

6-2003

# The Perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators on Sexual Discrimination in Intercollegiate Athletics

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The Perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators on Sexual  
Discrimination in Intercollegiate Athletics

Traci A. Hay

State University of New York at Brockport

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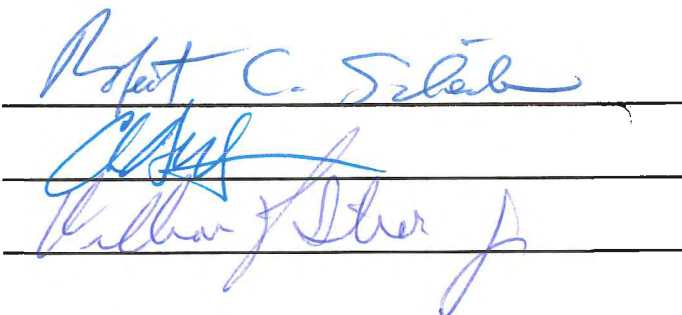
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT  
BROCKPORT, NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

**Title of Thesis:** The Perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators on  
Sexual Discrimination in Intercollegiate Athletics

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**Read and Approved by:**

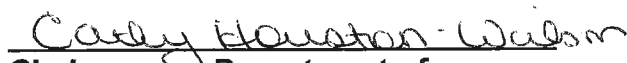


**Date Submitted to the Department of Physical Education and Sport:**

6-27-03

Accepted by the Department of Physical Education and Sport, State University of  
New York, College at Brockport, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree Master of Science in Education (Physical Education).

**Date:** 7/10/03

  
**Chairperson, Department of  
Physical Education and Sport**

## Abstract

### The Perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators on Sexual Discrimination in Intercollegiate Athletics

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This study examined the perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators (SWAs) on three forms of sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments: (a) gender inequity and overt discrimination, (b) sexual harassment, and (c) artificial barriers in employment. The effect of sexual discrimination on the employment of women in the athletic profession was also examined. A Likert scale survey was sent to randomly selected SWAs at NCAA Division III member institutions. Descriptive statistics revealed that Division III SWAs do not perceive sexual discrimination to exist in a global form in intercollegiate athletics. However, a perception of sexual discrimination was found in the subgroups of overt discrimination and artificial barriers in employment. Globally, sexual discrimination was not perceived to have an effect on the decline of, and low percentage of females working in intercollegiate athletics.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

It is perceived by many that sexual discrimination still exists in intercollegiate athletic departments (Bell, McLaughlin, & Sequeira, 2002; Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000; Lenskyj, 1992; Lopiano, 2001). Given legislation such as Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this perception of sexual discrimination is somewhat surprising (Bell, et al., 2002; Shaw, 1995).

Sexual discrimination occurs when one makes distinctions that show partiality or prejudice in the treatment of others based on sex or gender (Bell, et al., 2002). Three different forms (subgroups) of sexual discrimination affecting women in working organizations exist today: (a) gender inequity and overt discrimination, (b) sexual harassment, and (c) artificial barriers in employment (2002).

Overt discrimination involves using gender as a criterion for employment, which often leads to occupational sex segregation (Bell, et al., 2002; Bose & Whaley, 2001). The unfair allocation of equal access to career opportunities (in all professions) is significantly lower for women when compared to their male counterparts (Strachant & Tomlinson, 1994). The issue of overt discrimination, or gender inequity, serves as a barrier to women in the athletics profession.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 targeted the criterion of gender for employment related decisions (Bell, et al., 2002). Yet, women still experience gender inequality in the workplace and seldom move up the career ladder. This

is evident in the athletics profession, where women hold just 31.2% of the administrative jobs in National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) intercollegiate athletic departments (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

The second form or subgroup of sexual discrimination is sexual harassment. The law recognizes two forms of sexual harassment in the workplace: quid pro quo harassment and hostile environment harassment (Bell, et al., 2002; Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). Quid pro quo harassment occurs in athletics when one's tangible economic benefits are withheld as the result of the unwillingness to submit to sexual demands (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). Hostile environment harassment in athletics exists when an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment is so severe that it affects or interferes with an individual's performance (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

Sexual harassment, as well as overt discrimination, may lead to occupational sex segregation. Occupational sex segregation occurs when women purposefully enter occupations dominated by other women to be safer from harassing co-workers. These occupations typically are lower in pay and offer fewer opportunities for advancement (Bell, et al., 2002; Bose & Whaley, 2001).

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The third form of discrimination is artificial barriers in employment such as the glass ceiling and the old boy network. The glass ceiling is a transparent barrier that prevents women from ascending the corporate ladder past a certain point (Oakley, 2000). At the top of the corporate ladder is the old boy network,

“an informal male social system that stretches within and across organizations, and excludes less powerful males and all women from membership” (Oakley, 2000, p. 328). In athletics, the old boy network consists of male athletic directors and alumni who maintain the power and do not see the need to hire women (Jacobson, 2001). The glass ceiling and the old boy network are two factors of male dominance in sport that control and inhibit women’s advancement in the athletic profession. There are many of these barriers along a woman’s career path that prevent them from reaching their full potential in the athletic profession.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators (SWAs) regarding sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments. More specifically, this study sought to determine whether Division III SWAs perceived sexual discrimination to negatively affect the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women into the athletic profession.

### ***Research Hypotheses***

1. The perception among Division III Senior Woman Administrators is that sexual discrimination against women in intercollegiate athletic departments exists.
2. The perception among Division III Senior Woman Administrators is that sexual discrimination directed towards women in intercollegiate athletics has a negative effect on the employment of females in the profession.

### ***Significance of the Study***

Of major importance in this study is whether a perception of sexual discrimination directed towards women currently exists in intercollegiate athletic departments, despite legislation such as Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If sexual discrimination does in fact exist, the question remains as to whether it has a direct effect on women entering and remaining in the athletic profession. If it can be determined what factors might be keeping women out of the athletic profession, such recognition might be helpful in attempting to reverse the sharp decline that has occurred over the last 25 years.

### ***Assumptions***

It was assumed that the participants of this survey would respond honestly and openly to the questionnaire despite the sensitivity of the topic.

### ***Limitations***

The perceptions of those responding to the survey may not be representative of the entire SWA population (including Division I and II SWAs). The topic may be extremely sensitive to some subjects chosen to receive the survey, causing them to either not respond or not respond honestly. Also, as with any survey instrument, precise interpretation of some statements may have affected the answers given by some respondents.

### ***Delimitations***

The following parameters were imposed on this investigation:

1. The subject pool was composed entirely of females.
2. The surveys were only sent to NCAA Division III SWAs; therefore the results may not represent the perceptions of Division I and Division II SWAs within the NCAA.

### ***Definitions of Terms***

**Gender bias** is the absence of gender equity (Davis, 1999).

**Gender equity** is the principle and practice of fair allocation of resources, programs, and decision-making to both females and males, thus enabling them to realize their human potential (Strachant & Tomlinson, 1994).

**Glass ceiling** refers to an invisible or artificial barrier that prevents women from advancing past a certain level (Bell, et al., 2002).

**Hostile environment harassment** "derives from the employee's right to be free from sexual conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with his or her job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment" (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998, p. 19).

**Occupational sex-segregation** occurs when at least 75% of workers in an occupation are male or female (Bose & Whaley, 2001).

**Old Boy Network** is a group of men in administrative positions, along with the alumni from decades ago, that still do not see the need to hire women into the athletic profession (Jacobson, 2001).

**Overt discrimination** is "the use of gender as a criterion for employment related decisions" (Bell, et al., 2002, p. 66).

**Quid pro quo harassment** is when a tangible economic aspect of a worker's job is adversely affected by the exercise of power over a worker by a manager or owner with authority to control conditions of employment (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998).

**Sexual discrimination** is when one makes distinctions that show partiality or prejudice in the treatment of others based on sex and gender (Bell, et al., 2002).

**Sexual harassment** includes sexual advances and torments in either the verbal or the physical form from the harasser to the victim that is unwelcome and unwanted (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

Included in the many forms of discrimination that exist in society are sexism, racism, and ageism (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). Sexual discrimination in the form of: (a) gender inequity and overt discrimination, (b) sexual harassment, and (c) artificial barriers in employment, are generally interrelated and affect millions of women in working organizations worldwide (Bell, et al., 2002). Many of the factors that prevent women from occupying higher-level positions are related to gender discrimination (Bell et al., 2002). Despite legislation designed to prohibit sex discrimination in all work environments, a large percentage of females attempting to pursue careers in athletics are still victims of sexual discrimination. Some estimate that nearly half of all working women in the United States will be sexually harassed at some point in their careers (Bell, et al., 2002). This, along with increasing tension between men and women in the workplace, has led to the steady decline of women entering and remaining in the athletic profession (Lopiano, 2001). Discrimination, along with male hegemony, has also been identified as reasons why female coaches leave their positions in athletic departments (Inglis, et al., 2000; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000).

