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**PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS CONCERNING THE DECLINE OF  
DIVISION I WRESTLING PROGRAMS IN THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

**Applied Dissertation Project submitted to the faculty of the United States Sports  
Academy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Sport Management**

**By:**

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**June, 2002**

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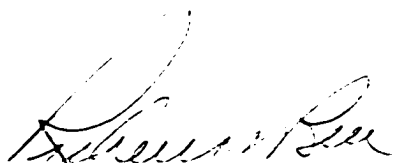
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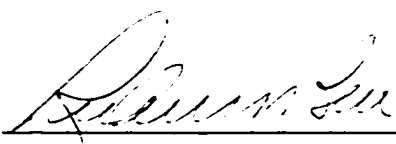
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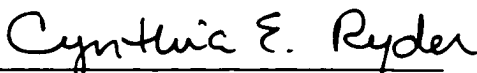
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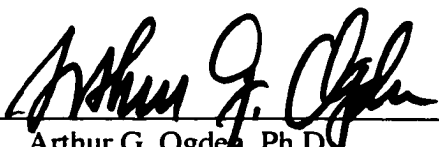
  
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## **DEDICATION**

**I would like to dedicate this to my parents and family. My dad, Mr. Robert J. Howard Sr., and mom Mrs. Margaret C. Howard, thank you for all that you have done. Special dedication goes to my wife and children: Andrea, Sydney, Kennedy, and soon to be Mary-Clay, if it was not for your existence in my life and your continued support and sacrifice, this would not have been possible. I love you more.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of athletic directors concerning the decline of wrestling programs at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level. This study surveyed all athletic directors from NCAA Division I institutions as well as all those NCAA Division II athletic directors belonging to institutions that compete in the NCAA Division I wrestling championships.**

**The survey instrumentation was developed by the researcher and utilized to have the subjects rank order the top 5 most believed perceptions concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level. The survey instrument contained 11 perceptions gathered from the review of literature, a panel of experts, and a pilot study that validated and tested for the reliability of the survey instrumentation.**

**The survey was administered through email to all possible athletic directors. For athletic directors non-accessible through email the United States Postal Service was used. A post card was sent to those athletic directors failing to return the survey instrument followed by a telephone call placed by the researcher asking about the status of the survey response.**

**There were 50 surveys returned from the original 326 for a return rate of 15.3 percent. The over all results addressing the perceptions of athletic directors concerning the decline of wrestling programs at the NCAA Division I level were: (1) Gender Equity; (2) Financial Burden; (3) Financial Equity; (4) Student Interest – Participation; and (5) Lack of Quality High School Programs. The perceptions of athletic directors from institutions that do not sponsor wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling programs at the NCAA Division I level were: (1) Gender Equity; (2) Financial Burden; (3) Financial**

**Equity; (4) Poor Team Performance; and (5) Student Interest – Participation. The perceptions of athletic directors from institutions sponsoring wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling programs at the NCAA Division I level were: (1) Gender Equity; (2) Financial Burden; (3) Financial Equity; (4) Conference Competition/Championships; and (5) Other perceptions not listed.**

**The over all perceptions of athletic directors concerning their institutional methods of compliance to Title IX were: (1) Proportionality; (2) Interest and Abilities of Students; and (3) History of Expansion. The perceptions of athletic directors from institutions that do not sponsor wrestling concerning their institutional methods of compliance to Title IX were: (1) Proportionality; (2) History of Expansion; and (3) Interest and Abilities of Students. The perceptions of athletic directors from institutions that sponsor wrestling concerning their institutional methods of compliance to Title IX were: (1) Interest and Abilities of Students; (2) History of Expansion; and (3) Proportionality.**

**The results of this survey could possibly be used to establish policy for athletic departments in the creation of new wrestling programs as well as the development of policy in order to protect the existing wrestling programs.**

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

**According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), "intercollegiate athletics is an integral part of the educational program" (Aronson, 2001). Since its establishment the NCAA has provided men and women opportunities to enhance their collegiate educational experience by participating in athletics. Throughout the years of the NCAA's existence, American society has undergone various movements and historic events. These issues have ranged from civil rights and desegregation of schools to equal opportunity for all races and genders. One of the current issues concerning American society today is the emphasis on and the enforcement of gender equity in athletics.**

**The same law that has created opportunities for thousands of women to participate in collegiate athletics has taken away opportunities from men (Alden, 2000). A historic and classic sport is under attack in the NCAA. Wrestling has survived for over 5,000 years and establishing itself as one of the oldest, if not the oldest, sport. Wrestling at the collegiate level has now encountered an admiral foe. Even though the number of participants in youth and scholastic wrestling has been increasing the past couple of decades, the number of collegiate wrestling programs have been on the decline.**

**In the 1999-2000 National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) participation survey, wrestling ranked ninth in total number of high schools offering the sport and sixth in total number of individual participants throughout the United States.**

**All fifty states reported boy's participation in wrestling with twenty eight states reporting girl's participation in wrestling. All together, 9,046 schools reported with 239,105 boys participating and 734 schools reported 2,474 girls participation (Participation survey NFHS, 1999-2000).**

**At the conclusion of the 2001 NCAA National Wrestling Championships, eighty-eight Division I wrestling programs existed. Syracuse University and Seton Hall University have been the most recent collegiate programs to succumb to the national trend of eliminating collegiate wrestling. The number of collegiate wrestlers has dropped from 9,214 in 1981 to 6,566 in 1999 (Larimer, 2001).**

**"A lack of financing cannot be a reason for discrimination, under Title IX law additional financial resources must be directed to women and/or a redistribution of financial resources must be made on each campus" (Fulks, 1994). Today's collegiate athletic directors are facing challenging decisions concerning the future of the traditionally defined non-revenue sports. Over the past twenty-five years, wrestling along with men's swimming, diving, gymnastics, track and field, and golf have been struggling to survive in the collegiate ranks.**

**Modern wrestling, through its rules and organization, provides for the development of many positive qualities within its competitors. The qualities provided by the sport of wrestling can be applied to both the participant and the administration. Wrestling provides athletes of all shapes and sizes with an opportunity to participate. Wrestling gives the small or short individual athlete an opportunity to compete in a full contact sport without placing that individual at a size disadvantage as in football or basketball. The wrestler must compete within a specified weight classification. There**

are 14 high school weight classifications ranging from 103 pounds to 275 pounds and 10 NCAA weight classifications ranging from 125 pounds to 285 pounds. Wrestling could be arguably the fairest sport, referring to size and weight, in the world. Each wrestler must weigh in at his/her specified weight one hour before each competition.

Wrestling demands the development of dedication and commitment from its participants. Due to the strict weight requirements, wrestlers are forced to maintain a specific diet. As a result of the individual aspects of the sport, a wrestler's success depends on the level of developed technique, strength, endurance, diet, and commitment that is not required in all sports.

The implementation cost of a wrestling program is relatively inexpensive. Given the fact that most institutions have a gym or arena, the only equipment necessary to begin a wrestling program are the mats and uniforms. A new wrestling mat can be purchased for \$7,000-\$8,000 (Sam Morvos, Resilite Mat Co., personal communication, March, 1999). An entire wrestling team can be outfitted for less than \$2,000 (James Sparks, First Team Sports, personal communication, March, 1999). The initial cost for starting a wrestling program is around \$10,000 and maintaining the program is a fraction of the original cost.

Dating as far back as the first Olympiad, wrestling has been a part of man's athletic history. From the first struggle with rivalry bands of nomads in hand-to-hand combat to the eighteenth Olympiad to the 2000 Summer Olympics, wrestling has survived the test of time. However, for the past twenty-eight years in the United States, more and more NCAA wrestling programs have been discontinued. Over the past ten years, it has been the researcher's privilege, as a high school wrestling coach, to watch

the continued development of high school, middle school, and youth wrestling programs throughout the southeast. Simultaneously, over the course of the previous twenty-eight years, some 800 NCAA institutions have disbanded their wrestling programs (Lowe, 1999). Currently, the number of high school and youth wrestling programs is growing while the number of collegiate programs is becoming increasingly smaller.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors concerning the decline of wrestling programs at the NCAA Division I level. The identification of the factors contributing to the decline of wrestling will benefit current programs, assist in the continued survival of existing programs, and aid in the implementation of future programs.

### **Sub-problem**

By surveying the perceptions of athletic directors as to the decline of wrestling programs in NCAA Division I:

1. Some of the perceptions as to the decline of wrestling may be perceptions from the decline of other sports.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there a trend to cut collegiate wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?
2. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors as to the causes of the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?



3. **What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that sponsor wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**
4. **What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that do not sponsor wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**
5. **What is the perception of NCAA Division I athletic directors as to their institutions approach to Title IX compliance?**
6. **What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that sponsor wrestling regarding their institutions methods of compliance to Title IX?**
7. **What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that do not sponsor wrestling regarding their institutions methods of compliance to Title IX?**

### **Definitions**

**Amatuer Athletic Union (AAU)**- one of the largest, non-profit, volunteer, sports organizations in the United States. A multisport organization, the AAU is dedicated exclusively to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs.

**Athletic Department**- the offices of an institution responsible for the organization and running of the institution's sport teams.

**Athletic Director**- the single individual in charge of and who directs the athletic department.

**Coaches- head or assistant coaches that are full-time.**

**Division I- NCAA institutions that are required to sponsor at least seven sports for men and at least seven sports for women with two team sports for each gender. Each playing season (Fall, Winter, Spring) has to be represented by each gender. There are contest and participation minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria.**

**Division I schools must meet minimum financial aid awards for their athletics program, and there are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division I school cannot exceed.**

**Division II- NCAA institutions that are required to sponsor at least four sports for men and at least four sports for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season (Fall, Winter, Spring) represented by each gender. There are contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. There are maximum financial aid awards for each sport that a Division II school must not exceed.**

**Division III- NCAA institutions that are required to sponsor at least four sports for men and four for women, with two team sports for each gender, and each playing season (Fall, Winter, Spring) represented by each gender. There are minimum contest and participant minimums for each sport, as well as scheduling criteria. Division III does not award financial aid on the basis of athletic ability – only on the basis of need.**

**Division I Wrestling Programs- any NCAA member institution whose competitors participate in the NCAA Division I championships.**

**Facilities- are the training areas and equipment, athletic arenas, dressing areas, office space for training and competition in intercollegiate athletics used by the institution.**

**Gender Equity- the equal treatment of male and female athletes.**

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**- the organization through which the nation's colleges and universities speak and act on athletic matters at the national level.

**National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)**- coordinates the efforts of its member state associations toward the ultimate objectives of interscholastic activities.

**Proportionality**- part of the three-prong test in Title IX stating that participation opportunities for male and female athletes should be in proportion to their respective enrollments.

