Final Report for

CAGE: The Coaching and Gender Equity Project

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by

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# Final Report for CAGE: The Coaching and Gender Equity Project

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The study presented here provides policy-relevant research on the decline of women in the coaching of women’s collegiate athletic teams. The decline is substantial: 90 percent of collegiate women’s teams were coached by women in 1972, a figure that dwindled steadily over time to a current level of around 44 percent (Acosta and Carpenter 2004). In other words, today’s women athletes are less than half as likely to have a woman coach as in the past. The basic fact of the decline is surprising given that the pool of prospective women coaches – among women student athletes – has expanded over 10-fold since the passage of Title IX in 1972.

The decline is of concern for several reasons:

- The quality of coaching is low relative to a situation where large numbers of men and women are in the talent pool.
- Gender equity has declined in this area during a period when substantial gains were experienced in other professions.
- Women student athletes have relatively few women coaches serving as role models, hence may avoid athletics-related professions entirely.

There are two overarching principles available to think about how we might reverse the decline. One principle of that of ‘integration.’ With a vision of integration, the end-point would be a situation where student athletes, regardless of gender, are equally likely to have a woman or man as their coach. Unfortunately, men’s athletics has proved particularly difficult for women to enter as coaches, although somewhat greater success has been experienced in the administration of collegiate athletics, where women represent around one-third of employees. Further integration is both possible and arguably desirable in terms of athletics administration.

The other principle that might be applied to envision progress is that of ‘separate but equal,’ whereby men’s teams would typically be coached by men, and women’s teams by women. Title IX, which permits the gender segregation of athletic teams, does not apply to coaches and athletic administrators. Therefore, coaches and administrators fall under traditional anti-discrimination laws, so separate but equal hiring per se is almost certainly illegal.

Nonetheless, measures to increase the percentage of women’s teams coached by women may be desirable for two reasons:

- Women coaches of women’s teams may serve as role models, drawing more girls into coaching and athletics administration, and thereby reversing the decline.
- To the extent women continue to be shut out of positions coaching men’s teams, reversing the decline of women coaching women’s team may be a more realistic and attainable goal in the short- to intermediate-term.
Although the principle of integration is most consistent with American ideals, and should therefore represent a long-term goal and vision, we believe explicit movement to reverse the decline within women’s athletics is desirable at present.

To provide relevant policy prescriptions for improving the present situation requires an understanding of why the decline occurred. We therefore analyzed the decline of women in the coaching of women’s intercollegiate athletic teams and the role of women in athletic administration by:

1. Considering the body of historical evidence,
2. Administering and analyzing focus groups with women coaches and athletic administrators,
3. Administering and analyzing focus groups with women student athletes, and

In general, the findings reported here regarding the decline can be classified into the following categories: sex discrimination, extreme workloads, family-unfriendly jobs, and the fact that race and sexual orientation remain salient.

The historical evidence suggests that *sex discrimination* played a central role in driving the decline. As money flowed into women’s athletics, men as coaches and athletic administrators tended to favor hiring men into what had become in many cases ‘breadwinner’ jobs. As the coach and athletic administrator focus groups further suggested, the ability of men to obtain an increasing proportion of coaching positions with women’s teams was fostered in part by the largely informal and poorly defined career tracks surrounding athletics in general. Indeed, the student athletes who were considering careers in coaching had no clear understanding of how to successfully enter the profession. When “who you know” becomes as important as “what you know,” discriminatory attitudes can loom large in hiring decisions.

In addition, the ways in which athletics programs are administered may play a role in fostering sex discrimination. The coach and athletic administrator focus groups suggest that Senior Women Administrators (SWAs) are often excluded from ‘hard’ decisions, including financing and physical plant decisions, since these are not exclusively ‘women’s issues.’ To the extent information is shared informally, and particularly in the men’s room or on the golf course, SWAs may also be excluded unintentionally from information sharing and decision making.

Sex discrimination was not only found among coaches and administrators. Perhaps the most surprising finding from the student athlete focus groups was the existence of a high level of discriminatory or stereotypical attitudes among female athletes, most of whom favored male over female coaches. Unless these attitudes among female athletes are changed, schools who favor men in the hiring of coaches (and particularly head coaches) will enjoy a competitive recruiting advantage.

We also found that *extreme workloads* help to explain the decline. The coaches and athletic administrators in the focus groups described their situation as involving “jobs that
never end,” while the student athletes described their own coaches as leading “lives that are crazy.” The Census 2000 analysis supported these claims, finding that full-time men coaches were working around 2600 hours per year, with women in similar positions putting in 2400 hours per year, far above the averages for women or men in other occupations.

Extreme workloads are in part responsible for jobs in coaching and athletic administration being viewed as family-unfriendly. The coaches mentioned difficulties performing their jobs while having any kind of life outside of the job. Many of the students believed that jobs in coaching were out of the question precisely because they rule out substantive commitments to family. When we considered full-time employees, the Census 2000 analysis supported the conclusions of the women student athletes: although men in coaching were just as likely as other men to be married, the women were far less likely (only 29.8%) than other full-time employed women (55.3%) to be married. Further, the men in coaching were around six percent less likely than other employed men to be rearing children, while the women in coaching were less than half as likely (17.8%) as other full-time employed women (44.6%) to be rearing children. The long hours demanded by the jobs are part of this story, but as the coaches and athletic administrators told us, other parts lie in the unpredictability of job demands in coaching, the family-unfriendly timing of practices, games and recruiting trips, as well as leaders and institutional cultures that are typically not welcoming of family commitments.

Fortunately, some schools support the family commitments of coaches. Support appears in environments where fathers feel free to integrate their children into their coaching and administrative work, and in settings where athletic directors are explicitly supportive of the family commitments of employees. In light of the census evidence, however, these schools undoubtedly remain the exception rather than the rule.

Additionally, race and sexual orientation remain salient. Regarding race, the proportion of non-white full-time coaches, particularly among the ranks of women, is very low. Over 84 percent of men who are full-time coaches are white, as are over 90 percent of comparable women. By way of contrast, as of the 2003-2004 academic year, just over 70 percent of NCAA male student athletes, and just under 80 percent of relevant women, were white (NCAA 2005, pp. 33,34). Across both male and female athletics, student athletes of color are being lost in the pipeline to coaching at about twice the rate of white student athletes.

Perhaps linked to the family-unfriendly nature of current positions in coaching and athletic administration, particularly for women, the Census 2000 analysis found a relatively high proportion – perhaps as high as six percent – of lesbian women among the full-time women coaches. Although many possible explanations for this finding are relevant, only further research could shed light on which explanations are most salient. What the focus group results suggest, however, are that the six percent figure holds in a context where women of same-sex orientation (or even suspected of holding such an orientation) experience substantial discrimination in both hiring and in treatment if hired.
If we take as our goals the short-term objectives of increasing the prevalence of women coaching women’s athletic teams and of improving the representation of women among athletic administrators, as well as the long-term objective of integrating coaching and athletic administration, then the findings here support four broad policy conclusions:

1) Increase the numbers of women in the coaching pipeline at all levels of athletics.
2) Formalize hiring practices, decision-making processes, training and development, and the career paths of coaches.
3) Make coaching and careers in athletic administration both more welcoming of and flexible in response to family commitments.
4) Provide a more inclusive environment within athletic departments and across athletic teams and organizations for women, people of color, and individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation.

Specific policies and practices related to each of these four items are as follows:

1) Increase the numbers of women in the coaching pipeline at all levels of athletics.

To achieve either the short- or long-term objectives stated above, both female and male student athletes require more exposure to women in coaching. Towards that end:

i) Women should be encouraged to coach athletic teams beginning with elementary school students, continuing through high school, and as collegiate athletes:
   i. Colleges and universities could benefit from stronger ties to their community to the extent coaching efforts are formalized to link women collegiate athletes and younger children.
   ii. Mothers could be encouraged to coach their children’s teams, perhaps through media efforts.
   iii. High schools could initiate programs to encourage young women or women as parents to develop as coaches.

ii) Coaching internship programs should be developed to provide formalized coaching training and development of women student athletes at the collegiate level.

2) Formalize hiring practices, decision-making processes, training and development, and the career paths of coaches.

The informality of present practices allows sex discrimination to play a major role in hiring, decision-making, training and development, and in career paths, thereby limiting opportunities for women interested in or already in coaching and athletic administration, and makes the career path uncertain for prospective coaches. To alleviate this situation:

i) Hiring procedures should be formalized for all paid positions, across all three divisions of the NCAA, with active affirmative action components to ensure both that the pool of prospective candidates is large, and that each candidate is provided an equal opportunity to be hired.

ii) Decision-making regarding finances, physical plant, and other decisions crucial to the health and development of athletic programs
should be made transparent, and actively involve all affected administrators and staff.

iii) Training and development processes for coaches and athletic administrators should be formalized such that job requirements include standardized, formal learning components (e.g., an advanced degree), and formal coaching certification processes (e.g., through the professional association for individual sports). Colleges and universities would need to agree, perhaps through the NCAA, to adhere to standardized requirements and certification (perhaps with a deadline after which all new hires would require certification).

iv) Select colleges and universities would need to further develop existing programs for the training of coaches and athletic administrators.

v) Colleges and universities in general should financially support the participation of women coaches and athletic administrators in programs to foster the networking and development of women coaches through, for example, the NACWAA Fall Forum, NACWAA/HERS Institute for Administrative Advancement, the NCAA’s Women Coaches Academy, the NCAA Fellows Leadership Development Program, or specific college and university programs.

3) Make coaching and careers in athletic administration both more welcoming of and flexible in response to family commitments.

To achieve either the short- or long-term objectives provided here, athletic departments need to discover ways to make coaching and athletic careers more consistent with family commitments. Such efforts might include:

i) Set practice times and schedules, game and tournament schedules and locations, and administrative meeting times in conjunction with affected head and assistant coaches and trainers.

ii) Support university- and college-wide initiatives to make each institution more responsive to family responsibilities. Relevant initiatives concern:
   i. Paid family leave policies.
   ii. Reduced hours options, on a temporary or long-term basis.
   iii. Part-time hiring options.
   iv. On-site, near-site or subsidized child care and after-school care arrangements.

iii) Provide a supportive climate for athletic department employees with family commitments by:
   i. Providing a written statement from the athletic director in support of family commitments across the ranks of all employees and student athletes.
   ii. Providing options for family involvement in various athletic activities.
   iii. Providing a welcoming, and safe, environment for children to be present during work hours on an as-needed basis.
iv. Ensuring that work quality, and not face time, is regularly monitored, reviewed, and rewarded.

v. Encouraging athletic department employees to cover for each other on an emergency or more regular basis.

vi. Ensuring that meetings end as scheduled.

4) Provide a more inclusive environment within athletic departments and across athletic teams and organizations for women, people of color, and individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation.

Athletics remains one of the few arenas in society where denigrating remarks regarding gender remain commonplace and accepted – as when a male athlete performs at a sub-par level and is labeled a ‘girl’ for the performance. For women of color, and for those of same-sex orientation, athletics can be even less welcoming. Collegiate athletics should follow the lead of many private and public sector organizations to achieve the objectives stated above through the following initiatives:

i) Communicate the college or university’s sexual harassment and diversity policies to all associated with athletics.

ii) Provide diversity training regarding gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, to student athletes, coaches and athletic department administrators.

iii) Provide affirmative action training and procedures to hiring committees or relevant individuals within athletic departments.

iv) Provide diversity training as part of staff and student athlete orientation programs.

v) Schedule practices, games and tournaments around important holidays for various religions, or permit excused absences for those holidays.

vi) Support or initiate community programs to foster the involvement of girls, children of color, and children with disabilities in athletics.

vii) Annually monitor and publicize the performance of the athletic department in terms of the diversity of student athletes, coaches and other administrative personnel.

viii) At the level of the NCAA, diversity objectives should be expanded from the current focus on “enhancing opportunities for ethnic minorities and women” to include improved opportunities for individuals of diverse sexual orientation.
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1: Setting the Stage

Introduction
In the three decades since the passage of Title IX, women’s participation in collegiate athletics has expanded dramatically, yet the entrance of women into collegiate coaching positions has not kept pace. Less than two percent of men’s teams, and only 44.1 percent of women’s teams have women as head coaches, and the latter is close to the lowest figure in the post Title IX era, declining from a level of 90 percent in 1972. Given most coaches emerge from the ranks of collegiate and high school athletes, this finding is surprising and disturbing.

Where we do find women coaches, they are concentrated in Division II and III institutions, and as assistant rather than head coaches. Women are nearly absent from the position of collegiate Athletic Director (AD). There exists little research addressing the reasons behind women’s under representation in collegiate coaching. Even less is known about how to attract, develop, and retain women coaches. What is more certain is that a large number of talented women are either not currently seeking and obtaining positions as coaches and ADs or are not remaining in such positions. This systematic loss of talent reduces the overall quality of coaching and athletics in the United States.

Colleges and universities have an interest in improving this situation to:
  • enlarge the talent pool from which coaches are drawn,
  • improve the overall quality of coaching, and
  • enhance gender equity across the ranks of their employees.

In addition, women coaches serve as role models for women athletes of all ages, and are particularly visible given the relative scarcity of professional women’s athletic teams in the U.S. As role models, expanding the numbers of women coaches at the collegiate level would:
  • increase the probability that young girls will take up athletics and therefore enjoy related health and character-building benefits, and
  • increase the likelihood that collegiate women athletes will perceive coaching as a viable option for their future.

The CAGE project generated research designed to help answer the question: *why are women under represented in the ranks of collegiate coaches and ADs?* The purpose in addressing this question is to shed light on methods for improving gender equity in collegiate athletics. The new research provided here involves an analysis of data from focus groups with women coaches and athletic administrators to get a front-line perspective on the issues, focus groups with women student athletes to help us understand why those individuals tend not to go into coaching, and an analysis of data from the 2000 U.S. census to gain insight into the extent and overarching extent of the problems across full-time and part-time women and men coaches. To the extent the research provides schools and professional associations with viable policies and practices to improve gender equity, the project will have succeeded.
Background
Before Title IX was passed into law in 1972, collegiate women’s athletics received minimal funding and involved a relative handful of students. Only 16,000 women were involved in varsity athletics, and while 90 percent of their coaches were women, most were volunteers.³ Title IX led to a dramatic expansion of both funding and the number of collegiate women athletes, with the latter rising over 10-fold to 163,000 by 1999.⁴

In contrast to other civil rights legislation, Title IX embraced the principle of “separate but equal” for athletic teams. Physical differences between men and women were assumed to exist, and the separation of men’s and women’s teams takes these differences into account. This separation raises an important question regarding the representation of women coaches: If we view the integration of women into coaching as desirable, does this mean we wish to see women coaching more women’s teams or both women and men’s teams? Attempts to move women into men’s athletics at the intercollegiate level have proved almost impossible;⁵ however, there are numerous advantages associated with increasing the representation of women’s coaches and administrators in female athletics. We therefore focus, as does most of the relevant literature, on the possibilities for improving the proportion of women coaching women’s teams and for women rising in athletic administration. The advantages of this approach are two-fold: girls and young women are more likely to interact with women as role models, and it will almost certainly be easier to increase the proportion of women coaching women as opposed to the proportion coaching men.

