

Full Length Research Paper

Career Paths of Women Working in Leadership Positions within Intercollegiate Athletic Administration

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Scholars have focused their attention on the careers of women working in management positions in several sport industry segments, however, limited research has focused on careers of women working in intercollegiate athletic administration. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine career information of women working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. The study addressed the following amongst women working in intercollegiate athletic administration: (a) demographics, (b) career paths, (c) most/least enjoyable aspects of their jobs, (d) greatest challenges, (e) career advice, and (f) short-term and long-term career aspirations. This descriptive study provided insight for women wanting to explore a career within intercollegiate athletic administration. The information is useful for both women and men working in intercollegiate athletic administration and to the NCAA organization in support of its ongoing work to promote diversity in leadership positions. In addition, women wishing to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletics face a number of challenges, but acknowledging the voices of the women within this study can begin to explain some of the steps needed to maximize women's contributions to this field. Finally, this study contributes to the body of knowledge in the sport management literature in intercollegiate athletics.

Keywords: career path, leadership, greatest challenges, career advice

Introduction

With a wide range of careers available in the sport industry, it is hard to track statistics of women working in sport management. The sport industry consists of interscholastic athletics, intercollegiate athletics, academia, recreational sports, business, and diverse populations (Hums, Bower, Grappendorf, 2007; Masteralexis, Barr, & Hums, 2012). Many researchers have examined women working in the management of sport within segments such as intercollegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Grappendorf, Lough, & Griffin, 2004; Lapchick, 2012; Wright, Eagleman, & Pederson, 2011), recreational sports (Aitchison, Jordan, Brackenridge, 1999; Bower, 2008; Bower & Coffee, 2010; Bower & Hums, 2003), professional sport (Hums & Sutton, 2000; Hums & Sutton, 1999), and diverse populations (Armstrong & O'Bryant, 2010; Hums & Moorman, 1999; Lapchick, 2012). Of all these segments the one the researchers are more focused on is women working in intercollegiate athletic administration. Intercollegiate athletics offers several leadership positions for women to pursue, including Athletic Director, Associate

Athletic Director, and Assistant Athletic Director, as well as the title, Senior Women Administrator. However, women are underrepresented in these administrative positions as reflected in a 30+ year longitudinal study conducted by Acosta and Carpenter (2012). Currently, women hold 20.3% of all Athletic Director positions. In addition, while 9.2% of athletic departments across all NCAA divisions totally lack a female administrator. Of the possible 4203 administrative positions in intercollegiate athletics, 2700 (64.2%) are held by males and only 1503 by females (35.8%) (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012).

As a result of the Acosta and Carpenter (2012) studies conducted since 1977, many researchers have focused their attention on potential reasons for why there is a lack of women within leadership positions within intercollegiate athletic administration (Hancock, 2012; Parks, Russell, Wood, Robertson, & Shewokis, 1995; Pastore, Inglis, & Danylchuk, 1996; Schneider, Stier, Henry, Wilding, 2010; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Wright, Eagleman, Pederson, 2011). Although the examination of the potential reasons why women are

underrepresented in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics is important, so, too, is an understanding of the history of how the numbers have dropped since 1972 when 90% of women’s intercollegiate athletics programs were led by females compared to 20.3% today (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). An understanding of women who have succeeded in achieving a leadership position within intercollegiate athletic administration is warranted.

History of Women in Leadership Positions within Intercollegiate Athletic Administration

In 1966, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), had no interest in developing women’s sports, so women working in athletics at the time created the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for women (CIAW). The CIAW established the organizational framework for elite-level intercollegiate athletic programs for women. Eventually, the CIAW became the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) in 1971, the governing body that would oversee women’s intercollegiate athletics for the next decade (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). At that time, more than 90% of coaches for women’s teams were female and more than 90% of directors of athletic programs for women were female. The majority of the women were typically physical educators and professors. Soon after the passage of Title IX, the NCAA attempted to remove athletics from the legislation’s jurisdiction, and to absorb women’s athletics into its structure. Women in leadership positions began to attend their first NCAA conventions. The numbers of women in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletic administration began to drop in the years following the passing of Title IX from 20.0% in 1980 to 15.9% in 1916 and 8% in 1992 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). How women obtained positions in intercollegiate athletics drastically changed from the physical educator or professor to stand alone career choices. This likely contributed to the continued decline in the number of women within these leadership positions. It may also be attributed to many other reasons that have been researched since that time including gender stereotypes, lack of female mentors, lack of a network, old boys network, and family to work-conflict (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 1996; 2000; Pastore, Inglis, & Danylchuk, 1996; Sisley, 1975; Quarterman, Dupree, & Willis, 2006). Although many women could not succeed in overcoming these obstacles, 20.3% of athletic administrators today are women. Thus, it is important to examine the careers of women who have succeeded in achieving these positions by examining their career paths, identifying the most and least enjoyable aspects of their jobs, greatest challenges, and career advice they would provide to women considering a career in intercollegiate athletic administration. What better way to learn but from those that have already succeeded?