**Recruiting expenses**- the total institutional expenditures associated with bringing athletes to the institution for their intercollegiate athletic teams.

**Revenue Sports**- those collegiate sports that usually produce more revenue than the amount of their operating expenses.

**Title IX**- part of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in any organization receiving federal funds.

**USA Wrestling**- the national governing body for the sport of wrestling in the United States and, as such, is its representative to the United States Olympic Committee.

### Scope of the Study

This study was composed of all NCAA Division I athletic directors. The researcher surveyed each NCAA Division I athletic director as to their perceptions concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level. The questionnaire asked each athletic director to rank the factors most important in the cancellation of Division I wrestling programs. Each athletic director was asked to rank the top five most applicable reasons for ending wrestling with one being the main reason and five being

the least influential reason according to their own perceptions. Each athletic director was assured anonymity and the survey results remain confidential for each institution. For each questionnaire not returned, a second survey was sent two weeks later, followed by a phone call, and if needed, a third questionnaire was sent.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations of this research consisted of:

1. Only the athletic directors of institutions at the NCAA Division I level, as well as athletic directors that compete at the NCAA Division I level in wrestling were surveyed.
2. Athletic directors at institutions that do not sponsor wrestling were included.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this research consisted of:

1. Receiving data only from those NCAA athletic directors that returned questionnaires.
2. Receiving data from athletic directors that have not developed perceptions concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level.
3. Refusal of athletic directors to participate in the survey due to institutional policies that prevent involvement in surveys that do not originate with the NCAA or Conference organizations.

### **Assumptions**

**It is the assumption of the researcher that each athletic director will:**

- 1. Answer the questions honestly and objectively.**
- 2. The questionnaire will contain adequate and sufficient reasons for cancellation.**
- 3. Each participant has developed a perception to the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I.**

### **Significance of the Study**

**NCAA Division I wrestling programs are declining. The literature review suggests reasons attributing to the decline of collegiate wrestling. The need for colleges and universities to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 tops the list. Budget restraint, decline in interest, lack of quality competition, lack of quality high school programs, facility expenses, inability to remain competitive, lack of conference schedule, and national trends are other contributing factors. The significance of this research is to provide the identification of the perceptions of athletic directors as to the cancellation of wrestling programs at NCAA Division I institutions. The results of this research may be used to develop a guideline for the implementation of new programs and to serve as a warning for existing programs in order to ensure their survival. By identifying the contributing factors causing the cancellation of collegiate wrestling, coaches and administrators will be able to prepare solutions that will assist in protecting wrestling programs from the identified threats or perhaps factors.**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The sport of wrestling has maintained its strength in high school and youth leagues throughout the United States, even though the college and university ranks have been weakened by the elimination of programs. The power of wrestling has been within its history, participation and ability to expand during a turbulent time. Wrestling faces challenges from multiple fronts and various directions. The literature suggests that Title IX poses the greatest threat causing the cancellation of programs. The reasons for cancellation continue to build. The courts continue to uphold the original interpretation of Title IX and the compliance regulations established by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate the perceptions of Division I athletic directors concerning the reasons for the decline of wrestling at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level. The review of literature will explore the history, effects of Title IX, cancellation, growth, reasons for cancellation, participation, and law cases related to wrestling in the United States and at the NCAA Division I wrestling level.

#### **History**

The purpose of the first Olympiad in 776 B.C. was to commemorate Zeus' victory over Kronos. The two Greek Gods wrestled on the mountains above Olympia for possession of the earth (Keen, Speidel, & Swartz, 1961). The actual date of the origin of wrestling is unknown. However, archeologists have found evidence of wrestling

dating back as far as 3000 B.C. Evidence has been unearthed from the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Sumeria, Assyria, China, Japan, and Babylonia. Evidence has also been found in the form of drawings on cave walls in France (Keen et al, 1961 and Ledebor, 1998). The earliest form of wrestling was a development from the actual skills necessary for survival. The earliest civilizations used wrestling as a form of combat, and as a matter of necessity, wrestling turned into a survival skill (Keen et al., 1961). The earliest armies used wrestling as part of their military training (Morgan, 2000). From there, wrestling developed into a sport with defined objectives and strict rules. For a competitor to be successful, a certain technical skill level needed to be obtained (Umbach & Jordan, 1966).

Competitors must master various techniques or holds used for scoring and pinning opponents to be successful in wrestling. Competitors must be in top physical condition to meet the demands of continuous movement during a wrestling match. Strength conditioning, muscle endurance and cardiovascular training also play major roles in the components to successful wrestling.

Wrestling was introduced into the Olympics in 708 B.C., during the eighteenth Olympiad. The importance of wrestling can be defined by its being placed as the chief event of the Pentathlon or Quintuple games. In some states, women were allowed to compete against men, and early civilizations taught wrestling through schools and the publication of textbooks and manuals (Keen et al., 1961).

Throughout history wrestling has thrived as an integral part of the development of civilizations. From the ancient Greeks and Romans through the earliest Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations, wrestling proved to be vital to the development of soldiers and

provided a competitive activity in sport. The United States has produced its share of Olympic medalists in wrestling as well. Possibly the most notable point of wrestling history lies in the fact that three United States Presidents were wrestlers prior to entering office. William Howard Taft, Abraham Lincoln who was known for “thrashing” opponents, and George Washington who was credited with defeating seven challengers in a row all became United States Presidents (Ledeboer, 1998).

### Title IX

An overwhelming amount of the literature attacks Title IX, the 1972 Education Amendment, as the predicator to the dropping of non-revenue male sports. Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 states, “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” (Lynch, 2000). This operational clause simply forbids sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds (Leo, 1998). The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which established the compliance format for Title IX, provides “no protection for a school experiencing budget constraints from eliminating male participation in order to avoid violating Title IX” (Mceldowney, 2000). The Department of Education, through its OCR administers the Title IX regulations (Aronson, 2001).

There is little argument that Title IX has had an astonishing and much needed affect upon women’s athletics. A government publication entitled “Title IX: 25 Years of Progress” reported that “In 1971 a Connecticut judge was allowed by law to disallow girls from competing on a boys’ high school cross country team even though there was



**no girls' team at the school" (Dayton, 2001). Nine states prohibited participation in interscholastic sports for women in 1961. "On the eve of Title IX in 1971, a mere 7.5% of the almost 4,000,000 high school student-athletes were girls. By 1980, just over 33% of more than 5,250,000 interscholastic athletes were female" (Bryjak, 2000). When President Richard Nixon signed Title IX into law 31,000 women participated in college sports (Fenoglio, 2001). After the passage and implementation of Title IX, forty percent of over 6,100,000 high school athletes were girls during the 1996-97 school year (Bryjak, 2000).**

**In 1972 women received only nine percent of medical degrees and only seven percent of law degrees and by 1994 thirty-eight percent of women received medical degrees and forty-three percent of law degrees. The ratio of girls playing sport in 1971 was 1 in 27 and improved to 1 in 3 in 2001 (Dayton, 2001). Before the birth of Title IX, women made up fifteen percent of college athletes but only received two percent of the athletic budgets (Bryjak, 2000). Spending for women's scholarships in 1972 was less than \$100,000, in 2001 the spending for women's athletic scholarships is close to \$180,000,000 (Fenoglio, 2001).**

**Senator Birch Bayh from Indiana who assisted in pushing Title IX through the Senate said "It was not the primary goal to get women athletes scholarships – it was trying to get women scholarships" , when asked about the intentions of Title IX (Fenoglio, 2001).**

**After the passage of Title IX in 1972, most colleges and universities "paid only lip service" to the equal treatment of sexes (Howard and Crumpton, 1995). Gradual development of women's athletic programs occurred for two decades until 1991, when a**

**quick succession of developments gave Title IX momentum (Howard and Crumpton, 1995).**

- 1. A Supreme Court ruling in the Georgia case, Franklin v. Gwinnett Public Schools, permitted for the first time stiff monetary penalties for Title IX violations.**
- 2. the Office of Civil Rights identified "discrimination on the basis of sex in athletic programs" as a priority in its overall enforcement strategy.**
- 3. The Big Ten council of Presidents adopted a resolution requesting conference schools to achieve a ratio of at least 40% female athletes to 60% male athletes by August, 1997. (Howard and Crumpton, 1995)**

**In 1992 the Big Ten made a commitment to reach a 60:40 ratio of gender equity by 1997. Within the five year period, four schools had met the commitment set by the conference, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio State, and Wisconsin (Lee, 1997).**

**Title IX has found its way through the hallways of schoolhouses and onto the playing fields of all institutions in receipt of federal funds. Title IX has not favored the male sports it has helped eliminate. According to a study conducted by Task Force Media (1998), among the sports most affected by Title IX from 1993-1997 are 51 golf teams, 18 swimming teams, 35 tennis teams, 37 indoor track teams, 26 outdoor track teams, 25 cross country teams, and 36 wrestling teams. This study alone found 323 NCAA Division I, II and III men's college programs had been dropped during the five year period. The study did not include NAIA and Junior College teams lost (Task Force Media, 1998).**

**Title IX was authored by House of Representative member Patsy Mink from Hawaii. Representative Mink penned Title IX after she was rejected from medical school (Bryjak, 2000). During senatorial hearings in 1970, Senator Birch Bagh was**

asked repeatedly if Title IX would ever be used to impose quotas. Senator Bagh of Indiana replied that gender quotas were "exactly what this amendment intends to prohibit...the thrust of the amendment is to do away with every quota" (Leo, 1998). During the Presidential election of 2000, George W. Bush said "I support Title IX" but "I do not support a system of quotas or strict proportionality that pits one group against another" (Fenoglio, 2001). Title IX's regulation and "policy interpretation" were never approved by Congress (Leo, 1998).

**"The self stated purposes of the policy interpretation were to clarify the obligations of recipients of federal funds under Title IX, to provide equal opportunities in athletic programs, and to provide a means to assess an institution's compliance with the equal opportunity requirements" (Mota, 1997).**

Neither congress, the President, nor the Department of Education ever formally accepted this policy interpretation. However, the federal courts have seen it fit to give "substantial deference to the policy interpretation" (Mota, 1997).

The policy interpretation has three parts. Each institution must fulfill one of the parts to be in compliance with Title IX. The three parts are: "1) show proportionality in the number of male and female athletes as to respective enrollments, 2) show a history of expansion to accommodate the underrepresented gender, and 3) show that the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex have been fully and effectively met" (Leo, 1998).

No matter the original intention of legislatures to the purpose of Title IX, "it was in the faculty lounges and women's conferences, in the Federal buracracies, and courtrooms of America that Title IX morphed into its present form" (Gavora, 2002).