#### ***Sexual Discrimination Legislation***

Sex discrimination is illegal in the workplace. The most pertinent form of legislation pertaining to sex discrimination in athletics is Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972. This Federal civil rights statute prohibits sex discrimination in education programs, including athletic programs, which

receive or benefit from Federal funding (Bonnette, 1996; Shaw 1995).

Specifically, Title IX states that “no persons in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Francois, 2002, p. 63-64). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the United States Department of Education is responsible for enforcing Title IX (Francois, 2002; Shaw, 1995).

Since the implementation of Title IX, the opportunities for females to compete in athletics have increased significantly. In terms of athletic participation, in 2002, the national average of women’s athletic teams per NCAA institution reached an all time high of 8.35 teams compared with 5.61 in 1978 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). Title IX has helped intercollegiate institutions to have a greater commitment to providing full access to the benefits of athletics to both males and females.

Ironically, the primary intent of Title IX was to help curb sexual discrimination in athletic programs. Yet opportunities for women to obtain administrative and coaching positions significantly decreased following the implementation of the Federal law (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). However, since the demise of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) occurred in 1982 and the NCAA became the governing body of women’s athletics, coaching and athletic administrative positions previously held by females, became more frequently occupied by males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002; Hawes, 2001).



Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is another important piece of legislation that prohibits sexual harassment in the United States in all employment-related matters such as hiring, firing, and promotions. This act, which was amended in 1991 to include punitive damages, establishes legal guidelines for sexual harassment in the workplace (Bell, et al., 2002; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). The Civil Rights Act of 1991 is significant because it allowed victims of intentional discrimination the right to recover compensatory and punitive damages (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

Unfortunately, women (in all professions) today still experience employment discrimination despite the threat of punitive actions. Disparities in earnings, status, and position cannot be explained by differences in education, job tenure, or work experience of women when compared to their male counterparts (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). This is especially apparent in the male dominated profession of intercollegiate athletics in which the percentage of female coaches and administrators has continually decreased over the past 30 years to an all time low. In 1972, 90% of the coaches and administrators of female athletic teams were female. In 2002, the percentage of women coaching all sports at all divisions was only 44% and females directed only 17.9% of women's programs (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

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Title IX of the Education Amendments Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, have both helped victims of sexual discrimination in athletics to seek justice. However, there are still many cases in the courts concerning the application of Title IX's jurisdiction in collegiate athletics (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

## ***Gender Inequity and Overt Discrimination***

### ***Gender Inequity***

The present status of women in sport shows that women still face numerous barriers imposed by male hegemonic ideology (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). In the 1960s and 1970s, gender inequity was easy to see and label because men's and women's athletic departments were separate entities (Lopiano, 2001). The AIAW governed the women's teams, and the NCAA oversaw the men's teams. Today, under a single administrative structure, gender discrimination is more discreet and difficult to uncover (Lopiano, 2001).

Furthermore, systems of inequality and exclusion in sport exist in many facets, including economics, employment opportunities, and ownership. Often the identification of gender discrimination in employment practices is further complicated because laws cannot prevent unethical behavior (Lopiano, 2001).

In the 1970s and 1980s it was more common for men to be coaches than women because men had more collegiate playing experience and there were more male teams. This is not the case today. When it comes to the criteria of playing experience, women are just as qualified as men (Delpy, 1998). Whether done consciously or subconsciously, athletic directors search for coaches of men's and women's teams in a different way (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002; Anderson, 2001; Lopiano, 2001). Athletic directors looking to fill coaching vacancies of men's teams heavily recruit men's coaches and former players (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002, p. 9). However, the same is only sometimes true

when looking to fill coaching vacancies for women's teams (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002; Lopiano 2001).

### ***Overt Discrimination and Occupational Sex Segregation***

As previously mentioned, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 targeted overt discrimination, prohibiting decision-making based on sex (as well as race/ethnicity, national origin, and religion) in employment-related matters. Overt discrimination can include refusing to hire women, paying them inequitably, or steering them towards "women's jobs" (Bell, et al., 2002).

Overt discrimination has led to occupational sex-segregation such as low pay, low status, and short career ladders for women (Baldwin, Butler & Johnson, 2001; Bell, et al., 2002; Bose & Whaley, 2001; Chan, 1999; Delpy, 1998). Specifically, occupational sex-segregation occurs when at least 75% of workers in an occupation are solely male or female (Bose & Whaley, 2001).

Although occupational sex-segregation has declined over the past three decades, many jobs in intercollegiate athletics remain sex-segregated. Often, when women are hired into an entry-level job in athletics, they are given responsibilities in traditionally "female roles," never gaining the necessary experience to move up the hierarchy and become an administrator in athletics (Berg, 1996). Those who are involved in administration may face the same challenge, as they tend to be responsible for the "cute sports" such as gymnastics, tennis, and golf, while the men are accountable for sports like football, basketball, and hockey (Inglis, et al., 2000).

Research, in general, has indicated that gender-based discrimination is most often manifested during the assignment of workers to organizational positions (Yitchak, 1992). Sex-segregated jobs that are highly populated by women tend to be low status and low paying. Women frequently move between these sex-typical occupations throughout their lives (Chan, 1999; Goldberg, 2001). Those that attempt to “escape” from sex-segregated positions, often face adverse social pressure, which pushes them back into the traditional female roles and occupations (Chan, 1999).

Women in these male-skewed, sex-segregated workgroups are more likely to be supervised or managed by men than women, increasing the risk that they will be harassed by their male superiors or work in a harassing environment at some point in their career (Bell, et al., 2002; Goldberg, 2001). They are subjected to performance pressures and stereotyping that isolates them from the dominant group. For this purpose, some women may purposefully leave male dominated professions, such as athletics, and enter occupations typically dominated by women, in part, to be safer from harassing coworkers (Goldberg, 2001).

Sexual discrimination in the labor market, and more specifically in athletics, often depends on the positions of men and women in job hierarchies (Baldwin, et al., 2001). There is a direct link between occupational segregation and wage discrimination. The main reason for this correlation is that the relative proportion of females declines exponentially as one moves up the job hierarchy. It is also based on the social history of attitudes toward women in the working

world as well as in managerial positions. Most men and women work well with each other, but it appears that men are often reluctant to work for women. The traditional role of women in society was to support, not direct, men's work activities. Thus, female managers may encounter resistance from the men they supervise and fail in leadership positions (2001). According to the 1992 longitudinal study by Acosta and Carpenter, 43% of the 174 SWAs in NCAA member institutions never sought a vertical or lateral job change, although 95% felt that they were fully qualified.

### ***Wage Discrimination***

In the United States, women who are low in the hierarchical structure earn significantly less than men and are more frequently targets of sexual harassment. Women in the United States earn just 76 cents to the dollar that men earn; and while females comprise 50% of the workforce, they only occupy 30% of all salaried managerial positions, 20% of middle manager positions, and 5% of executive level positions (Bell, et al., 2002).

As in the regular labor market, women in athletics work for a lower salary when compared with their male counterparts. This creates an extreme disadvantage for women in sport (Delpy, 1998). For example, in 2000 the average salary for coaches of women's teams in Division I was \$38,191, while coaches of men's teams earned an average of \$61,534. Assistant coaches of women's teams earned on average \$18,623, while their counterparts with men's teams earned \$30,584 (Jacobson, 2001).

## ***Sexual Harassment***

Like overt discrimination, sexual harassment is a common workplace problem for women worldwide (Bell, et al., 2002; Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998). It is estimated that at least half of all women in the workplace in the United States will become victims of sexual harassment at some point in their careers (Bell, et al., 2002). The definition of sexual harassment can be quite broad to include the making of unwelcome verbal, sexist, and offensive comments, as well as physically violating an individual based on their sex (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). There are three psychological dimensions of sexual harassment: (a) sexual coercion, (b) gender harassment, and (c) unwanted sexual attention (Bell, et al., 2002).

Women who work for male supervisors, report more cases of sexual harassment than women who work for female supervisors, and they perceive their organization to be more tolerant of harassment (Baldwin, et al., 2001). Some have suggested that increasing women in administrative roles in intercollegiate athletics may help curb sexual harassment (Baldwin, et al., 2001; Bell, et al., 2002). Ironically, sexual discrimination may be preventing or limiting their opportunities for advancement into these authoritative roles (Bell, et al., 2002).

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Sexual harassment is now viewed as a form of sexual discrimination, which was not the case in early legal cases under Title VII (Bell, et al., 2002). In 1980, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published guidelines on sexual harassment using Title VII to clarify the illegality

of harassment. Under these guidelines, two specific types of sexual harassment were identified as being unlawful: quid pro quo and hostile environment harassment (Bell, et al., 2002; Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

### ***Quid Pro Quo Harassment***

Quid pro quo harassment takes place when one who has power uses bribery or threats to obtain sexual compliance (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998). In doing so, a harasser adversely affects a tangible economic aspect of a worker's job by holding some power over the victim. Therefore, this form of harassment commonly stems from managers and supervisors. A more specific example would be a supervisor firing an employee or withholding a raise or promotion because the worker will not submit to unwelcome sexual advances or demands (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

### ***Hostile Environment Harassment***

Hostile environment harassment occurs far more frequently than quid pro quo harassment. However, it is harder to identify and liability is harder to establish (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998). Most commonly, hostile environment harassment occurs when an employee suffers intimidation and insult on a consistent basis from managers, supervisors, peers, or subordinates without incurring any tangible or economic loss (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Weiss, 2002). This hostile or offensive working environment is so severe that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). At times, this type of intimidating environment may

cause an employee to resign or quit their job (Bell, et al., 2002; Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Krauchek & Ranson, 1999).

Unfortunately, some feel that while sexist comments contribute to a hostile environment, they are not technically instances of sexual harassment (Krauchek & Ranson, 1999). Sexual harassment and what constitutes it is often unclear, and what males and females perceive to be sexually harassing often differs (Weiss, 2002). Therefore, the law has developed standards when identifying hostile environment harassment. These standards are meant to determine whether or not an employee is subjected to sexual comments that are severe and pervasive, and that a "reasonable woman" would find the behavior harassing, and whether or not the problem was reported to the employer (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998).

### ***Reporting Sexual Harassment***

The majority of those filing sexual harassment charges with the EEOC are women (91% in 1992), clearly making sexual harassment a gendered problem (Bell, et al., 2002). Unfortunately, most sexual harassment targets do not file formal charges because they fear they may lose their job and be publicly humiliated. In addition, many women use silence as a coping strategy to deal with the shame they may feel from being sexually harassed (Lenskyj, 1992).

In addition, women are socialized to avoid conflict, and therefore may remain silent, quit their job, or transfer departments instead of reporting harassment (Goldberg, 2001). Specifically what constitutes sexual harassment is often subjective, and what many females perceive as being harassing may



seem inconsequential to their male coworkers. Therefore, it is essential that all athletic departments collaborate with their institution in forming and implementing sexual harassment policy and procedures that clearly defines what constitutes sexual harassment (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996).

Furthermore, policies and procedures must be posted and provided to each employee, along with appropriate training indicating how to report an incident and what disciplinary actions will be taken against the harasser (Wolohan & Mathes, 1996). In the occurrence of a sexual harassment incident, an investigation with prompt action in meeting with both parties must occur. Complaints must be taken seriously and considered on a case-by-case basis with fair and confidential investigations (1996).

### ***Artificial Barriers in Employment***

The third form of discrimination, identified by Bell, et al., is the glass ceiling (2002). This invisible or artificial barrier prevents minorities, in this case women, from advancing past a certain level in their careers. The old boy network, a separate artificial barrier but similar to the glass ceiling, alludes to the adaptation of a male sport model, in which male athletic directors and alumni maintain the power (Jacobson, 2001; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). It is another hegemonic strategy which ensures that control of athletic programs remain under male domination through maintaining discriminatory hiring practices (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). The glass ceiling and old boy network are both factors of male dominance and control that inhibit the progression of women in sport (Stahura & Greenwood, 2001).

Although the barriers are often subtle, the glass ceiling and the old boy network limit a woman's opportunity to gain valuable job experience, preventing their advancement into top managerial positions (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). The existence of this form of discrimination is supported by evidence that worldwide only 6% of those employed in the highest levels of management are women. In the United States, that percentage is even lower, with only 5% of high-level managers in all organizations being female (Bell, et al., 2002; Oakley, 2000).

Despite Title IX legislation, the glass ceiling is prominent in intercollegiate athletics, where only 17.9% of head athletic directors are female (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). Females comprise just 27.6% of all Division III athletic administrators, and according to Acosta and Carpenter (2002), 18.8% of NCAA women's athletic programs do not have a female anywhere at any level in the administrative structure. Lough (2001) suggests that many women never reach the administrative level because they lack the experience as head coaches. The jump from an assistant coach to head coach is often never made (2001). However, throughout all divisions and all female sports, 55.5% of paid assistant coaches are female; yet almost half of those female assistants never advance any further in the hierarchy of athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002).

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The EEOC developed the Glass Ceiling Commission, a 21-member panel established by the Civil Rights Act of 1991, to assist women and minorities who were not advancing to upper levels of the corporate world despite impressive credentials (Twohey & Ellenburg, 2001). According to the director of the Labor

Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, progress has been made since the Glass Ceiling Commission released its report in 1995, but the glass is far from shattered. Women are still at a disadvantage to men in the working world and must work much harder to achieve equal recognition and promotions (Twohey & Ellenburg, 2001).

### ***Other Theories for the Decline of Women in Athletics***

Although this paper focuses on sexual discrimination as the main reason why women have been avoiding the athletic profession, several additional factors offer possible explanations to the phenomenon of female avoidance of the athletic profession. "Women have come a long way in many respects, but the doors are still closed within the coaching profession" (Shen, 2000, p. 12). Below, information relative to the following factors are included: control theory – male dominance, interest theory, family theory, socialization, homophobic harassment, and the lack of female mentors.

#### ***Control Theory – Male Dominance***

Steil offers up three theories that he calls the control theory, interest theory, and family theory (1997). The control theory states that because men dominate sports administration and hiring, they tend to hire other men as coaches. The control theory could also be related to the old boy network, which attributes the dwindling number of female coaches to groups of dominate males who fear change, which would allow women to oversee athletic programs.

"Sport is one of the most visible social institutions in the United States" (Parks & Robertson, 1998, p. 480). Traditionally sport has been considered a

masculine domain, and sometimes those involved in the administration place a strong emphasis on maintaining its hegemonic traditions. Whether playing, coaching, supervising, or reporting, all occupational aspects of sport are controlled by males. This is partially due to the power structure. At the intercollegiate, elite amateur, and professional levels, the ruling governing body consists of mostly men whose interests are served by keeping sport a male preserve (Schell & Rodriguez, 2000).

Schell and Rodriguez state, "Under a male hegemonic system, access to available occupations, income and prestige in sport primarily is reserved for men. A few women have access to comparable earnings in order to appease immediate demands for equality" (2000, p. 17). Some feel that men fear the change of women coming into a male dominated profession. Some men may view an increase of power and control of women as achievable only at the expense of their own power (Lovett & Lowry, 1995). There are some who "believe that the greatest obstacle is that the persons who are in decision-making positions are not as committed to gender equity as they are committed to maintaining the status quo" (1995, p. 247).

Often, those practicing discriminatory behavior are not aware that they are doing so. Many times, discrimination takes place because those in decision-making positions are not educated in the importance of ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity. In these situations, people tend to do the easiest thing, which is hire the type of people they know and with whom they can associate (Lopiano, 2001).

### ***Interest Theory***

The interest theory is another concept stating that women are more likely than men to look for a career outside of sports, creating a smaller pool of qualified female applicants (Steil, 1997). More and more women are securing leading positions in business, politics, and education because of the increase in educational opportunities that has taken place in the past three decades (Jacobson, 2001; Lough, 2001; Williams, 2000). It is much more acceptable today for women to build careers in these once male dominated professions. Women also make better money doing so and have more time to spend with their families (Lough, 2001; Williams, 2000).

