



Challenges and Best Practices for Sexual Violence Prevention and Education in Division I Athletics Departments

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The NCAA provides athletics departments with guidance through its Policy on Campus Sexual Violence (2021), but practitioners tasked with implementing Title IX and preventing sexual violence and educating stakeholders on these areas still encounter many obstacles related to training and compliance. However, practitioners have also developed strategies to tackle these obstacles. Through interviews with practitioners working at the nexus of intercollegiate athletics and Title IX (n = 15), the purpose of this study was to uncover challenges related to sexual violence prevention and education and ways these participants chose to address said challenges. Through a conceptual combination of bottom-up policy implementation and procedural justice, three challenges and associated best practices materialized from participants' interviews. The first challenge was (1a) a resistance to sexual violence education from stakeholders which was addressed by the best practice of (1b) creating a community mindset. The second challenge was (2a) an emphasis on external image by the institution/athletics departments with the accompanying best practice being (2b) proactive stakeholder participation. The third challenge participants discussed was (3a) information gatekeeping which was dismantled by establishing the best practice of (3b) a scaffold of trust and communication between Title IX officials and athletics.

Keywords: Title IX, sexual misconduct, student-athletes, procedural justice

Title IX, established in 1972, states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, 1972). For 50 years, this legislation has been pivotal in providing increased access and opportunities for women in higher education, particularly in intercollegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Osborne, 2015). In its infancy, the primary public focus on Title IX centered around sports (Edwards, 2010; Osborne, 2015), but, just a few years later, attention shifted to sexual harassment and violence when the court upheld the legal argument in *Alexander v. Yale University* that sexual harassment qualified as sex-based discrimination, and therefore, violated Title IX (Alexander v. Yale, 1980). Violations of the statute also later expanded to include sexual assault and misconduct¹ which help ensure institutions maintained prevention and response strategies in these areas (Melnick, 2018).

Sexual violence remains an emotionally charged issue on college campuses, especially in Division I athletics departments in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Previous scholarship has demonstrated that sexual violence is more common on Division I campuses compared to institutions in Divisions II and III (Blanchard et al., 2021; Jacoby, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017; Wiersma-Mosley & Jozkowski, 2019). One reason for this focus on athletics and sexual violence is the recent scholarship consistently indicating “male college athletes are more often involved than other male students when there are reported charges of sexual misconduct, sexual assault, and sexual and domestic violence” (Coakley, 2021, p. 171). An investigation by USA Today from 2014–2019 uncovered 28 current/former student-athletes were able to transfer and compete for new institutions despite being disciplined for a sex-related offense at their previous school (Jacoby, 2019). Similarly, because of their status as student-athletes, they may be treated differently—often more favorably—than others involved in such heinous crimes due to their high profile on campus (Coakley, 2021; Crosset, 2015; Jacoby, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017).

Even with this research, the NCAA and its members have been slow to adapt their policies regarding sexual violence prevention and education (Jacoby, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). It is plausible that part of the prevalence of sexual violence in athletics stems from poor policies or lack of policies and education about sexual violence (Mordecai, 2017). In fact, nowhere in the NCAA’s 400-plus page Division I Manual is there a discussion of regulations surrounding sexual violence (Jacoby, 2019; NCAA Division I Manual, 2021). Similarly, research by Staurowsky and Rhoads (2020) highlighted a limited understanding of Title IX and a “general lack of consistent Title IX education” across the Association (p. 386).

Despite this context, sexual violence prevention and education within Division I athletics departments is an under-explored area (Coakley, 2021; Mordecai, 2017). To fill this literary gap, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 stakeholders involved at the intersection of Title IX and athletics to answer the following questions:

¹ While there are slight differences between verbiage like sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual assault, and sexual misconduct, we are using the terms interchangeably since higher education institutions, the NCAA, and the government use these terms in various ways.

RQ 1: What challenges exist for sexual violence prevention and education in Division I athletics departments?

RQ 2: What are the best practices for sexual violence prevention and education for Division I athletics departments?

Literature Review

Brief History of Title IX

For fifty years Title IX has been used to address sex-discrimination in education and has gone through four distinct phases: (1) resistance, (2) marginalization, (3) advocacy, and (4) backlash (Lough, 2015). All of the phases are important to Title IX's history; however, the focus of this section is on phases three and four.

In the resistance phase and early years of the legislation, Title IX implementation focused on school-based athletics from K-12 through post-secondary competition. This involved increasing participation opportunities and improving resources for athletes on women's teams (Edwards, 2010). At the college level, the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) was established to manage competitions for women. However, given the growing power of the NCAA, the AIAW disbanded after the NCAA started hosting women's championship events in 1981 (Lough, 2015). During this phase, the court ruled that sexual harassment was a form of sex-discrimination. As a result, institutions established grievance policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment (Alexander v. Yale University, 1980; MacKinnon, 2016). Still, much of this phase was characterized by limited understanding and enforcement of Title IX (Lough, 2015).

In the marginalization phase, the Department of Education (DOE) received oversight over Title IX from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). This phase still centered around athletics. In 1984, the courts ruled in *Grove City College v. Bell* that Title IX only applied to athletics programs if the department directly received federal financial assistance. As a result, athletics departments that did not use federal dollars to directly support their programs did not fall under this compliance rule (Lough, 2015). This lasted until 1987, when the Civil Rights Restoration Act reversed *Grove City College v. Bell*. Since then, athletics departments, because they are an arm of their institutions and their institutions do receive and use federal funding, are required to comply with Title IX or risk losing federal funding (Osborne, 2015). This meant all athletics departments had to comply with Title IX. Due to the marginalization experienced, women began filing litigation to spark institution and athletics-based compliance. Drawing on the ruling from Alexander v. Yale (1980), women also started filing more cases regarding experiences with sexual violence and bringing more attention to sexual violence in sports and higher education (Jessup-Anger et al., 2018; Melnick, 2018). This continued into the advocacy phase.

Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools (1992), is a hallmark case of the Title IX advocacy phase. This case expanded the definition of sexual discrimination to include sexual assault. Additionally, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that punitive damages can be associated with Title IX non-compliance. Importantly, non-compliance included institutions turning a blind eye to sexual misconduct (Melnick, 2018). Still, athletics departments favored cutting women's programs to save on expenses (Francis, 1993; Melnick, 2018; Osborne, 2015). This prompted more lawsuits claiming these actions violated Title IX. For example, Brown University downgraded women's volleyball and gymnastics to club sport status and the women impacted sued for unequal athletics opportunities. The institution argued that men were more

interested in intercollegiate athletics than women and that maintaining Title IX compliance was therefore discriminatory against men (Lough, 2015). The court disagreed, ruling in favor of the women and reinstating their teams.

Another key event of the advocacy phase was the Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) issued in 2011 by the DOE that established guidelines for how publicly funded educational institutions should handle and prevent issues of sexual assault (U.S. DOE, 2011). The DCL advised on student-on-student misconduct and the legal obligations schools had to respond to formal complaints of sexual violence including requirements to provide resources and offer medical, safety, and accountability options (U.S. DOE, 2011). These obligations of institutions also extended to student-athletes.

The DCL also recommended sexual violence prevention and education programs with “training for student-athletes and coaches” as one of the main expectations (U.S. DOE, 2011, p. 14). Stemming from the DCL and its implementation requirements, preventative training on sexual misconduct, particularly for athletics departments, increased during this third phase (Lough, 2015; Melnick, 2018). A focus on athletics departments and training for student-athletes likely stemmed from research showing student-athletes on men’s teams are more likely to commit sexual misconduct or engage in sexual coercion than men not competing in athletics (Young et al., 2017; Coakley, 2021). However, research on sexual violence training is mixed (Malamuth et al., 2018). Briefly, some research demonstrated that certain types of rape prevention education can actually backfire, catalyzing psychological reactance, or the state of being “aroused in opposition to perceived threats to personal choice” (Brehm, 1966; Malamuth et al., 2018, p. 23). In this way, when Title IX training is forced onto stakeholders, particularly student-athletes, they may be less engaged in learning about the topic and combatting issues related to sexual misconduct. This resistance is particularly common amongst student-athletes who voice feeling like they are unfairly targeted for such training due to misconceptions (Coakley, 2021; Young et al., 2017). This doubling down on resistance is known as the boomerang effect and is commonly experienced in trainings and campaigns related to topics covered by Title IX like sexual violence (Byrne & Hart, 2016; Malamuth et al., 2018).

Finally, the fourth phase of backlash continues to this day as inequities and sex-discrimination remain problematic and prolific across institutions and their athletics departments. For example, college athletics has experienced a rise in the number of schools that are not compliant with Title IX regarding sexual violence (Jacoby, 2019; Jenkins, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). One of the biggest and most concerning Title IX backlash cases unfolded at Baylor University and involved student-athletes and non-athletes on campus. From 2012-2016 multiple women on Baylor’s campus reported to the Title IX coordinator that they had experienced sexual violence at the hands of student-athletes or non-athletes. While the coordinator noted she came forward to her superiors with these sexual assault violations, the institution engaged in backlash, largely denying that the reporting took place (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). Additionally, instead of receiving the support necessary and required per Title IX to move forward after sexual violence, the women were ostracized and shamed by the Baylor community (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). This backlash continued as the NCAA’s Committee on Infractions (COI) noted that despite “moral and ethical failings” of the athletics staff, Baylor did not violate NCAA policy (NCAA, 2021, p. 1). This is not unique as the NCAA has never sanctioned any institution for failure to prevent or respond to sexual misconduct (Jacoby, 2019; Meyer, 2017).

Most scholars agree that Title IX has served as a mostly positive force for women’s interest, access, and opportunity to participate in college sports (Weight & Harry, 2019; Staurowsky & Rhoads, 2020). NCAA data show that from 1983 through 2020, the number of

women's teams across the Association has more than doubled from 4,279 to 10,682 (NCAA Demographic Database, n.d.). Similarly, the trend in women's participation numbers has skyrocketed from 64,390 to 221,212 (NCAA Demographic Database, n.d.). Still, only 44% of NCAA student-athletes are women so there is work to be done to improve women's representation in sport, even 50 years post-Title IX (Weight & Harry, 2019). There is even more work to be done concerning sexual violence prevention and education (Melnick, 2018; Osborne, 2015).

Sexual Violence and NCAA Athletics

Only recently has the NCAA honed in on helping member schools address Title IX issues related to sexual misconduct (NCAA Board of Governors, 2014). A brief timeline of the NCAA's recent work on sexual violence is provided in Figure 1 below. For example, it was not until 2016 that the NCAA released its Sexual Violence Prevention Tool Kit, designed to guide member institutions on creating campus collaboration to educate and respond to sexual misconduct. The Tool Kit was revamped in 2022 to reflect updated policy and highlight five core commitments for departments in order to achieve a culture free from sexual misconduct (1) leadership, (2) collaboration, (3) compliance and accountability, (4) education, and (5) student-athlete engagement (NCAA, 2022, p. 2).

Despite the increase in attention the NCAA and member schools have provided to Title IX, investigations into sexual violence involving student-athletes and/or the athletics department remain common. One such investigation occurred at San Jose State University (SJSU). In the fall of 2021, SJSU agreed to pay \$1.6 million as a resolution to failing "for more than a decade to respond adequately to reports of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, of student-athletes on women's teams by an athletic trainer then working at SJSU" (Office of Public Affairs, 2021, para. 2). This investigation and report emphasized the importance of athletics departments to appropriately report and respond to sexual misconduct. Indeed, it appeared that SJSU participated in gatekeeping by sweeping this issue under the rug for years, allowing for survivors of sexual violence to go unheard and without justice. In response to this investigation, the Department of Justice (DOJ) stated institutions are responsible for ensuring that "students can attend school and participate in college athletics free from sexual harassment, including sexual assault" (Office of Public Affairs, 2021, para. 1). However, such respect was not afforded to the student-athletes who suffered at the hands of this SJSU athletic trainer.

Another recent example of sexual violence in college sports emerged in March 2021 when claims against Louisiana State University (LSU) were made regarding negligent responses to filings of sexual misconduct in the athletics department. The report found "various incidents of athletics-related misconduct [were not] appropriately reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator," demonstrating a decades-long cultural failure to address and respond to sexual misconduct (Husch Blackwell, 2021, p. 8). The SJSU and LSU cases unfolded in the aftermath of larger sexual violence cases such as the one at Michigan State University (MSU). At MSU, mandated reporters were aware of sexual violence, but did not come forward due to the potential for poor publicity and subsequent negative ramifications a Title IX investigation would bring (Hauser & Astor, 2018; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). During his tenure at MSU, Dr. Larry Nasser, abused victims for over two decades under the guise of medical treatments, resulting in hundreds of survivors of sexual assault.

