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# Barriers and facilitators shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration

Carissa Miller

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Barriers and Facilitators Shaping the Career Progression of Women in Collegiate

Athletics Administration

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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

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## **ABSTRACT**

Few studies have explored the experiences of women in collegiate athletics administration. The underrepresentation of women in administration positions continues to raise concern with a growing need to understand the career progression and experiences of women. The purpose of this study was to explore perceived barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Participants identified for the study were located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and currently employed by Division I institutions.

The type of qualitative research conducted in this study was a descriptive case study. Data were collected through standard open-ended interviews and resumes or career history describing positions held, duration, and the location of each. An interview guide was established with considerations to a previous study conducted by Hancock (2012), career construction theory and two pilot interviews. Data was collected from 9 women collegiate athletics administrators.

Findings of this study included perceived barriers identified as work-life balance and a male-dominated industry. Perceived facilitators included mentors, supervisors, and support systems. Findings also indicate continuing challenges both personally and professionally. Yet, nearly half of the participants (4) identified as the anomaly or exception to the norm. Study findings provided valued information for current collegiate athletics administrators and future entry-level professionals of the industry.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1972, when Title IX was passed, nearly 90% of director of athletics positions were filled by women yet, within eight years that number plummeted to 20% (Wilson, 2016). The reason for this dramatic change is unknown, but coincided with the discontinuation of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). As recently as 2017, women represented 47% of the general United States workforce population (DeWolf, 2017). This included women in positions of human resources (74%) and education administration positions (65%). More importantly, approximately 27% of women represented management or chief executive (C-Suite) positions, while men held 74% (DeWolf, 2017; Walker & Bopp, 2010). Beginning as early as the first position post degree, women are unmistakably progressing in their careers at a significantly slower pace than men (Carter & Silva, 2010; Miller & Sisk, 2012; Wilson, 2017). The fact that women are still progressing behind men in the general workforce raises concern.

Senior-level positions in the general workforce are comparable to collegiate athletics administration include Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), Assistant, Associate, and Deputy Athletic Director (AD). The director of athletics positions are the most visibly underrepresented in the sports industry (Wilson, 2017). In a report published in the NCAA archives; Dr. Amy Wilson (2017) states that as recent as 2016 men filled 80.4% of director of athletics positions and a mere 19.6% were women (See Figure 1). Women have steadily averaged 20% representation since the earlier referenced precipitous drop in the early 1980s when the AIAW discontinued (See Figure 2). The



deviation in the statistic is found at the Division III level, but even there, women only comprise 30% of the director of athletics positions (See Figure 3).

### **Statement of the Problem**

To date, few studies have explored the experiences of women in collegiate athletics administration, specifically the facilitators and barriers for women entering and progressing in collegiate athletics administration. There is a need to explore and identify perceived barriers and facilitators shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Hancock (2012) noted that this raises concerns. The United States has advanced nearly 50 years since 1972 and women's presence in collegiate administration has not increased. There is a lack of research on the specific area of women in collegiate athletics and thus a need to explore.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Literature has focused on women in the general work place, women as collegiate level coaches, and as administrators. This study sought to address the gap in research by exploring the career progression of women currently in collegiate athletics administration positions to gain a better understanding. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences during the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. By differentiating factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration, the study may allow explanation as to why women are not obtaining more of the positions in Administration.

### **Significance of the Study**

There is an increasing need to understand and educate current administrators and future entry level professionals on the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. This study was significant for multiple reasons. First, there are limited studies that have explored the factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Therefore, this study may increase support, awareness, and extend the literature on the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Walker and Bopp (2010) state “Title IX has been a monumental catalyst for the increased participation of women in sport” (p. 50). The same has not been true for administration positions in collegiate athletics. Second, building off the studies of Hancock (2012) and Taylor, Siegele, Smith, & Hardin (2018), this study may provide further understanding of the perceived factors shaping the career progression to support women with current and future careers in collegiate athletics to “make more proactive career-related decisions” (p. 17). The study explored factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration.

### **Exploratory Question**

The primary explorative question guiding this study was: *what are the perceived factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration?*

Supportive secondary questions adapted from a previous study conducted by Hancock (2012) with considerations to Career Construction Theory are as follows:

1. What facilitators do participants perceive as shaping their career progression?
2. What barriers do participants perceive as inhibiting their career progression?

### **Limitations**

Conducting this type of study regarding the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration may present the following limitations.

1. I, the researcher, may have possible biased perception of what is occurring during the the career progression for women in collegiate athletics administration.
2. The participants may provide inaccurate responses regarding barriers and facilitators experienced during their career progression.
3. The study is limited to women in current positions of SWA, assistant, associate, or deputy AD.
4. The study may lack participants due to time constraints and limited availability of women in the collegiate athletics administrator positions.

## Definition of Terms

**Assistant Athletic Director** – The position responsible for overseeing collegiate athletics alongside departmental assistant athletic directors and reports to an Associate Athletic Director (PennState Human Resources, 2018).

**Associate Athletic Director** – Position overseeing an athletic department and Assistant, Athletic Directors (PennState Human Resources, 2018).

**Barriers** – Something material or immaterial that blocks or is intended to block passage (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

**Career Construction Theory (CCT)** – Looking at career decisions made by professionals based on answering how and why (Savickas, 2005)

**C-Suite** – C-suite refers to the positions at Chief executive level in an organization (Miller & Sisk, 2012).

**Career Progression** – Career progression is defined as the process of making progress to better jobs; referring to the upward mobile movement in one's career path leading to the ultimate goal position in management or leadership (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).

**Collegiate Athletics** – The college level of competition in athletics (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

**Collegiate Athletics Administration** – The senior-level of management in collegiate athletics including Athletics Director, Assistant, Associate, Deputy, and the Senior Woman Administrator (Hancock, 2012)

**Deputy Athletic Director** – The administration position second to the athletic director in overseeing and supporting the athletic department (Western Michigan Human Resources, 2017).

**Director of Athletics (AD)** – Athletic Director, the administrative position which oversees the athletic department including coaches and other employees involved in sporting events at an education institution at the collegiate level (Angst, 2018).

**Facilitators** – Someone or something shaping or advancing the career positively through indirect or direct influence (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

**Gender Wage Gap** – The difference in annual salary between men and women (Childers, Hartmann, Hegewisch, & Milli, 2019).

**Leadership** – The position in management or administration (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

**Mentor** – Any professional or superior one can look to for information, serving as a mentor (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).

**NCAA** – The National Collegiate Athletic Association; An organization dedicated to the success of student athletes at the collegiate level (NCAA, 2019).

**Senior Woman Administrator (SWA)** –The highest-ranking female in each NCAA athletics department or conference office (NCAA, 2018).

**Title IX** – Comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination by sex in any federally funded education program or activity (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

**Underrepresentation** – Low number of women or any minority presented in a position (Merriam-Webster, 2019).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A gap in research is reflected through limited knowledge of factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration positions. It is important to understand the factors contributing to career progression and why women continue to lag behind men in the workforce. Wilson (2017) found the associate director of athletics position to be filled by 63.4% men and 36.6% women in 1996. By 2016, the representation of men in associate director of athletics position climbed to 65.5% and women dropped to 34.5%. This change reflects a slight decline of women in the associate director of athletics position over the span of twenty years. Finding a greater understanding as to why the underrepresentation of women continues, may allow for growth of current and future professionals of the industry.

The underrepresentation of women in management and leadership positions, specifically collegiate athletics administration positions, has become a raising concern. Studies have found various barriers inhibiting women from progressing their careers. These barriers include gender stereotyping, the gender wage gap, and lack of role models and mentors (Brandon Hall Research Group, 2016; Miller & Sisk, 2012; Steele Flippin, 2017). While these barriers have been reported, there is less emphasis toward facilitators shaping the career progression for women. However, suggestions are provided to support career progression through women specific training and development, networking, and coaching or mentor programs (Brandon Hall Research Group, 2016; Hall & Oglesby, 2016; Steele Flippin, 2017). Brandon Hall Research Group (2016) found that only 81% of organizations offer women specific leadership training, while 76% do not have any

type of mentoring to provide. Additionally, Brandon Hall Research Group (2016) states “three times as many organizations have no women or few women in C-level roles” (p. 6). Gender inequality remains with the lack of women represented in leadership and management roles. Further methods may need to be acquired in effort to promote progress for women in the sport industry.

In the following literature review, three tables are provided. Table 1 reviews the underrepresentation of women and what barriers are encountered in the general workforce and sports industry. Table 2 reviews and explores the gender wage gap, identifying reasons researchers have found to explain the phenomenon. Table 3 offers potential suggestions provided to women in effort to enhance their career progression. Each table incorporates articles examining and exploring the central topic of barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration.

## **Underrepresentation of Women and Barriers Encountered**

Barriers refer to someone or something preventing or slowing the career progression (Merriam-Webster, 2019). While Hancock (2012) described barriers as “real features of an industry or an organizational environment” (p. 9). These career inhibiting qualities exist in a variety of ways at each level of a woman’s career beginning with business education (Miller & Sisk, 2012).

