

ABSTRACT

YATES, SHANNON. The Career Development of a Senior Woman Athletic Administrator. (Under the direction of J. Conrad Glass, Jr.)

While there are numerous models of career development for female managers, little is documented about career development for females in athletic administration. Life-history case study methods of qualitative research were employed to examine the participant's career development experiences, as well as her rise to the senior woman athletic administrator. In using the case study method, the term "career" is also emphasized as an integral part of the review process. The reason for this is that careers reflect the relationships between people and their providers or official position, those individuals and their institutions or organizations and how those relationships fluctuate over time (Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, p. 8).

Data were collected using open-ended, semi-structured questions during tape-recorded interview of Senior Woman Athletics Administrator who has worked at her university/college for a minimum of 20 years. During analysis the following themes were explored in comparison to female executives: Senior Woman Athletic Administrator's (a) early years, represented by family; (b) educational experiences including high school and college; (c) her personal life; and (d) career including barriers and mentors. During analysis the theme of the role of the Senior Woman Athletic Administrator and the impact of Title IX emerged. This theme is relevant to the career of female athletic administrators. This theme is not comparable to research relating to women in the business world. Findings suggest that the Senior Woman Administrator's career is accurate in comparison to female executives in the following themes, (a) demographics, (b) post graduate education, (c) familial support, and (d) barriers. The themes that were reviewed can be transformed in similar context to the business world. This may bode well for future woman professionals in sport as they can look to the business world for guidance and support.

The Career Development of a Senior Woman Athletic Administrator

By

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my Grandmother Rosa Belle Riddle. Although she was not here to see me complete my degree, she has remained the one person who has inspired me the most. She taught by example—the issues of faith, necessary skills, and unconditional love. She remains my most sincere guidance. This work is dedicated to her—in her trusting me to “just do my best”.

BIOGRAPHY

Shannon Yates, now in her 14th year as a member of the NC State Department of Athletics, was named Assistant Athletics Director for Varsity Sports Administration and Game Operations in May 2000.

Yates is responsible for game-day management for each of the Wolfpacks' varsity sports, overseeing event staff, security, parking, credentials, and stadium policies. As the sport administrator for volleyball, gymnastics, softball and cheerleading, she serves as a liaison for the teams with the rest of the department.

Yates began her career at NC State as a student trainer in 1988. In 1992, after completing her undergraduate degree in psychology, she joined the department as a marketing intern. Two years later, she became administrative coordinator for finance and operations and worked in the areas of game-day operations, tickets, and finance.

After serving as director of operations for women's basketball during the 1996-97 school year, Yates returned to her role of managing the Wolfpack's game-day events a year later and remained in that capacity until she was promoted to Assistant Athletics Director in 1998.

Yates is a 1992 summa cum laude graduate of NC State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. She earned her Master of Science degree in sports administration at NC State in 1994 and has been a lecturer in the physical education department from 1996-2007, where she taught Introduction to Sport Management.

Yates serves as the gender equity chair for the department as well as the Chair of the ACC Softball Committee. Yates will serve as as the Co-Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the 2008 NCAA Men's Basketball 1st and 2nd rounds.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	3
The Purpose of the Study	4
Significance of Study	5
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study	5
Definition of Terms	6
The National Collegiate Athletic Association	7
Division I	7
Bowl Championship Series Conferences	8
Senior Woman Administrator	8
Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women.....	9
CHAPTER II	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Career Theory and Women	10
Life Phases for Women and their Career	15
Statistics on Business and Women	18
Demographic Portrait of Female Executives	19
The Glass Ceiling	19
Barriers to Advancement	20
Mentors	22
History of Women in Sports	23
Title IX Legislative History	25
Statistics on Females in Athletics	33
The Role of the Senior Woman Administrator	36
CHAPTER III	38
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	38
Overview	38
Participant Selection	39
Research Design	40
Interviewing	40
Data Collection and Analysis	43
Interview Process and Instrumentation	43
Analysis	44
Ethics	47
Reliability and Validity Issues	47
Summary	48

CHAPTER IV	49
RESULTS	49
Portrayal	50
Early Years	50
College and University	51
Personal Life	51
Career Path	52
Barriers	56
Role Model	57
Closing Impression	59
Summary	60
Comparison of SWA and Female Executives	60
Early Years	61
Education	61
Personal Life	62
Career Path	63
Barriers	65
Mentors	68
Summary	70
Emergent Themes	70
The Role of the SWA	70
CHAPTER V	74
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74
REFERENCES	80
APPENDIX A	84
Semi-Structured Interview Guide	85

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Thirty-five years ago, before many of the female athletes participating today were born, Congress was forming a foundation that was to bring equality in education for both men and women. This controversial legislation was to prevent “sex discrimination” in all educational institutions that received federal financial assistance. This legislation pertained to athletics as well as academics.

In 1972, Congress spoke 37 words that have since changed the face of college athletics: “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance....”(Acosta & Carpenter, 1993, p. 55). This legislation from the Educational Amendment is simply known as Title IX.

In 1972, female administrators directed 90 percent of women’s athletic programs and that figure had decreased to 18.6 percent once the NCAA replaced the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). In 2006, 14.5 percent of all NCAA schools still have no women involved in the athletic administration structure. (p. 180). Yet, female student participation in athletics has increased 121,000 athletes in that same time period. (p. 170). Although Title IX applied to all facets of campus life, its application to athletics has received the largest degree of press attention and discussion” (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). Many have postulated the reasons why this has occurred. Some think that this because the majority of athletes are male, more discrimination takes place in athletic departments than other places in the university, or perhaps it is because athletics is in the public view more than other academic areas.

The “athletic department is most frequently the location to watch” since that is where the vast majority of noncompliance violations occur” (Acosta & Carpenter, 1993, p. 58).

The literature suggests that at this time there are not large amounts of female sport administrators and the need to understand how females can gain leadership positions in athletic departments is important if young women are to continue to increase their presence in athletics. In addition it is important to review and record models for female career development pathways and management theories as those do not currently exist for intercollegiate athletics administrative positions.

In this study, we will examine the career history of a current female senior woman administrator at a Division I BCS (Bowl Championship Series) Conference university. Using the life history-case study method of qualitative research to examine the participant’s career development experiences, as well as her rise to the senior woman administrative position, the story that this senior woman administrator can provide will detail her career development experiences and her ascendancy in athletic administration authority.

A qualitative research methodology was selected because in this case it seeks to understand the meaning that an individual has constructed for herself and how she makes sense of her world and the experiences she has had in the world. It is concerned directly with “experience as it is lived, felt, or undergone” (Bierema, 1998, p. 6). A case study is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for the one involved.

The interest here is in the process rather than outcome, and in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from a case study can directly influence policy, practice, and future research (Bierema, 1998). Bierema states that case studies by definition get as close to the subject of interest as they can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by

their access to subjective factors (thoughts feelings, desires)” (p. 32, 1998). The case study method is selected for its uniqueness for what it can reveal about a phenomenon; knowledge to which we might not otherwise have access. Rare data can help one to understand the experiences of those being studied and reveal information that otherwise might not be readily available.

In using the case study method, the term “career “ is also emphasized as an integral part of the review process. The reason for this is that careers reflect the relationships between people and their providers or official positions those individuals and their institutions or organizations and how these relationships fluctuate over time (Bierema, p. 8.). The evolution of a career can thus be viewed as individual change and sociological life history case studies provide much information, as they are “anchored in real-life situations, and so the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon” (Bierema, 1998, p.41).

Statement of Problem

While there are numerous models of career development for female managers, little is documented about career development for females in athletic administration. Many studies have examined the career paths of women in top administrative positions in the business world (Gallos, 1998). Researchers have also focused on the trait theory and career advancement for women (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Researchers have also looked at life phases for women and careers (Gallos, 1989). In addition, demographic studies of female senior executives (Davidson & Burke, 2000), (Lipman-Blumen, 1996), reviews on the glass ceiling effect for women (Bierema, 1998 & Powell, 2000), barriers to advancement (Mitchell, 1993) and the effects of mentors have all been studied (Bierema, 1998).

In addition, there is much evidence on the history of women in sports (Lenoard, 1984; Spears, 1995), Title IX legislation (Narol, 1994; Vargyas, 1989), statistics on female athletic participation (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006), and the role of the senior woman administrator (About the NCAA, 2002). Further review of these and other studies will be discussed later in this document.

Although many studies focus on females in top-level business world positions, no recent qualitative study has presented a portrait of the career development experience of a top female athletic administrator. The case study-life history model has been used to seek information about the factors and circumstances that influenced top female athletic administrator by examining their self-perception of their career development experience.

The Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to tell the story of a female athletic administrator from a Division I BCS conference university. This will provide a written account of the career development process and will focus on identifying the factors that led a female to the decision to become a part of athletic administration, her early years, her educational experiences, her personal life, and her career path. The research will be guided by the question: What were the career development experiences, as she became a senior women's administrator in athletics? In addition, how does this experience relate to female executives in the business world?

Significance of Study

The existing data on senior level women in business positions have not provided information into the world of athletic administration. If the field of athletic administration is to present a complete and accurate account of its history, there should

be documentation of women in these positions. The information provided by these interviews would be valuable to future young women in sports as they chart their career paths. The “rare data can help them to understand the experiences of those being studied and reveal information that otherwise might not be available” (Bierema, 1998, p. 33). The proposed study should help contribute to this void of information.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The techniques for collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative setting are very labor intensive and cannot examine every phenomenon of interests. The number of respondents must be limited and the research focused. Therefore, this study was limited to examining the career development of one senior woman administrator at a Division I BCS University.

Due to the employment of the researcher in a Division I university in a BCS conference university, interviewer bias cannot be completely eliminated. In order to lessen possible researcher bias, predetermined characteristics were established to identify potential participant selection.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions represent accurate accounts of what Title IX and Gender Equity embody, and related terms that contribute to this research:

Title IX

Title IX is the portion of the Educational Amendment of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funds. The law states that: “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity

receiving federal financial assistance....”(Acosta & Carpenter, 1993, p. 55). This legislation from the Educational Amendment is simply known as Title IX.

Gender Equity

Gender Equity is a “philosophical consideration based on the moral imperative of equality for women” (National Association of Women in Sports, 1992, IV2). The NCAA

Gender Equity Task Force defined Gender Equity in the following manner:

"At an institutional level, gender equity in intercollegiate athletics describes an environment in which fair and equitable distribution of overall athletic opportunities, benefits, and resources are available to women and men and in which student athletes, coaches and athletics administrators are not subject to gender-based discrimination. An athletics program can be considered gender equitable when participants in both the men's and women's sports programs would accept as fair and equitable the overall program of the other gender..." (1993, p. 2). Both of these terms are often interchanged, but they each have distinctive meanings in the context of this legislation.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association

The NCAA is the “organization through which the nation’s colleges and universities speak and act on athletics matters at the national level. It is a voluntary association of approximately 1,200 institutions, conferences, organizations, and individuals devoted to the sound administration of intercollegiate athletics” (About the NCAA, 2002). The NCAA divides its members into three different divisions, which are classified as I, II, III.

Division I

Division I schools are member institutions of the NCAA and have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season has to be represented by both genders and there are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria (About the NCAA, 2002).

For sports other than football and basketball, Division I schools must play 100% of the minimum number of contests against Division I opponents and anything over the minimum number of games has to be 50% Division I. Men and women's basketball teams must play all but two games against Division I teams, and the men must play one third of all their contests in the home arena.