With this context, it is clear that the ownership of navigating Title IX and preventing and educating stakeholders on sexual violence and prevention, rests on the shoulders of local actors within the Title IX office and/or the athletics department. Additionally, the history of Title IX

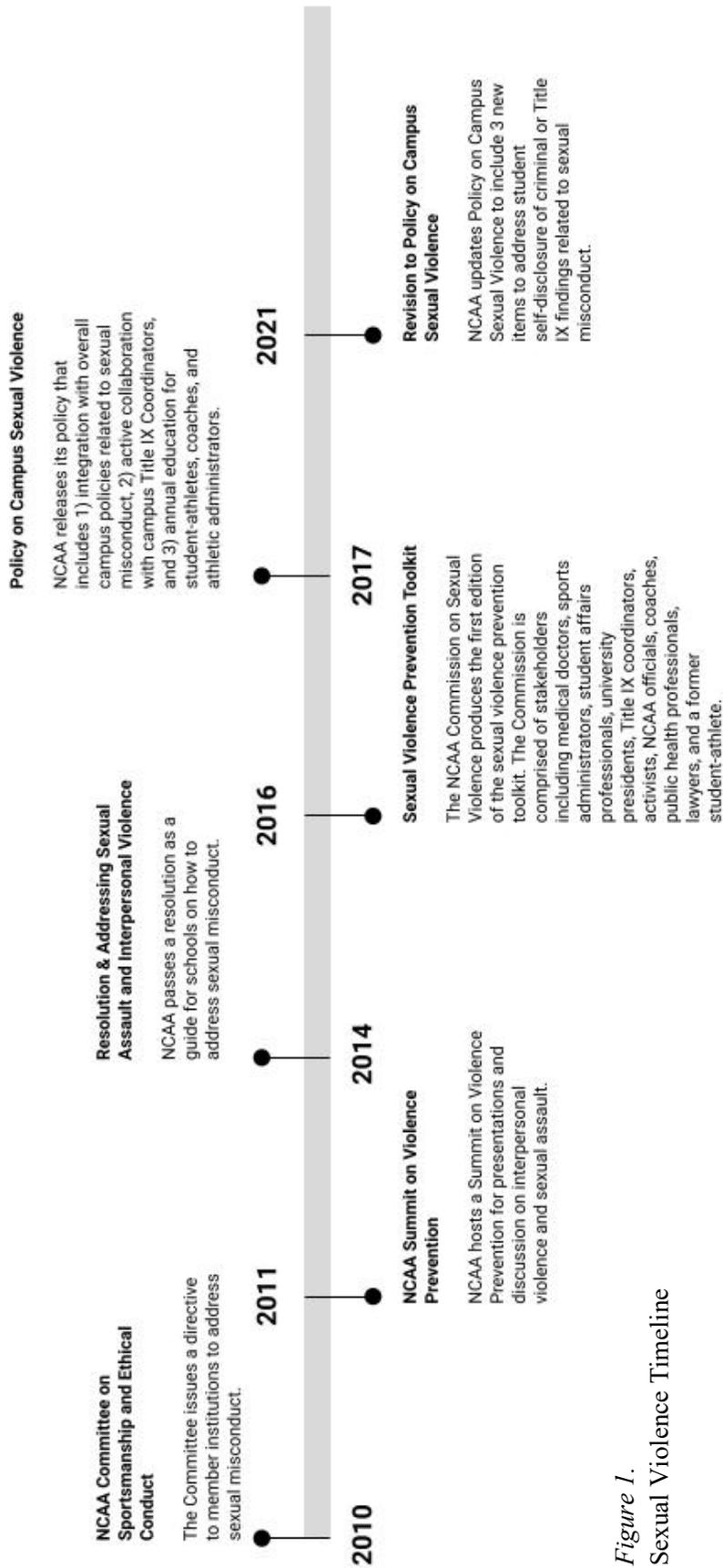


Figure 1.
 Sexual Violence Timeline

and the multitude of sexual violence cases demonstrate a need to better understand how Title IX practitioners on campus and in athletics educate stakeholders in order to prevent sexual violence. One avenue toward understanding this is through a conceptual hybrid of bottom-up policy implementation (Matland, 1995) and procedural justice (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual basis of this research comes from studies focusing on Title IX and policy implementation and involves a combination of bottom-up policy implementation through procedural justice (Harper et al., 2017; Matland, 1995). Bottom-up theorists stress that national policy education and implementation—such as those associated with Title IX—happen at the local level and are achieved by the “service deliverers” (Matland, 1995, p. 148). For example, Title IX in higher education and college athletics is implemented at the local school/athletics department levels by those in Title IX compliance and athletics administrator roles (Osborne, 2015). In this way, the local level service providers establish their own compliance-related programs and best practices to put into action (Matland, 1995). This can be beneficial as contexts and cultures of institutions and athletics departments differ, and thus, this offers flexibility to tailor policies and programs related to Title IX to these school-based idiosyncrasies while still ensuring state/federal and NCAA compliance. However, this opportunity for policy creativity results in a large variance in how Title IX and the NCAA Policy on Campus Sexual Violence (2021) are implemented across local institutional and athletics department levels, especially related to sexual misconduct prevention and education (Jenkins, 2019). Such variance in Title IX policies, such as those related to sexual violence, may hinder appropriate, efficient, and equitable implementation of strategies to respond to and prevent sexual violence on campus and in athletics spaces. In fact, Hernandez (2021) offered the following view about the NCAA’s sexual violence policies and practices related to bottom-up implementation:

The Association has left the sexual assault issue completely in the hands of its individual member schools—which is problematic. First, the NCAA Policy goes into great detail covering numerous areas of sexual assault prevention but provides no real guide for implementation or accounts for resource disparities among its member schools. This lack of direction leads to a lack of uniformity within the Association on how to combat the problem through meaningful punitive actions. This also leaves the fox completely in charge of guarding the henhouse (p. 172).

Matland (1995) noted that bottom-up lenses are most appropriate for examining what factors have hindered reaching certain policy goals and which variables have assisted practitioners in achieving objectives of a stated policy. As this research uncovered challenges and best practices on how institutions and athletics departments try to limit sexual violence, this bottom-up perspective is warranted. Bottom-up policy implementation aligns with procedural justice.

Procedural justice is a concept that highlights the use of fair procedures to make and enact policy decisions (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2006). Scholarship by Tyler (2007) found that stakeholders are more likely to follow and comply with decisions—whether they are seen as favorable/unfavorable to the individual—when the process to get to that decision is seen as fair and just. With this fair and just perspective of the policy, those impacted by it are more likely to see the policy and its service deliverers as legitimate (Tyler, 2006). Having transparent and consistent policies and procedures related to Title IX and prevention and response to sexual

violence are critical to achieving stakeholder buy-in and compliance while also promoting the legitimacy of Title IX on campuses and in athletics (Harper et al., 2017).

There are four key factors when considering procedural justice decision-making and policy implementation (Harper et al., 2017). The first is voice, which involves authority figures listening to stakeholders' perspectives and providing a platform in the implementation and related programming processes (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007). Next is respect, which includes stakeholders' desires concerning a policy to be taken seriously. A Title IX and athletics example of voice and respect might include the Title IX officer taking the time to listen to student-athletes' ideas about how to conduct meaningful training and education about sexual violence.

The third factor is neutrality, which centers around the notion that those in positions of power who are making decisions about policies do not have preconceived ideas about procedural justice in the implementation process (Harper et al., 2017). Neutrality would be critical in considering all "sides of a story" concerning student-athletes involved in a sexual violence incident. Finally, trustworthiness is the sincerity and care of those implementing Title IX policies and procedures (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007). The more trustworthy Title IX actors, such as compliance officers on campus and in the athletics department, appear, the more likely student-athletes are to listen and value their education and training, which could promote buy-in and enhanced learning outcomes.