A few examples of barriers inhibiting the career progression of women included the lack of women role models and mentors, little or no support from leadership, and the absence of women-specific training (Brandon Hall Research Group, 2016). The purpose of role models and mentors is to strengthen relationships and improve the overall career progression (Steele Flippin, 2017). Yet, only 6 in 10 companies have role model and mentor relationships in place leaving women to struggle cultivating these relationships with women they can learn from and relate to (Brandon Hall Research Group, 2016).

A lack of women role models and mentor relationships may impact women focusing on their leadership style to find success. Research studies have suggested women may need additional leadership support, training and development during their career progression (Brandon Hall Research Group, 2016; Ibarra et al., 2010). Barriers found in these studies are suggested to be slowing the career progression of women in the general workforce and in the sports industry (Carter & Silva, 2010; Haile et al., 2016; Ibarra et al., 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2017). However, there are limited recommendations offered to guarantee support and development provided.



Table 1

## Underrepresentation of Women and Barriers Encountered

<b>Title/Authors</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Procedures</b>	<b>Results</b>
Business Education and Gender Bias at the “C-Level”  Miller and Sisk, 2012	The purpose of this study is to identify barriers responsible for underrepresentation of women in C-Level positions and create suggestions to further prevent from occurring.	1200 women within Fortune 100 companies	Observation	Observe and discuss obstacles faced by women rising to “C-Level” positions and how business education is a primary contributor	Business education is contributing factor to gender bias in the workplace. Goal is to bring attention to gender bias ultimately moving toward gender neutrality.
Women in Leadership and Gender Parity: Is Change Happening Fast Enough?  Brandon Hall Group Research, 2016	The purpose of this study is to explore barriers and limitations women face when progressing career and what organizations can provide to support and build up the representation of women.	420 responses from 26 countries and more than 30 industries	Online Survey	25 Qualitative Interviews	Strides have been made to advance women in business, however more research needs to be completed at organizational and individual levels to make critical changes.
The Underrepresentation of women in the male-dominated sport workplace: Perspectives of Female Coaches  Walker and Bopp, 2010	The purpose of this study is to examine underrepresentation of women in male dominated workplace of men’s sports. Contributing to literature and previous research.	Snowball sampling, beginning with D1- University – 10 total female coaches	In-Depth Semi Structured Interviews to explore how and why (lack of women coaches) is occurring	None	Suggest that the perception of gendered opportunities, male-exclusive social networks, & pressures to overcompensate for being female, are all strong negative influences

Explaining the Under-representation of Women in Leadership Position of Sport Organizations: A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective Sartore and Cunningham, 2007	The purpose of this study is to propose behavior hypotheses in effort to explain why there is an underrepresentation of women in sport. Find and identify the connection to social ideology and societal norms?	11 Propositions studied through theoretical framework, not actually tested only identified here	Symbolic Interactionism	None	Under-representation of women in sport and studies find the expectation of women to behave a “certain way” in a male dominated environment
12 Stats About Working Women DeWolf, 2017	The purpose of this study is to provide statistics of women in the workforce currently based on categories and overall representation comparatively to dates in history.	None	None	None	None
Women in Management: Delusions of Progress Carter and Silva, 2010	The purpose of this study is to present barriers women face in the workforce and where they rank relatively to men.	None	Statistics provided	None	None
Maternal Bodies as Taboo at Work: New Perspectives on the Marginalizing of Senior-Level Women in Organizations Gatrell, Cooper, and Kossek, 2017	The purpose of this story is to contribute new perspectives to research and further explain why women are underrepresented at the management level, thus providing focus on the concept of the “maternal” body as a primary barrier.	123 studies providing evidence of discriminatory practices	Providing argument that underrepresentation of women in management or at senior-level is based on their potential maternity rather than performance.		Studies provide evidence of discriminatory practices, concluding women are excluded from career-advancement opportunities due to the maternal body.

Why Men Still Get More Promotions Than Women	The purpose of this study is to explain barriers preventing women from obtaining promotions at the same rate as men.	None	None	None	Identified mentorship and sponsorship has different meaning for men than it does women in addition to the way the relationship progresses one's career.
Ibarra, Carter, and Silva, 2010					
Barriers and Challenges Confronting Women for Leadership and Management Positions: Review and Analysis	The purpose of this study is to review and analyze issues preventing women from obtaining promotions, management positions, and international assignments in workforce.	None	None	None	8 barriers listed in article with evidence identify as preventing women from obtaining leadership positions in workforce supported by cultural challenges. Improvements suggested through education, training, and empowering women.
Haile, Emmanuel, and Dzathor, 2016					
Promoting the Leadership Development of Girls	The purpose of this study is to discuss unique barriers experienced by girls in their leadership pursuits and provide suggestions for the future.	None	None	None	Attention brought to female leadership opportunities in addition to ways to encourage youth.  Suggestions: 1. Embracing Leadership 2. Building Networking & Mentorship 3. Encouraging girls to use their voice  Chart provided, "Girl's Leadership Resources"
Voelker, 2016					

## **Gender Wage Gap**

Literature states that one of the primary barriers women face professionally is the gender wage gap. This is suggested to be due more to gender bias than a woman's ability or inability to negotiate (Abendroth et al., 2017; Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Leibbrandt & List, 2015). Leibbrandt and List (2015) study the negotiation frequency by men and women during the interview process for a new position. The findings reflect that men are four times more likely to approach a negotiation when the salary is listed, and the gender difference disappears when the salary is reflected as "negotiable". This type of gender bias is not explained merely through barriers, however, the barriers faced may be internal. Miller and Sisk (2012) suggested through studies that women may be creating their barrier. The gender wage gap is explained further in Table 2.

Table 2

## Gender Wage Gap

<b>Title/Authors</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Procedures</b>	<b>Results</b>
Women At Work: Women's Access to Power and the Gender Earnings Gap  Abendroth, Melzer, Kalev, and Tomaskovic-Devey, 2017	The purpose of this study is to explore how gendered access to power is associated with gender differences in earnings.	5,022 Workers selected from 94 large German corporations	5,022 Workers selected from 94 large German corporations	Random Sampling	More women in management positions reduces the gender earnings gap Men with male supervisor have a positive effect to pay while women with a female supervisor does not receive such advantages
Do Women Avoid Salary Negotiations? Evidence from a Large-Scale Natural Field Experiment  Leibbrandt and List, 2015	The purpose of this study is to explore and observe salary negotiations during the hiring process by men and women.	2,422 job seekers from 18 job ads posted Relevant theory with 2x2 factorial design	Relevant theory with 2x2 factorial design	Random Sampling and Report Survey	2,382 applicants reported gender  Men are four times more likely to negotiate on first salaries than women. However, gender differences disappear completely when a position is advertised as salary "negotiable".
Changing the Narrative: Women as Negotiators and Leaders  Kray and Kennedy, 2017	The purpose of this study is to explore the misunderstood barriers created when stereotyping women as poor leaders and negotiators.	None	None	None	Further research necessary. Education implemented toward men and women to improve and understand negotiation process further.

### **Future Prevention of Barriers Inhibiting Women**

Factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration include, Table 3, which explores recommendations provided to reduce current and future obstacles or perceived barriers. Steele Flippin (2017) found that women are likely see further career progression if utilizing a multi-faceted career approach. The multi-faceted career approach encompasses career planning and development, organizational empowerment, and networking. Women may continue to face barriers that inhibit the career progression if further education is not implemented with a new societal mindset (Hall & Oglesby, 2016). The societal attitude has a large impact on expectations in the workforce and career progression These topics are explored further within Table 3.

Table 3

## Future Prevention of Barriers Inhibiting Women

<b>Title/Authors</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Procedures</b>	<b>Results</b>
Stepping Through the Looking Glass: The Future for Women in Sport Hall and Oglseyby, 2016	The purpose of this study is to suggest society step out of established conversations in order to better shape the future and change expectations for women in sport and address gender issues.	None	None	None	Creation of a new and future theme, four segments, to empower women and improve their presence through media. Educational components included in plan in additional to “pretty and powerful” theme.
The Glass Ceiling is Breaking, Now What? Steele Flippin, 2017	The purpose of this study is to identify effective strategies to successfully advance women’s careers, specifically Gen-X women.	240 U.S “Gen X” professionals	Statistics used to identify current career progression of women in comparison to men and where support is necessary to assist women	Series of Likert-type & open-ended questions 32% men 68% women	Three-pronged approach is suggested for women, which includes career planning & career development, organizational empowerment, and networking.
Opting Out of Denying Discrimination? How the Framework of Free Choice in American Society Influences Perceptions of Gender Inequality Stephens and Levine, 2017	The purpose of this study is exploring reasoning and decision behind mothers who have left the workplace. Do gender barriers exist?	None	Study 1: Women strongly endorsed choice to explain workplace departure through online or paper survey  Study 2: Discussion of “social issues” and affirming the “choice” framework through survey with exposure to posters with specific titles related to topic	Study 1: 117 stay-at-home mothers who were U.S. residents (Mean age = 39.5 years)  Study 2: 46 U.S.-born undergraduates (74% female, 26% male; mean age = 19.5 years)	Study 1: Reflects the individual ‘s choice to leave work force. Evidence of discrimination concealed by “equal opportunity” idea presented in society.  Study 2: Revealed exposure brought greater evidence of feminism and endorsement of gender discrimination.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Career construction theory (CCT) is designed to explore and examine career growth by answering how and why people make career decisions (Hancock, 2012; Savickas, 2005, 2009; Taylor et al., 2018). During the early 20th century, researchers began to identify ways individuals would be able to negotiate an occupational salary and how career choices were made if not predetermined (Savickas, 2009). Initially, this social phenomenon concentrated on the focused individual's personality traits and the process of each career phase. Through the development of the 21st century, researchers were able to recognize where emphasis on this social phenomenon was necessary. Savickas (2005) believed that the career path of individuals was shaped through memories, experiences, and future ambitions. It is noteworthy that researchers have recognized how negative experiences during an individual's career progression are only a fragment of a broader complexity of problems shaping current and future career decisions.

