



# PROGRESS AND PROMISE:

Title IX at 40 Conference

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# INTRODUCTION

*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (U.S. Department of Justice, 20 U.S.C. §1681).*

Forty years ago, the work of Oregon representative Edith Green, educator Bernice Sandler, Hawaii representative Patsy Mink and Indiana senator Birch Bayh came to fruition when Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The legislation, which reflected the dramatic emergence of women’s rights and feminism as key items on the national political agenda, ostensibly ensured that all students, from kindergarten through postgraduate school, should receive equal educational opportunities regardless of their sex.

While it was primarily intended to foster gender equity and “level the playing field in education, perhaps the most profound, yet unanticipated, legal impacts of Title IX unfolded within sport (Ware, 2011). Sports in the United States prior to the passage of Title IX were mainly directed at and played by boys and men. Men’s passion for and dominance in athletics were commonly thought to reflect and justify other forms

of gender inequality in the workplace, government, family, religion and medicine. Prevailing cultural assumptions included a belief that boys were “innately” physical and interested in sport, and girls were not emotionally or physiologically equipped for the competition and aggressive play that sport required. The primary reason for girls’ low sport participation rates included a lack of opportunity provided for girls by schools and communities. Title IX helped to change the gender status quo—both in sport and in education more broadly.

When Title IX was passed, access was provided for girls and women to male-dominated sport contexts. The number of girls in high school athletics grew from fewer than 300,000 athletic participation opportunities before Title IX to more than 3.2 million by 2012 (National Federation of State High School Associations, 2012). Women’s participation in college athletics increased from 30,000 for female athletes before Title IX to more than 190,000 in 2011-2012 (NCAA, 2012). Despite progress, however, today the scales of opportunity in interscholastic and collegiate sports still tip unfairly toward a male advantage, and Title IX remains a legislative beacon and, sometimes, a legal bludgeon (Sabo & Veliz, 2012; Cheslock, 2010).

Title IX represents a legal, social, educational, economic and public health issue that crosses many social and disciplinary boundaries. The social changes that accompanied Title IX transformed many cultural beliefs about gender, women's roles, and notions about femininity and masculinity. Women's growing involvement with sport also paralleled their increased educational attainment, economic productivity and leadership in multiple sectors such as religion, academia, law, journalism, nonprofits and the military (The Whitehouse Project Report: Benchmarking Women's Leadership, 2010). In short, sport and education were not singular or isolated institutional forces that fostered greater achievement among girls and women. The growth of opportunity and success in one institutional theater spilled into others. The data in a recent study of pre- and post-Title IX female cohorts indicated state-level increases in female sports participation generated a one percentage point jump in state-level female college attendance and a one to two percentage point rise in women's participation in traditionally male-dominated jobs and high-skill jobs (Stevenson, 2010).

Women's achievements in education and sport also spurred exciting research and policy development. Title IX not only changed the ways women thought about themselves, but also changed the way that men thought about women. Similarly, Title IX inspired knowledge production in academia,

commercial research, law, journalism, literary circles and nonprofit organizations. Whether in the form of books, essays, op-eds, courtroom depositions, published research reports, conference papers, lectures, meta-analyses or congressional testimony, facts and analyses increasingly displaced myths and stereotypes, and shifted dominant ideologies about gender and sport. Research and advocacy around women's athletics and physical activity migrated from physical education and sociology during the 1980s to include other disciplines. One area of inquiry that helped draw attention to inequality and change ideology about females and sport is media studies.

Some media scholars studied the growing cultural visibility and celebration of women athletes, while others documented the sexualization and trivialization of women in television and advertising. Historians unearthed women's forgotten achievements in sports and physical culture. Social scientists traced how economic disparities meshed with gender, race and ethnicity in ways that influenced who wanted to play and who got to play. Other scholars revealed how girls of color have not reaped similar sport participation benefits and opportunities as their white peers (Sabo and Ward, 2006). A widening array of biomedical researchers during the 1990s focused on links between athletic training, strength and conditioning regimens, cardiovascular endurance, and neurophysiological processes. Orthopedists

and athletic trainers tracked the incidence of ACL injuries and evaluated the effectiveness of prevention programs. Today public health advocates, legal scholars and policymakers are using evidence-based research to assess how involvement in physical activity can reduce risk for obesity among variant populations of girls and women.