Purpose of the Study

The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletic administration warrants a look at their career paths. First, there is limited “recent” research on

career paths of women working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. Second, there is no research on career paths of women working in leadership positions across all divisions including NCAA Divisions I, II, II, as well as at NAIA schools, junior colleges, and Canadian colleges. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine career information of women working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. The study addressed the following amongst women working in intercollegiate athletic administration: (a) demographics; (b) career paths; (c) most/least enjoyable aspects of their jobs; (d) greatest challenges; (e) career advice; and (f) short-term and long-term career aspirations.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for three reasons. First, the information is useful for both women and men working in intercollegiate athletic administration and to the NCAA in support of its ongoing work to promote diversity in leadership positions. Second, women wishing to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletics face a number of challenges, but acknowledging the voices of the women within this study can help athletic administrators begin to understand some of the steps needed to maximize women’s contributions to this field. Finally, this study contributes to the body of knowledge in the sport management literature as intercollegiate athletics.

Methods

Participants

A total of 518 (N=518) women working in intercollegiate athletic administration at NCAA Divisions I, II, II, as well as at NAIA schools, junior colleges, and Canadian colleges responded to the survey. The majority of the women in the study (a) worked in NCAA Division I (44.4%), (b) held the title Associate Athletic Directors (37.2%), (c) were in the 45-54 years age range (30.7%), (d) were white (83.2%), (e) earned a salary between \$40,000-\$59,999 per year (29.8%), and (f) held a master’s degree (72.5%). Table 1 provides additional demographic information.

Table 1
Demographics.

Demographics	Responses	Percentage
Income Range		
Less than \$19,999	2	0.4
\$20,000-\$39,999	32	6.2
\$40,000-\$59,999	153	29.8
\$60,000-\$79,999	124	24.1
\$80,000-\$99,999	95	18.5
\$100,000-\$119,999	43	8.4
\$120,000-\$139,999	38	7.4
\$140,000-\$159,999	4	0.8
\$160,000-\$179,999	7	1.4
\$180,000-\$199,999	4	0.8

\$200,000 or higher	4	0.8
Missing	8	
Degree		
High School Graduate	2	0.4
Some College (includes Associate)	5	1
College Graduate	82	16
Master's	372	72.4
Doctoral	29	5.6
JD	19	3.7
Other	4	0.8
Missing	1	0.2
Played Organized Sport		
Played	455	88.5
Did Not Play	55	10.7
Missing	4	0.8

Procedures

Survey Monkey was used to send a total of 1833 (n=1833) Female Sport Manager Career Surveys (Bower & Hums, 2003) to women working as athletic administrators at NCAA Divisions I, II, III, as well as at NAIA schools, junior colleges, and Canadian colleges. The email addresses of the female intercollegiate athletic administrators were obtained from the *National Directory of College Athletics*. Surveys were sent out to the 1833 women working in intercollegiate athletic administration and after three weeks a follow up email was sent to all non-respondents. A total of 514 (N=514) usable surveys were returned for a return rate of 28.0%.

One way to determine if respondents are representative of the population is to compare characteristics of the sample with the demographics of benchmarks in the literature (Olson, 2006). The demographics of the respondents in this study were similar to the literature. For example, Lapchick (2011) indicated that more than 80% of females working in intercollegiate athletic administration were white. Acosta and Carpenter's (2011) data indicated the majority of women working in intercollegiate athletics are at Division I institutions. Female athletic administrators in Sagas and Cunningham's (2004) study had an average age of 42 and Hancock (2012) found the majority had a masters degree or higher. Another way to see if the respondents are representative of the population is by comparing early and late respondents. By Division, 52.1%, 21.2%, and 21.6% of early respondents came from Division I, II, and III respectively while 52.5%, 20.7%, and 26.6% of late respondents came from NCAA Division I, II, and III respectively. The two groups were not significantly different.

