Title IX Compliance: A Comparison of Conference Equality

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It is well documented that a majority of educational institutions are not in compliance with Title IX (DOE, 2008; Staurowsky, 2005). It has also been theorized that not much is likely to change in the future regarding institutional compliance with Title IX due to the way the law is currently enforced. However, the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s (NCAA) recertification process does require member schools to develop gender equity plans to reduce the gender gap (NCAA, 2010). There is currently a lack of comparative research of Title IX compliance in collegiate athletic programs. In 2005, a comparative study was performed by the Women’s Law Project examining colleges and universities in Pennsylvania (Cohen, 2005). This study was followed up in 2007 by Staurowsky et. al. with a focus upon institutions in Ohio. In 2010, Ellen Staurowsky suggested that further research should take place in looking at levels of Title IX compliance regionally. Taking this suggestion to heart, this study aimed to illustrate a clearer picture of Title IX compliance by Conference affiliation institutions and other regional institutions.

For example, the Big South Conference schools’ athletics programs compare to each other and to Division I universities in South Carolina in the following areas: coaching salaries, athletic participation, expenses, and compliance with the three-prong test of Title IX compliance. The data was compiled through the use of information collected through the Department of Education’s Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act 2008-2009 reports. All NCAA division 1 conferences were compared.

Data was analyzed within the four categories and then a composite score was calculated. After the data was compiled, it was sorted into the given conferences and then the schools were compared internally. The schools were ranked within their given conference affiliation based on the categories of information found with the instrumentation form. Each school was compared in 4 categories and a composite score was calculated based on each schools findings. The lower the composite score, the more equitable the school was in their athletics programs.

The findings illustrate that gains have been made in some regions and conferences. In addition, the data suggests that while many schools are not in compliance with the Title IX, there is evidence at some levels that some of the athletics departments in the region have shown improvement. This improvement is illustrates that a gender gap still does exist, however gains are being made in some areas. In addition, comparing institutional compliance with Title IX regionally may create leverage for institutions in achieving the goal of creating an even playing field.