Title IX emerged from social and cultural shifts in the American gender order. Its legal ripples created controversy and pushback from many men who sat atop sport infrastructures from Little Leagues to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). It has provided women and

advocates of female sport participation with a legal tool to advance opportunity for girls and women in education and sport. Over time, many parents, educators, administrators and government leaders fell in step with its vision and ethic of fair play. Today, thanks to a growing body of research, the advocates for reform in sport and education increasingly base their claims and visions on evidence rather than myth or ideology. And it is out of these historical changes, knowledge production and celebration of its inception that the 2012 Title IX at 40: Progress and Promise—Equity for All conference was born.

# THE TITLE IX AT 40 CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE SHARP CENTER FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

SHARP, the Sport, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center for Women and Girls, was established in 2010 as a strategic partnership between the Women's Sports Foundation and University of Michigan. SHARP's mission is to lead research that enhances the scope, experience and sustainability of participation in sport, play and movement for women and girls. Leveraging the research leadership of the University of Michigan with the policy and programming expertise of the Women's Sports Foundation, findings from SHARP research better inform public engagement, advocacy and implementation to enable more women and girls to be active, healthy and successful.

Inspired by the upcoming 40th anniversary of Title IX in June 2012, the SHARP Center for Women and Girls competed for and was awarded a grant by The Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies to host a conference on Title IX. Entitled Title IX at 40: Progress and Promise—Equity for All, the meeting was held May 9-11, 2012. A primary objective was to highlight the research that

has contributed to the understanding of Title IX's impact and potential as well as the challenges that remain. It was also designed to explore the types of future policies needed to achieve Title IX's objectives. Additionally, the conference also sought to bring national attention to the changes that have occurred since Title IX's passage. Title IX at 40 became a call to action, offering a platform for academics to discuss the next steps in research to advance this important legislation to reach its full potential.

The Title IX at 40 conference brought together a diverse array of more than 200 athletes, coaches, administrators, educators, students, researchers, legal authorities, equity advocates and policymakers who shared an interest in issues pertaining to girls and women in sport. The exchange and interaction between individuals from different backgrounds and disciplines provided opportunities to critically evaluate the current state of sport and physical activity for women and girls, and to once again strengthen calls for equity and diversity. The conference also furthered

the SHARP Center's efforts to establish interdisciplinary research partnerships on the U-M campus and across the country.

National experts presented their key research findings under four central themes:

1. Physical Health and Fitness for Women and Girls
2. Education and Employment for Women and Girls
3. The Impacts of Title IX on American Culture: Psychological, Social and Economic Influences
4. Title IX and the Experiences of Boys and Men in Sport

Discussion at each session established new understandings about the impacts, effects and trends linked to Title IX and culminated in a call for future priority research that will help this legislation become fully implemented (A list of speakers and their affiliations can be found at the end of this paper in Appendix A). Below, we present an overview of the key ideas, statements and summaries of findings presented at the conference (each section's themes are attributed to the appropriate speaker). Following the discussion of the conference themes and key takeaways are areas of future research discussed at the Title IX at 40 Conference and compiled by the SHARP Center. There is great opportunity for researchers to link Title IX with many of these future research directions.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH AND FITNESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

*“Anything that increases your education and your career will have a positive effect on your long-term health.” — Jacquelynne Eccles*

Research on the physical health and fitness of women and girls has flourished since the passage of Title IX (Bernice Sandler). Title IX facilitated girls’ entry into physical activity and sport at younger ages, something that can have life-long benefits that appear to protect health by reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, breast cancer and osteoporosis among women. Robert Kaestner reported findings from a national cohort study—Kaestner documented the public health impacts of Title IX regarding obesity levels and improved health outcomes. He reported that women who grew up before Title IX likely found it more difficult to become physically active later in life. In contrast, Title IX generations were physically active at younger ages, which induced protracted health effects throughout later life. The effects of Title IX were stronger among higher-income women than lower-income women. His overall conclusions suggested that Title IX may benefit public health by decreasing obesity

levels, among other health benefits accrued from physical activity.