Title IX has been interpreted to establish automatic compliance if a school's participation rates are equal to the enrollment rates. Title IX law does not establish

methods of compliance, rather it provides three separate regulations by which a school can meet compliance (Collins, 1995). Title IX does not provide guidelines for the implementation of gender equity, history of women's expansion, or fulfilling and accommodating interest. Title IX leaves the methods of compliance up to the school's administration. Budget restraints and the prevention of expanding female sports forces administrators to eliminate sports and reduce or limit the number of walk-on athletes from male rosters (Kerr, 1995).

It has been reported by sport economist Andrew Zimbalist that "the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) attempted to derail Title IX from the start" (Bryjak, 2000). The NCAA lobbied the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1974 to exclude athletics from the scope of Title IX. During that same year the NCAA campaigned in favor of the Tower Amendment, "which would have exempted men's football and basketball (the "Revenue" sports) from Title IX coverage. Two years later it challenged the constitutionality of the gender equity provision in the courts and lost" (Bryjak, 2000). House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert, Illinois, "attempted and failed on two occasions to cut funding for the enforcement of Title IX" (Bryjak, 2000). Representative Hastert said in a 1998 speech, "The story is, the people who have gained are women's sports, and that is great. The sports that have lost are men's sports....What we really want to do is to treat kids fairly" (Bryjak, 2000).

It was only after 1974, "when federal education bureaucrats drafted regulations for Title IX, that the Health, Education, and Welfare Department's Office of Civil rights received a torrent of public feedback – 10, 000 complaints, mainly on athletics" (Fenoglio, 2001). The Office of Civil Rights "doesn't want to find a school in

**noncompliance; their preferred method is to eke out compromises. They try to get schools to do something inventive so they don't get slammed with noncompliance", says University of Pittsburgh law professor Deborah Brake (McRorie, 2001).**

**Athletic Director Bruce Baumgartner of Edinboro University in Pennsylvania stated "Title IX is an excellent law". Baumgartner, ex-head wrestling coach at Edinboro and an Olympic gold medallist, realizes that most colleges do not have the resources available to add athletic programs for women and that often results in the cutting of men's athletic programs (Alden, 2000).**

**Athletic administrators and university Title IX officers try to abide by OCR Title IX compliance rules regarding finances, scholarship distribution, facility considerations and support services (Aronson, 2001). Each institution has the right to develop its own gender equity compliance plan which may include one or more of the following: adding new intercollegiate teams for women, capping the number of participation slots on men's teams, and eliminating men's teams. If a school decides not to allocate new money to the women's program, the institution must implement one or more of the following in order to free up money for the women's program: reduce expenditures in men's sports, reduce expenditures at the national level for both men's and women's sports, consider moving the athletics program to a less costly divisional affiliation, or eliminate men's sports (NCAA Gender Equity Study, 1992).**

**Author Gia Fenoglio writes that "It s aim was to give women the same opportunities as men for a college education – to get rid of admissions quotas and to give women a shot at studying engineering, medicine, and other fields in which they had been largely shut out" (Fenoglio, 2001). It has been thirty years since Title IX was**

signed into law and appears to have “done what it was supposed to – and also some things that it wasn’t” (Fenoglio, 2001). President James C. Garland of the University of Miami of Ohio at a press conference in 1998 concerning the state of athletics stated “Title IX has become a blunt instrument that does not adequately acknowledge the economic realities of intercollegiate athletics. Nevertheless, Title IX is the law and must be obeyed to the best of our ability” (Fenoglio, 2001).

According to author Jessica Gavora of Tilting the Playing Field, Schools, Sports, Sex and Title IX, the sentiment of most members of congress during the passage of Title IX was one to create “equality under the law – nothing more and nothing less” (Gavora, 2002). When asked if the intent of Title IX was to bring into a reduction of men’s programs, Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana replied “No, that was not the purpose of Title IX. And that has been a very unfortunate aspect of this. The idea of Title IX was not to give fewer opportunities to men; it was to make more opportunities for women” (Fenoglio, 2001).

Title IX has improved opportunities for women, especially white women. “According to the NCAA, the four fastest growing women’s sports in the past 15 years have been soccer, rowing, lacrosse, and golf, none of which have been successful in recruiting large numbers of minorities” (Lees, 2001). The head coach of rowing at Duke University has been quoted saying that “as more high schools feature rowing as a sport, a more varied group of athletes will emerge” (Lees, 2001).

### Cancellation

Since 1972 there have been almost 800 wrestling programs cancelled by schools who are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Lowe, 1999). From 1994 to 2000, the Independent Women's Forum reported that over 350 men's teams have been cut by colleges in order to achieve statistical balance (Kersten, 2000). Furthermore, in the last 30 years more than 450 wrestling programs have been eliminated. This number surpasses the number of cuts to any other sport during the same time period (Schwartz, 2001). Collegiate wrestling teams in all NCAA divisions have dropped from 374 in 1979-80 to 238 in 1998. NCAA Division I wrestling teams have dropped from 152 to 91 in the same time frame (Alden, 2000).

In 1999 the United States women's soccer team captured its second World Cup and as a result Title IX is glorified as the "valuable and victorious" legislation that made those victories possible (Fenoglio, 2001). When the NCAA announced in 2000 that wrestling programs had been dropped at 136 schools over the past twenty years, "Title IX was described as discriminatory and unfair" (Fenoglio, 2001).

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law the Educational Amendment Title IX with little controversy. Totally for the benefit of women, the signing of Title IX started a movement of participation for women in higher education and collegiate sports that would change the status of women in sports forever. However, without the benefit of foresight and the belief by legislators that men's collegiate athletics were entrenched within the collegiate blueprint, the signing of Title IX would eventually adversely affect men's non-revenue sports significantly (Dayton, 2001).

In the first gender equity study conducted from 1992-1995, the NCAA found that some 200 male teams had been eliminated (Anderson, 1999). Along with the 200 male teams, 20,900 male athletes disappeared (Kocher, 1999). This study also showed that during the specified time only 5,800 female athletes were added (Kocher, 1999). This averages into dropping nearly four males for every new female added (Kocher, 1999).

Title IX does not show gender bias. Although more male programs have been cut than female programs added, there have been some casualties taken by women's programs due to Title IX law. In 1996 Stanford University was forced to drop a popular, women-only self-defense class offered by a group called Women Defending Ourselves due to Title IX regulations (Cuza, 2000).

Of the three NCAA Divisions, Division III male opportunities were hit the hardest from 1992-1997 (Anderson, 1999). According to Anderson (1999), 178 athletes were added and over 9,000 male opportunities were lost during this time frame. These rates have had a crushing effect in Division III where 20 male athletes were eliminated for each female added (Anderson, 1999). The NCAA Gender Equity Studies from 1992 to 1997 reported that the number of female athletes increased by 5,800 (Kocher, 1999). According to the same study during the same time, 20,900 male athletes were dropped. The problem was worse for NCAA Division III athletics. During the same five-year study, 178 female athletic opportunities were added while 9,000 male athletic opportunities became extinct (Kocher, 1999). Kocher goes on to say, "That is 20 males dumped for every female gained." These numbers show that Title IX was "four times more effective at eliminating male athletes than it was at creating female athletic opportunities" (Kocher, 1999). In 2000 at the University of Miami, Ohio, seventy male



athletes lost their opportunity to compete in wrestling, tennis, soccer and golf. The University of Miami, Ohio cancelled four men's teams and did not create a single athletic opportunity for women (Daugherty, 1999).

According to NCAA Online (2000), currently 207,592 men and 145,832 women compete in NCAA athletic events. Over the past 3 years there has been a 15.71% increase in the participation of women athletes in the NCAA, and during the same time, the number of male athletes increased by .72% (NCAA Online, 2000).

Since 1990, 150 new schools have joined the NCAA, increasing the overall participation numbers while many schools continue to cut men's teams (Aronson, 2001). In 1999 the General Accounting Office studied the 12 years between 1985-86 to 1996-97 in an attempt to hold the pool of schools constant and found that 21,000 male athletic spots disappeared resulting in a 12 percent drop overall, while 14,500 female athletic spots appeared, resulting in a 16 percent increase (Lynch, 2001).

Wrestling coach Chuck Angello of the University of Miami, Ohio has stated that "Under Title IX, it's possible for a school to have intercollegiate synchronized swimming, but not soccer, equestrian, but not wrestling or men's golf. This makes sense somewhere" (Daugherty, 1999). Senator Bill Bradley stated that Title IX "should work by expanding the opportunities for women, not curtailing the opportunities for men" (Bryjak, 2000). A critic of feminism at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Diana Furchtgott-Roth, says that she "favors accommodating any women interested in sports, but adds that it 'verges on unfair' when men's programs are dropped if the numbers don't turn out equal" (Fenoglio, 2001). The Women's Sport

Foundation has always maintained that "it is inappropriate for the Title IX solution to bring the level of men's sports down to the women's level" (Lee, 1997).

Without the passage and implementation of Title IX women may have "never received the same athletic opportunities as men – and men probably never would have lost their teams" (Fenoglio, 2001).

### Growth

In June of 2000, the NCAA reported the largest increase in sport participation for the previous 14 years (Conway, 2000). Women's participation led the increase by 9.3%, opportunities for male athletes also increased by 3.7% (Conway, 2000). According to Conway (2000), men's basketball added 42 teams and men's cross country added 37 teams. The leading sport of participation was football with 56,528 student athletes followed by baseball with 25,669, outdoor track with 20,401, and men's soccer with 18,238. Overall, since 1981, women's participation has risen from 64,390 participants to 145,832 while men's participation in 1981 was 167,055 and currently stands at 207,592 (NCAA, 2000). According to Alden's study in 2000, the remaining colleges and universities with wrestling programs are not having a problem finding wrestlers. From 1998-99, 238,334 athletes participated in high school wrestling, an increase of more than 7,000 from the year before. Furthermore, USA Wrestling, the governing body of amateur wrestling from youth to the Olympics excluding the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), high school, and collegiate wrestling, reported an increase from 90,523 to 142,065 participants from 1989-2000 and the increase in sanctioned events rose from 1,193 to 1,537 during the same time (Alden, 2000).