Schools that have football are classified as Division I-A or I-AA. I-A football schools usually have fairly elaborate programs. Division I-A teams must meet minimum attendance requirements. These are either 17,000 people in attendance per home game, or 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years, or 30,000 permanent seats in their stadium and average 17,000 per home game or 20,000 average of all football games in the last four years. In lieu of this, they may be in a member conference in which at least six conference members sponsor football or more than half of football schools meet these attendance criteria. Division I-AA teams do not need to meet minimum attendance requirements. Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed” (About the NCAA, 2002).

Bowl Championship Series Conferences

The top six conferences in the United States in terms of “revenues and prominence” are full members of the Bowl Championship Series (*BCS*), which selects teams to play in the National Football Championship each year. The leagues include the Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-10 and Southeastern Conferences (Suggs, 2000a, p. 5).

Senior Woman Administrator

The NCAA designated the position primary woman administrator in 1981 and later changed the title to the Senior Woman Administrator (1991) and this was the individual who was selected to receive specific mailings from the organization. “The SWA is the highest-ranking female administrator involved with the conduct of a member institution’s intercollegiate athletics program. The purpose of this appointment is to involve female administrators in a meaningful way in the decision-making process in intercollegiate athletics. This position is intended to ensure representations of women’s interests at the campus, conference, and national levels” (About the NCAA, 2002).

Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women

The association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women was established in 1971 to govern collegiate women’s athletics in the United States and to administer national champions. “It evolved out of the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for women (founded in 1967). The association was one of the stepping-stones for women’s athletics on the collegiate level. After conflicts with the NCAA in the early 1980s the AIAW discontinued operation and most member schools continued their women’s athletic programs under the governance of the NCAA” (Willey, 2007, p. 2).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is necessary to first present a review of the pertinent literature available on women in executive positions as well as women in athletics: Many studies have examined the career paths of women in top administrative positions in the business world (e.g., Gallos, 1989; Gutek & Larwood, 1987; Davidson & Burke, 2000). Researchers have also looked at life phases for women and their careers (Gallos, 1989; Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990). There have been studies on the demographics of female senior executives (Davidson & Burke, 2000, Lipman-Blumen, 1996) and reviews have taken place on the glass ceiling effect on women (Bierema 1998; and Powell, 2000), barriers to advancement (Mitchell, 1993) and the effects of mentors (Bierema, 1998).

In relation to females in athletic administration, Title IX and its correlation to intercollegiate female advancement has been reviewed by Acosta and Carpenter. Review of this literature shows several categories emerging: The History of Women in Sport; Title IX Legislative History, Statistics on Female Athletic/Administration Participation; and the Role of the Senior Woman Administrator. All of these categories will be further discussed and reviewed.

Career Theory and Women

“The concept of career theory has never been so popular. Career can be viewed as the “evolving sequence of a person’s work experience over time” (Bierema, 1989, p.8). For the individual, work can provide a potential influence on both personal adjustments and development in life. Career theory is the focus on the whole person as he or she relates to his or her work situation. According to Erikson and Levinson (as cited in Gallos, 1998), career theories

have largely been built on male models of success and work. The lack of female oriented career theories has made it hard to fully understand the process that women follow.

Gallos (1998) asserts that even today, “primitive beliefs that menstruation weakens the supply of blood to the brain, linger in the cocktail-party expressed theories that women by nature, are too emotional to be good managers and that menstrual cycles might affect their decision making abilities in an organization” (p. 113). While interdependence, self-sufficiency, and an emphasis on work/career underpin life phases for men, “interdependence and struggle to combine attachment and accomplishment is key to explaining the sequencing of women’s life phases” (p. 118). According to Gallos (1998), many women still feel themselves in the awkward position of having to either defend or reject the family in order to have or work on equal footing with men.

Traditional career development theory is based almost exclusively on studies of male subjects and “gives little attention to the fact that for women the development process over the life span is different from that of men and far more complex” (Gutek & Larwood, 1997, p. 15). Gutek & Larwood, 1997) asserts that women are socialized to give primacy to nurturing roles, and career or achieving roles assume secondary or negligible priority. According to Gutek & Larwood, not until “1975 did women’s career development”, in the currently accepted view as a lifelong process, began to be studied extensively (1997. p. 16).

In the 1970’s Ginzberg found that the “male model of career preparation and choice did not fit the female prototype and that many women interrupted their educational preparation for marriage and experienced frequent shifts between work and home” (Gutek & Larwood, 1987, p.17). Super implied that his theory of vocational development, which he defines as “implementation of one’s self-concept and includes biological, societal, and psychological

variables-could be applicable to women if the qualifiers of marriage and childbearing were taken into account” (Gutek & Larwood, 1987, p. 17).

Super felt career women could be best described in one of three ways: as “stable homemaking conventional (working followed by marriage), stable working double-track (working while homemaking), or interrupted (either giving up homemaking or working)” (Gutek & Larwood, 1987, p. 17).

Fitzgerald and Crities (Gutek & Larwood, 1987) argued that women will never achieve equality with men until they have similar access to financial resources and are not dependent on others for their livelihood (p. 19). Richardson (Gutek & Larwood, 1987) suggests that although young women no longer see marriage and family as responsibilities that exclude involvement in an occupation, the two aspects of female role development exist in somewhat an uneasy alliance.

Gutek and Larwood, (1987) identified three models of career patterns of women in his research:

- (a) A continuous uninterrupted work pattern which is characteristic of women who may not marry or delay marriage or childbearing until they have established themselves in an occupation;
- (b) Working women who place equal priority on both parts, who may drop out of work for a limited time-but more or less work continuously; and
- (c) Homemaking women who place a high priority on family and have little concern for establishment in the occupational world. (p. 20)

The problem Gutek and Larwood identified is that the “years in which women who want children must bear and raise them are also the key years in the struggle for career success” (1987,

p. 24). A variety of traditional attitudes and behaviors still set up barriers to women's optimal career development and particularly their participation in nontraditional occupations.

In a study by (Gutek & Larwood, 1987) 1500 women and men who had received MBAs from the University of Texas were followed over a 60-year period. Women who were classified as "workaholics" reaped fewer rewards than their male counterparts, and were more likely to be single, divorced, or married several times. Fifty-two percent of the women were single compared with 17% of the male's. (p. 23)

White, Cox, and Coopers conducted a study in 1992 to support a career stage theory for women based on age. These researchers asked successful women to describe their "career decision making story". Their peers who are the organizing members of their occupational networks described career success. Examples of criteria their peers might have used to identify these successful women were salary, the annual budget she managed/controlled, number of staff supervised, or level on the occupational hierarchy (Davidson & Burke, 2000).

The career stages were categorized in the following manner:

Early Adult transition: 17-25 years (exploration)

- Early commitment to an occupation
- Testing of initial choices and preferences for living
- Identity diffusion caused by role conflict

Entering the Adult World: mid 20s (crystallization and implementation)

- Developing a sense of personal identity in relation to work and on-work
- Rejection of housewife role/separation from partner, resulting in growth of career
- High career centrality along early starters
- Search for opportunities to practice chosen occupation

Establishment: 25-33 Years

- Period of rapid learning and development
- Establishing reputation as a high achiever

Early-30s transition: 33-35 years

- Raised awareness of biological clock: decision whether to have children

Settling Down: 35 years (advancement)

- Decision about motherhood resolved
- Minimum maternity leave
- Striving for achievement of personal goals

Late 30s transition: 38-40

- Regret lack of children
- Family-career conflict
- Movement in response to glass ceiling

Achievement: 40-50 years (rebalancing)

- Resolution of career-family conflict
- Rationalization of decision not to have children
- Realization of personal goals
- Development of greater stability and consolidation of achievements to date

Maintenance: 50s onwards

- Continued growth and success

(Davidson & Burke, p.167, 2000).

Life Phases for Women and their Careers

Life phases for women have also been reviewed for their impact on women's careers. Gallos (1989) outlines a tentative portrait of a woman's life as it relates to career compared to life stage development. According to Barwick's research, the following chronological phases coincide with certain career tasks that women must work through:

1. Early Adult Transition Years (age 17 to 28)-Women are being pushed in the direction of marriage-which Barwick sees as the undisputed crucial achievement of an adult woman.

Work is something important to do here rather than something to be. In this phase relationships may be sacrificed for career or vice versa (p. 119).

2. Settling down Period (age 30 to 40)- This is a time of heavily investing in work for men.

Gallos, (1989) sees this period as the time to "climb the corporate ladder and become one's own man" (p.120).

Becoming one's own woman requires more than achieving professional success and it may require cutting back on either professional work or personal relationships or parenting.

Women who achieve professional success alone may feel anxious about their femininity or wonder what they have sacrificed (Gallos, 1989).

Scores of professional women in the corporate ranks reported frustration, emptiness, exhaustion, disillusionment, and a sense of professional failure when they realized the personal and interpersonal costs of their professional success. For these women, power, title, money, and status were not enough. The women wanted fair treatment and compensation, but almost more importantly, they wanted opportunities to be themselves at work, and to be connected with people around them (Gallos, 1989).

3. Middle Adulthood (age 40-50) has traditionally been a time of increased assertiveness and professional accomplishments for women. During this period-women have a distinct edge over their male counterparts in terms of physical health, well-being, and prospects for the future.
4. Age 50 and older, it is a time for acknowledging one's mortality and learning to enjoy what time is left.

In research completed (Gallos, 1989), modern women are living longer, having fewer children, and have more time for employment in the workplace. Therefore, 50 years old and beyond could still be argued as a productive time in a woman's life.

In a study completed by Gallos, (1989) using 300 women at midlife, the researchers found that achievement and accomplishment were critical aspects for leading a satisfying life. During the interviews, the women studied focused on their work achievements, jobs, career goals, and education. When the women were asked "If you could live your life over again, what one thing would you change?", the most frequent response was that they would seek more education and career preparation. At the same time pleasure for these women still centered on the quality of relationships with others.

A study completed by Velsor and Hughes in 1990 found seven common managerial lessons when comparing men and women managers and how they affected the managers' careers. These commonalities included directing and motivating employees, self-confidence, basic management values (such as ethics), how to work with executives, learning to understand others' perspectives, dealing with people over whom you have no authority, and handling the politics of situations. The men and women studied also reported other lessons learned, but there was distinction between the men and women reviewed. The next most important lessons reported by men

focused on mastering new job skills that would relate to performance, while those that were seen as important by women focused on learning about themselves and how to best fit into the organizational environment (Veslor & Hughes, 1990).

These women were focused on discovering who they were as individuals in their organizations, finding their niche, and integrating themselves with the environment. The men focused on the mastery of more specific business skills. The researchers found that female managers “spend more time engaged in a process of self-analysis; learning what a female manager is by identifying the traits of a male manager that she does not possess” (Veslor & Hughes, 1990, p. 10).

According to Velsor & Hughes, success for the female manager “may depend on her toning down certain desired characteristics of masculine behavior with more traditional feminine behaviors, or on combining seemingly contradictory behaviors, such as being tough but not macho or being ambitious but not expecting equal treatment” (1990, p. 11).

In the sample studied by Velsor and Hughes, many of the women described experiences of feeling unwelcome by their male peers, a superior, or subordinates. A number of these women faced and fought acts of discrimination. Factors such as organizational experience, newcomer or minority status, the need to define sex-role-appropriate behavior, isolation, and discrimination create a working environment more complex in its challenges for women.

The female managers found that working in the limelight, often under the stress of acting as a representative of all women, was an additional challenge they faced.

These women did find because they were often the first at their management level that their managers and other higher-level executives had a personal stake in their success. This support

and encouragement provided by these senior level staff, as well as personal mentors, was viewed as crucial in their learning and success.