### ***Family Theory***

The final of Steil's (1997) theories is the family theory, which adheres to the notion that women are more likely to leave coaching than men, especially when the demands of family duties increase. This reinforces the dominance of men in the coaching ranks because women face more societal pressures than men concerning work and home. Therefore, men are more likely to remain in the profession. The concept of family duties tends to weigh more heavily on female than male coaches (Anderson, 2001; Jacobson, 2001; Pastore, 1991; Steil, 1997). The hours and travel required to maintain a career in athletics are very demanding and make it difficult to raise a family. Though acceptable for men, it is still frowned upon for women to be away from home (Anderson, 2001; Jacobson, 2001).

## ***Socialization***

There have been several reasons offered as to why sexual discrimination still exists in athletics today. The most prominent explanation is the socialization process and gender bias, or the absence of gender equity (Davis, 1999; Pastore, 1991). For example, treating boys and girls differently throughout their lives based solely on their gender reinforces gender inequity from an early age. Controlling female status in sport and having influence over their interest or participation is sustained through socialization methods that teach different gender-appropriate behaviors to males and females starting in the preschool years (Davis, 1999; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). Masculine and feminine behavior reinforced by parents, schools, peers, television, and church, all emphasize behavior as gender appropriate or inappropriate (DeBoer, 1993). Society places different expectations on performances of girls and boys in athletics. Females are not expected to perform well in physical challenges and therefore, have lower standards in performance testing than males (Davis, 1999).

Many girls and women interested in sports and athletics eventually succumb to societal pressures to conform (Davis, 1999; DeBoer, 1993). Previously, woman's traditional role in American society had been to manage the home and nurture the children while men were expected to dominate the working world and earn the living (Baldwin, et al., 2001). Despite support from family members and peers, stereotypes and cultural pressures have sent mixed

messages to female athletes pressuring them not to participate in sports (DeBoer, 1993).

### ***Homophobic Harassment***

Sexual harassment can also denote homophobic harassment (Lenskyj, 1992). Labeling female athletes as lesbians is yet another controlling variable used to sustain male hegemony in sport. "Allegations of lesbianism directed at female athletes deter many women from rejecting unwanted sexual attention or complaining about sexual harassment, since they fear that such actions will confirm that they are not sexually interested in men, and hence, lesbian" (Lenskyj, 1992, p. 19).

A woman's femininity is often questioned when they participate or excel in sport, or desire to gain access to a previously all-male profession; consequently, these women are perceived to be masculine (Anderson, 2001; DeBoer, 1993; Lopiano, 2001). Society's values and norms have formed a negative image about homosexuality. Labeling female athletes and demeaning those who currently participate in sports socially-defined as masculine may deter many women from pursuing natural athletic desires and careers in sport (DeBoer, 1993; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000).

Contrarily, descriptions of female coaching candidates as feminists are often used to imply that the person is a "troublemaker" and a "whistleblower" (Lopiano, 2001). Women are often in a no-win situation when interviewing for a coaching job. If they are single, they are labeled as homosexual; if they are

married or single with children, it is perceived that they will not have enough time to devote to their profession (Lopiano, 2001).

### ***Lack of Female Mentors***

Discrimination, along with the lack of administrative support, has been identified as reasons why female coaches leave their positions (Inglis, et al., 2000). Many feel that there are not enough female mentors and role models in the athletic profession for young coaches from which to learn and emulate (Lough, 2001). Increasing the percentage of females in administrative positions in all professions may help curb instances of sexual discrimination and harassment, while at the same time encouraging other women to pursue male dominated careers (Goldberg, 2001; Stahura & Greenwood, 2001).

Although many women have strong male mentors, it is essential that females in the athletic profession who are able and willing to serve as mentors and role models to other women and to encourage female athletes to pursue careers in athletics (Lopiano, 2001; Lough, 2001). Many female athletes go through their scholastic and collegiate careers only playing for male coaches. Exposure solely to the male leadership style often causes females to struggle when attempting to model leadership traits and characteristics (Lough, 2001). Women in athletic careers need the professional support system of female mentoring to help them break into the old boy network and through the glass ceiling (Inglis, et al., 2000; Lough, 2001; Steil, 1997).

Interestingly, it was concluded the athletic director's gender makes a difference in whether women's teams were coached by females or males (Acosta



& Carpenter, 2002). Also stated was a possible reason as to why the presence of a female athletic director increases the likelihood that women coaches will be hired. "There is better networking and there also is a greater sensitivity to the need for female role models for women" (Acosta-Carpenter Study, 2002, p. 11).

### ***Summary***

It is evident, based on the existing literature, that sexual discrimination and its three components: (a) overt discrimination and gender inequity, (b) sexual harassment, and (c) artificial barriers in employment affect women in the athletic profession. Although sexual discrimination may not be the sole reason for the dominance of males in sport, according to the literature, sexual discrimination is a contributing factor. Sexual discrimination in the forms of overt discrimination and gender inequities, sexual harassment, and artificial barriers in employment, appears to be keeping many women from pursuing athletic careers. Since the three subgroups of discrimination identified all have commonalities, steps to reduce one form of discrimination will likely affect others (Bell, et al., 2002).

Over twenty-five years after the implementation of Title IX, the percentage of females employed in coaching and athletic administrative positions in intercollegiate athletics continues to decrease. According to a longitudinal study that began in 1978 and has been conducted every two years, only 44% of the coaches for women's intercollegiate athletic teams in 2002 were female, which is the lowest recorded percentage in the history of the study (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). An analysis of the perceptions of Senior Woman Administrators relating

to discrimination might shed some light on the aspect of the decreasing number of women coaches in intercollegiate athletics.

## **Chapter III:**

### **Methods**

#### ***Subjects***

Data was collected from Senior Woman Administrators from NCAA Division III institutions throughout the United States. Participants were selected at random. All 396 NCAA member institutions were listed alphabetically and assigned numbers (1-396). Next, through the use of a random numbers table, 198 (50%) of the total number (396) of Division III institutions were selected. Those selected were mailed copies of the survey, addressed to the Senior Woman Administrator. Of the 198 SWAs sent surveys, 59 (30%) responded, which represents 14.9% of all Division III institutions.

#### ***Instrument***

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire containing 52 items in Likert scale format (Appendix A). The Likert scale survey contained five possible responses. The values of each number were: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree (Appendix A). The questions and statements of the survey pertained to the individual Senior Woman Administrator's perceptions of sexual discrimination and its three subgroups in intercollegiate athletic departments as well as their perceptions on employment in the athletic profession.

The statements in the survey were arranged into four sections. The first was a brief demographic section. The purpose of the nine-question demographic portion of the survey was to obtain basic background information from the

participants and to ensure that the response group was accurately described. This was followed by three sections of statements pertaining to the participants' perceptions of: (a) sexual harassment and the reporting of harassing incidents; (b) artificial barriers in employment (the glass ceiling, and the old boy network); and (c) gender equity and overt discrimination (Bell, et al., 2002).

The second section of the survey had two parts. The first sought to determine whether a perception of sexual harassment in athletic departments still existed. The second part sought each respondent's perceptions of the effectiveness of the administrative process in reporting and reducing sexual harassment.

The third section of the survey contained statements designed to determine whether women still perceived artificial barriers in employment such as the glass ceiling and the old boys network as negatively affecting their opportunities for career advancement. The fourth and final section contained statements intended to determine whether the perception still existed among SWAs that gender issues prevent women from entering a profession in athletics, or that gender issues drive women out of the profession. This section also sought the SWAs opinions as to whether their present athletic department had reached gender equity. Finally, there was room at the end of the survey for the participants to respond in a qualitative manner. The qualitative responses were in the form of general comments, opinions, and feedback on the subject matter of the survey.

The foundation of the content included in the survey was based on current pertinent literature. A panel of three experts, with at least 10 years of experience as a Division III SWA, reviewed the survey for content validity. Based on feedback from the panel of experts, final changes were made prior to the mailing of the instrument. To address construct validity, the questionnaire contained both positive and negative statements resulting in the elimination of question predictability and providing a means to evaluate reliability. Paired survey items included #12 and #14, #15 and #17, #34 and #33, #48 and #47, #38 and #51, and #37 and #36, respectively.

### ***Procedures***

The 198 randomly selected Senior Woman Administrators were mailed the survey, along with an informed consent cover letter that was approved through the SUNY Brockport Internal Review Board (IRB) (Appendix B). The cover letter asked the recipients of the survey (Division III SWAs) to participate in a study that would allow them to provide their perceptions regarding sexual discrimination in NCAA intercollegiate athletic departments. The cover letter also clearly stated that the survey was anonymous and allowed the subjects the option to not participate at any time during the process. Finally, the cover letter stated that the results of the study would be available to all participants upon request.