A year prior to passage of Title IX, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) was founded to govern and promote women’s athletics. The AIAW grew for over a decade. However, Title IX was silent on the question of gender equity in coaching and athletics administration. In part for that reason, when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) began holding national championships for women in 1981-82, the AIAW folded, and women’s leadership roles in women’s athletics were diminished as the NCAA became the governing body for the vast majority of men’s and women’s intercollegiate sports.

The role of the NCAA in the decline of women as coaches and athletic administrators is complex. On the one hand, the NCAA oversaw the period from 1982 to 2004 when the percentage of women’s teams coached by women declined from 52.4 percent to 44.1 percent. On the other hand, the only major increase in that proportion during that time was a 3.8 percent increase (to 56.2 percent) in 1983, immediately following the initiation of NCAA governance.⁶ Further, as early as 1981, the NCAA asked participating colleges and universities to designate a Primary Woman Administrator, a term that was altered to Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) in 1990.⁷ The NCAA also began collecting and publicizing information on the gender and race composition of athletics personnel during the 1990-1991 academic year.⁸ By 2001, the NCAA initiated a gender equity plan for its own national office that involved the appointment of a SWA.⁹ The term Senior Woman Administrator is interesting because there is no comparable title for men; nonetheless, the development of the position represented an explicit attempt to improve the status of
women in the administration of athletics. Regardless of any earlier role, it is clear from current policy and initiatives that the NCAA seeks to halt, and reverse, the decline.

Finances also played a role in the decline. Women’s athletics has enjoyed a relatively continuous infusion of new funding for two reasons. First is Title IX, which requires institutions to devote substantial monetary resources to women’s athletics. Second is the rise of television, advertising and game revenues, mainly due to the increasing popularity of intercollegiate football and basketball. As a result of Title IX, women’s athletics can command a sizable portion of the hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into the NCAA and member institutions from television contracts. As a result of these twin factors, women’s intercollegiate athletics went from a situation of minimal funding prior to Title IX, to a situation today where the average Division I institution spends over three million dollars annually on women’s teams. Indeed, if we exclude football, basketball, and ice hockey, average expenditures on men’s and women’s athletic teams, as well as head coach salaries across men’s and women’s teams, are quite similar.\(^\text{10}\)

As funding increased, women’s coaching positions moved from volunteer status to jobs that often permit an employee to financially support a family. Men in the U.S. have traditionally sought such “bread-winner” jobs,\(^\text{11}\) so may have been drawn into the coaching of women’s teams as a result of increased pay.\(^\text{12}\)

The increases in funding for women’s athletics occurred simultaneous with a general societal shift among professionals towards the “ideal worker norm.”\(^\text{13}\) The ideal worker is someone who dedicates his or her entire life to a career, working longs hours for periods of years or even decades to obtain relevant educational credentials and work up the career ladder without breaks or long vacations. The ideal worker norm dictates that serious employees not have substantial time commitments to family or other activities external to the job. Evidence for the expansion of the ideal worker norm in recent decades includes the finding that the longest workdays are now associated with the highest wage employees while, as recently as 1971, low wage employees worked the longest days.\(^\text{14}\)

Ideal worker careers are typically inconsistent with childrearing responsibilities. Child care in the home still mainly falls on women, even if men are performing more child care than was true in the past,\(^\text{15}\) and it remains true that young women in the workplace are expected to become mothers and to ramp down work commitments for childrearing. For a specific example, consider academic positions at U.S. colleges and universities. Studies show that women who bear children prior to receiving a Ph.D. are 29 percent less likely to enter a tenure-track position than women without children.\(^\text{16}\) By extension, it seems likely that many women who wish to raise children avoid entry into coaching or careers in athletic administration. Continuing the academic example, a recent study of U.S. college and university faculty in chemistry and English found over 10 percent of men, but more than 16 percent of women, stayed single to achieve academic success, while an overlapping 12.6 percent of men and 25.6 percent of women had fewer children than desired in order to achieve academic success.\(^\text{17}\) Such behaviors are labeled “bias avoidance,” because there is a bias against caregiving among professionals, and bias
avoidance involves strategies permitting the individual to escape career penalties associated with family commitments. Although evidence of bias avoidance per se does not exist for women coaches and athletic administrators, it is telling that in a sample of 20 men and nine women serving as Athletic Directors for Division IA institutions, all of the men but none of the women had children.\textsuperscript{18}

Connected to the ideal worker norm, anecdotal evidence suggests the hours and travel required to be successful in these positions are daunting and also largely incompatible with childrearing responsibilities. Because student athletes need weekday time in the classroom, and because fans are typically employed during weekdays, events and travel may frequently interfere with traditional family times such as evenings or weekends. Previous studies show elevated levels of marital unhappiness among dual-earner couples when the wife works weekends but the husband does not,\textsuperscript{19} suggesting that coaching raises levels of work-family conflict for women. The role of work-family conflict in the decline of women coaches and athletic administrators therefore warrants close scrutiny.

In addition to work-family concerns, athletics are intimately connected to notions of masculinity.\textsuperscript{20} Men who are athletes, coaches of men’s teams, or administrators in men’s athletic departments fit these norms. Women involved in athletics deviate from these norms in some way. Women who are serious athletes or coaches may be stereotyped as lesbians. Men who coach women may have their masculinity questioned. And men who report to women within athletic programs may see the situation as improper or even humiliating. Further, while male athletes can fit society’s ideal type by working out and bulking up, women who do so move themselves away from society’s ideal body type for women. Finally, women who enter coaching and athletic administration may be subject to sexual harassment, and men who coach women may open themselves to accusations of such behavior. The effects of masculine norms on the entry, retention and promotion of women as coaches and athletic administrators are poorly understood at present, but of obvious importance.

A related effect is, however, well documented: men athletic directors tend more often to hire men. Male athletic directors hire 4.2 percent fewer female than male coaches in Division III, a figure that rises to 9 percent in Division I institutions.\textsuperscript{21} It could be that men, more so than women, tend to gender stereotype and discriminate in hiring.\textsuperscript{22} However, it is also plausible to suggest that women coaches may seek out positions with women as their superiors, believing that greater levels of support might exist in such situations. Regardless of the specific reason, it seems safe to conclude that we cannot understand the decline of women coaches without analyzing the role of women in athletic administration.

Another piece of the puzzle surrounding women coaches concerns the relatively recent development and informal career tracks within the field. In many professional occupations, such as academics, the law, accounting, medicine and management, the field itself was well-developed in terms of requisite education and relevant career tracks by the 1960s at the latest. Women could therefore enter these occupations with a fairly accurate knowledge of the formal requirements for success. With coaching, educational
requirements and career tracks are far less developed. Formalization of relevant practices and procedures is particularly problematic given continuing expansion in the area, with the number of intercollegiate women’s teams rising from 7,247 in 1998, to 8,402 teams in 2004. Nonetheless, the prospective role of formal licensing may be worth analyzing. Of nine major women’s sports in Division I schools, only one – soccer – showed an increase in the proportion of women coaches between 1977 and 2004, and soccer is the only sport with a formalized and widely accepted licensing process for coaches.

In the absence of formal career tracks, informal networking and mentoring take on added importance in terms of individual development and learning, acquiring a reputation, obtaining positions, and gaining resources within an institution. For that reason, interviews with men and women coaches and athletic administrators find them emphasizing the need to acquire a mentor and become well-networked. The National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) has facilitated these processes by holding an annual Fall Forum for women coaches and administrators and, since 1995 and in conjunction with HERS-Mid America, by sponsoring annual Institute for Administrative Advancement sessions. It is not known at present, however, whether women achieve greater levels of success with female as opposed to male mentors, or whether networking is most efficient through coaching associations for specific sports, the NACWAA, the NCAA, or inside of a particular institution or league.

Related to networking is the function of role models. At present, we do not know whether a woman who has a female collegiate coach is more likely to enter the ranks of coaching, nor whether a girl who had a female coach in high school is more likely to be recruited by a female as opposed to a male coach at the college and university level. What is known from previous studies suggests that women role models are particularly salient for recruiting women into nontraditional occupations, such as science. As suggested earlier, women in athletics, coaching and athletic administration, all arguably fall under the rubric “nontraditional,” suggesting that women as role models may play a crucial part in any attempt to reverse the decline of women coaches.

Finally, many of these issues are relevant to but distinct for women of color among the ranks of coaches and administrators. The NCAA has made the promotion of African-American coaches and athletic administrators a priority since the early 1990s, and regularly collects relevant data. Yet, among Division I schools (excluding Historically Black Institutions), only 2.9 percent of Athletic Directors and 7.0 percent of SWAs were African American by the 2001-2002 academic year. Research focusing on the decline of women coaches needs to address issues of race/ethnicity explicitly to ensure that any resulting policies serve to broaden the pool of prospective and active coaches and athletic administrators across lines of both gender and ethnicity.

**Research Approach**
A relatively complete answer to the question of why are women under represented in the ranks of coaches and ADs requires that we understand the issues of recruitment, retention, and promotion. The primary tool we use here for answering these questions is the focus group. Guided focus groups are ideal for developing hypotheses grounded in
the experiences of the relevant groups. Focus groups help individuals to step back and examine their circumstances and possibilities from a broad perspective, helping open doors to ideas that would otherwise remain hidden because individuals take their situation so much for granted on a day-to-day basis. We suspect, for example, that issues surrounding the long hours and irregular schedules of coaches and athletic administrators may help to explain women’s under representation, yet the relevance of these possibilities remains undeveloped in the literature to date. In a related vein, potential work-family conflicts may alter relevant career decisions, but the topic has largely been neglected. Somewhat differently, stereotyping of women involved in athletics may play a role here, yet the subject is largely unexplored. Sex discrimination and the importance of women as role models has received considerable attention, as described earlier, but the specific mechanisms through which these operate warrant further exploration.

To obtain information from potential coaches and administrators, we administered two focus groups with women coaches and athletic administrators at the NACWAA Fall Forum in 2004, and two more focus groups with individuals in similar positions at the NCAA National Convention in 2005. Focus groups were administered at the two conferences due to suspicions that members of NACWAA and of the NCAA might provide different focus group results (although this turned out not to be the case).

The major purpose of these groups was to gather information on the retention and promotion of women in coaching and athletic administration. The complete focus group instrument is provided in Appendix 1, and the questions centered around:

- Job characteristics in coaching or athletic administration.
- Career path and resources and networks supporting that path.
- Working time hours, arrangements, and effects/strategies for combining with personal life.
- Gender stereotypes, discrimination and harassment.
- Organizational climate at institution of employment.
- Sports and schools that are more or less accessible for women.
- Programs, policies and resources that would improve gender equity in the field.
- Visions of gender equity (women coaching women vs. the gender integration of coaching).

A final question concerned the racial/ethnic composition of each focus group. The groups that participated in the focus groups were therefore comprised of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>#Participants</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>Non-caucasian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NACWAA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCAA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>1+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, four focus groups were administered to student athletes, with two of the groups at an NCAA division I school, and with one each at a division II and a division III institution.
These focus groups were intended to address pipeline issues, or the attractiveness of careers in coaching and athletic administration to individuals in a strong position for movement into these careers. The student athlete focus group instrument (see Appendix 2) addressed the following issues:

- Involvement and experiences to date with coaching or athletic administration.
- Characteristics of good coaches (including gender if relevant).
- Stereotypes around women athletes.
- Gender differences in resources provided to men’s and women’s teams.
- Future coaching plans, and reasons for pursuing or avoiding.
- Programs, policies and resources that would attract student athletes into coaching and athletic administration.

Again, a final question concerned race/ethnicity. The composition of these groups was as follows:

Table 1.2: Composition of Student Athlete Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>#Participants</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>Non-caucasian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I (2 groups)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus group data were transcribed and recoded to protect the confidentiality of participants, and contact information for participants was destroyed for the same reason. The data was analyzed thematically to identify core issues around the topic of women in collegiate coaching and athletic administration.

A very different way of approaching these issues involved use of the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample from the U.S. Census to estimate usual work hours, marital status, sexual orientation, and the number of dependent children in the home for men and for women in collegiate coaching. For the analysis, we divided coaches by gender and according to part- and full-time employment status as coaches, and provide comparisons both across the ranks of coaches, as well as with men and women in other occupations. The overall sample includes almost 7 million individuals and, out of that group, over 1,000 men reported employment at a college or university as a coach, while just over 350 women reported similar employment. The census analysis can help to inform us as to the general severity of work hours issues, the scope of work-family conflicts, and regarding the sexual orientation of collegiate coaches in the U.S.
2. Coach and Athletic Administrator Focus Groups

The data from the CAGE project Coaches and Administrators focus groups revealed a complex picture regarding the ways in which gender inequities were created, perpetuated, and potentially ameliorated in collegiate athletics. Five analytical areas arose from the focus groups. These are 1) the organization of work (what it’s like to do the job), 2) work/life balance issues, 3) job mobility obstacles, 4) input from the broader culture, and 5) strategies for coping and change. Each of these five areas is discussed separately.

Organization of Work

The focus group results demonstrated that the women involved have a tremendous passion for the job. Many entered their fields because of an initial love for sport. Many were college athletes or had family members (usually fathers) who were their coaches when they were very young. Somewhat differently, many respondents constructed the job as “a caring profession,” similar to the ways women construct jobs as teachers, doctors, and even managers as requiring caring behaviors. The interpersonal aspects of the job (i.e. working with the student athletes) frequently are noted as fulfilling, and help drive the passion for the job. However, many women also noted that the caring aspects of the job diminished considerably as one moved up the hierarchy.