Statistics on Business Women

For the last three decades women have succeeded entering careers in corporate American in unprecedented numbers. Women make up a growing segment of the talent pool from which American business organizations draw entry-level employees (Davidson & Burke, 2000, p.22).

Women have taken significant steps to increase their higher education in recent years. Between 1970 and 1995, “the proportion of women earning college degrees in all disciplines increased from 43% to 55 % at the bachelor level and from 40% to 55% at master level” (Davidson & Burke, 2000, p. 240). Women hold approximately 49% of the managerial and professional specialty occupations in the United States. However, for the vast majority of women, advancement stops there (Mattis, 2000).

The issue of why the numbers of women in top-level management positions has stayed so small. “Throughout recorded history, a patriarchal social system in which males have the power and authority over females has almost always prevailed. In most cases people make the most positive evaluations of and decisions about people whom they see as similar to themselves” (Davidson & Burke, 2000, p. 242). Therefore, men seemingly always have the competitive advantage in job procurement and advancements, since males are the primary decision makers in these offers.

Demographic Portrait of Female Executives

Lipman-Blumen found the following demographic portrait in her research of female senior executives:

- Women in business leadership roles are mostly middle aged.

- The vast majority grew-up in families where both parents were present.
- They often come from families where their homemaker mothers were more educated than their fathers
- They frequently have fathers who held managerial positions.
- The majority hold postgraduate degrees.
- The majority of top-level female leaders are married, but they are less likely to be married than their male counterparts
- They are likely to have fewer children than male executives
- These women are primarily Caucasian. (1996, p. 13)

The Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling has been defined as “ a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong, that it prevents women and minorities from moving up the management hierarchy”(Davidson & Burke, 2000, p.236). The term was coined in 1986 as a result of a three-year study, supported by the Center for Creative Leadership. It was conducted by Velsor and looked at seventy-six female executives and their male associates at top companies (Bierema, 1988, p.35).

The study found that while “some behaviors were acceptable for men, such as political action in the organization, they were not approved of for women. Many women would choose to leave the organization rather than try to mitigate the issues” (Bierema, 1988, p.35). This “glass ceiling” study offered advice for women who sought success: put in extra time and effort, advertise your abilities, cultivate allies, and actively seek opportunities (p. 35).

Barriers to Advancement

The following barriers that many women will face in their quest to advance in higher education administration, “lack of self esteem, need for self improvement, balancing family and work, being the only senior level woman and feeling a sense of isolation, limited experience with business politics, not having a mentor, and a lack of an internal/external network” (Mitchell, 1993, p.49).

“Acquiring a leadership position requires a record of achievement, a plan for career advancement and a strong and powerful support web. This is especially critical in the early stages of a woman’s career...While a well devised and implemented plan for advancement into leadership positions will not guarantee a woman a top level position, it will make her a more viable competitor, can help overcome many existing barriers, and enhance opportunities for career advancement” (Mitchell, p. 154 1993).

A study offered suggestions as to Strategic Plan for Career Advancement components for women administrators is outlined in the following:

Phase I: Foundation

Competence: Establish a knowledge base. Analyze your skills and abilities.

Political Climate: Analyze the climate in the work environment. Cultivate boss-subordinate relationship.

Phase II: Support Systems

Web: Identify internal and external coalitions and alliances important to your success.

Support Team: Select Several Powerful Mentors.

Select a confidant.

Phase III: Reaching a Career Goal

Marketing Scheme: Plan your public persona and ways to ensure your voice is heard.

(Mitchell, 1993, p. 148)

Suggests that women who aspire for successful careers, “take credit for their work and accomplishments, remember the political environment they work within, create situations to associate with people and organizations, keep updated in their field and abreast of current issues affecting their organizations, accept that analytical thinking and gamesmanship are essential to success, and find a career in which they make a difference” (Mitchell, 1993, p. 158)

Wellington asserts that the following points are the most powerful barriers to female career advancement:

- Negative assumptions in executive ranks about women, and their abilities, and their commitment to careers
- Perceptions that women do not fit within the corporate culture
- Lack of career planning and the range of job experiences commensurate with the needs of the organization
- Lack of core opportunities for female employees who have managerial potential
- Assumptions that women will not relocate for career advancement
- Failure to make managers accountable for not advancing women
- Management’s reluctance to give women revenue generating experience
- Lack of mentoring and exclusion from informal career networks, where men have typically learned the unwritten rules of success

- Appraisal and compensation systems that are not uniform for men and women
- Lack of flexible work arrangements that support work/family balance
- Discrimination (1998, p. xxi)

Mentors

Bierema indicated that a women's career development may be enhanced by or even depend on the helpful relationships formed with more experienced colleagues. Mentoring relationships have been shown to affect "protégé's careers positively and are related to achievement and influence in organizations, which leads to protégés earning higher salaries" (1998, p.62).

According to Bierema) "having a mentor may help increase the quality of organizational life for women by increasing self-esteem" (1998, p. 62). In addition, women in mentoring relationships with senior employees may gain special forms of entry into meaningful social networks and acquire important managerial skills by observing effective senior management.

However, research has shown that mentoring relationships are often "less available to women than men, and are sometimes viewed as problematic or complex for Bierema (1998) refers to mentoring as an intense caring relationship in which persons with experience work with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal development. Many organizations have realized the power of mentoring programs and have initiated formal programs designed to reach women and minorities.

History of Women in Sports

Before launching into a study of the emergence of Title IX and the repercussions of this legislation, it is important to ground the discussion by understanding the history of women in sports, specifically at institutions of higher education. From the earliest parts of documented

American history, women's sporting activities have been restricted. The American Colonial woman's athletic experience was limited to such pastimes as "dancing, 'spectatoring' of horse and boat races, skating and sleighing" (Leonard, 1984, p. 194). During the early 19th Century, women were again encouraged to "watch" while men were persuaded to "do" (Leonard, 1994, p. 189). The proper image of the Victorian woman was seen as a "pale, fragile creature who was ruled by her hormones and could only participate in the mildest of pastimes" (Leonard, 1984, p. 194).

Although historically the attitude that women should not participate in sports was widespread, some college administrators chose to encourage women to participate in physical activity. Matthew Vassar proved his interest in physical education for women by building the Calisthenium in 1861 and stating in Vassar College's *General Scheme of Education* that "physical education came first, as a fundamental to all the rest" (Swanson & Spears, 1998, p. 141). Women were limited to their choices of collegiate sports, but at least choices were offered. Matthew Vassar decided that women could participate in "such simple feminine sports as archery, croquet (or ladies cricket), graces, and shuttlecock" (Swanson & Spears, 1998, p.144).

At this point in history, games were just developing into professional sports. "Some contests between persons such as tennis and croquet and some pastimes such as roller skating and bicycling - also moved toward the category of sport" (Swanson & Spears, 1998, p.146). Women competed in the first national women's singles tennis championship in 1887 and women began competing in basketball just months after James Naismith invented the game, although, the rules for women were altered in order to "conform more closely with prevailing medical, psychological and social concepts of women's physical capabilities" (Swanson & Spears, 1995, p. 175). Women's collegiate sport experiences differed from men in that most women's

programs were part of the Physical Education Department, not a school sport, and all women's games were closed to the public. On a somewhat positive note, while men's sports excluded all but the best competitors, women's sports encouraged participation by a majority.

Industrialization and World War I and II did much to improve the participation of women in athletics (Leonard, 1984). In society women went to work, gained the right to vote and more women attended college. At colleges clubs were formed, more physical education classes were offered and women were allowed to participate in team sports. Despite steps in the right direction for college women athletes, there were overwhelming setbacks such as the disapproval of women in intercollegiate athletics by the Conference of College Directors of Physical Education in 1920. The Conference stated that women should avoid the "evils of men's athletics" and not participate in sports because:

1. "It leads to professionalism.
2. Training of a few to the sacrifice of many.
3. It is unsociable.
4. The necessity of hiring professional coaches for females.
5. Physical educators, both men and women, of our leading colleges, found results undesirable.
6. Expense, and
7. Unnecessary nerve fatigue" (Spears, 1995, p. 237).

Interestingly, eight years after this, women participated in the Olympic Games of 1928. The decades that followed the Wars and the Depression were a time for re-growth and an opportunity for women to become more involved in athletics on college campuses. There were even co-ed intramural teams at some universities. Programs were expanding and women were enjoying more activity in collegiate sports.

Title IX Legislative History

During the later decades of the 20th Century, the social change and upheaval that the United States faced was immense. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 challenged long held beliefs and an attitude demanding more equality for all Americans. Beginning in 1972, the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) was formed to ensure that the change in “society’s definition of gender roles” (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992, p. 36) was translated into athletics programs. As Donna Lopiano, the Executive Director of the Women’s Sport Foundation suggests, athletic departments may very well be “the last bastion of male chauvinism” (Alexander, 1991, p. 1A). The limited opportunities, exclusion, lesser funding and inferior equipment, facilities, and training for women provided documented inequality, which spurred on the emergence of Title IX. (Acosta & Carpenter, 1993).

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon enacted Title IX of the Educational Amendment prohibiting sexual discrimination in all federally funded educational programs including sports programs. It stated that, “Title IX requires a recipient of federal funds which sponsors intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics to provide equal opportunity for both sexes. Equal opportunity must be viewed in three areas: “(1) scholarships, (2) equivalents in other athletic benefits, and (3) effective accommodations of student interests and abilities” (Narol, 1994, p. 11).

It was two years later that Senator Tower introduced an amendment to exempt revenue-producing sports (such as football) from being tabulated when determining Title IX compliance (Grant, 2000, History of Title IX). This was rejected in 1974 because “under Title IX, there is no absolute requirement that a school spend the same amount of money on its male and female students, in addition, schools cannot justify discriminatory treatment of girls’ and

women's sports because they are not 'revenue' sports" (Vargyas, 1989, p. 10). The Javits Amendment stated that it would consider the different needs of different sports. It was included in Title IX legislation in July 1974.

The Javits amendment was not designed to give special consideration to football (Grant, 2000, History of Title IX), but rather it was intended to permit for differences in costs of equipment or management. Two more attempts were made to exclude revenue-producing sports from Title IX, but both died before reaching Congress.

As a result, football "must be treated as a part of the total athletic program, not separately" (National Association of Girls and Women in Sports, 1992, p. 56).

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the updated regulations and assigned a three-year window in which schools must comply with Title IX, but this was not the end of the fight. The day after Title IX regulations were sent to the Congress, Senator Jesse Helms disagreed with them and several other attempts were made at modification but Congress rejected all disapproving resolutions. Senator Helms tried two more times, in 1975 and 1977, to limit the reach of Title IX by entering resolutions to restrict Title IX to athletic programs that were part of the existing curriculum. Both times he entered these bills they were rejected. As of 1979, colleges and universities needed to be in compliance with the following three major categories:

- I. Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interest and abilities of members of both sexes (sport offerings),
- II. Athletic Financial Assistance (scholarships)

III. Other Program Areas to include:

1. *Equipment and Supplies*

Quality; amount of; suitability; maintenance and replacement; availability of equipment and supplies.

2. *Scheduling of Games And Practice Time*

Number of games, length, and time of day of practices; time of day of games; pre-season and post-season opportunities.

3. *Travel and Per Diem Allowance*

Modes of transportation; housing furnished during travel; length of stay before and after competitive events; dining arrangements and per diem.

4. *Tutors*

Availability procedures and criteria for obtaining assistance; assignment qualifications, training, experience, etc.; Compensation-rate of pay, pupil loads, qualifications, experience, and other terms and conditions of employment.

