

**Perceptions of NCAA athletics directors and senior woman administrators towards work-life conflict: A divisional comparison**

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Abstract 103**

Intercollegiate athletics is recognized as a dynamic industry that places high demands on the time and energy of personnel regardless of the competitive division or size of the institution. Collegiate coaches, athletic support staff, and administrators working in the twenty-first century are experiencing less and less "down" time due to factors such as increases in allowable off-season activities, overlapping sport seasons, and lengthened recruiting periods. Also contributing to a demanding work environment is the perceived role expectation of intercollegiate athletics employees in superseding personal needs to adhere to the needs of the department and/or athletes. Personal sacrifices in time and energy for the sake of the program are equated with contributing to high levels of work-life conflict. In addition, the culture of collegiate coaching and management is one that demands non-traditional work hours on nights and weekends thus further adding to work and life conflict.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) uses financial award structures, athlete grant in aid limitations, sport sponsorship minimums, and contest and participant minimums in federating three divisions known as Division I, Division II, and Division III (NCAA, 2005). When considering media attention, revenue streams (especially television), and staffing, Division I athletic departments are highly distinctive from Division II and III athletic programs. DI schools are major financial enterprises with larger budgets, stadium capacity requirements, higher numbers of athletic scholarships, and a focus on entertainment. Whereas, DII athletics programs try to find a balance between supporting highly competitive athletics teams by providing athletics related grant in aid, but emphasizing student-athlete academic success and integration into the social fabric of the campus (DII Philosophy Statement, 2007). Finally, DIII athletics programs focus on the overall participation experience of the student-athlete (DIII Philosophy Statement, 2007).

Regardless of division, each institution sponsoring athletics designates an "athletic director" (AD) as the department supervisor, and according to NCAA constitutional bylaw (4.02.4) also designates a senior woman administrator (SWA) who is "the highest ranking female involved with the management of an institution's intercollegiate athletics program" (NCAA Bylaws, 2007). Due to their status as the highest ranking administrators within the department organizational structure, the AD and SWA are likely candidates to have knowledge of the existence of institutional workplace benefits to potentially influence work-life conflict. Additionally, they each have a sense of the general climate present in his or her department with regards to promoting work-life balance policies and benefits.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions towards work and life conflict among senior woman administrators and athletic directors at Division I, II, and III institutions regarding the work-life climate within the athletic department and the existence of workplace benefits offered at an institution. The impact of the presence of children on the perception of work-life climate within the athletic department was also examined.

An electronic survey was distributed to the population of athletic directors and senior woman administrators from the 1018 active NCAA Division I, II, and III schools during the 2005-2006 academic year. After deleting duplicate or non-entry data, the sample for the study consisted of 442 senior woman administrators (SWA) and 456 athletic directors (AD) for a respective response rate of 43% and 45%. The survey instrument was a partial replication of an instrument used in previous studies endorsed by the NCAA Division II Management Council and Division I and III Governance Staffs (Tiell, 2004). The initial instrument used to research the perceptions of ADs and SWAs on the roles, tasks and career paths of the Senior Woman Administrator was modified with the addition of a series of questions adapted from the work-family conflict literature of Anderson, et al., (2002) and Allen (2001). Revisions to the instrument were based on the recommendations of the expert panel consisting of academic professors, members of the NCAA headquarters staff, a DI conference administrator, a DI university president, athletic coaches, SWAs, and athletic directors.

Data was analyzed using SPSS. Frequencies and measures of central tendency were utilized to examine descriptive variables. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used as the statistical tool to describe the ordinal data indicating whether the subject groups generally agreed or disagreed with each statement describing the work-life climate of his or her department. Further post hoc (Scheffe) tests of statistical significance were applied when the significance level was at .05 or less. Chi square analyses with an

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alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine whether sample groups agreed or disagreed on the perception of whether the institution offered workplace benefits to potentially assist work-life conflict.

There were significant differences noted in the availability of benefits between DI and DII/DIII, but no significant differences in the perceptions of availability of benefits between ADs and SWAs. When combining the data from all three divisions and comparing the responses of administrators with children and administrators without children, a Chi square test indicated statistically significant differences for all 17 work-life benefits ( $p < .05$ ). In examining six statements related to work-life climate, there were no statistically significant differences reported between the sample of ADs and SWAs ( $p < 0.01$ ) or between the sample of administrators with children and the administrators without children ( $p < 0.05$ ) for the three divisions combined. Division I had no significant differences reported between ADs and SWAs ( $p < .01$ ). In Division II, a statistically significant difference was reported between the sample of ADs and SWAs ( $p = .920$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) on one of the six statements, suggesting that the family and personal needs of employees are accommodated. In Division III, a statistically significant difference was reported between ADs and SWAs for two of the six statements suggesting that the family and personal needs of employees are accommodated ( $p = 0.157$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) there as well, and that employees can easily balance their personal/family life and work obligations ( $p = .839$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Study results and policy implications will be discussed.