The job is also described frequently as involving “firefighting” or requiring that one wear “many hats.” An outsider, and perhaps some student athletes, might view the job of coaching as routine and repetitive, involving training, practices with set drills, and games where the rules are relatively fixed. For the coaches and athletic administrators, however, the job is anything but routine and predictable. Thus, in addition to the appeal of a caring profession, the job provides high levels of stimulation with little routinization. The job is described as highly fulfilling, yet several individuals noted that fulfillment is best self-generated in the job. Together, these job characteristics are what drew these women to their fields.

*It takes a great deal of passion. It takes a great deal of devotion to the job in order to get the fulfillment. It’s not something you can go in and look at it just simply as a job and to work to accomplish. I mean it takes your entire person to be successful in the world that we’re in and then when you do that you get fulfillment back... But you have to be self-rewarded...*

These comments echo the ideal worker norm, as found in many professional careers, but are distinct in that the norm is highly internalized (e.g., instead of “career progression,” we find the term “self-rewarded”). Despite or perhaps because of the high levels of affinity for and commitment to their jobs, the women cautioned against the potential for burnout.

*I think you if again if you’ll allow me to speak historically if you go back and you look at the women that were in coaching there was a really high burnout rate...*
I'm married with three children and the burnout thing is... About five years ago, my children were 2, 4, and 8 (someone whistles), yeah and I was working just phenomenal hours. I mean, you know, just about got out of the business.

Work/life Balance
As we expected, participants agreed that coaching and athletic administration posed significant work/life balance challenges for job incumbents regardless of their gender. Many professional jobs have such long work hour demands that they are referred to as “jobs that never end.” Indeed this sentiment was expressed strongly and consistently throughout the focus groups. Several participants made reference to there no longer being an off-season.

We were just talking about this other day at my institution that we, I felt maybe five years ago there was a little bit of a down-time maybe even longer than that. It’s not like [that at] all [f, now in] summer I just go go go and I don’t feel like there’s any down time anymore.

What I’ll say is that with the deadlines that come up now with July recruiting for basketball, with August first the new manual coming out with the legislative cycle, we were for awhile getting legislation twice a year, and had all those immediate deadlines and going into effect immediately. That all transitioned for us from having any down time to being a constant twelve month cycle.

While individuals provided a variety of responses to the heavy time demands, no one disagreed with the overall characterization of coaching and athletic administration as “jobs that never end.” Men were seen as both having greater latitude to meet work/life demands either through having a spouse or because they were praised for attending to the needs of their family: the men experienced “daddy privilege” in the workplace.32 For women, family demands were seen consistently in a negative light. Work/life balance issues create preemptive decisions about whom to hire for a job, such that mothers (particularly of young children) were less likely to be hired. These issues and a lack of institutional response also steer women away from jobs in which they know they will garner little support for the complexities of balancing work and life.

I have a daughter that’s an assistant basketball coach and she vacillates back and forth about whether or not she wants to be a Head coach you know. She wants to be the Head Coach (laughter) but then at other times you know she’s traveling all the time. It’s hard to have, to be in a relationship. She’d like to get married and have a family some day. But it’s a tough life. It’s tough for men and women both. Um and somehow I think we’ve just become nuts in this profession and we need to make this profession more family friendly for both men and women.

With some notable exceptions, organizational cultures did not seem to welcome family, but rather treated coaches and administrators as if they were ideal workers, or what Joan Acker (1989) refers to as the “disembodied universal worker.” Men who left work to tend to children received more organizational support in the form of daddy privilege.
Indeed, the findings suggest that “daddy privilege” is distinct from norms around motherhood: mothers, married and single women, and single men were given less latitude than dads to balance work/life in a publicly visible way.

_The majority of the people in athletics were single. They did not get married and have families or what have you. Now I think that’s changing a little bit but even within my own institution. It’s almost, there’s a, there’s almost a sense of, a different sense of expectations for some of the males that are married. I mean it’s okay for them to leave at 4:30 ‘cause their kids have a soccer game or whatever._

Athletic Directors (male and female) were described as having the power to set the tone for how work and life balance is achieved and whether both men and women feel free to publicly acknowledge and care for their families. Ironically, the exercise of daddy privilege can actually help, as a critical mass of men visibly taking on family responsibility can also improve the organizational climate:

…_[O]ur athletic director has done a good job of making it a family oriented department so it’s nothing to come in and find a child somewhere in the building because daycare fell through and one of the admin assistants has them in their office._

_I think [some] departments [are] being sensitive to family issues for both men and women. I mean we have more men in our department now that will bring their child to work with them [on] a day if their wife’s having a, you know, a full day at her job or whatever. So I think there’s lots of things we can do, to still do our work and do it well and make our workplaces more family friendly._

Another key to work/life balance is the necessity of family participation in running the household. However, many women noted that housework can be a great source of conflict and potentially drive relationship dissolution. Choosing the right partner is a common, tongue-in-cheek piece of advice. Household demands of single individuals were very similar to those of women with partners with little participation in household work.

Finally, with regard to work and life, women expressed having more significant limits on geographic mobility, particularly with regard to a partner’s career. This characteristic of the ideal worker – the ability to relocate at the drop of a hat – is often not realistic for many of the women. In addition to a reluctance to uproot children (a scenario which many men would face as well), the women potentially are linked with life partners who also hold high level, high demand jobs and who cannot move or may not desire relocation.

**Job Mobility Obstacles**
The family-related geographic mobility limitations expressed by women also limit their occupational mobility, or the extent to which they are able to rise to positions of authority and prominence in their field. Other factors, however, also help construct a glass ceiling...
that was acknowledged across each of the focus groups. In addition to family considerations, the women cited a lack of mentors as a significant obstacle to job mobility. Conversely, mentors were seen as an invaluable ingredient in one’s success in the field.

*I think what helped me along is having a great mentor, but also in combination with doing various jobs in athletics to get me to where I am.*

Unlike what has been documented in other fields, where some successful women view others as potential competitors, however, women mentors (when they can be found) seemed to be quite welcoming of other up-and-coming women.

*‘Cause the women in the profession have been absolutely excellent. You can pick up the phone and call just about any woman who’s an SWA or even a coach and ask for suggestions or situations or evaluations or whatever and you can get help. I think that’s one of the real plusses of our profession.*

NACWAA was seen as a significant source of mentoring support for women.

*I’ll speak ‘cause I think that is the reason I’m doing what I’m doing today is because of NACWAA. I absolutely believe it’s a phenomenal organization. It reaches out and mentors people in a way. I don’t know of any other professional organization that does it as well as this group does.*

Women from the “older generation” tended to characterize their entrance into the field as having “fallen into it” because of their love of sport and the opportunities created by Title IX. The younger generation, however, had an additional route in through sports management graduate programs.

*I think one of the things that got me to where I am is actually enrolling in [a] sports management graduate program because that really opened up the door for me as far as networking, as far as really learning what it takes to get into the industry.*

The presence of SWAs was also seen as a key to women’s progress in collegiate athletics, although at times it has been devalued.

*In some ways, whether we like it or not, you may or may not agree, the SWA was really a little bit of a token position (group nodding in agreement). I mean my SWA and I know there are some male counterparts that are not happy with it. But you know, and again it’s a very good thing in terms of trying, you have to start somewhere to help women get in the profession.*

Despite some tangible gains over the years, women still comprise a small pool when it comes to hiring and promotion. Women are sometimes included in hiring short-lists to
demonstrate an effort toward gender equity. However, focus group participants believed that many of these efforts were insincere:

I applied, I interviewed for a position two years ago... and I was assured that it was open to me, that I just wasn’t a token woman in the situation. And then when it got down to naming the two finalists that [were] on the campus, I was told that I didn’t have enough experience.

...I used to joke [that] every finalist pool would have one minority, one woman, and two or three white guys, one of whom would get the job (laughter). And so after awhile you realize that, I mean you thought you really had a shot, but you really didn’t.

Discrimination and stereotyping have not disappeared from the scene and continue to inhibit chances for upward mobility. One commonality for women in many male-dominated jobs is the experience of “role encapsulation.” Role encapsulation describes a situation in which an individual is asked to perform tasks more related to their gender than to their job description. For example, when women are asked to get coffee and men are asked to lift heavy boxes, we see evidence of role encapsulation. Role encapsulation is an insidious way to constraint gender equity because it removes women from their organizational role (with authority, skill, and power) and places them in an extra-organizational or familial role that does not garner respect, recognition, or a promotion.

... I have noticed that in working with my male co-workers, I think they have a certain level of expectation of me because of my gender as far as doing things, such as doing a lot of administrative and clerical work: “You have better handwriting and typing,” better phone skills and [they] kind of push those types of duties onto me, assuming that I have, you know, a stronger skill set.

Differential treatment and expectations of women and men seemed to be common with the most egregious of those situations involving sexual harassment.

You know being a coach I definitely feel treated differently as a female than [I would as] a male. And I’ve been in the business and I’ve been you know pretty successful and I still think I get treated differently from officials, [and] from [my] male counterparts at some point. I don’t think it’s as bad as it used to be, probably because I’m older and I just ignore it...

I witnessed [and] experienced harassment from a male who’s a supervisor and I had been privileged all my life to never experience that. I didn’t know how to deal with it. And it was difficult. It was difficult. ...And I was just very strategic but anybody who knew me knew that I was all tore up. My stomach was always upset and I was always very nervous and ironically he did go ahead and get married after that so [it was ended].
Differential treatment is common in many social settings. However, we suspect that it is more severe in collegiate coaching, partly because of the explicit and legally sanctioned gender segregation of sports, but also because athletics is closely linked to notions of masculinity.

Relatedly and not surprisingly, the women believed their authority was less readily accepted and that they needed to work “twice as hard” to make equal gains to men. Younger women felt particularly disadvantaged as their age and gender worked against them. By way of contrast, young men’s gender provided them with an immediate legitimacy not experienced by young women in the field.

\[\text{I think a lot of times men tend to get that respect just because they are men. Especially if they’re working around other men, it tends to be that, “ok you’re a man [so] you probably know it.” It doesn’t matter how young you are you can get the job done. But if you’re a woman, you [have] got to kind of fight against that a lot more. You [have] got... to do your job twice as good and you know and that sort of thing.}\]

Just as in many other occupations, a lack of recognition of women’s skills and knowledge, the rejection of their authority (even by players, as documented in the following chapter), and the need to repeatedly prove oneself, inhibited job mobility even in the absence of explicit, intentional discrimination or harassment. Given the small size of the coaching and athletic administration community, individuals expressed fears of being blackballed should they take official action against discrimination or harassment.

**Input from the Broader Culture**

Discriminatory attitudes and stereotyping are not behaviors limited to the workplace and colleagues. Input from the broader culture also affected the way women experienced their jobs in coaching and athletic administration and the extent to which they were accepted in their field.

Both inside and outside of coaching and athletic administration, society constructs the “proper” incumbent for jobs or sports. That is, we employ gender schemas to jobs. Individuals will make reference to a “male nurse,” because we still expect nurses for the most part to be female. Similarly, we find “women police officers,” “women attorneys,” and “male kindergarten teachers.” Language reveals the gender markings of occupations. One effect of gender schemas is to more readily assume that men are more qualified for many types of jobs, that they are the best candidates for those jobs, and that they can “get it done.” Even female athletes sometimes demonstrate preferences for male coaches based on gender schema (see chapter 3).

\[\text{So it’s the viewpoint of...[who] do you think [is] more valuable? The women’s head coach or a male coach on a lower level. And right now... they think that the male is more valuable coming into our side. And then you know by the Connecticut [women’s basketball team] winning a lot of championships [with a male coach.] you know... recruiting [by a female coach is an issue]. Your}\]
recruits see a male winning the national title. That has a lot to do with their mindset: “Oh, I’m going to go play for a male because they can get it done.”

Although men were viewed as acceptable (and even desirable) as coaches for women’s teams, women were not deemed appropriate to coach men’s teams. Reactions to attempts to integrate coaching have been strong:

Our volleyball coach is female, but she also coaches the men’s volleyball team. ...And the response from our men’s team, the guys who were also on the basketball team, and 6’4”, 6’5”, they quit. [They] quit volleyball. And one of them said [it] was that she was too tough on them (laughter). ... You know I think that because they weren’t use to that face being the head coach, [although] maybe [as] the assistant, and [if there were] a white male in there they wouldn’t have done that. So I think that the fact that you’ve got to go through that testing of authority situation is a problem. If there are more coaches, if there’s more diversity there then maybe that problem won’t be there.

In addition to preferences for male coaches, student athletes seemed to less readily accept women coaches’ authority.

... I think one of the things is that women don’t often let other women drive them the same way that a male would and I think that’s why they accept this kind of coaching from men and then they think: “That’s okay, that’s why I need a male coach...”

...[S]ome women don’t allow women to act like a coach. They have a stereotype [that] you can’t do that. A man can yell at me but you can’t yell at me cause you’re a woman and I think that’s kind of a problem between either players and coaches or female coaches

Preference for men’s over women’s involvement in athletics was also expressed from alumni and fans.

I think when you know I’ve been married for twenty-seven years, been in college coaching for twenty-eight years, I would say the first five to six years you know I actually I had I was on a football search committee, [although] why I got chosen I don’t know, (laughter) but it was interesting you know it was interesting to see that they went to these 4-star restaurants. I got to go to 4-star restaurants for the interviews. But I got a phone call, it was in the paper who the search committee was, which I thought was kind of odd, and I got a phone call that said: “What does a dyke like you know about football/” And you know, and then they hung up.

Discrimination from the outside was viewed as particularly strong when women were known to be or suspected of being lesbians.
He's been there six, seven years now and he actually told me that (man's name) when he was applying, when he was searching he had a couple of people call him and tell him that you don’t want to go work with her, you know she’s gay. You don’t want to be involved with that. You don’t want to go to that school. So that was pretty interesting that, that they would even go to that extreme to inform him of that.

Finally, having a woman in coaching or athletic director roles was sometimes seen externally as an indicator that the school was less competitive. This perception can hurt the school with either the recruiting of top athletes and with fundraising efforts. These external pressures can help to explain why women are losing ground in coaching and administration.

There has been a lot of cases in the last couple of years where they would take the third assistant from the men’s side and promote them to [being] the women’s head coach. And there’s a lot of qualified women head coaches out there and they’re being pushed out now because they’re taking them from the men’s side and bringing them over to the women’s side.

