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United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Human Resources Division

B-248451

May 21, 1993



149240

The Honorable Cardiss Collins  
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Consumer Protection, and  
Competitiveness  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
House of Representatives

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

This responds to your March 1993 letter asking us to respond to concerns raised by a constituent on our report Intercollegiate Athletics: Compensation Varies for Selected Personnel in Athletic Departments (GAO/HRD-92-121, Aug. 19, 1992). Specifically, the constituent believes that our use of the title "head of women's athletic programs" was misleading, and that we did not consider the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) requirement that each of its member schools designate a "senior women's administrator." Also, the constituent believes that the findings of a 13 year longitudinal study--"Women in Intercollegiate Sport"--conducted by R. Vivian Acosta and Linda Jean Carpenter would serve as a more accurate reflection of the current status of women in intercollegiate athletics.

Our report, for the most part, provided compensation and profile information for five positions commonly found at the NCAA's division I schools,<sup>1</sup> including the position that we defined as the head of women's programs. Some information we reported was obtained and attributed to the NCAA, but most we developed through a questionnaire mailed to all 298 division I schools. One of the positions for which we wanted information was for the person most responsible for heading women's sports at each school.

<sup>1</sup>Typically, NCAA member schools with the largest number of athletic programs and facilities belong to division I, smaller schools are in divisions II or III.

GAO/HRD-93-24R, Athletic Department Profiles

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USE OF THE TITLE "HEAD OF  
WOMEN'S ATHLETIC PROGRAMS"

In designing our questionnaire, we were very much aware of the NCAA requirement that a senior women administrator be designated at member schools. In discussions with NCAA officials, and in pretesting our instrument, we were cautioned that some schools' senior women's administrator may not be the person actually in charge of women's athletics. Therefore, we identified the term "head of women's athletic programs" to represent the responsible person.

To help respondents provide the appropriate data in our instrument, we defined--and disclosed in the questionnaire--the head of women's athletic programs as ". . . the person responsible for overseeing women's athletics at your school, not necessarily the person designated as the senior women's administrator." This was done in an attempt to minimize or prevent respondents to our questionnaire from referring to the designated NCAA senior women's administrator when identifying the head of women's programs.

As stated in our report, we did not verify or validate the information in the schools' responses, although we did obtain comments on a draft of our report from the NCAA. We pretested our questionnaire at several schools before mailing it to all division I schools. But these pretests did not identify problems with our use of the term.

COMPARISON OF OUR RESULTS WITH  
A 13-YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY

We do not disagree that the longitudinal study is a more accurate reflection of women's role in intercollegiate athletics. It appears to be a more in depth and extensive study and covers a much longer period of time. Our work was more limited and was designed to serve a different purpose.

The information contained in our report was what 259 of the 298 division I schools reported to us for academic year 1990-91, rather than the 13-year period covered in the other study. The material you provided on the longitudinal study covered not only a much longer period of time, but included all NCAA member schools.

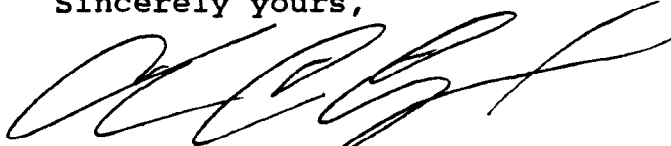
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Our questionnaire solicited information on five specific positions rather than all athletic department positions. It was not designed to include all sports that schools may offer. Also, the information we reported was generally consistent with similar statistics that the NCAA developed for division I schools. Division I schools, however, generally have larger athletic programs than division II and III schools, and this may explain why some of our results may be different than those contained in the longitudinal study.

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We hope this provides an additional perspective to our report. Copies of this letter will be provided to other parties upon request. If you have any further questions, please contact me at (202) 512-7014.

Sincerely yours,



Clarence C. Crawford  
Associate Director, Education and  
Employment Issues

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