### ***Survey Design and Analysis***

The design of the questionnaire was constructed to determine the current perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators on components of

sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments. The mean and standard deviation of each response were recorded as raw data and negatively phrased questions were inverted to reflect the true scores. Using a five point Likert scale, responses to each survey item were averaged. An average composite score from grouped survey items indicated perceptions of the respondents.

The survey instrument was divided into four sections. The first section, containing basic demographic information, acquired the age, education, and professional experience of the participants. It was also used to make comparisons of responses based on different demographic backgrounds.

The second section of the survey contained 19 statements and two parts. The first part of section two asked SWAs for their perceptions on sexual harassment. Statements 12-19, and 21-22 were used in the results section to determine the perceptions of sexual harassment among SWAs. The second part asked the perceptions of the effectiveness of the administrative process in reporting and reducing sexual harassment. Numbers 23-26 were examined to determine the perception SWAs had regarding the reporting of sexual harassment.

The third section of the survey contained nine statements regarding sexual discrimination from an employment perspective. Specifically, the responses to statements 33-38 were examined to determine the perceptions of SWAs on artificial barriers in employment such as the glass ceiling and old boy network in the athletics profession.

The final section consisted of 12 statements based on gender equity and overt discrimination issues. When examining the SWAs perceptions of gender equity in athletics, statements 41-44 were used. Overt discrimination perceptions were determined by looking at the responses to statements 47-51.

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the global perception of SWAs on sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments, the composite weighted average of all subgroups was calculated. This average was then used to determine the SWAs overall perception on sexual discrimination as a global issue.

In order to examine the second hypothesis regarding the employment and retention of women in the athletic profession, statements 21, 23, 36, 44, and 50-52 were used to examine a global perception. Each statement specifically addressed different forms of sexual discrimination that may influence the employment of females in the athletic profession.

### ***Analysis of Perceptions***

To determine the strength of perception, responses were compared to a standardized scale. Average mean responses that were above a 3.5, indicated that SWAs were more likely to agree to certain perceptions. Those that were below a 2.5, indicated that SWAs were more likely to disagree to certain perceptions. Any composite means that fell between a 2.5 and 3.5 were considered neutral responses, indicating that the SWAs neither agreed nor disagreed to a specific perception. The standardized scale was applied at every

level of the survey instrument, including individual items, subgroup composite averages, and global averages.



## Chapter IV

### Results

As stated previously, the purpose of this study was to determine the perception of Division III Senior Woman Administrators (SWAs) regarding sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments. In addition, this study sought to determine whether SWAs perceived sexual discrimination to have a negative effect on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the athletic profession. In an effort to examine the perception of sexual discrimination, a survey instrument with three subgroups was used. The subgroups included: (a) gender inequity and overt discrimination, (b) sexual harassment, and (c) artificial barriers in employment. In order to examine the perception of sexual discrimination on employment, selected survey items relating to employment issues from each subgroup were analyzed. Descriptive statistics for each item on the survey can be found in Appendix C.

#### ***Demographics***

Those responding to this survey were diverse in their demographics and professional experiences, with the exception of ethnic background. Ninety-three percent responding were Caucasian, with just under 8% classifying themselves as an ethnic minority. Participants averaged 44 years of age. Almost half (49%) of those responding were married, 37% were single, 9% divorced, and 5% checked *other* (widowed or partnered). Half (50%) of the 59 respondents indicated that they had children. Professionally, 75% of the respondents worked for a male athletic director at the time of the survey, whereas 25% worked for a

female athletic director. Of the 59 SWAs, two stated that they were the athletic director. Of the respondents, 70% had completed their master's degree as their highest level of education. Fifty-three percent of the respondents had served as Senior Woman Administrator for just five years or less. The years of SWAs coaching experience were evenly distributed with 29% having 20 years of experience or more. The years of administrative experience among the respondents were also equally distributed through all categories. Complete demographic information can be found in Appendix C.

### ***Reliability of Instrument***

In order to eliminate statement predictability by the respondents and to measure construct validity, the questionnaire contained both positive and negative statements. Paired survey items incorporated in the correlation included #12 and #14, #15 and #17, #34 and #33, #48 and #47, #38 and #51, and #37 and #36, respectively. A Pearson product-moment correlation indicated a statistically significant inverse relationship between positive and negative questions ( $r = -0.909$ ,  $r^2 = 0.826$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ), and indicated high reliability.

### ***Subgroups of Sexual Discrimination***

With reliability established, perceptions of sexual discrimination were examined. To do so, subgroups were identified and representative survey items were grouped. An averaged composite total of 3.10 indicated that SWAs neither agreed nor disagreed that discrimination existed in the subgroup of gender equity in athletics. Therefore, the overall perception among SWAs regarding gender equity was neutral (Table 1). The next subgroup examined was overt

discrimination. The averaged composite mean of 3.73 indicated that SWAs somewhat agreed with the perception the of overt discrimination, and that overall, SWAs slightly perceived the existence of overt discrimination in athletics (Table 2). The third subgroup of sexual discrimination examined was sexual harassment. An averaged composite total of 2.59 indicated that SWAs somewhat disagreed with the perception of the subgroup of sexual harassment in athletics (Table 3). The final subgroup of sexual discrimination that was examined was artificial barriers in employment. An averaged composite total of 3.72 indicated that SWAs somewhat agreed with the perception of the glass ceiling and old boy network existing as artificial barriers to women in athletics (Table 4).

**Table 1**

***SWAs Perception of Gender Equity in Athletics***

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
41. The athletic department in which I currently work supports gender equity (-).	3.81	2.19
42. Complete gender equity within my current athletic department has been achieved (-).	2.59	3.41
43. I am not concerned that gender equity is a problem in my current athletic department (-).	2.59	3.41
44. Gender inequity in athletics is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession.	3.37	3.37
<b><i>Averaged Composite Total</i></b>		<b>3.10</b>

*Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.*

**Table 2**

***SWAs Perception of Overt Discrimination in Athletics***

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
47. An individual hired to a coaching or administrative position should be hired based on their gender, not on their qualifications (-).	1.58	4.42
48. When my athletic department is looking to fill a coaching vacancy for a men's athletic team, the athletic director and search committee actively recruit qualified male candidates.	3.70	3.70
49. When my athletic department is looking to fill a coaching vacancy for a women' s athletic team, the athletic director and search committee actively recruit qualified female candidates (-).	3.58	2.42
50. It is my perception that wage discrimination based on gender does not occur in intercollegiate athletic departments (-).	1.76	4.24
51. Opportunities for career advancement for women in the athletics profession are equal to that of men (-).	2.12	3.88
<b><i>Averaged Composite Total</i></b>		<b>3.73</b>

Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.

**Table 3****SWAs Perception of Sexual Harassment in Athletics**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
12. I have been sexually harassed by male co-workers while working in an intercollegiate athletic department.	2.17	2.17
13. I am not aware of other women who have experienced sexual harassment in intercollegiate athletic departments (-).	2.68	3.32
14. I have not been a victim of quid pro quo harassment (-).	4.05	1.95
15. I am not aware of other women in athletic departments, in which I have worked, who have been victims of quid pro quo harassment (-).	3.59	2.41
16. My work has been negatively affected by working in a hostile environment in which I was intimidated by sexual harassment.	1.86	1.86
17. I am aware of other women in athletic departments, in which I have worked, who were negatively affected by working in a hostile environment.	2.86	2.86
18. My perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment and what my male co-workers perceive as being sexual harassment differ greatly.	3.31	3.31
19. I have never worked in an athletic department that fosters a climate of sexual harassment by allowing sexual jokes, comments, and other inappropriate behaviors to take place (-).	2.95	3.05
21. Sexual harassment is a reason why women leave their positions in the athletic profession.	2.78	2.78
22. Sexual harassment is not an issue in my current athletic department (-).	3.80	2.20
<b>Averaged Composite Total</b>		<b>2.59</b>

*Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.*

**Table 4**

***SWAs Perception on Artificial Barriers in Employment***

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
33. I do not believe the glass ceiling has prevented me from advancing in my career (-).	3.15	2.85
34. I do believe the glass ceiling has prevented my female co-workers from advancing in their careers.	3.24	3.24
35. I believe the old boy's network still exists as a barrier to women attempting to advance in the athletic profession.	4.02	4.02
36. Females do not have to work harder in the athletic profession than men to active equal recognition (-).	2.02	3.98
37. Males have greater access to power and status in the athletic profession than females.	4.10	4.10
38. I feel men dominate the athletic profession.	4.15	4.15
<b><i>Averaged Composite Total</i></b>		<b><i>3.72</i></b>

*Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.*

***Overall Perception of Sexual Discrimination***

In order to determine a global perception among SWAs on sexual discrimination in athletics, results from each of the four subgroups were examined. A composite weighted average of 3.17 indicated that SWAs neither agreed nor disagreed to the global perception of the existence of sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletic departments, and the overall perception among SWAs regarding sexual discrimination was neutral.

