

Race and Gender Hiring and Expansion of Minority Donor Base in Division-I Athletic Fundraising

By Bryan Duby* & Steve Chen[‡]

This study examined the underrepresentation of minority fundraisers and diversity related concerns in the NCAA Division-I intercollegiate athletics. In addition, the study sought out the opinions of ten racial or gender minority fundraisers (25% of return rate) about departments' strategical initiative in expanding donor base and creating giving society through recruitment of diverse fundraising candidates. Each participant (fundraiser) participated in a 45-60 minute phone interview covering one's background and demographic information, challenges and diversity concerns in the workplace, potential strategies for improving diversity hiring and creation of certain specific giving societies. The results showed that D-I athletics still have room to improve minority hiring. However, factors such as race and gender did not affect these fundraisers' career advancement much. Participants also expressed that athletic departments need to be intentional with their commitment in diversity and inclusion initiatives. By committing to minority hiring, there could be potential for solving the issue of underrepresentation of marginalized groups in athletic fundraising and diversifying the donor base, thus increasing the overall size of gifts.

Keywords: athletic fundraising, collegiate athletics, fundraising officer, philanthropy officer, and athletic donation

Introduction

Despite the fact numerous institutions of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) have continued to improve their effort in diversity and inclusion on the playing field in recent decades, they still lag behind when it comes to racial and gender equality in the administrative hiring of Division-I (D-I) athletics. In the nonprofit sector, females are dominant in numerous service-delivery positions, such as teaching, nursing, childcare, social work, and fundraising (Dale 2017). However, the underrepresentation of the female and minority hiring can still be seen in the leadership of higher education and collegiate athletics (Owen 2009, Shaker and Nathan 2017, Titus-Becker 2007). While the current number of women playing collegiate sports has risen by over 10% in the last decade, there are still very few women and people of color (POC) in leadership roles at the D-I, Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) level (Hancock and Hums 2016, The Women's Sports Foundation 2016). Women represented 47% of the total student-athletes, but only 10% in the role of the athletic director positions (Hruby 2021, NCAA 2021, Sage et al. 2019, Whisenant 2002). Overall, people of color represented 44% of all

*Director of Development, University of Illinois Chicago, USA.

[‡]Professor, Morehead State University, USA.

student-athletes, but only 15% of fundraisers or development managers (NCAA 2021). Of those 15% of non-White fundraisers, about 9% were African-American ($n = 161$) (NCAA 2021, Whitford 2020).

Each of the student-athletes who finishes his or her playing career may become a potential donor or major gift prospect of his or her alma mater one day. In addition, many student-athletes may also aspire to pursue a career as a fundraising or philanthropy officer of their athletic program or institution. According to Shaker and Nathan (2017), fundraising is relationship- and information- driven. With proper strategic effort, the higher education institution can breed fundraisers with a strong knowledge base and set of learnable skills that further professionalize the field (NCAA 2014, University of Notre Dame 2020, Shaker and Nathan 2017). Therefore, fundraisers in the education sector may have special opportunities to advance the professionalization of their occupation. The position of fundraising or philanthropy/project development manager in the athletic department can be an attractive position for former athletes because it offers a chance for them to continuously serve and help the next generation of student-athletes (Bowman 2010).

Studies have shown women usually dominated the fundraising field, occupying roughly 54-60% of philanthropy jobs across the country (Haar 2003, Nathan and Tempel, 2017, Zippia 2022), but a smaller ratio of female employees worked in the fundraising sector of the college athletics (Dale 2017, Daniel et al. 2019, Eisenstein 2019, Haar 2003). Less than 10% of the national fundraising professionals, in both for-profit sectors, non-profit sectors and private businesses, are people of color according to the Association of Fundraising member demographics (Burton 2020). In higher education setting, minority female fundraising officers and administrators were about 4-8% of the total fundraising employees (Nadel-Hawthorne et al. 2022). The Primary investigator, a biracial fundraising officer of a D-I athletic program, was intrigued to exam the challenge of increasing diversity of the fundraising officers in collegiate athletics. The investigators assumed the interview information of some current Division-I athletic fundraisers (particularly with those of underrepresented groups) concerning their job responsibilities and hiring experience could provide insights for improving the workplace diversity of the collegiate athletic industry.

In many practical cases, we witness individuals with similar racial background or personal interests would collectively gather and donate or contribute to political parties, schools, and non-profit agencies for achieving certain agendas or carrying out social responsibilities (Valbrun 2018). Research also showed when donors/givers and fundraising officers (recipients) of charity share similar or common bonds such as racial or gender identity or past athletic experience, donors would value the supported causes and aforementioned related traits as more important, and give more (Craver 2019, Kaiser and Dolan 2013, Shapiro and Ridinger 2011, Vaid and Maxton 2017). Colleges and universities with increasingly diverse student bodies have become aware of that development and fundraising staff members remaining overwhelmingly white and male-dominant and start to value women and people of color as rising assets (Bowman 2010, Valbrun 2018). A 2019 study by the non-profit Cause Effective revealed that many “underrepresented” donors

felt more comfortable in giving large gifts, when their prospect manager was similar to them in both race and gender (Butterworth 2020, Tesar 2019). Caucasian fundraisers have also been told that they were passed over for promotions, because certain minority donors would not want to engage with someone not of their race (Butterworth 2020). According to a Women's Philanthropy Institute's (WPI) report, identity-specific giving accounted for 60% of all giving circles and was experiencing significant growth (Mesch et al. 2019). Although people of color had not been asked frequently, when they have the equal capacity and chance to donate like their white counterparts, they would prefer to work with fundraisers who reflected the same demographic identity (Mesch et al. 2019). In order to maximize the fundraising effort, it is logical to understand why the agencies or organizations would love to bring the minority candidates onboard to hold fundraising officer positions.