Instrument

The Female Sport Manager Career Survey was used for the current study. The Female Sport Manager Career Survey was selected for this study for two reasons. First, questions for the Career Paths of Women in Sport Survey was developed through extensive study of previous studies of career paths of

women working in the management of different sport segments, including professional baseball (Hums & Sutton, 1999), professional basketball (Hums & Sutton, 2000), sport for people with disabilities (Hums & Moorman, 1999) and campus recreation (Bower & Hums, 2003). For this study, appropriate modifications were made through the modification of the survey language to address women working in intercollegiate athletic administration.

A panel of experts examined the survey for content validity, biased items, and terms before being piloted. The panel of experts included four women who either previously worked in intercollegiate athletic administration, conducted extensive research within intercollegiate athletics and/or completed research in the area of career paths of women working in different segments of the sport industry.

The Career Paths of Women in Sport Survey elicited responses in several quantitative areas, including (a) demographic information, (b) career path information, and also included open-ended questions about careers and career advice. The demographic information included age, ethnic background, income, and highest level of education. The career path information included previous positions, past and current work experience, and family and/or sport connections to intercollegiate athletics. In addition, qualitative responses were collected from the participants responding to questions about their most and least enjoyable aspects of their jobs, greatest challenges, career advice, and career goals.

Data Analysis

SPSS 19.0 was used to calculate means for the demographic data of this descriptive study. Means were calculated for the quantitative data. A three-step content-analytic procedure was used to analyze the qualitative data. First, the researchers organized and condensed the data by uploading it into HyperResearcher 2.7. The researchers read and reread the data from the qualitative responses. Second, both investigators independently analyzed and coded the data. The researchers used constant comparative analysis, a categorical analysis strategy, to review the applicable comments from all the content areas (most/enjoyable aspects of the job, greatest challenges, career advice and goals) and identified similarities and differences among the data, coding and sorting into appropriate categories (Rallis, 2011). Each content area of interest was reviewed individually and similar comments were categorized into groups. Phrases rather than sentences were used as the unit of analysis because of the possibility of two or more divergent ideas. A single versus multiple classification system was assigned for each category (Weber, 1990). For example, "serving as a role and mentor for other women (and men) interested in coaching and athletic administration" would be classified under "serving as a role model" and "serving as a mentor".

Finally, the researchers used inductive reasoning by examining the categories that emerged from the data rather than placing comments into predefined categories. Once the comments were categorized, “themes” were provided a name to capture the meaning of the groups of comments.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Multiple strategies of analysis introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were used to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study. First, constant comparative analysis was used to establish categories and develop themes from the open-ended questions. Constant comparative analysis strengthened the credibility (internal validity) by creating “authenticity” of the data. Authenticity of the data is described as a “fair, honest, and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint who lives it every day” (Neuman, 2010, p. 31).

Second, comments were examined and tallied, which assisted in establishing themes and strengthened the transferability (external validity) (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Third, the researchers debriefed by examining the data individually and meeting later to discuss the themes and categories. Following discussion, a final list of themes and categories were determined which strengthened the dependability (reliability) of the study. Finally, the researchers limited 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 through researcher debriefing. These supporting techniques strengthened the confirmability (objectivity) of the study.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. For instance, the return rate was 28.0%. However, it is hard to choose the best time to conduct a survey with the continuous amount of work and intercollegiate athletic administrator has all year around. This survey was administered at the beginning of the basketball season which is a peak time in terms of responsibilities for intercollegiate athletic administrators. For this reason, the researchers decided not to send the survey out a third time and reported the return rate as acceptable for the time of season it was distributed. Second, the study was limited to women who were administrators in intercollegiate athletic administration. This study did not ask similar questions of men working in intercollegiate athletics.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine career information of women working in the administration of intercollegiate athletics. The study addressed the following amongst women working in intercollegiate athletic administration: (a) demographics, (b) career paths, (c) most/least enjoyable aspects of their jobs, (d) greatest challenges, (e) career advice, and (f) short-term and long-term career aspirations. The study shed light on the workplace environment for women working in this traditionally male dominated segment of the sport industry.

Demographics

The demographic groups examined in this study included age, race/ethnicity, and education. On average, the participants were older, white, and highly educated.