**Strategies for Coping and Change**

Participants voiced many suggestions for enhancing gender equity in coaching and athletic administration. The most common suggestions follow. High upon everyone’s list was the need for a “critical mass” of women in coaching and in individual educational institutions.

...[I]t’s that critical mass issue. If you have fifty men applying and three women, the chances that you’re going to find the right fit in the fifty is a lot greater than in the three, so even though there’s a lot of qualified women out there, when you’re looking at specific jobs, the critical mass isn’t great enough to really help get women to the top.

The key is the critical mass (laughter). The critical mass. We [have] got to increase the critical mass. Then when we do that our chances are going to be a lot better.

Attaining a critical mass is an idea supported by research on gender equity in other organizations and occupations (e.g., Kanter 1977). The benefits of a critical mass are evidenced by increased recruitment and retention. Simply put, the job becomes better. Attaining a critical mass reduces discrimination, harassment, and role encapsulation. Perhaps of greatest importance, attaining a critical mass serves to challenge stubborn gender schemas both inside and outside of the institution. A key to attaining a critical mass is an emphasis on women as coaches from the lowest levels of sport (pre-school soccer) so that athletes will see women in coaching as normal, instead of deviant.

Critical mass is to some extent a chicken or egg dilemma. The best way to maintain a critical mass of an under represented group is to have a critical mass of that group.
However, organizations often preemptively decide that the pool of potential women candidates is too small and create a self-fulfilling prophecy with regard to their ability to achieve a critical mass. Recruitment of women into coaching and athletic administration needs to be undertaken with the same degree of earnestness that academic institutions are turning to for recruitment of women faculty, particularly in scientific and engineering fields.

Professionalization, including increased training, mentoring, and networking, is another route to promoting gender equity. Organizations often find that by following generalized best practices they are, in fact, doing what is best for women.

*I think the college needs to provide mentoring for the young coaches and I think they need to provide money and access to professional enhancement so that they make sure that they can attend coaching clinics and whatever types of experiences they need to be involved in, [like] the NACWAA HERS experiences... Many sports now are developing their own coaching certifications. I think it’s very important that you get your coaches in it, and... there are some men coming out who don’t have the background in Phys Ed [either], so I think it’s even [needed] with the men. Just because you played it doesn’t mean you can coach it.*

Professionalization and training opportunities in the field step up the expectations for behavior and help standardize recruitment. Rather than relying on the “old boy network,” search committees can cast their net more widely and more equitably evaluate candidates’ qualifications.

Greater exposure of women to coaching and athletic administration would help to increase numbers and equity in the field. Graduate programs, internships, and volunteer opportunities can all help move us toward that end. In part, these efforts would help as potential recruits gain more experience and develop realistic expectations of the job.

*The conference started it... [T]hey had a coaching symposium where each institution in the conference chose two young women who applied to go to this weekend symposium. [The women] had expressed [an] interest in coaching as a career, and a mentor from, or a coach from that institution, and the SWA all went to this weekend. And we did it last year for the first time. They brought in speakers and brought in also coaches from our conference to make presentations on a variety of issues. We did it for the first time last year. We’re hoping it’s going to be an annual thing within our conference. And the whole idea is to introduce the women athletes in our conference to the career of coaching, just to try to stimulate some interest in it cause most of the women who come to our colleges are not thinking about that. They’re thinking of all these other fields. We have some extraordinary athletes and I think we keep quite a few of them in terms of interest.*

Institutional support is also a crucial ingredient for change. Colleges and universities have within their means the ability to shape a workplace that promotes equity. Visible
support by these institutions for women in athletics can help shape gender schemas and at the very least send a message to constituents that women coaches are more than okay, they are also competent and supported. Improved human resource practices can help the recruitment of women and the attainment of gender equity:

There really is an intrinsic lack of understanding of how hiring practices are supposed to happen and... I mean, I couldn’t believe the number of times when I had what I would call [an] entry level position (because I did the HR for the department). And I would have guys walk up to me and say, “[W]ell, so-and-so at this high school is interested in the job, [so] why don’t you just give it to him cause he’s a local boy and he graduated from here.” Well, what about like posting it, and what about like looking at resumes? Just ‘cause you say he’s a good guy I should hire him? But I think that’s the way they’ve seen it happen. And so in your situation somebody’s obviously not saying, “Hey, we need to follow institutional hiring practices.”

Beyond the adherence to equitable human resource practices, institutional support can also be generated through meaningful work/life policies and broad efforts at sustaining a gender-equitable organizational culture.

I think what we’re trying to do is try to make areas like at the football games, like we have a little tent you know. It’s just for staff you know and it’s kid friendly. It’s in the long jump pit but (laughter) [it’s] great. It’s a sand pit you know so everybody, we have about four or five babies right now, and so everybody brings their kids and we have cider. I think [we should do more] things like that um where we try to promote bringing spouses and families to events.

Work/life policies in and of themselves are not sufficient to alleviate the disadvantages women accrue in this area, in part because the women sometimes feel compelled to engage in bias avoidance strategies. For example, some participants felt it was difficult for administrators in traditional family arrangements to fully comprehend and address gender inequity.

I think it’s more difficult at my institution because the AD and the senior ADs are all in traditional marriages where their wives stay at home, so that’s the viewpoint that they get on women.

The presence in many institutions of men in authority with minimal time commitments to family may help to explain why women coaches tend to be employed by women athletic administrators. However, this situation is not set in stone, and colleges and universities can change the climate around family issues and gender equity in general, often with existing administrators.

Finally, institutions should be mindful of designing equity into jobs. Equal access to resources and equal input into decision-making are a crucial part of this story. Women need a seat at the table on all issues, and not simply “women’s issues.” For example:
I think in many cases we feel like, “gosh, if I could have been included in those meetings I might have been able to bring this up earlier.” And I think sometimes when somebody says, “okay, you’re an administrator now” and you’ve got the key to the women’s room, but I don’t have a key to the men’s room… you know, little things like that where conversations take place that were not structured. I think that would be very beneficial for us because even though I’m not in charge of the facilities, I might have been able to find out, if I’d been included in the discussion on the planning of the new softball locker room, that we needed more than one electrical outlet in a women’s locker room you know.

Here we see a contradiction created in part (and surely unintentionally) through the position of SWA: many administrators may implicitly presume that the SWA should be concerned only with women’s issues, and not with “hard” issues such as physical plant or financial decisions. In response, some schools (including Penn State) have moved the SWA position into broader coverage of athletics – including men’s teams.

Nonetheless, reports of being left out of hard decisions were common, particularly with regard to budgetary matters. Despite the necessity of this information for job performance, women were often excluded from crucial financial discussions, as in the following case:

I remember one instance when I was an SWA on campus. I had a coach in my office upset about budgets and I was concerned because I don’t get to see the budget, but I’m the person they come to if they have questions, concerns, and issues (she laughs) with their budget because they weren’t trusting what they were getting from the other side.

Equity is need in the distribution, not only of resources, but also of access to knowledge in and about the institution.

**Summary and Implications**

Jobs in coaching and athletic administration attract individuals with a passion for the arena and often a strong sense of caring regarding student athletes. The jobs have, however, become endlessly demanding and largely unpredictable, in part because of the passion (and perhaps competitive spirit) many women and men bring to the job, but also because collegiate athletics have become year-round and “commercialized.” Some coaches and administrators fall victim to the resulting burnout and leave the field, but others undoubtedly avoid these jobs entirely as “too demanding.” This explanation for the decline of women in coaching and athletic administration – that the jobs have become more demanding – is surely a key aspect of a more complex story.

Related to substantial job demands was a frequently reported inability to balance work and personal life: work typically takes precedence. This inability affected women, whether they were single or partnered, and whether or not they had children, but it also affected many single men who were presumed to have no life outside of work. The only
individuals who were allowed to integrate work and life consistently were fathers who were permitted to exercise “daddy privilege.” Ironically, the results suggest that while there are fundamental inequities in the way mothers and fathers are viewed as coaches and administrators, the extensive use of daddy privilege at any particular school also seemed to offer a mechanism for making the organizational climate more family-friendly for everyone. Athletic Directors also play a pivotal role in determining this climate (and, presumably, so do college and university leaders as well).

Job mobility issues were in part linked to work and family – some of the women reported that their geographic mobility was hindered by commitments to children or to a partner. But other mobility issues were mentioned more prominently – including the informal nature of many job searches, and resulting utilization of predominantly male “old boy networks” to fill jobs, along with implicit gender stereotyping within hiring processes, and the lack of mentors with the power to help in job searches. Perhaps surprisingly, given the competitive nature of athletics, the women consistently reported that senior women in the field are uniformly supportive of more junior women seeking advice and mentoring, particularly through various NACWAA-related activities.

The commercialization of sports is also connected to coaches, in particular, being highly visible. Such visibility, and the reliance of many athletic programs on fan and alumni support, provides external groups with influence over hiring practices that is absent from many other professions. Add to these facts that the vast majority of intercollegiate television revenues, and the vast majority of fans who attend college sporting events, are related to men’s basketball and football, and the possibility for individuals outside the college or university successfully opposing the appointment of women to high-level positions, becomes very real. This dynamic suggests that college and university athletic administrators will often require a display of courage to reverse the decline of women in coaching and athletic administration.

The focus group results further suggest that professionalization of career paths, including formal mentoring, certification and training opportunities, could help to reverse the decline. Our suggestive finding reported in the last chapter – that the only major sport with a clear certification process at present (soccer) is also the only one where women’s representation as coaches of women’s teams has not declined – indeed fits the policy conclusions of these focus groups.

Related to the need for training, certification and transparent career paths, is the need for women athletic administrators to be involved in the “hard” decisions surrounding athletics policies and resources. Such a change, like the initial development of the SWA position, is somewhat contradictory: to achieve equality, special treatment might be required for a time.

Finally, these women coach and athletic administrator focus groups herald a troubling finding from the student athlete focus groups: the fact that many women student athletes believe men are better coaches. We now turn to those results.
3. Student Athlete Focus Groups

This chapter provides a glimpse into the world of collegiate female student athletes. The women coaches and athletic administrators provided a glimpse of the issues faced by women who have both entered and remained in the field. Given the difficulties detailed in the previous chapter, these women are arguably heroic, and not necessarily representative of the women who will need to be attracted into and then retained if the decline of women in the field is to be stemmed and reversed. A look at women student athletes can therefore provide useful information both regarding why so many do not enter into coaching and administration, and what could be done to change the situation.

In general, the strongest and perhaps most surprising finding is that the women student athletes hold firm and often stereotypical views regarding coaching and gender. It seems likely that most college and university students, if asked about gender differences across teachers, might require some prodding to even answer the question: a presumption (if not the reality) of gender equity exists in that field. We would also hazard to guess that most students do not pick professors based upon the gender of the professor. However, perhaps because notions of masculinity are linked so closely to athletics, because traditionally male traits are presumed to be those of good coaches, and because athletics is largely segregated by gender, student athlete views of gender and coaching are both strongly held and often acted upon.

The following themes emerged from the four focus groups with women student athletes, and elucidate how gender shapes female student athlete expectations and experiences with coaches, and their own career goals: 1) Commanding Respect; 2) Early Gender Schema of a Coach; 3) Drama and the Female Coach; 4) Emotional Labor and; 5) Student Athletes as Coaches.

Commanding Respect

The majority of female student athletes wanted a coach who was able to command respect from players. A coach who commanded respect first and foremost was able to establish a hierarchy on the team, as someone who was “on top” and “runs the show.”

Student athletes felt that male coaches were more successful in commanding the respect of players by the inherent power of their authority as men, and because they tended to have an authoritarian style of coaching.

Male coaches are like just more authoritarian kind of. They’re just like you do it. I don’t know. Like when I had female coaches, I felt like female coaches in a way like you could just walk all over them and when it came to male coaches you really just can’t.

Within the hierarchy between coach and athlete, female student athletes wanted a coach who was a coach and “not your best friend”. They wanted the boundaries between coach and athlete to remain clear and “professional.”
I think someone that’s going to tell you like is not your best friend. Someone I mean...he’s going to kick your ass. And you know he’s blunt. He’s going to tell you if you’re not playing well and that’s that and pick it up.

Student athletes felt that a professional relationship with a coach allowed for communication to be more “blunt”, direct, and honest. Athletes wanted a coach to “tell it like it is”, providing abundant feedback, and with both praise and criticism.

So getting criticism as well as praise just I think that helps out a lot because then you know exactly where you stand on the team and in the coach’s eyes.

Student athletes also framed a professional relationship with a coach as one in which the coach showed little in the way of feeling or emotion, expecting their coach to keep his or her “personal life out of coaching.”

I think another thing is that they don’t bring their personal life into the team. They leave that outside. That’s a big part. Like if they’re having a bad day and come to practice like all pissed off...I think sometimes female coaches show that more than male coaches.

In sum, women wanted a coach who commanded respect; a person who could establish a hierarchy on the team, was authoritarian and professional, and kept their personal lives private.

The last criteria women held for placing their trust in and respecting a coach depended upon the coach’s experience and maturity. Women believed that a coach should have experience playing the sport, preferably their entire lives, and thus having the experiential knowledge to effectively coach.

....[Y]ou like trust what he says is going to be right in everything that he’s telling you and that he’s not teaching you the wrong thing...

Student athletes spoke of having had coaches without this experience, and going to practices feeling frustrating because a coach didn’t know what “he” was talking about…

I had this one coach and he was horrible I mean like he didn’t know how to play soccer but he had read like every book about it. He’s one of those people. Like he would run practice thinking he knows exactly what he’s doing and all the girls hated him and we didn’t respect him as a coach.

Excepting the last point, the characteristics these women sought in coaches are those traditionally associated with masculinity.

**Early Schemas of a Coach**
The majority of female student athletes said they preferred a male coach over a female coach. Again it is worth highlighting the likely uniqueness of this finding, as it is
difficult to imagine female college students consistently expressing strong preferences for male professors. The reason for this conclusion was, in part, because men were able to more successfully “command respect” based on a male coaching style.

Relatedly, some women’s preferences were shaped by never having had a female coach or just having one female coach in their athletic career.

Yeah I think it may just be like the personal experience. Like I’ve only had one female coach and it was when I was in middle school and it was when we were kind of just learning...I’ve had guy coaches and it’s just I guess most of us have so it’s probably what were used to. Like if we had like a strong you know powerful, knowledgeable female coach I’m sure we’d have a different opinion.