Purpose of the Study

The existing studies on female and minority fundraising officers in collegiate athletics were rare. By examining the racial and gender composition of the fundraising officers and occupational challenges faced by this position, this study attempted to discover insightful information for improving minority hiring of minority fundraising officers and the amount of donations in collegiate athletics. The investigators' assumption was that hiring of diverse fundraising officers would potentially improve the overall profits across the D-I intercollegiate athletics. Shouldn't athletic directors and university leaders do more to help increase the overall number of female and racial minority fundraising professionals, if they wish to generate more contributions? To identify the best strategies for improving the hiring landscape of fundraising professionals, the investigators solicited the responses from a few fundraising officers. The interview questions covered main topics such as: (1) best strategies for improving existing hiring practices; (2) concerns and challenges faced by minority candidates while applying for a position; (3) personal experienced racism and sexism throughout one's employment and their impact; and (4) one's opinion on race-specific or gender-specific giving.

Literature Review

A Brief History and the Financial Aspect of the Intercollegiate Athletics

Since its establishment in 1910, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) has gone through numerous transformations that shaped the structure and operation of this governing body of the nation's intercollegiate athletics (Weathersby 2016). For example, the 1972 Title IX educational amendment opened the door for female athletic participation and dramatically increased the number of female athletes from 31,000 to 208,000 (Sage et al. 2019). The Special Convention in 1973 created the three-division membership system that allowed member institutions to offer men and women athletic scholarships and opportunities for tournament

competitions (NCAA 2013). The more funding that each institution can be provided and endowed by donors, the more that institution can offer to enhance student-athletes' athletic and educational experience. These changes have made the public more aware of the issues related to gender inequality in both sport participation and hiring as well as the importance of maintaining financial resources, stability, and accountability for an athletic program (Longman 2017, McDowell and Carter-Francique 2017),

The slow economic growth since 2010s and decrease of state appropriations to higher education institutions have created severe financial constraints and pressure on the intercollegiate athletics departments (Burgmaster 2020, Glasgow 2017, Hanson 2019, Humboldt State University 2018, Mitchell et al. 2017, Rackers 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic certainly made the problem worse for many small colleges and universities in Division-II or III. In order to operate a successful athletic program, the institution must be able to generate a huge amount of revenues and funds to offset an exorbitant budget. Supporting several hundreds of student-athletes' tuitions can be a huge financial burden for the athletic department. The average spending for each individual student's college education went from \$8,250~\$17,680 (public and private) in 1978 to \$21,730~\$48,510 in 2019 (Hess 2019). On top of the scholarship spending, the institutions also spend an incredible amount of money in facility renovations and constructions to attract the best athletic talent and entertain their potential athletic donors. At the most well-funded D-I level, among its 350s member institutions only 25 schools recorded a positive net-profit in 2019 (Drozdowski 2020), which meant more than 320 schools had to find ways to make up their budget shortfalls. The need of finding money to cover athletic programs' deficit significantly reflects the importance of fundraising, yet in the meantime, athletics is also the more influential sector in brining donations among higher education institution (Burgmaster 2020). In 2015, the top 400 athletic departments in the country raised a combined fund of over \$1.2 billion. It was the fourth time in a five-year span that athletic departments collected over \$1 billion in contribution (Wolverton and Kambhampati 2016).

The Culture and Environment of Athletic Fundraising/Giving

Athletic departments across the country have experienced the burden of raising huge funds to keep their programs operating, so they have relied on creative organizational strategies and activities to maximize private and charitable contributions (Hanson 2019). In general, about 25% of schools' athletic budgets came from fundraising efforts, which include major donors contributing for athletic scholarships and other initiatives, priority points programs tied to seating and parking for revenue generating sports, small annual fund contributions and million-dollar capital contributions (Wolverton and Kambhampati 2016). As costs rise, athletics directors realize that their programs need capable individuals to manage fundraising activities and cultivate these donors for maximizing their participation and contributions. Therefore, philanthropy professionals, such as fundraisers and project developers were valued as great assets and revenue drivers for schools across the country.

For decades, white males have dominated the landscape of D-I athletic giving.

In 1980, as the female demographic was growing in collegiate sport participation, 82% of the working age population were white (Tencer 2011). At that time, white males dominated the majority of leadership; thus, they hired professionals who looked and thought like them into the business, additional white males. Workplace diversity has changed over the last four decades. In 2011, the working population consisted of 37% minorities with 17% being Latino-Americans (Tencer 2011). A decade ago, minority college student-athletes would not value athletic fundraising as a lucrative career path for them to seek, because they had never been exposed to it (Bowman 2010).

Recently, more studies and articles have gradually emphasized the importance of the concept of diversity and inclusion in expanding the donor base and the involvement of stakeholders to maximize the philanthropic support for education (including athletic departments) and traditional charity (Hanson 2019, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis 2019, Steinbach 2012, Women of Color 2019). According to a report issued by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, regardless of gender and race, all donors with high net worth were equally willing to donate to the charity (Women of Color 2019). This finding clearly defied the myth that minorities were not willing or could not afford to support charitable causes (Craver 2019). In fact, women across races and ethnicities are leading through philanthropy (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis 2019). Many institutions began to recognize the role stakeholders may play in the fundraising process, so they utilized their athletic coaches and student-athletes to solicit the support from the donors. Often times, these involved individuals belonging to the racial minority groups (Hanson 2019).

As more people of color and women play college sports, those individuals would potentially enter the donor pool after they graduate. D-I athletic departments can take advantage of this by expanding their donor bases and improve the diversity level of the workplace. It was not news to hear that women and people of color were underrepresented in the management and leadership roles of intercollegiate athletics (Belzar 2020, Burton 2020). The 2020 College Racial and Gender Report Card still showed the D-I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools received an overall grade of D+, with a B- in racial hiring, and an F in gender hiring (Lapchick 2021). Among the FBS schools' leadership positions, 83.1% of the ADs were whites and 14% were classified as minority (Belzar 2020). Only 12 FBS ADs were women (Lapchick 2021). Minority candidates and professionals in collegiate athletics and fundraising and philanthropy often become the victims of the prevalent "good ol' boy network" and encounter racism and sexism (Burton 2020, Butterworth 2020, Fabri 2019, Longman 2017). Nevertheless, it was encouraging to see that some members of intercollegiate athletics are taking a stand and forcing change to happen. The West Coast Conference (WCC) had recently passed the new Russell Rule regarding diversity, equity and inclusive hiring (Nguyen 2020). WCC is the first D-I conference to create such a rule and it requires the member institutions to include a candidate of a traditionally underrepresented community in the final interview pool, whenever they hire any athletic director, senior administrator, head coach or a full-time assistant coach (Nguyen 2020). Gloria Nevarez, the first Latino-American D-I commissioner, stated the creation of this rule was to improve

the diversity that reflected of their student athletes (Nguyen 2020). The field of athletic giving may soon improve its diversity among the fundraisers and project developers after the administrators understand the benefits of inclusion by educating and promoting more minority students to pursue a career in athletics.

Encouraging female (especially the minority) candidates to pursue leadership roles in athletics is not an easy task. Often time, there were not enough influential role models available to inspire young women pursuing leadership positions in athletics (Whisenant et al. 2002). Fabri (2019) indicated that the advertisement of athletic director positions often implies masculinity for the role, responsibilities, and title, thus women are somewhat discouraged from applying for such positions. The lack of understanding finances of lucrative men's sports, such as, football and basketball, is the main excuse for keeping females from getting the job of athletic directors (Hartzell and Dixon 2019). Yet, some women who have made the athletic director seat indicated that gaining relevant experience in marketing and fundraising could be useful experience and a better route to top leadership (Grappendorf and Lough 2006). As the need for fundraisers continues to expand and the workplace demographic keeps shift toward diversification, we may witness a potential increase of female and minority fundraising officers hired in higher education institutions and athletic departments.

Method

Participants and Procedure

To investigate the challenges faced by fundraising professionals in athletics during their hiring and work, ten current fundraising officials were selected and invited to provide insights concerning the diversity issues in workplace and the expansion of the minority donor base. These D-I intercollegiate fundraisers ($n = 10$) were classified as underrepresented members based on either their racial identity or gender (or both). These individuals' positions ranged from directors, hiring, managers, to entry-level officers. They were employed at either the FBS or the FCS institutions. The length of their career experience ranged from over 20 years to 1.5 years in intercollegiate athletics. Please see Table 1 for the detailed information of participants' demographics. The information showed each corresponding fundraiser's (F1 to F10) demographic identifier.

Table 1. *Demographics of Participants*

Respondent	Gender and Race	Work Experience (Years)
F1	Female White	6
F2	Female White	21
F3	Female Latino-American	7
F4	Male Black	12
F5	Female White	3
F6	Female White	3
F7	Male Black	24
F8	Female White	2

F9	Male Black	11
F10	Female White	8

The investigators utilized the directory of D-I athletic departments and looked up the webpage page of fundraising officers for more than 100 schools. The primary investigator identified many of them through his own network and professional organization. Then we selected 40 D-I fundraising professionals who were classified as racial minorities (people of color) to the contact list. The investigators randomly contracted individuals this 40-person list. The study sample was made up of the first ten (seven women and three men) individuals who voluntarily agreed to be interviewed.

The investigators adopted a structured-interview approach to interview all participants with a series of research questions under the same protocol (Andrew et al. 2020). Participants were interviewed through a phone call between the dates of December 1, 2020 - January 8, 2021; and each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. All phone interviews were conducted by the primary investigator. Participants answered four open-ended questions pertaining to their work experiences in intercollegiate sports and they commented on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. The investigators obtained the verbal consent from the participants and promised to keep their name strictly confidential. Participants were instructed of their rights and understood that their given information such as demographics, work experience and comments would be used for data analysis only.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

Each participant responded to six open-ended questions concerning their work experience as a fundraiser at the D-I level and their opinions on diversity issues. These questions were self-created based on the research concepts of past studies related to minority hiring in athletics and fundraising challenges in collegiate athletics (Burton 2020, Butterworth 2020, Hartzell and Dixon 2019, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis 2019, Tencer 2011, Whisenant et al. 2002) (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Open-ended Research Questions*

<p>Question 1: What can the leaders of D-I athletic departments do to improve the diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) hiring practices for fundraising officers? What recommendations would you give for helping people of color rise to levels of leadership and management?</p> <p>Question 2: What are some hurdles/challenges that minority employees may face while applying or once entering the field of athletic fundraising? How do an individual's characteristics affect your career pathway or one's interrelationship with donors, fans, coaches?</p> <p>Question 3: Please discuss the examples or experience related to racism or sexism that department's minority fundraising officers have encountered (or heard)? Do these individuals feel any of these biases hinder their career advancement or contribute to the underrepresentation of minorities?</p> <p>Question 4: Please address your thoughts on building the department's employee demographics to match the gender and race of major gift donors in order to increase overall giving. Should the departments develops giving societies that target or attract underrepresented minority individuals?</p>
--

The primary investigators recorded the interview conversations and composed the full transcriptions of recorded interviews. The investigators adopted the Grounded theory to further deconstruct the information by identifying and creating themes to summarize the lengthy information (Andrew et al. 2020). Then investigators checked the accuracy of the summarized information/themes by listening to the recorded conversations and compared each other's notes. The investigators also discussed and agreed on the use of selected "themes or key words" for depicting the issues. Each participant's responses and examples of one's experience were further coded into either negative/unfavorable or positive/favorable aspect for generating frequency counts. The investigators' ultimate goal was to draw conclusions and strategies for solving the issues related to the underrepresentation of the minorities and diversification of the donor base in collegiate athletics.

Results

After each participant identified his/her demographic characteristics, the individual answered four questions and provided insight into their unique professional journey. Over the course of interviews, several common themes emerged regarding their experiences with workplace challenges and recommendations for improving diversity hiring and expanding the donor base. The investigators reexamined the analysis of themes and compared the results with the full transcriptions to ensure they were in agreement. Readers can find the identified themes in the summary tables (see Appendix A to D). Following sections depicted the summary of themes concerning each area of the research questions.

Hurdles/Challenges While Working in Intercollegiate Athletics

Apparently, seven of the ten participants offered some form of negative concerns. These identified issues were challenges or problems that affected their morale or performance in daily work. The most identified theme was that “there was no one else who looked or thought like me” (according to five participants). The notion of “the athletic department is a ‘good ole boy’ network of old white people” was prevalent. Female participants particularly addressed the unfair treatment that they had personally experienced. They included unfair or double standards for work evaluations, lack of pay equity, and intentional humiliation. Female participants described them being held to higher standards when entering meetings with male fundraisers or donors. Their opinions were often neglected. Male workers would make the environment uncomfortable for them to talk, thus they felt lack of confidence. Only one white female worker (F10) felt that there was no issue in her workplace. She believed she could earn other colleagues’ respect by working hard. A minority fundraiser (F7) explained that POC needed to be careful about their words and actions while confronting incidents related to racism, because others oftentimes would classify them as “angry Black men.”

Faced Biases and Impact of Race and Gender on Career Advancement

According to eight participants’ responses, racism and sexism were still easily observed in their athletic department. Some expressed racism seemed to be a more serious and prevalent issue, yet females tended to cover up those incidents or avoided talking about sexual harassment. At the personal level, no participant expressed his/her career was affected by the racial or gender identity. However, they all stated some coworkers or donors really acted outside of the lines of professional conduct. One participant (F1) complained for a long time, that she was forced to look like male counterparts. She had shorter haircut and wore suits to work. She often felt she was not well trusted in the workplace. F9 felt many of her female staff dealt with sexism often but might not always vocalize those issues. F10 also had witnessed those types of incidents but chose not to elaborate on the topic. F6 was disappointed that people cracked racial jokes on a frequent basis (by both donors and employees). She felt people were still not being conscientious about racial awareness. F3 expressed that inappropriate racial comments mainly came from donors but not co-workers.

Two participants (F1 and F2) elaborated that being a female could bring some advantages to their fundraising work. They would be more strategic and include the donor’s wife in meetings. Oftentimes, fundraisers just looked to the male donors, and forgot in a couple’s lifespan, the wife would most likely have financial control in most cases. When females were brought to the meeting, gifts/giving in some instances were higher because both partners were now “buying in.”

Although the participants’ career advancement was not impacted by their demographic identity, this did not mean that they thought race or gender did not play a no role in one’s promotion. F9 expressed favoritism seemed to be given to white male candidates in promotions. F4 believed being a POC certainly limited

one's chance to reach the top-level leadership role in athletics (i.e., Athletic Director). F7 emphasized the importance of making sure POC have the same job access that others have for future generations. Schools must make an intentional effort to connect student-athletes of marginalized groups with individuals in leadership roles and make sure student athletes know what athletic jobs and careers entail.

Expansion of the Donor Base and Matching of the Demographic Profiles

The investigators were intrigued by how matching the donors' and fundraisers' demographic profiles could improve the efficiency of the fundraising tasks and expand the size of the donor base. In general, more participants recognized the benefit of connecting donors with fundraisers who shared the same racial or gender identity as them. This type of connection might make individuals relate to each other easier. After all, fundraising success is heavily reliant on relationship building. Two participants (F1 and F9) stated they had previously intentionally switched their employees to match the donors' demographic profile. There were two other cases fundraisers had to take the donors off the list because they made inappropriate comments toward the female or minority fundraising staff. The majority of the participants (n = 6) did not see the urgent need to align the fundraisers and donors' demographic background. However, they were mindful about this concern and believed their colleagues and themselves were well trained to face any situation.

Participants had mixed feelings about the creation of specific giving societies that target or attract underrepresented minority individuals. Some of them were open to the idea and believed this approach could reach out to different groups of people and increase the sources of revenue. F8 reflected as a young former female athlete in the fundraising industry, she was able to successfully convince parents of student-athletes or individuals who look to support female initiatives to donate more. However, more participants thought there was no need to develop such societies (or donor portfolios) due to the following reasons: (1) creating too many sub-groups may confuse the donors' understanding about the general mission, (2) it was not financially worthy to create additional funding initiatives, (3) the practice may offend some older white donors, and (4) it may sound narrow-minded to just target special minority groups.

Recommendation for Improving Minority Hiring

In terms of improving the diversity, equality and inclusion of the athletic department, numerous recommendations were offered by the participants. All participants were supportive of this initiative. It is not about merely hiring women and POC within fundraising, the leaders must sincerely intend to promote these minorities to the leadership roles and upper management level (shared by F2, F5 and F6). In addition to hiring elite candidates based on both experience and trainability, ADs need to be willing to stick their neck out for individuals who come from underrepresented groups. ADs must create a culture that intentionally and actively pursue diverse candidates (i.e., women, POC and LGBTQ), and work

hard to hire and retain them (F2 and F6). Minority hiring starts with where and how people look to hire their employees. Institutions have not put enough coordinated effort to recruit POC and have not educated people (student-athletes and high school prospects) on the career opportunities as well (by F2, F4 and F7). The key to solving this problem is providing access and opportunity (F2, F4 and F7). Institutions and athletic departments must share opportunities where minorities often seek jobs by extending beyond the traditional athletic job boards and databases. Leaders must assign and support mentors to minority groups once those individuals get hired into the entry level (F8 and F9). A couple of participants firmly believed that the diversity initiatives like the Russell Rule were necessary. This type of rule should be required until the workplace can naturally hire individuals with all backgrounds and races equally.

Discussion

After reviewing the responses of all participants, who were at different points in their careers, the investigators got the sense that athletic departments really needed to be intentional with their commitment to diversity and inclusion. It is going to be a challenging thing to implement, but if departments do not commit to it, they will never improve the organization's effectiveness and performance to its maximum level. Departments need to look outside the norms of athletics to recruit talented hardworking people who are trainable. Schools also need to make sure that POC, women, and other diverse groups have the proper access and opportunity to get to the entry-level jobs and get promoted to the leadership roles (i.e., AD position). This means the current leaders in power would need to take risks including hiring individuals who might not have the same experience or background as the usual white candidates.

In order, to hire diverse talent, it is ultimately about educating all levels and types of people about the access and opportunity. Educators can help collegiate student-athletes and high school students to start thinking of athletic fundraising as a career option. Working in athletics is not just about coaching football or basketball. There are jobs relating to marketing, fundraising and dozens of other professions in intercollegiate athletics. Fundraisers need to work with the sports teams and show players about the critical role that they play in funding the programs. Then student-athletes can be aware that they are being directly supported by the hundreds of donors and be willing to seek a career in this field.

It was a relief to know that only a few participants felt their race or gender identity had somewhat impacted their career advancement. However, almost everyone agreed that racism and sexism issues were very prevalent among the older generations of white male donors. Uncomfortable situations often occurred and were tough to avoid. Thus, it became critical for the departmental leaders to vocalize these issues and address unacceptable behaviors. When the situation arises, we witness more and more schools are willing to cut ties with donors who exhibit discriminatory behaviors. Hopefully, the rise of the diversity awareness in our society will help the institutions obtain more diverse philanthropic individuals

and change the composition of the donor base.

Many fundraising professionals felt portfolio of their major gift donors should be customized. Fundraisers should strategically connect with their donors along personalities and commonalities in lifestyle more so than simply just matching the gender or race. Participants expressed that flexibility should be allowed to match and accommodate the need of major gift donors. It is perfectly acceptable to assign an entry-level fundraiser to work with a large prospective donor, if the individual can relate well with the donor. It is interesting to think about integrating not only through a capacity strategy, but a personality strategy as well.

Most interviewed fundraisers agreed to the rationale of building specific fundraising societies to target minority donors; however, some believed there is a fine line to walk this path. If the school did not have a history of this type of initiative, then creating those societies out of the blue might turn off some donors. On the other hand, if more donors can be passionate about these initiatives, then the schools may be able to efficiently receive more gifts. Overall, participants did not project the formation of different fundraising societies or targeting minority donors would significantly increase the revenues or number of gifts. Nevertheless, they seemed open to the idea of reaching out to different groups to diversify the donor base.

Conclusions

This study showed there is clearly room for intercollegiate athletics to improve their diversity hiring practices and workplace environment. There were still too many instances of unfair practices in promotions and negative workplace interactions. Athletic fundraisers' job is to make the largest transformational impact on the athletics department. Departments all over the country certainly cannot afford to leave money on the table by not improving hiring practices to help recruit donors of various diverse groups. Departments need to be intentional with their hiring strategies and make sure that candidates with diverse demographics and backgrounds are considered, hired, and retained. Schools and conferences may need to rely on implementation of diversity hiring initiatives, such as the Russell Rule, to keep them transparent and honest. Some individuals worried this type of practice was merely adding a box to check off during the interview process. This rule at least imposes the athletic departments to give minority candidates a chance for the fair interview. Clearly, there are ways to improve the college diversity landscape, but it is up to administrators now in power to make sure it happens.

Finally, the small size of the study sample and the specific intent in selecting minority participants were two major limitations that hindered the validity for generalizing the research findings. The investigators would like to encourage future investigators to expand the sample size and target on different subdivisions (i.e., athletic training, compliance, media relations, and marketing) in collegiate athletic departments regarding the issue of hiring practices and diversity concerns.

References

- Andrew DPS, Pedersen PM, McEvoy CD (2020) *Research methods and design in sport management*. 2nd Edition. Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics.
- Belzar J (2020) *The inequality of leadership in college athletics*. Athletic Director U. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3f6RCj1>.
- Bowman N (2010, December) Cultivating future fundraisers of color at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 10(Dec): 230–234.
- Burgmaster G (2020) *The impact of athletics on fundraising at the NCAA Division I level*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3TZ4V3M>.
- Burton BS (2020, February 3) *The issue of racism in the fundraising profession*. Available at: <https://afpglobal.org/issue-racism-fundraising-profession>.
- Butterworth M (2020, August 17) *Undoing racism in fundraising and philanthropy*. Available at: <https://southseattleemerald.com/2020/08/17/undoing-racism-in-fundraising-and-philanthropy/>.
- Craver R (2019, October 28) *Gender, race and fundraising myths*. The Donor Voice. Available at: <http://agitator.thedonorvoice.com/gender-race-and-fundraising-myths/>.
- Dale EJ (2017) Fundraising as women’s work? Examining the profession with a gender lens. *International Journal of Nonprofit Volunteer Sector Marketing* 22(4): e1605.
- Daniel J, Levine J, McGoy D, Reddrick C, Syed H (2019, June) *Money, power and race: the lived experience of fundraisers of color*. Cause Effective. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3N8IR5D>.
- Drozdowski MJ (2020, November 16) *Do college sports make money?* Available at: <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/do-college-sports-make-money/>.
- Eisenstein A (2019) *Women in fundraising: 3 keys to be more successful*. Available at: <https://www.amyeisenstein.com/women-fundraising-3-keys-more-successful/>.
- Fabri RA (2019) *Gender stereotyping of the managerial roles of NCAA Athletic Directors*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3TFdZuX>.
- Glasgow B (2017, April 15) *With school closing, what happens to Saint Joseph’s athletes?* Available at: <https://bit.ly/3faYtI5>.
- Grappendorf H, Lough N (2006) An endangered species: characteristics and perspectives from female NCAA Division I athletic directors of both separate and merged athletic departments. *The Sport Management and Related Topics Journal* 2(2): 6–20.
- Haar JM (2003) Review of reinventing fundraising: Realizing the potential of women’s philanthropy by Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership* 86.
- Hancock MG, Hums MA (2016) A “leaky pipeline”? Factors affecting the career development of senior-level female administrators in NCAA Division I athletic departments. *Sport Management Review* 19(2): 198–210.
- Hanson A (2019) *Examining the fundraising challenges faced and strategies utilized in the NCAA Division II Athletics environment*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/m0834552/Down loads/HANSON-THESIS-2019.pdf](file:///C:/Users/m0834552/Down%20loads/HANSON-THESIS-2019.pdf).
- Hartzell AC, Dixon MA (2019) A holistic perspective on women’s career pathways in athletics administration. *Journal of Sport Management* 33(2): 79–92.
- Hess AJ (2019, December) *The cost of college increased by more than 25% in the last 10 years—here’s why*. CNBC.
- Humboldt State University (2018, July 17) *University announces football decision*. Available at: <https://hsujacks.com/news/2018/7/16/general-university-announces-football-decision.aspx>.