While Title IX created the largest expansion of school-based physical activities to date, most of the focus has been on the collegiate level. Hence, many policymakers and researchers have underestimated what has happened or what needs to happen at the K-12 level. A key call to action at the conference was for more attention on K-12 and school-based programs that promote physical activity because it is optimal to get girls in the habit of being active and eating well at a young age (Jacque Eccles, Robert Kaestner, Caroline Richardson & Nicole Zarrett). The panelists agree that school-based programming is (and should be) a primary tool to reverse the rise of obesity among children and adults alike. This is especially challenging now because shrinking school budgets and much tighter competition for resources make this provision of programming harder to ensure.

Speakers also pointed to research that confirmed that summer camps and after-school programs encouraged physical activity for both male and females. Key

gender differences, however, were discussed, such as males being more likely to participate in competitive games while females sought out positive peer interaction. Some after-school data also indicate that boys participate at much higher rates and in various activities whereas girls participate at lower rates and tend to leave after-school programs as they get older. Given the seemingly distinct preferences between girls and boys, it is important to make sure after-school programs are designed to attract and retain girls to get and keep them active. The need to design adequate and attractive after-school programs is especially important for African-American girls, who are at high risk for becoming obese and developing the related health problems (Nicole Zarrett). To showcase positive examples, panelists referred to some programs that use physical activity as a vehicle to promote positive behaviors, such as healthy eating among girls, at regional and state levels (e.g., Best Bones Forever, Body Works).

The health benefits of physical activity were also discussed for adults. Among adults, nearly two-thirds of the population is obese or overweight and are consequently at higher risk than normal-weight individuals for weight-related diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer (Caroline Richardson). Women are more likely to be obese than men. Because obesity is linked to poor health, finding ways to promote a physically active lifestyle to

reduce rates of weight gain is currently a priority in public health research. Dr. Caroline Richardson reviewed research on new approaches to promoting a physically active lifestyle, including automated technology mediated programs that can deliver individually tailored motivational messages and feedback constructed for an individual user. Such programs use low-cost objective physical activity monitors to track physical activity participation and can leverage gender differences in barriers to physical activity and in motivational profiles by delivering different motivational messages or intervention components to women than to men, thus increasing effectiveness for all participants.

Several speakers also addressed the need to understand, prevent and treat sports injuries (James Eckner, Dan Ferris, Scott McLean) in order to provide women and girls with a positive and healthy sport experience. Because so many more girls and women are participating in sports now than 40 years ago, there are many more who are exposed to and experience injuries. Women have a higher risk of concussion per exposure and have worse outcomes following concussions, though men have a higher incidence of concussion overall. The reasons for this are not known, but theories include biomechanical, hormonal, neuroanatomical, bio-psycho-social or cultural factors (James Eckner). Additionally, while boys have a higher prevalence of ACL injuries, girls continue to suffer ACL

injuries at a higher rate than boys. One way to study the prevalence of this type of injury among women is by assessing how an athlete lands from jumping, particularly when fatigued. Some researchers have found that because fatigue affects men and women differently, girls from a young age may need to be taught to land differently (i.e., more consistent hip motions to accommodate relative strength and neuromuscular difference) from boys in order to prevent ACL injuries. It is also important to identify at what age to start prevention training for girls in order to reduce the risk of ACL and related injuries (Scott McLean).

Research on the “female athlete triad” has also expanded in the wake of the passage of Title IX. Nancy Williams provided a detailed overview of the components of the triad—amenorrhea, eating disorders and osteoporosis. Some progress is being made on detecting, diagnosing and treating these disorders. More importantly, researchers are evaluating the effectiveness of treatment interventions that establish healthy eating patterns among female athletes. Researchers also are looking at the relationship between these disorders and the unrealistic images of women put forward in popular culture.

Other speakers reported on research that ties athletic participation to educational outcomes. Athletic participation during adolescence has been linked with college

attendance and graduation (Jacque Eccles). High school athletic involvement is often related to positive health-behavior outcomes, such as decreased rates of illicit drug use and cigarette smoking among females (Kathleen Miller). Participation in interscholastic sports also has been shown to be a preventive factor in reducing risk for teen pregnancy, hence ameliorating a major public health problem in the United States (Kathleen Miller). Adherence to a “jock identity” rather than an “athlete identity,” the former being more common among adolescent males, is related to proneness to health-risk behaviors (Kathleen Miller). In contrast, Jacque Eccles discussed research that showed that boys and girls involved with sports drink more alcohol and get drunk more often than those who do not participate in sports.