***Employment and Retention of Women in Athletics***

After reviewing the responses to pre-selected statements in each subgroup of the survey instrument, an averaged composite total of 3.38 indicated that SWAs neither agreed nor disagreed to a perception that sexual discrimination directed toward women in intercollegiate athletics had an effect on

the employment and retention of females in the profession indicating that the overall perception was neutral (Table 5).

**Table 5**

***SWAs Perception on Employment and Retention of Women in Athletics***

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
21. Sexual harassment is a reason why women leave their positions in the athletic profession.	2.78	2.78
23. If I reported sexual harassment, I would not feel threatened that my career would be jeopardized (-).	3.47	2.53
36. Females do not have to work harder in the athletic profession than men to achieve equal recognition (-).	2.02	3.98
44. Gender inequity in athletics is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession.	3.37	3.37
50. It is my perception that wage discrimination based on gender does not occur in intercollegiate athletic departments (-).	1.76	4.24
51. Opportunities for career advancement for women in the athletics profession are equal to that of men (-).	2.12	3.88
52. Sexual discrimination is a main reason why women leave their positions in athletic careers.	2.90	2.90
<b><i>Averaged Composite Total</i></b>		<b>3.38</b>

*Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.*

Finally, an aspect of sexual harassment that was examined was the reporting of incidents of sexual harassment. With a composite mean of 2.15, results from this survey indicated that SWAs disagree with the perception that women are hesitant in reporting sexual harassment (Table 6).

**Table 6**

**SWAs Perception on Women Reporting Sexual Harassment**

<b>Survey Item</b>	<b>Raw M</b>	<b>True M</b>
23. If I reported sexual harassment, I would not feel threatened that my career would be jeopardized (-).	3.48	2.53
24. If I became a victim of sexual harassment, I would file a formal complaint (-).	4.10	1.90
25. If I became a victim of sexual harassment, I would fear my complaint would not be taken seriously.	2.15	2.15
26. I have worked for an athletic department that has attempted to cover up incidents of sexual harassment.	2.03	2.03
<b>Averaged Composite Total</b>		<b>2.15</b>

*Note. Negatively (-) phrased statements are indicated, and raw mean scores of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores. All composite total means reflect true values.*



## Chapter V

### Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### *Discussion of Results*

Contrary to much of the current literature, the global results of this investigation indicated that NCAA Division III Senior Woman Administrators in intercollegiate athletics neither agreed nor disagreed to a perception that sexual discrimination existed in the athletic profession ( $M=3.17$ ). Similarly, SWAs responses also indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed to a perception that sexual discrimination against women in athletics had a direct effect on their employment in intercollegiate athletic departments ( $M=3.38$ ).

#### *Subgroups of Sexual Discrimination*

##### *Gender Equity*

In the first subgroup, the SWAs responding to this survey neither agreed nor disagreed with the majority of the gender equity statements given on the survey ( $M=3.10$ ). The true mean responses for three of the four survey items (items #42, #43, and #44) were within the 2.5-3.5 range, meaning the SWAs were neutral and neither agreed nor disagreed to the statements. These neutral findings support those of Lovett and Lowry's (1995) study on women in the NCAA, where it was found that some institutions are committed to gender equity and abide by legislation while others use stalling techniques to avoid moving toward gender equity. "A much more active intervention is needed if the gender equity problem is to be solved" (Lovett & Lowry, 1995, p. 246).

The lone item that did not produce a neutral response was (item #41): "The athletic department in which I currently work supports gender equity." A raw mean score of 3.81 indicated that the majority of those responding tended to agree that they currently worked in an athletic department that was supportive of gender equity. In fact, 66% agreed they worked in this supportive environment, while just 10% disagreed.

Though many SWAs were neutral in their gender equity responses, indicating that as a group they neither agreed nor disagreed, the majority still disagreed that absolute or complete gender equity in intercollegiate athletics, as a whole, had been achieved. An average of a near neutral mean was calculated for statements 42 and 43 regarding gender equity in their own athletic departments (*M* of 3.41 for each). However, the percentages indicated that complete gender equity in athletics might still be nonexistent.

When asked to respond to the statement (item #42): "Complete gender equity within my current athletic department has been achieved," 58% disagreed while only 25% agreed that complete equity had been achieved. Fifty-eight percent also disagreed when asked to respond to the statement (item #43): "I am not concerned that gender equity is a problem in my current athletic department." Another noteworthy finding from this subgroup were the responses to item #44.

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A raw mean score of 3.37 indicated that, on average, SWAs were neutral in their response, neither agreeing nor disagreeing to the statement: "Gender inequity in athletics is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession."

However, when looking at specific percentages, 44% agreed that gender inequity

is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession, 42% neither agreed nor disagreed, and just 14% disagreed. This indicated that SWAs might actually be more likely to agree to a perception of concern for gender equity in athletics. It appears that there is a perception of support for equality among the genders in athletics, but complete gender equity does not exist. These findings support Schell & Rodriguez's (2000) conclusion that despite progression toward gender equity, women still face barriers imposed by male hegemonic ideology.

### ***Overt Discrimination***

Not only did this study examine possible inequities in gender, but inequities in overt discrimination were revealed as well. In this second subgroup of sexual discrimination, SWAs agreed to a slight perception of overt discrimination in all intercollegiate athletic departments with a composite mean of 3.73. All five statements in this section (items #47, #48, #49, #50, and #51) had mean responses that were noteworthy.

The most revealing finding in this section was that only 5% of the SWAs perceived that wage discrimination did not exist in athletic departments (item #50). With a true mean of 4.24, 88% of the SWAs agreed that wage discrimination existed as a form of overt discrimination in the athletics profession. This response was not unexpected since women in the United States, in all professions combined, earn just 76 cents to the dollar that men earn (Bell, et al., 2002). Further, this finding supports Jacobson (2001), who reported that coaches of women's teams still earn far less on average than coaches of men's teams.

Not only did SWAs perceive that wage discrimination occurs thru all intercollegiate athletic departments, but 80% also had a perception that opportunities for career advancement for women in the athletics profession (item #51) are not equal to that of men ( $M=3.88$ ). This indicated that the majority of SWAs agreed that men are more likely to advance in the hierarchy of athletics when compared to women.

Sixty-one percent of the SWAs perceived that their athletic departments actively recruited qualified male candidates for coaching positions (item #48,  $M=3.70$ ), and 59% felt that female candidates were also actively recruited (item #49,  $M=3.58$ ). Just 22% disagreed with the perception that female candidates were actively recruited. This just somewhat supports the opinions from literature which suggested that athletic directors searching to fill coaching vacancies actively recruit qualified male candidates for men's teams, yet seldom search for quality female coaches for women's teams (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002; Anderson, 2001; Lopiano, 2001). Ninety-two percent of the respondents felt that gender should not be used as a basis for hiring coaches or administrators (item #47,  $M=1.58$ ).

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Of the three-subgroup components of sexual discrimination, SWAs disagreed the most to a perception of sexual harassment in intercollegiate athletics ( $M=2.59$ ). Contrary to much of the review of literature (Bell, et al., 2002; Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998; Wolohan & Mathes, 1996), SWAs did not agree with the perception that they and female co-workers were victims of quid pro quo

harassment nor hostile environment harassment at any time in their athletic career. The respondents generally disagreed to perceptions of quid pro quo harassment by agreeing to the negative statements (item #14 and #15): "I have not been a victim of quid pro quo harassment" ( $M=4.05$ ), and "I am not aware of other women in athletic departments, in which I have worked, who have been victims of quid pro quo harassment" ( $M=3.59$ ). Respondents also strongly disagreed that their work had been negatively affected by working in a hostile environment in which they were intimidated by sexual harassment (item #16,  $M=1.86$ ).