5. *Coaches*

Availability-full time, part time, assistant, and graduate assistants; Assignment –training, experience, professional standing, and other professional qualifications; Compensation-rate of compensation, duration of contracts, conditions relating to contract renewal, experience, nature of coaching duties, working conditions, and other terms and conditions of employment.

6. *Locker Rooms, Practice and Competitive Facilities*

Quality, availability, and exclusivity of practice and competitive facilities, quality and availability of locker rooms; maintenance and preparation of practice and competitive facilities.

7. *Medical and Training Facilities and Services*

Availability of medical personnel; availability and quality of weight training and conditioning facilities; availability and qualifications of athletic trainers; health and accident, and injury insurance coverage.

8. *Housing/Dining Facilities Services*

Housing provided; special services as part of housing; dining arrangements

9. *Publicity*

Availability and quality of sports information personnel access to other publicity resources; quantity and quality of publications and other promotional devices.

10. *Support Services*

Administrative, secretarial, and clerical support; office space

11. *Recruitment of Student Athletes*

Equal opportunities for professional personnel to recruit, availability of financial and other resources for recruitment; equivalent benefits, opportunities, and treatment of prospective athletes (Bonnette, 2000, II-1)

With regards to the “effective accommodations” category, Bonnette (2000, II-1) states that colleges and universities must “meet at least one of the following three requirements: (1) substantial proportionality between the ratio of full-time men and women in the student body and the number of varsity athletic slots apportioned to men and women (a five percent differential in

ratio has held in some cases), (2) show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to developing interests and abilities of members of the under-represented sex, or (3) the full and effective accommodations of the interests and abilities of the under represented sex by the present program.” This is referred to as the Three-Pronged Test.

The Three-Pronged test was developed by the Office for Civil Rights and is the primary basis for establishing compliance under Title IX. There are questions under each prong that the university must answer in order to pass. Proportionality demands that the “percentage of female athletes must exceed or be within five points of the percentage of its full-time female undergraduates” (Bonnette, 2000, II-6). If the first test is “failed,” then historical effort may be considered. At an institution where one gender is underrepresented, the university must demonstrate its effort to add sports programs for the underrepresented gender. Compliance in the area of historical effort as well as effective accommodation is “a subjective measure, and can but doesn’t automatically satisfy the requirements of Title IX” (Bonnette, 2000, II-6). Effective accommodation is the last chance for a school to pass Title IX. For instance, through a survey of underclass students a university can prove it provided effective accommodation, if “varsity status was given to any sport played by the underrepresented class on an intramural or club level that has shown strong interest and ability to compete on the intercollegiate varsity level” (Bonnette, 2000, II-7).

It should be noted that there is not a part of this legislation that states that there must be separate competitive teams for female and male students, or that schools must spend the same amount of money on their male and female teams. Schools may offer separate teams where: “(1) the selection is based on competitive skill; or (2) the sport involved is a contact sport (boxing,

wrestling, rugby, ice hockey, football, basketball, etc.)” (Vargyas,1989, p. 10). However, if a school offers any non-contact sport for members of one sex only and opportunities have been limited for the excluded sex, the members of the excluded sex must be allowed to try out for the team.

Four major events have occurred since 1978 that have shaped Title IX and its importance at colleges and universities. The first came about in 1984 when the applicability of Title IX across the board, was completely destroyed. The *Grove City vs. Bell Decision* limited the scope of Title IX to only those programs receiving direct federal assistance. Since most athletic departments did not receive money directly from the government, they became exempt from Title IX legislation. Four years later, the *Civil Rights Restoration Act* passed despite a presidential veto by Ronald Reagan. This act nullified the *Grove City vs. Bell Decision* and stated that, “all educational institutions which receive any type of Federal financial assistance, whether it be direct or indirect, will be bound by Title IX legislation” (Curtis, 2000, History of Title IX).

Four years after the *Civil Rights Restoration Act*, a landmark case changed the future of Title IX. In the case of *Franklin vs. Gwinnett County Schools*, the Supreme Court ruled that since “Congress did not intend to limit the remedies available in a Title IX suit” (White, 1992, p.12), those filing Title IX lawsuits “are entitled to receive punitive damages when intentional action to avoid Title IX compliance is established.” Because of this decision, “not only will victims be compensated for their injuries for the first time, there is now a powerful incentive for schools to eradicate discrimination” (Vargyas, 1989, p. 10). The most recent event that encourages compliance with Title IX is the 1994 *Equality in Athletics Disclosure Act* (EADA), which was first sponsored by Senator Mosley-Braun in 1993. This act

requires all coeducational institutions that receive any federal financial assistance to annually disclose information about athletic departments.

The first reports were due October 1, 1996 and provided results that were disturbing, if not surprising. Some twenty-eight years after the inception of Title IX, 89 to 94 percent of NCAA Division I-A schools did not pass the proportionality test (Anderson, 2006).

Looking at how far female athletes have come since doctors claimed that women who engaged in sports “would do irreparable harm to their reproductive organs” (Lopiano, 1997, p. 2) is encouraging. Over the last thirty years, Title IX complaints have brought about new opportunities and better conditions for girls interested in sports competition.

In-depth studies of female athletes have opened society’s eyes to those myths that have been perpetuated to keep women out of sports. It is now known that women collegiate athletes can expect the following benefits:

- higher graduation rates compared to non-athletes,
- better self-image, confidence, and self-esteem,
- less depression,
- lowered risk of breast cancer,
- 20-30% lower levels of blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure

(Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001, p. 1)

From this emergence of Title IX compliance, a new form of thinking has taken place. While Title IX has come to be associated with the law, the term “Gender Equity” represents a new philosophical way of thinking and behaving. Gender Equity “is a philosophical consideration based on the moral imperative of equality” for women while Title IX is the law from which this idea was formed” (National Association of Girls and Women in Sports, 1992, IV-2). While many

in intercollegiate athletics have adopted this new ideal, statistics on female athletes reflect that many of the promises of Title IX legislation and gender equity still must be achieved. As Nora Lynn Finch, Senior Associate Athletics Director at NC State University, stated, "...there's still so much energy being spent on complaining instead of complying"(Politi, 1997, p. 9A).

Statistics on Female Athletes

From this groundbreaking beginning to reach equality for women in sports, many changes in numbers have begun to take place. In 1972, fewer than 300,000 girls played high school sports. By the academic year 2002-2003 over 2.8 million females played high school sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2003). In 1970, only 16,000 women competed in intercollegiate sports whereas in 2006 approximately 180,000 women play on NCAA teams (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006).

There is also another side to Title IX reform. While the participation of women in sports has increased, the number of leadership opportunities for women in athletic administration has decreased (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992). Suggs (2006) found that the majority of female administrators—"30 percent of assistant and associate athletic directors were female—98 percent of these women are white. Only 7.9 percent of athletic directors were female"(p.3). Oftentimes these females are given token roles, reserving decision-making jobs for white males. In a twenty-nine-year longitudinal study, Acosta and Carpenter found that 2006 represented the lowest number ever of females as head coaches of women's teams. The details of the study reflected, Only 42.2 percent of women's teams are coached by a female coach. In 1972 over 90 percent of the head coaches for women's teams were females. Females in athletic administrative ranks of college athletics continue to decline. In 2006 only 18.6 percent of athletic directors of women's programs are females, yet females hold 35.2 percent of all administrative jobs.

Shockingly enough, 14.5 percent of women's athletic programs totally lack any female administrator at any level.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, in 1998-99 there were approximately sixty thousand women on varsity teams at the 311 Division I NCAA Institutions. These women made up forty-two percent of all athletes, received forty-two percent of the scholarship budgets, thirty-one percent of the recruiting budget, thirty-four percent of the coaching-salary budget, and thirty-three percent of the total operating budget (Suggs, 2000b).

The disparities among salaries and contracts between men and women coaches are substantial. For example the average salary for "all men head coaches is \$102,155, nearly twice the average of women head coaches at \$55,120" (Suggs, 2000b, 8). Furthermore, while base salaries are in the \$100,000 range, total compensation packages for men's coaches routinely reach from the \$700,000 to \$1.4 million and can be higher with all of the added incentives (Zimbalist, 2000,).

In a 1988 survey sent to 400 male and female athletic administrators, Acosta and Carpenter addressed the question of numerical disparity between men and women in athletic administration. While males and females cited some of the same responses in their answers, their basic perceptions of the problem were different. Women felt the main reason females did not get jobs was the success of the so-called "old boys network", while the men reported the main reason was the lack of qualified females for the job. Men added that females often failed to apply for openings, women had too many time constraints from family duties, and females often burn out sooner than males and leave their jobs. Women felt the reason that they had not succeeded as hoped was the failure of an "old girls network." They also cited the unconscious

discrimination in selection and hiring of females, and burn out due to more job responsibilities and family pressures (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988).

In the past, administrative jobs and coaching positions held by women received lower salaries and benefits. However with the emergence of Title IX, salaries and perks for these jobs traditionally held by women have increased. As a result, more men are applying for these jobs that they would have once ignored and male administrators are hiring men where women used to be (Acosta & Carpenter, 1988).

A recent report also reflected spending amounts on male versus female athletes. At Division I programs the disparity is evident. “Men’s budgets for recruiting (\$740,000) and average coaching salaries (\$102,155) were more than twice as large as those for women’s recruiting (\$292,000) and average coaches salaries (\$55,120).” Schools spent on average \$27,000 per each male athlete, compared with \$17,000 for each female athlete. It should be noted that besides some football and men’s basketball programs all men and women’s sports are non-revenue generating enterprises” (Suggs, 2000a , p. 5).

BCS institutions had on “average a budget of \$28.7 million in 1999-2000, a more than \$2-million increase from 1998-98. BCS football teams had average budgets of \$6.4-million each in 1999-2000, while other NCAA Division I-A football teams’ annual budgets averaged \$2.9-million. Only 15 Division I-A institutions “spent more on women’s sports combined in their entirety than they did on football” alone (Suggs, 2001, para.20).

The Role of the Senior Woman Administrator

The NCAA established that universities should designate the position primary woman administrator in 1981 and later changed the title to that of Senior Woman Administrator (1991) in order to identify a female athletics administrator to receive specific mailings from

the organization. “The SWA is the highest ranking female administrator involved with the conduct of a member institution’s intercollegiate athletics program. The purpose of this appointment is to involve female administrators in a meaningful way in the decision-making process in intercollegiate athletics. This position is intended to ensure representations of women’s interests at the campus, conference, and national levels” (About the NCAA, 2002).

The SWA reports to the Athletic

Director and should be involved in the management of the athletics department through a variety of responsibilities, some of which could include:

- Involvement in Budgetary Decisions,
- Involvement in initiatives to support student athlete welfare,
- Participating on search committees for athletic administrators and coaches,
- Assisting in the development and implementation of a gender-equity plan,
- Serving as a spokesperson for women issues within the department, campus and community,
- Serving as a role model for student athletes and other aspiring female athletic administrators,
- Attending conference level and national meetings to represent the university, and
- Serving on conference, NCAA, and other committees to review and recommend legislation relating to athletics and in particular to items affecting women’s sports (About the NCAA, 2002, p. 2).