**One approach that colleges have taken to combat against Title IX and financial elimination is through endowments. The University of North Carolina head wrestling Coach Bill Lam stated in July 2000 at the South Carolina High School Wrestling Coaches Clinic that the University of North Carolina wrestling program was on track to become the first fully endowed collegiate wrestling program in the United States (South Carolina Wrestling Coaches Clinic, 2000).**

**A program operates through an endowment by utilizing the interest accumulated on a principle amount held in a trust specifically designated for that purpose. Endowments have been established for scholarships, coaches salaries, and operating expenses. By utilizing these resources institutions may shift funding from wrestling programs and implement women's teams in order to meet Title IX proportionality requirements.**

**Princeton University has been successful in holding on to its wrestling program by utilizing an endowment provided for by the Friends of Princeton Wrestling group. Yale, Syracuse, and Central Connecticut State University have also tried to implement similar measures with little or no success (Mceldowney, 2000).**

**Another solution created by colleges to prevent the cutting of sports has been to downgrade programs to a non-scholarship status. By not awarding scholarship money the financial equity between men's and women's athletic programs narrows. Athletes compete on nonscholarship teams with no hope to earn money to assist in the tuition costs. This helped James Madison University save 12 athletic teams. The University of Virginia and Virginia Military Institute are planning to take similar actions (Berman, 2001).**

**Some research shows that proportionality based on Title IX can never be reached without eliminating male sports. If the participation of high school students is 60% male and 40% female, this will never convert into 50% male and 50% female at the collegiate level (NCAA, 2000). In 1998-99 there were 211,273 college male athletes and 148,803 female college athletes for 8,374 female college teams and 8,004 male college teams. Women have more chances to play sports but they don't take advantage as often as men (Lynch, 2001).**

**Opponents of Title IX argue that the interest in athletics for males and females is not the same. Minnesota University head wrestling Coach J. Robinson uses Minnesota intramurals as an example. In this program 48 men's teams and 12 women's teams compete (Schwartz, 2001). And according to a 1994 study by Pacey Economics Consulting firm, collegiate intramurals are dominated by males with 8 out of 10 participants being men (Lynch, 2001).**

### **Reasons for Cancellation**

**The majority of the reasons for cutting men's programs have been attributed to a combination of finances and Title IX (Alden, 2000). Budget issues and competitive issues have been cited as reasons for Iowa State dropping baseball and men's swimming and diving (Iowa State, 2001). The University of Syracuse's ex-head wrestling coach, Scott Miller, suggests that wrestling is being cut because there is not a comparative female sport and that wrestling provides a large team with approximately thirty-five athletes to impact the proportionality factor of Title IX. Syracuse Athletic Director Jake Crouthamel cited college trends and declining participation of high school**

athletes as reasons for elimination. However, Crouthamel denied having cited high school trends as a reason after being informed that the National Federation of High School Association (NFHS) tracked increasing participation rates from 1990-2000 of 8,677 high school wrestlers to 8,900 (Schwartz, 2001).

Fred Skousen, Advancement Vice-President at Brigham Young University (BYU) cited budgetary restraints and a lack of quality high school wrestling in Utah as a basis for dropping wrestling (Schwartz, 2001). While the Brigham Young University administration gave other reasons for dropping wrestling to head coach Mark Schultz that included: wrestling is too expensive, dropping wrestling programs is part of a national trend, wrestling is not fan friendly, wrestling is a dinosaur, a "zero growth" policy imposed by the church, and BYU's desire to keep the new conference "pure" (Schultz, 2001).

Athletic directors and administrators often cite rising tuition costs, increased travel expenses, health insurance premium increases and increasing utility costs as some of the expenses affecting colleges to reevaluate programs and eliminate programs to stay within specific budget restraints (Iowa State, 2001). In February of 1999 the University of Miami of Ohio's trustees gave a final warning to four men's sports programs; wrestling, golf, tennis, and soccer, to raise thirteen million or have sports dropped by the athletic department. Chuck Angello, head wrestling coach at the University of Miami, Ohio, has a budget of \$146,000, which is "less than 2 percent of Miami's athletic outlay" (Daugherty, 1999). The four men's programs were cancelled in 2001. This type of cancellation of teams continues to take place at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

High school sports participation is about sixty percent male and forty percent female (Johnson, 2000). Meanwhile, the NFHS reported that female high school students outnumber males in all extracurricular activities other than sports. "The Independent Women's Forum has calculated that if courts were to require gender parity across the board, 96.4 percent of female high school cheerleaders would have to be cut, along with 35.8 percent of female choir members and 25.4 percent of female orchestra members". This is in addition to the 33 percent of female debaters that would be denied a chance to compete (Kersten, 2000).

Wrestling is growing on every level and routinely sells out its national championships (Reimer, 2001). In 2000 the NCAA Division I championships set an attendance record of 96,994 over the three-day tournament at the Kiel Center in St. Louis (Alden, 2000). Recently, the NCAA has decided to only host the wrestling championships at the larger venues in order to accommodate the desire for more tickets.

### Participation

It must be understood that in 1972, largely due to the exclusion of women by colleges and universities, athletic opportunities for women needed to increase. According to the National Coalition for Athletics Equity (NCAE), the drive for proportionality in colleges and universities "is resulting in fewer gains for women and significant losses for men". At the time Title IX was enacted there were just 31,852 women participating in NCAA athletics (NCAE, 1999). By the 1998-99 school year 148,803 women participated in NCAA athletics. According to the National Federation of

**State High School Association one year prior to the passage of Title IX 294,015 girls participated in high school sports compared to 3.7 million boys and by 1999-2000 2.7 million girls were active in high school sports compared to 3.8 million boys (Lynch, 2001).**

**Krebs and Robinson (2000) found that in 1994 women received 38% of medical degrees compared to 9% in 1972; women earned 43% of law degrees in 1994 compared to 7% in 1972; and women received 44% of doctoral degrees in 1994 compared to 25% in 1977. Furthermore, the amount of female participation in high school athletics rose from 294,015 in 1971 to 1,854,400 female athletes in 1978 – a 63% increase in 7 years. All of this was accomplished without cutting a single male sport (Krebs & Robinson, 2000). Law professor Robert C. Farrell notes that “It is hard to have high level of interest in a sports program that does not exist” (Bryjak, 2000). This is a result of Title IX requiring the expansion of sports and women participating in those sports. Farrell also points out that, “whenever well-organized, well-funded, and well-promoted athletic opportunities have been made available to women, women’s interests in athletics has flourished” (Bryjak, 2000).**

**The increased athletic opportunities for women are great and have been long overdue. However, the director of the Center for Individual Rights, Curt A. Levey, has indicated that “studies consistently find higher rates of interest in athletic participation among males, be they eighth-graders or college students” (Bryjak, 2000). Similarly, the Physical Activity and Sport in the Lives of Girls reported to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and sports that “young women are twice as likely to be inactive compared to young men. Furthermore, clinical Psychologist Mary Bray Pipher, author**

of Reviving Ophelia, states that “pubescent girls enter a ‘social and developmental Bermuda Triangle’, in which they ‘lose their assertive, energetic, and ‘tomboyish’ personalities and become more deferential, self-critical, and depressed’ as they seek to conform to abiding feminine stereotypes” (Dayton, 2001).

Men still outnumber women on the “field, court, track, and in the pool – 207,592 to 143,832 in 1999 – they have 330 fewer teams than do women” (Bryjak, 2000).

### Cases

Both women and men have brought Title IX law suits against colleges and universities. The suits are not limited solely to higher educational institutions. Many high schools and school districts have also been the target of Title IX suits as well. The intent of Title IX was to eliminate sex discrimination in institutions receiving federal assistance (Leo, 1998). Suits have ranged from cases involving sex discrimination where male teachers have pursued female students as in Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools (1992), to men suing an institution for cutting their sports as in Neal v. California State University-Bakersfield (1999), to women suing for equal opportunity as in Cohen v. Brown University (1993).

Courts have continued to sustain their prior rulings in Title IX cases as in the most recent decision of the 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals which stated that Illinois State University acted lawfully when it dropped wrestling and soccer to boost the percentage of female athletes at the school. The court further stated that universities have broad leeway under Title IX to decide strategies intended to offer men and women equal athletic opportunities (Manson, 2001).



The most historic Title IX cases is Cohen v. Brown University (1993). This case set a precedent in that Title IX would have to be complied with by institutions throughout the nation. In Cohen v. Brown University (1993), the courts forced Brown University to reinstate women's volleyball and gymnastics to varsity status after the university dropped these along with two varsity men's sports. This was the first major test for Title IX pertaining directly to athletics and set a precedent for the proportionality test of Title IX.

The courts have allowed institutions to use their own discretion in complying with Title IX. In doing so, the courts have allowed quotas to be used in complying with Title IX's proportionality test. This type of application can be seen in Neal v. California State University-Bakersfield (1999). The district court initially ruled that the proportionality test of Title IX was misapplied when the university cut spots on its wrestling team and granted a temporary injunction that prevented the cutting of male athletic spots. However, the federal court of appeals lifted the injunction based on the fact that each institution has the right to comply with Title IX in any way that institution sees fit (Neal v. California State University-Bakersfield, 1999).

According to Mary Jo Kane instructor of sports sociology at the University of Minnesota and director of the Tucker Center for Research on Women and Girls in Sport, only 9 percent of NCAA Division I schools are in Title IX compliance 30 years after passage (Lynch, 2001). The courts have systematically enforced Title IX through litigations and in Cook v. Colgate University, the court stated:

"Equal treatment is not a luxury. It is not a luxury to grant equivalent benefits and opportunities to women. It is not a luxury to comply with the law. Equality and justice are not luxuries. They are essential elements which are woven into the very fiber of this country. They are essential elements now codified under Title

**IX. Many institutions of higher education apparently hold the opinion that providing equality to woman in athletics is both a luxury and a burden. The feeling seems to be that to afford such equality to women is a gift and not a right" (Heckman, 1994).**

**The courts continue to stand behind the universities and colleges decisions to meet Title IX compliance even though sometimes colleges cut male sports to reach proportionality without adding female opportunities. In 1998 Providence College of Rhode Island announced the intention to cancel its 78 year old baseball program at the conclusion of the 1999 season. Providence College would also end men's golf or tennis after the 2002 season. Furthermore, Providence College would not add new women's teams stating, "but the male-female ratio would still be greatly improved" (Lynch, 2001).**

**It goes without saying that the Title IX concept was long over due. At the adoption of Title IX, there were 31,852 women competing in the NCAA (National Coalition for Athletic Equity [NCAE], 1999). During the 1998-1999 seasons, there were 145,832 women participants in NCAA competition (Conway, 2000). It is unquestioned that women deserve the same opportunities afforded to men. Just as African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans deserve the same opportunities that white males have enjoyed throughout history.**

**Collegiate academics have also been brought to court by Title IX suits. Philosophy professor Mary Daly had kept male students out of her feminist ethics courses at Boston College. Duane Naquin, a male student brought suit in 1999 against professor Daly based on sex discrimination under Title IX. In a surprise event, professor Daly brought a counter suit also based on Title IX. According to professor Daly's lawyer, Gretchen Van Ness:**

**"There's nothing that says what she's been doing is per se against the law. In fact, Title IX has said that when you are making up for past discrimination and have a pedagogical reason for what you're doing, might be permissible" (Gavora, 2002).**