Sixty-eight percent agreed that sexual harassment was not an issue in their current athletic departments, while only 15% disagreed (item #22,  $M=3.80$ ). The majority of those surveyed disagreed to the statement indicating that they had been sexually harassed by co-workers (item #12,  $M=2.17$ ), yet they were more likely to perceive that others in their department had been sexually harassed at some point in their professional career (item #13,  $M=3.32$ ). More specifically, 58% perceived others in their department had been sexually harassed; yet only 22% admitted to experiencing sexual harassment themselves. Although not the majority, these percentages still cause concern. As Lenskyj (1992) suggested as a result of her study of sexual harassment of university sport and physical education, "it is perhaps significant that responses to the survey were sparse [since] the process of describing an experience of sexual harassment often feels like reliving it, and that is obviously something that most women want to avoid" (p. 20).

Lenskyj also suggested other reasons for the low percentage of reported cases of sexual harassment. Research has shown that many cases of sexual harassment may remain unreported because many women who are victims use silence as a coping strategy (1992). Conversely, the SWAs in this study disagreed to a perception that women fear filing formal sexual harassment complaints ( $M=2.15$ ). When asked, "If I became a victim of sexual harassment, I would file a formal complaint (item #24)," 78% agreed. Similarly, 70% disagreed that if they became a victim of sexual harassment, they would fear their complaint would not be taken seriously (item #25,  $M=2.15$ ).

The possibility that victims remain silent, along with possible attempts by some administrators to cover-up incidents of sexual harassment, makes it difficult to get an accurate account of the magnitude of the problem. The number of reported cases and those that file formal charges is far lower than the actual incidents (Bell, et al., 2002; Lenskyj, 1992). This may be a contributing factor with the perception of harassment, which was reported to be low.

### ***Artificial Barriers in Employment***

The final subgroup of sexual discrimination that was examined, and the subgroup that had the most noteworthy findings, was artificial barriers to employment such as the glass ceiling and the old boy network. SWAs somewhat agreed with the perception of the glass ceiling and the old boy network serving as artificial barriers to women in the athletic profession. An averaged composite mean of 3.72 indicated that respondents somewhat agreed that artificial barriers prevent women from advancing in their athletic careers. This supports the

findings of Bell, et al., (2002) that the glass ceiling is an important factor in women's lack of access to power and status in organizations today.

The strongest perceptions among SWAs were that men dominated the athletic profession (item #38,  $M=4.15$ ). When responding to the statement, "I feel men dominate the athletic profession," 61% agreed and 27% strongly agreed. When responding to the statement: "Males have greater access to power and status in the athletic profession than females," 90% agreed (item #37,  $M=4.10$ ). Sixty-six percent felt that females must work harder in the athletic profession than men to achieve equal recognition (item #36,  $M=3.98$ ). These findings offer support for Schell and Rodriguez's (2000) findings that state, "women continue to face numerous barriers imposed by male hegemonic ideology, despite their recent attempts to gain equality and respect in sport" (p. 15).

SWAs agreed ( $M= 4.02$ ) that the old boy network was still prevalent in intercollegiate athletic departments (item #35). More specifically, 85% of those responding to the survey believed that the old boy network still existed as a barrier to women, while 80% felt that opportunities for career advancement in the athletics profession was not equal for women and men (item #51,  $M=2.12$ ). This finding supports current literature (Bell, et al., 2002; Jacobson, 2001; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000) that reports a prevalence of the old boy network. The findings also support previous reports that the old boy network is a factor of male dominance and control that inhibits the progression of women in sport (Stahura & Greenwood, 2001).

Overall, when combined, the SWAs perception of each subgroup of sexual discrimination did not contribute to an overall perception of sexual discrimination in all intercollegiate athletic departments (composite weighted average of 3.17). The composite means of overt discrimination ( $M=3.73$ ) and the glass ceiling and old boy network ( $M=3.72$ ) reflected a slight perception of sexual discrimination, but were diluted by the composite means of gender equity ( $M= 3.10$ ), and sexual harassment ( $M=2.59$ ).

### ***Sexual Discrimination and Employment in Intercollegiate Athletics***

The respondents of the survey neither agreed nor disagreed ( $M=3.17$ ) to the global perception that sexual discrimination had a negative effect on the employment of females in the athletic profession. This finding contradicts current literature that suggests sexual discrimination is a reason why women leave the athletic profession or avoid it altogether (Bell, et. al., 2002; Inglis, et al., 2000; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). Similarly, SWAs were neutral ( $M=3.38$ ) in their perceptions of the effect sexual discrimination had on the employment and retention of women in athletics.

A possible reason behind these differences in the perception of the SWAs in this study and the preponderance of pertinent literature is that the occurrence of sexual discrimination against women in athletics might be declining. In recent years, intercollegiate athletic departments may have increased efforts to ensure gender equity and a harassment-free working environment (Shaw, 1995). If this is true, the decline of females in the athletic profession, which has resulted in a



sparse number of women employed in athletic departments, may return to the higher percentages found decades ago.

### ***Conclusions***

The majority of respondents (Senior Woman Administrators in NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletic departments) neither agreed nor disagreed to a global perception that sexual discrimination existed against women in the athletic profession. When breaking down the global perceptions into more specific subgroups of sexual discrimination, the perception of sexual harassment was not as prevalent as overt discrimination and artificial barriers in employment.

The majority of respondents who participated in this study neither agreed nor disagreed to a global perception that sexual discrimination directed towards women in intercollegiate athletics has had a negative effect on the employment of females in the profession. However, it was perceived that sexual discrimination in employment related issues did commonly exist in the form of wage discrimination.

Although sexual discrimination may exist in some intercollegiate athletic institutions, it is not reported to be as prevalent as in the past, and it is not reported to be the main reason why women leave their careers in athletics; rather, it may be one of many reasons. However, specific components of sexual discrimination do appear to have a negative effect on the employment of women in athletics.

It is evident that legislation and organizational policies have helped to alleviate the problem of sexual discrimination in intercollegiate athletics. After

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 was enacted over thirty years ago, and after Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was implemented nearly forty years ago, the perception of sexual discrimination in athletics seems to be changing. However, women must still break down and overcome gender barriers in the male dominated field of athletics and athletic organizations must continue to accept change and embrace gender equity in an effort to eliminate gender bias and discrimination in sport.

### ***Future Directions***

After reviewing the literature, survey comments, results, and conclusions of this study, there are areas that call for future research. Those areas are stated and described below.

Future research should consider the perceptions of SWAs on sexual discrimination across divisions in the NCAA. Responses should be solicited from Division II and Division I SWAs as they relate to discrimination within intercollegiate athletics. Perceptions may vary between the divisions because as Acosta & Carpenter (2002) indicated, Division III programs are more likely to have a female head administrator (27.6%) when compared with Division I programs (8.4%). In fact, in this study, 25% of the SWAs responding worked for a female athletic director. The sex of the athletic director may have an effect on the occurrence and frequency of sexual discrimination. Similarly, additional studies should be conducted that examine the perceptions of SWAs on sexual discrimination specific by Division (I, II, and III).

Further research should be conducted on same gender sexual harassment and issues of homophobia. The stereotyping of females in athletic careers that tends to label all women in the profession as lesbians regardless of their actual sexual orientation could be another reason for the low percentage of women in the profession, and needs continued examination. This recommendation comes from comments made by participants in this current study as well as recommendations from past works (Lenskyj, 1992; Lopiano, 2001; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000).

Finally, the aspect of reverse discrimination against males working in athletic departments in intercollegiate institutions for *women only* should be pursued, as suggested by participants in this study. Some respondents stated in a qualitative manner that men may be discriminated against based on their sex when attempting to obtain coaching positions for women's teams, especially at intercollegiate institutions for women only.

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**Survey Instrument**

The Perceptions of Division III Senior Woman Administrators of  
Sexual Discrimination in Intercollegiate Athletics

The Perceptions of Senior Woman Administrators of Sexual Discrimination in  
Division III Intercollegiate Athletics

ART I.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Year of birth: 19 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

_____ Associate's Degree	_____ Master's Degree
_____ Bachelor's Degree	_____ Doctoral Degree
_____ Other, please specify _____	

What is your race or ethnic background?

_____ Caucasian	_____ African-American
_____ Asian American	_____ American Indian
_____ Hispanic	_____ European
_____ Other: _____	

What is your current income?

_____ Between \$15,001-\$25,000	_____ Between \$55,001-\$65,000
_____ Between \$25,001-\$35,000	_____ Between \$65,001-\$75,000
_____ Between \$35,001-\$45,000	_____ Above \$75,000
_____ Between \$45,001-\$55,000	

What is your marital status?