### **Key Insights**

1. Title IX has increased girls’ and women’s participation in sports exponentially, which shows that when participation opportunities are available, girls and women participate.
2. Participation in sports is related to immediate and long-term health benefits, particularly when girls get involved with sports and physical activity at younger ages.
3. Combating the rise of obesity includes understanding how to tailor physical activity and motivational techniques

- differently for females and males.
4. While boys have a higher prevalence of suffering ACL injuries, girls are at a higher risk of injuring their ACLs, indicating that girls need to be taught to land differently due to hip posture in order to reduce risk of ACL injuries
  5. Concussion risk and proper diagnosis and treatment are important for both female and male athletes.
  6. There is little awareness of the risks and incidence of concussions among athletes in non-contact sports.
  7. Even with the development of ACL training programs over the last 10 years or so, we still haven't seen fewer injuries.
  8. While some health-risk behaviors, such as drinking, are more prevalent among high school athletes, involvement in sports reduces illicit drug use, teenage pregnancy and smoking cigarettes.
  9. We cannot blame exercise for menstrual cycle disturbances. Exercise may contribute to sustained low energy availability in the presence of inadequate dietary intake. This means female athlete triad is completely preventable.
2. Research on the injury and illness consequences and related potential prevention strategies has lagged behind the explosion in participation.
  3. Before we can create and implement injury prevention programs, more research is needed into the causes of sports-related injuries.
  4. There needs to be more research on sexual abuse of women athletes and bullying (which also could be sexual harassment) of women athletes by male athletes and coaches.
  5. We are under-researched when it comes to minority groups in the female athlete triad and in risky sexual behavior and drug use.
  6. What is the best way to screen women for the female athlete triad? How do we mark or find low energy availability?
  7. More research is needed to understand gender-based differences in concussion incidence, as well as the short- and long-term effects of concussion in both genders.
  8. Research is needed to explore how intersexed athletes fit (or don't fit) into the sex-segregated system of athletic participation.
  9. Very little is known about female athletes with disabilities.

### **Future Research Directions**

1. More research is needed to quantify the immediate and long-term health benefits of participation in sports with a special emphasis on gender, racial and ethnic differences.

# EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

*“Until recently we were able to put a man on the moon, but we were unable to definitively count the number of female and male sports participation opportunities.”*  
— John Cheslock, referring to the conflicting reports from government agencies, the NCAA, etc.

While Title IX has fueled women’s struggles for gender equity in sport, parallel efforts have pushed for more opportunities in education and employment. Compliance with Title IX’s requirement that institutions receiving federal funds must offer equitable athletic opportunities to female and male students, however, remains a goal rather than an achievement.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is meant to give technical assistance to schools, parents and advocacy groups in order to make them aware of their rights and indicate to schools what they need to do to comply with Title IX (Berman, 2012). Currently there are three ways schools can determine if they are in compliance with Title IX: 1) proportionality; 2) a history and continuing practice of program expansion for the underrepresented sex;

and 3) the demonstration that their current athletic offerings accommodate the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. Until April 2010, an institution could prove compliance with Title IX by issuing a survey to students, in which a non-response could be interpreted as a lack of interest in participation. This option was rescinded in 2010 when the OCR and the Department of Education deemed that more had to be done in this area. The OCR received 100 complaints in the 2010-2011 year and initiated 13 compliance reviews at both the secondary and high school levels (Amy Berman). Part three of the compliance guidelines also indicates that when reviewing access to opportunities to participate, it is imperative to see what that access looks like.

The need for continued education about Title IX is pressing. Whether in reference to schools, athletic departments, organizations, coaches or students, there is a need to inform professionals and the wider public about the state of gender equity in athletics and also the still-lagging extent of women’s opportunities within sport-related professions (Vivian Acosta, Arthur Bryant,

Linda Carpenter). For example, 79% of college and university coaches believe that their department is in compliance, while 82% of coaches indicate they do not review the Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (EADA) reports yearly (Ellen Staurowsky). In 2010 the work of Ellen Staurowsky and Erienne Weight created the foundation for an online program being developed by the Women's Sports Foundation and the NCAA on which coaches can check to see if their programs are in compliance, but education remains a critical area of work for the future of Title IX enforcement (Marjorie Snyder).

Several speakers documented women's comparative underrepresentation in the professional sectors that exist within the athletic opportunity infrastructures of elementary, secondary, intercollegiate and professional sports. For example, women are significantly underrepresented as head coaches, assistant coaches, athletic directors, assistant athletic directors, team physicians, athletic trainers and sport public relations positions (Vivian Acosta, Linda Carpenter, Kristen Galles, Karen Morrison, Ellen Staurowsky). It has mainly been males in these professions who have been disproportionately advantaged by the growth of job opportunities and financial compensation produced by the expansion of women's sports. Women of color have been especially underrepresented among the professional ranks within the sport athletic infrastructure (Ketra Armstrong).

Many speakers argued that the substantial increases in girls' and women's participation in sports have disproportionately enhanced men's advancement in coaching and athletic administration. It appears that Title IX has generally failed to substantially alter the male-dominated professional hierarchies in sport and in the sport industry.

The economic impacts of Title IX stretch far beyond sport itself. Athletic participation among adolescents has been associated with a range of educational benefits, including better grades, more hours spent studying, increased graduation rates, increased enrollments in Advanced Placement courses, and decreased suspension and expulsion rates (Don Sabo). In addition, several economists have linked national increases in U.S. female athletic participation since the passage of Title IX to larger enrollments of women in higher education, greater participation in the work force and increased economic productivity (John Cheslock, Betsey Stevenson). These macro-economic trends are particularly relevant as the U.S. economy struggles to climb out of the current recession and to maintain its leadership in the global economy.

Several speakers and panelists discussed additional issues related to Title IX, including sexual harassment, sexual violence, homophobia and bullying. These concerns pose significant challenges to a quality

education and a welcoming environment within sport and education. According to Amy Berman, 62% of female college students have experienced some form of harassment during their college careers, with 83% of girls reporting having been harassed in school. The OCR received 1,120 complaints in 2011, a 34% increase from the previous fiscal year. In response, OCR issued policy guidance regarding harassment, sexual violence and bullying. One letter issued regarding bullying and harassment covered LGBT harassment (Amy Berman). Civil rights laws at the federal level cover race, national origin, age, sex and disability—sexual orientation is notably missing from this list. State laws and school policies typically make up for this lack of coverage, but the OCR still needs to remain vigilant, ensuring that the LGBT community is protected.

*“It’s high school where Title IX has had its greatest impact. The money is in college, but the people are in high school.” — Betsey Stevenson*

### **Key Insights**

1. Title IX was an important factor in increasing the number of women in higher education and in the workforce. However, gender equity in most sport sectors—including coaching, athletic administration, athletic training and sports medicine—remains a goal rather than a reality.
2. Compliance with Title IX is still misunderstood by many coaches, administrators and athletes.
3. Title IX has positively impacted women’s economic standing.
4. Women and girls of color are still underrepresented as athletes and in the athletic workforce.
5. Overall greater education and attention to compliance is needed for Title IX’s full impact to be realized.
6. Title IX covers bullying, sexual violence and harassment, including harassment due to sexual orientation that stems from gender stereotypes.
7. Many speakers called upon the OCR to take more proactive steps to monitor, analyze and take action to correct egregious instances of gender inequality in interscholastic and college sports.

### **Future Research Directions**

1. Describe and analyze how the implementation of the “Rooney rule” in the hiring process for coaches could impact gender equity and minority hiring in head coaching and football operation opportunities. (The Rooney Rule requires National Football League teams to interview minority candidates for head coaching and senior football operation jobs.)

2. Measure and track women athletes' academic success in high school and college. Assess the extent that athletic participation is linked to success in education, the work place and civic leadership.
3. Examine the experiences and contributions of female coaches of men's sports. Document the experiences of female coaches.
4. Evaluate the impacts of Title IX education training on the experience of athletes, coaches and administrators.
5. Assess the need for and educational impacts of sexual harassment prevention programs for coaches and athletic administrators.
6. Continue to monitor the extent of women's participation in coaching and athletic administration. Measure and analyze progress toward gender equity.
7. Explore how addressing and overcoming homophobia can improve the hiring and retention of women in coaching and administration as well as how it might improve the overall sports environment.

# THE IMPACTS OF TITLE IX ON AMERICAN CULTURE: PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCES

*“Do we have a culture of understanding about what Title IX is? What it requires?”*  
— Ellen Staurowsky

Before Title IX, sports were largely viewed as a male preserve. The cultural equation between sport and masculinity remains salient, and its trappings form barriers to building respect and compliance around gender equity. Men’s cultural dominance is institutionally congealed within the larger social organization of sport. The lack of female coaches and women in athletic departments needs to be addressed in order to provide more role models for girls and women in sport (Sweet, 2012). Women of color are particularly scarce in administrative leadership and coaching positions (Vivian Acosta, Ketra Armstrong, Linda Carpenter). Economic resources on college campuses often lopsidedly tilt toward funding men’s sports, particularly football. Representations of women athletes in print and electronic media are as scarce compared to portrayals of male athletes (Joanne Gerstner, Nicole LaVoi). Findings from the Tucker Center

for Research on Girls & Women in Sport illustrate that when women athletes are visible in sport media, images often downplay athleticism and instead emphasize a “sex sells” narrative and femininity (Nicole LaVoi).

Female athletic participation has increased since the 1970s, but within sport media, women athletes remain underrepresented. While female athletes comprise more than 40% of athletes at the high school and collegiate levels, they receive 1.62% of sport media coverage on major networks, and content analyses of sports magazine covers also reveal women’s underrepresentation; e.g., 3.6% of ESPN Magazine covers featured women athletes (LaVoi, 2012). Female sports journalists in print and electronic media also are underrepresented in positions of power. Just one out of 10 sports bloggers is a woman, one out of 10 Sport Information Directors is a woman, and 11% of sports broadcasting employees are women (Marie Hardin). Some studies show when women cover sports, the amount and type of stories about women athletes differ

from stories written by male journalists. The more women who write sports stories, the more women are in the stories (Marie Hardin). Compared with male journalists, female reporters also use more athletic words to describe female athletes and to depict Title IX in affirmative terms.

Schools often convey the message that male sports are the central priority, with typical overemphasis on football and basketball. Although Title IX requires that resources be equitably dispersed, data show that financial equity is not the norm. Men's basketball and football accounted for 78% of the total budget for men's sports in 2010 at Division I Football Bowl division (FBS) schools (Christine Grant). Many student-athletes are treated like second- or third-class citizens, with only 22% of budgets spent on men's "minor" sports. Allocation of resources at many NCAA Division I schools with football programs show considerable differences. At these institutions, women's resources are significantly lower than men's, (Christine Grant). At schools without football, women's resources are almost equal with men's. The greatest difference between men's and women's budgets is seen in NCAA Division I schools. The difference decreases in NCAA Division II schools and is least in NCAA Division III, where resources are distributed almost equally (Christine Grant, Judy Sweet).

A great deal of current policy and research interest centers around the need for greater

involvement in sports and physical activity among girls of color (Ketra Armstrong, Neena Chaudhry). Fewer African-American girls, for example, participate in community-based and school sports than Caucasian girls. There is a lack of African-American women in leadership and coaching positions, particularly in the NCAA (Ketra Armstrong). Girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often have little free time for sport, or they lack transportation opportunities or financial resources that make participation possible.

### **Key Insights**

1. There is a critical need to increase participation numbers at both the high school and collegiate levels.
2. There is a critical need to ensure that the allocation of resources is made more equitable at the high school and collegiate levels.
3. There is a need to build a culture of respect and compliance around Title IX, challenging the cultural link between sport and masculinity and how this influences the prospects for gender equality for girls and women in sport.
4. Female athletes should be educated about how to present themselves in the media.
5. Sports journalists need to be trained in gender equity and Title IX.

6. It is necessary to have greater representation of women in coaching and administrative positions and to research how to make this happen.
7. African-American girls participate in sport at the lowest rates, and this contributes to the lack of women of color in leadership and coaching.
8. Schools need to understand that not complying with Title IX will cost them money (through litigation, the need to respond to bad publicity and liability if found to have consciously discriminated) and it is in their best interest to comply.

### **Future Research Directions**

1. How do we measure what you lose if you do not get an opportunity to participate? What are the economic and educational consequences?
2. There is a need for data at the high school level, similar to the data collected in the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act.
3. How can the messaging around Title IX be changed in order to break down myths and misrepresentation of the law?