**The problem is not Title IX's intention, but the methods in which institutions are allowed to comply with Title IX given the federal standards. Colleges and universities have created an abundance of athletic opportunities for women, and those opportunities will continue to grow. However, due to the institutions' ability to comply with Title IX via proportionality, the women's opportunities have come largely at the expense of men's athletic programs.**

**If Title IX was applied to all programs across the board, as to the proportionality test, collegiate dance teams that are ninety percent female and engineering programs that are seventy percent male would be banned along with the non-revenue sports (Cuza, 2000). College professors and deans would also be affected because of a lack of proportionality. Title IX is not applied to faculty and administration nor is it applied to society, meaning that a city populated by fifty percent women does not employ a fire station with fifty percent firewomen or a police station with fifty percent policewomen (Schwartz, 2001).**

**For the most part high schools have avoided Title IX law suits. This has been largely attributed to the high schools non-requirement to adhere to the 1994 Equity Disclosure Act. Colleges and universities are "required to publish information on their athletic participation, staffing, revenues or expenses" where high schools are exempt (McRorie, 2001). However, recently the courts have had an increase in the number of suits concerning high school athletics as well as high school academics. The New York**

**City school system was sued by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) on a complaint charging that the New York City school system violated Title IX because the city's vocational schools were segregated by sex. The NWLC is demanding that the New York school system take action to correct the "inequities" and take measures to make girls feel "welcome" (Gavora, 2002).**

**Jay Roberts-Eveland brought a class action lawsuit against the Michigan high School athletic Association. The suit alleges that the Michigan High School Athletic Association "violates Title IX equity requirements by scheduling shorter athletic seasons for some girls' sports than for boys' sports, scheduling girls' team competition during non-prime times or during the week, and providing, assigning and operating inferior athletic facilities for girls for state games" (McRorie, 2001). The Michigan High School Athletic Association has taken the stance that they are "not subject to enforcement of federal laws, including Title IX, because of its private, nonprofit corporation status and voluntary membership" (McRorie, 2001).**

**It does not look like the Michigan High School Athletic Association's argument will hold up in Federal Courts. In 1977, Brentwood Academy sued the Tennessee School Secondary Athletic Association and claimed that the organizations "recruiting rules violated constitutional protections of free speech and assembly and equal protection of the laws". The Tennessee Athletic Association argued that they were a private organization and not subject to "constitutional requirements of fairness". The Supreme Court ruled that the Tennessee Athletic Association was a "state actor" and therefore governed by federal law (McRorie, 2001).**

## **Chapter III**

### **Method**

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I wrestling programs are being dropped at an increasing rate. Over 800 programs have been cancelled since 1972 (Lowe, 1999). The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of Division I athletic directors concerning the reasons for the decline of Division I wrestling programs.**

### **Subjects**

**There are currently 318 NCAA Division I schools (NCAA, 2000). The researcher contacted the NCAA national office in order to identify those institutions that compete in Division I as well as those Division II institutions that compete in Division I wrestling. The researcher surveyed each NCAA Division I athletic director as well as the NCAA Division II athletic directors whose schools compete in NCAA Division I wrestling championships.**

**Each athletic director was surveyed with a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the athletic director at each institution to rank order the main reasons for the cancellation of wrestling programs, using their perceptions and experience as a basis. Each survey contained twelve possible reasons contributing to the cancellation of wrestling. Each athletic director was asked to rank order the top five reasons contributing to the cancellation of wrestling in NCAA Division I.**

## **Instrumentation**

**The researcher developed the survey instrument. A questionnaire was developed that contained the causes of the decline of wrestling at colleges and universities that has been reported in the literature covering the reduction of these teams. The causes were listed as perceptions regarding the decline of wrestling and the athletic directors were asked to rank order the top five most perceived reasons for the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level.**

**A panel of experts was developed to assist in the writing of the survey instrument. The panel of experts was made up of: Ms. Brenda Story, Ms. Julie Dillon, and Mr. Daniel Wernsberger. Ms. Brenda Story, a English teacher, assisted in the wording of the instrument. Ms. Julie Dillon, a statistics instructor, assisted in the development of the statistical design and analysis. Mr. Daniel Wernsberger, assistant wrestling coach at Virginia Tech University, assisted in the development of perceptions to be included in the instrumentation.**

**After the instrumentation was developed, a pilot study was conducted to establish reliability of the survey. The pilot study was emailed to all athletic directors at the NCAA Division II level. The athletic directors of NCAA Division II institutions that sponsor wrestling that participate in the NCAA Division I wrestling championships were omitted from the pilot study in order to participate in the Division I survey.**

**Reliability and validity of the instrumentation was established by using a test-retest method with a two week time interval between tests. Reliability and validity was established with a 79 percent result measuring the consistency of the performance of the instrument as well as the effectiveness regarding the rate at which athletic directors**

were able to successfully rank order their perceptions to the decline of wrestling at the collegiate level.

Minor adjustments were made to the directions of the survey instrument and to the instructions regarding the use of email to reply and return the survey instrument. Once the minor corrections were made, the survey instrument was sent to the athletic directors of NCAA Division I institutions as well as NCAA Division II institutions that compete at the NCAA Division I national championships.

The survey instrument was emailed to each athletic director. A second survey instrument was mailed two weeks after the first email to those athletic directors that did not reply. A survey instrument was mailed to those athletic directors without a valid email address. Once there was no return of the second email, the researcher mailed a survey instrument to the non-responsive athletic directors. Finally, a phone call was made to establish the status of the non-returned surveys.

### **Statistical Design and Analysis**

The researcher used descriptive statistics in order to measure the reasons cited by the athletic directors for their perceptions regarding the cancellation of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level. The researcher reported descriptive statistics utilizing frequencies and percentages to show the five most perceived reasons for the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level.

## Chapter IV

The entire group of 326 athletic directors of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I schools and all other NCAA schools that participate in the NCAA Division I wrestling championships were surveyed. Athletic directors from 50 schools responded to the survey. The results of the survey were conducted on the 15.3 percent of surveys returned.

The results of the survey concerning the perceptions of NCAA athletic directors as to the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I was successful. The survey effectively identified the top five perceptions of athletic directors. The top five perceptions of athletic directors concerning the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I are: 1. Gender Equity, 2. Financial Burden, 3. Financial Equity, 4. Student Interest – Participation, and 5. Lack of Quality High School Programs.

The NCAA Division I athletic directors ranked the top five perceptions from one to five with one being the strongest perception and five providing the weakest perception to impact the decline of wrestling in the NCAA Division I. Other selections in the survey consisted of NCAA sanctions, student interest, lack of competition, decline interest, poor team performance, lack of quality high school programs, facility cost/upkeep, and other not listed.

The highest scoring response was gender equity. Of the 50 returned surveys gender equity lead the average response score with 1.9, the sum of responses was 78, and the frequency of response was 42. Financial burden ranked as the second perception with a average response score of 2.2, the sum of responses was 94, and the



frequency of response was 43. Financial equity scored third in the ranking of perceptions with an average response score of 2.9, a sum of responses totaling 108, and the frequency of response was 37. The fourth ranked perception was student interest -participation with a average response score of 3.3, the sum of responses totaling 46, and the frequency of response was 14. The fifth ranked perception was lack of quality high school programs with an average response score of 3.4, the sum of responses totaling 31, and the frequency of responses at 9 (Table 1).

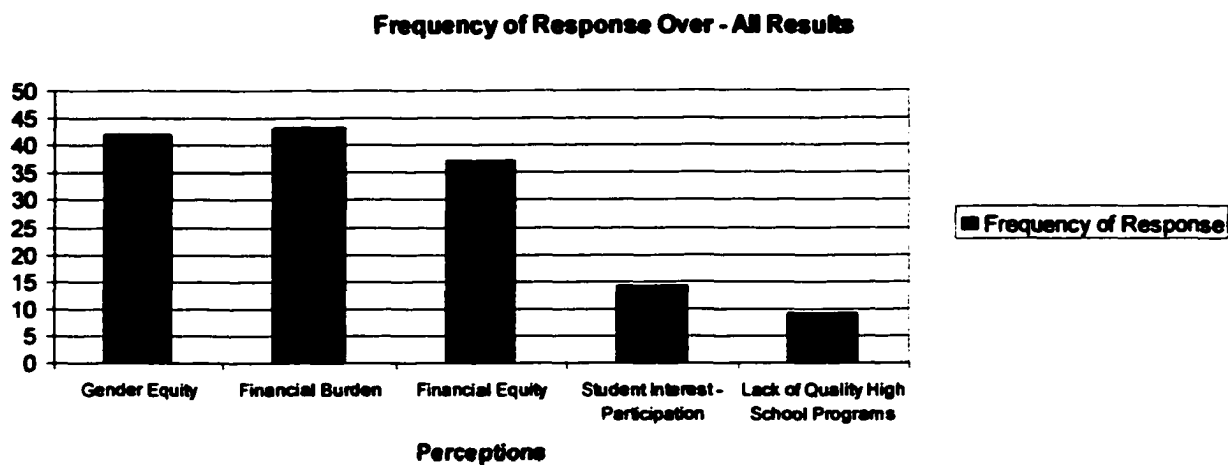
**Table 1**

**Over All Results from Athletic Directors**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Sum of Responses</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender Equity</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Financial Burden</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Financial Equity</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Student Interest Participation</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Lack of Quality High School Programs</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>3.4</b>

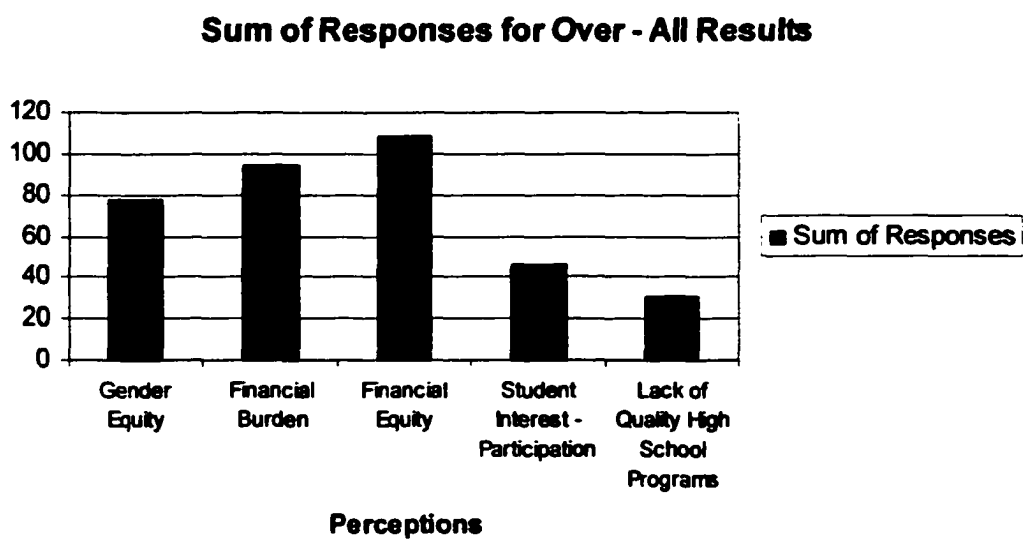
The frequency of response was calculated by counting the number of times that the perception was selected as an answer. The frequency of response for the perceptions of the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level (Figure 1).