To our knowledge, this manuscript is the first to explicitly couple bottom up policy implementation with procedural justice (Harper et al., 2017; Matland, 1995; Tyler, 2007), offering a unique contribution to the intercollegiate sports and Title IX literature. However, the integration of these two frameworks makes sense. The context of Title IX implementation is almost strictly bottom up and happening at the local level in institutions and athletics departments, with the main actors putting Title IX into action being compliance officers, athletics administrators, and others in these communities (Osborne, 2015; Staurowsky & Rhoads, 2020).

The ultimate goal of procedural justice is fairness (Harper et al., 2017), which is, arguably, the main purpose and goal of Title IX and its policies (Edwards, 2010; Osborne, 2015). However, procedural justice, as it relates to sexual violence in intercollegiate athletics is rarely explored (Harper et al., 2017; Melnick, 2018). When procedural justice is examined in the college athletics literature it is used in two ways. First, it is used to describe an organization's justice orientation overall. Second, past research simply defined procedural justice, but focused on other forms of justice, like distributive justice, as it related to resource allocation (Czekanski & Turner, 2015; Kim & Andrew, 2013).

Procedural justice is strongly addressed in this study and, taken together, this conceptual lens of bottom-up Title IX implementation and procedurally just education regarding sexual violence prevention are helpful in understanding the challenges encountered and best practices employed by Title IX administrators in this sample.

Methods

Participants

This qualitative study used purposive snowball sampling to conduct semi-structured interviews with a sample of 15 individuals connected to Title IX either on campus and/or in athletics (Patton, 2002). Titles for these positions vary across institutions, and it is not often publicly available which individuals handle sexual violence prevention and education specific to

athletics. Because the Title IX community within athletics is relatively small, this style of convenience recruitment and sampling is appropriate (Miles et al., 2020; Patton, 2002). Similarly, given the contentious nature of sexual violence, administrators in these areas may be hesitant to discuss topics in this realm. Thus, snowball sampling was helpful as those who were willing to come forward and participate were able to refer other practitioners who were also interested in sharing their Title IX and sexual violence education and prevention narratives.

Outreach to potential participants involved social media posts/messages by researchers on Twitter and LinkedIn. Participants were then able to respond to the posts by direct message. Thirty-nine members of the Title IX-athletics community reached out with 15 interviewed. Participants in this study included former student-athletes ($n = 2$), Title IX coordinator/student affairs administrators ($n = 4$) and athletics administrators ($n = 9$) and were predominantly from private Division I institutions. Table 1 provides participants' information.

Table 1
Study Participants

Name	Role	Private/Public Status
Cathy	Deputy Athletics Director	Private
Deanne	Assistant Athletics Director	Private
Krystal	Deputy Athletics Director	Private
Vivian	Dean of Students	Private
Xavier	Deputy Athletics Director	Public
Nat	Former Student-Athlete	Private
Zach	Senior Associate Athletics Director	Private
Sonia	Title IX Coordinator	Private
Brittany	Senior Associate Athletics Director	Public
Alex	Former Student-Athlete	Private
Frances	Director of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response	Public
Gia	Deputy Athletics Director	Private
Josie	Associate Athletics Director	Public
Kim	Deputy Athletics Director	Private
Marci	Deputy Title IX Coordinator	Public

Given the conceptual framework it was pertinent to follow the bottom-up method by getting a host of perspectives from those directly influencing sexual violence education and prevention (e.g., administrators) and those impacted by this education and prevention programming (e.g., student-athletes) (Matland, 1995). Similarly, we thought it was vital to follow the components of procedural justice by using various voices, including those of student-athletes, who are often not considered when it comes to implementing best practices. In this way, respect for various perspectives and neutrality in getting multiple "sides" of sexual violence

education and prevention were incorporated into this research (Harper et al., 2017). In aligning this method with the three aforementioned components of procedural justice—voice, respect, and neutrality—the fourth component, trustworthiness, is also built into this study (Tyler, 2006).

Data Collection

Consent information was distributed to participants via email, and a virtual interview was scheduled through the Zoom video conferencing platform since this research was conducted during the Coronavirus pandemic. Each interview was semi-structured, lasting approximately 60 minutes. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled researchers to address a set of predetermined but open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Open-ended questions for this study were designed to facilitate discussion on Title IX in athletics and obstacles and best practices related to sexual violence prevention and education. Participants received the same questions, and based on their various experiences and perspectives, they responded to the best of their knowledge. Example questions included: What challenges have you encountered in your role working with sexual violence prevention and education with student-athletes and what successful approaches have you seen in this area of sexual violence prevention and education? Other key questions involved asking about communication and collaboration between Title IX offices and athletics departments and similarities/differences between sexual violence prevention and education with student-athletes compared to the rest of the student body. This semi-structured method enabled participants to lead parts of the discussion if they wished so their voices and experiences were elevated through the interview process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Miles et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

Analysis began with transcription of the Zoom interview recordings. Next, two researchers with content expertise in Title IX and athletics read/cleaned the transcripts and participated in analytic memoing for deeper reflections (Miles et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2013). Upon completion of researchers' individual data analysis, they met to discuss memos and coding and theming processes. As a result, a hybrid of two first cycling coding methods were used: process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and versus coding (Wolcott, 2003).

Process coding is action coding and is especially helpful in examining an “ongoing action/interaction/emotion in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 96-97). This makes it particularly useful in examining stakeholders' actions and responses to Title IX sexual misconduct situations and their best practices for these problems. The four procedural justice factors emerged in stakeholders' interviews with this coding method. Additionally, bottom-up policy components like grassroots efforts, flexibility, variance, and inefficiency also emerged (Matland, 1995).

Versus coding is helpful in uncovering division regarding a phenomenon and is often employed in policy evaluation research, such as this scholarship evaluating the bottom-up policy implementation of Title IX at member institutions by local level providers (i.e., athletics administrators, compliance officers, etc.) (Matland, 1995; Wolcott, 2003). Additionally, this coding was beneficial in discovering the challenges versus the best practices concerning sexual misconduct policy prevention and education at the institutional level.

Findings

From the hybrid coding methods described above, three key challenges and corresponding best practices surfaced from participant interviews. The challenges included: (1a) a “check the box” mentality, (2a) an emphasis on external image, and (3a) information gatekeeping. The best practices included: (1b) creating a community mindset, (2b) fostering proactive stakeholder engagement, and (3b) building a scaffold of trust and communication.

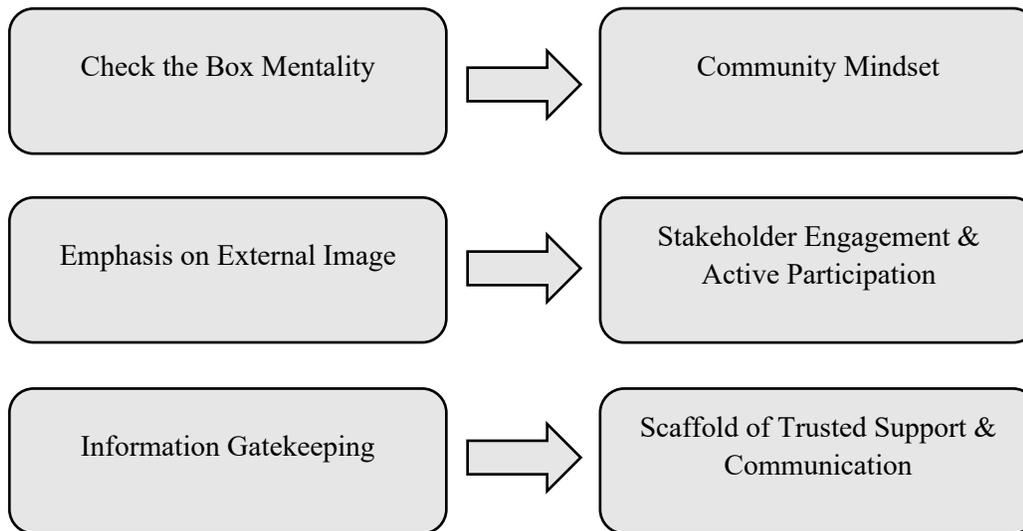


Figure 2.

Challenges and Best Practices for Sexual Violence Education

Challenge (1a): “Check the Box” Mentality

The first challenge identified by participants focused on the attitude and approach of student-athletes, coaches, and staff to sexual violence prevention and education, which many described as a “check the box” mentality (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This mindset worked to diminish the effectiveness of the Title IX training. For example, participants perceived that student-athletes held this “check the box” attitude as they were more focused on completing the training and moving to their next activity, rather than truly understanding what sexual violence prevention and education meant for their experiences at the institution. Nat, a former student-athlete, reflected on this: “I do see a lot of like training and stuff... Whether it’s diversity or nutrition or Title IX, they’re seen as this very like ‘check off the box.’” She continued on to describe the student-athlete pushback from Title IX training specifically stating: “They’re like... ‘we don’t really have this problem.’”

Participants reflected that resistance was strong amongst student-athletes due to feeling wrongly targeted because of additional Title IX training in comparison with the rest of the student body. Additionally, participants perceived that stigmas associated with student-athletes and sexual violence, as communicated through the media, television, and other outlets (Coakley, 2021), fostered feelings of defensiveness that bolstered the “check the box” mentality (Wolcott, 2003). Indeed, student-athletes may double-down on resistance when they feel unfairly singled out from the rest of the campus because of additional training requirements (Malamuth et al.,

2018). Sonia, a Title IX Coordinator, noted how she tried to meet the athletes where they were and validate their feelings of resistance: “One thing I try to do with [student-athletes] is explain, ‘yes, this is required, I get it, that makes you a little angry. Somebody else doesn't have to do this because they’re not athletes.’” Sonia’s validation of student-athletes’ attitudes meshes with procedural justice as it shows respects their voices and feelings (Harper et al., 2017).

Deputy Athletics Director, Cathy, also witnessed this mentality trickling down from the athletics department leadership and how it was perpetuated by coaches. She mentioned it was “challenging to execute programming” because administrators and coaches felt Title IX training was “just another requirement and not something they're bought into.” The lack of buy-in and resistance is significant as they make training ineffective (Malamuth et al., 2018). However, potentially worsening this issue is the fact that many athletics departments have opted for online modules or other quick fix forms of training that merely meet the NCAA and/or institution Title IX training requirements (Melnick, 2018). However, participants consistently noted that Title IX training should be intentional and focused, which is harder online. Title IX Coordinator, Marci, reflected on this intention stating she was “tired of checking boxes... I don’t think it’s helpful.” She continued: “training must be targeted to student-athletes’ needs.” Marci’s idea of fitting education to student-athletes aligns with the NCAA’s Tool Kit on Sexual Violence which states that Title IX education is most effective when it is tailored to meet the “specific identified needs of the student-athletes on their campuses” (NCAA, 2022, p. 8).

Best Practice (1b): Community Mindset Approach

To limit a “check the box” attitude and grow buy-in from student-athletes, coaches, and administrators, the majority of participants felt it was best to adopt a community mindset approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Wolcott, 2003). A community mindset is a perspective that proactively seeks like-minded individuals to grow a relational network used to achieve the same goals. These networks further support the use of procedural justice as they allow for various voices to be heard and respect and trust to be fostered (Harper et al., 2017). For this group of participants, this involved cultivating a sense of student-athletes as role models for the student body and representatives of the institution regarding sexual violence prevention and education.

Participants expressed building this mindset could decrease resistance to sexual violence prevention, particularly with student-athletes. Participants encouraged student-athletes to consider their roles as leaders on campus and in local communities and their potential to bring about positive contributions. For example, Cathy felt that it was her job to “reframe” sexual violence prevention through the community mindset, helping student-athletes view this training as “how to be a good citizen and how to be a good community member” instead of additional obligations that took away from their athletic duties.

Title IX Coordinator, Frances, noted a similar sentiment, in that she “really highlighted their role as leaders on their campuses to then help them see that they carry not a burden, but awesome responsibility.” She also explained to student-athletes that their responsibility was not just with Title IX, but also as school ambassadors. Thus, their responsibility and influence spread across a host of important issues.

Zach, a Senior Associate AD, commented that education and prevention is “all about empowering [student-athletes] to say we can ensure that you know this information.” He continued to state that even if the student-athletes do not use or need this information for themselves, it could be beneficial for them to share with or at least be knowledgeable in situations with other community members. Sonia added similar sentiments to the conversation:

I just try to point out that they're a 'captured audience...' Athletics is one of those captured audiences that has so much support and I just want to make sure I'm getting as much education and training out there so they can get that support and then, hopefully, if they're knowledgeable enough, they can help somebody outside of athletics also.

The perspectives of Zach and Sonia are also acknowledged in the NCAA's Sexual Violence Tool Kit, which states that "the voice, visibility, and size of athletics enable it to be a major part of a solution that makes campuses safe for all students" (NCAA, 2022, p. 12). Deputy AD, Xavier commented on how fostering a community mindset over the past few years has changed the way student-athletes and their teams engage with Title IX programming (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). He said that the teams in his department are now "really trying to get a better understanding, and there's a lot of buy-in when he asks them 'how do we make this culture better?'"

Still, a few participants perceived instilling fear about the risks of committing acts of sexual violence was necessary for Title IX education. Dean of Students, Vivian, stated the following: "Student-athletes need to understand what they have to lose. That they in many ways, have more to lose than the general members of the student body. They really have to examine their decisions." However, as most participant perspectives did not align with Vivian's, it is likely that most Title IX practitioners do not see fear tactics as a best practice.