What is the most effective and efficient way for athletes, coaches, parents and administrators to understand Title IX?

4. To what extent are Americans (e.g., parents, students, educators) aware of Title IX and support gender equity in athletics?
5. To what extent does commercialization of collegiate sport benefit or negatively impact female athletes?
6. What are the forces motivating (or preventing) African-American, Hispanic, Asian and other minority girls from participating in physical activity?
7. At the secondary school level, what athletic participation opportunities and benefits/services are available? In the absence of a federal law, initiatives at the state level can help fill any gap found.
8. How effective is the NCAA curriculum in educating high school and college athletes, administrators and coaches in relation to Title IX?
9. How can we encourage the use of databases for secondary analytic studies focused on gender equity in sports?

# TITLE IX AND THE EXPERIENCES OF BOYS AND MEN IN SPORT

*“We need to make women and men discontented with the situation as it is—educate and build awareness.”*

— Bernice Sandler

The claim that Title IX has negatively impacted boys’ and men’s sports by increasing the opportunities for girls and women in athletics is not supported by the evidence. Title IX requires that schools consider male and female students equally based on a proportionate allocation of participation opportunities, athletic scholarships and treatment of men’s and women’s teams. One common claim, for example, is that women’s gains in sports opportunities result in lost opportunities for men. In fact, in 2011 more women’s college athletic teams were dropped than men’s teams, and since Title IX passed, men’s participation continued to grow and exceed women’s at both the high school and collegiate level, even though there are more women attending college. The “women’s gains = men’s losses” claim is not supported by the evidence (Deborah Brake, Arthur Bryant, Neena Chaudhry, John Cheslock, Judy Sweet). Additionally, 57% of high schools that reported having an

athletic program had more boys’ teams than girls’ teams. When cutting teams becomes necessary, it is more often the level of funding versus the distribution of resources that shapes decisions (Robert Kaestner).

Controversy and issues of fairness around Title IX most often pertain to the distribution of resources, not the level of funding. It is often a misdirection to say it is “Title IX’s fault” that men’s or women’s sports are dropped (Judy Sweet). Amy Berman cited a Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report that showed that, of the 948 colleges that added women’s teams, 72% of them did so without cutting other men’s or women’s teams. It is a misconception, therefore, that the increase in girls’ participation due to Title IX decreased men’s participation opportunities. Indeed, according to NCAA data, even in the wake of Title IX, girls continue to have 1.3 million fewer opportunities to participate in high school sports than boys (Marjorie Snyder). It should be noted that girls’ participation in sports in 2011 had not yet reached the number of participation slots for boys that existed in 1972 (3,176,000 vs. 3,667,000). At the intercollegiate level, women have 62,000

fewer opportunities than men (42% of the opportunities) (Marjorie Snyder), despite being a majority (57%) of students, which makes the gap even wider.

Undeniably, myths surrounding Title IX remain. These erroneous ideas primarily stem from a lack of knowledge about how this law works. For instance, there is no evidence that increased (sport) opportunities for girls have come at the expense of boys and yet, the belief that boys are disadvantaged by Title IX prevails—despite evidence to the contrary. Title IX is about social values, institutional priorities and the equitable distribution of available resources, and more value must be placed on broadening the range of sport opportunities for boys and girls. There is a need to challenge the gender ideology that channels boys and girls into a limited range of sports based on their sex. Basic fairness would dictate that girls and boys should be able to participate in any sport.

### **Key Insights**

1. Title IX is about the distribution of available resources. How these resources are distributed is based on institutional priorities.
2. More value must be placed on broadening the range of sport opportunities for boys, especially in non-traditional male sports.

3. Funding for sports programs is not a “zero-sum game” of women win, men lose.
4. Women’s sports advocates should mount public relations campaigns or explore other awareness-building efforts to counter the negative stereotypes and misinformation floating around about Title IX.

### **Future Research Directions**

1. Cost-benefit analyses should be done in order to measure the extent that greater inclusion of female athletes within a college or university influences overall recruitment, enrollment and retention levels.
2. More descriptive data and concomitant analyses are needed to examine how investments in highly capitalized men’s sports (i.e., football and basketball) influence funding of women’s sports and lesser-status men’s sports (e.g., wrestling, cross country, swimming and diving).
3. More research is needed on the manner in which co-ed sports empower (or disempower) female participants. Such research should also investigate the impact of co-ed sports on male participants.