Age and Ethnicity. As mentioned earlier, 30.7% of the women were between the ages of 45-54 years. In addition, 83.2% of the women were white. These two statistics support previous research on women within intercollegiate athletics that have discovered a homogenous group when studying women in this sport segment (Fitzgerald, 1990; Grappendorf, Lough, & Griffin, 2004). For example, Fitzgerald (1990) reported that women athletic directors averaged 48.7 years of age and 92.5% of them were white. This was also consistent with Grappendorf, Lough and Griffin (2004) who revealed that NCAA Division I female athletic directors were an average of 50.21 years and 94.7% of them were white. In addition, only 8% of the population was African American mirroring the research of Lapchick (2012). This is a higher percentage than Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) reported, where only 5.3% (n=1) of their population was African American. Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) speculated that it was unlikely to see women who are not White in a position of power in the sporting world. If it is hard for a white woman to enter the field, just think about how much harder it is for a woman of a diverse background to enter the field. Table 1 provides additional information on age and ethnicity.

Education. The women in this study were well-educated with 72% holding a Master’s degree, 27.0% holding a JD, and 3.7% holding a Ph.D. The advanced degrees support previous research on women working within intercollegiate athletic administration (Cuneen, 1988; Fitzgerald, 1990; Grappendorf, Lough, & Griffin, 2004). It may be women decided to pursue an advanced degree because they wanted to be more competitive (Hums & Sutton, 1999). Table 1 provides additional information on education.

Career Paths. The career paths information sheds light on the participants’ experience in organized sport and obtaining their current position. A total of 88.5% of the women played organized sport with 76.0% playing at the college/university level. Seventy-six percent of the women stated playing an organized sport impacted their decision to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletic administration. The findings support previous research conducted by Cuneen (1988) and Grappendorf (2004). Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) reported that 84.2% of the women played at least one varsity sport in high school, while 89.5% played at least one varsity sport in college. For that study, 88.5% played organized sport with 76.0 %

Table 2
Playing Organized Sport

Level of Playing Organized Sport	Responses	Percentages
College/University Athletics	346	76.0
High School	313	68.8
Recreational	194	42.6
College/University Intramurals	120	26.4
Amateur Elite	43	9.5
College/University Club Sports	26	5.7
Professional	20	4.4
Other	7	1.5
Olympian	5	1.1
Paralympian	0	0.0

Impact on Career Path	Responses	Percentages
Yes	641	79.5
No	136	16.9

How did sport impact your Career	Responses	Sample Comment
Exposed to Athletics/Loved Sports	187	I have played organized sport since age 4. It was the activity that had the greatest positive influence on my life, education, and personal development. I knew I wanted to make a career out of it, but as time passed, it was apparent that my talents were more concentrated in academics than athletics, so administration was a natural choice.
Provided Skills	109	I determined that my skills set was better served as administrator than a coach.. . I have strong people skills and am extremely well organized and a successful multi-tasker and I love sports!
Positive Role Model	22	Athletics helped me to grow and develop. I had so many influential coaches. I knew I wanted to use sports as a way to influence young people in a positive direction.

playing at the college/university level. Of the women, 86.8% said playing organized sport impacted their career choice. In addition, the women began at an early age with 68.8% playing at the high school level. Research by Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) reported sport participation at an early age may have helped the women learn skills of commitment, leadership, and balance to develop into an athletic director. This study also supports the importance of athletics in skill development,

helping the women in becoming leaders within intercollegiate athletics. Table 2 illustrates specifically how sport impacted women's career choices and also includes sample responses.

In addition, the women in this study held their current position within intercollegiate athletic administration for an average of 6.8 years. Sixty-four percent held at least one intercollegiate athletic administration position prior to their current position.

In addition, 11.3% of the women worked outside intercollegiate athletic administration for a sport organization. Before entering the sport industry, 16.0% of the women held positions outside the sport industry. The participants provided information how they acquired their first jobs within intercollegiate athletic administration. While eight responses were listed, the category most frequently chosen was “other” (30.2%). When explaining what “other” meant, women most often mentioned a coach or administrator. Women were also asked how they obtained their current position within intercollegiate athletic administration. Again, 44% of women chose “other” but then repeatedly referred to a coach or administrator. This career path data supports Fitzgerald (1990) who hypothesized women attained positions from a coach or athletic administrator. As mentioned previously, 88.5% of the women played organized sport and 44% indicated their career path continued from being a coach to an administrator. This result is slightly different than Grappendorf, Lough and Griffin (2004) who reported 100% of their participants were either teachers or coaches or a combination. Table 3 provided additional responses on how the women obtained first full-time and current job in intercollegiate athletic administration.