Most female student athlete’s experiences with female coaches were minimal to nonexistent. Therefore, women’s schema for what constitutes an “ideal” coach came primarily from early experiences with male coaches. Even among the women who had “excellent” female coaches, these women preferred male coaches. As one student athlete said, “there’s just something more credible about male coaches.”

Further, student athletes held stereotypical beliefs about what it means to be female in terms of their perceptions of female coaches. In particular, stereotypes informed their beliefs regarding how women do and should navigate the emotional and relational domains of their lives.

Drama and the Female Coach
Student athletes believed that women in general were more emotional than men, and this belief was associated with a perception that women coaches take things more “personally”, were moody and were likely to create “drama” on the team.

Female coaches tend to take things more personal and male coaches just kind of like deal with things. Like if there’s trouble on the team, they deal with it and get it over with. And I just feel like female coaches make it more of an issue just cause I guess females in general are more emotional and stuff.

Like the female coach I had, she sometimes starts the drama. The male coaches I’ve had have always been real neutral.

Women connected emotionality to women’s biology and to the menstrual cycle.

I would not want to go to a college where the head coach was a woman. I mean if she’s on her period, we’re screwed like we all know how we all act. We’re all bitchy...

Conversely, women also believed that menstruation formed a connection with a female coach as someone who could understand “where I’m at.”
...[It’s] just down to the basic level of how our bodies work different... if you have a female coach I mean just having her being able to relate... she understands where I’m at. And I think that connection is a really big deal when you’re on the same level.

Perceptions of female coaches were imbued with negative stereotypes about women generally. And yet, women felt drawn to female coaches because they were perceived to be more nurturing and supportive than male coaches.

**Emotional Labor**
Although the ideal coach was someone who was professional, women also wanted certain qualities in a coach that challenged that ideal. Women said they wanted a coach whom they could talk to and feel emotionally supported by.

In general, most student athletes said they felt more comfortable talking intimately to a female coach rather than a male coach.

*Girls have drama. I mean my softball coach she’ll take every drama and like she’ll just sit in the office with us for hours at a time and listen to us. No guy coach I’ve had in the past would ever want to listen.*

*You can’t tell a guy coach everything like most girls don’t feel comfortable. But you can tell like a female coach and she can relate it back to the male coach. You know if you ever had a problem. And you like certain things you feel more comfortable talking to a female coach about.*

Women generally wanted a female coach as part of the team, but not as the head coach. Women looked to female coaches, usually assistants, to provide emotional labor for the team, and to balance out the maleness of the head coach.

Female coaches provided the emotional labor for a team, but yet that level of support was problematic and ultimately undermined her authority.

*I think all of us agree that you can tell female coaches more things so you sort of gain a different level of trust with them. So when they come to practice and say something to you like that’s harsher than they normally would you just sort of react like bitch you know almost like she’s using that level of trust to get back at you or something.*

That is, trust and closeness between a female coach and a student athlete comes at a price. It interferes with communication and the student athlete’s willingness to accept feedback from the coach. In the student athlete statement above, a female coach has stepped out of the ideal to be “unprofessional” in providing athletes with emotional support. The female coach is no longer acting like an “ideal” male coach in this scenario. She is caught in the conundrum of gender, of being emotionally supportive and then resented or disrespected for providing needed support to student athletes.
In addition to discussing preferences in coaches, student athletes also spoke to their own experiences with coaching others and whether they foresaw a coaching career in their future.

**Student Athletes as Coaches: Experience and Future Plans**

*Coaching Children.* “Fun and frustrating” were words female student athletes used to describe their experiences coaching others. Most student athletes said they had some experience coaching either children or youth, primarily at summer camps and clinics. Women also said they sporadically “helped out” with children’s teams as an assistant or volunteer, usually working with a team who had a sibling member or a team that a parent coached.

Women consistently described their experiences with coaching as “fun”, as an activity they enjoyed participating in. Women’s enjoyment of coaching came from interacting with “cute kids” and watching them have fun, appreciating that the kids didn’t take the game very seriously. As one young woman noted, these kids just “brighten your day” because they’re having so much fun. For example:

> I coached my little sister’s soccer team. She’s eleven. I didn’t think it was hard. I thought that since they were so young like you know it was kind of for them to have fun and stuff so I thought it was easy. I mean they like brighten your day and they’re good kids.

Women also liked coaching because of the inherent rewards that came from watching a child’s skill and ability improve over the course of a season.

> My dad coaches a ten to twelve year old girl’s team so I just help out with him them. I think it just fun to see them improve because they come in and they’re not good at all...But it’s also good because in the end you see all their improvements over like time that you’re coaching with them so it’s rewarding in that sense.

The rewards of coaching were tempered by the challenges and frustrations of working with young children, who were neither “good” when it came to skills or “serious” about the sport.

> It was frustrating because they weren’t good at all. Like they’re young, you don’t expect them to be good but...I mean at a certain level there’s only a certain amount you can coach. And at practice it’s like you teach them how to pass and you can do that for like forty-five minutes and they still won’t get it. I don’t know; I found it frustrating.

> I thought it was really like hard to think of drills. I didn’t know what to do. Like even if I had an idea of like what to do, I didn’t know how to explain it.

The women occasionally felt frustrated because they didn’t know how to teach young
children and were at a loss in terms of how to begin with the fundamentals of the sport. This challenge seemed to in part fuel women’s overall frustration with coaching.

*Professional Aspirations.* Approximately half of the female student athletes said they held aspirations to coach in the future. Interest in coaching ranged from coaching in elementary or secondary school to employment at the collegiate level as a coach or athletic administrator.

Many of those interested in a coaching or athletic administration career lacked a discernible path for attaining their goals, expressing uncertainly about the direction or first step needed to realize their dreams of coaching.

*I don’t have [an] exact direction but I think I want to maybe do something with athletics in the inner city…*

*I really don’t know an exact direction either just I want to do some kind of coaching whether its in my high school or even as a grad assistant for college if I can’t find a job right away.*

*I definitely want to coach and like that’s what I’m trying to figure out now like it kind of seems do I go out and teach right away or do I get a grad assistant[ship] and coach right away…*I would love to coach like there’s no doubt in my mind. *I want to coach at a college level but it’s just so unsure…that I’m scared to not have a security net to fall back on.*

How to navigate a career path in coaching is marked by tentativeness, doubt, and concerns about security in the field. One young woman referred to this uncertainly regarding a coaching career as a “big question mark”.

*I would love to like major in coaching and do that for the rest of my life. If I could do that and I knew it would be okay to do that then there’s no question about like I would want to be a coach some day. But there’s just a big question mark.*

The “question marks” of coaching for young women are in “how” and “where” to begin a career. Women expressed uncertainly as to whether they should pursue teaching as an entrance into the coaching field or whether to begin as a graduate assistant, coaching at the collegiate level. In facing the unknowns of a coaching career, a student athlete suggested that senior year internships be developed and implemented to give students experiences in coaching and administration, and in mentoring them along a clearer career path.

*I think like why don’t we have like you know there’s a director of athletics, why don’t we have a student director of athletics like we can help out the administrator. I mean you can get internships at like hospitals. Why can’t you get internships at high schools coaching, be like a student coach like a student
teacher. So I mean there are high schools around here that probably can use some help...

In addition to the challenge of knowing “how” and “when” to begin a coaching career, women identified related barriers to the transition. These barriers generally were centered around age and experience, and of not being taken seriously by others. Some women felt like they didn’t have the credibility to begin a coaching career because of their youth.

Among women interested in a coaching as a career, only a few student athletes saw themselves in a collegiate coaching or administrative position. For many, especially student athletes at the Division I level, they were disinterested in a college coaching career because of the time commitment, demands and sacrifices they saw as intrinsic to the position.

Up to this point, the student athlete’s perspectives on coaching careers largely echoed those provided by the coach and athletic administrator focus groups: the jobs were viewed as demanding, career paths as unclear, and mentoring as minimal. The students even pointed to the need for professionalization of relevant career paths.

Family as a Barrier to Coaching. As we expected, however, some of the students rejected the idea of coaching careers because they believed it would rule out family commitments (a group that was self-excluded from the focus groups covered in the last chapter). Many of the women expressed that “family” would be a priority for them in the future and didn’t believe they could successfully combine coaching with family life. Their perspectives were informed by observing coaches who were never home and never saw their families. As one woman stated, “their lives are just crazy” because of the demands of the job; of working late in the office, preparing for each game, traveling to games, recruiting during off-season, etc.

I think it’s very hard especially at the collegiate level like they deal with us all the time. We have practice all the time, lifting all the time. And I think that it’s hard for them to have a family…A lot of people who want families don’t want to get into it cause they’re going to have to manage between their family and coaching.

I think there are not as many women pursuing Division I coaching jobs because of the sacrifice they have to make when it comes to their families. Like our coach is never around and he has children and his wife basically raises them on her own. And like, I think that for a woman it would be harder to just leave every weekend, to be out for of the house till eight or nine at night, every night. And I think that’s a priority for a woman growing up to have a family and be there. And I mean as very typical as that sounds like that’s just the way life is you know.

In general, the women, especially at the Division I level, felt there was nothing colleges and universities could do to make these positions either more practical or desirable to women because the decision to coach came down to a matter of “personal priorities.”
Making a decision about coaching is a matter of “personal priorities” and not what colleges and universities are doing to attract and support women in the positions.

I think it has a lot to do with the individual’s priorities. We all have different priorities about having a family, kids. So I think the main thing is just figuring out where your priorities are.

Many women expressed that their “personal priorities” for the future involved a commitment to family first, as opposed to prioritizing a career. Thus, collegiate coaching for many would not be a viable career path, because women were unwilling to make family sacrifices in the pursuit of collegiate coaching careers.

I don’t think that’s a sacrifice that any of us would make....

I couldn’t imagine like regretting not seeing your kids raised. You know not being there when they were still young.

Summary and Implications
Given the history of professional, intercollegiate, and primary and secondary school athletics in the U.S., perhaps it is not so surprising to encounter such strong sentiments among women student athletes regarding the ostensible superiority of male coaches. Men have historically been viewed as prototypical in athletics generally, and coaches are viewed as acting, and holding authority, by virtue of exhibiting masculine traits.

Recalling that these focus group results only involved 41 women student athletes in total, it is tempting to argue that our findings would not generalize, and that many women athletes are probably either ambivalent or neutral regarding the capabilities of women as coaches. Only further evidence could support that conclusion. Nonetheless, if these findings are general, they are quite troubling, as they suggest that women student athletes are often selecting male coaches through the recruitment process. If this is true, then schools who hire women into head coaching positions may be at a competitive disadvantage.

As the student athletes themselves suggest, a shortfall of women coaches at the elementary and secondary school level, may be partly responsible for negative attitudes expressed toward women coaches. If this is so, then efforts to move women into the coaching of young girls (and boys) may be required.

In the corporate world, there has been a shift away from a vision of professionalism as involving the relatively complete separation of the spheres of home and of work, toward a vision involving competence, performance, and flexibility for employees to meet non-work commitments (Burud and Tumolo 2004). The student athletes, while recognizing the value of the latter approach in terms of women coaches supposed greater ability to provide emotional support, generally expressed a preference for the ‘male’ style of
coaching implicit in the out-dated model of separate spheres. This finding, assuming it is general, suggests that the profession of coaching is itself linked to methods of management which have declined in recent decades, such that utilization of more modern management methods may provide part of the solution to the decline of women in coaching.

As mentioned earlier, the women student athlete results echoed those of the women coaches and athletic administrators in a desire for more clear career paths, more and more systematic mentoring training as coaches. The students were also cognizant of the endless demands of coaching expressed in the focus groups covered in the last chapter. Their response to those demands was, for many of the student athletes, to eliminate coaching as a career possibility so they could rear children. More troubling, and quite differently from the coaches and administrators, the students viewed the endless demands of coaching as given, immutable and fixed. Those views – and the reality of endless demands – would probably need to be changed if more women are to be drawn into the ranks of collegiate coaches and athletic administrators.
4. Analysis of Women in Coaching from Census 2000

The goal of the present work is to identify factors that may contribute to the under-representation of women in coaching and athletics administration within the NCAA. From the narrow and deep approach of the focus groups, this chapter moves outward to a broader though shallower analysis of data from the U.S. Census 2000 to document some of the demographic information of relevance to men and women in coaching. Specifically, we compared demographic information across respondents who report being employed full-time/year-round versus respondents who reported being employed part-time or part-year. This comparison permits an examination of the proportion of women in the ranks of full-time/full-year coaches (assumed to be of higher stature) versus part-time/part-year coaches. The approach also permitted examinations of differences in the features of work (e.g., average hours worked and income) and family (e.g., proportion of coaches married, partnered, and/or with dependent children) among the men and women who are full-time/full-year coaches versus part-time/part-year coaches.

Analyses were performed to test five predictions. First, we expected to find that women would be over-represented among those who are employed part-time/part-year. Second, we expected to find long hours and few weeks off per year among men and women in full-time coaching. Third, we expected that women would report lower incomes than men. Fourth, we expected to find that people of color would be under-represented among coaches in both groups (i.e., those working full-time/full-year and those working part-time/part-year). Fifth, we expected to find that coaches, particularly female coaches, who are employed full-time/full-year have fewer commitments to family than do coaches who are employed part-time/part-year. We also analyze the sexual orientation of full- and part-time coaches, given the role of masculine gender schemas and of stereotyping in the profession.

Data Description

The data that were analyzed were taken from the 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, produced by the U.S. Census Bureau. In theory, the data cover five percent of all adults in the U.S. as of the year 2000. The data do not precisely describe coaches and athletic administrators per se. Instead, they permit identification of individuals who classify their primary occupation as a “coach or scout,” and are employed by “colleges and universities, including junior colleges”. Athletic scouts undoubtedly comprise only a tiny fraction of this group (in contrast to professional sports), so respondents in the PUMS files should mainly be representative of paid coaches. Unfortunately, there is no obvious way to identify athletic administrators, so the present analysis focuses exclusively on coaches.

In terms of institutions, the NCAA had 1,263 member colleges and universities as of 2004, while the Carnegie rankings included a total of 3,941 colleges and universities as of 2000. This difference implies that some of the coaches included in the PUMS data are employed at non-NCAA member institutions. Nonetheless, given the central and highly visible role of the NCAA in athletics, we believe that athletics are typically of minimal importance at most non-member schools, and that relevant respondents at non-member
institutions will likely be mainly part-time employees or volunteers (the latter group is excluded from the analysis).

