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Q: How Do You Measure Gender Equity in the Assignment and Compensation of Coaches?

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Introduction

In intercollegiate athletic programs, equal access for male and female student-athletes to equitably qualified coaches is a Title IX requirement. Establishing this fair situation, however, can sometimes be tricky. The good news is that after an athletic department has analyzed its own personnel system and implemented a fair plan that incorporates the elements listed below, any further analysis is usually unnecessary unless changes occur which affect the equitable balance between the coaching staffs for men's and women's sports.

The Policy Interpretation outlines three factors to be assessed when measuring the opportunity to receive coaching: (1) relative availability of full-time coaches, (2) relative availability of part-time and assistant coaches and (3) relative availability of graduate assistants.

Two factors are listed when measuring the assignment of coaches: (1) training, experience and other professional qualifications and (2) professional standing.

Seven factors need to be assessed when dealing with the compensation of coaches: (1) rate of compensation, (2) duration of contracts, (3) conditions relating to contract renewal, (4) experience, (5) nature of coaching duties performed, (6) working conditions and (7) other terms and conditions of employment. (Title IX Athletics Investigator's Manual, 1990, p.55)

Availability

In Division I where most of the head and assistant coaches are in full-time coaching positions, an analysis of the number of coaches allocated to the women's program compared to the men's program is relatively easy to do. In comparable sports, the total number of coaches in a men's sport program

should be the same as in the women's sport program e.g. each basketball program having a total of four coaches. In non-comparable sports, a wise guide would be to use the NCAA coaching limits in each of these sports since the organization has attempted to identify for each sport the number of coaches necessary to adequately perform the responsibilities associated with that sport. A common problem is to hire the maximum number of coaches for some men's sports and fewer than the maximum for women's sports.

In other Divisions where many of the coaches may not be full-time, the analysis is a little more complex. In this instance, there may be part-time head coaches and assistant coaches. One way to look at the assignment of coaches is to convert percentage of time assignments, full-time and part-time, to full-time-equivalents (FTE). One FTE is equal to the equivalent of one 100% time coach, i.e., two 50% time coaches, etc.). Then take the total number of male athletes and divide by the number of FTEs for coaches of male teams and do the same for coaches of female teams. For instance, if there are 200 male athletes and a total of 10 FTEs for coaches of these teams, there is a coach/athlete ratio of 1 to 20. Assume there are 150 female athletes and 6 FTEs for a coach/athlete ratio of 1 to 25. In this example, a school is giving its male student-athletes more favorable teaching ratios than female athletes.

Ideally, in all sports the coaches of men's sports and the coaches of women's sport would have the same percentage of time allocated for coaching. If not, then it would also be defensible to have the coaches of comparable sports with the same percentage and to allocate percentages to coaches of non-comparable sports in such a way that the overall result is equitable. Allocating differing percentages is permissible providing that student-athletes of one gender are not disadvantaged by having less access to their coaches because of additional non-coaching responsibilities e.g. having some full-time coaches for one gender and not for the other. Having non-comparable teaching loads would also be of concern. For example, it would be inequitable to have coaches of men's sports teaching sport skill classes while coaches of women's sports are teaching theoretical courses, such as biomechanics, which require much more preparation time.

The overall allocation of graduate assistants to the men's program and the women's program should also be equitable and the institution again can be guided by the NCAA rules and regulations in this area.

Assignment

The assignment of coaches deals with the professional qualifications of coaches e.g. their educational preparation, their experience and their achievements in their careers. One way to help develop similarly well qualified coaches for both men's and women's sports is to advertise coaching positions with the same required and desired qualifications and to have compensation packages designed to attract quality individuals for both programs. A common problem is created when salaries for women's sports fail to attract quality coaches with the result that female student-athletes do not receive the high quality coaching afforded their counterparts in men's sports. While years of experience should be one factor in the search for good coaches, the proven academic and athletic success record of an individual or the potential for success based on excellent experiences should be an important factor since years of experience do not necessarily correlate well with success.

Compensation

The area of compensation in athletics is complex. Disparities in coaches' salaries cannot be resolved under Title IX unless the salaries create a lower quality of coaching for student-athletes of one gender. In this instance, the complaint would have to come from the affected student-athletes since the coaches cannot assert a compensation discrimination claim under this area of Title IX. Title VII and the Equal Pay Act are the appropriate avenues for coaches to resolve salary disputes if no resolution can be reached at the institutional level.

For institutions wishing to avoid salary disputes, criteria for the establishment of base salaries should be created. Factors taken into consideration could include areas such as: educational preparation, years of coaching experience, academic success of student-athletes, athletic success and achievements.

Supplemental sources of income could include areas such as: sports camps, television and radio shows, and speaking engagements as well as incentives in specific areas e.g. graduation rates. Whenever possible, the institution should treat the coaches of men's teams and women's teams in a similar fashion. It is also important to avoid using criteria that may be the result of past discriminatory practices e.g. the number of spectators at athletic events.

Additionally, courtesy cars and cell phones, which can be viewed as fringe benefits when available for coaches' personal use, should be equitably shared between men's and women's coaches. These benefits can also be used as recruiting tools so an inequitable distribution can unfairly impact the recruiting of the students of one gender.

The length of coaches' contracts is often another area of concern. Again, having all coaches on the same length of contract avoids problems. However, having some on 12 month contracts and others on 9 month contracts is permissible providing that the student-athletes of one gender are not being short-changed because more of their coaches are on the shorter contract. If differing lengths of contract are used, then the percentage of men's coaches on the 12 month contract should be the same (or as close as is possible) as the percentage of women's coaches on the l12 month contract. The same holds true for coaches on multi-year contracts.

Where possible, terms for the renewal of contracts for coaches should be the same or very similar for coaches of men's and women's teams.

Having similar responsibilities for all coaches additionally helps avoid problems related to treatment of personnel. Moreover, working conditions and other conditions of employment should be equitable. For instance, an area of concern may be when all coaches are required to attend booster club functions but only some coaches of men's sports are compensated for this responsibility.

It is recommended that the advice of the University legal counsel be sought when dealing with the area of compensation.

Topics

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