In 2001, the NCAA confirmed their commitment to athletics equality by naming Judy Sweet, Vice President for NCAA Championships as the designated NCAA senior woman administrator. The duties of the NCAA senior woman administrator will include serving a key role in the president’s cabinet and having a voice in key decisions within the NCAA national office. NCAA President Cederic W. Dempsy has highlighted equity throughout his

tenure since it began in 1994, by increasing the percentage of women in NCAA upper level management and administrative positions to thirty-two percent and 53.2 percent respectively (About the NCAA, 2002). However these changes only affect his female staff at the NCAA offices in Indianapolis. Dempsey reiterated his support for Title IX adding that the NCAA's goal for intercollegiate athletics is clear, "To provide equitable opportunities for men and women. Our reason is just as clear: it's the right thing to do"(About the NCAA, 2002, p.3).

The issues presented in this chapter lead to the following research questions for this study: What were the career development experiences of the senior woman athletic administrator? In addition, how do these experiences relate to female executives in the business world?

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

Overview

The research method for this study is qualitative; therefore the findings are descriptive rather than statistical. There are several critical factors that are characteristic of qualitative research. The most important factor is that the phenomenon being reviewed is understood from the participant's perspective and not the researcher's perspective (Bierema, 1998).

A second characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that the "researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Bierema, 1998, p.7). A third characteristic is that qualitative research normally involves fieldwork. The researcher must actually go to the people of interest in their settings and observe them in their natural environments. Fourth, qualitative research "primarily employs an inductive research strategy" (p.7). This type of research builds abstractions, concept hypotheses, or theories rather than testing existing theory. Often qualitative studies are undertaken because there is a lack of theory or the existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon. Finally qualitative research focuses on process meaning and understanding—the product of this research is richly descriptive. Often the participant's own words are used to support the findings of the study.

The qualitative research method used in this study is life history case study.

"Case studies by definition get as close to the subject of interest as they can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires)" (Bierema, 1998, p. 32). Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon (Bierema, 1998). In this form of

case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), the researcher conducts extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative. When a historian does this type of interviewing it is referred to as oral history. Sociological first person life histories collected through case study interviewing are usually directed at using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior rather than to understand his/her history. Sociological life histories often try to construct subjects' "careers by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects', evolving sense of self and their perspective on life" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65).

The feasibility of life-history case studies is mostly determined by the nature of the potential subject. Is the person articulate and does he/she have a good memory? Has this person lived through the kinds of experiences and participated in the types of organizations or events you want to be explored? If this is the case then it is feasible to use the form of case study referred to as a life history.

Participant Selection

In reviewing sampling techniques, there are two primary methods, which are employed, random sampling and purposeful sampling. When choosing participants random sampling is the appropriate method to use if the researcher wants to generalize the sample studied to some larger population. Purposeful sampling is used as a "strategy when one wants to learn something and come to understand something about certain select cases without needing to generalize to all such cases" (Patton, 1980, p.100). "Purposeful sampling is based on the insight that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned." (Bierema, 1998, p. 61).

To select a purposeful sample, one must determine what selection criteria are essential in choosing the individuals to be studied. In doing this, a list of attributes is created and subjects, who match these criteria, are selected as part of the sample and tested with instrumental case study qualifications. Stake (1995) asserts, “that when we have a general question or issue—the in-depth study of a particular case(s) will illuminate that interest” (p. 3)

The purpose of this study was to tell the story of a female athletic administrator from a Division I university who is a member of a BCS conference university and has met the following career criteria:

- She is the designated Senior Woman Administrator
- She has worked at her university for a minimum of 20 years.
- She ranks as an Associate Athletic Director or higher, and
- She works directly with the athletic sport program administration,

She was selected in part for her long tenure so she can provide insight and historical information as it relates to her career evolution.

Research Design

Interviewing

The form of case study referred to as a life history is used in this study. In social sciences, biographies are often called “life histories”. According to Bogdan and Biklen, a life history is a “series of extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative” (1998, p. 56). In this form of case study, the researcher conducts extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative. Sociological “first person

life histories collected through case study interviewing are usually directed at using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior rather than history”. While some life history interviews are directed at capturing the subjects’ rendering of their whole lives, others are more limited. They may seek data on a particular period in a person’s life or on a particular topic (Bogdan & Biklen,1992).

“The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms” (Patton, 1980, p. 205). The assumption is that their perspective is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (p. 196). Bierema has described an interview as “conversations with a purpose” (1998, p. 71). The main purpose of these interviews is to find out “ those things we cannot directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts, or behaviors that took place at a previous time” (Bierema, p.72).

There are three different types of interview structures. These include highly structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and informal unstructured interviews.

Bierema describes these types of interviews as follows:

Highly Structured

- Wording of Questions Predetermined
- Order of Questions Predetermined
- Oral Form of a survey

Semistructured

Mix of more-and-less structured questions

Unstructured

- Open ended questions (Bierema , 1988, p. 73).

The semi-structured interview was selected for use in this study and was guided by a list of questions to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions was determined ahead of time. This format allowed the researcher to respond to a situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.

The interview guide contained several specific questions that the reviewer wanted to ask the subject, some more open-ended questions that could be followed by probes, and a list of some areas, topics, and issues that the researcher wanted to know more about but did not have enough information about at the onset of the study to form specific questions

(Patton, 1980, p.198). The interview guide simply served as a checklist during the interview to make sure all topics were covered. The most important point was to listen carefully; “treat every word as having the potential of unlocking the mystery of the subject’s way of viewing the world” (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 98).

As this case study was a life history, the researcher utilized the process coding system to organize findings from the interviews. Bogdan and Biklen describe process codes as “words and phrases that facilitate categorizing sequences of events over time, or passes from one type or kind of status to another” (1998, p. 174). The subject is instrumental in providing process codes, which relate to steps in her career and chronological subject orders to classify her life from the body of the interview.

While some life history interviews are directed at capturing the subjects’ rendering of their whole lives, others are more limited. They may seek data on a particular period in a person’s life or on a particular topic (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Also Stake (1995) suggests that intrinsic case studies are employed when the case itself is of primary interest. This type of research was used in this study to gain insight from the career process and successful methods of an SWA. The

interview questions in this study were designed to gather information on the particular subject interviewed. The SWA in question was asked to tell about her experiences prior to her current job status and what circumstances led to her current position. The subject was asked to tell about her experiences in broad areas. This interview guide is found in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interview Process and Instrumentation

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the selected SWA in the privacy of her office. Data were collected via research notes and observations, as well as tape recorded for accuracy. The data were classified as being qualitative, as they included descriptions of observations made by the researcher and open-ended interview questions answered by the participant of the study. Three interview sessions were scheduled for 1-½ hours each and began with demographic data collection and concluded with specific questions related to the research topic. The interview sessions took place over three weeks. In addition, document analysis appropriate to the research questions was used to review various sports media in the form of archived game programs and news articles. Several data collection methods were used in order to provide triangulation. These included interviews, document analysis, and participant review of taped interviews. This use of comparative observation helped in confirming the validity and reliability of information provided in the interviews.

The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed using a personal computer. All interviews were transcribed exactly as provided. This practice assured everything was preserved for “analysis and also as a back up for the researcher” (Bierema, 1998, p. 88). Copies of the transcripts were provided to the research participant for her review of accuracy. Follow-up phone calls to the SWA

were used to confirm the accuracy of documents and to allow for any corrections of the data. As a source of comparison, back up written notes were taken during the interview as well.

Analysis

Case analysis involves organizing the data by specific cases, which permits in-depth study of these cases. The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest (Patton, 1998, 1980). Case data consist of the entire interview data, observational data, and the reviewer's impressions and statements about the case. The voluminous case data are recorded and organized for ready accessibility either chronically and/or topically (Patton, 1980).

Inductive analysis “means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data: they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis”(Patton, 1980, p. 306). The analyst can use categories developed and articulated in the program studied to organize the presentation of particular themes. The analyst may also become aware of categories or patterns for which the person in the case did not have labels or terms, and then the analyst develops terms to describe these inductively generated categories.

Typologies are classification systems made up of categories that divide some aspect of the world into parts (Patton, 1980). These typologies are in essence labels used to describe “verbal categories” of what the people actually said in their interviews. Once these labels have been created, the next step is to identify the attributes or characteristics that can distinguish one thing from another.

According to Patton (1980), process codes refer to coding words and phrases that facilitate categorizing sequences of events, changes over time, or passages from one type of status to another. In order to use process codes, the researcher must view a person, group, organization, or

activity over time and perceive change. Typical process codes point to time periods, stages, phases, passages, steps, careers, and chronology. In addition, key points in a sequence (turning points or benchmarks) could be included as process codes.

Process coding schemes are commonly used in ordering life histories. The coding categories are the periods of life in the subject that appear to separate important segments. In developing life history coding systems, the subject's classification scheme usually dictates the codes (Patton, 1980).

As a source of comparison, back-up written notes may be taken during the interview as well. These reflections might contain insights or descriptive notes on the behavior (verbal/nonverbal) of the subject (Patton, 1980).

The development of the constant comparative method of data analysis as a means of developing grounded theory. A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are a conceptual link between and among the categories and properties (Bierema, 1988)- Units of potentially meaningful data are sorted into groupings that have something in common.

The task is to compare one unit of information with the next in looking for recurring regularities in the data. Bierema (1998) suggests that category construction is like "having a conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments to it, and so on" (p.179). Category construction begins with reading the first interview transcript and then rereading while jotting notes, comments, observations and queries in the margins. Once comments and notes are written these items can be grouped into items that seem to go together (p. 181). The next set of data is then reviewed in much the same way as just outlined. Once this analysis is complete the second set of data can be compared to the first looking for "recurring regularities and patterns" in

the data. The patterns and regularities become categories or themes into which subsequent items are sorted (p.183).

Bierema suggested that categories derived from the constant comparative method should:

1. Reflect the Purpose of the Research. In essence these categories should “answer your research questions.”
2. Categories should be exhaustive. All relevant data should be able to be placed in one of the categories.
3. Categories should be mutually exclusive. A particular piece of data should only be able to fit into one category.
4. Categories should be sensitizing. The name of the category should be as sensitive as possible to what are in the data. (1998, p. 183)

The analyst brings closure to the process when sources of information are exhausted, when sets of categories have been saturated so that new sources lead to redundancy, and when clear regularities have emerged that feel integrated (Patton, 1980).

The following provided the researcher’s method of analysis in this study: 1) The researcher used interview data that was organized by date and topics. 2) Categories reviewed from the interview guide led to the emergence of themes. 3) The themes were gathered from the actual words of the subject. 4) The subject was questioned concerning time periods of her life, including education, sport, and career path. 5) The interview quotes provided by the subject served as backup data. These items were put into categories. As suggested by Bierema (1988) above, the categories answered the researcher’s established questions (p. 282).

Ethics

Confidentiality was promised to the female athletic administrator who was interviewed. Cherry stated, “the information collected from an individual who agrees to participate in your research can be highly sensitive” (2000, p. 67). If confidentiality is promised you have the ethical and legal duty to inform the subject how you intend to use the information provided. One method used to assist in this process is an informed consent form. An informed consent form was used in this study.

Reliability and Validity Issues

The question posed in relation to qualitative research, is “Can another researcher replicate the observations (reliability), and to what extent did the research situation influence the participants or subjects being studied (validity)” (Cherry, 2000, p. 65). This research study used purposive sampling. This sampling technique was based on the knowledge of the subject being studied to meet the preset research criteria. This method was used to help increase reliability. Validity was addressed by having the subject interviewed to review what was transcribed and to make any changes as necessary.

Summary

This chapter reviewed research methods and data collection. The following areas were presented, the interview process and instrumentation, analysis, ethics, reliability, and validity.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the portrayal of the senior woman administrator that I interviewed. An interview is compared to a “conversation with a purpose” (Merriam, 1998, p. 71). The main purpose of these interviews is to find out “those things we can not directly observe, such as feelings, thoughts, or behaviors that took place at a previous time” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72).