Overall estimates from the PUMS data, for all employees over the age of 16 (i.e. the employed and self-employed), suggest that 23,664 men and 7,722 women identified themselves as coaches and scouts in higher education as of 2000 (see Table 4.1 below). The sample from which this estimate was made included a total of 1054 men and 355 women.

**Analysis**

In athletics, as is true in the overall labor market, women are over-represented in lower status positions, or the lower rungs of coaching (such as in Division III schools, see Acosta & Carpenter, 2004). One marker of lower-visibility positions is part-time employment. For instance, findings from the NCAA Gender Equity Study (NCAA 2004), suggest that more than twice as many women coaches are employed in part-time coaching positions (6,639) than full-time coaching positions (2,742).

To examine this possibility in the PUMS data, the file was split into two groups – coaches and scouts who are employed full-time (at least 35 hours per week) or full-year (at least 30 weeks per year) versus those who were employed part-time (< 35 hours per week) or part-year (fewer than 30) weeks per year. This breakdown differs in three ways from the criteria used to create groups of full-time and part-time coaches in the NCAA Gender Equity Study. First, scouts are included with coaches in the numbers in the PUMS data. Second, club teams may be included in the count of full-time coaches in the PUMS data because of the self-report and self-classification aspect of the census. By contrast, club coaches were excluded from the full-time coach count in the NCAA Gender Equity Study data. Third, and finally, the PUMS data may underestimate the number of part-time coaches, because the focus is on primary employment and part-time coaching opportunities often are not considered to be one’s primary employment. Although figures from the PUMS data therefore will diverge somewhat from the results of the NCAA Gender Equity Study, we expect to find similar patterns.

The number of men and women employed full-time/full-year versus part-time/part-year in the PUMS data are reported in Table 4.1. The estimated number of women who are full-time employed is 1,000 higher in the Census data than in the NCAA Gender Equity Study. The PUMS over count may either reflect the inclusion of scouts or, more likely, the counting of club team coaches (excluded by the NCAA), and coaches at non-NCAA schools.

The part-time/part-year figure for women coaches in Table 4.1 is only slightly higher than that for full-time/full-year coaches. This stands in contrast to the NCAA findings, which suggest that women are more than two times as likely to be employed part-time/part-year. Importantly, however, respondents to the census questionnaire might not report college or university coaching as their primary occupation, particularly if they either moonlight or volunteer as a coach. Thus, the NCAA figures should pick up these individuals, while the Census figures will not.
Regardless of the specific numbers, both the NCAA Gender Equity Study and the present census findings paint a stark picture of gender inequity in coaching. Table 4.1 shows that around one-third of the men in coaching and scouting are employed part-time/part-year compared to more than half of women in coaching that are employed part-time/part-year. Looking at figures from the far right portion of the table, for all other employees, we find that women and men are less likely to be employed part-time or part-year in other occupations and industries than in coaching. Around one-fifth of men and one-third of women in the remainder of the labor market, are employed part-time or part-year.

Figures for working hours and total income for these same groups are reported in Table 4.2. T-test were performed to test for (a) gender differences across full-time versus part-time employees, and (b) across coaches and non-coaches by gender. Only results statistically significant at the .05 level or better are discussed here.

Considering respondents working full-time/full-year as coaches or scouts, average hours per week are almost three hours longer for men. Among respondents working full-time/full-year as coaches, men worked more weeks per year and more hours per week than did women. Finally, the average annual total income was also more than 30 percent higher for men than women. These findings were more striking when we divided the income figure by hours per week and weeks per year. The average hourly earnings of men was $16.22, while the average hourly earnings for women was $12.88. Importantly, these hourly earnings figures are low relative to those for full-time/full-year employees in other occupations and industries, who average $19.99 per hour for men and $14.94 per hour for women. Together, the findings suggest that the hourly earnings differences between coaches and non-coaches may be primarily attributable to the greater number of hours that coaches, both men and women, work per week. In fact, there is no significant difference between coaches and non-coaches for annual income, but both hours per week and weeks per year differences are significant.

The Census data are not ideal for understanding the divergence between men’s and women’s hourly earnings among college and university coaches. In part, we suspect that women coaches tend to be concentrated in lower-ranked schools with fewer resources. In
addition, men tend to coach the Division I teams associated with high television revenues – men’s football and basketball – providing another possible explanation for the divergence. Some degree of sex discrimination in hiring and pay-setting may also be involved, although it is worth noting that, after excluding football, basketball, and ice hockey, average expenditures on men’s and women’s athletic teams and head coach salaries in the NCAA are quite similar. 

None of the gender differences in weekly hours, hours per year or annual income are statistically significant among part-time/part-year coaches. Among part-time or part-year coaches, hourly earnings were $11.24 for men and $7.92 for women. These figures are well below those for part-time or part-year employees in other occupations and industries, where men average $16.25 per hour, and women average $12.78. Furthermore, differences in earnings across coaches versus non-coaches may be underestimated. This is because, as we noted earlier, many coaches either moonlight as coaches or volunteer to coach, and are not detected in the Census data.

There are at least three reasons why hourly earnings are so low in coaching at the collegiate or intercollegiate level. First, among full-time/full-year employees, if we multiply hours per weeks by weeks per year, we find extremely long hours for coaches – over 2600 annual hours for men and 2400 for women, compared to less than 2300 hours for men and just over 2100 hours for women in other occupations and industries. These long hours are consistent with a culture of “face time,” whereby commitment to the job is measured by hours present in the workplace. Second, low earnings among those employed part-time and part-year may in part reflect the fact that coaching is sometimes viewed as an avocation or form of service to the institution or community, echoing the passion the coaches and athletic administrators mentioned in the focus groups. Third, career paths among coaches and athletic administrators may be unique in that individuals may have to work as part-time coaches or volunteer coaches (for low or no pay) as the main route to career progression.

The difference between the extremely long hours of full-time/full-year coaches and those for part-time or part-year coaches may help to explain the dearth of women as coaches of women’s teams. For instance, Mason and Goulden (2004) found that, among new Ph.D. recipients, women who sought time to rear children often avoided employment at the most visible, high-stature, high-status jobs (e.g., tenure-track academics within research institutions). Similarly, many women with an interest in coaching may believe that the extreme hours associated with full-time/full-year coaching are inconsistent with family commitments. To the degree that such beliefs prevail, women may either avoid full-time, high status coaching positions, or entirely abandon careers in athletics.
### Table 4.2: Working Conditions for Coaches/Scouts at Colleges and Universities vs. Other Employees, by Full-time/Full-year status and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Women Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Other Employed Men</th>
<th>Other Employed Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time/Full-year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. hours per week</td>
<td>53.09 (59.75)</td>
<td>50.13 (54.44)</td>
<td>45.63 (40.26)</td>
<td>42.34 (30.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. weeks per year</td>
<td>50.05 (21.07)</td>
<td>48.75 (24.34)</td>
<td>50.24 (19.95)</td>
<td>49.72 (22.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. total annual income</td>
<td>$43,088 (183,295)</td>
<td>$31,469 (110,32)</td>
<td>$45,821 (211,319)</td>
<td>$31,450 (121,727)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2,871,803</td>
<td>2,111,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part-time or Part-year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. hours per week</td>
<td>26.72 (66.32)</td>
<td>26.34 (70.42)</td>
<td>29.28 (62.72)</td>
<td>25.85 (51.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. weeks per year</td>
<td>25.14 (74.78)</td>
<td>26.5 (79.52)</td>
<td>27.5 (75.97)</td>
<td>31.8 (77.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. total annual income</td>
<td>$7,548 (58,886)</td>
<td>$5,527 (31,872)</td>
<td>$13,085 (124,768)</td>
<td>$10,504 (78,057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>777,812</td>
<td>1,212,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 PUMS, 5 percent sample.

The NCAA (2003) found that people of color were under-represented among coaches and athletic administrators, particularly at the highest levels. By way of comparison, the race and ethnic composition of the coaches and scouts in the Census data are presented in Table 4.3.

As shown in the table, Whites are over-represented among coaches and scouts, and the difference is significant across both the full-time/full-year employed and those employed either part-time or part-year. Among those employed full-time/full-year, the proportion of Whites among men is around four percent higher than among other male employees. By contrast, among women who are employed full-time/full-year, the proportion of Whites is a little over 13 percent higher for coaches relative to other women. Among women who are employed part-time or part-year, the differences are also substantial. For men, these differences are not due to the under representation of African-Americans. In fact, for full-time/full-year employed men, African-Americans are about five percent more common among college and university coaches, as compared to other occupations and industries. Instead, we see a dearth of Asian-Americans and of those groups left out of the analysis – including Latinos, indigenous Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other smaller ethnic groups. In contrast to the findings for men, African-Americans are under represented among women in coaching by over five percent.
Putting these findings together, we see that Whites are more prevalent among women as compared to men in coaching, and this difference is significant across the full-time/full-year sample, though not for the part-time or part-year subsample. By implication, the scarcity of women of color among coaches may be a factor contributing to the general shortfall of women in coaching.

### Table 4.3: The Racial/Ethnic Composition of Coaches/Scouts at Colleges and Universities vs. Other Employees, by Full-time/Full-year status and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Women Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Other Employed Men</th>
<th>Other Employed Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time/Full-year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample size</strong></td>
<td>695</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2,871,803</td>
<td>2,111,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part-time or Part-year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample size</strong></td>
<td>359</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>777,812</td>
<td>1,212,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 PUMS, 5 percent sample.

Finally we turn to the family status and sexual orientation of the coaches and scouts, as shown in Table 4.4. In general, coaching appears to be a rather family-unfriendly profession, particularly at the highest levels. It is difficult to be present in the home during family hours (e.g., dinnertime during the week and/or weekend activities) when practices, games, and recruiting trips occur during precisely those times. In addition, professionals who meet family commitments may often encounter biases against caregiving in the workplace. When men and women, and particularly women, display family commitments, they may be viewed as substandard performers. As a result, individuals may avoid taking on family responsibilities, engaging in the “bias avoidance” behaviors discussed in previous chapters.

Table 4.4 provides evidence of bias avoidance behaviors among coaches. Among coaches employed full-time (see top panels of the table), men are six percent less likely to have children in the home than are other male employees. Because bias avoidance behaviors tend to affect women more often than men, it is not surprising to find that full-time/full-year women coaches are more than 20 percent less likely than comparable men to have dependent children. Women who are full-time/full-year coaches are also more than 35 percent less likely to be married. The apparent inability to partner and parent while coaching full-time may help drive the scarcity of women in coaching. As long as women continue to perform most unpaid labor in the household, parenting and partnering will represent a particular disadvantage for women as coaches. In addition, women coaches, particularly women coaches who work full-time/full-year, may be at a
disadvantage such that they may believe they need to avoid career conflicting life-choices to survive and thrive as a coach, as also suggested by the student athletes in our focus groups.

Importantly, bias avoidance behaviors may disproportionately affect women, while still affecting many men: tests across the overall coach/non-coach subsamples for the full-time/full-year employed find the coaches are significantly less likely to be parents or to be partnered. We suspect that this behavior is partly due to family-unfriendly schedules, such as when practices and games are held during times when young children are not in school or when practices and games are scheduled outside of normal operating hours for child care services. These factors, combined with a culture of face time, may motivate many coaches to avoid parenting and (for women) partnering.

Table 4.4: The Family Status and Sexual Orientation of Coaches/Scouts at Colleges and Universities vs. Other Employees, by Full-time/Full-year status and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Women Coaches &amp; Scouts</th>
<th>Other Employed Men</th>
<th>Other Employed Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time/Full-year</td>
<td>Have dependent children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gay/lesbian living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2,871,803</td>
<td>2,111,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time or Part-year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have dependent children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gay/lesbian living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2000 PUMS, 5 percent sample.

Gay men and lesbian women have experienced increasing support when coming out and success in obtaining partner benefits from corporations (Raeburn, 2004). Nonetheless, in the athletics community, it is often the case that male athletes who come out are castigated by teammates and face discrimination in hiring. Indeed, in the entire history of the NFL, only three players have “come out” as gay, and all did so after retiring. This is consistent with the suggestion that athletics represent a masculine culture that has extreme levels of homophobia.
As women entered intercollegiate sports following passage of Title IX, they were often subject to homophobic stereotyping. Indeed, we found current evidence of such stereotyping in both the coach and athletic administrator and the student athlete focus groups. Since women athletes and coaches are engaged in what have been viewed historically as distinctly masculine activities, stereotyping of such women as lesbians is not surprising.

Little is known about whether gay men and lesbian women are, in fact, under or over represented in athletics and/or coaching. To the degree that coaching pushes individuals – and particularly women – to engage in bias avoidance behaviors, heterosexual women may find full-time/full-year coaching to be uninviting, leaving a higher proportion of gay men and lesbian women in the profession as a result. In addition, athletics is one of the few arenas of employment where sex segregation remains relatively complete and legally sanctioned, at least as Title IX has been interpreted to date, so the field might be interpreted as more welcoming of individuals with a same-sex orientation.

Figures presented in Table 4.4 regarding sexual orientation are for respondents to the long-form census who reported living with a non-related same-sex partner. Among those full-time/full-year employed, no men who are coaches and scouts report living with a partner, while slightly over three percent of the relevant women do, a difference that is significant. A similar pattern, although without significance, appears for part-time or part-year coaches.

The form of the census questions understates the proportion of gay men and lesbian women in the population, since many such individuals will not be living with a partner. Analyzing the same data, and putting it in the context of previous research on the prevalence of gays and lesbians in the U.S., Gates and Ost conclude that the census undercounts gays and lesbians by a factor of at least two (2004, p. 15). Therefore, it is reasonable to double the sexual orientation figures in Table 4.4, such that an estimated 6.4 percent of women employed full-time in coaching are lesbians, compared to around one percent of women in the overall population.

The severe extent of homophobia affecting men in sports may help to explain the apparent scarcity of non-heterosexual men, and we seem to confirm that women are more often gay among coaches than in the general population of employees. The finding for women echoes that for the one other arena of employment where gender segregation has been historically supported by the law – in the armed forces, where the proportion of lesbian members is also well above the national average (Gates, 2004). The figures also fit the possibility of bias avoidance as heterosexual women avoid full-time/full-year coaching positions.

