

2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

Working in Intercollegiate Athletic Administration: Their Greatest Challenges and Career Advice

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Diversity

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**20-minute oral presentation
(including questions)**

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Most Title IX advocates have focused their energy on female athletes, thus creating increased opportunities for women to participate in high school and college sport (Women's Law Center, 2012; Women's Sports Foundation, 2011). Following the enactment of Title IX in 1972, the number of female athletes playing college sports has risen from 16,000 in 1972 to 200,000 in 2012 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). In addition, the number of women's teams per school has grown from 2.5 in 1970 to the highest number at 8.73 in 2012. While there are increased opportunities for women to participate in sport, the percentage of women administrators has dwindled from about 90% to 20.3% in all divisions. In addition, 9.2% of athletic programs have no female in their administrative structure (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). Why are there limited numbers of women within administrative positions within intercollegiate athletics? The purposes of this study were to (a) examine the greatest challenges facing women working in intercollegiate athletics and (b) gather career advice for women wanting to work in intercollegiate athletics from women already working as intercollegiate athletic administrators.

For this descriptive study, means will be calculated for the quantitative data. The qualitative data will be examined for themes from the participants' answers to the open-ended questions. Both investigators will independently analyze the responses for themes and then compare their analyses. From this process, various themes for the open-ended questions will emerge (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Emails were sent to 1834 women working as athletic administrators at NCAA Divisions I, II, II, as well as at NAIA schools, junior colleges, and Canadian colleges. The emails directed participants to the survey which was set-up using Survey Monkey. The National Directory of College Athletics provided the email addresses of the female intercollegiate athletic administrators. After three weeks a follow up email was sent to all non-respondents. A total of 514 usable surveys were returned for a return rate of 28.0%.

The Female Sport Manager Career Survey was selected for this study. The initial instrument was examined by a panel of experts to make sure the instrument had content validity and avoided biased items and terms. The instrument was then pilot tested, and has since been used in studies involving women working in the management of professional baseball (Hums & Sutton, 1999), professional basketball (Hums & Sutton, 2000), sport for people with disabilities (Hums & Moorman, 1999) and campus recreation (Bower & Hums, 2003). The survey focuses on career paths and concerns of women working in sport management positions. Appropriate modifications of the survey language were made to address women working in intercollegiate athletic administration.

For this descriptive study, means and standard deviations will be calculated for the demographics using SPSS 16.0. Wolcott's (1994) four-step approach will be used to organize the qualitative data. First, the researchers will organize the data by utilizing HyperResearcher 2.6. Second, the researchers will read and reread the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions. Third, categories will develop through a categorical strategy of analysis called the constant comparative analysis. The constant comparative analysis will be used to "identify similarities and differences among the data through coding and sorting into appropriate categories" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, pg. 273). For classification purposes, phrases will be used because some sentences will contain two or more divergent ideas. Each phrase will be assigned to a single category. Finally, the researchers will code the data looking for themes that emerge through intensive analysis and categorization of the data.

The researchers will use multiple strategies introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study. The credibility (internal validity) will be strengthened through the use of the constant comparative analysis by establishing categories and developing themes from the open-ended questions. The constant comparative analysis will also allow for "authenticity" which is described by Neuman (2000), as a "fair,

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honest, and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint who lives it every day” (p. 31).

Transferability (external validity) will be provided by examining the comments from the the intercollegiate athletic administrators to support the themes (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Dependability (reliability) will be supported by researcher debriefing. Each researcher will examine the data and meet to discuss themes and categories. The final list of themes and categories will be determined following the meetings. Confirmability (objectivity) will be based on the researchers’ ability to limit bias by not making any premature conclusions on the themes and/or categories, by reading and rereading the data, using the constant comparative analysis, and the researchers debriefing.

This study will provide insight for women wanting to explore a career within intercollegiate athletic administration and to the NCAA in support of its ongoing work to promote diversity in leadership positions. The study will also provide insight on the greatest challenges women face while working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. Finally, women wanting to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletic will receive valuable career advice from women currently working in the field.