_____ Single	_____ Separated
_____ Married	_____ Divorced

Do you have children?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Is your current athletic director: Male \_\_\_\_\_ or Female \_\_\_\_\_?

How many **total years** have you served as a Senior Woman Administrator at **all** collegiate institution?

_____ less than 1	_____ 11-15
_____ 1-5	_____ 16-20
_____ 6-10	

0. How many years of coaching experience do you have?

_____ 0	_____ 11-15
_____ 1-5	_____ 16-20
_____ 6-10	_____ more than 20

1. How many years of administrative experience do you have?

_____ 0	_____ 11-15
_____ 1-5	_____ 16-20
_____ 6-10	_____ more than 20

**ART II.**  
**EXUAL HARASSMENT**

Please circle the number that corresponds with the extent you agree or disagree with the statements below based on your personal perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment **in any** intercollegiate athletic department in which **you have ever been employed** unless otherwise stated.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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2. I have been sexually harassed by male co-workers while working in an intercollegiate athletic department. *Sexual Harassment* → *Sexual advances and torments in either the verbal or physical form from the harasser to the victim that is unwelcome and unwanted.*
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
3. I am not aware of other women who have experienced sexual harassment in intercollegiate athletic departments.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
4. I have not been a victim of quid pro quo harassment. *Quid pro quo harassment* → *“a tangible economic aspect of a worker’s job is adversely affected by the exercise of power over a worker by a manger or owner with authority to control conditions of employment (Debevoise & Tselikis, 1998).”*
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
5. I am not aware of other women in athletic departments, in which I have worked, who have been victims of quid pro quo harassment.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
16. My work has been negatively affected by working in a hostile environment in which I was intimidated by sexual harassment. *Hostile environment* → *“occurs when sexual behaviors have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment (Bell, McLaughlin & Sequeira, 2002).”*
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
17. I am aware of other women in athletic departments, in which I have worked, who were negatively affected by working in a hostile environment.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
18. My perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment and what my male co-workers perceive as being sexual harassment differ greatly.
- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Strongly Disagree  
1

Disagree  
2

Neither Agree or Disagree  
3

Agree  
4

Strongly Agree  
5

9. I have never worked in an athletic department that fosters a climate of sexual harassment by allowing sexual jokes, comments, and other inappropriate behaviors to take place.

1 2 3 4 5

0. Women tend to be too sensitive about jokes and comments that are gender based.

1 2 3 4 5

1. Sexual harassment is a reason why women leave their positions in the athletic profession.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Sexual harassment is not an issue in my current athletic department.

1 2 3 4 5

### **Reporting and Reducing Sexual Harassment**

3. If I reported sexual harassment, I would not feel threatened that my career would be jeopardized.

1 2 3 4 5

4. If I became a victim of sexual harassment, I would file a formal complaint.

1 2 3 4 5

5. If I became a victim of sexual harassment, I would fear my complaint would not be taken seriously.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I have worked for an athletic department that has attempted to cover up incidents of sexual harassment.

1 2 3 4 5

7. My current athletic department, or institution as a whole, has a detailed sexual harassment policy in place, which outlines what constitutes harassment, to whom to report harassment, and the penalties for harassment.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The office of equity and diversity strictly enforces my institution's sexual harassment policy.

1 2 3 4 5



Strongly Disagree  
1

Disagree  
2

Neither Agree or Disagree  
3

Agree  
4

Strongly Agree  
5

6. Females do not have to work harder in the athletic profession than men to achieve equal recognition.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Males have greater access to power and status in the athletic profession than females.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I feel men dominate the athletic profession.

1 2 3 4 5

9. In my current athletic department, men treat women as their equals regardless of their position.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Increasing women in athletic administrative positions would help reduce sexual discrimination in athletic departments.

1 2 3 4 5

#### ART IV.

#### GENDER EQUITY AND OVERT DISCRIMINATION

*Overt Discrimination → The use of gender as a criterion for employment related decisions.*

*Please circle the number that corresponds with the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below based on your personal perceptions and experiences of gender equity and overt discrimination **in any** intercollegiate athletic department in which **you have ever been employed** unless otherwise stated.*

1. The athletic department in which I currently work supports gender equity.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Complete gender equity within my current athletic department has been achieved.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I am not concerned that gender equity is a problem in my current athletic department.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Gender inequity in athletics is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession.

1 2 3 4 5



## Appendix B

### Cover Letter



December 3, 2002

Dear Division III Senior Woman Administrator,

My name is Traci Hay and I am seeking your expertise and assistance by requesting that you complete the enclosed survey. The results will be used to complete my masters thesis in the Athletic Administration program at the State University of New York at Brockport.

I am conducting the enclosed anonymous survey to learn more about the perceptions of Senior Woman Administrators in Division III NCAA intercollegiate institutions on sexual discrimination. Please note that you are not obligated to participate in this study and may at any time exercise this right by choosing not to complete the enclosed survey prior to returning it.

Your responses are important to me. They will not only help me to complete my graduate work, but will also provide me with the necessary information to arrive at results and conclusions pertaining to my topic. Please take the time to answer the questions honestly prior to returning the survey to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you wish to receive the results of this study, please express this desire on a separate piece of paper and return it in a second envelope separate from the envelope in which you are returning the completed survey.

Thank you for your time assisting me with this important research endeavor. Please note, the enclosed survey is copied back-to-back. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Thank you in advance for your time,

Ms. Traci A. Hay  
Graduate Student  
The State University of New York at Brockport

Enc.

# Appendix C

## Survey Results

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Table C1

## Survey Results

Demographic Questions	Responses
1. Sex: Male or Female	100% Female
2. Average Age:	44 years
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	70% Master's 14% Bachelor's 14% Doctoral 2% Associate's
4. What is your race or ethnic background?	92% Caucasian 4% Black 2% European 2% Asian
5. What is your current income?	0% Between \$15K-\$25K 16% Between \$25K-\$35K 25% Between \$35K-\$45K 18% Between \$45K-\$55K 14% Between \$55K-\$65K 12% Between \$65K-\$75K 16% Above \$75K
6. What is your marital status?	49% married 37% single 9% divorced 5% other
7. Do you have children?	50% yes 50% no
8. Is your current athletic director: Male or Female?	75% male 25% female
9. How many total years have you served as a Senior Woman Administrator at all intercollegiate institutions?	19% Less than 1 year 34% 1-5 years 14% 6-10 years 19% 11-15 years 14% 16-20 years
10. How many years of coaching experience do you have?	19% 0 years 17% 1-5 years 17% 6-10 years 9% 11-15 years 10% 16-20 years 28% More than 20 years
11. How many years of administrative experiences do you have?	4% 0 years 17% 1-5 years 29% 6-10 years 17% 11-15 years 16% 16-20 years 17% More than 20 years

Table C2 (continued)

## Survey Results

Survey Item	Raw M	True M	True Mode	SD
42. Complete gender equity within my current athletic department has been achieved (-).	2.59	3.41	4	1.21
43. I am not concerned that gender equity is a problem in my current athletic department (-).	2.59	3.41	4	1.27
44. Gender inequity in athletics is a reason why women leave their positions in the profession.	3.37	3.37	3	0.81
45. More females are needed as coaches in intercollegiate athletic departments.	4.51	4.51	5	0.86
46. More females are needed as administrators in intercollegiate athletic departments.	4.47	4.47	5	0.90
47. An individual hired to a coaching or administrative position should be hired based on their gender, not on their qualifications (-).	1.58	4.42	5	0.65
48. When my athletic department is looking to fill a coaching vacancy for a men's athletic team, the athletic director and search committee actively recruit qualified male candidates.	3.70	3.70	4	1.13
49. When my athletic department is looking to fill a coaching vacancy for a women's athletic team, the athletic director and search committee actively recruit qualified female candidates (-).	3.58	2.42	2	1.05
50. It is my perception that wage discrimination based on gender does not occur in intercollegiate athletic departments (-).	1.76	4.24	4	0.86
51. Opportunities for career advancement for women in the athletics profession are equal to that of men (-).	2.12	3.88	4	0.93
52. Sexual discrimination is a main reason why women leave their positions in athletic careers.	2.90	2.90	3	0.87

Note. Negatively (-) phrased questions are indicated, and raw mean scores, mode, and standard deviations of negative statements were inverted to reflect true scores.