In this portrayal, I describe the senior woman administrator as she shared her thoughts on herself, her early years, her education, and her career. According to Bogdan and Biklen, a life history provides an extensive interview with one purpose of collecting a first person narrative (1992, p. 56). As Stake suggests, a life history interview is the “chronology of life explored against a set of issues” (1995, p. 97). The direct quotations provided reveal intimate details as they relate to the life of this woman.

The portrayal is presented in themes or stages that evolved during the interview with the respondent: her early years, which includes her relationship with her family; her educational experiences, which includes high school and college; her personal life; her career path, which includes barriers; and finally role models and mentors.

This portrayal is told using her words and descriptions. The study begins with a description of the respondent, followed by themes found in the data. The portrayal concludes with a summary. Using pseudonyms protects the respondent’s identity and that of all other important characters, places of employment, and the name of the university.

Portrayal

This senior woman athletic administrator (SWA) currently serves as the Senior Associate Director of Athletics at an NCAA Division I university. This athletics department is a member of a Bowl Championship Series Conference. SWA has served in this athletic department for over 30 years in a variety of positions. Prior to this position she served as a coach and college instructor. SWA is a very polished and professional woman. She exudes confidence and displays a keen sense of purpose. She thrives on challenges and has used her 30 years of experience to hone her administrative skills.

Early Years

SWA was born and raised in the Southeast. SWA has three siblings. She has an older brother and one younger brother and sister. Her father was a dentist and mother was not employed. Sport was a major part of her life, “give me a ball, give me a horse, put me in water: sports are what I enjoy most.” As a young girl, SWA competed in horse shows against boys, competed in an adult bowling league, and swam on her country club swim team. “There weren’t girls’ programs, so I am a teenager competing against men or women in their 20’s or 40’s.” The only sport offered in SWA’s school for girls was JV and High School basketball. “When I was in the ninth grade, I was the first in the program’s 15 year history to make varsity.”

SWA indicated that her older brother was the person to introduce her to sport. “I had no other coaching of any kind except for him. He took exceptional pride in that “he prepared me for organized sports.” SWA was fortunate to have learned to play football and full-court basketball. “I learned a lot of football. I could run fly patterns and cross patterns.”

In her elementary school there were not enough boys to field 2 teams to compete against each other. So a few of the girls played baseball and basketball. "I was playing sports while the other girls were jumping rope and doing each other's hair."

College and University

SWA indicated a sincere love of school. She has a Bachelor of Science and Master's of Arts in education. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and pursued several courses towards her doctorate. Her favorite subject was Shakespeare. SWA indicated that when she completed school "I believed I would be a college professor." She states

"I have a bunch of hours toward a doctorate. However, I knew that teaching was not the career I wanted to pursue. What I learned in the classroom did not compare to the education I was getting on the job".

Personal Life

SWA is 57 years old. She has never been married, nor does she have any children. She feels that her career in athletics administration has greatly diminished her social life. With competitive calendars from the first weekend of September until the first weekend of June, SWA's weekends are full of competitions and team travel. SWA believes her job has made her life an open book.

When I go into a restaurant it is uncommon if I can get in and get out and leave without someone talking to me about the athletics programs. That has a lot of plusses and a lot of minuses. My life is very public. My home has a lot of windows and my life is like that. There is not much secrecy to it.

Career Path

SWA decided her last year of graduate school that she did not want to be a traditional teacher. She “didn’t want to teach children,” saying, I relate better to adults.” She decided she wanted to teach/coach athletic teams-however there were no full time coaching positions for women.

I noticed a part time job opening at a four-year private liberal arts school that appealed to me. My younger brother was a student there and it was my father’s alma mater. I taught physical education classes and I headed the women’s intramural program. I was also offered the opportunity to coach field hockey, volleyball, basketball and tennis. This was definitely divine intervention. These were the very same four sports I had played in college.

SWA continued at a second four-year women’s college for two years. At that time she was offered the position of director of athletics, head of the physical education, and head basketball coach. She remained there for four years

SWA began work at her current university, a four-year state university May 16, 1977. The athletics department is an NCAA Division I program. SWA was originally hired as the associate head women’s basketball coach and head coach for volleyball and softball. After a few months, SWA was named coordinator of women’s athletics.

I would say that distinction of coordinator of women’s athletics was a title; it was more of a working title than work. I administered the three teams I coached as well as swimming, tennis, and cross-country.

The SWA attained the title senior woman administrator to provide the distinction of the highest-ranking female administrator. The NCAA started with the creation of this title to insure the voice of minorities (women) would be included in administration, planning and decision-making. It should be noted that SWA was the only female in athletic administration at this institution for almost 15 years into her career.

We now have diversity around our table, but we are not benefiting from their viewpoint of diversity, which is why the NCAA started the SWA responsibility.

SWA continued to coach and oversee women's teams until 1984. At that time she was named as an assistant director of athletics; and this began her full-time career in athletics administration. This role allowed her the opportunity to influence budgets, facilities, staff and sports programming. In 1986, a change in athletic directors expanded SWA's role and title. She was promoted to associate director of athletics where she oversaw each women's program's coaches. Her role was split with a male associate athletics director. As an example he would have the swimming coach to report to him about men's swimming and to SWA concerning women's swimming.

Another change in athletic directors significantly changed SWA's work responsibilities. All sports were now to be overseen by a male administrator. SWA was asked to administer the external components, to include tickets, marketing, and promotions. In addition, SWA began to work with the university's booster club to increase awareness of women's sports as well as to increase the endowment for female scholarships. Although two men's coaches approached the director of athletics about overseeing their teams, she felt that her influence as a leader had been greatly diminished.

My attempts to have input have just been lost. I have not been involved. There are some people that don't want relationships. Women want to be invested in the decisions that affect them. Now that does not mean that the decision is made like I always want it to be made. But to be heard in the beginning, and my needs and thoughts have been heard and considered is a fundamental professional courtesy.

In the late 1990's a fourth different AD was hired who promoted SWA to senior associate athletics director. This athletics director returned sports (men and women) to SWA for her to govern. She continued to work with the booster club to support scholarship fund raising for women's athletics. However, she still indicates that she has helped the progress of female athletes and staff. Even if her voice was often muted, it still resonated with some.

I think Olympic sports are better off today than they were some 20 years ago.

Scholarships are better. Support services are better. Facilities are better. I am not naïve. I know that a lot of what we have accomplished was going to come about anyway. But, I still see my fingerprints on some of it.

SWA indicated that her love for sport was the main reason she wanted to be in athletics administration. She seemed to see that she had to work very hard to learn the skills she would need to work in business.

If I were going into administration from college, I would want to have business skills, communication skills, and a great understanding of marketing and finance. I have learned these on the job. They were just things I have a knack for. The fact I played sports helped me. So I was never behind; I was always at the front of the class. Today

there are people competing for positions with education and experience. If you don't have these things, you will be well behind. When asked what were her skills that she found helpful she replied: It would be my people skills. They are the most difficult. They are the most taxing. What I do most of the time during my day is trying to get people to agree to do something that they really didn't want to do. Otherwise, it would have already been done. Or to try to help two people who are on opposite sides of the argument to come to some understanding – could be student and coach, could be coach and parent, could be coach and administrator, could be administrator and administrator, or it could be coach and a coach. Seventy-five percent minimum with this job; is communication skills, and probably more.

SWA was candid in her response to the question: What is the typical day in her position. I have not had the same day twice, as you know. I dread the meetings, but I have a lot of those. I have conference calls that relate to my committees there. I am currently on three NCAA committees. I am also very involved in city/local groups, leadership conferences, and fundraising opportunities for local charity events.

Barriers

SWA found and still finds many barriers in her career. Since she had her beginning as a coach in the early 60's, many other women have entered the field of sport management. There are now college majors and other female colleagues who are available to aspiring young women.

Gender was a radical diversity when I began coaching. Men did not want women to compete in this limited job market. Even when women did get jobs, it was still not an

inclusive culture. It was a very exclusive culture; the only people the male athletic directors trusted were their male counterparts.

The barriers SWA experienced included isolation from other males on the athletics staff and the lack of promotion opportunities from her male bosses. SWA was always given little information. She was not told when meetings were being held. This left her in the dark on any major changes in the athletics department. Keeping her out of the loop was the best way to control her influence on major decisions.

The men in the department did not include me in their work plan initiatives or even their weekly games of golf. Since I was the only female administrator there was no one to turn to. Female mentors did not exist. And in some cases they still do not.

Not only did SWA experience barriers when she began, she expressed that she still experiences them today.

Some hurdles are lower than when I began. Many more are invisible today than then. In some rooms the ceiling is higher. In some rooms the ceiling is lower, but there are definite ceilings. Some are glass. Some are steel. The existence of barriers continues to be strong.

Role Model/Mentor

SWA found it hard to find a true mentor. Since SWA majored in education she began to see professors as possible mentors. However since she chose a career in athletics and not many women were involved she struggled to find a role model.

There were not any full-time positions in athletics for women, so it wasn't like I had a mentor, someone you could emulate, that yes this is what I would like to do. I thought I would teach in college. In the 60's there just wasn't an opportunity for women to have a career in athletics administration. I was alone in my chosen path of profession.

SWA did find one colleague she admired. This other professional female was a coach in the athletic department where SWA got her first job. Since SWA was a coach herself this seemed a logical conclusion. However, as noted earlier, SWA moved to a career in athletics administration where there were no other females to consult or admire. However, SWA has served as mentor to young women in the athletics department. She created a graduate assistantship in her office for young women in athletics administration. Her guidance has allowed over ten young women to complete the internship and earn graduate degrees. These women have moved onto other BCS schools in the areas of administration, marketing, fundraising, and also the business world. SWA is extremely proud of this accomplishment.

Title IX

SWA has served the administrator who is responsible for Title IX. Title IX is often controversial in athletics department. Some perceive this law to take away funds from men's sports to allow women's sports to flourish. SWA had the following comments on Title IX and its impact on her departmental staffing, budgets and facilities.

I think there is a lot of misinformation about Title IX and a lot of misunderstanding by administrators, coaches, and the public on Title IX. Title IX is not salary legislation. That's Title VII. But there are athletic directors, and we have had them here, that kind of lump everything in terms of gender equity under Title IX, and they miss the point that what we should be primarily

concerned about is staffing our coaching staff for women's sports and our administrators and support staff for women's sports to have comparable experience, expertise, and abilities as we do for our men's sports.

Title IX has definitely helped with operating budgets. The recruiting budgets too, because there are gender equity bumps in some of our women's sports that really made a difference to them. Facilities have flourished as well. I think we could have been happy to leave women's facilities, as they were if it hadn't been for Title IX.

SWA did make some additional comments on her role in the involvement of managing the athletics department. She has been as vocal as she can to support the Olympic sports and the women's sports. She feels this is her greatest achievement.

Her guidance has been included in increased budgets, new facility enhancements, and in her support of additional scholarships. She feels her 20 years have really impacted her department and the athletes they serve.

The Future

SWA was asked to provide a framework of her future goals.