Table 3
First and Current Full-Time Job in Intercollegiate Athletic Administration

Obtainment of Job	Responses – First	Responses - Current
Other	154	215
Head about opening & applied	116	108
Responded to job advertisement	101	118
Recommended by colleague	84	92
Internship led to employment	80	17
Graduate assistantship	80	17
Recommended by colleague	12	8
Family connection	10	5

Most and Least Enjoyable Aspects of their Jobs

The participants offered a total of 966 responses related to the most enjoyable aspects of their job. These responses were initially grouped into eight themes. Following the researcher debriefing, a total of 54 comments were deleted, decreasing the number of themes to six, representing 912 comments. Table 4 provides a summary of the most enjoyable aspects of working in intercollegiate athletic administration and themes with sample comments. Table 4 illustrates how the women indicated the most enjoyable aspects of their job to be working with people with 483 responses followed by job responsibilities (156), being a role model (114), mentoring (77), gender responses (54) and flexibility of hours/work schedule (28). It is interesting to note that in about 57% of the theme, working with people, the respondents specifically said working with female student athletes. Women had a tendency to express their

interest in helping female student athletes with their career paths. This may be due to the fact that there are limited numbers of women holding leadership positions in intercollegiate athletics. Conversely, the least enjoyable aspect of the job was gender specific and the highest number of responses (56) was lack of females within intercollegiate athletics. This supports research that has examined and reported the lack of representation of female coaches was a reason why women did not aspire to become a head coach (Beverly, 2010; Kilty, 2006; Moran-Miller & Flores, 2011).

The women provided a total of 955 responses related to the least enjoyable aspects of their job which were initially grouped into six themes. Following the researcher debriefing a total of 47 comments were deleted, decreasing the number of themes to four representing 908 comments. Table 4 provides a summary of the least enjoyable aspects of working in intercollegiate athletic administration and the themes with sample comments. Table 4 illustrates the women indicated the least enjoyable aspect of their job to be gender specific with 336 responses, followed by time commitment (193), dealing with people (106), and coaching responsibilities (80). As mentioned earlier, lack of females in administrative positions was the number one gender specific category. Following close behind as a least enjoyable aspect of the job was stereotypes. Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) reported female athletic directors were stereotyped as other administrators had the perception that just because they were a woman they were not capable of leading an athletic program. Women were stereotyped in the same way as many of them were not respected, had continuous pressure to prove themselves, and were not taken seriously.

Greatest Challenges

The women had a total of 660 responses related to the greatest challenges of their job, which were initially grouped into five themes. Following the researcher debriefing, a total of 24 comments were deleted, decreasing the number of themes to three, representing 636 comments. Table 5 provides a summary of the greatest challenges of working in intercollegiate athletic administration and the themes with sample comments. Table 5 illustrates the greatest challenges of the job to be gender specific (488), time commitment (139), and communication (33). The greatest challenges were very similar to the least enjoyable aspects of the job as women were not respected, had continuous pressure to prove themselves, and were not taken seriously.

Career Advice

The women had a total of 430 responses related to career advice, which were grouped into eight themes. Following the researcher debriefing, none of the comments were deleted and therefore the eight themes remained. Table 6 provides a summary of the career advice women would give other women wanting to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletic administration and themes with sample comments. Table 6 illustrates the women provided career advice including work