CCT provides another way of thinking about the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration by incorporating multiple components: career adaptability, vocational personality, and life themes. Career adaptability is defined by Taylor et al. (2018) as an individual's relationship between professional interest and social expectations. The adaptability of an individual distinguishes a relationship between professional interest and social expectations. The second component of CCT, vocational personality, is defined as "career-related abilities, needs, values, and interests" (Savickas, 2005, p. 47). Abilities, needs, and values are strengthened by the individual's personality (Taylor et al., 2018). Finally, the third component of CCT is life themes, which impact



career choices made by an individual giving purpose to significant decisions influencing the individual's career (Hancock, 2012; Taylor et al., 2018).

The application of the CCT may be beneficial when identifying what career decisions women in athletics are making and why they are making these decisions. Additionally, this study focused on the exploration of factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Similar studies by Hancock (2012) and Taylor et al. (2018) explored career mobility of senior women administrators and women commissioners of Division I collegiate athletics respectively.

Hancock (2012) explored the career development of women athletic directors within Division I institutions. The investigation was presented to study career goals and expectations, supports and barriers, and supports in the pursuit of career goals. Applying the CCT enabled Hancock (2012) to see through the lens of a theoretical framework providing a different perspective. While Taylor et al. (2018) utilized the same theoretical framework, the study focused on the career experiences of women commissioners at the Division I level. Experiences, as defined by Taylor, included the continuous negotiation of work and personal time spent, occurrences of sexism in the workplace, and organic relationships transitioning into mentorship.

Furthermore, the CCT is applicable to this study when further exploring the factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. The purpose of applying the CCT to this study is to further explore what career decisions are being made, by women, and why. Most importantly, the researcher is provided with a different point of view when focusing on these career decisions and working to answer each research question for the study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Overview

Qualitative research is defined by Creswell (2009) as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). The purpose of the exploration is to gain a better understanding of a complex problem and principal reasons, thoughts, and motivations; known as an umbrella that delivers the simple epistemological assumptions that direct the paradigm or the study of knowledge (Horvat, Heron, Tancredi-Brice, & Bergey, 2013; Olson, 2011; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Stake (1995) states, “the most distinctive characteristic of qualitative inquiry is its emphasis on interpretation” (p. 41). A qualitative approach allows for a higher capacity to identify emerging themes through interpretation of meaning by each researcher who in turn allows for the tradition to evolve through curiosities (Creswell, 2009, 2016; Horvat et al., 2013).

According to Creswell (2009, 2016), there are multiple benefits to qualitative design including a natural setting, holistic account, and the researcher’s interpretation. First, a natural setting is essential due to its potential to provide a relaxed and familiar environment. Next, qualitative research is developed by the creation of complex problems where findings provide a first-hand holistic account. Third, the researcher becomes an essential component in the study because of the role that they play in interpreting information from interviews and documents collected.

## **Case Study Research**

The type of qualitative research conducted in this study was a descriptive case study. Often seen as unique, case studies are known for their descriptiveness and exploration to illuminate meanings and experiences (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2009; Stake 1995; Yin, 2014). A case study was deemed to be the appropriate method of inquiry for exploring and identifying barriers and facilitators shaping the career progression of women employed in collegiate athletics administration. Specifically, a case study allows for an “intuitive grasp of the phenomenon” and closely reflect the reality by focusing on an occasion, program, or one or more individuals (Merriam, 2009, p. 2). A descriptive case study, according to Merriam (1998) provides “rich” and “thick” findings, which is appropriate when acquiring a first-hand account from one or more people.

## **Exploratory Question**

The primary explorative question guiding this study was: *what are the perceived factors shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration?*

Supportive secondary questions adapted from a previous study conducted by Hancock (2012) with considerations to Career Construction Theory are as follows:

1. What facilitators do participants perceive as shaping their career progression?
2. What barriers do participants perceive as inhibiting their career progression?

## **Research Procedure**

### **Study Participants**

The case for this study was composed of women employed as collegiate athletics administrators. Prior to data collection, criteria were designed to select a specific group

through position title and geographic location. Therefore, the nine participating women held a position of either Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), Associate, Assistant, or Deputy Athletic Director (AD) at a Division I institution in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This method of identifying participants to recruit for the study defines what is known as purposeful sampling.

The initial method of invitation to potential participants was email (See Appendix B). All participants signed Informed Consent (See Appendix E) upon entering the study. Twenty-nine collegiate administration women were reached out to through email while nine agreed to participate in this study. Participation of this study was voluntary. Women participating in the study ranged from one to eleven years of experience in their immediate position (See Table 4).

### **Data Collection**

**Interviews.** Data was collected through standard open-ended interviews and document analysis of resumes or career histories provided by the participants. This approach was used for this phase of data collection, combined with a “general interview guide” (Patton, 2002, p. 342) (See Appendix F). Interviews took place during a four-month period and were transcribed through a web-based transcription system, otter.ai prior to the coding process.

Two pilot interviews were performed before initiating further interviews. Pilot interviews are primarily utilized to “develop, test, or refine the planned research” with a purpose certifying a smooth data collection process (Creswell, 2016; Horvat et al., 2013; Yin, 2014, p. 240). The pilot interviews in this study were beneficial in gaining feedback

on the interview guide. After the two pilot interviews, the researcher then included a question asking the participants about their work and life balance.

Any field notes from the interviews were recorded within 48 hours of each interview to provide the most thorough detail from memory (Horvat et al., 2013). Field notes consisted of an analysis of the interview responses in relation to the resume or career history provided from each participant. Field notes were utilized by the researcher to interpret the meaning of the findings from each interview.

**Documents.** Documents collected were a resume or career history describing positions held, duration, and the location of each. The purpose of this was to link findings together with data collected from the interviews.

### **Data Management**

All data collected from participants were kept in files in the researcher's secured office in a locked file cabinet, while electronic files (including digital recordings) were stored on a password-protected computer. The research committee only has access to information shared directly by the researcher upon request. Any information shared was directly from the researcher while in the same room, but all data remains on a single computer. All efforts have been made to preserve the identity of each participant.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Interviews**

The data analysis process consisted of multiple steps. According to Yin (2014), the process includes categorizing and organizing data, calculating frequency of categories, and placing categories into sequential order to identify themes. Coding is described by Saldaña and Omasta (2018) as labeling for pattern detection focusing on the

concealed meanings. Codes were designed based on the research questions and then by the theoretical framework, career construction theory. The nine interviews were categorized into 43 codes and condensed to five common themes.

Secondary researchers participated in the intercoder agreement to check the accuracy and reliability of the researcher's interpretation. The intercoder agreement offers a means for ensuring the consistency between two or more researchers as well as adds refinement and rigor of qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2016). However, often it is found that an experienced researcher on their own can find patterns in data working on their own.'

### **Documents**

Documents collected during the study were coded with a similar process. The researcher identified duration of career progression, duration spent in each position held, lateral and upward position changes, and location of each position held during the progression. The purpose of collecting and analyzing documents was to further understand how and why career decisions were made during the progression. By answering these questions, the researcher was able to view findings through the lens of the career construction theory.

### **Constant Comparative Method**

Merriam (2009) identified the constant comparative method as a form of analysis to determine similarities better and "identify patterns in the data" (p. 30). Steps involved to identify the patterns are described by Creswell (2009) as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding was utilized when creating categories of information from the interviews. Next, axial coding supported the development of a story from these

categories by formulating themes and generating ideas. The final step in the coding process is selective coding and was employed to create a connection from the information gathered. Selective coding was applied when articulating themes to share found truths in the information (Creswell, 2009).

### **Trustworthiness**

Credibility determines the trustworthiness of the interview guide. The questions for the interview guide were developed based on another researcher's, Hancock (2012), Career Construction Theory, and the two pilot interviews. To ensure the credibility of the qualitative data, triangulation of data will occur by examining the data collected in different formats at different times through a qualitative approach. In this study data were collected from resumes or career history and standard open-ended interviews. The purpose of triangulation to provide credible findings to strengthen the research study being conducted (Creswell, 2016; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014).

### **Case report**

The case report provides a detailed description of the case, findings, and overarching themes. The audience of this study is current administrators and future entry level professionals of the industry. The research will be submitted with intent of publication and presented at a local conference.