Figure 1



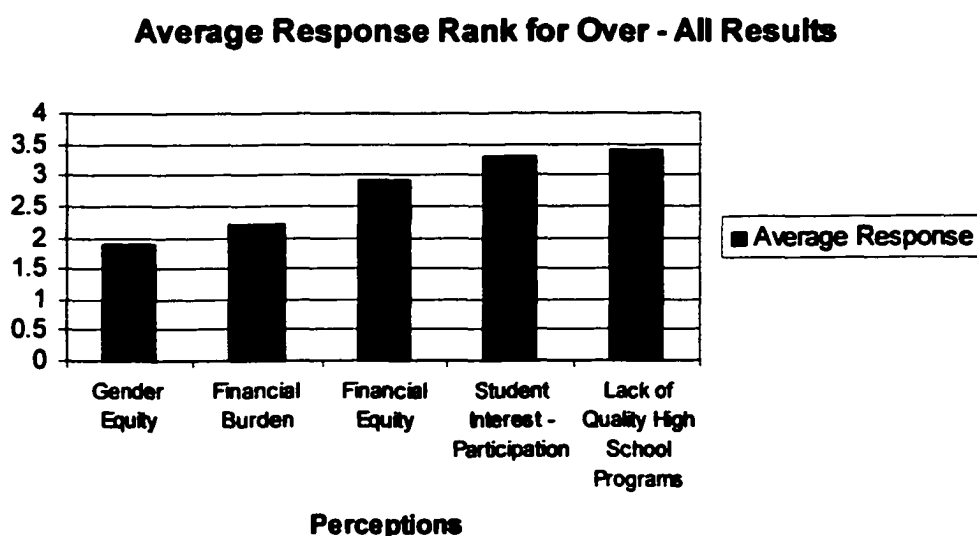
The sum of responses was calculated by adding the total ranking of each perception, the sum of responses are shown in Figure 2

Figure 2



The average response rank for perceptions of athletic directors concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level are represented in Figure 3. The average response rank is calculated by taking the sum of responses and dividing by the frequency of responses. The athletic directors ranked their top five most influential perceptions from one to five with one being the strongest and five being the weakest, therefore the lowest average response carries the strongest perceived value by athletic directors.

Figure 3



After completing the ranking reflected by the survey the subjects were separated into two additional categories. The two additional categories consisted of athletic directors with schools that sponsor wrestling and athletic directors with schools that do not sponsor wrestling.

Athletic directors of 39 schools without wrestling responded to the survey. The ranked survey results of athletic directors without wrestling are: 1. Gender Equity, 2.

**Financial Burden, 3. Financial Equity, 4. Poor Team Performance, and 5. Student Interest - Participation.**

The athletic directors' without wrestling first ranked perception was gender equity with an average response score of 1.9, the sum of responses totaled 63, and the frequency of responses was 33. Financial Burden ranked second with an average of response score of 2.1, the sum of responses totaling 70, and the frequency of responses were 33. Financial equity ranked third with an average response score of 3, the sum of responses totaling 86, and the frequency of responses at 29. The fourth ranked perception of athletic directors without wrestling, poor team performance, had a average response score of 3.2, the sum of responses totaling 42, and the frequency of response rate of 13. The fifth ranked perception, Student Interest – Participation had an average of responses score of 3.4, the sum of responses was 24, and the frequency of responses totaling 7 (Table 2).

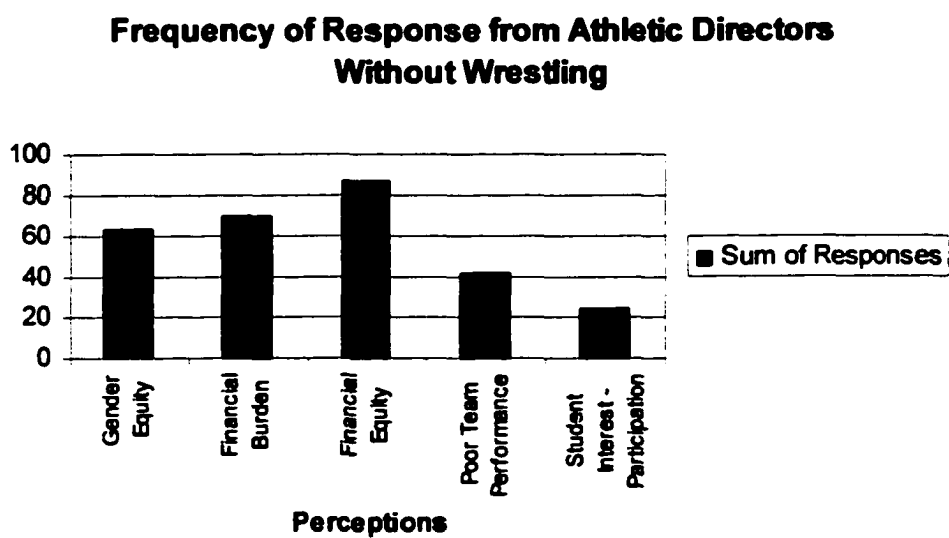
**Table 2**

**Response from Athletic Directors of Institutions that Do Not Sponsor Wrestling**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Sum of Responses</b>	<b>Average Response</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender Equity</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Financial Burden</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Financial Equity</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Poor Team Performance</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Student Interest - Participation</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3.4</b>

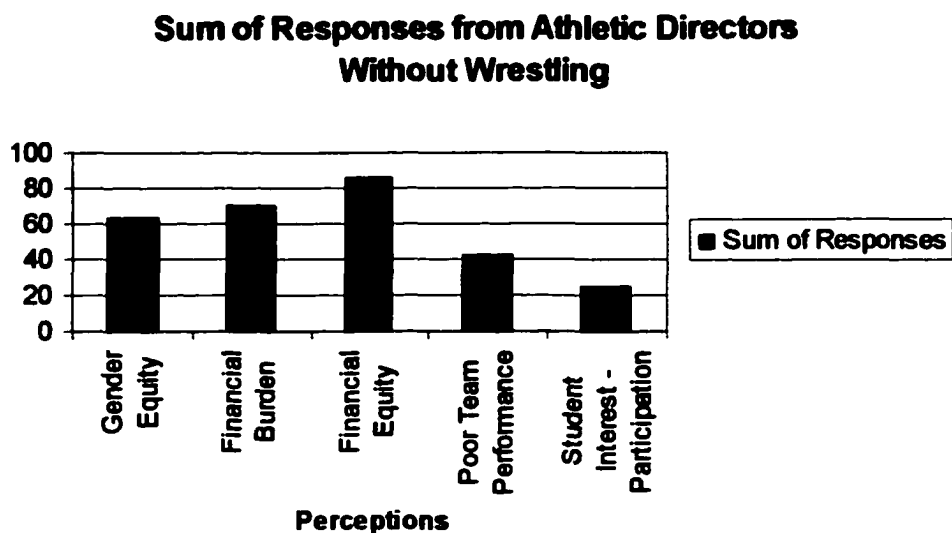
The frequency of response from athletic directors without wrestling is calculated by counting the number of times a specific perception was selected by athletic directors from institutions without wrestling (Figure 4).

Figure 4



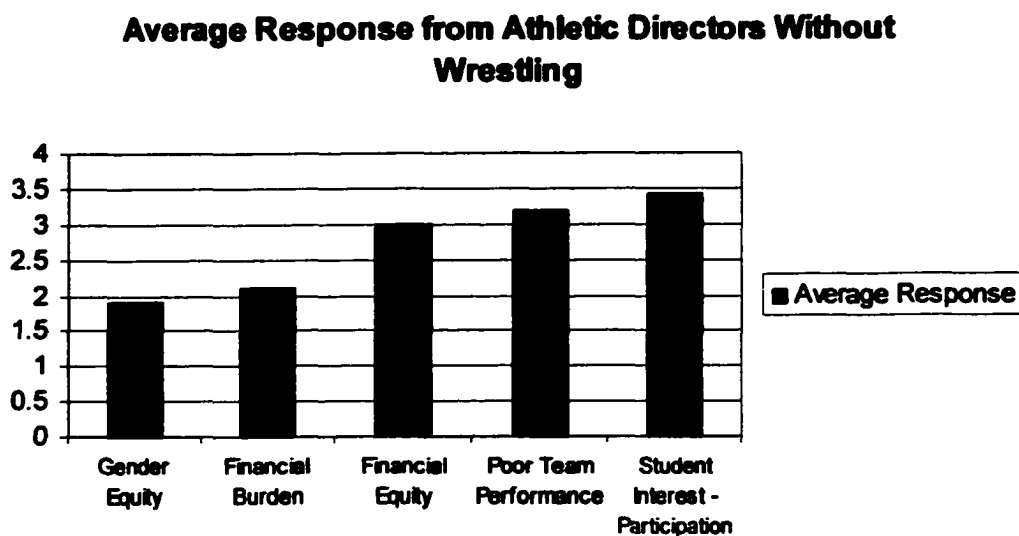
The sum of responses was calculated by adding the total ranking of each perception, the sum of responses are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5



The average response rank for perceptions of athletic directors without wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level are represented in Figure 6. The average response rank is calculated by taking the sum of responses and dividing by the frequency of responses. The athletic directors from institutions without wrestling ranked their top five most influential perceptions from one to five with one being the strongest and five being the weakest, therefore the lowest average response carries the strongest perceived value by athletic directors without wrestling.

Figure 6



Athletic directors from eleven schools sponsoring wrestling responded to the survey. The survey results of the athletic directors with wrestling mirrored the over-all results in the top two rankings but were different in the third, fourth, and fifth ranked perceptions. The top five ranked perceptions of athletic directors from schools with wrestling are: 1. Gender Equity, 2. Financial Burden, 3. Financial Equity, 4. Conference Competition/Championships, and 5. other perceptions not listed.

The first ranked perception, gender equity had an average of responses score of 1.7, the sum of responses totaled 15, and the frequency of responses was 9. Financial Burden, the second ranked perception, had an average response score of 2.4, the sum of responses totaled 24, and the frequency of responses was 10. The third ranked perception, Financial Equity, had an average response score of 2.8, the sum of responses was 22, and the frequency of responses totaled 8. The fourth ranked perception, conference competition/championships, had an average response score of 3.2, the sum of responses totaling 19, and the frequency of responses at 6. The fifth

ranked perception, other, had an average response score of 3.3, the sum of response score 10, and the frequency of responses at 3 (Table 3).