Table 4
Most and Least Enjoyable Aspects of the Job

Most Enjoyable Aspect	Responses	Sample Comments
Working with People	483	<p>“Working with our female student-athletes and helping them with their career path”.</p> <p>“I enjoy working with students and coaches on eligibility and academics”.</p>
Female Student Athletes	274	
Fellow Colleagues	104	
Female Administrators	45	
Coaches	33	
Colleagues Across Campus	9	
Community (donors, sponsors)	8	
Relationships in General	6	
Alumni	4	
Job Responsibilities	156	
Supervision	53	
Internal Operations	29	
Decision Making	20	
Strategic Planning	14	
Problem Solving	10	
Sponsorship	9	
Event Management	5	
Compliance	4	
Construction Projects	4	
Finance/Budgeting	3	
Evaluations	1	
Ticketing	1	
Being a Role Model	114	<p>“I like being able to be an advocate and role model for female and male athletes”.</p> <p>“Serving as a role model and mentor for other women (and men) interested in coaching and athletic administration”.</p>
Women Student Athletes	51	
Women/Men Student Athletes	24	
Women (non-athletes)	13	
Women/Men (non-athletes)	12	
Women Colleagues (Admin)	6	
Women/Men Colleagues (coaches)	5	
Women/Men Colleagues (Admin)	2	
Women Coaches	1	
Mentoring	77	<p>“I am proud to be the first female athletic administrator at my institution. I LOVE being a mentor to all of our student-athletes and many female student-athletes will come to me for things as I am one of few in our department”.</p>
Women/Men Coaches	21	
Women/Men Administrators	14	
Women (non-athletes)	13	
Women Student Athletes	11	
Women Administration	9	
Women Coaches	1	
Gender Related	52	<p>“I enjoy bringing a different perspective to a heavily male male-dominated culture of athletics. It helps them to see avenues they may have normally missed or did not consider enough a make the department efficient, effective and well-rounded”.</p>
Advocating for Women	24	
Getting Respect from Men	8	
Outworking Men	8	
Promoting Diversity	4	
Networking with Women	4	
Challenging Stereotypes	2	
Having a Woman Boss	2	

“As a working mother, I do have flexibility and there is a general understanding that family is more important than work. Fabulous work/life balance”.

Least Enjoyable Aspect	Responses	Sample Comments
Gender Specific	336	“Lack of other women”.
Lack of Females	56	
Stereotypes	51	
Old Boys Network	44	“Not one of the good ole boys-left out of decisions affecting department. Continually reminded I’m not part of the coaches club”.
Gender Equity - Compensation	40	
Lack of Respect	32	
Prove Myself	30	
Gender Equity - Other	28	
Not Being Taken Seriously	18	
Negative Attitudes Towards Women	16	Not having the respect of other male administrators in the department, who look at my job as unimportant or necessary”.
Glass Ceiling	12	
Token Woman	5	
Queen Bee Syndrome	4	
Time Commitment	193	
Long Hours	100	“I think the hours are very long and having a family can be a very hard thing to do for someone like myself that works many hours”.
Balancing Work/Family	93	
Dealing with People	106	
Fellow Employees (personnel issues)	22	
People in General	16	“Working with young administrators who want the title, but don’t necessarily want to do the work.”
University Administration	13	
Student Athletes	10	
Dealing with People	106	
Parents	5	“Dealing with parent complaints”.
Media	1	
Groupies	1	
Coaching Responsibilities	80	
Compliance	32	“I don’t enjoy compliance investigation”.
Fundraising/Budgeting	22	
Game Mgt/Event Planning	7	“Compliance – all too consuming”.
Marketing/Promotion	5	
Meetings	5	
Recruiting	2	“Fundraising because I haven’t had a lot of experience”.
Personnel Evaluations	2	
Scheduling	1	
Student Development	1	“Event planning”
Reserving Vehicles	1	
Ordering Food	1	
Decorating	1	“Game management”

Table 5
Greatest Challenges

Greatest Challenges	Responses	Sample Comments
Gender Specific	488	<p>“Earning respect of head coaches in specific sports (football, men’s basketball, baseball”.</p> <p>“Overcoming the stereotype that men are better at overseeing an athletic program. Being respected as a qualified professional in this area”.</p> <p>Proving that as a young administrator I know what I am doing and gaining respect from Male co-workers that could be my farther”.</p> <p>“Wanting to be successful and wanting to have a family”.</p> <p>“Life balance – expectation to Work full-time and be at many events, while I have family commitments”.</p> <p>“Lack of communication among our senior staff“.</p>
Lack of Respect	114	
Prove Myself	58	
Advocating for Women	44	
Stereotype	38	
Glass Ceiling	37	
Gender Equity – Compensation	32	
Not Being Taken Seriously	30	
Old Boys Network	29	
Dealing with Male Attitudes	28	
Lack of Female Leadership Positions	26	
Not having a Voice	21	
Male Dominated Environment	18	
Queen Bee Syndrome	13	
Time Commitment	139	
Work & Family	127	
Long Hours	13	
Communication	33	
Fellow Colleagues (Personnel Issues)	18	
Men’s Athletic Teams	5	
Donors	4	
Administration on Campus	3	
People in General	3	