### **Human participant and ethics precautions**

Permission to conduct this study was sought from the thesis committee of the researcher and the James Madison University Institutional Review Board (IRB). No data were collected until approval was obtained. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Each participant received a cover letter explaining the study followed by

signing an Informed Consent (see Appendix D). The researcher used pseudonyms to ensure privacy and security of each participant.

### **Chapter Summary**

The case study design for this research study was established with consideration of a similar study conducted by Hancock (2012) exploring the career development of women senior administrators. Nine women employed as collegiate athletics administrators served as the case for this research. Two methods of data collection were utilized: standard open-ended interviews and document analysis. Interviews were transcribed through an online system, otter.ai, and stored in an online coding software, Nvivo 12. Document analysis was conducted using hard copies of resumes or career history acquired by the researcher.

An initial 43 codes were developed and condensed as patterns and themes emerged (five). The findings were triangulated with respect to the credibility triangle. A thorough case report was developed and can be found in Chapter Four.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The chapter is broken down into participant data and three themes shaping the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. The three themes include barriers, facilitators, and “exception” to the norm. First, perceived barriers inhibiting career progression details work/life balance and a male dominant industry. The second theme includes perceived facilitators of mentors, supervisors, and support systems. Finally, the third theme describes women who identify as being the “anomaly” or “exception” to the norm.

#### Participant Data

Women participating in this study had a career length from 11 to 37 years for an average career length of 21.7 years. Table 4 provides aggregated data of the participants’ career in collegiate athletics. The participants averaged 5.6 years in their current position with an average of 5.8 years at the current institution. Four of the women held a position of Assistant AD, two as Deputy AD, two as SWA, and one as AD.

Table 4

*Participant Data (Aggregated)*

Career length (avg.)	21.7 years
Current title (avg.)	5.6 years
Current institution affiliation (avg.)	5.8 years
Area of Responsibility	Internal (7) External (2)
Title Range	Assistant AD (4) Deputy AD (2) SWA (2) Director of Athletics (1)

## Barriers

Barriers have been defined in this study as something physical or immaterial that blocks or is intended to block or slow course (Hancock, 2012; Taylor et al., 2018). The two barriers detailed are work/life balance and male dominant industry.

**Work/life balance.** Work and life balance proved to be a continuous challenge for at least five of the participants who provided insight to their challenges. First, Doris initially stated, “Yeah, I don't have a life.” Once this statement was made, she began to elaborate further.

I work on average, probably 55 to 58 hours a week. I'm on call, and I wouldn't say 24/7. I get phone calls or texts from coaches and student-athletes as early as 6 in the morning and as late as probably midnight. There's just an expectation in this field that you're there, and you're available. And not only that, but you'll have whatever information is needed, even if it is 11 p.m.

This statement by Doris provides insight into the demanding schedule working in collegiate athletics administration. This is not a gender-specific issue, but this may be a significant barrier for Doris. She described another woman, who has found “balance” by further explaining, “One of my walking heroes, she's a mom with two kids, and I don't know how she does it. If I were to have a family, I would have to change the way that I approach my job drastically.” This quote identifies how Doris visualizes successful work and life balance, just not in her own time management.

Eloise's experiences reflect a sense of balance by following and relying on the clock or calendar constantly. “As you can imagine the days get shorter, and then you think you can do one more thing and next thing I know, 7, 8 o'clock at night, and I

haven't left the office yet.” This quote emphasized how necessary it is to complete tasks daily to keep up with the workload but also of the absence of constant work and personal time balance there is in collegiate athletics. Work and personal time management is a constant process, according to the participants. Eloise continued to elaborate on balancing work and life by explaining how the duration of her commute allows her to transition from work to home: “... that's my detox time, I blast the radio as I'm driving home, and I clear my head and then it's family time for me.” Eloise described her commute as her time to unwind from work as well as personal fitness and “family time” by establishing boundaries with her time during each day for herself and when arriving home her priority is family. Creating the boundaries for each day has allowed Eloise to find her work and life balance in contrast to some other participants.

Jamie best explained how the group of participants viewed the long hours of work by merely acknowledging the high number of hours is well known throughout the industry. She continued to describe how she might be able to take a “day off” by working from home during the following week as a way to create balance from working the abundance of hours for the many athletic events and functions. “I will probably work almost 30 hours just within Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. So, that doesn't even include a couple of events that we have during the week just for various homecoming events.” This quote emphasizes the abundance of hours working with multiple athletic events, but also recognizes the day-to-day schedule of work and home life balance that must be maintained.

Christy, among others, explained how she struggles to keep up with both work and home activities. She went so far as suggesting the only outlet would be to disappear.

There are times that I need to step away. We are encouraged to do that but truly, it's a 10-month grind. So even when I step away, I never turn my phone off. The only way I can really get away is to get off the grid completely, like being on a boat and disappear.

This quote does not present a lack of balance for Christy, but she does express working to find a way to create coexistence with work and personal time. However, the downside is not having the ability to “step away.”

Even if stepping away is an option, participants like Erma said she continues to regret taking time away from work because she missed a professional opportunity. Erma explained a scenario she faced decades prior when she was a coach, and it still haunts her as an administrator.

To this day, I remember I took an afternoon off to do some work at home with a contractor and missed an appointment with a recruit. So to this day, I regret that because I think she would have been great. She's moved on; she's become a head coach. I mean, she was a great player.

Even with this event in the past, Erma perceived her time off to have inhibited her from obtaining a favorable opportunity with a recruit. The quote focuses on the participant ruminating on the event.

**Male-dominant.** Nearly half of the women participants (4) perceived the industry to be male dominant. First, Doris said, “I know that college athletics is very male dominated.” This matter of fact statement was supported by another response from Lila, “It’s still considered a man’s profession.” Her statement refers to the industry “still” being male dominated, inferring the lack of change or equality over a prolonged period of

time. Jamie matched the previous statements by emphasizing how challenging the sport industry is for women by stating, “I definitely feel like being a female in college athletics is really tough.”

Toni recognized the lack of a female presence through her personal experience by identifying herself as the only woman. This may have been a facilitator for her individual career progression, she argued, but she has still identified the industry as male dominated.

### **Facilitators**

Facilitators are someone or something shaping or advancing the career positively through indirect or direct influence (Hancock, 2012; Taylor et al., 2018). Participants identified facilitators to their career success and progression as mentors, supervisors, and support systems.

**Mentors.** Five women talked about the mentors who have positively influenced their career progression. Four of these women described other women within the industry who have supported their career progression with mentor relationships.

Erma first stated, “Yes, I had a couple of mentors. One was a woman.” This identifies that women are mentoring other women in the industry. Jamie explained, “... she's been somebody that I've looked up to from a mentor standpoint.” The mentor described is another woman within the industry of higher ranking. Peggy also spoke highly of two women who played a huge role in her career progression and having the opportunity to learn from females of the industry. These mentor relationships have been between industry colleagues in addition to those in higher-ranking positions.

Finally, Doris, described both men and women when she said she was, “encouraged to branch out when I was tired, not tired, but ready to branch out and make a

change.” This description reflects reinforcement that mentors have assisted in facilitating career progression.

**Supervisors.** Supervisors more closely aligns with Mentors, but three women specifically cited a mentor-type relationship with a direct supervisor in their current or previous roles who facilitated advancement positively in their careers. Therefore, it was broken out as a separate section within the findings. Lila described a coach who provided her the opportunity to transition into an assistant coaching position. This was her coach during her time as an athlete, and she was able to transition into a coaching position because of the mentor relationship developed. Doris had a similar experience upon being hired to an institution.

Peggy described a male supervisor who taught her specifics of the industry:

He taught me the ins and outs of fundraising and being a good fundraiser. He showed me how to be a good manager. He led by example. If he asked you to do something, he was doing it double time. He was a great leader.

The supervisor provided Peggy with the skills and knowledge to advance in her career in addition to being a positive example to follow.

**Support systems.** Three women identified perceived facilitators to their career progression as a support system. While three women do not constitute a majority of participants, it was worth noting due to their acknowledgment of positive reinforcement of their careers. The support system incorporates family, colleagues, friends, and other groups with which the participants were associated.

First, Toni described, “I have a really great support system. My parents really encouraged me to just go for it.” Peggy had a similar response when stating, “My dad has

always been a sounding voice for me.” Both quotes offer evidence that parents provided a foundation for a support system.

Eloise created a picture of her colleagues and leaders of the institution as being a source of support:

I am so extremely thankful for the individuals that I'm surrounded by. Like I said, our senior leadership team is a close-knit group, and we rely on each other heavily. I think that's probably the reason that we are successful here.

The description provides another way support systems are influential to career progression similarly to Christy's experience when she stated, “Learning something from everybody, whether it's a mentor or whether it's people that work for me, or churches I work with, and those types of things.” This information reflects mentor-type relationships to have formed through friends, church, and even between colleagues. These may also be considered a “support system,” which is identified as a separate facilitator in the following section.

### **Exception to the Norm**

Four women did not perceive any barriers inhibiting their career. These four women specifically identified that they were the “anomaly” or the “exception to the norm.” Conversely, three women stated that being a woman was the primary barrier inhibiting their career. Two other women did not focus on barriers as they provided different influences such as mentors, supervisors, and even overall organizational support.