So, what do I want to do? The fight is always going to be there. Hopefully there will always be warriors who are going to understand the real goal and have a servant's attitude to make it better, not just for themselves, but for those who come after us. That's really what this is all about. Making it better for the student-athletes. Making the world a better place. Make your world a better place when you are here. You know, I am 57. I feel 40. I like what I do. So, I would like to continue. When I feel confident that this athletic director and university is going to be sure that the next SWA will be in a capacity and in a position to influence,

then it will be very easy for me to hand the keys to somebody else. Until that time, I am just going to keep grinding away

Closing Impression

SWA has been supported her whole life by her family to play sports and to further herself via a masters degree. Her parents sent her to England to study Shakespeare. However, she wanted to coach. These coaching experiences provided her real-life sport management opportunities. She also had a male sports mentor in her brother who taught her the rules and how not to be intimidated by boys in sports. This has proved helpful in her career path. SWA expressed some regrets in the loss of personal life to her hectic job.

SWA has worked very hard over the past 30 years to prove herself in this male dominated culture. The field of athletics continues to support men's sports in a way that women have not achieved. According to SWA, men's sports receive more funding, more promotion, and generate more interest from fans/boosters.

SWA has achieved a status where many young female athletic administrators would love to be. SWA never said this, but she is a female executive. She commands a presence and expresses a clear knowledge of athletics administration. She has set the bar higher for young women and young men who aspire to work in this field. Her commitment to student athletes and the inclusiveness of women in sports has created a benchmark for all those who work in sport management by which to measure themselves.

Summary

The themes presented in this chapter provide a portrayal of a female athletic administrator. This interview shared SWA's early years, education, and career. Next, I will discuss the major themes that emerged from the interview and summarize how a female athletic administrator career path compares to female executives in other fields. I will also discuss additional themes that emerged during data analysis.

Comparison of SWA and Female Executives

In this section, I review the information that SWA revealed about her (a) early years, represented by family; (b) educational experiences including high school and college; (c) her personal life; and (e) career including barriers and mentors. In addition the following themes emerged from the data-the role of the SWA in athletic departments; the role of SWA and the impact of Title IX.

The career development experiences as well as personal data provided by SWA will be compared to that of a female executive. This is important as no demographic information or detailed career path data have been documented for future female athletic administrators to review.

Early Years

After reviewing the demographic data, I found some similarities between the SWA and female executives. For example, the vast majority of female executives grew up in families where both parents were present and their mothers were homemakers (Lipman-Blumen, 1996, p.

13). In addition Lipman-Blumen found (1996) that female executives fathers held managerial positions.

SWA was raised in the Southeast in a small farming town. SWA has three siblings. She has an older brother and one younger brother and sister. Both of her parents were present. She came from a family where her father was employed as a dentist and her mother stayed at home.

Education

The majority of female executives hold postgraduate degrees. They have taken significant steps to increase their higher education. Between 1970 and 1995, the proportion of women earning college degrees in all disciplines “increased from 43% to 55% at the bachelor level and from 40% to 55% at the masters level” (Davidson and Burke, 2000, p. 240). SWA expressed a sincere love of school. She has a Bachelor of Science and Masters of Arts in education. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and pursued several courses towards her doctorate.

Female executives who achieved personal success were asked what would they change about their education experience if they could live their lives over. The most frequent response was that “they would seek more education and career preparation” (Gallos, 1998, p. 123). SWA echoed this sentiment. She expressed that she would like to have had more business courses, mass communication training, and negotiating skills. She felt, however, in absence of these skills, she had learned the majority of her administrative acumen on the job.

Personal Life

Lipman-Blumen (1996) found that the demographic portrait of female executives included the following traits: these women are primarily Caucasian; they are mostly middle aged,

are married, but they are less likely to be married than their male counterparts; and, they have fewer children than their male counterparts. SWA is 57 years old and her race is Caucasian. She has never been married, nor does she have any children. A note: all males in the athletics department where SWA works are white and married. Gallos cited that “modern women are living longer, having fewer children, and have more time for employment in the workplace. Therefore, 50 years old and beyond could still be argued as a productive time in a woman’s life” (1998, p. 123). During this period, women have a distinct edge over their male counterparts in terms of physical health, well-being and prospects for the future.

Scores of professional women “in the corporate ranks reported frustration, emptiness, exhaustion, disillusionment, and a sense of professional failure when they realized the personal and interpersonal costs of their professional success” (Gallos, 1998, p. 121). Female managers often found that “working in the limelight, under the stress of acting representatives of all women, was an additional challenge they face” (Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990, p. 38).

SWA reported that her career has greatly diminished her personal life and that her personal life has always been far down on her priority list compared to her job.

For my first 20 years in my career I don’t know that I had much of a personal life.

For the last 14 years I have done a better job of balancing that, and I wish at 30 I could have understood things I understood at 50. I really wish I could have.

Career Path

Gallos (1998) cites “primitive belief that menstruation weakens the supply of blood to the brain, lingers in the cocktail-party expressed theories that women by nature, are too emotional to

be good managers and that menstrual cycles might affect their decision making abilities in an organization” (p. 113).

SWA indicated some insight into her beginning involvement with her career ambitions:

In my hometown, in the 1960's, you know, you could be a nurse, you could be a teacher, you could be a secretary, or even a hairdresser. Women were not thought to be able to do much more than that. I don't remember any female doctors or attorneys. A doctor might have appealed to me, but not a nurse. I didn't want to be a secretary. I didn't want to be a hairdresser. My mother thought I might be good at that. I did not want to be a mother or full-time mom at home. I felt like a teacher was the best I could do.

The women who have succeeded in becoming managers are often left in the middle. Women hold approximately 49% of the managerial, and professional specialty occupations in the United States (Mattis, 2004,). The vast majority stops there. In athletics administration the statistics are very similar. Suggs (2006) found that the majority of female administrators, “30% of assistant and associate administrators were female--98% of these women are white. Only 7.9% of athletic directors were female” (p.3). Oftentimes these females are given token roles, reserving decision-making jobs for white males. In a 29-year longitudinal study, Acosta and Carpenter (2006) found that 2006 represented the lowest ever number of females as coaches of women's teams. The details of this study reflected, “only 42.4% of women's teams are coached by a female coach and less than 2% of men's teams are coached by a female coach. In 1972 over 90% of the head coaches for women's teams were females. Females in the administrative ranks of college athletics continue to decline. In 2006 only “18.6% of athletic directors of women's

programs are female yet females hold 35.2% of all administrative jobs” (p. 1). Interestingly enough “14.5% of women’s athletics programs totally lack any female administrator at any level” (p.1).

In her 30 years of employment SWA has climbed to the rank of Senior Associate AD. It took her 23 years to attain this ranking. She has interviewed for several athletic director positions. However, she was not offered the jobs. She admits that her first position of coordinator of women’s athletics was more of a title than any kind of real administrative responsibility.

The main reason that female executives as well as SWA have not advanced is that the men in charge are not hiring women. There has been exploration the issue of why the numbers of women in top-level management positions have stayed so small. “Throughout recorded history, a patriarchal social system in which males have the power and authority over females has almost always prevailed. In most cases people make the most positive evaluations of and decisions about people whom they see as similar to themselves” (Davidson & Burke, 2000, p. 242). Therefore, men seemingly always have the competitive advantage in job procurement and advancements, since males are the primary decision-makers in these offers. In addition when lower level male managers are hiring, upper level management fail to make them accountable for not advancing women.

SWA has experienced many of these frustrations in her career. She feels that athletics is not an inclusive culture. It is a very exclusive culture of only the people that the athletics director trusted and wanted to include in decision-making. These people were men.

Barriers

Acquiring leadership positions requires a record of achievement, a plan for career advancement and a strong powerful support web” (2000, p. 148). This is especially critical in the early stages of a woman’s career. While a well-devised and implemented plan for advancement into leadership positions will not guarantee a woman a top-level position, it will make her a more viable competitor and can help overcome many existing barriers, and enhance opportunities for career advancement” (2000, p. 148).

One barrier that is often mentioned by women is referred to as the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling has been defined as “ a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong, that it prevents women and minorities from moving up the management hierarchy” (Davidson & Burke, 2000, p. 236). SWA asserts that she has and continues to experience barriers on a daily basis.

I continue to experience barriers. I learned a long time ago that very few men would receive ideas or suggestions from women unless they are in a position over them. And with men holding the overwhelming majority of management jobs in athletics it seems it will take longer for women to advance than I had hoped.

SWA indicated that she often felt a sense of exclusion and this was exacerbated by a lack of internal and external networks. For the majority of her career SWA did not have mentors or any networks. There are few women in SWA’s athletic department that she works with as a mentor. She does have administrative oversight over several young female coaches. These women do look to SWA to serve as their mentor. Over the past several years, SWA has become

actively involved on the local, conference and national level (NCAA) with college athletics. This has allowed her to have an impact on women's athletics as a whole. She truly enjoys this part of her job. Wellington (1998, p. xxi) asserts the following point that one of the most powerful barriers to female career advancement is exclusion from informal career networks "where men have typically learned the unwritten rules of success". She refers to this as the good old boys' network, which she says most women will never be a part of.

Unwelcome discrimination continues to be an obstacle that women in all the realms of business face. This can include the act of hiring as well as the same appraisal and compensation that are not uniform for men and women. Van Velsor and Hughes found that factors "such as organizational experience, newcomer or minority status, the need to define sex-role appropriate behavior, isolation, and discrimination create a working environment more complex in its challenges to women" (1990, p. 11). In a sample of women studied by Van Velsor and Hughes, many of the women described experiences of feeling unwelcome by their male peers, a superior, or subordinates. A number of these women faced and fought acts of discrimination. This discrimination is often built around the facet that executives question a woman's ability and her commitment to her career. This leads to the conclusion women do not and will not fit into these executive positions or culture.

SWA feels that every woman in an athletics department is very dependent upon her supervisor as to what her relationship is, her ability to contribute, and her ability to grow. SWA discussed her role in the department as follows:

I am well accustomed to sitting at a table with all white men, knowing how uncomfortable I make them because they can't say some of the things they want

to say, and I do vocalize the impact that I think that some decisions could have on women or the viewpoint of women. I try to be an advocate for women. But, sometimes this effort falls on deaf ears. Women want to be invested in the decisions that affect them. Now that doesn't mean that the decision is made like I always want it to be made. But to be heard in the beginning, and my needs and thoughts being heard and considered is a fundamental professional courtesy.

SWA cannot really know if she was being heard or not in these meetings. Since her opinions have not been put into action, she believes she has been ignored.

Mentors

Research has shown that mentoring relationships are less “available to women than men, and sometimes viewed as problematic for women particularly when all potential mentors are males” (Bierema, 1998, p. 63). Mentoring can best be described as “an intense caring relationship in which persons with experience work with less experienced persons to promote both professional and personal development” (p. 64).

SWA grew up with her brother as her only athletic mentor. She had no female coaches and most times not even organized teams for girls to compete on.

Sport had a huge impact on me. When I was growing up, there were very few school-organized opportunities for girls. I competed against boys and men. I played baseball with my brother and his friends. In my competitions with my horse was always against boys and men. I rode western events. That's what cowboys were; I like cowboys; that was ok. I swam at the country club swim team and I bowled in an adult bowling league; in fact it was co-ed league. When I was

in school my bowling partner was 34 and I was 14. I played softball in the recreational league; against an adult league. There weren't girls' programs, so I am a teenager competing with women in their 20's or 40's and in bowling 30's and 40's. In college I played field hockey, volleyball, basketball, and tennis. That was all that was offered for women. This was a blessing and interesting coincidence. My first job was teaching physical education and coaching these same sports.

In the 1960's when SWA began her career, there were no jobs in athletics other than coaching for females. SWA indicated she has only had one other mentor (besides her brother) in her entire career. This female mentor was a successful coach. She provided SWA with an opportunity to assist her and learn from her coaching/management style. SWA had female professors. But, there wasn't any type of mentoring towards females going into a career in athletics administration. At that time no administration jobs were offered to or filled by women.