- Hruby P (2021, May 7) *Lonely at the top: Few college athletic directors are women and people of color*. Available at: <https://globalsportmatters.com/business/2021/05/07/few-college-athletic-directors-minorities-ncaa/>.
- Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (2019, March 19) *New study finds generosity links women across race and ethnicity*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2FzFUsh>.
- Kaiser S, Dolan AW (2013) *Women as a donor group to higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Lapchick R (2021, January 6) *College sports must diversify racial and gender hiring practices*. Available at: <https://es.pn/3f5ebVj>.
- Longman J (2017, March 30) *Number of women coaching in college has plummeted in Title IX era*. Available at: <https://nyti.ms/3TDakh0>.
- McDowell J, Carter-Francique A (2017, September) *An intersectional analysis of the workplace experiences of African American female athletic directors*. Sex Roles.
- Mesch D, Osili U, Ackerman J, Bergdoll J, Williams-Pulfer K, Pactor A, et al. (2019) *Women give 19, gender and giving: Across communities of color*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3N8mPPj>.
- Mitchell M, Leachman M, Masterson K (2017, August 23) *A lost decade in higher education funding*. Available at: https://www.cbpp.org/research/statebudgetand-tax/a-lost-decade-in-higher-education-funding#_ftn27.
- Nadel-Hawthorne S, Schmidt A, Bichsel J (2022, April) *The development, fundraising, and alumni relations workforce in higher education*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3TZ7kvk>.
- Nathan, S. K., Tempel, E. R. (2017) *Fundraisers in the 21st century*. Available at: https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/13845/Fundraisers%20in%20the%2021st%20Century%20_%20white%20paper%20_2017.pdf?sequence=1.
- National Collegiate Athletic Association – NCAA (2013, November 20) *Divisional differences and the history of multi-division classification*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3SG0ERY>.
- National Collegiate Athletic Association – NCAA (2014, September 8) *Marketing and Fundraising*. Available at: <https://www.ncaa.org/governance/marketing-and-fundraising>.
- National Collegiate Athletic Association – NCAA (2021) *Fundraiser/development manager*. Available at <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2018/12/13/ncaa-demographics-database.aspx>.
- Nguyen TN (2020, August 3) *WCC introduces 'Russell Rule' to drive diversity hiring in athletics*. Available at: <https://www.latimes.com/sports/story/2020-08-03/wcc-introduces-bill-russell-rule-drive-diversity-hiring-athletics>.
- Owen SA (2009) *Understanding career progression for women in higher education advancement: gender bias and personal choice*. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3DBgpF1>.
- Rackers T (2016, May 11) *Lincoln decides to drop baseball, women's tennis*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3WiG3pE>.
- Sage G, Eitzen DS, Beal B (2019) *Sociology of North American sport*. 11th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shaker GG, Nathan S (2017, October 23) *Understanding higher education fundraisers in the United States*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3SAIU0>.
- Shapiro SL, Ridinger LL (2011) An analysis of donor involvement, gender, and giving in college athletics. *Sport Marketing Quarterly* 20(1): 22–32.
- Steinbach P (2012, June 19) *Athletics development success hinges on broadening the donor base*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3gNHPX>.
- Tencer D (2011, July 29) *Forbes survey: workplace diversity key to innovation*. The Huffington Post. Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/07/29/workplace-diversity-innovation_n_913214.html?guccounter=1
- Tesar T (2019) *Patterns of philanthropic gifts among student-athlete alumni: a case study*

- of a Midwest university. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3DCabor>.
- The Women's Sports Foundation (2016) *The Women's Sports Foundation report brief: her life depends on it III: Collegiate coaching and athletic administration*. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED598622.pdf>.
- Titus-Becker KC (2007) "Make that gift": Exploring the stoical navigation of gender among women fundraisers in higher education. *Ohio Library and Information Network*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3DgoOMG>.
- University of Notre Dame (2020, November 24) *It takes training and skill to be a great fundraising manager*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3SHsayj>.
- Vaid U, Maxton A (2017) *The apparitional donor: Understanding and engaging high net worth donors of color*. Available at: [https://www.donorsofcolor.org > uploads > 2019/01](https://www.donorsofcolor.org/uploads/2019/01).
- Valbrun M (2018, September 20) *Growing needs and changing demographics strain college fundraising*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2NUdxWc>.
- Weathersby, J. (2016, July, 6) *Teddy Roosevelt's role in the creation of the NCAA*. The Sports Historian. Available at: [https://www.thesportshistorian.com/teddy-roosevelts-ro le-in-the-creation-of-the-ncaa/#20](https://www.thesportshistorian.com/teddy-roosevelts-role-in-the-creation-of-the-ncaa/#20).
- Whisenant WA, Pedersen PM, Obenour BL (2002) Success and gender: determining the rate of advancement for intercollegiate athletic directors. *Sex Roles* 47(Nov): 485–491.
- Whitford E (2020, October 28) *There are so few that have made their way*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Dc1AHG>.
- Wolverton B, Kambhampati S (2016, January) *Colleges raised \$1.2 billion in donations for sports in 2015*. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3TYbCTA>.
- Women of Color (2019) *The apparitional donor: understanding and engaging high net worth donors of color*. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3fe8QuL>.
- Zippia (2022, April 18) *Professional fundraiser demographics and statistics in the US*. Available at: [https://www.zippia.com > professional-fundraiser-jobs/demographics](https://www.zippia.com/professional-fundraiser-jobs/demographics).

Appendix A: Summary Table of Question 1’s Responses

Question 1: What can the leaders of D-I athletic departments do to improve the diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) hiring practices for fundraising officers? What recommendations would you give for helping people of color rise to levels of leadership and management?