# CONCLUSION AND A CALL TO ACTION

Gender equity in sport remains a goal rather than a reality. Girls and women are still not provided comparable athletic participation opportunities, resources and recognition as boys and men. Nonetheless Title IX has been a catalyst for much more than increased participation of girls and women in sport. The law has facilitated an ongoing transformation of sport across four decades. Women and their male allies have become the principle investigators, chief architects and leading voices of a new paradigm in sport that promises to democratize participation, tap the educational potential of sport and promote public health as major policy goals.

Before Title IX, just 40 years ago, it would have been hard to imagine the explosion of girls' and women's involvement with sports and physical activity in so many institutional contexts. Women had just begun to take on leadership in the fitness revolution. Think of the flood gates that one woman, Katherine Switzer opened when she snuck into the Boston Marathon in 1967 and broke the patriarchal taboo that barred strong and able women runners! Today the legal battles for equity in sports participation, leadership and market share are being waged daily across the United States and around the world. And

it is women who have become the most active change agents in sport.

While women in sport still face monumental challenges in their quest for recognition, equity and leadership opportunities, they have made great strides toward transforming the meaning and practice of sport. Title IX may someday prove to have been a tipping point in the world of sport—a seismic shift from a cultural definition of sport as simply winning games or garnering headlines and market share to a model of athletic practice that primarily intends to nurture youth development, educational achievement, inclusion, and health and wellness. Title IX and women's leadership in sport might offer a different kind of “winning vision” that forges a future for sport that is fundamentally different from the traditional model. And central to the Title IX at 40: Progress and Promise—Equity for All national conference, the emerging navigational chart for sport reform is increasingly based on evidence-based, interdisciplinary research rather than presumption and privilege.

When Barbara Boxer was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1982, she found that women were barred from

the House gym. She wrote and sang a parody of the old standard “Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue” that included, “Equal rights, we’ll wear tights, let’s avoid those macho fights,” which persuaded her colleagues to repeal the ban. Women had endured another indignity, enacted another strategy and achieved another victory. And the ongoing struggle to make Title IX a reality in the realm of sport and physical activity inched forward.

Consistent with this spirit of reform, the May 9-11, 2012 Title IX at 40 conference convened and celebrated a national community of academic researchers, nonprofit leaders, athletes and coaches,

community organizers, legal scholars—each dedicated to both the legacy and further implementation of Title IX. This white paper chronicles the highlights of the conference, but it also is intended as a conduit for networking, collaboration and further advocacy. Toward this latter goal, the SHARP leadership announced that a request for proposals will be issued nationally during 2013 in order to foster research on Title IX. We also have attached a list of the names and affiliations of the conference speakers and participants as a touchstone for future communication and collaboration.

For more information, please visit [SHARPCenter.org](http://SHARPCenter.org)

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<http://www.acostacarpenter.org>

Office for Civil Rights: 2009-2010 data; surveys of more than 72,000 schools across the U.S.  
<http://ocrdata.ed.gov>

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<http://irwg.research.umich.edu/pdf/OCR.pdf>

The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE)  
<http://www.ncwge.org/>

U.S. Department of Education: The Equity in Athletics Data Analysis Cutting Tool  
<http://ope.ed.gov/athletics/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Targets girls 10-16 to provide information on healthy diets and physical activity.  
<http://Girlshealth.gov>

Women's Sports Foundation  
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# TITLE IX CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

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Jo-Ann Barnas, Detroit Free Press sportswriter

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### **About The SHARP Center for Women and Girls**

SHARP, the Sport, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center for Women and Girls, was established in 2010 as a new partnership between the Women's Sports Foundation and University of Michigan's School of Kinesiology and Institute for Research on Women & Gender. SHARP's mission is to lead research that enhances the scope, experience and sustainability of participation in sport, play, and movement for women and girls. Leveraging the research leadership of the University of Michigan with the policy and programming expertise of the Women's Sports Foundation, findings from SHARP research will better inform public engagement, advocacy and implementation to enable more women and girls to be active, healthy and successful.

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