SWA has a passion for mentoring young women. This has provided SWA the opportunity to give guidance where none existed for her. SWA has mentored young women in her department as well as meeting others from various schools and the community. She is a featured speaker at many meetings and conventions. In addition, she oversees several women's teams. She gives those athletes a chance to meet with her and discuss their goals/career paths. Mentoring young female athletes has proved to really help SWA in continuing her love of sports and in her administrative role in the athletics department.

Summary

During analysis the following themes were explored in comparison to female executives: SWA's (a) early years, represented by family; (b) educational experiences including high school and college; (c) her personal life; and (e) career including barriers and mentors.

Since there is no information or detailed career path data that have been documented for future female athletic administrators to review, this information was deemed important to explore.

Emergent Themes

During analysis the theme of the role of the SWA and the impact of Title IX emerged. This theme is relevant to the career path of female athletic administrators. This theme is not comparable to research relating to women in the business world. No current research exists to explain this factor and the circumstances that have affected this SWA. Therefore the theme of the role of the SWA is documented to help further present a complete and accurate analysis of women in the field of sport management.

The Role of the SWA

“The SWA is the highest ranking female administrator involved with the conduct of a member institution's intercollegiate athletics program. The purpose of this appointment is to involve female administrators in a meaningful way in the decision-making process in intercollegiate athletics. This position is intended to ensure representation of women's interests at the campus, conference, and national levels” (About the NCAA, 2002). The SWA reports to

the Athletic Director and should be involved in the management of the athletics department through a variety of responsibilities, some of which could include:

- Involvement in Budgetary Decisions,
- Involvement in initiatives to support student athlete welfare,
- Participating on search committees for athletic administrators and coaches,
- Assisting in the development and implementation of a gender-equity plan,
- Serving as a spokesperson for women issues within the department, campus and community,
- Serving as a role model for student athletes and other aspiring female athletic administrators,
- Attending conference level and national meetings to represent the university, and
- Serving on conference, NCAA, and other committees to review and recommend legislation relating to athletics and in particular to items affecting women's sports (About the NCAA, 2002).

This position was created in deference to Title IX. While Title IX has helped female athletes, it has not had the same impact of female athletic administrators. It appears that the title of SWA has added to the credence of female athletic administrators to the outside world. However, it has not provided hiring/promotional opportunities, increased salaries, or respect by male colleagues.

SWA is currently the highest-ranking female in the department. She has indicated that she was often given more of a working title than work. She has more experience and years of service than her direct male counterpart yet she still makes some \$40,000 less (including benefits and

bonuses). She feels that the athletic department's having an SWA does ensure that conference and NCAA documents and issues are sent to this position for review and dissemination.

There was a culture in athletics where the information went to the AD and most of the time it would stay on his desk and most athletic directors administered on a need to know basis only. It was not an inclusive culture; it was a very exclusive culture of only the people that the athletics director trusted and wanted to include. For a long time I never received information. That is why it helps that now the conference and the NCAA include the SWA on all mailings.

SWA feels one of the biggest issues is how we recruit, assign, and pay our female staff members. She found that over the years many women were hired with little to no experience and therefore would be paid less. Yet interestingly enough these women were still given "plum" positions in the department.

We do not hire correctly here. We continue to hire first and second year right out of graduate school students to have very important positions with our women's teams. These areas include academics, sports medicine, and compliance.

SWA was often ignored when she offered her thoughts and suggestions to improve the athletics department. When decisions were made women were decidedly not included.

Women want to be invested in the decisions that affect them. Now that doesn't mean that the decision is made like I always want it to be made. But to be heard in the beginning, and my needs and thoughts being heard and considered is a fundamental professional courtesy.

However, she still indicates that she has helped the progress of female athletes and staff. Even if her voice was often muted, it still resonated with some.

I think Olympics sports are better off today than they were 20 years ago.

Scholarships are better. Support services are better. Facilities are better. I am not naïve. I know that a lot of what we have accomplished was going to come about anyway. But, I still see my fingerprints on some of it.

The woman portrayed in this study has overcome obstacles from her early childhood to her current position. Her experiences reveal the inner workings of college athletics and what it takes to be apart of this male dominated culture. Her story reflects her early love of sport when girls were not allowed, to her education, lack of mentors, and barriers. All of these experiences have directed her career path and led her to where she is today.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to tell the story of a female athletic administrator from a Division I BCS conference university. The goal of the study was to provide a written account of the career development process for women involved in the business of sport. The research was guided by the question: What were the career development experiences, as she became a senior women administrator in athletics? In addition, how does this experience relate to female executives in the business world?

The qualitative research method used in this study is life history case study.

Bromley argues “that case studies by definition get as close to the subject of interest as they can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires) (p. 32)”. In this form of case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), the researcher conducts extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative. First person life histories collected through case study interviewing are usually directed at using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior rather than to understand his/her history (p.65). Life histories often try to construct subjects “careers by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects evolving sense of self and their perspective on life” (p.65).

What can I conclude from the interview tends to be supported by research found in the literature on female executives? The life history and career experiences of SWA provided much interesting and insightful information. Surprisingly, the characteristics, career path, and experiences of SWA and female executives were very similar.

SWA is a Caucasian and middle aged (57), and unmarried. This is very comparable to the majority of executive businesswomen. SWA grew up with both parents, a professional father, and was provided a chance to continue her education after high school. She completed her master's degree.

Lipman-Blumen (1996, p.13) found the following demographic portrait in her research of female senior executives:

- These women are primarily Caucasian.
- Women in business leadership roles are mostly middle aged
- The vast majority grew-up in families where both parents were present.
- They frequently have fathers who held managerial positions.
- The majority have post-graduate degrees.
- The majority of top-level female leaders are married.

Significant Comparisons are as followed:

SWA and female executives are very similar in their demographics and familial influence.

SWA holds a postgraduate degree. This is consistent with female executives educational patterns.

SWA is not married. However, most female executives are married.

SWA's career path was not modeled after the women she grew up and around. These women were homemakers or teachers. Prior to her wish to work in athletics she earned two educational degrees. She, as well as women in the work world, wished she had focused more on business skills that would have made her more qualified and marketable.

Even with her vast experience (57 years old/30 years of employment)-it still took her 23 years to attain her title. She has attained the status of an upper-level manager. Female executives have titles that are top management titles in much less time. SWA tried to interview for higher-

level athletic director positions on several occasions. While granted interviews, she was never offered the job.

Significant Comparisons are as followed:

SWA had to wait over $\frac{3}{4}$ of her career to achieve her mid-level ranking. Female executives at similar ages have achieved greater positions in their business careers.

SWA tried to advance her career path by looking at other college athletic department's jobs. She was not hired. SWA as well as female executives believe that more business acumen would advance their careers. This was not substantiated.

In comparison to those in business, SWA experienced the same form of barriers in her career path. She encountered discrimination, exclusion from the 'good old boys' social network, as well as lower pay for equal work. She found it very hard to find a female mentor since she was a trailblazer in the field of athletics. She cited the influence of her younger brother in his acceptance of her as an athlete. She indicated that she only connected with one other female in athletics. The mentor was a coach and not in a managerial position. However, SWA is currently a member of her conference, the NCAA, and other professional women's networks. This allowed her to become more involved in advancing women in sports and leading young females who desire a career in athletic administration.

Significant Comparisons are as followed:

SWA and female executives both experienced barriers in their work environments. Because their male colleagues ostracized them both, there were no real mentors to ask for advice.

Both SWA and the executives referred to this as the "glass-ceiling". They could see an opportunity to advance. But, neither of them could move beyond their current status.

SWA has a unique role in her department as she has the indication of the highest-ranking female. This status affords her information from various conferences and external sources. However, her inclusion in the administration of her department is inconsistent at best. She may get outside information-but she is not included in internal matters.

Significant Comparisons are as followed:

Female executives are included in business decisions and management of their companies. SWA is decidedly not.

She expressed frustration with being labeled as a troublemaker in her fighting for women's athletics. The fact that the majority of her colleagues are white males mirrors athletics programs across the country. In addition she makes a significantly lower salary than her male counterpart even though she has more education and experience.

White males permeate both the business world and athletics. These males are paid significantly more than their female counterparts.

I learned from this study that women in the working world exceed the number of female managers in athletics-yet their career story is very much the same. Lack of opportunities, barriers, no mentoring, exclusion, less pay, and discrimination permeate both cultures. Even with these many similarities-Bettsey, asserts that female careers in athletics are "20 years behind the corporate world" (2007, p. 2)

These themes that were reviewed can be transformed in similar context to the business world. I did not anticipate this many similarities. This may bode well for future women professionals in sport as they can look to the business world for guidance and inspiration.

Recommendations for Further research

The purpose of this study was to tell the story of a female athletic administrator from a Division I BCS conference university. The goal of the study was to provide a written account of the career development process for women involved in the business of sport. The results compared to females in business indicate a strong commonality and sense in understanding. Given the limitations of this study, I would suggest that future researchers consider addressing the following issues:

1. Increasing the numbers of SWAs interviewed to draw further comparisons.
2. Explore the career path of male executives in comparison to those males in the sports industry.
3. Review a younger SWA with less experience might draw further implications for those young women interested in a career in sports.

The success of SWA and her varied accomplishments serves as an example to those interested in the female sport profession. Her candid responses provided much insight into this male dominated culture. When asked for advice for future females who aspire to a position such as her she answered the following:

The fight for women in athletics is going to be there. Hopefully there will always be warriors who are going to understand the real goal and have a servant's attitude to make it better, not just for themselves, but also for those who come after us. I would say to young women entering this world to be careful, have thick skin, create clear objectives, and bring confidence to the table. If she can bring these characteristics combined with an aptitude in sport: "Than come on-join the team".

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APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

- I. Demographic Information
 - Title of Current Position
 - Years in Current Position
 - Years if applicable at another institution
 - Previous athletic administrative positions
 - Educational Level
 - Years in an Education Setting prior to College Experience
 - Age Range 35-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60
 - What factors led you to this position

- II. Interview Guide

The following questions will help to understand your experiences prior in your current job and what lead you to this position.

- A. Early Years
 - Describe your early years
 - Did sport play a role in your life?

- B. High School/University
 - Describe your high school and university years.
 - Did sport play a role in your life?
 - Did you have an idea of what career you wanted to pursue?

- C. Personal Factors
 - How did your career affect your personal life?
 - Did your personal life affect your job?

- D. Career Path
 - What positions did you hold prior to your current job-and do you think they help you in your current job?
 - What made you want to be in athletic administration?
 - What educational experiences did you find helpful in your current position?
 - In your current job, what job skills do you find most helpful?

- E. Barriers
 - Did you experience any barriers as you became involved in athletic administration?

F. Mentors

- Did you have a mentor while you were seeking and now that you have your position? If so what role did they play?
- Do you serve as a mentor for any young female athletic administrators?

G. Role of Senior Woman Administration

- What is the climate for women working in your department?
- How did Title IX help salaries for females in the athletic department?
- How did Title IX affect sport budgets in the athletic department?
- What other roles has Title IX played in your department?
- How has the designation of a Senior Woman Administrator effected your position?
- Did becoming a Senior Woman Administrator allow you to be involved in the management of the athletic department?

H. Challenges/Achievements

- What is the single most challenging situation you have faced in your position?
- What is the greatest achievement in your position?

I. The Future

- What are your future professional goals?
- What advice would you give a young female trying to get involved in athletic administration?

Are there any other issues you would like to discuss concerning your position that I did not address?