Toni, who was in her third year as a deputy athletic director, described an overall positive experience during career progression. Toni even referred to her experience as the “exception to the norm” in a quote during the interview:

My story is one that I would, I would venture to say, I would look at myself and others would look at me as the real success story for females in the world of athletics, because I am an exception versus the norm.

Doris echoed Tony by saying, “I guess I’ve just been incredibly blessed because I have not had major barriers.” Eloise said, “I’m very fortunate that I’m developing my career.” She elaborated: “I’ve ended up in a pretty good place. And I’m grateful for that. And because that’s not everybody’s story.” Finally, Christy said she has not experienced barriers like other women may have, but that her barriers have all been related to the work.

I feel fortunate in that I have not had too many barriers. I mean, other than, you know, normal constraints, like budget admissions and stuff like that. But, you know, I’ve been very, very fortunate to have had choice and autonomy as I moved along.

When Toni elaborated on her overall work experience and career progression, she continued to discuss the positives. Specifically, Toni denied the barrier of being a woman while other participants claimed it was a significant barrier to their career progression.

I even sometimes feel like, they are looking for numbers, and you are sitting around the table of 10 men, and you need a female whether there is one of us because it just looks good, or because it needs to be the case.



This description provided expands on how being the only woman has been a facilitator for Toni's career.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The barriers emerging from this study include work/life balance, gender biases, and stereotypes. These barriers are similar to what has been found in other recent studies (Brandon Hall Group Research, 2016; Gatrell et al., 2017; Hall & Oglesby, 2016; Miller & Sisk, 2012; Walker & Bopp, 2011). While the barriers are a common finding, there is yet to be any apparent change to the representation of women at the level of administration in collegiate athletics or the C-Suite of the general workplace. Other findings emerging from this study include facilitators in the form of mentors, supervisors, and support systems.

#### **Barriers**

Barriers identified in this study are male-dominated industry and work-life balance which are similar to those barriers found by Hancock (2012). The sport industry continues to be male-dominated with approximately 90% of athletics director positions filled by men at the Division I level (Hancock, 2012). Haile et al. (2016) explained that the lack of women in senior leadership positions is partially due to the “strain in work/life balance” (p. 36).

Literature reflects a perceived barrier inhibiting women’s career progression as the gender wage gap (Abendroth et al., 2017; Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Leibbrandt & List, 2015). Remarkably, this study did not present such findings as only one participant mentioned the gender wage gap. However, the gender wage gap has been reported to be closely related to gender bias versus a woman’s ability to negotiate (Abendroth et al., 2017; Kray & Kennedy, 2017; Leibbrandt & List, 2015).

**Work/life balance.** Women participants (5) elaborated on the challenges of work-life balance identifying their experiences concerning a need to defend their calendar in regard to the number of hours worked in a week, limited ways to rest and recover, and finding time for their families or personal life. These findings are important to note in regard to the absence of women in leadership positions as research has found that women employed in collegiate athletics administration, or the C-suite, face the constant battle of “having it all” (Hancock, 2012, Gattrell et al., 2017; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007).

While facing the constant battle, decisions are being made that impact the priorities and outcomes based on CCT. Findings from the current study viewed through the lens of CCT provide insight to how and why women are making these difficult decisions. The component of life themes is reflected through the decisions made based in life influences. These influences have been represented through having a family and balancing time or making career the top priority. The impact of these decisions may be influencing the career progression of women in collegiate athletics.

**Male-dominant.** Participants of this study (3) identified the industry as male-dominated, which supports conclusions of current literature (Gattrell et al., 2017; Haile et al., 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Walker & Bopp, 2010). Studies reflect women lagging behind men in their career progression beginning as early as their first position post-graduation (Carter & Silva, 2010; Miller & Sisk, 2012). The general workforce trend has carried over into the sport industry with the lack of representation of women at the senior-level. Hancock (2012) found that men dominate the industry with a 91.7% representation of NCAA Division I athletic directors. The lack of representation could be attributed to gender bias (Miller & Sisk, 2012).

Women have adapted to the male-dominated environment by conforming their leadership styles and minimizing their personalities with consideration to their professional interest and social expectations. Findings reflect that women may be thoughtful when considering their words and actions in effort to seek success and career progression. Considering leadership styles and actions is important when viewing status and representation of women employed in collegiate athletics administration.

### **Facilitators**

This study produced an opportunity for women to elaborate on the perceived facilitators to their career progression. There was a response by women (4) who believed they were the “exception to the norm” or the “anomaly” to the industry. These women identified minimal perceived barriers inhibiting their career progression. These findings set this study apart from Hancock (2012) and Taylor et al. (2018) as there is limited available information with similar results.

Interestingly, a similarity in findings evolved as Brandon Hall Research Group (2016) found women not claiming their success from hard work and dedication but to project based on “luck” or praising a mentor they encountered along the way. The findings deliver a new perspective from current research focusing on barriers and factors inhibiting career progression.

**Mentors.** Studies have found that mentor relationships aid in assisting career progression (Brandon Hall Group Research, 2016; Steele Flippin, 2017; Hall & Oglesby, 2016). Findings from the current study support the positive impact of mentor relationships as five women reported their positive career progression as a result of mentors. Three of the five women identified their mentor as another woman in the

industry. These mentors provided insight on their experiences, instilled confidence, and encouraged them to expand beyond their comfort zones. There is limited research available to support the prevalence of women mentoring other women. This could be due to the lack of female representation in sport overall.

When viewing this phenomenon through the lens of the career construction theory, the findings reveal choices made by women are a reflection of their influences, life themes, and vocational personalities. The mentor relationships influence career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration in a positive way. Development of these relationships may be due in part to vocational personalities, which is comprised of needs, values, and interests. Women who prioritize their career progression may cultivate mentor relationships within the office as opposed to using external support systems.

**Supervisors.** Only three participants noted their positive experience with supervisors during their career progression, yet it was important to note due to the similarities to mentor relationship. These findings identified the professional relationships aiding in the career progression. This is an area that may need further research with limited studies available with support.

Steele Flippin (2017) discussed the multipronged career approach for women which includes career planning and development, organizational empowerment, and networking. By utilizing this approach, a supervisor/mentor relationship may be beneficial in obtaining success through each of the components of the approach. Women may also be able to expand their vocational personalities through growth and development with the support of the organization and supervisors.

**Support system.** Findings reported from this study identified a support system as a facilitator to the career progression. The support system was recognized as family, colleagues, and other groups of people. Although only three participants discussed support systems, the findings reinforced the impact these relationships have on the career progression.

Due to their significance, the support system relationships may influence career decisions. In this study, influences reflected positive results toward career progression. However, further studies are necessary to explore and identify how these relationships stand with consideration to the lack of women in collegiate athletics administration. It is possible that support systems guide women to making the choice to have a family and continue working in a lower-ranking position versus taking on the work-life balance challenge to obtain a senior-level position.

### **Exception to the Norm**

Nearly half of the women (4) interviewed identified themselves as the “anomaly” or “exception” to the norm. Interestingly, a similarity in findings evolved as Brandon Hall Group Research Team (2016) found women identified their success as “luck” or praising a mentor they encountered along the way. These findings have not been identified directly from any other current literature. However, Sartore and Cunningham (2007) found that women behave a “certain way” in a male dominated environment. Findings revealed that status and power may influence the way men and women act in a professional environment.

While women have a perception that they are the “anomaly” or “exception” to the norm, it may actually prove negative to the sport industry. Women identifying this way

may be a potential weakness threatening athletics departments. The support of anti-discrimination laws may not be delivering a true equal opportunity for more than athletes in sport due to the lack of representation of women in senior-level administration positions. Another potential reason supporting these findings is the scope of opportunity provided to women progressing their careers. As women continue to adapt to the male-dominated environment within the sport industry, equality may not be on the horizon.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Women face continuous work-life challenges in administration when choosing to progress their career and having a family or personal life. Most of the participants (7) described their constant struggles and daily challenges juggling all the pressures of being a senior-level professional and maintaining the traditional roles of a woman. This information is not new and may continue to arise in future studies. Women who have progressed their career to senior-level administration positions have self-identified as the “anomaly” or “exception” to the norm. This finding is important to build upon current literature and inform administrators and future entry-level professionals of the time challenges, need for additional support, and constant pressures of being female in a male-dominated industry.

This study provided a more unobstructed view of women working in collegiate athletics administration and the factors shaping their career progression. The illustration was represented by the first-hand accounts of nine women who described the perceived facilitators shaping and barriers inhibiting professional experiences.

## **Future Research**

Future research in this area should include questioning whether or not women are provided the opportunity to be an athletics director or general manager at the senior-level position. Greater exploration is needed on whether women are taking full advantage of the career progression opportunity or choosing to remain in a lower position and balance career and life. With limited support, further research is necessary to explore further and consider additional elements that may have an impact on responses. Factors to consider in future research should incorporate (a) personality characteristics and (b) career development experiences and expectations.

Future research absolutely must explore why women believe they are the “exception” to the norm or the “anomaly.” These areas are essential to future studies as it is important to identify if this belief is negative to the future of the sports industry. Further exploration may provide in-depth insight into current findings as well and uncover any new phenomenon.



