

REPORT OF THE
NCAA RESEARCH COMMITTEE

1. **ACTION ITEMS.**

None.

2. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.**

Association-wide.

a. **Discussion of the Research Committee Graduate Student Research Grant Program.** Numerous issues were discussed, including:

- (1) Timing of the Call for Proposals. The committee requested NCAA staff to disseminate the Call for Proposals in mid-January and establish a deadline of May 1.
- (2) Possible refinement of the topic areas noted in the Call for Proposals. The committee agreed to maintain the topic areas as they are presented in the current Call for Proposals.
- (3) Future presentations by the grant winners. The committee recommended in subsequent years that current grantees and grantees from the previous year who have completed their studies make presentations at the annual Research Committee meeting.
- (4) The inclusion of undergraduates in the Call for Proposals. The committee decided to table the inclusion of undergraduates in the Call for Proposals until a future meeting.
- (5) How the Call for Proposals is disseminated. The committee requested NCAA staff to disseminate the Call for Proposals through a press release in the NCAA News, forwarding an email to the contact person in each Sports Management department at member institutions and an email announcing the Call for Proposals to faculty athletics representatives at each member institution.
- (6) The role of NCAA staff and consultants in the review process. The committee requested NCAA staff to include in the review documents a staff review of each proposal, focusing on an assessment of the study methodology, analysis plan and possible overlap with current NCAA research initiatives.

- b. Future meetings.** The committee agreed to continue holding its annual in-person meeting in conjunction with the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representatives Fall Forum.
- c. Research updates.** Mr. Petr led a discussion of Association-wide research updates, and Mr. Paskus did the same for Division I. Mr. Hartung led the discussion of research updates for Divisions II and III.

The committee requested the committee chair and NCAA staff to forward the substance of the discussion on the proposed NCAA Campus Climate Study to the principal investigator, consultants and the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport, the group sponsoring the proposed study. The NCAA Research Committee is charged with oversight responsibilities of all NCAA-sponsored research and was compelled to make this request of the committee chair and NCAA staff following a comprehensive review of the proposed study.

The committee would like to make clear that they support the study goal to gather information on the working and learning environment in athletics departments and, in particular, assess the climate on campuses related to sexual orientation and the comparative receptiveness or hostility or even victimization to such diverse populations. The committee did have a number of concerns associated with the study, ranging from methodological to human subject safety issues. Those concerns are outlined here followed by recommended action.

The committee questioned the study methodology, in particular the sampling plan, length of the survey instrument, and analysis plan. The committee was not convinced that the study in its current form could adequately meet the study aims. Specifically:

- (1) The proposed sampling plan is one used in previous NCAA Association-wide studies where the sample is drawn based on sports-sponsorship records. This results in select teams being chosen to complete the survey. Considering the nature of the survey items focused on victimization, the group questioned the adequacy of the proposed sampling plan in obtaining a representative sample.
- (2) The long item response lists were seen as problematic, considering those study respondents that have either experienced or witnessed victimization would be required to use these long lists to respond to the prompt and this, in turn, would extend the amount of time needed to complete the survey to an inordinate amount.
- (3) Further, in terms of analysis, concern was voiced that the principal investigator and consultants would have difficulty in drawing valid conclusions from such long item response lists with multiple responses within the item.

Discussion of the items above closely relate to the risk/benefit assessment that the NCAA Research Review Board and campus-level institutional review boards are required to conduct. The safety of human research subjects is of paramount importance to the NCAA Research Committee, and the committee had serious safety questions on this study.

First, the sensitivity of certain survey items and their potential impact on the study respondent, as well as study administrators, were discussed. The nature of certain survey items may trigger an adverse reaction from the study respondent. That potential adverse reaction could also result in situations for which the survey administrators are not prepared. The large group settings in which these surveys are typically administered have the potential to be extremely problematic.

Second, possible identification of an individual who has experienced the events questioned in the survey by peers and the study administrator may occur because of the survey design (i.e., a respondent who has experienced the events questioned will take dramatically longer to complete the survey due to the item skip pattern and the length of the response lists for the relevant questions). Confirming adequate confidentiality procedures on studies of this type is a central charge of the NCAA Research Review Board and campus-level institutional review boards. In its current form, the NCAA Research Committee predicts likely rejection of the study by the NCAA Research Review Board and campus-level institutional review boards. Even if the study was modified to the point where it could pass the muster of the NCAA Research Review Board, the committee still predicts potential issues with campus-level institutional review boards. A significant rejection rate at the campus level could cause sampling complications for this study, as well as undermining future NCAA-sponsored studies seeking institutional review board approval, due to the potential sharp negative reaction to this proposed study.

The Research Committee strongly urges the principal investigator, the consultants and the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport to consider the areas of concern noted above and modifications to the study to ensure its ability to meet the stated aims and the safety of human research subjects. In short, the committee recommends significant modification to the study design and survey instrument. It also is recommended that the principal investigator, consultants and committee should work closely with NCAA research staff to make these modifications, since they have been thoroughly briefed by the Research Committee and the Data Analysis Research Network and can assist with determining whether the modifications align with the recommendations forwarded by these two groups. Once again, the committee supports the study goal, recognizing the importance of the topic area. However, the committee seriously questions the ability of the survey, as currently drafted, to reach its intended goal while protecting the safety of the study respondents.

- d. Graduate Student Research Grant Program presentations.** The committee received a presentation from the three grant winners of the 2006 Research Committee Graduate Student Research Grant Program.
- (1) “Sports Expertise and Perceptual and Cognitive Performance,” Michelle Voss, University of Illinois, Champaign.
 - (2) “An Examination of the Transformational Leadership Behaviors of Female Head Coaches and Performance in Division I Women's Soccer Teams: The Mediating Role of Cohesion,” Misty Hall, University of Denver.
 - (3) “The Under-Representation of Women in Athletics Leadership: A Qualitative Study of NCAA II Women Coaches and Athletics Administrators and their Career Decisions,” Jill McCartney, Southwest Minnesota State University.
- e. Election of Research Committee chair.** The committee elected Grace Calhoun, Indiana University, as the new chair of the NCAA Research Committee

3. **LEGISLATIVE ITEMS.**

None.

Committee Chair: Michael Miranda, Plattsburgh State University, SUNYAC Conference
Staff Liaison: Eric Hartung, Research