Table 6
Advice

Advice	Responses	Sample Comments
Work Hard	112	<p>“Work hard and work smart. Don’t be afraid to try new things”.</p>
Be Confident	87	
Develop a Network	74	<p>“Be confident no matter who is in the room. Find your voice and find it fast”.</p>
Gain Experience	41	
Internships	17	<p>“Network and find strong mentors; male or female”.</p>
Volunteer	14	
Be prepared	10	
Balance Work & Life	36	<p>“While a student, take every opportunity to assist in the athletic department. If there is no position, work study or</p>
Find a Mentor	35	

Continue your Education	23	internship, volunteer and keep copious notes. Also, ask as Many people within the profession how they got there.
Attend Conferences	22	

Table 7
Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

Short-Term Goals	Responses	Sample Comments
To Advance within Intercollegiate Athletics	202	
Athletic Director	118	“I would like to be an athletic director and just see if I enjoy the small, medium, or large sized schools the most”.
Assistant Athletic Director	34	
Associate Athletic Director	30	
Administration (not specific)	20	
Stay in Current Position	143	“Maintain my current position as athletic director”.
Retire	59	“I am nearing retirement, but have goals for our institution, particularly in facility improvements before I retire”.
Leaving Athletics	26	“After 35 years in this Profession I would like to pursue a job in an area outside of intercollegiate athletics”.
Long-Term Goals	Responses	Sample Comments
Administration	233	
Athletic Director	182	“To be an AD if the location, position, university/college is the right fit or to remain at my current institution or other high level institution and help to raise that department to a high level of success”.
Stay in Current Position (Admin)	67	
Associate Athletic Director	36	
Senior Woman Administrator	20	
Retire	49	“Retire from my administrative responsibilities knowing I have positively influenced and enhanced opportunities for females in sports”.
To be Successful	31	“To have a successful career helping others succeed in college and later in life”.
Obtain a Job Outside of Athletics	27	“Move into full-time faculty position, away from athletics”.
Impact Lives of Students	16	“My ultimate career goal is to continue to assist our athletes in finding and securing a job after they graduate and to take our academic component to the next level.

hard (112), be confident (87), develop a network (74), gain experience (41), balance work and family (36), find a mentor (35), continue your education (23) and attend conferences (22). These results do not support Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) who reported relevant experience was the number one response that women provided to other women who aspired to become NCAA Division I Athletic Directors. Women in this study tended to focus on working hard, being confident and developing a network before gaining experience. However, working hard was not defined when mentioned by these women and it could be they meant hours worked or positions worked which lends itself to gaining experience.

Short-Term and Long-Term Career Goals

The women reported a total of 470 responses related to short-term career goals in intercollegiate athletic administration in the next 3-5 years. The responses created a total of eight themes. Following researcher debriefing, a total of 40 responses were deleted, decreasing the number of themes to four, representing 430 responses. Table 7 provides a summary of what the women said their career goals in intercollegiate athletics were for the next 3-5 years and themes with sample comments. The women's career goals in intercollegiate athletic administration included advance within intercollegiate athletic administration (202), stay in current position (143), retire (59), and leave athletics (26). It is positive to see how many women want to advance within intercollegiate athletic administration. This shows promise that as more women enter the field there may be more mentors to assist young women to advance through the ranks as well. More female mentors may provide a greater chance of building a network of women who may produce an old girls network (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Young, 1990). It is also promising to see the number of women who want to stay in their current position as they can show the young and inexperienced women the ropes.

The women provided a total of 459 responses related to long-term career goals in intercollegiate athletic administration. The responses created a total of six themes. Following researcher debriefing, a total of four responses were deleted, decreasing the number of themes to four, representing 455 responses. Table 7 provides a summary of what the participants said concerning their ultimate long-term career goal and themes with sample comments. The women's long-term career goal themes included staying in intercollegiate athletic administration (233), retire (49), be successful (31), get a job outside of athletics (27), and impact the lives of students (16). Again, it is promising to see women wanting to stay in intercollegiate athletic administration and be successful. The research in business supports the need to set goals for career advancement. Kreitner and Kinicki (2012) indicate that successful people, regardless of their achievements, tend to have one thing in common and that is being goal oriented. Setting career goals is a key component of the career advancement process.