**APPENDICIES****APPENDIX A**

Figure 1: Administrators by Gender: Directors of Athletics (Wilson, 2017)

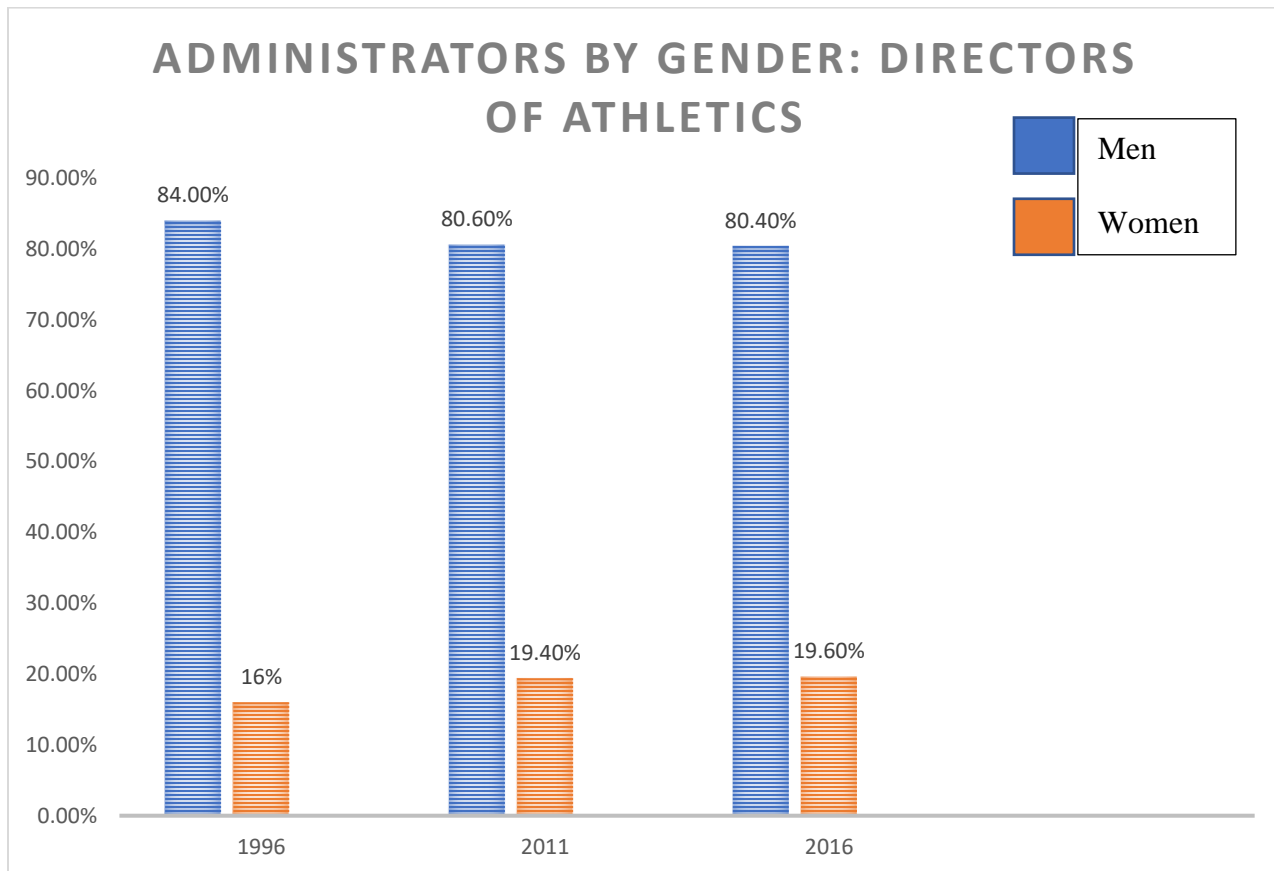


Figure 2: Acosta and Carpenter's Longitudinal Study Percentage of Female Athletic Directors (Wilson, 2017)

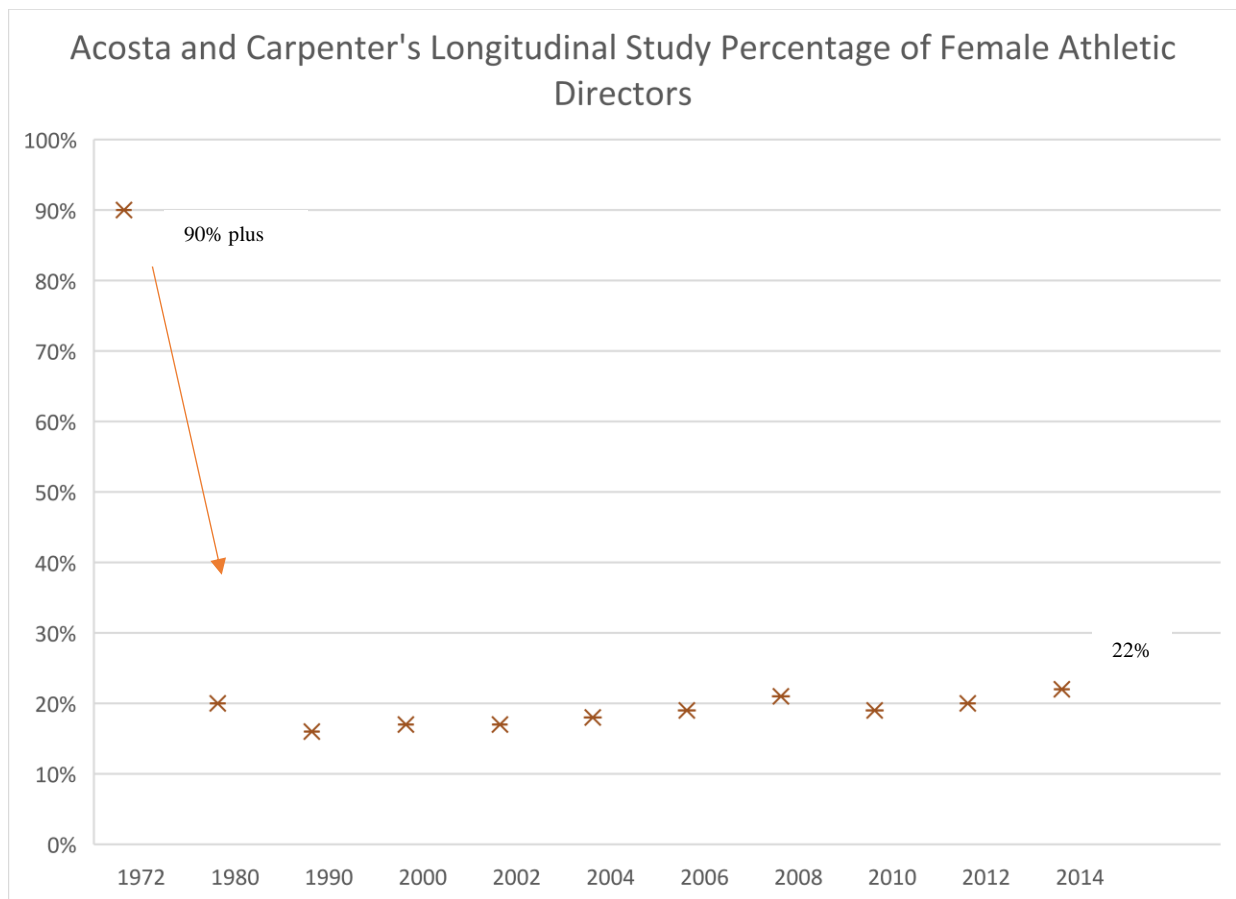
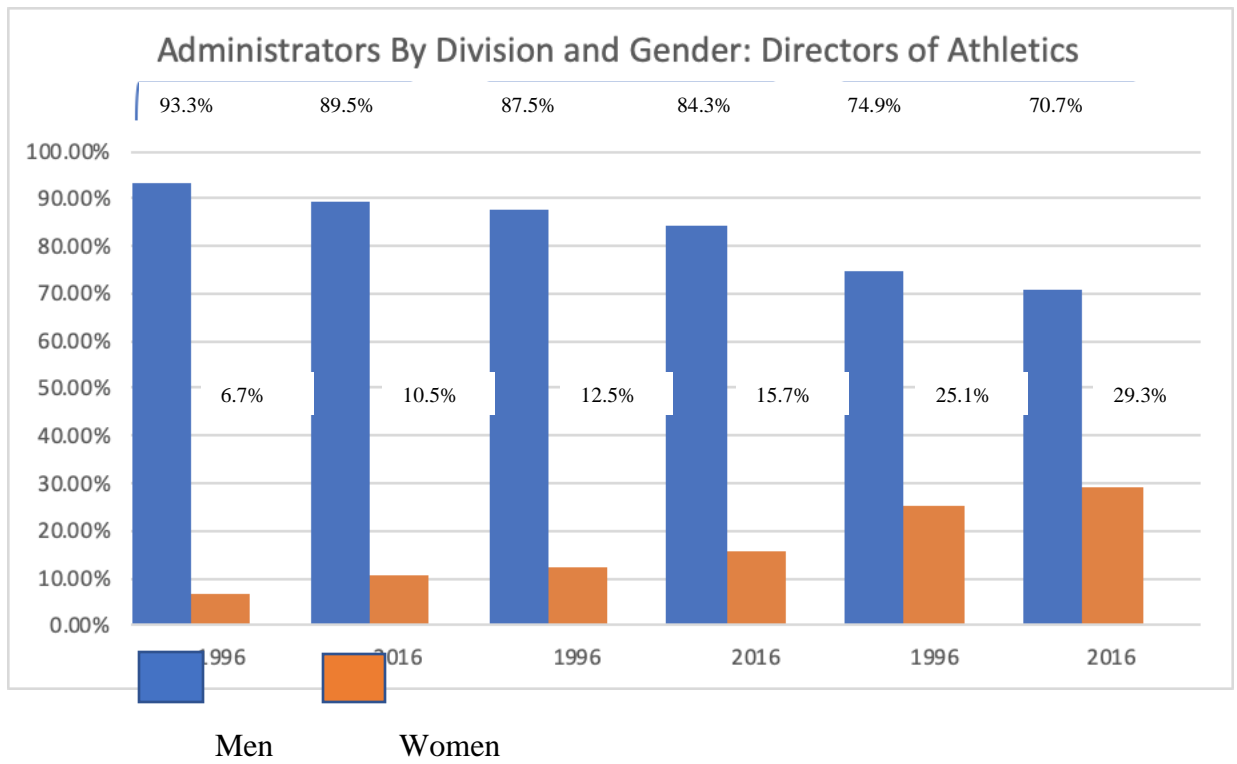