**Table 3**

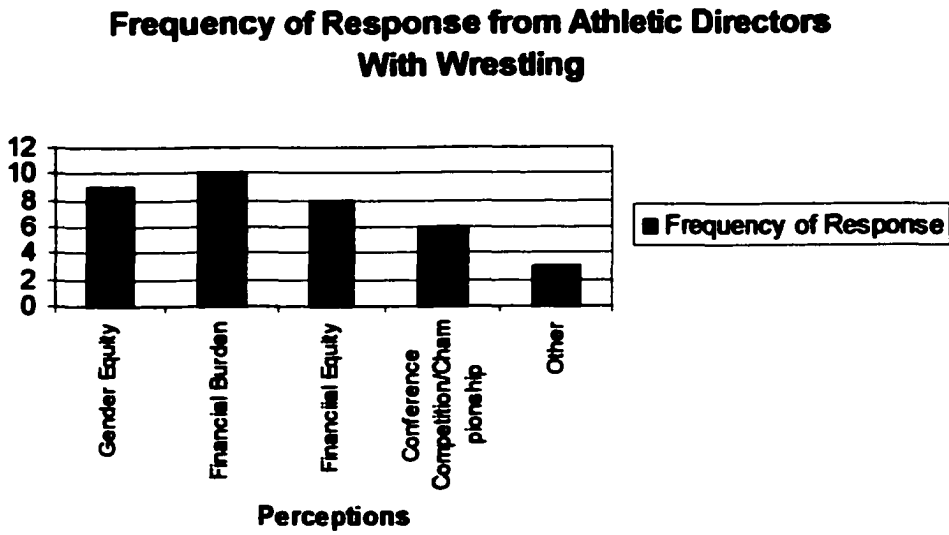
**Response from Athletic Directors of Institutions that Sponsor Wrestling**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency of Responses</b>	<b>Sum of Responses</b>	<b>Average Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Gender Equity</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Financial Burden</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Financial Equity</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Conference Competition/ Championship</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3.3</b>

The frequency of response from athletic directors with wrestling is calculated by counting the number of times a specific perception was selected by athletic directors from institutions without wrestling (Figure 7).

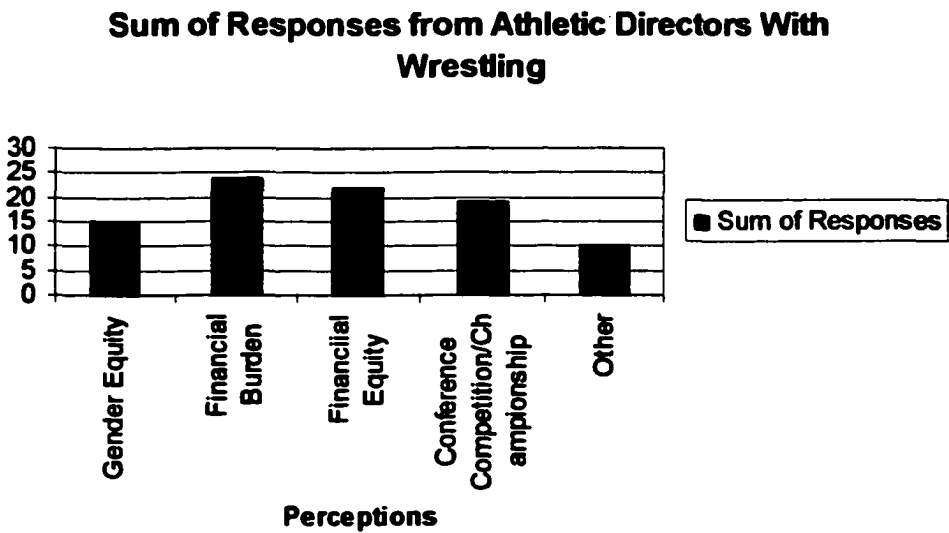


Figure 7



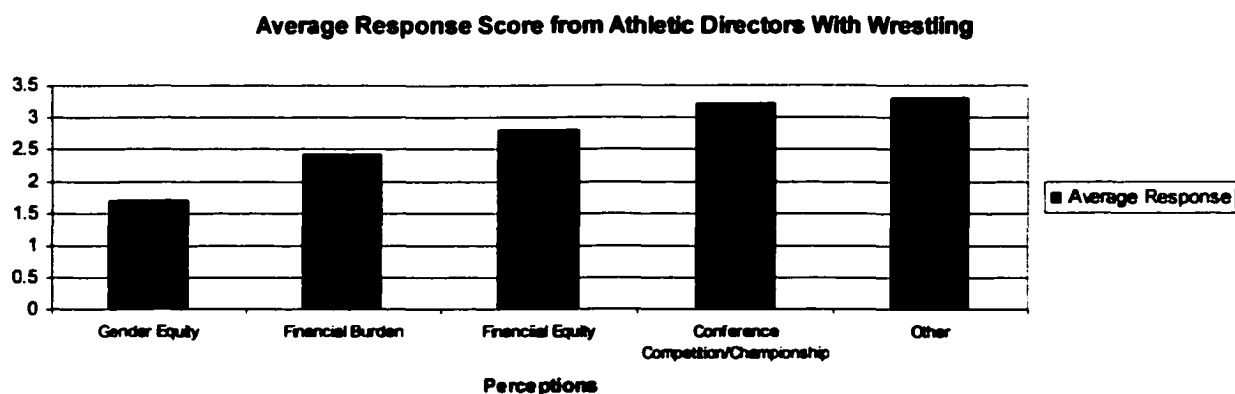
The sum of responses was calculated by adding the total ranking of each perception, the sum of responses are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8



The average response rank for perceptions of athletic directors with wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level are represented in Figure 9. The average response rank is calculated by taking the sum of responses and dividing by the frequency of responses. The athletic directors from institutions with wrestling ranked their top five most influential perceptions from one to five with one being the strongest and five being the weakest, therefore the lowest average response carries the strongest perceived value by athletic directors without wrestling.

Figure 9



Two groups, athletic directors with wrestling and athletic directors without wrestling were identical to the over-all results in the top three ranked perceptions: gender equity, financial burden, and financial equity. However, each group had different perceptions for their fourth and fifth rankings.

Athletic directors without wrestling ranked poor team performance as the fourth and student interest – participation as their fifth strongest perception to the decline of wrestling programs in NCAA Division I. Athletic directors without wrestling perceptions were similar to the over-all results except for the fourth ranked perception, poor team

performance. Both the over-all results and the results from athletic directors without wrestling included student interest – participation as a ranked perception. The over-all results ranked student interest – participation as the fourth most powerful perception, while athletic directors without wrestling ranked student – participation as the fifth perception.

Athletic directors with wrestling ranked gender equity first, financial burden second, and financial equity third. These rankings are identical with the over-all results as well as the results compiled from athletic directors without wrestling. The fourth and fifth ranked perception, however, were different from the over-all rankings and the ranked results gathered from athletic directors without wrestling. Athletic directors with wrestling ranked conference competition/championship as their fourth perception and other as their fifth perception.

The athletic directors of NCAA Division I institutions as well as those athletic directors of colleges and universities that compete in wrestling at the Division I level were surveyed regarding their perceptions of their institutions method of compliance with Title IX. The athletic directors selected from Proportionality, History of Expansion, and Interest and Abilities of Students. The 50 returned surveys were separated into three groups, Over All, Athletic Directors with Wrestling, and Athletic Directors Without Wrestling. The over all results were that athletic directors selected proportionality 29 times, history of expansion 27 times, and interest and abilities of students 29 times. Survey results show that athletic directors with wrestling selected proportionality 3 times, history of expansion 7 times, and interest and abilities of students 10 times. The athletic directors without wrestling selected proportionality 26 times, history of

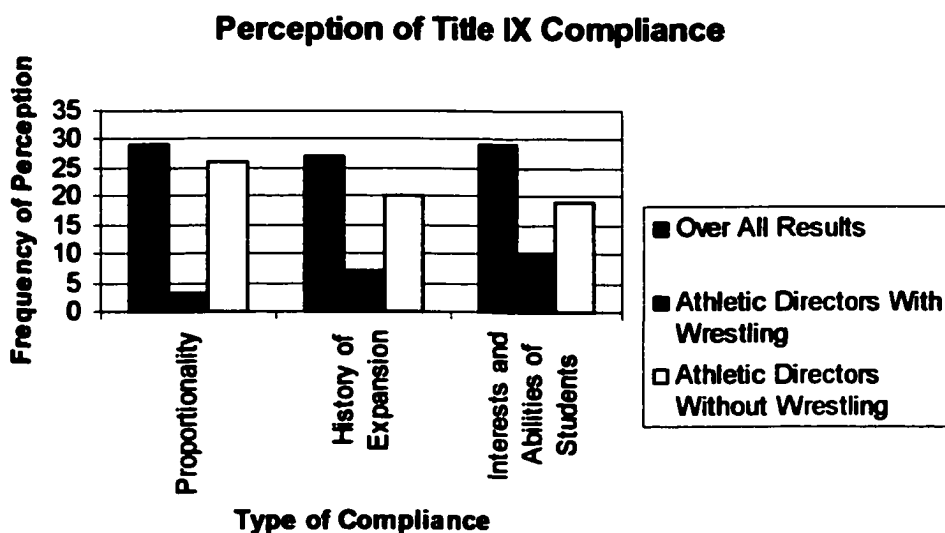
expansion 20 times, and interest and abilities of students 19 times (Table 4 and Figure 10).