Challenge (2a): Emphasis on External Image

External image pressure is a common motivation for athletics departments finding themselves in media firestorms when student-athletes, coaches, or administrators are accused or convicted or alleged of wrongdoing (Clotfelter, 2019; Rauhley & Fall, 2009). With sexual violence, it is no different (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). Former student-athlete, Nat, reflected that reticence from administrators to take proactive measures or programming came from a lack of media pressure or exposure. She discussed a specific instance while trying to form a sexual violence survivor support group, but because there was no external pressure—say from a current Title IX scandal—the athletics department was less invested:

Every time I would talk with our athletics department about a specific initiative I was working on I was met with a lot of hostility... 'we can't do that' or 'we can do something small.' It was their response to pretty much everything... unless it was a crisis, they wouldn't do anything.

Nat perceived that the athletics department administration was in the "business of keeping their image." Nat continued: "If it's not like a Larry Nassar case, then you're not going to really be heard." The irony in this statement is that hundreds of student-athletes were found to have confided in and sought support from mandated reporters like administrators, coaches, and staff at MSU, and yet, these survivors were not truly heard until the amount of evidence was so insurmountable that Nassar had to be brought to trial (Hauser & Astor, 2018).

The fear of unsavory public attention created concerns amongst participants that athletics departments prioritized external image over true Title IX and related education (Wolcott, 2003). Marci provided the following about this dynamic: "You know, student-athletes, especially if they're high profile, there are some challenges that might come from the department just thinking about the press." Additionally, Title IX Coordinator Frances laid it out clearly: "Mr. Joe

who's just a student on campus and they assaulted someone... it doesn't always make the headline news. But if it's a basketball or football player that tends to make some pretty big headlines.”

Across interviews, participants perceived that media attention influenced the reporting and response to sexual misconduct in athletics departments. Frances noted, “one of the barriers to reporting is that everyone knows your business just because we're so small, and so I think on athletics teams it's even smaller.” As a result, tensions are high when there are reports of sexual misconduct committed by student-athletes, a finding backed in other literature on sexual violence in athletics spaces (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). Brittany, a Senior Associate Athletics Director, recognized a particular challenge regarding the image of her athletics department: What to do when a survivor of sexual violence does not want to go through a formal disciplinary process? She expressed: “We have a lot of external criticism if there's a report of any sort and the complainant doesn't want to be a part of it, then people think we're sweeping it under the rug.”

Even when a lack of action is requested by the survivor, there is a common perception of “sweeping” sexual violence reports “under the rug.” This is likely due to a long legacy of the inadequacies of athletic departments to appropriately respond to sexual misconduct (Clotfelter, 2019; Jacoby, 2019; Osborne, 2015). Additionally, this undermines the goals of local actors seeking procedural justice as this perception decreases the goals of trust and neutrality (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007). One way to combat this perception and improve the departmental image is to foster stakeholders' active engagement in Title IX education programs.

Best Practice: (2b): Proactive Stakeholder Engagement

In order to combat the emphasis on external image and forsaking appropriate internal response to Title IX violations related to sexual violence, participants identified proactive engagement from athletics departments—from student-athletes, coaches, and administrators—as critical (Wolcott, 2003). Proactive, rather than reactive, engagement was seen as an avenue to break longstanding practices within athletics communities that issues related to Title IX are only issues once they become public knowledge. Cathy spoke to the importance of this approach in “truly bridging the gap between doing enough to meet requirements for compliance versus truly successful programs.”

Marci noted, that as a Title IX Coordinator, she has witnessed an increase in interest from the athletics department in sexual violence resources, stating: “athletic teams are asking for and wanting climate assessments to help initiate some change surrounding sex and gender issues.” This is an example of stakeholders working together to proactively engage and participate in education related to Title IX. Actions like these move athletics departments away from reactive strategies that merely meet the NCAA's Policy on Campus Sexual Violence and other institutional guidelines, to a space where athletics personnel are appropriately trained, student-athletes are educated, and the community knows resources are available. This can help move the needle from sole emphasis on external image, to emphasis on swift reporting and support, and ultimately care for the community (Harper et al., 2017).

Challenge (3a): Information Gatekeeping

Information gatekeeping related to sexual violence reporting and confidentiality were mentioned as some of the most common challenges by participants. Title IX guidance includes employees who act as mandatory reporters and have a legal obligation to pass on information related to sexual misconduct to the appropriate Title IX-related official (U.S. DOE, 2011). While

all information regarding sexual misconduct in athletics must be reported to Title IX campus offices, the information does not flow from Title IX to athletics in the same way. Not all reports of sexual misconduct will be shared with an athletics department due to survivor and alleged perpetrator confidentiality.

Vivian, a Dean of Students, elaborated that because this kind of “information is extremely powerful,” it is critical to “define when and what information should and can be shared.” She added that notification of a Title IX report to coaches, trainers, or administrators were conducted on a “need to know basis to really try to keep things as close to the vest as possible.” Similarly, with sexual violence cases involving student-athletes, Deputy Athletics Director Cathy mentioned that “lack of trust comes as a result of the coaches, in particular, wanting to have information about their student-athletes,” especially when the Title IX officers discussed they could not provide that information per the statute. This lack of trust works against procedural justice (Harper et al., 2017).

Almost every participant pointed out that no one in athletics was in charge of Title IX investigative responsibilities. Still, participants encountered instances in which coaches and athletics administrators wanted to know or tried to pry for information related to student-athletes potentially involved in Title IX cases. Deputy Athletics Director Krystal believed that this was done by coaches for two reasons. First, she stated “it’s challenging for coaches to know where their role starts and ends.” Second, she perceived that some coaches were struggling to adapt to cultural and policy changes related to Title IX and proper reporting. Krystal reflected that she’s talked with many coaches who say “well we used to handle this ourselves, you know it’s nothing.” Still, she explained to coaches that they could not have this information, which, ironically, if the coaches were actively engaged in Title IX training, would know. Former student-athlete Nat provided the perception at her own institution that “athletics is its own beast and they do not communicate with anyone else.”

Still, most participants were clear in their perceptions that coaches/administrators wanting to know about Title IX issues was not because they wanted to meddle in investigations or reports, but rather because of their care for student-athletes. Cathy elaborated:

People generally are so caring that they want to try and fix this, they want to follow up and really help people...I think just educating them and making sure they understand, that yes, athletics has always worked a certain way, but they can’t work that certain way anymore.

Best Practice (3b): Scaffold of Trust and Communication

Many participants expressed trust and communication was integral for coordinating successful sexual violence education and prevention with a campus’s Title IX offices and the athletics department. This aligns with the lens of procedural justice (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007). Despite noting, at times, a general absence of such channels, most participants stated communication was the most significant scaffold of support to create real partnership in the institution for better education and swift reporting. Vivian reflected:

Spending time developing that relationship between the Title IX office, student affairs, the student conduct office, and athletics is a goal. It cannot be an adversarial relationship, it needs to be collegial, it needs to be cooperative, it needs to be fair, and it needs to make sense for the institution.