Implications

Several practical implications for women wanting to work in intercollegiate athletics emanate from this study. First, education is important. More than 66% of these women obtained a master's degree. For those early in their careers, continuing to obtain as much experience as possible through internships and volunteer work is critical. Along with the Master's degree and experience it is important to work hard, stay confident, and develop a network. Working hard and staying confident may help diminish the stereotype that women do not have the necessary skills to work in a leadership position in intercollegiate athletes. Related to this type of stereotype is the disrespect that comes with the position while constantly proving oneself. In addition, surrounding one's self with other executive level women is important as it can become hard to deal with the old boy's network. It is important to continue building the old girls network as this may encourage more women to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletic administration.

Second, women indicated that being able to work with people was very enjoyable. Women entering this field must have good interpersonal skills and want to work with people including student athletes, colleagues, administrators, coaches, community members and alumni. If a woman does not like to work within people this may not be the job for them.

Third, be prepared for the lack of females in the profession. Lack of female administrators may lead to three possible barriers for women. The lack of females in intercollegiate athletic administration has been attributed to stereotypes (Grappendorf, Lough, & Griffin, 2004). Grappendorf, Lough and Griffin found that about half of female intercollegiate athletic administrators attributed stereotypes as a reason why there is a lack of females. There are specific gender stereotypes that directly relate to leadership and are described best through the social role theory. The social role theory indicated there are communal and agentic attributes. Women are more stereotyped to have communal attributes which include sensitive, nurturing, sympathetic, warm, and kind. With these communal attributes women face the lack of respect and providing themselves which were the top two responses of the gender specific challenges women faced within this study. Thus, these stereotypical behaviors indicate women have greater difficulty of attaining top leadership roles and greater difficulties in being viewed as an effective leader (Eagley, 2007).

Another area of concern with the lack of females is the lack of mentoring. Mentoring has been instrumental in the upward mobility of women within intercollegiate athletics (Bower & Bennett, 2011; 2010; Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002; Young, 1990). Young (1990) showed that athletic administrators supported the notion of mentoring and networking as an avenue for career progress. Bower and Bennett (2011) reported that career functions of mentoring such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, and challenging assignments.

The final area of concern with the lack of females is the lack of opportunity to build female networks. Networking is very similar to mentoring in terms of support and encouragement, professional acceptance, new contacts, career advice and professional advancement (Young, 1990). With a lack of females there is a lack of opportunity to build an old girls network (Acosta & Carpenter, 1984, 1986, 1988). Young (1990) reported that female administrators indicated that there was evidence of the development of an old girls' network. Acosta and Carpenter (1984, 1986, 1988) cited the weakness of an old girls network as a reason for the decline in women administrative positions. The mentoring relationship and an old girls network can be a critical factor in educating, and retaining female athletic administrators. The female athletic administrator has a definite influence on the females planning to enter or advance in the profession. The more female intercollegiate athletic administrators in the field, the more opportunities exist to have a support system for building mentoring relationships and networks that can lead to success.

Fourth, women expressed the importance of working hard. Grappendorf, Lough, and Griffin (2004) indicated that female athletic directors often feel more pressure and more scrutinized which leads to longer hours to prove themselves and to eliminate stereotypes they face because they are women. Thus, women entering this field must realize the job required long hours. A woman must be willing to sacrifice or learn to balance work, family, and a social life.

Finally, goal setting is extremely important in career advancement. The majority of research on goal setting is conducted in the area of business. Career advancement is based on Goal Setting Theory which indicates the important key role is motivation. Locke and Latham (2002), the leading theorists in goal setting, define a goal as one in which the individual is attempting to accomplish an aim of action. To obtain the goal one must have a commitment and determination to set the goal (Robbin & Coulter, 2011). Goals must also be achievable and important enough for one to provide sufficient desire to initiate the action needed to achieve that goal (Kavoo-Linge, Sikalieh, & VanRensburg, 2011). What these women stated within this study reinforces the importance of setting both short-term and long-term career goals.

Conclusion

Overall, this study provided valuable information for women wanting to enter the intercollegiate athletic administration field. Women wishing to pursue a career in intercollegiate athletic administration may face a number of challenges, but acknowledging the voices of the women within this study, both men and women can begin to understand some of the steps needed to maximize women's contributions to this field.

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