**Conclusions**

Our five predictions were each supported by the analysis of the Census data. Specifically:
1) Relative to men, women are more likely to be employed part-time among coaches.
2) Full-time coaches work very long hours and many weeks per year relative to other employees, and are arguably often overworked.
3) The hourly wages of women are well below those of men (by around $3.50 per hour).
4) The under representation of women is partly due to a shortfall of women of color in the ranks of coaches. For women, the relative scarcity of African-American women is particularly a concern.
5) Full-time women coaches are far less likely than other employees – whether men who coach or men and women among all types of employees – to partner and parent. The under representation of women may therefore be intimately linked to the family-unfriendliness of either or both the family-unfriendly schedules and long work hours involved in coaching or institutional cultures that are unsupportive of family commitments.

In addition, the evidence suggested that women among full-time coaches are more likely to have same-sex partners. Given the focus groups uncovered high levels of discrimination against women coaches who either admitted to or were even suspected of holding a same-sex orientation, it seems likely that if all hiring were performed on the basis of candidate quality alone, the number of same-sex coaches (across both women and men) would likely rise although it is difficult to imagine the proportion rising even above 10 percent if discrimination were entirely eliminated.
5. Summary and Policy Recommendations

The study presented here provided policy-relevant research on the decline of women in the coaching of women’s collegiate athletic teams. The basic fact of the decline is surprising given that the pool of prospective women coaches and administrators – among women student athletes – has expanded over 10-fold since the passage of Title IX in 1972.

The decline is of concern for several reasons:

- The quality of coaching is low relative to a situation where large numbers of men and women are in the talent pool.
- Gender equity has declined in this area during a period when substantial gains were experienced in other professions.
- Women student athletes have relatively few women coaches serving as role models, hence may avoid athletics-related professions entirely.

There are two overarching principles available to think about how we might reverse the decline. One principle of that of ‘integration.’ Historically, many professions, including the law, management, and medicine, have at least begun to address problems surrounding under representation by integrating women into existing educational and career paths. With a vision of integration, the end-point would be a situation where student athletes, regardless of gender, are equally likely to have a woman or man as their coach.

Unfortunately, men’s athletics has proved particularly difficult for women to enter as coaches: the percentage of men’s intercollegiate teams with a woman as head coach has remained stubbornly below two percent for the last three decades (Acosta and Carpenter 2004). If male athletes typically refuse to join teams coached by women, or to attend schools where women might be coaching them, the integration solution will be very difficult to implement. Further, even if a substantial pool of non-discriminating male athletes exists, those responsible for hiring coaches may avoid hiring women such that we never discover whether women could have successfully coached men’s athletic teams.

Somewhat greater success has been experienced in the administration of collegiate athletics, where women represent around one-third of employees, although there are more women presidents than athletic directors in Division IA schools even today (Acosta and Carpenter 2004). Further integration is both possible and arguably desirable in terms of athletics administration. Nonetheless, current levels of women in athletics administration are undoubtedly partly due to the NCAA requirement that member institutions appoint a Senior Woman Administrator (SWA).

The other principle that might be applied to envision progress is that of ‘separate but equal,’ wherein men’s teams would typically be coached by men, and women’s teams by women. In general, separate but equal education was made illegal under the 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Board of Education. Passage of Title IX in 1972 has been consistently interpreted as condoning segregated men’s and women’s teams at all levels of schooling, although Title IX does not apply to coaches and athletic administrators per se (otherwise, the decline of women in coaching would probably never
have occurred). Given that Title IX does not apply, coaches and administrators fall under traditional anti-discrimination laws, so separate but equal hiring is almost certainly illegal.

Nonetheless, measures to increase the percentage of women’s teams coached by women may be desirable for two reasons:

- Women coaches of women’s teams may serve as role models, drawing increasing numbers of girls into coaching and athletics administration, and thereby reversing the decline.
- To the extent women continue to be shut out of positions coaching men’s teams, the reversing of the decline of women coaching women’s team may be a more realistic and attainable goal in the short- to intermediate-term.

The latter argument appeared, albeit mainly implicitly, in our focus groups with women coaches and athletic administrators. We therefore conclude that although the principle of integration is most consistent with American ideals, and should therefore represent a long-term goal and vision, explicit movement to reverse the decline within women’s athletics is desirable at present.

To provide relevant policy prescriptions for reversing the present situation requires an understanding of why the decline occurred. Towards that end, we analyzed the decline of women in the coaching of women’s intercollegiate athletic teams by:

1. Considering the body of historical evidence,
2. Administering and analyzing focus groups with women coaches and athletic administrators,
3. Administering and analyzing focus groups with women student athletes, and

**Findings**

In general, the findings here regarding the decline can be classified into the following categories: sex discrimination, extreme workloads, family-unfriendly jobs, and the fact that race and sexual orientation remain salient.

The historical evidence suggested that sex discrimination played a central role in driving the decline. As money flowed into women’s athletics, men as coaches and athletic administrators tended to favor hiring men into what had become in many cases ‘breadwinner’ jobs. As our coach and athletic administrator focus groups further suggest, the ability of men to obtain an increasing proportion of coaching positions with women’s teams was fostered in part by the largely informal and poorly defined career tracks surrounding athletics in general. Indeed, the student athletes who were considering careers in coaching had no clear understanding of how to successfully enter the profession. When “who you know” becomes as important as “what you know,” discriminatory attitudes can loom large in hiring decisions.
In addition, the ways in which athletics programs are administered may play a role in fostering sex discrimination. The coach and athletic administrator focus groups suggest that SWAs are often excluded from ‘hard’ decisions, including financing and physical plant decisions, since these are not exclusively ‘women’s issues.’ To the extent information is shared informally, and particularly in the men’s room or on the golf course, SWAs may also be excluded unintentionally from information sharing and decision making.

Sex discrimination was not only found among coaches and administrators. Perhaps the most surprising finding from the student athlete focus groups was the existence of a high level of discriminatory or stereotypical attitudes among female athletes, most of whom favored male over female coaches. Although we cannot know from such a small sample whether the finding is general, it strikes us as unlikely that the discovery of the attitudes – found here across Division I, II and III schools – was a mere fluke. The major implication of the finding is that, unless these attitudes among female athletes are changed, schools who favor men in the hiring of coaches (and particularly head coaches) will enjoy a competitive recruiting advantage.

We also found that extreme workloads help to explain the decline. The coaches and athletic administrators in the focus groups described their situation as involving “jobs that never end,” while the student athletes described their own coaches as leading “lives that are crazy.” The Census 2000 analysis supported these claims, finding that full-time men coaches were working around 2600 hours per year, with women in similar positions putting in 2400 hours per year, far above the averages for women or men in other occupations.

Collegiate coaching has arguably become a job where the ‘ideal worker’ norm is prevalent, such that long hours and extreme levels of commitment are expected – and such expectations are internalized. The expectations are internalized in ways that are somewhat unusual (e.g., compared to accounting or law) because many coaches have a passion for their student athletes, and for the games their athletes participate in. Although we cannot know for certain why the norm emerged, as least part of the story lies in the commercialization of collegiate sports, and the significant amounts of money currently involved. What is also clear from the student athlete focus groups is that they assume the long, unpredictable hours and high levels of commitments among their coaches are fixed and permanent aspects of the coaching profession.

Extreme workloads are in part responsible for jobs in coaching and athletic administration being viewed as family-unfriendly. The coaches mentioned difficulties performing their jobs while having any kind of life outside of the job. Many of the students believed that jobs in coaching were out of the question precisely because they rule out substantive commitments to family. When we considered full-time employees, the Census 2000 analysis supported the conclusions of the women student athletes: although men in coaching were just as likely as other men to be married, the women were far less likely (only 29.8%) than other full-time employed women to be married (55.3%). Further, the men in coaching were around six percent less likely than other employed
men to be rearing children, while the women in coaching were less than half as likely (17.8%) as other full-time employed women (44.6%) to be rearing children. The long hours demanded by the jobs are part of this story, but as the coaches and athletic administrators told us, other parts lie in the unpredictability of job demands in coaching, the family-unfriendly timing of practices, games and recruiting trips, as well as leaders and institutional cultures that are typically not welcoming of family commitments.

Fortunately, some schools support the family commitments of coaches. Support appears in environments where fathers feel free to integrate their children into their coaching and administrative work, and in settings where athletic directors are explicitly supportive of the family commitments of employees. In light of the Census 2000 evidence regarding the low level of family commitments among coaches, however, supportive schools undoubtedly remain the exception rather than the rule.

Additionally, race and sexual orientation remain salient. Regarding race, the proportion of non-white full-time coaches, particularly among the ranks of women, is very low. Over 84 percent of men who are full-time coaches are white, as are over 90 percent of comparable women. By way of contrast, as of the 2003-2004 academic year, just over 70 percent of NCAA male student athletes, and just under 80 percent of relevant women, were white (NCAA 2005, pp. 33,34). Across both male and female athletics, student athletes of color are being lost in the pipeline to coaching at about twice the rate of white student athletes.

Perhaps linked to the family-unfriendly nature of current positions in coaching and athletic administration, particularly for women, the Census 2000 analysis found a relatively high proportion – perhaps as high as six percent – of lesbian women among the full-time women coaches. The flip-side of this finding was that zero full-time men coaches reported same-sex orientation. Although many possible explanations for these findings are relevant, only further research could shed light on which explanations are most salient. What the focus group results suggest, however, are that the six percent figure holds in a context where women of same-sex orientation (or even suspected of holding such an orientation) experience substantial discrimination in both hiring and in treatment if hired.

During the course of this study, we informally discussed these issues with many women in coaching and athletic administration. Several phenomena not uncovered here were raised in those discussions, and may warrant further investigation. First is the possibility of the sexual harassment of women athletes by (particularly) male coaches. We found no evidence of this behavior, but given the hierarchical nature of athletics, and the strong support for the concept of “team” in many sports, it is possible that such behavior exists but goes largely unreported. Second, part of the reason for the decline of women in coaching may lie in a greater tendency for women (as opposed to men) to quit coaching when a job is lost or given up for any reason. Only a study of individuals who have left the field of coaching could verify whether this behavior exists and is a contributing factor.
Policy Prescriptions
If we take as our goals the short-term objectives of increasing the prevalence of women coaching women’s athletic teams and of improving the representation of women among athletic administrators, as well as the long-term objective of integrating coaching and athletic administration, then the findings here support four broad policy conclusions:

5) *Increase the numbers of women in the coaching pipeline at all levels of athletics.*
6) *Formalize hiring practices, decision-making processes, training and development, and the career paths of coaches.*
7) *Make coaching and careers in athletic administration both more welcoming of and flexible in response to family commitments.*
8) *Provide a more inclusive environment within athletic departments and across athletic teams for women, people of color, and individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation.*

Specific policies and practices related to each of these four items are as follows:

1) *Increase the numbers of women in the coaching pipeline at all levels of athletics.*

To achieve either the short- or long-term objectives stated above, student athletes require more exposure to women in coaching. The recalcitrance of male athletes towards the idea of women coaches, and the stereotypical attitudes of women athletes, both support such a shift. Towards that end:

ix) Women should be encouraged to coach athletic teams beginning with elementary school students, continuing through high school, and as collegiate athletes:

i. Colleges and universities could benefit from stronger ties to their community to the extent coaching efforts are formalized to link women collegiate athletes and younger children.

ii. Mothers could be encouraged to coach their children’s teams, perhaps through media efforts.

iii. High schools could initiate programs to encourage young women or women as parents to develop as coaches.

x) Coaching internship programs should be developed to provide formalized coaching training and development of women student athletes at the collegiate level.

2) *Formalize hiring practices, decision-making processes, training and development, and the career paths of coaches.*

The informality of present practices allows sex discrimination to play a major role in hiring, decision-making, training and development, and in career paths, thereby limiting opportunities for women interested in or already in coaching and athletic administration, and makes the career path uncertain for prospective coaches. To alleviate this situation:

a. Hiring procedures should be formalized for all paid positions, across all three divisions of the NCAA, with active affirmative action components to ensure both that the pool of prospective candidates is large, and that each candidate is provided an equal opportunity to be hired.
b. Decision-making regarding finances, physical plant, and other decisions crucial to the health and development of athletic programs should be made transparent, and actively involve all affected administrators and staff.

c. Training and development processes for coaches and athletic administrators should be formalized such that job requirements include standardized, formal learning components (e.g., an advanced degree), and formal coaching certification processes (e.g., through the professional association for individual sports). Colleges and universities would need to agree, perhaps through the NCAA, to adhere to standardized requirements and certification (perhaps with a deadline after which all new hires would require certification).

d. Select colleges and universities would need to further develop existing programs for the training of coaches and athletic administrators.

e. Colleges and universities in general should financially support the participation of women coaches and athletic administrators in programs to foster the networking and development of women coaches through, for example, the NACWAA Fall Forum, NACWAA/HERS Institute for Administrative Advancement, the NCAA’s Women Coaches Academy, the NCAA Fellows Leadership Development Program, or specific college and university programs.

3) Make coaching and careers in athletic administration both more welcoming of and flexible in response to family commitments.

To achieve either the short- or long-term objectives provided here, athletic departments need to discover ways to make coaching and athletic careers more consistent with family commitments. Although the student athletes believed such efforts would be fruitless, relevant models already exist – both in the NCAA’s efforts to make time for academics across the body of student athletes, and among high school coaches who are rarely employed full-time to coach a single sport. Such efforts might include:

a. Set practice times and schedules, game and tournament schedules and locations, and administrative meeting times in conjunction with affected head and assistant coaches and trainers.

b. Support university- and college-wide initiatives to make each institution more responsive to family responsibilities. Relevant initiatives concern:
   i. Paid family leave policies.
   ii. Reduced hours options, on a temporary or long-term basis.
   iii. Part-time hiring options.
   iv. On-site, near-site or subsidized child care and after-school care arrangements.

c. Provide a supportive climate for athletic department employees with family commitments by:
   i. Providing a written statement from the athletic director in support of family commitments across the ranks of all employees and student athletes.
   ii. Providing options for family involvement in various athletic activities.
iii. Providing a welcoming, and safe, environment for children to be present during work hours on an as-needed basis.

iv. Ensuring that work quality, and not face time, is regularly monitored, reviewed, and rewarded.

v. Encouraging athletic department employees to cover for each other on an emergency or more regular basis.

vi. Ensuring that meetings end as scheduled.