Krystal emphasized how important the athletics department's collaboration with Title IX is for consistent messaging, especially in education: "It's just so important, because we all want to speak the same language." For example, Zach, an Associate Athletics Director, spoke about a best practice of making resources more ubiquitous throughout the department as a means to build interest in Title IX education and trust for student-athletes to come to him for guidance:

[Student-athletes] knew [Title IX] was on my monitor, they knew like 'hey if you have questions, please stop by my office' and I made a point to have [posters] out to show that I'm not only educated on the topic, but willing to be an advocate and help in going through the process.

This kind of signage signaled that Zach cared about these issues, and was a trusted resource to report to (Tyler, 2007). Others like Senior Associate Athletic Director, Brittany, highlighted the importance of athletic-specific Title IX resources to increase trusted resources for student-athletes: "We're creating a safer space for reporting so that people know they just have to pick up the phone and call me. They know I'll report it." By working to create more connections between athletics personnel and Title IX, student-athletes can feel supported by a variety of actors within their day-to-day lives at the institution and feel comfortable seeking help from athletics or Title IX staff.

Implications

This study sought to examine challenges institutions face for sexual violence prevention and education and best practices for institutions regarding sexual violence prevention and education. With this enhanced understanding, Title IX scholars and practitioners can further explore compliance related to sexual violence and implement stronger policies and procedures that not only educate stakeholders about sexual violence but work to overcome Title IX barriers and prevent future sexual violence incidents on campus and in athletics. This section highlights practical implications of this research while tying in the findings to the conceptual framework.

Practical Implications

"Check the Box" Mentality and a Community Mindset Approach. Findings from this study suggest that one way to combat a "check the box" philosophy with stakeholders participating in Title IX education and training is to establish and promote a community mindset approach within athletics and between athletics and the greater campus community. First, a community mindset focuses on athletics or campus community rather than the individual as a means to develop mutually beneficial relationships to achieve a goal, such as sexual violence education and prevention. In this way, a community mindset can enhance support for bottom-up actors (Matland, 1995; Osborne, 2015), particularly Title IX administrators, by removing a "us versus them" mentality.

With a community mindset, it becomes everyone's responsibility to know and abide by Title IX, not just the responsibility of those in the Title IX office or the athletics department's Title IX representative (Osborne, 2015; Melnick, 2018). A community mindset fosters increased buy-in as different Title IX stakeholders—student-athletes, coaches, administrators, the Title IX officers, and more—come together to creatively establish bottom-up sexual misconduct policies that take all parties into consideration (Matland, 1995; Melnick, 2018). This may further work to shift the culture surrounding sexual misconduct, which ties into breaking down the other cultural

challenges that emerged in this study such as hyper focusing on external image and information gatekeeping.

Examples of Title IX stakeholders coming together to foster a community mindset and better relationships include efforts from Yale University and University of Minnesota where student-athletes have taken on roles as peer educators for other student-athletes and non-student-athletes (Miller, 2017; Gopher Sports, 2019). These Communication and Consent Educators (CCE) and Athletes Supporting Advocacy and Prevention (ASAP), at Yale and Minnesota, respectively, highlight student-athletes as role models on campus and work to create effective change to prevent sexual misconduct.

Many participants stated that those involved in Title IX education were more focused on just getting the training done, and less interested in learning what compliance related to sexual misconduct actually meant. Thus, a second benefit of a community mindset is its potential for increased effectiveness of Title IX training. Research shows that when local actors care about their community they are more likely to invest in learning rather than merely completing a training program to “check the box” and move on (Melnick, 2018; Osborne, 2015). This also aligns with the respect element of procedural justice as a community mindset demonstrates a genuine interest and concern regarding sexual misconduct on campus and in athletics spaces (Harper et al., 2017; Melnick, 2018; Tyler, 2007).

Previous research has shown that discussions surrounding sexual assault and student-athletes is a discussion that most administrators and coaches evade (Miller, 2017). However, this group of Title IX and athletics administrators displayed passion for this topic and educating stakeholders on the importance of the statute and sexual violence education and prevention. This likely spurred interest in this education from student-athletes and others as was discussed by participants like Marci, a Deputy Title IX coordinator, which is key for a community mindset. Thus, a community mindset also challenges the boomerang effect of training discussed by Malamuth and colleagues (2018) in which interventions—like Title IX training—may result in an “increased probability that relatively high-risk males will endorse more sexually violent attitudes and be willing to behave more aggressively after the intervention compared to before” (p. 21).

In examining intervention strategies for training regarding sexual violence, literature shows that respect for and focusing on the role model and leadership status of those being trained is more effective than methods centering preaching and punishment (Byrne & Hart, 2016; Malamuth et al., 2018; Miller, 2017). Using strategies that highlight the role model status of student-athletes and deference for this group, may promote feelings of autonomy in the Title IX learning process which results in lower levels of psychological reactance to the material and better overall learning outcomes (Brehm, 1966; Malamuth et al., 2018). These ideas were mirrored in the best practices discussed by participants in this study with only one participant taking a more punishment-centric ideology with student-athlete training and education.

Emphasis on External Image and Proactive Stakeholder Engagement. Division I athletics departments are often called the front porch of institutions of higher learning as they garner widespread interest and attention and many institutions are just—if not more—well known for their athletics as they are for their academics (Clotfelter, 2019). Thus, it is common for institution and athletics leaders to hone in on their external perceptions, which is a challenge for successful sexual misconduct prevention and education. However, when it comes to situations involving stakeholder safety, like those involving Title IX, this is inappropriate (Jacoby, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). Participants perceived the best practice of proactive stakeholder engagement was an avenue to lessen the emphasis on external image when it came to issues or attention related to sexual violence on campus.

In their narratives, many participants expressed that regardless of the pressure from outside the school or athletics department, Title IX should be seen as a crucial component to organizational policy and practice. However, study participants like former student-athlete Nat and Deputy Title IX coordinator Marci, felt others did not take Title IX or associated education seriously unless there was a related scandal unfolding (e.g., Larry Nassar and MSU). Rather, they saw their institutional actors being more passive in their approach to sexual violence cases, which they perceived aligned with the traditional “good ole boys’ club” culture present in Division I athletics (Coakley, 2021; Jacoby, 2019; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017).

Every instance of sexual violence should be treated as a crisis, whether it is front page news or not. Dismantling this perception that Title IX only matters in times of scandal is a key component to training and promoting proactive stakeholder engagement (Crosset, 2016; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017; Osborne, 2015; Ruihley & Fall, 2009). This can also break down the idea that “what happens in athletics, stays in athletics,” and build a healthier campus and community mindset discussed in the first best practice.

Intercollegiate athletics has a longstanding history when it comes to caring about external image and narrowly focusing on Title IX during scandals (Crosset, 2015; Hughes, 2015; Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017). The belief that institutions care more about protecting student-athletes accused of sexual misconduct than protecting other non-student-athletes or victims on campus is a common public perception, that is sometimes correct. Indeed, instances of sweeping Title IX concerns under the rug were seen across institutions involved in recent Title IX cases (e.g., Baylor, LSU, MSU, and SJSU). These actions challenge the procedural justice components of neutrality and trustworthiness (Harper et al., 2017; Tyler, 2007). Concealing Title IX issues related to athletics demonstrates a favoring of student-athletes and sports over cases involving non-student-athletes outside of the athletics department. This further perpetuates stereotypes against student-athletes that they are sexually deviant and violent (Coakley, 2021; Hughes, 2015). Additionally, these actions do not foster trust and are likely to hinder future survivors from coming forward to report sexual violence encounters (Lavigne & Schlabach, 2017).