Table 4

**Response of Athletic Directors Regarding Their Perceptions Concerning Compliance to Title IX**

Group	Proportionality	History of Expansion	Interest and Abilities of Students
Over All	29	27	29
Athletic Directors With Wrestling	3	7	10
Athletic Directors Without Wrestling	26	20	19

Figure 10



**Athletic directors chose proportionality at a rate of 58%, history of expansion at 54%, and interests and abilities of students at 58%. Athletic directors with wrestling selected proportionality at a rate of 27%, history of expansion at 63%, and interest and abilities of students at 90%. Athletic directors without wrestling selected proportionality at a rate of 74%, history of expansion at 69%, and interest and abilities of students at 74%.**

## **Chapter V**

**Throughout history the sport of wrestling has maintained a stable place in athletics. However, for the past thirty years the number of collegiate wrestling teams has been declining. As previously mentioned, there are various reasons attributing to the decline of wrestling. The purpose of this research is to identify the perceptions of athletic directors to the decline of wrestling at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level.**

### **Conclusions**

- 1. Is there a trend to cut collegiate wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**

**The review of literature shows that for the past thirty years colleges at all levels have shown a propensity to cut wrestling programs. In 1999 a letter to the editor of the NCAA on line reported that since 1972 there have been almost 800 wrestling programs cancelled by schools who are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Lowe, 1999). From 1994 to 2000, the Independent Women's Forum reported that over 350 men's teams have been cut by colleges in order to achieve statistical balance (Kersten, 2000). Furthermore, in the last 30 years more than 450 wrestling programs have been eliminated which surpasses the number of cuts to any other sport during the same time period (Schwartz, 2001). Collegiate wrestling teams in all NCAA divisions have dropped from 374 in 1979-80 to 238 in 1998. NCAA Division I wrestling teams have dropped from 152 to 91 in the same time frame (Alden, 2000). It must be**

noted that even though there has been a consistent decline in the overall number of wrestling programs, there has been some addition of wrestling programs from 1982 through 2000. From 1982-2000 the overall number of wrestling teams in the NCAA dropped from 363 to 234. During that same time frame there was the addition of 22 new wrestling programs (1982-00 NCAA Participation Statistics Report).

**2. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors as to the causes of the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**

The athletic directors of NCAA Division I colleges and universities were surveyed along with those institutions that compete at the NCAA Division I level. The athletic directors ranked perceptions, that were identified in the review of literature, from one to five with one being the greatest perception to the decline of wrestling and five being the least perceived impact on the decline of wrestling.

The over-all results of the survey showed that athletic directors of NCAA Division I institutions as well as NCAA institutions that compete in wrestling at the NCAA Division I level selected gender equity as the highest ranked perception concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level. The second most perceived influence concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level was financial burden. The third ranked perception, financial equity was followed by the fourth and fifth perceptions, student interest-participation and lack of quality high school programs, respectively.

After the over-all results were compiled the survey field was divided into two groups, athletic directors without wrestling and athletic directors with wrestling.

**3. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that sponsor wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**

**Athletic directors with wrestling mirrored the over-all perception results in the top ranked perceptions. Athletic directors with wrestling ranked gender equity first, financial burden second, and financial equity third. The fourth ranked perception of athletic directors with wrestling was conference competition/championships. The fifth ranked perception for athletic directors with wrestling was the "other" category. This category was selected when athletic directors felt that a perception was missing. The athletic directors that ranked "other" would fill in the perception they felt was relevant. The "other" perceptions cited by athletic directors with wrestling were poor coaches running programs and personnel issues and image of the program.**

**4. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that do not sponsor wrestling concerning the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level?**

**The results from athletic directors without wrestling were identical in the top three perceptions when compared to the over-all results. Gender equity, financial burden, and financial equity ranked first, second, and third respectively, in both the over-all and athletic directors without wrestling results. Athletic directors without wrestling ranked poor team performance as the fourth strongest perception and student interest-participation as the fifth strongest perception.**



**5. What is the perception of NCAA Division I athletic directors as to their institutions approach to Title IX compliance?**

**Athletic directors were surveyed and asked to select the methods that they perceived their respective institutions take in order to meet the three-pronged test of Title IX compliance. The over-all results of the methods of compliance of NCAA Division I institutions were proportionality selected twenty-nine times, history of expansion twenty-seven times, and interests and abilities of the under represented gender twenty-nine times. The over-all results concerning the method of compliance to Title IX does not provide any significant differences.**

**6. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that sponsor wrestling regarding their institutions methods of compliance to Title IX?**

**Athletic directors with wrestling selected proportionality three times, history of expansion seven times, and interests and abilities of the under represented gender ten times. The results from this group shows a significant difference between the proportionality method and, history of expansion and interests and abilities of the under represented gender. The athletic directors with wrestling had a tendency to select the other methods of compliance other than proportionality.**

**7. What are the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors of institutions that do not sponsor wrestling regarding their institutions methods of compliance to Title IX?**

**Athletic directors of institutions that do not sponsor wrestling selected proportionality twenty-six times, history of expansion twenty times, and interests and abilities of the under represented gender nineteen times. The athletic directors without wrestling had a tendency to select proportionality over the other two methods of compliance to Title IX.**

**Discussion**

**The sport of wrestling occupies an entrenched place in the history of athletics throughout the world. Wrestling, one of the oldest if not the oldest sport, has maintained a relatively high participation rate at the scholastic level throughout recent history. However, the researcher has found that there has been a trend to cut collegiate wrestling programs and the research shows a perception of NCAA Division I athletic directors associating the decline of wrestling at the NCAA Division I level to gender equity, and the researcher would content more specifically Title IX of the educational Act of 1972.**

**For the past thirty years women's athletics have been transformed into a respectable arena within American society. The researcher maintains that Title IX has had more than a successful impact upon women's athletics. Title IX has been instrumental in providing and expanding opportunities for women throughout the United**

**States' educational system. However, Title IX has been transformed, augmented, and interpreted within the federal judiciary system in methods that violate the actual wording of the Title IX legislation, and have prohibited the original intent of the law, "expanding opportunities".**

**Some opponents of Title IX attack the legislation, and more specifically the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance regulation, as a "gender quota". The researcher does not contend that Title IX and the OCR's compliance regulations are entirely based on gender quotas. The researcher does; however, believe that prong one (proportionality) of the OCR's three part test for compliance is in fact a federal gender quota law. Because of the strict use of percentages, the student body male and female enrollment percentage needing to be proportional to the number of male and female athletes, and the OCR's redefinition of proportionality as "the only safe harbor" to protect colleges and universities from law suits; the researcher concedes that prong one (proportionality) to be a gender quota.**

**Colleges and universities have an option when striving to reach compliance with Title IX. Institutions may choose proportionality, history of expansion, or meeting the interests and abilities of the under represented sex as methods of compliance. However, by allowing a quota to fulfill a method of compliance to a federal mandate and accepting institutions that have met gender equity and awarding those institutions as being in compliance, the federal government supports a gender quota.**

**Women have received great gains form Title IX since its passage in 1972. Opportunities for women have risen dramatically. The number of womens teams have grown and currently out number men's teams in the NCAA. Participation has increased**

for both men and women since 1972. However, as women gain access to increased opportunities, some institutions decide to cut men's teams in order to reach proportionality and in some cases never increase women's opportunities, while male opportunities are lost.

The researcher admits that it is ultimately the decision of the individual institutions in their approach to Title IX compliance. Furthermore, the researcher realizes that when institutions decide to cut male athletic opportunities and women opportunities are not created, the theory of increased female opportunities is impossible.

The researcher understands that the decision to cut athletic teams is a difficult and multi-dimensional problem. Facing increasing costs, decreasing revenue, and mandates to reach Title IX compliance institutions have a daunting task that is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, because the opportunity is given to institutions to cut programs as an acceptable method of Title IX compliance, the researcher suggests that this in fact is a violation of Title IX law under the equal opportunity clause and brazenly opposes the original intent of the Title IX legislation.

During the review of literature the researcher discovered that one author associated Title IX and gender equity in the same category with the Voting Act of 1965 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. Although Title IX has etched its place in the realm of influential legislation, the researcher offers that Title IX and gender equity is not of the same stature as the aforementioned legislation, due to the fact that the Voting Act of 1965 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 never robbed from one group in order to feed a lesser appetite.

### **Recommendations**

**The researcher would like to recommend that future studies should include the addition of subjects to include college and university presidents and wrestling coaches. The addition of the presidents and coaches would expand the research and enable a comparison evaluation of the perceptions of athletic directors, college and university presidents, and wrestling coaches. The expansion of the survey will also enable the research to utilize a stronger method of statistical analysis.**

**The future research should strive to include the support of the NCAA as well as the major collegiate athletic conferences, such as the Big Ten, Atlantic Coast Conference, Pack 10, Big Twelve, and the Southeastern Conference.**

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**COVER LETTER**

**Cover Letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your participation is needed in a survey of NCAA Division I athletic directors. As a Doctoral student in sports management at the United States Sports Academy, I am conducting this survey to identify the perceptions of NCAA Division I athletic directors concerning the cancellation of wrestling programs in NCAA Division I institutions.

Participation will require approximately 15 minutes. The questionnaire and instructions have been included in this email in hopes that you will agree to be a participant.

The evaluation and analysis of this survey will be a comparative study. Following the completion of the survey and the statistical analysis of the data, I will gladly send you a summary of the findings. All data will be dealt with confidentially, and no institution or individual taking part in the study will be identified.

Hopefully, you will find time in your busy schedule to participate in this study. If at all possible please return the questionnaire by Month Day. Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Russell C. Howard  
Doctoral Student

Dr. Richard Bell  
Research Project Chair

**APPENDIX B**  
**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

## Perceptions of NCAA Division I Athletic Directors

### Study:

The perceptions of NCAA Athletic Directors to the decline of Wrestling in Division I

Your cooperation in this survey is greatly appreciated. The results of your survey will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

### PART I Ranking

#### Directions:

Read the question. Rank the top five reasons for the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I based on your perceptions as athletic director. Rank 1 thru 5 with 1 being the strongest perception and 5 being the weakest.

1. What factors have led to the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I?

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| A. ___ Financial Burden      | G. ___ Gender Equity                        |
| B. ___ NCAA Sanctions        | H. ___ Financial Equity                     |
| C. ___ Student Interest      | I. ___ Lack of Quality High School Programs |
| D. ___ Lack of Competition   | J. ___ Conference Competition/Championship  |
| E. ___ Decline Interest      | K. ___ Facility Cost/Upkeep                 |
| F. ___ Poor Team Performance | L. ___ Other: _____                         |

### PART II Elaboration

#### Directions:

If you ranked answers A, B, C or D in part one please elaborate by checking the specific descriptors relating to those answers. Please check all that apply.

#### **A. Financial Burden**

- |  |   |                         |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| ___ Coaches Salaries                               | ___ Scholarship Cost                    | ___ Recruiting Expenses |
| ___ Operating Expenses:<br>___ \$25,000 - \$35,000 | ___ Below \$15,000<br>___ Over \$35,000 | ___ \$15,000 - \$25,000 |

**B. NCAA Sanctions**

- Eligibility Problems (GPA)
- Eligibility Problems (Credit Requirements)
- Rules Violations:  Athletes  Coaches
- Disciplinary Actions From the School

**C. Student Interest**

- Collegiate  High School

**D. Lack of Competition**

- Local  Regional  Conference

**PART III Compliance****Directions:**

Read each question. Check all answers that apply.

1. Based on your perceptions as athletic director, which method(s) of Title IX compliance has your institution taken or intend to take?

- Proportionality
- History of expansion for the underrepresented gender
- Interests and abilities of the underrepresented gender have been met

2. List any perceptions or aspects concerning the decline of wrestling in NCAA Division I that may not have been covered.