4) Provide a more inclusive environment within athletic departments and across athletic teams for women, people of color, and individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation.

Athletics remains one of the few arenas in society where denigrating remarks regarding gender remain commonplace and accepted – as when a male athlete performs at a sub-par level and is labeled a ‘girl’ for the performance. For women of color, and for those of same-sex orientation, athletics can be even less welcoming. The private and public sectors of our economy have made great progress in recent decades in reducing the prevalence of open and explicitly disparaging behavior regarding gender, race and sexual orientation. Collegiate athletics needs to follow this lead to achieve the objectives stated above. Specific initiatives include:

a. Communicate the college or university’s sexual harassment and diversity policies to all associated with athletics.

b. Provide diversity training regarding gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, to student athletes, coaches and athletic department administrators.

c. Provide affirmative action training and procedures to hiring committees or relevant individuals within athletic departments.

d. Provide diversity training as part of staff and student athlete orientation programs.

e. Schedule practices, games and tournaments around important holidays for various religions, or permit excused absences for those holidays.

f. Support or initiate community programs to foster the involvement of girls, children of color, and children with disabilities in athletics.

g. Annually monitor and publicize the performance of the athletic department in terms of the diversity of student athletes, coaches and other administrative personnel.

h. At the level of the NCAA, diversity objectives should be expanded from the current focus on “enhancing opportunities for ethnic minorities and women” to include improved opportunities for individuals of diverse sexual orientation.

The decline of women in coaching occurred over a span of decades. We therefore do not expect a quick turnaround, even if all of the recommendations provided here are implemented. However, it is quite reasonable to believe that colleges and universities, and their athletic departments, who take the lead on the policies listed here will improve the quality of their organizations, of their personnel and coaches, and will ultimately hold
a competitive edge. Again, however, it is worth stressing that the attitudes of student athletes require close attention if we are to achieve success in reversing the decline.
APPENDIX 1: Coach/Athletic Administrator Focus Group Questions

(Note: For any answer mentioning a coach, player, superior/subordinate, mentor, or parent, make sure the gender of the person is clear from the context. If not, follow-up immediately with: “And was this a man or a woman?” to clarify gender.)

Today we’d like to discuss coaching and athletics administration with you, and hear about your experiences in the field, and your thoughts on the retention and promotion of women in coaching and administration.

Before we get started, I’d like to hand out a sheet for informed consent. Please take a minute to read it and, if you’re comfortable signing, please do and hand it back to me. If you do not wish to sign the form or do not want your comments recorded and transcribed for research purposes, you are free to leave and no information will be reported about you.

(Place informed consent forms in folder marked “informed consent forms only.” Once the forms are in and anyone not wishing to continue has left, turn on recorder.)

I’m passing around extra copies of the informed consent form, and we would like you each to keep one for your records. Let’s take a brief moment to introduce ourselves. First names will be sufficient and please tell us your job title, whether you are the Senior Woman Administrator for your school, how long you have been at your current school, and the Division of the school.

(Start with first person immediately to the left of the moderator. If two participants have the same name, ask the second if you can use a nickname or her name with last initial, e.g., Jane B., to distinguish the two.)

(Fill out remainder of Facilitator Information Sheet during introductions. NOTE: Periodically call on individuals by first name during the session to make transcription easier.)

1. For an outsider who holds, say, a desk job at a corporation, how would you describe your job? What makes it uniquely exciting and interesting, and what makes it uniquely difficult?

2. How did you reach your current position? Were there certain experiences, training, previous positions, mentors or networks that helped you get where you are today?

3. Coaching and athletics administration are sometimes associated with long hours, extensive travel, weekend and weeknight work, but may have off-seasons as well. How have these time arrangements worked for you? (wait for responses, then) How have these time arrangements affected your ability to make and meet family commitments? (wait for responses, then) Are you aware of strategies that you or
others in the field use to make their family and professional lives both work effectively?

4. Women athletes, coaches and administrators are sometimes stereotyped in terms of sexual orientation, and may experience sexual harassment or discrimination. Have you or your colleagues been subject to these stereotypes, or to harassment or discrimination? (wait for responses, then) Do you think these experiences have altered your career path? (wait for responses, then) And are there strategies that you or other women have used effectively to deal with these issues?

5. At your school, is there a sense of belonging that you and others perceive regarding the athletic department or the institution as a whole? (wait for responses, then) And would you say that you are a valued member of the institution and have equal access to resources compared to men in similar positions?

6. In your experience, are some particular sports or schools more accessible for women as coaches and administrators? And what makes these sports or schools unique?

7. Now we’d like you to think broadly about the role of women in intercollegiate athletics. What sorts of programs, policies or resources, provided by either an individual school or an athletics or coaches organization would help to attract and retain women coaches and athletics directors?

8. (skip to 9. if running out of time) Our last large question concerns young prospects. What advice would you give to a women who is a student athlete thinking about a career in coaching or administration?

9. A related question concerns a hypothetical world where half of athletes and half of coaches are women. Do you think it would be better if girls were coached by women, and boys by men, or instead if women and men coaches were spread evenly across both girls and boys teams?

10. Finally, I’d like to go around the table and get race/ethnicity information for you. We’re using census categories such as white, latina, african american, asian and so forth, and multiple answers are fine. (Start at your left)

(Turn off recorder, hand each participant the Focus Group Follow-Up sheet)

Thanks for you help. To help maintain confidentiality, please do not report to others things that were said during this session. We will have a report available
from this study in February ’05 at our web site. The address is on the follow-up sheet and informed consent, so you can see the overall findings. Thanks again.

(Potential land mines moderators must be sensitive to, head off, or redirect)

- Discomfort over discussion of sexual orientation – reduce discomfort by lightening the discussion or redirect to another topic
- Discussion of athletes as academically substandard – redirect
- Extended discussion of a particular coach – redirect
- Extended discussion of anything off-topic, such as the particular school, present family circumstances, or recent events on-campus – redirect
APPENDIX 2: Student Athlete Focus Group Questions

(Note: For any answer mentioning a coach, mentor, or parent, make sure the gender of the person is clear from the context. If not, follow-up immediately with: “And was this a man or a woman?” to clarify gender.)

Today we’d like to discuss coaching and athletics administration with you, and hear about your experiences with coaches or in coaching, and your thoughts on entering coaching or administration either as a career or a sideline after graduation.

Before we get started, I’d like to hand out a sheet for informed consent. Please take a minute to read it and, if you’re comfortable signing, please do and hand it back to me. If you do not wish to sign the form or do not want your comments transcribed for research purposes, you are free to leave and no information will be reported about you.

(Place informed consent forms in folder marked “informed consent forms only.” Once the forms are in and anyone not wishing to continue has left, transcribing may begin.)

I’m passing around extra copies of the informed consent form, and we would like you each to keep one for your records. Let’s take a brief moment to introduce ourselves. First names will be sufficient and please tell us what sport or sports you play here, your major, and whether you are a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.

(Start with first person immediately to the left of the moderator. If two participants have the same name, ask the second if you can use a nickname or her name with last initial, e.g., Jane B., to distinguish the two.)

(Fill out Facilitator Information Sheet during introductions. NOTE: Periodically call on individuals by first name during the session to make transcription easier.)

1. Have any of you been involved in coaching or administration while you were a student athlete in high school or college? (If any ‘yes’s, continue, otherwise skip to 2.) What sort of work did this involve, and did you enjoy the work?

2. All of you will have worked with several coaches during your athletic careers, and might have even chosen this school because of a particular coach. Would you tell us what characteristics you look for in a great coach? (wait for responses, then) How many of you have worked with both women and men coaches during your athletic careers? A show of hands here would be fine. (state response out loud for transcription) For those of you who have worked with both men and women, have you seen any differences between the way they coach and, if so, do you have any gender preference here? (wait for responses, then) And do any of the rest of you have preferences for male or female coaches?

3. In speaking with athletes, coaches and administrators, we often hear of stereotypes around women athletes. If someone you meet hears that you’re an
athlete, and makes an immediate assumption about, say, your academic abilities or sexual orientation, that would be an example of a stereotype. What sort of stereotypes have you run into in high school or college? (wait for responses, then) Have any of these incidences influenced your thoughts about athletics or coaching in the future?

4. In your experience, have you seen differences in the ways men’s and women’s teams are treated by (name of school)? If you needed help with, say, tutoring or if a family emergency came up and you needed to leave school for a few days, do you think you would be treated the same as the athletes on men’s teams here?

5. Now we want to talk about the future. How many of you have thought about going into coaching or athletics administration at any level, whether volunteer or professional? A show of hands would be fine. (state response out loud for transcription) Could each of you who have thought about it tell us what you’d like to do if anything were possible? (wait for responses, then) Are there any barriers that stand in the way of your getting there? Such barriers might include your work plans, present or future family commitments, or a lack of openings or resources in your sport. (wait for responses, then) Are there any resources you could tap into to get there? Such resources could include friends, family, coaches, mentors, networks or associations you belong to. (wait for responses, then) For any of you, how would a career in coaching or administration compare on a day-to-day basis with other careers you’ve considered. Comparisons might concern the competitive environment, hours, travel, or a host of other factors. (wait for responses, then) And what specific steps would you take now and in the next few years if you did want to become a successful coach at the collegiate level?

6. We’re almost done, and we’d like you to think very broadly for this question. When our study is completed, many colleges and universities, as well as organizations such as NACWAA and the NCAA, will be hearing about the results. What do they need to do to attract you, your friends, or your teammates into coaching and athletics administration? Anything that comes to mind here is fair game for discussion, and it’s worth reminding you that your names will be hidden in our reporting, so your answers here will not be linked to you personally.

7. Finally, I’d like to go around the table and get race/ethnicity information for you. We’re using census categories such as white, latina, african american, asian and so forth, and multiple answers are fine. (Start at your left)

(Stop transcription, hand each participant the Focus Group Follow-Up sheet)

Thanks for you help. To help maintain confidentiality, please do not report to others things that were said during this session. We will have a report available
from this study in February ’05 at our web site. The address is on the follow-up sheet and informed consent, so you can see the overall findings. Thanks again.

(Potential land mines moderators must be sensitive to, head off, or redirect)

- Discomfort over discussion of sexual orientation – reduce discomfort by lightening the discussion or redirect to another topic
- Discussion of athletes as academically substandard – redirect
- Extended discussion of a particular coach – redirect
- Extended discussion of anything off-topic, such as the particular school, present family circumstances, or recent events on-campus – redirect
References


———. 2000. *1999-00 Race Demographics of NCAA Member Institutions’ Athletics Personnel*. Indianapolis IN: NCAA.


Notes

1 The figures and facts presented in the following paragraph are from Acosta and Carpenter (2004).
3 See Acosta and Carpenter (2004).
4 See Gogol (2002).
7 See NCAA (2002a).
8 The NCAA was collecting information on the gender and racial composition of athletics personnel by the 1990-1991 academic year. See NCAA (1999) regarding gender and NCAA (2000) on race.
9 See NCAA (2002a).
10 For the relevant figures, see NCAA (2002b, pp. 17, 20).
11 See Williams (1999).
12 Relatedly, Acosta and Carpenter (2004) argue that Title IX opened many alternative career doors for women, leading many prospective women coaches to look at other careers. Given that these doors also remain open to men, and the persistence of sex-segregated occupations (see Albelda, Drago & Shulman, 2000), it is difficult to give this particular argument much credence.
13 See Williams (1999).
15 See Sandberg and Hofferth (2001).
17 See Drago and Colbeck (2003, p. 31).
19 See Presser (2003, pp. 97, 99).
20 See Whisenant, Pedersen and Obenour (2002).
22 See Vescio, Snyder, and Butz (2003) showing that powerful men, but not women, stereotype subordinate women according to gender and show discrimination in task assignment, evaluations, and recommendations for promotion.
24 The nine major sports, as defined by at least 50 percent of Division I schools fielding a women’s team, are basketball, cross country, golf, soccer, softball, swim/dive, tennis, track and field, and volleyball, all of which exhibited declines from 1997 to 2004 in the percentage of women coaches of at least 10 percent excepting soccer, where the figure increased from 29.4 to 30.1 percent (Acosta & Carpenter 2004, pp. 9, 13). Licensing of soccer coaches occurs through the U.S. Soccer Federation (see www.ussoccer.com).
25 See Young (1990). Young recommends that women acquire male mentors because the men can open more doors for the women.
26 For further information, see www.nacwaa.org.
27 See, e.g., Smith & Erb (1986).
28 See NCAA (2003, p. 10).
29 For example, the national survey of faculty reported in Drago and Colbeck (2003) tested hypotheses generated by focus groups while, in focus groups administered subsequent to the survey, further hypotheses were generated.
30 We attempted to administer two focus groups with male coaches and athletic administrators at the NCAA convention. However, only two respondents were involved in those groups, so we ignore those results here.
31 Figures for the race/ethnic composition of one of the NCAA focus groups are not available, hence the use of + signs in the relevant cells to connote that at least that number of participants were in the cell.
32 See Drago and Colbeck (2003) for a description of ‘daddy privilege’ in the academic workplace, a concept discovered in that research by Kai Dawn Stauffer.
33 The long hours for coaches and athletic administrators fits the findings of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2001) report, where they argue that “…academic transgressions, a financial arms race, and commercialization – are all evidence of the widening chasm between higher education’s ideals and big-time college sports.” (2001, p. 4)
35 Undercounting, particularly of people of color and of the poor, occurs to some extent (see Anderson and Feinberg, 1999).
36 The Standard Occupational Classification code is 27-2022 and the Census 2000 Industry Code is 787.
37 See www1.ncaa.org and www.carnegiefoundation.org for these figures.
38 These figures are rough approximations. To obtain the estimates, we multiplied the average number of women coaches per school by the number of schools responding, across all three divisions, and across full-time and part-time employed coaches (see Tables 2A and 2B for Division I overall, and for Divisions II and III for the original figures). Given the response rate for the survey was 82.5 percent, we took the total figure and divided it by .825 to obtain an overall estimate. Although the precise figures might be off, we suspect the ratio of full- to part-time coaches is more accurate than that from the Census analysis.
39 For relevant figures, see NCAA (2002, pp. 17, 20).
41 Indeed, we are not aware of any case where a high school coach is employed full-time to coach a single team.