Gender Equity In College Sports Essay, Research Paper

“Gender Equality In College Sports?”

An on going issue facing education today is the growing controversial topic of gender equality in sports participation and it’s so call quota for achieving equality. The most notable action that has taken place as women continue to strive towards equality in the athletic realm is what is known as, Title IX. The basic ideas underlying Title IX are that “if an institution sponsors an athletics program, it must provide equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes.” (Yoshida p.3) Simply put, Title IX attempts to achieve “equality” of funding for male and female athletes. The problem with this idea of complete “equality” is that no one agrees as to what is considered equal. It is an ambiguous term, interpreted differently by many people.

The enactment of this Title has significantly changed the playing field for athletic departments through out the nation by altering their funding systems to comply with its rules. As a result, women have benefited greatly. There have been additions of female sports as well as an increase of the number of scholarships awarded to female athletes, and also a lot more funding to provide more “equitable” facilities for them. According to the NCAA Gender Equity Studies , “from 1992 to 1997 NCAA institutions have increased the number of female athletes by 5,800. But tragically during that time these colleges also eliminated 20,900 male athletes.” (Kocher p.1) This dramatic landslide has occurred because athletic departments are under pressure to rapidly increase the proportion of female athletes by whatever means necessary. As the path toward complete “equality” gradually brightens for women in college athletics, a dark path is now becoming evident. Male athletes, in a sense, are now being discriminated against because of Title IX.

This issue of Title IX affects our education system today because its rules are controversial as to what is really “equal.” For instance, if one particular sport at a university is extremely successful and is capable of supporting many other sports within the system, then, is it fair that that successful sports team should be penalized by limiting their funds? Should they have to support a team who has been added to the university to abide by Title IX rules, but are not making a profit? In the end, the university as a whole is negatively affected. The concept of equality in terms of Title IX does not seem to be evident in this case, when one team makes a majority of the profit, yet must surrender it’s share to support the others. A real example of this occurrence is when the National Organization for Women filed a complaint against UCLA and Southern California, alleging that they were noncompliant to Title IX. In order to comply with Title IX, UCLA made drastic efforts to meet satisfying gender quotas by terminating its men’s swimming team that produced 20-plus Olympic gold medals and eliminated a nationally ranked men’s gymnastics team. These quotas not only hurt the financial welfare of UCLA, but because of similar circumstances that have been occurring at universities through out the entire nation, athletic departments nationwide have also been experiencing a decline.

Title IX has a tremendous effect on whom will be allowed to receive an education. It affects to whom is admitted into universities, who is granted scholarships, and it also directly affects the financial aspect of most universities due to the fact that they must now alter their systems and funding plans to comply with its rules. Athletes should not be discriminated against because of their sex. If one athlete or team is more deserving of being funded because they doing well, and are contributing to the overall success of the university, then sex should not be the reason why they cannot be rewarded.

Through my personal experience at the University of Hawaii athletic department, I have noticed that this has become a big issue for us. This university, in comparison to the universities on the mainland, is not one that can afford to fully accommodate to the rules of Title IX and still continue to be successful. The cost of travel expenses at the University of Hawaii are incredibly high compared to schools on the mainland. Thus, making it very difficult for the athletic department to stay within budget. Due to various budget constraints with in the department, the UH football team is recognized as the only school in the nation who averages eight or more home games a season because of the heavy travel expenses. To continue to add women sports to the UH athletic department doesn’t seem logical, knowing that the budget deficit will only continue to rise dramatically, it seems that the only thing UH is forced to do is to add more and more people into an already packed canoe which is rapidly sinking.

In conclusion I feel that women sports is positive and good for our society. At this point in time women sports is at a developmental stage. The influence of Title IX has really made a significant impact on many lives and campuses around the nation, especially here at UH. The question of equality will always continue to hover over our heads as to finding what is the truest meaning of “equality” in college sports . Is one’s daughter more worthy of attaining a scholarship than one’s son? In what ways are we really achieving equality? It is my assumption that law makers need not put so much pressure on athletic departments who are making positive efforts in complying with Title IX. Although Title IX has been a huge boost in women athletic participation and to women receiving an education, it acts as a cut throat advocate for male participation in athletics and education.

As for the University of Hawaii, I feel that we are making positive strides in the right direction in adding female sports to the athletic program. The latest addition to be added to the program is a women’s track team. Although Title IX has made it possible in opening opportunities for women, I think that law makers need to look into having the University of Hawaii exempt, to some degree, as far as being compliant with Title IX. If equality is what law makers are striving for than, because of UH’s geographical position, it’s not fair that the athletic program alone would have to generate twice as much money compared to the mainland schools, just to stay afloat. Not even to be competitive! How close are we really to achieving “equality” or is there even such a word like that in college sports?

1.) Kocher, Leo; “1992-1997-An Era Of Title IX’s Unintended Consequences in College Athletics,”

Online @: (www.intermathwrestle.com/titleix/congress4.htm)

2.) Yoshida, Hugh; “If You Let Us Play…” A Plan for Achieving Gender Equity in University of Hawaii Intercollegiate Athletics 1996-2002.

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