No.	Gender and Race	Response
F1	Female White	Hired based on experience and trainability
F2	Female White	Create a culture, leadership has to be intentional and actively pursue diverse candidates, ask right questions
F3	Female Latino-American	These new Chief Diversity positions should consider being an outside hire...don’t just add diversity to a current employee’s role. Be intentional
F4	Male Black	There has not been a good enough coordinated effort to get POC into fundraising as a whole, haven’t educated people [student-athletes, high schools] on the opportunities in the world of athletics to mirror student athlete makeup [to get the demographics closer]...talent pool is there
F5	Female White	Leadership needs to be willing to stick their neck out for individuals who come from underrepresented groups...give people chance...bravery to ask
F6	Female White	“Growth takes progressive leaders...we need to continue to retain our diverse candidates... have to build culture, Black, Latino-American, LGBTQ individuals have to all feel comfortable...leadership committees need to be diverse in their hires and create that positive culture More than check a box
F7	Male Black	Access and opportunity, in my opinion POC feel like they only have one shot, so they often times they take the automatic career path
F8	Female White	The key is to provide mentors to marginalized groups once those individuals get into the entry level... women need to push women to grow up, push through the inequality
F9	Male Black	It starts with where you look to hire people... share opportunities where minorities often seek jobs, not just the traditional athletic job boards and databases, vary your platforms Russell rules must be there until the process is natural
F10	Female White	No comment

Appendix B: Summary Table of Question 2's Responses

Question 2: What are some hurdles/challenges that minority employees may face while applying or once entering the field of athletic fundraising? How do an individual's characteristics affect your career pathway or one's interrelationship with donors, fans, coaches?

No.	Gender & Race	Response	Negative Experience
F1	Female White	Female held higher standard, SWA extra steps	Y
F2	Female White	Female held higher standard, No one like me good, old boy network	Y
F3	Female Latino-American	Good old boy network, No one like me, only males attend golf outing	Y
F4	Male Black	No one like me, begin to call them out (embrace diversity early)	Y
F5	Female White	Lack of confidence, they don't apply, network	
F6	Female White	No one like me, family or work (gradual change)	Y
F7	Male Black	Unfair evaluation, angry Black man (slight improve)	Y
F8	Female White	Lack of pay equity	Y
F9	Male Black	No one like me, good old network	Y
F10	Female White	No issue (hard work earn respect)	

Appendix C: Summary Table of Question 3's Responses

Question 3: Question 3: Please discuss the examples or experience related to racism or sexism that department's minority fundraising officers have encountered (or heard)? Do these individuals feel any of these biases hinder their career advancement or contribute to the underrepresentation of minorities?

No.	Gender and Race	Response	Negative Experience
F1	Female White	Being a female help (has some advantages)	
F2	Female White	Yes sexism: for a long time I was forced to look like male counterpart, wearing suits, shorter haircuts. No well trusted Be more strategic, include wife....	Yes
F3	Female Latino-American	More racism: mainly from donors not from employees	Somewhat
F4	Male Black	racism is still very frequent, witnessing it every week working with majority older white males Not possible to know for sure. Top level AD job (hard for people of color)	Somewhat
F5	Female White	Have good mentor, not much of problem	No
F6	Female White	F6- "racism is happening on a pretty frequent basis by both donors and employees, people are still not being super intentional with racial awareness, No issue....progress is slow but steady	Yes
F7	Male Black	Definitely, connect student athletes in marginalized groups with individuals in leadership role and make sure student athletes know what those jobs entail	Yes
F8	Female White	Pay gap do exist	?
F9	Male Black	it still is an issue, I feel like many of my female staff deal with this more but may not always vocalize. Not personally, but the favoritism existed	Yes
F10	Female White	I do see them, but don't wish to elaborate. Not personal, value diversity	Yes

Appendix D: Summary Table of Question 4's Responses

Question 4: Please address your thoughts on building the department's employee demographics to match the gender and race of major gift donors in order to increase overall giving. Should the departments develop giving societies that target or attract underrepresented minority individuals?

No.	Gender and Race	Response	Support the Idea
F1	Female White	Yes, but case is rare. No need to change schools don't need to generalize donors like that and build their portfolio in that way Don't confused the donors, adding too many. Small giving is OK	Somewhat
F2	Female White	Diversity is the key. Do not believe that portfolio should be defined along race or gender lines" Why not?	No
F3	Female Latino-American	Do see the connection, be more intentional, still no need to change Beneficial to have option	Somewhat
F4	Male Black	If I can't morally align with that donor, it will always be something that will end with one. May cross the line, can't steer people to one.	No
F5	Female White	"I have had to adjust portfolios for women on my team and we will instantly remove them... I always have to be very mindful about things that I shouldn't have to think about [my appearance and makeup and shoes] but I do it because that is what the culture is, Open to the idea,.... People may have interest	Yes
F6	Female White	There are two donors that they are debating removing, and on with a checkered past and one that has made some inappropriate comments...does feel like fundraising is easier when individuals are very similar. Don't think change is profitable. May upset the white people, but marginalized groups need help	No
F7	Male Black	Awareness of issues is key, make sure fundraisers know where people are coming from, do their pre-meeting research...let donors know that they will be heard It's happening, not necessarily created groups but emphasize great deeds	No
F8	Female White	Our school is intentional at building portfolios around people who we might work the best with, think it would be closed minded and short sighted useful for achieving gender equity	No
F9	Male Black	"We have had to switch members of our team's portfolio when some males are too forward with our female fundraisers. I don't think you need to build a portfolio Could be helpful, naturally occur/history	No
		See the benefit. I think that departments should build	