Figure 3: Administrators by Division and Gender: Directors of Athletics (Wilson, 2017)



## APPENDIX B

### Initial Invitation Email

August 1, 2018

Good morning, (participant) –

As partial fulfillment of my master's in Sport and Recreation Leadership with a concentration in Sport and Recreation, I am conducting a study of the career progression and experiences of females in intercollegiate athletics administration. The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in intercollegiate athletics.

Given your position in collegiate athletics administration, I would like to invite you to participate in my study. I am requesting one interview of approximately 30 minutes and a copy of your most recent resume or a list of positions held, duration of each, and location. The interviews will take place in July and August. If you agree to participate, please respond to this email or contact me at (785) 280-2312 to schedule a time for an interview.

Your feedback is vital to the success of this study. More importantly, your responses will help professionals and academics better understand the career progression of women currently in collegiate athletics administration positions. Additionally, the experiences you share will also help women seeking such positions understand the personal and professional barriers and facilitators accompanying these leadership positions.

I hope you will consider my invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Carissa Miller  
Sport and Recreation Leadership Master's Degree Candidate  
James Madison University

## APPENDIX C

**James Madison University**  
Human Research Review Request

**FOR IRB USE ONLY:**

<b>Exempt:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Protocol Number:</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Review:</b> _____	<b>Reviewer:</b> _____
<b>Expedited:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>IRB:</b> <u>19-0059</u>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Review:</b> _____	<b>Reviewer:</b> _____
<b>Full Board:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Received:</b> <u>07/19/18</u>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Review:</b> _____	

<b>Project Title:</b>	<u>Barriers and Facilitators: Women in Collegiate Athletics Administration</u>
<b>Project Dates:</b> (Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)	From: <u>07/31/18</u> To: <u>11/30/18</u> MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY
<b>Responsible Researcher(s):</b>	<u>Carissa E. Miller</u>
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	<u>Mille5ce@dukes.jmu.edu</u>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<u>785-280-2312</u>
<b>Department:</b>	<u>Hart School</u>
<b>Address (MSC):</b>	<u>2305</u>
<b>Please Select:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Student</span> <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator/Staff Member <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student</span>
<b>(if Applicable):</b>	
<b>Research Advisor:</b>	<u>Julie Wallace Carr, Ed.D</u>
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	<u>wallacj@jmu.edu</u>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<u>(540) 830-2020</u>
<b>Department:</b>	<u>The Hart School Sport and Recreation Leadership</u>
<b>Address (MSC):</b>	<u>2305</u>
<b>Minimum # of Participants:</b>	<u>10</u>
<b>Maximum # of Participants:</b>	<u>15</u>
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>External Funding:</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____ <b>Internal Funding:</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes, Sponsor:</b> _____ <b>Independently:</b> Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> _____
<b>Incentives:</b>	<b>Will monetary incentives be offered?</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>If yes: How much per recipient?</b> _____ <b>In what form?</b> _____
<b>Must follow JMU Financial Policy:</b>	<a href="http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#.394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects">http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/procedures/4205.shtml#.394IRBApprovedResearchSubjects</a>

<b>Institutional Biosafety Committee Review/Approval :</b>	<b>Use of recombinant DNA and synthetic nucleic acid molecule research:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <b>If "Yes," approval received:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Pending <b>IBC Protocol Number(s):</b> <b>Biosafety Level(s):</b>
<b>Will research be conducted outside of the United States?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <b>If "Yes," please complete and submit the International Research Form along with this review application:</b> <a href="http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbinternationalresearch.doc">http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbinternationalresearch.doc</a>
<b>Certain vulnerable populations are afforded additional protections under the federal regulations. Do human participants who are involved in the proposed study include any of the following special populations? Some populations may be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence. Does your research involve any of the following populations?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minors <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women ( <i>Do not check unless you are specifically recruiting</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners <input type="checkbox"/> Fetuses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> My research does not involve any of these populations  <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly <input type="checkbox"/> Diminished capacity/Impaired decision-making ability <input type="checkbox"/> Economically disadvantaged <input type="checkbox"/> Other protected or potentially vulnerable population ( <i>e.g. homeless, HIV-positive participants, terminally or seriously ill, etc.</i> ) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> My research does not involve any of these populations

**Investigator: Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.**

1.  **YES**  **NO** Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board define the project as **research**?

The James Madison University IRB defines "research" as a "systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2.  **YES**  **NO** Are the human participants in your study **living** individuals?

"Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research

obtains:

(1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information.”

3.  YES  NO Will you obtain data through *intervention* or *interaction* with these individuals?

“Intervention” includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (*e.g.*, measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. “Interaction” includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (*e.g.*, surveying or interviewing).

4.  YES  NO Will you obtain *identifiable private information* about these individuals?

“Private information” includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific purposes which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (*e.g.*, a medical record or student record). “Identifiable” means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (*e.g.*, by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).

5.  YES  NO Does the study present *more than minimal risk* to the participants?

“Minimal risk” means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic well being, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.

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### **CERTIFICATIONS:**

For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, **all** research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. “Research staff” is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

*Test module at ORI website*

<http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml>

Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor	Training Completion Date
<b>Carissa E. Miller</b>	<b>02/01/2018</b>
<b>Julie Wallace Carr, Ed.D.</b>	<b>04/05/2018</b>
<b>Benjamin H. Carr, J.D</b>	<b>02/14/2018</b>
<b>Joshua Pate, PhD.</b>	<b>02/16/2018</b>

For additional training interests, or to access a Spanish version, visit the National Institutes of Health Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) Course at: <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>.

*By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit an electronic version (in a Word document) of your **ENTIRE** protocol to [researchintegrity@jmu.edu](mailto:researchintegrity@jmu.edu).

Provide a **SIGNED** hard copy of the Research Review Request Form to:

Office of Research Integrity, MSC 5738, 820 Madison Drive, Burruss Hall, First Floor, Room # 109



## APPENDIX D

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to explore, identify, and provide a better understanding of barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping women's career progression within intercollegiate athletics administration. There is an increasing need to understand and educate the public on the career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. The study is significant in extending current literature with support of limited studies available. Additionally, the study will provide evidence to current and future sport professionals of the barriers and facilitators taking place at the level collegiate athletics administration. The research questions utilized for the study are as follows:

What are the barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping the career progression of women in intercollegiate athletics?

1. What facilitators do participants identify as shaping their career progression?
2. What barriers do participants identify as inhibiting their career progression?

### **Procedures/Research Design/Methodology/Timeframe**

The researcher will identify universities in the Central Atlantic geographic location of the United States with women in positions of athletic administration to invite to participate in the study. Women invited to participate in this study will currently hold an Assistant, Associate, or Deputy Athletic Director position. Sample text included in the email invitation will be as follows:

Good morning,

As partial fulfillment of my master's in Sport and Recreation Leadership with a concentration in Sport and Recreation, I am conducting a study of the career progression and experiences of females in intercollegiate athletics administration. The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in intercollegiate athletics administration.

Given your position in collegiate athletics administration, I would like to invite you to participate in my study. I am requesting one interview of approximately 30 - 45 minutes and a copy of your most recent resume or a list of positions held, duration of each, and location. The interviews will take place in August and September. If you agree to participate, please respond to this email or contact me at (785) 280-2312 to schedule a time for an interview.

Your feedback is vital to the success of this study. More importantly, your responses will help professionals and academics better understand the career progression of women currently in collegiate athletics administration positions. Additionally, the experiences you share will also help women seeking such positions understand the personal and professional barriers and facilitators accompanying these leadership positions.