Proactive engagement can lessen the notion that athletics departments and schools sweep potentially negative information under the rug in order to preserve a positive external image. If the campus and general public see that a school, athletics department, and stakeholders are proactively engaging in education, training, and campaigns against sexual violence, it is less likely those educated would ignore reports of sexual misconduct. Most importantly, this could shift the culture of the institution or athletics from one of Title IX resistance to one of Title IX respect (Lough, 2015; Malamuth et al, 2018).

In a similar vein, proactive stakeholder engagement should include the various voices of bottom-up actors across intercollegiate athletics and Title IX, such as student-athletes, coaches, administrators, and others. Having input, particularly from student-athletes, elevates their voices, which centers procedural justice in this best practice (Tyler, 2006, 2007). Continuing to listen or highlight student-athletes’ voices is another way to also promote buy-in and work against the “check the box” mentality participants struggled with. Indeed, sexual violence training is more likely to be successful when the wants/needs of various community groups, especially survivors, are considered (Malamuth et al, 2018; Melnick, 2018; Osborne, 2015). Listening to these voices can be done through climate assessment and surveys and town hall forums to promote active avenues for engagement (Osborne, 2015). In this way, a community mindset is also bolstered.

Information Gatekeeping and Scaffold of Trust and Communication. Information gatekeeping is an important but difficult concept in the Title IX space as not all stakeholders of athletics and/or Title IX need to know about a current/unfolding instance of sexual violence

(Melnick, 2018). This is primarily to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the survivor and the alleged perpetrator, as well as maintain due process (Melnick, 2018). Participants noted that the lack of ability to share information was one catalyst for tension between Title IX officials and athletics personnel, especially coaches, as coaches wanted to know more about what was going on with their student-athletes. Still, those interviewed perceived this was not a coach's ploy to interfere with a report but rather, coming from a place of care. Regardless, the perception that Title IX is "out to get" the athletics department is widespread and harmful to all parties.

Previous research in this area challenges these participants' perceptions of coach and other stakeholder involvement in Title IX issues, which ties the challenge of information gatekeeping to the challenge of focusing on external image. For example, Crosset (2015) claimed an "athletic department's concerns for a team's reputation and/or record, the welfare of the accused, or meeting NCAA requirements" can actually "conflict with the university's responsibility to respond appropriately to complaints about student behavior" (p. 77). Similarly, athletics departments may believe that student-athletes are unfairly held to higher standards regarding sexual misconduct education compared to non-student-athletes and/or that student-athletes are frequently stigmatized as the "problem" when it comes to sexual violence on campus (Crosset, 2015, p. 78; Jacoby, 2019). Desires to protect student-athletes from being stigmatized or potentially wrongfully accused of sexual misconduct may lead coaches and administrators to become overinvolved. Thus, the conflicts of interest that emerge in Title IX cases involving athletics can result in tensions across campus, increase information gatekeeping, and hinder the development of trust necessary for procedural justice (Crosset, 2016; Harper et al., 2017).

Still, when there is ability to communicate across campus about an instance of sexual misconduct, it is important to do so. Stakeholders involved at the intersection of athletics and Title IX must have strong communication channels to build a scaffold of trusted support. Further, this scaffold may result in enhancing the community mindset from the first best practice as everyone is appropriately conversing and exchanging information to ensure Title IX compliance and safety regarding sexual violence. Such communication is critical for bottom-up policy implementation, too (Matland, 1995).

Importantly, a scaffold of trust and communication should not just be at the institutional level of athletics, but also from the national level. While the NCAA does not have bylaws pertaining to Title IX and sexual violence (Jacoby, 2019), the Association and conferences should consider implementing more standardized education and training for Title IX and sexual misconduct. While the NCAA does provide its sexual violence prevention Tool Kit to membership schools, leaders on NCAA committees could create a conference or enhanced networks of local actors working at the Title IX-athletics nexus to foster more shared knowledge and resources in this area. Such sharing could foster creativity and keep practitioners abreast of new ideas while allowing them to keep their programming individualized to their specific campus' and athletics departments' needs and cultures. Additionally, more resources should be allocated to meet the additional demands from NCAA Policy on Campus Sexual Violence to ensure compliance.

Finally, at the heart of the best practice of scaffolded support and communication is trustworthiness (Tyler, 2007). Building this trust was the center of many of the participants' narratives and practices, such as Deputy Athletics Director Zach's use of posters and other information to show his care and advocacy for Title IX compliance. To establish and maintain this component, other Title IX actors must demonstrate authenticity about Title IX training, student-athletes rights and wellbeing in relation to the statute, and the rights of sexual violence survivors (Harper et al., 2017). This involves appropriate, consistent, and transparent communication to overcome the challenge of information gatekeeping. Without trustworthiness

stakeholders will not have confidence in the administration on campus and/or athletics when it comes to Title IX (Tyler, 2007).

Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion

While the sample size of this study was limited and participants self-selected to enroll, the depth received from the participants still expands scholarly and practitioner understanding of challenges and best practices for Title IX and sexual violence prevention and education. The focus of this study was Division I given the attention provided to this level of NCAA competition, but sexual misconduct is a concern across institutions in the Association. Future research could examine Divisions II and III challenges and best practices and offer a unique comparative analysis of the findings. Additionally, the field of Title IX compliance could benefit from additional perspectives from smaller institutions with potentially different budgets and priorities. In a similar vein, future studies concerning sexual violence prevention and education should include coaches. Athletes often admire their coaches while also feeling accountable to these important actors in their lives. So, exploring how coaches understand, promote, or dismiss sexual violence education and prevention can expand our field's scholarship in this area.

There are also possibilities for future research that delve deeper into the challenges and best practices. For example, a future study could provide a case study analysis of a particular institution promoting a community mindset approach or research specific channels of communication that bolster the scaffold of trust and communication. Finally, scholars could use the conceptual combination of bottom-up policy implementation and procedural justice to study the intersection of Title IX and intercollegiate athletics from a new perspective.

The current findings highlight the primary barriers and best practices for Title IX sexual violence prevention and education that emerged from Title IX stakeholders who worked on campus and/or in athletics. Crosset (2015) argued that "student-athletes may feel most accountable to the athletic department" (p. 77), so it is critical that key Title IX policy actors in athletics acknowledge their role in compliance and sexual violence education and prevention, particularly when working with student-athletes. In recognizing their roles, Title IX administrators can engage in the best practices of creating a community mindset, proactively engaging stakeholders in education/training, and supporting a scaffold trust and communication to combat the challenges of resistance, emphasis on external image, and information gatekeeping.

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