commitment from department and university leaders to correct inequity.

7. Implement changes constructively.

8. Communicate changes openly.

9. Create a diverse gender equity committee.

In addition to the gender equity development plan, a seven-step guide for gender equity planning was outlined. The plan includes:

1. Review NCAA documents (certification, reports, and resources).

2. Review the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act.

3. Keep detailed records if the institution uses part two or three to comply with Title IX.
4. Include staff composition and hiring.

5. Identify problems, issues, and solutions.

6. Seek feedback (athletes, coaches, and administrators).

7. Develop data_collecting forms.

The planning guides are tools designed to provide athletic administrators help with implementing equitable practices.

Every year, the NCAA hosts an inclusion forum where educators, administrators, and student-athletes speak about diversity, equity, and inclusion in intercollegiate athletics. The programming for the event focuses on five areas: disability, international, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity, and women. The forum hosts guest speakers to speak about initiatives that specific institutions and/or the NCCA have implemented and the impact the initiatives have made. In addition to guest speakers and shared storytelling about experiences, the event provides attendees with resources and guidelines designed to help their athletic department and institution better understand the importance of equity. The NCAA also hosts the Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee Summit, where designees from across the country go through educational programs and networking.

Leadership development programs were established by the NCAA to provide resources to student-athletes, coaches, and administrators. Many programs, but not all, include seminars that are held at the NCAA Headquarters in Indianapolis. For in-person seminars, attendees pay for their own travel, and an additional fee is required to attend the seminars, but the NCAA waives the fee and covers travel costs on some occasions. Different resources are provided to the actors, but some overlap and apply to multiple entities, such as the NCAA Leadership Collective which coaches and administrators can
The resources provided to student-athletes in terms of leadership development consists of the Student-Athlete Leadership Forum, Career in Sports Forum, and the NCAA Postgraduate Internship Program. At these forums, student-athletes intend to enhance their leadership capabilities and interact with industry leaders to build connections and learn insights into the administration side of intercollegiate athletics. The student-athletes also learn about potential careers in sport post-graduation and network with professionals and other student-athletes. Post-graduation, the athletes can apply to work at the NCAA headquarters for a yearlong program that focuses on helping ethnic minorities, women, and former student-athletes understand internal procedures of athletics organization-wide.

Coaches can seek NCAA resources through the Effective Facilitation Workshop and behavioral assessments. At the Effective Facilitation Workshop, coaches get feedback on their leadership styles by leading small and large group discussions. Throughout the workshop, coaches learn applicable skills they can bring back to their respective institutions. Coaches also have access to behavioral assessments where they learn more about their leadership style and how it applies within a team environment. The assessments are also designed to help coaches understand biases and how to relate better with people from different backgrounds.
Programs and resources provided to administrators are designed to help better serve student-athletes through leadership and diversity initiatives to improve decision-making. The NCAA Women’s Leadership Symposium is designed to help women new to the administration side of intercollegiate athletics improve leadership skills, network with other administrators, and advance the recruitment and retention of women working in sports. The Leadership Academy Workshop is a resource provided to have athletic administrators from member schools collaborate with members of other athletic departments and create a leadership development program implemented at their respective institutions. In addition to the leadership programs mentioned, The Dr. Charles Whitcomb Leadership Institute is a program established with an intent to provide professional development resources to help ethnic minority administrators progress their careers in intercollegiate athletics. The program includes eighteen alumni mentors who speak about their experiences as minority administrators and teach the new participants strategies of how to implement change and improve college sports.
Chapter 4
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

With intercollegiate athletics being near the forefront of popularity, it is important to understand how the NCAA supports Title IX and how law’s impacts the sports world. This concluding chapter includes the following: a discussion of the findings, limitations of the research, conclusions based on research questions, and recommendations for the future.

Discussion

While the NCAA’s governance allows body members to discuss issues affecting intercollegiate athletics and recommend policies to make improvements organizationally, the governmental structure lacks the necessary effectiveness and power that the leading governing body of college sports should possess. Harry et al. (2022) noted that in a traditional government structure, governing bodies or courts can make rulings on policies by setting precedents and providing clarity to those impacted by the judgment. Since the NCAA’s governing bodies can only recommend that the divisions implement policy changes, the organization cannot set a precedent on issues that directly impact student-athletes. Having each division set rules and policies limits the NCAA’s power to make improvements on important topics, like Title IX. There are several instances where the NCAA’s Board of Governors implemented policy within the organization that all three divisions adopted, but other policies have only been adopted by some divisions, or none
at all. When a policy recommendation is made that increases gender equity and strengthens support of Title IX, it may be in the best interest of each division to adopt the policy, but they are not required to do so unless the division’s government votes in favor of implementing the policy. Harry et al. also noted that institutions and athletic administrators rely on Title IX policy implementation and guidelines to help serve the needs of student-athletes. The lack of uniformity between policy implementation at the NCAA and divisional levels makes it difficult to effectively support student-athletes. The NCAA can become more effective without changing its governmental structure by adding stipulations in the institution’s membership that focus on improving support of Title IX, including compliance checks by the NCAA, and surveys of female students.

The committees that support Title IX implementation do an effective job of empowering women and other underrepresented individuals by helping to increase athletic opportunities. According to Lopiano (2000), participating in sports allows women the opportunity to build confidence and skills that last much longer than their playing days. Lopiano also explained that as the participation numbers grow, women’s sports become more recognized and accepted within society. The NCAA committees on Title IX issues were slow to develop but are currently making a significant impact on intercollegiate athletics. There are a myriad of reasons why athletic participation numbers for women have increased in the past few decades, and the creation of the Emerging Sports for Women program, based on a recommendation made by the Gender Equity Task Force certainly played a vital role in the advancement for more opportunities. Goplerud III (2003) noted that an effective way for athletic departments to support female student-athletes is to have communication channels and gather useful information
on sports that interest them. If more sports that female students are interested in becoming accessible, participation will increase. The committees have also played a crucial role in making policy recommendations that allow transgendered athletes to compete in college sports at NCAA member schools under specific parameters. Staurowsky et al. (2022) mentioned that while the US Government has deferred to States to implement competition guidelines for transgendered athletes, the NCAA has stepped up and established competition rules with Title IX in mind. As more issues regarding Title IX become politicized and argued, the NCAA should increase funding for committees to conduct further research on how to best serve underrepresented student-athletes.

The resources and programs provided to student-athletes, coaches, and administrators in support of Title IX are good in principle, but the implementation and execution leave much to be desired. The gender equity planning best practices document, created by the organization, has many useful tools, including the recommendation of having the Title IX coordinators at the institutions collaborate with athletic administrators to help athletic departments be more equitable. However, as explained by Pappas (2021), communication between coordinators and the athletic department is difficult because coordinators oversee many departments and have many responsibilities. Impactful changes can occur if coordinators and the athletic department can come together and commit to improving gender equity in athletics. The resources provided by the NCAA to support Title IX can be most beneficial to athletic administrators. As mentioned by Staurowsky and Rhoads (2020), the lack of knowledge that athletic administrators have on the implementation of Title IX stunts the potential progress for providing support to
female student-athletes. The issue with the resources and programs is that many are in-person seminars, where administrators must pay their way to travel to the NCAA headquarters to access the resources. According to Honse and Meyer (2022), budgetary constraints are a crux within athletic departments and many administrators have placed more importance on the budget rather than Title IX. Since budgeting concerns are a big issue for many athletic departments, it is a lot to ask for the department/institution to pay for administrators to travel to the Indianapolis headquarters to attend seminars and gather resources to help support student-athletes. The NCAA should continue holding seminars for people who want to attend and network with other industry members, but the organization should create recorded video workshops that go over the same material presented at the seminars and send the videos to the athletic department of every member institution. The NCAA should implement policy making the internet workshops required viewing and submit the policy to each division's governing body.

When critically examining this study, there are several limitations that should be considered. The researcher had a ten-week time frame to conduct a review of literature, research, analysis, and present the findings of the study. Another limitation was the use of only online accessible sources, including the organization’s website, academic journals, books, government websites, and third-party websites. Similarly to most organizations, the NCAA wants to showcase positivity and promote goodwill efforts on its website, so the researcher used mostly academic journal articles to build knowledge about the implementation of Title IX to effectively analyze the organization's efforts. The researcher has personal biases by working in the sports industry and starting a position working in intercollegiate athletics. Despite potential limitations and biases, the
researcher was able to gain an important understanding of Title IX in intercollegiate athletics and use critical thinking to examine and analyze how the NCAA supports the implementation of the law.

Protecting the principles of Title IX is crucial for providing women and underrepresented individuals opportunities to build confidence, leadership, and teamwork skills by participating in intercollegiate athletics that extend to other branches of life. Through the study, analysis was conducted by examining how the leading governing body of intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA, supports the implementation of Title IX in its governance, committees, and resources. The government structure of the organization is set in a way that gives each division the power to make rules and regulations. The committees within the NCAA do an effective job at bringing awareness to Title IX issues in intercollegiate athletics and making recommendations to resolve the problems. The resources provided by the organization to make college sports more equitable can be useful if they become more accessible to institutional members. The NCAA is a powerful player in intercollegiate athletics that must use its standing to help make improvements that promote gender equity.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The NCAA has two government bodies (Association-Wide Committees and the Board of Governors) that make policy on issues that affect the entirety of intercollegiate athletics, but each division makes its own rules and policy.
2. The four committees that focus on Title IX research data, review old policy, and often collaborate with other committees to recommend policy to the Association-Wide Committees who then pass it onto the Board of Governors for approval to be implemented within the organization.

3. The NCAA provides resources through programs and seminars to improve gender equity, diversity, and inclusion.

4. The government structure of the NCAA lacks the power and effectiveness to make impactful changes to intercollegiate athletics by letting each division decide what policies they would like to implement.

5. The committees effectively support the implementation of Title IX by providing more opportunities for women to compete in intercollegiate athletics and played a critical role in introducing policies that allowed transgendered athletes to compete in NCAA-sanctioned sports.

6. The resources, programs, and seminars can be useful tools to promote the principles of Title IX, but the resources provided are optional and members often have to pay to attend the seminars to access the resources.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Office for Civil Rights should create a training program that explains how Title IX is directly in athletics and send videos to every high school and university in the US for coordinators and athletic administrators to review.
2. The NCAA should include stipulations in institutional memberships that focus on improving support of Title IX, including compliance checks by the NCAA, and surveys of female students to help meet their needs.

3. The NCAA should invest more money into committees that are designed to uphold the principles of Title to gather more research about how they can best serve underrepresented athletes.

4. The NCAA should create a mandatory virtual web series about the Title IX resources that the organization provides and send the video series to every member institution and their athletic departments for mandatory viewership. Develop a specific recommendation for an organization.

5. Further research should include interviewing student-athletes, coaches, and administrators to gain an understanding of their awareness level of NCAA resources and programs that support the implementation of Title IX.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Instrument
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