I hope you will consider my invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Carissa Miller  
 Sport and Recreation Leadership Masters' Degree Candidate  
 James Madison University  
 785-280-2312

The women who consent to participate will be asked to participate in an in-person or videoconference interview focusing on the experiences of barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression. Participants will be asked to email or call the researcher, Carissa Miller, to arrange the interview. The researcher's goal is to have 10-12 participants for interviews. Participants may be contacted for a brief, 10-15 minutes, videoconference or telephone follow-up interview for clarification of responses provided during the initial interview. Once oral and written consent is provided, the researcher will interview participants individually seeking in depth information of the experiences during career progression. Questions asked are based on a previous study conducted by Hancock (2012) based on the career experiences of women in senior administrator positions of intercollegiate athletics. The interview will be semi-structured with the audio digitally recorded.

There is no foreseeable risk for the participants of the study aside from potential uneasiness when answering personal questions during the interview and risks of everyday life. Participants of the study will not be identified at any time. Privacy will be protected to the greatest extent. Participants identity and responses will be kept confidential. Participants who consent to participate in the study will be assigned a pseudonym and their personal information will not be mentioned or released. There are no benefits to participating in the study aside from educating professions and future women entering the sport industry, specifically collegiate athletics administration. By participating in the study, information gathered will be used to expand current and future research. In addition, information may be beneficial to current and future women considering collegiate athletics administration as their career.

All research will take place through face-to-face interviews via in-person, videoconference, or telephone. In person interviews will be conducted at the participant's place of work.

The timeframe of this study is as follows:

August 2018 (Pending IRB approval)	Invite participants
September 2018	Schedule and conduct interviews
October 2018	Schedule and conduct interviews
November 2018	Data analysis
January 2019	Create Case Report

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Data will be collected through resumes, semi-structured interviews, observations, and field notes. Data collection consists of obtaining resumes or a list of positions held, duration of each, and location. Documents collected during research study will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the researcher at James Madison University. Any signed consent forms from participants participating in the study will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the office of the researcher at James Madison University. Additionally, interviews will be digitally recorded using a voice/sound recorder. The digital voice/sound recording device with each of the interviews will be kept by the researcher and safely stored in a locked file cabinet within the office of the researcher. Field notes will be written from observations made during each interview. Data collected electronically will be kept on a password protected computer. Once interviews are transcribed into a word document, the digital file will be deleted.

Data analysis will begin with coding of the data, seeking basic themes and concepts from the data. Coding will be performed by highlighting similar text themes with the same color and designating the group a code best defining the themes and concepts. Analysis will continue with a member of the thesis committee participating in the intercoder agreement to check accuracy and reliability of the researcher's interpretation. Data will again be examined to construct overall themes from grouped concepts.

Only the researcher will have access to the data for this study. The results of the research are going to be published in a scholarly research journal, all identities will remain anonymous. Names of participants in the study will be changed to protect identity and confidentiality. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers including audio recordings will be safely stored and kept by the researcher for up to two years unless the participant specifically requests these be destroyed.

**Reporting Procedures**

The audience of this study will be sport and recreation management professionals, scholars, researchers, and students. The audience will also include JMU staff and administrators of sport and recreation leadership. Findings of this study will potentially be published in a sport management scholarly journal. Findings will be provided to any participant of the research study that inquires.

**Experience of the Researcher (and advisor, *if student*):**

Carissa E. Miller is a graduate student in the Hart School of Hospitality, Sport and Recreation Leadership at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA.

Carissa's research begins with this thesis studying the barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping women's career progression in collegiate athletics administration.

The thesis committee faculty advisor is Julia Wallace Carr Ed.D.

Julia Wallace Carr received her Ed.D. in Human and Organizational Learning from The George Washington University. She has worked in campus recreation and wellness and health promotion for over 25 years. During that time she has contributed to research projects in Sport and Recreation Management, Kinesiology, Health Sciences, and AHRD at James Madison University. She has chaired three thesis committees and has been a committee member on seven reading and research and thesis projects for these departments. Four of the projects have been published in peer-reviewed journals. A curriculum vita is available upon request

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Consent to Participate in Research**

#### **Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study**

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Carissa Miller from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to identify barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's thesis.

#### **Research Procedures**

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of a formal semi-structured interview that will be administered to individual participants at their place of work. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in collegiate athletics administration. Additionally, each participant will be asked to provide a current copy of their resume or list of positions held, duration of each, and location.

#### **Time Required**

Participation in this study will require 30-45 minutes of your time for the initial interview. A follow up interview may take place if necessary, lasting 10-15 minutes. In total the maximum amount of time necessarily possible to participate in this study is 30-45 minutes.

#### **Risks**

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study aside from uneasiness answering personal questions during the interview (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life). There may be unpredictable risks.

#### **Benefits**

There are no benefits to participating in the study aside from educating professionals and future women entering the sport industry, specifically collegiate athletics administration. Benefits to the area of research include expanding current research available and providing future research opportunities. In addition, information may be beneficial to current and future women considering collegiate athletics administration as their career.

## **Confidentiality**

The results of this research will be presented to the thesis committee. The goal is to have the case report published in a sport management peer reviewed scholarly journal. Names of participants in the study will be changed to protect identity and confidentiality. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. At the end of the study, records will be kept up to two years then destroyed.

## **Participation & Withdrawal**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

## **Questions about the Study**

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Carissa Miller  
Hart School

Julie Wallace Carr, Ed.D  
Associate Professor  
The Hart Schools Sport & Recreation

Leadership  
James Madison University  
Mille5ce@dukes.jmu.edu

James Madison University  
Telephone: (540) 830-2020  
wallacje@jmu.edu

## **Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject**

Dr. David Cockley  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
James Madison University  
(540) 568-2834  
[cocklede@jmu.edu](mailto:cocklede@jmu.edu)

## **Giving of Consent**

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I give consent to be (*video/audio*) recorded during my interview. \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

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Name of Participant (Printed)

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Name of Participant (Signed)

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Date

---

Name of Researcher (Signed)

---

Date

### **Sample Consent Guide for Telephone Surveys**

#### **VERBAL CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PARTICIPATION.**

**SUBJECT:** Barriers and Facilitators: Women in Collegiate Athletics

Oral consent serves as an assurance that the required elements of informed consent have been presented orally to the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative.

Verbal consent to participate in this telephone survey has been obtained by the participant's willingness to continue with the telephone survey by providing answers to a series of questions related to what the participant has heard about Barriers and Facilitators: Women in Collegiate Athletics

**\* Phone Script:**

My name is Carissa Miller and I am a graduate student at James Madison University conducting a study on the barriers and facilitators of women in collegiate athletics administration. The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers inhibiting and facilitators shaping career progression of women in intercollegiate athletics administration.

Given your position in collegiate athletics administration, I would like to invite you to participate in my study. I am requesting one interview of approximately 30-45 minutes and a copy of your most recent resume or a list of positions held, duration of each, and location. The interviews will take place in July and August. Do you have any questions? Do you understand what is being requested of you as a participant in this study?

I attest that the aforementioned written consent has been orally presented to the human subject and the human subject provided me with an oral assurance of their willingness to participate in the research.

---

Surveyor's Name (Printed)

---

Surveyor



## **APPENDIX F**

### **Data Collection**

Data is collected through multiple sources in this study. One source of data is going to be a semi-structured interview. The researcher will conduct the interview with each participant at their place of work or by videoconference, if neither is an option the researcher will interview by telephone.

Preliminary Information for the Interviewer (Hancock, 2012)

Discussing informed consent document with participant

Explain confidentiality of interview responses to participant.

Inform the participant that other individuals (thesis committee names) will have access to the data collected during this study.

Thank participant at the beginning and end of the interview.

1. What initially attracted you to a career in collegiate athletics?  
What were your expectations and how did they change when you began to progress your career in athletics? Why? What prompted the change/s?
2. When you began your career in collegiate athletics what were some of your career goals? How have these changed with your career progression? Why?
3. Did you have a particular person influence your career decisions and progression?  
What influence did this person have?  
What role have they played in your career?
4. If you had not pursued collegiate athletics as a career, where would you be? Why?
5. When experiencing difficult situations at work, what coping strategies have you used to handle the situations?  
How have your strategies changed with your career progression? Why?

### **Career Experiences**

6. Tell me about one or two of the greatest facilitators to your career and how you feel they have shaped your development and growth.  
What has made these experiences positive? Why?
7. Describe one or two of the barriers you have experienced during your career and how have they inhibited your progression.
8. Tell me about what you identify as barriers women face in general when pursuing a career in collegiate athletics?
9. Describe your level of satisfaction with your career and progression this far?  
What situations have impacted your satisfaction? How?

**Wrap Up**

10. If you could have changed your career progression in any way, what would it be? Why? How has this impacted your career today?
11. Where do you see your career in 5-10 years from now?
12. What advice would you share to younger women seeking to advance in collegiate athletic administration?

**Participant Demographics**

Demographic information is for record-keeping purposes only and will not be used to identify responses. Demographic responses will be presented in aggregate form.

Demographics recorded will include age, sex, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Thank participant for time and participation in the research study.

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