Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics: Determinants of Title IX Compliance


While Title IX has increased athletic opportunities for females, some institutions clearly perform better than others in their compliance with the regulation. Compliance with Title IX as it relates to intercollegiate athletics can be achieved by either providing opportunities for men and women that are proportionate to their respective undergraduate enrollments, by showing a history and continuing practice of program expansion for the underrepresented sex, or by meeting the interests and abilities of female students even when fewer females participate in sports. Compliance is usually attempted through the first prong of substantial proportionality. Therefore, this study uses regression analysis to determine which schools do a better job of complying with Title IX based on proportionality gaps.

Proportionality gap = [(% of undergrads who are female) – (% of athletes who are female)] * 100

Out of compliance (by favoring males) = 1 if proportionality gap > X
0 if proportionality gap < X

Where X is alternatively equal to 3% or 5%.

An institution’s level of compliance is measured as a function of preferences of the institution and students, financial ability of the institution to provide adequate athletic opportunities for male and female students, and structural constraints.

Data/Model:

\[ Y_i = \alpha + \beta P_i + \gamma F_i + \delta D_i + \psi C_i + \mu_i \]

\( Y_i \): Proportionality gap for institution i
\( P_i \): vector of variables describing preferences of the institution and its students. This includes whether the institution is private or public, Census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, versus West), an indicator for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), and selectivity group indicators (selective, more selective, highly/most selective, versus non/less selective)
\( F_i \): measures institution i’s financial wealth (endowment per student, tuition and fee level, state appropriations per student, and giving dollars per student)
\( E_i \): measures the enrollment of institution i (percentage of undergraduates who are female and FTE undergraduate enrollment)
\( D_i \): represents division membership (Divisions I, II, or III) and football offerings of
The results of this study show that noncompliance through substantial proportionality decreased from 90-93% in 1995-96 to 82-89% in 2001-02. The average proportionality gap was 13% in 2001-02. These findings show much slower progress than what has been previously thought, and therefore institutions still have a long way to go in reaching gender equity.

Data Sources:


