

ENTREPRENEURSHIP—A COACHING STRATEGY TO SUSTAIN DIVISION I-A  
NON-REVENUE SPORT VITALITY

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*To my family*

*Your faith, example, and encouragement are the source of my strength.  
I am so grateful for your love and support.*

## Acknowledgments

*“We don’t accomplish anything in this world alone...and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one’s life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.”*

*-Sandra Day O’Conner*

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## Preface

This inquiry has been approached through a theoretical perspective of post-positivism with an epistemology of objectivism. This objectivist epistemology is the basis of beliefs utilized within this study about how we know what we know. The objectivist epistemology “holds that meaning, and therefore meaningful reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). This research is aimed at discovering a meaning that has been there, undiscovered—there is an underlying truth to the phenomena in question.

The methodology utilized is in line with this epistemology. Post positivism is a divergence from the classical positivism research stance “which has recognized the forces of criticisms and have come to terms with them” (Robson, 2002, p. 27). For example while “positivists maintain that one reality exists and that it is the researcher’s job to discover what it is, [post-positivists] believe that a reality does exist, but consider that it can be known only imperfectly and probabilistically because of the researcher’s limitations” (Robson, 2002, p. 27).

Additionally, “while positivists hold that the researcher and the researched person are independent of each other, there is an acceptance by post-positivists that the theories, hypotheses, background knowledge and values of the researcher can influence what is observed” (Robson, 2002, p.27). However, within a post-positivistic methodology there is a “commitment to objectivity, which is approached by recognizing the possible effects of these likely biases” (Robson, 2002, p. 27). As such, I have approached the research

keenly aware of my biases and as such followed the recommendations of Peshkin to “systematically seek out [my] subjectivity” to ensure objectivity in the study (1988, p. 17).

I am a female athlete who has very much benefited from Title IX. I participated in Division I-A track and field as an athlete at a university without a men’s track & field team equivalent because it had been cut. I have also been a member of a Division I-A non-revenue sport coaching staff, and have felt the budget strain so common within the non-revenue sport arena. I have seen that dramatic affects of sport terminations as I lived in a state where every collegiate wrestling team was cut. I have also seen the potential for wrestling’s economic viability by observing an entrepreneurial coach for whom my husband wrestled. These experiences, and my deep love for non-revenue sports triggered my interest to investigate this subject.

## Abstract

Within the last decade, a trend of men's non-revenue sport cuts has swept the collegiate athletics landscape in the United States leaving few athletic programs unaffected. Particularly hard hit has been the sport of wrestling. Much of the blame for the program discontinuation movement has been levied at Title IX, and in particular its "proportionality" prong of the three-part compliance test, and for a good reason. A growing body of literature, however, supports the conclusion that Title IX does not in any way require or support the cutting of sports (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), and the amount of cuts are due to irresponsible spending in big-time revenue producing sports and the 'arms race' that is increasing the amount of expenditures at rapidly escalating rates (Knight Commission, 2004).

Due to the Title IX phenomenon, escalating costs, and subsequent losses in major sports over the last decade (NCAA, 2005), many athletic departments have significantly pinched the budgets of their non-revenue sports. Due to this squeeze, amid the ever-looming threat of program termination, some coaches have taken the pursuit of increasing demand into their own hands. These coaches have become proactive in recognizing and exploiting value-creating opportunities for their programs by sustaining funds and additional community support to supplement athletic department budgets. The purpose of this study is to explore this phenomenon; specifically, *to examine the perceptions and influences of coaches in achieving sustained viability of Division I-A wrestling programs.*

After empirical analysis using a multiple-embedded case study with the use of survey, and a theoretical foundation based upon Adam Smith's classic economic theory,

which stands as the basis of the theory of resource allocations, the following five conclusions have been developed.

1. Financial and gender equity considerations are the chief concerns in sport discontinuation decisions
2. Coaches and athletic directors have significantly different views on discontinuation criteria
3. It is becoming more important for coaches to be entrepreneurs for their programs
4. Coaches can enhance their program's chance of vitality through "Complimentary Entre-lationship Promotion"
5. Wrestling coaches should be held moderately accountable for their fan base and revenue.

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## **Chapter I Introduction**

*An athlete walks into the locker room to change into practice gear, leaving the pressure of exams and worries of college life at the door. She puts her hair in a ponytail, he puts on his shoes, she walks onto the track; he walks onto the mat...they are about to learn many of the most valuable lessons they will take away from college.*

*Collegiate athletics are housed within the university because they are educational. The academic mission of the sports, however, has largely been washed away; even many of the sports themselves are quickly eroding and joining the torrent of mounting collegiate athletic financial pressure. Perhaps the only way to maintain and shelter these values, and the sports wherein they lie is to fortify them with a force equally powerful: demand.*

Due to Title IX compliance pressures, escalating costs, and subsequent losses in major sports over the last decade (NCAA, 2005), many athletic departments have significantly pinched the budgets of their non-revenue sports. Due to this squeeze, amid the ever-looming threat of program termination that has swept the collegiate athletic landscape in the United States, some coaches have taken the pursuit of increasing demand into their own hands. These coaches have become proactive in recognizing and exploiting value-creating opportunities for their programs by sustaining funds and additional community support to supplement athletic department budgets. The purpose of this study is to explore this phenomenon; specifically, *to examine the perceptions and influences of coaches in achieving sustained viability of Division I-A wrestling programs.*

### **Conceptual Rationale**

In order to more fully understand the significance of this research, what follows is a summary of issues that collectively serve as the conceptual rationale for the study. Included in this union of issues are the increasing numbers of sport discontinuations within the Division I-A level; the history and continuing force of Title IX in the athletic department balancing act; the “arms race” of increased expenditures within big time

collegiate sports; and the national interest trends of wrestling participation and spectatorship.

### *Sport Cuts*

Within the last decade, a trend of men's non-revenue sport cuts has swept the collegiate athletics landscape in the United States leaving very few athletic programs unaffected. Interestingly, however, data gleaned from the NCAA sport sponsorship and participation report (2004) indicate an overall increase in men's participation between the years of 1988 and 2003. This data is quite surprising to the populace who has felt the extensive affect of many of these program terminations. Arguments have been levied that the reported data may not actually represent an increase in men's participation numbers, but rather are due to an increasing number of schools switching from NAIA to NCAA status. This may or may not be a well-founded claim and has yet to be fully researched.

A deeper examination of the data provides another possible explanation for the enigma. The bulk of the losses have occurred within the most visible and widely publicized NCAA category—Division I-A. The data report a net loss of 239 men's teams within the Division I category (the only division to report a net loss); with 137 of those terminated teams falling from the Division I-A category (NCAA, 2004). Despite the news of an overall gain within the NCAA men's participation numbers, a net loss of 239 teams within this division represents a significant amount of loss and is undoubtedly a large source of the program termination upheaval.

Particularly hard hit has been the sport of wrestling. Throughout the 1988-2003 period there has not been one year of positive net program gain within the sport and there has been an aggregate net loss of 107 programs (45 programs within Division I). This loss is significantly higher than any other sport's net loss. Men's tennis is second to wrestling with a loss of 68 teams (32 within Division I) (NCAA, 2003).

To better understand the wrestling predicament, it is necessary to understand the statistics that derive from the "proportionality" prong of the three-part test released in the 1979 Title IX policy interpretations which will be explained further within the Title IX section of this chapter. The proportionality prong provides the option to comply with the participation requirements of Title IX by providing participation opportunities substantially proportionate to the ratio of males to females in the student body. Many administrators have viewed this prong as their only compliance option because they have found it difficult to meet the terms of the other two prongs (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005), and the U.S. Department of Education's guidelines have designated a numerical balance to be a "safe harbor" regarding gender equity concerns (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

According to the NCAA Gender Equity Report (2003), this "safe harbor" is a long way off for many universities. The average number of Division I male participants per institution was 324.5, compared with an average of 253 Division I women per institution; an average difference of 71.5 participants per institution. Add to this difference the fact the females now outnumber males 57% to 43% on average in university student bodies (Marklein, 2005), and it becomes apparent that athletic departments have a large discrepancy to balance in order to comply with Title IX. Many athletic directors,

particularly in the face of financial pressures, have chosen to cut men's sports rather than increase opportunities for women. Wrestling is the only sport other than football with no female equivalent, and with an average squad size of 31.9, it is often an attractive shortcut taken toward compliance.

Because of the dramatic impact program elimination has had on the sport of wrestling and the Division I-A category in particular, this research has been delimited to the study of Division I-A athletic directors, Division I-A wrestling coaches, and clusters of data surrounding these categories within specific focus wrestling programs.

### ***Title IX***

Much of the blame for the program discontinuation movement has been levied at Title IX, and for a good reason. As we sport enthusiasts, participants, and administrators all-to-well know, Title IX is the legislation, which, through its 37 words has "changed the face of American sport forever" (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p.3): "*No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance*" (U.S.C. §§ 1681-1987).

What follows is a discussion of a few pertinent landmarks in Title IX law history and evolution that are critically important to the understanding of the role that Title IX has played, and continues to play, in the actions of athletic directors, and the debate within the literature regarding sport program discontinuations. This discussion is succinct and non-inclusive in order to briefly cover only those landmarks that most directly impact the issues researched.

**1972: Title IX is passed** Title IX was enacted on June 23, 1972. A six-year grace period was established to allow schools to come into compliance while simultaneously allowing time for regulations to be written to measure compliance. Responsibility for the development and enforcement of policy was delegated to what is now the Department of Education. Title IX was written to apply to any educational program, however much of the early debate regarding the law centered on its application to athletics.

**1978: Mandatory compliance date** The 1978 mandatory compliance date passed without considerable equity existing, but it served as an important point in time that put institutions at risk of sanctions for failure to conform with the law's requirements. The posed sanctions included a denial of federal funding, including a withholding of future Federal grants for the institution in offense (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

**1979: Policy interpretations** A final draft of policy interpretations, designed specifically for intercollegiate athletics, was added to the federal register on December 11, 1979. These interpretations delineated detailed necessities for compliance achievement related to contentious issues that had been raised within the previous years. It additionally provided a 3-part test to assess whether an institution is providing "nondiscriminatory participation opportunities for individuals of both sexes" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, ¶ 7). An institution's compliance could (and theoretically still can) be achieved in any one of the following ways: 1) Provide participation opportunities substantially proportionate to the ratio of males to females in the student body (the proportionality prong), 2) Show a history and continuing practice of upgrading programs for the under-represented sex, 3) Meet the interests and abilities of the under-represented sex (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

***1984-1987: Grove City College v. Bell - Civil Rights Restoration Act*** The Grove City case represented a significant weakening of the law in application to intercollegiate athletics until its ruling was later changed in 1987 with the passing of the Civil Rights Restoration Act. In Grove City, the court determined that only subunits that actually received federal money were included in the term “program” (Grove City College v. Bell, 1984). Until the law was changed the effect was substantial. Within weeks of the decision, scholarships for female athletes at many schools were discontinued, women’s teams were terminated, OCR complaint investigations were halted, and lawsuits were dismissed (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005).

The vocal wrestling proponents who have so strongly fought to defend their sport against “Title IX attacks,” have been continuously faced with the reality that while Title IX was in decline between 1982 and submission during this time period, the number of wrestling teams declined at a rate almost three times as high as the rate of decline during the twelve years after Title IX’s application was reestablished by the Civil Rights Restoration Act. These figures bolster the argument that the reasons why wrestling numbers continue to decline is because of an overall decline in the interest in the sport (Samuels & Galles, 2003; Burk & Plumly, 2003). This argument may have been true during that time period—at this point it is difficult to determine. Recent high school participation numbers, however, do not support a conclusion that wrestling popularity is in decline at this time. Specifics on this topic will be covered in the “national interest trends” conceptual rationale section later in this chapter.

**1992: *Franklin v. Gwinnet County Public Schools*** The *Franklin v. Gwinnet* case marks a pivotal point in Title IX legislation history. Some authors have even divided Title IX into the pre and post *Franklin-Gwinnet* eras (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). The court decision in this case ruled that monetary damages are available to the successful Title IX plaintiff (*Franklin v. Gwinnet County Public Schools* 1992). “This decision put every institution on notice that it now faced a realistic threat of losing substantial and unpredictable amounts of money for noncompliance. In response, many institutions decided that compliance was more fiscally sound than noncompliance” (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p. 124). Up until this time, because of the wide spread lack of compliance throughout the nation, the threat of sanctions was minimal because very few were in compliance. With the new threat of lawsuits, more athletic directors were faced with the reality that they actually would have to comply with one of the three prongs set forth within the 1979 policy interpretations. For many fiscally strained athletic departments, this new pressure led to decisions to cut men’s sport programs (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2001).

From this time forward, lawsuits rather than OCR complaints became the enforcement method of choice in most situations. With each lawsuit, the law and its interpretation grew in depth bringing Title IX application and enforcement to where it is today (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). A few cases pertinent to this research are discussed below.

**1993: *Favia v. Indiana University of Pennsylvania*** Facing institution-wide budget cuts, Indiana University of Pennsylvania cut two women’s teams and two men’s teams. The women and other female athletes joined in a class-action suit. The court

ruled that fiscal difficulties are not an excuse for discrimination (*Favia v. Indiana University of Pennsylvania*, 1993).

**1993: *Gonyo v. Drake*** Drake University athletic administrators cut the men's wrestling team in order to reduce their athletic department expenditures. The wrestlers sued seeking reinstatement. At the time, however, 75% of the Drake athletes were males despite a 42% male student body. The court in *Gonyo* ruled that cutting the men's sport did not adversely affect proportionality and therefore the wrestling team had no legal recourse under Title IX (*Gonyo v. Drake*, 1993).

**1999: *Neal v. Board of Trustees of California State University*** In order to improve the male/female athletic participant ratio at California State University at Bakersfield, the athletic administrators reduced and limited the number of male athletes rather than increase the number of female athletes. This improved the ratio despite reducing the total number of athletes who could profit from the experience. "Roster management is a euphemism for limiting male participation to meet the proportionality prong of the three-part accommodation test" (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p.148). This case substantiated how the courts would respond to roster management as a vehicle for compliance under prong three.

**2002: *Chalenor et al. v. University of North Dakota*** Financial shortages in addition to concerns related to finding a way to comply with the proportionality prong led the University of North Dakota to cut their wrestling team. The team members sued citing their rights had been violated under Title IX. The court declared it legal to cut a men's team rather than increase female participation (*Chalenor et al. v. University of North Dakota*, 2002).

***2003: National Wrestling Coaches Association v. U.S. Department of Education***

Mounting aggravation stemming from increased program cuts in late 2002, and early 2003 led a group of non-revenue sport advocates headed by the National Wrestling Coaches Association to file suit against the Department of Education with the goal to alter Title IX enforcement. The main contention of the Association was that “the regulations,” with an emphasis on the 3-prong test, “artificially limit the number of male athletes and essentially establish an illegal quota system in an effort to attain gender equity” (Goplerud, 2003, 124).

The U.S. constitution requires lawsuits levied against the federal government to meet the minimal requirements for legal standing: injury, causation, and redressability in order for the suit to enter the federal court system. The lawyers were not able to demonstrate whether it was the association that was injured; its members, or the coaches and athletes at the institutions. Further, it was not clear whether the cause was associated with the interpretation of Title IX and its corresponding enforcement, or whether the cause was centered on campus-based decisions. Further, even if the first two elements of legal standing were met, it was unclear whether the injury could be remedied. “The court had no power to force the institutions that had terminated their teams (which were not parties to the lawsuit) to make better decisions or to reinstate previously terminated wrestling teams” (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p. 187). The lawsuit, therefore, did not meet the three elements of legal standing. Thus, on June 11, 2003, it was dismissed (National Wrestling Coaches Association v. U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

*2002: The Federal Commission on Opportunities in Athletics* In June of 2002, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Roderick Paige, formed a Commission on Opportunity in Athletics—the first federal advisory panel to study Title IX. The commission was established as a response to mounting debate surrounding several issues including (but not limited to) the lack of enforcement by OCR throughout the life of Title IX, the decisions made by athletic administrators to terminate men’s teams in the name of Title IX, the sky-rocketing expenses within football and the other major sports which are making it difficult for administrators to expand female opportunities in their effort toward compliance, and perhaps, as critics have poised, a “power base in government who believed themselves to be unrestrainable” (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p.201 ).

From inception to conclusion, the commission was criticized for being biased and flawed in its methodology. The commission membership itself was largely questioned because ten of the fifteen members represented Division I-A programs—there were no members from Division II, Division III, high schools, junior colleges, or NAIA institutions, all of which would be subject to any Title IX regulation changes made by the commission. The process of collecting “broad based input,” was equally contentious, because the Office for Civil Rights staff screened potential presenters during four town-hall style meetings throughout the country and ultimately determined who could present (Osborne, 2003). This screening was particularly outrageous for those lobbying to leave Title IX unchanged, because only 15 of the 53 presenters spoke on behalf of the legislation (Osborne, 2003).

“The 12-month period covering the life span of the commission was one of tumult and turmoil for anyone who was watching...Commissioners displayed their ignorance of

the law and their failure to do their homework, biases surfaced, and votes occurred with illogical lack of consistency. Tempers flared, and emotions ran high” (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005, p. 191). The final report, “Open to All: Title IX at Thirty,” was issued on February 26, 2003 and was greeted “with far more criticism than the group’s leaders had anticipated” (Suggs, 2003, A40). It included 23 recommendations, with 15 approved unanimously by the commission. In an attempt to assuage fears, perhaps, Paige stated that the Department of Education would only “move forward” on the unanimous recommendations (Suggs, 2003, A40).

***2003: Further Clarification Letter*** Three components within the commission’s letter are of particular importance to this study. One section emphasizes the position that OCR holds regarding program termination. “OCR hereby clarifies that nothing in Title IX requires the cutting or reduction of teams in order to demonstrate compliance with Title IX, and that the elimination of teams is a disfavored practice. Because the elimination of teams diminishes opportunities for students who are interested in participating in athletics instead of enhancing opportunities for students who have suffered from discrimination, it is contrary to the spirit of Title IX for the government to require or encourage an institution to eliminate athletic teams” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 3).

The report also emphasized that OCR will “aggressively enforce Title IX standards” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p3), which serves as a warning to institutions that Title IX enforcement is a reality. This will mean, perhaps, that institutions that are not currently compliant may take additional steps to bring their

school to gender equality, which may in some circumstances where fiscal difficulties stand, mean additional program terminations.

A final point of emphasis from this report is that “private sponsorship of athletic teams will continue to be allowed” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p.3). This is an interesting inclusion within the report. It serves as a statement affirming the possible need for institutions, administrators, and coaches, to become proactive and secure private funding where possible to help overcome the financial deficits facing so many athletic departments. This is the subject of research within this study.

To many observers, the commission and this further clarification of Title IX was the end of the Title IX debate. Thirty years after inception, the law really hadn’t changed much, and proponents were hoping that it would stay this way. The NCAA ran its story on the issuance of the 2003 letter under the headline “Department of Education Closes the Book on Title IX” (NCAA News, 2003). But, as it appears, this was not the end.

**2005: “Dear Colleague” Further Clarification of Prong 3** To the shock of many and to the horror of others, one of the recommendations within the commission’s report that did not receive unanimous approval was advanced on March 17, 2005. James Manning, a representative for the O.C.R. and U.S. Department of Education issued a “dear colleague” letter that additionally clarified part three of the three-prong test. In order for the third prong to be satisfied, an institution must demonstrate that the underrepresented sex’s sports programs fully and effectively accommodate the interests of female students and potential students. Under this avenue of title IX compliance, “an institution may provide proportionally fewer athletic participation opportunities to one sex, as compared to its enrollment rate,” and even continue to add more athletic

opportunities for the overrepresented sex without any imposed limitations, “if the interests and abilities of the enrolled and admitted students of the underrepresented sex are being fully and effectively accommodated by the institution’s current varsity athletics program” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 3).

This prong is widely accepted as the most difficult prong to satisfy because traditionally it has been difficult to verify compliance. The belief, “that some institutions may be uncertain about the factors OCR considers under part three, and they may mistakenly believe that part three offers less than a completely safe harbor” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. v), is a major reason cited by O.C.R for issuing the report: The additional clarification letter, users guide, and related technical reports issued are designed to provide direction to schools that choose to comply with part three (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

The new clarification is an obvious departure from the previous ruling in *Cohen v. Brown* (1997) where a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit ruled that surveys and ratios could not be used to determine compliance and that to do so would freeze opportunities for women at a level engendered by past discriminatory practices. The new policy puts the burden of proof on students and government investigators, through surveys, that a college is not doing enough to accommodate women’s athletic interests and abilities.

The letter emphasized that each prong of the three-part test is a safe harbor, and that a purpose of the Additional Clarification and User’s Guide is to help reinforce the flexibility of the three-part test (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Manning also reminded the reader “that nothing in Title IX or the three-part test requires the cutting or

reduction of opportunities for the overrepresented sex, and OCR has pledged to seek remedies that do not involve the elimination of opportunities” (2005, p. v).

This clarification is being met with significant opposition (Suggs, 2005), and it’s too early to tell what the consequences of this particular chapter may entail. Research into this new policy, and athletic director responses as to its potential affect are included within chapter two.

Thirty-three years following the enactment of Title IX, the debate is still raging. Most institutions are on their way to compliance, and many have dropped their wrestling teams en route. There has certainly been tremendous growth and success of women’s sports, however the side-affects are also apparent. This in many ways Title-IX-promulgated trend of sport discontinuations and the on-going debate as to the culpability of the legislation serves as an important conceptual backdrop to this study.

### ***“Arms Race”***

Critics of Title IX are generally not anti-women’s rights. They are simply anti-sport cuts, and believe that the “increase in opportunities for women should not come at the expense of opportunities for men” (Klinker, 2003, p. 81). Most anti-Title IX literature sites the increasing numbers in men’s sport cuts. However, a growing body of literature supports the conclusions reached by the eight appellate courts, and the recently appointed commission. Title IX does not in any way require or support the cutting of sports, (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), and the amount of cuts are due to irresponsible spending in big-time revenue producing sports and the ‘arms race’ that is

increasing the amount of expenditures at rapidly escalating rates (Women's Sports Foundation, 2002; Suggs, 2001; Suggs, 2003).

This "arm's race" is eloquently described by Robert Frank in the latest publication by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2004). "Any given athletic director," he writes,

knows that his school's odds of having a winning program will go up if it spends a little more than it's rivals on coaches and recruiting. But the same calculus is plainly visible to all other schools...the gains from bidding higher turn out to be self-canceling when everyone does it. The result is often an expenditure arms race with no apparent limit (p 5).

One example of this is the \$388,000 average base salary of a division I-A football coach, which represents an increase slightly above 80% in real terms over the 1998 average (Knight Foundation Commission, 2004).

Because of this winner-take-all market that big time sports has become,

Colleges are doing everything they can to preserve their chances of hitting the jackpot by getting their football teams to bowl games and their basketball squads to the Final Four. They'll do what they can to be competitive in sports their fans care about...but everything else that isn't covered by Title IX is expendable (Suggs, 2001, A45).

This explains why athletic directors often cut teams with annual budgets of under \$600,000 because of "budget constraints," while paying individual coaching contracts well beyond the same figure (Suggs, 2001), and maintaining a football roster with eighty-five full scholarships, while the NFL can easily make do with 58 players (Griffith, 2003).

Using data from the 2001 NCAA Revenue and Expenses Report, the average Division I-A Deficit was \$600,000. It is equally interesting to note the average student fee contribution of \$1,425,000. When summed, these figures represent an average operating deficit of \$2,025,000 (NCAA, 2001). Given these numbers, along with the

realization that the sports being cut are “non-revenue” in nature, any prudent athletic director that acts as a profit-maximizer faced with a potential Title IX lawsuit regarding proportionality would choose to cut a men’s unprofitable sport rather than add a women’s unprofitable sport.

For much of collegiate athletic history, the educational value of the sports was enough to justify their existence, but in the increasingly big business that is becoming collegiate athletics, financial justification is becoming more and more a reality (Howard & Crompton, 2004). If this trend continues, and gains enough momentum to lower the team quotas required by conferences, women’s *unprofitable* sports are equally as vulnerable, and probably next in line.

Clearly the financial pressures looming over any athletic director are a significant contributing factor to not only the sport discontinuation equation, but also the potential role that an entrepreneurial coach can play. Any dollar brought in by a non-revenue sport is one dollar less that the athletic director must find to support that program.

### ***National Interest Trends***

Fundamental to the development of this study is an understanding of whether wrestling program discontinuations are primarily due to financial problems; whether Title IX is primarily responsible; or whether, as the critics who cite the decline in participation during the 1980s argue, wrestling is simply a declining sport.

Wrestling proponents cite the steady increase in the number of high school boys participants and teams with an average growth rate of 3% that equates to roughly 610 new athletes per year. Also cited are the numbers showing that girls wrestling is also a

growing sport program. For a complete listing of highschool participation numbers for boys and girls see **Tables 1.1 & 1.2** ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org), 2005).

Year	Wrestling Participants	Sponsor Schools
1990-91	230,763	8,404
1998-99	235,973	9,022
2003-04	238,700	9,526

Year	Wrestling Participants	Sponsor Schools
1990-91	132	21
1998-99	2,361	132
2003-04	4,008	236

Wrestling proponents can also point to data that indicate the steady growth of USA wrestling, the national governing body for amateur wrestling in the United States ([ncmat.com](http://ncmat.com), 2000); and the fact that wrestling is the number three revenue producer among all NCAA D-I championships ([ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org), 2005).

These numbers suggest that wrestling is still in demand. Skeptics argue, however, that these increases simply mirror population growth. This argument can be put to rest by comparing high school participation per capita figures by state using 2003-04 high school participation and 2003 census estimate numbers with the same statistics John Rooney (1974) compiled in his 1974 geographical census of sport. The data support a conclusion that wrestling participation per capita has in fact increased: From 1 in every 59.8 people in the 14-17 age group wrestling in the 1972-72 school year to 1 in every 57.59 people in 2003-04. Additionally, the spread of participation rates between states has declined

putting to rest the argument that perhaps these increases have occurred primarily in a few atypical wrestling-dominant states. Participation is now more evenly distributed. In 1972-73, the standard deviation was .826 in units of participants away from the participation average, and the 2003-04 standard deviation has decreased to .534 indicating less variability in participation per capita between states. .

This data reveals that interest in wrestling is not a sport on the decline at all, but rather a sport that is slowly increasing in participation at the high school level. However, with the increasing sport cuts at the collegiate level this trend may not continue, and greater numbers of college students will be without the opportunity to wrestle in intercollegiate athletics. Being able to disprove the argument that wrestling is a dying sport is another critical component to the conceptual rationale founding of this study.

This phenomenon of increased high school wrestling participation and simultaneous decrease in collegiate wrestling participation coupled with the other facets of the conceptual rationale discussed (sport cut trends, Title IX, and the “arms race” of expenditures) point toward a conclusion that *the primary problem facing men’s sports involves the allocation of resources*. The *majority* of wrestling programs, logically, have been discontinued because universities have either chosen to 1) decrease expenditures in men’s sports in order to fund the expansion of women’s sports, or 2) cut back on unprofitable expenditures in order to reallocate the funds to more profitable sources within the athletic department umbrella.

### Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study is based upon a portion of Adam Smith's (1776) work, which involves his systematic analysis of the behavior of individuals pursuing their self-interest in a competitive economy. Smith's (1776) doctrine remains fundamental to the theory of the allocation of resources—resources seek their most profitable uses. The synopsis of the theory can be found within the following sentence: *“The quantity of every commodity naturally regulates itself according to the demand of those who are willing to pay the whole rent, labor, and profits which must be paid in order to bring the product to market”* (Smith, 1776, p. 63).

According to Adam Smith, the reason these sports are being cut is a lack of demand. As long as there are individuals who are willing to pay for the product, it will continue to flow to the market. In the case of wrestling, at one point the demand related to the educational value of the sports was enough to justify its existence, but in the increasingly big business that is intercollegiate sports, financial justification is the reality. Athletic directors, for example, are unwilling to pay the whole rents, labor, and profits necessary to bring wrestling programs to market because the demand competes with other sports where patrons are willing to pay part of the freight. No longer is demand by educators to provide an educational experience for athletes enough, there needs to be more: demand by fans, donors, local high school participants, and educators “who are willing to pay the whole rent, labor, and profits which must be paid in order to bring the product to market” (Smith, 1776, p. 63).

The theory has been sustained throughout the ages, and seems to be imminently applicable to this situation. The questions remaining are: 1) What specifically can be

done to increase this demand enough to stop wrestling programs from being terminated; and 2) Who can best facilitate and promote this demand? A proposed answer is the entrepreneurial coach.

Due to the escalating cost and subsequent losses in major sports over the last decade in particular (NCAA, 2001), many athletic departments have significantly pinched the budgets of their non-revenue sports. Due to this squeeze, amid the ever-looming threat of program termination, some coaches have taken the task of increasing demand into their own hands and have become proactive in recognizing and exploiting value creating opportunities for their programs by sustaining funds and additional community support to supplement athletic department budgets. The purpose of this study is to explore this phenomenon; specifically, *to examine the perceptions and influences of coaches in achieving sustained viability of Division I-A wrestling programs.*

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This exploration has a foundation based upon a plethora of excellent literature. The literature encapsulating Title IX and its affects is vast, and the literature supporting and developing the theoretical perspective have provided an excellent launch pad. Only a few researchers, however, have empirically studied the motives for program termination (General Accounting Office, 2001, Williamson (1983), Gray & Pelzer (1995), Marburger (2003), Leland & Peters (2003); potential ways to offset or reverse program discontinuation decisions (James & Ross, 2004), or the affect of an entrepreneurial coach (Robinson, Miller, & John, 2003). This literature is discussed below.

### Literature Review

#### *Title IX's New Additional Clarification*

At the onset of this inquiry, the controversial new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys was in its primacy, and the affects it could potentially have on the collegiate athletics landscape were very much a mystery. This addition to the Title IX wealth of literature was explored by Weight (in press) and is critically important to the development of this study in order to build a solid foundation of understanding of the role this clarification may play on the sport discontinuation landscape.

Weight explored the reactions of Division I-A athletic directors toward the clarification through the use of survey and found that the majority of the sampled athletic directors reported skepticism toward the clarification, and no intent to utilize the surveys

as a primary method of Title IX compliance. The author used legitimacy theory to juxtapose athletic director responses with the criticisms of the legislation that have been levied. These criticisms are based on the fear that athletic directors will utilize the survey method of compliance to simply satisfy the legal demands of Title IX (achieve legitimacy) without necessarily striving for equality of opportunity. Based on the findings, Weight argued “if this new clarification is truly an ‘easy way out’ of Title IX compliance, the majority of Division I-A athletic directors do not want to take this route of legitimacy in the eyes of legislators, because perhaps this route will not achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the public and key stakeholders” (in press).

Because the athletic directors surveyed within this study for the most part reported skepticism toward the clarification, and no intent to utilize the surveys as a primary method of Title IX compliance, it appears that the Title IX landscape has not significantly changed at this time, and thus the purpose of this study will not be altered by its subsistence.

### ***Sport Discontinuation***

The United States General Accounting Office conducted a groundbreaking study within this niche exploring primarily how colleges and universities made and implemented decisions to discontinue sport teams, and what strategies were used to avoid discontinuing the teams (2001). They conducted this inquiry through an athletic director survey, and four case studies within a variety of NCAA divisions. The researchers found that within all NCAA divisions, insufficient student interest most often greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue men’s teams. Athletic directors reported gender equity requirements as the second factor that greatly or very greatly affected the

decision to discontinue a men's team followed closely by the number three reason which was resources needed for other sports.

Another important finding within the GAO study pertinent to the foundation of this research is the differing strategies used by universities to avoid program discontinuation. Within the time period of 1992-2000, the 693 schools that added one or more intercollegiate athletic teams without discontinuing a team "pursued creative strategies to build athletic programs without discontinuing teams" (2001, p.25). These "creative strategies" included several methods of raising revenue and cutting costs. Fundraising efforts included seeking donations, renting athletic facilities, providing overflow parking for city events, and hosting events. Cost containment strategies included recruiting via telephone, replacing full-time faculty positions with a coach, limiting the size of the football roster, and limiting team travel, among other strategies (GAO, 2001). This "creative strategy" conclusion serves as an important source of founding evidence to support the hypothesis that some type of entrepreneurial effort is linked to program protection.

In many ways the GAO inquiry is similar to this study. The researchers explored reasons for cuts by surveying athletic directors. They then studied a few cases more in depth to discover best practices. There are, however, significant differences within this study which will further the knowledge within the field. Whereas the GAO studied a broad scope of divisions and sports, this study focuses solely on Division I-A, and wrestling. The reasons that prompt Division I-A programs to cut a certain sport may be completely different from other divisions that drop a particular sport. This is also true of additions. In Division II and III, it is possible to get additional funding to add sports. One

of the great weaknesses of the GAO study was that for the most part all divisions were lumped when “why” or “how” issues were discussed. The general accounting office has been very cooperative and has supplied much of their unpublished data for use in this study. Their figures are presented in several of the following chapters and serve as a second source of data to support the findings in this research.

One other important deviation from the GAO study that is noteworthy is that within their study, the potentially significant role of a coach was completely overlooked. Within the athletic director survey and the follow-up cases, there is no mention of the coach. The role that the entrepreneurial coach plays is at the heart of this study, and as such will expand the library of knowledge within the field.

Wrestling sport cuts specifically within the Division I category have been studied by two authors: Williamson (1983), and Gray & Pelzer (1995). Williamson conducted survey research with 18 NCAA athletic directors and concluded that top reasons for discontinuing wrestling in the late 1970s and early 1980s were lack of student interest, high cost, lack of recruitable prospects, and lack of spectator appeal. Title IX was ranked in seventh position as a reason for discontinuing the sport (1983). Gray & Pelzer researched many of the same issues addressed within the Williamson study using the survey method as well. Their 1995 study used a larger sample size of 63 Division I-A athletic directors who had all discontinued wrestling between the 1981-21 season to 1995. The researchers expected to find Title IX higher on the list of justification for program termination because at the time the study was conducted “Title IX [had] become a driving force behind the restructuring of college athletics” (Gray & Pelzer, 1995, p.

121), but it again ranked 7<sup>th</sup> following the top reasons of conference alignment, shifting resources, inconvenient travel, cost, lack of spectators, and lack of student interest.

Both of these studies provide valuable insight regarding the reasons athletic directors cited sport cuts to the specific target population of this study and reasons for program discontinuation, but both studies occurred over a decade ago, thus discontinuation justifications may have changed within this time period. Additionally, as was the case in the GAO study, the role of a coach in influencing the discontinuation decision was largely overlooked. The findings in these studies will be compared with the data collected within this study in chapter three.

Carroll & Humphreys (2000) used a nonprofit economic behavioral model to explore the effects of Title IX or a similar gender equity regulation on athletic administrators within a university that behaves as a nonprofit organization, arguably similar to an athletic department. The model “predicts a decrease in the total number of sports teams and a net decrease in the number of men’s teams, suggesting the regulation has unintended consequences” (2000, p.359). The theory is confirmed through empirical analysis, which also uncovered size and prestige of the athletic department as well as existing women’s program quality as “important factors affecting the probability that men’s sports teams were eliminated to comply with the regulation” (2000, p. 359). This is an excellent study that stands as a source of evidence supporting the theory that Title IX is in some way accountable for sport cuts and/or decreased demand for men’s teams, and that there are influencing factors to potentially counteract the regulation’s affects. It is an interesting view on the current situation within collegiate athletics, and serves as an

example of economic theory use. However, the study uses the non-profit model, which arguably is not appropriate for Division I-A.

Economic theory was also used by Marburger (2003) to support his assertion that cuts to men's sports are driven by profit motivated athletic departments, not by tight budgets. He compared profits, expenses, and sport cuts of Division I, II, and III Universities and noted that between 1778-1996 the number of men's sports offered in Division II and III experienced a net increase, however at the Division I level the men's sports offered experienced a net loss despite the fact that Division I Universities have the greatest percent of departments with revenues exceeding expenses (35% vs. 5% and 6% in 2003). Using these comparisons he argues that logically "If Title IX requirements placed an undue burden on athletic budgets, one would expect to see the axe fall disproportionately on Division III men's non-revenue sports, since neither football nor men's basketball can be counted on to generate profits to help foot the bill" (Marburger, 2003, p. 74). This study offers an interesting perspective on the issue of sport cuts, particularly when viewed from the demand perspective. Perhaps within the smaller (I-AA, AAA, II, and III) divisions where the funding generally comes directly from the university to the sports rather than from a large and often separate entity athletic department, there are differing values for sport justification. He concludes:

"If Division I athletic directors behave as profit-maximizers...than any expenditure on a non-revenue sport will reduce the athletic department's profit. In time, expenditures on non-revenue sports would be reduced until the last dollar spent on a non-revenue sport serviced the investment/consumption interests of the university as much as the last dollars spent on football and men's basketball (as investment/consumption and profit-generating programs). If the athletic director has significant autonomy in decision-making and does not stand to benefit materially from the investment/consumption interests of the university, the incentive is to phase out non-revenue sports entirely" (2003, p. 75).

This offers an interesting paradigm for viewing the athletic department allotments' and cutting decisions. Fortunately, unless the autonomy of these athletic directors becomes powerful enough to alter the NCAA Division I sport requirement minimums, the unprofitable sports are currently shielded by mandatory sponsorship requirements, and thus the argument levied within the study should be viewed while maintaining that reality.

Leland & Peters (2003) expressed a similar conclusion in their research: The real expenses starving minor men's sports of funding are the disproportionate share of university athletic dollars spent on one or two teams—football and men's basketball—and not spent to add new teams for women or to support other men's sports. Title IX should not be the scapegoat for irresponsible nonprofit institutions of higher education that operate their football and men's basketball programs like professional franchises" (p. 4)

Certainly pressure to make money is a significant issue facing athletic administrators who often choose to spend more on their high-demand football or basketball teams rather than maintaining their less-demanded unprofitable sports.

### ***Potential Ways to Increase Sport Demand***

Responding to many of the same issues tackled within this research project, James and Ross studied motives that drive consumer interest in non-revenue sports in order to understand how to better promote, increase attendance, and "ultimately offset costs to the programs" (2004, p. 17). The authors surveyed fans in attendance at three sporting events, one of which was a wrestling meet, and found through statistical analysis of the surveys that "those attending wrestling matches expressed the strongest agreement with the ideas that they enjoyed the athletes' physical skills and the drama of matches" (2004,

p. 22). Understanding these motives can aid in the development of promotional campaigns helping to increase demand for the sport.

Another author who has contributed immensely to understanding the sport consumer is Howard Cosell (1974). He popularized the entertainment thesis, which states that we need to entertain people with storylines, rivalries, stars, individual challenges, human-interest stories, and cosmic challenges. Sport marketers can develop these product influences to increase demand for their sporting events. The application of these fundamental marketing ideas is something that is often missing from non-revenue sport, and this absence may certainly have something to do with the often-empty stadiums.

### ***The Role of a Coach***

The role of the coach in non-revenue sports has been vastly overlooked in the scholarly research and until this study had not been empirically addressed. Compelling evidence from the revenue producing sport faction, however, has been uncovered by Robinson, Miller, & John (2003) as they assessed the significant financial impact of Bobby Knight on the brand equity of the Texas Tech basketball program. They did a great job of presenting the financial influence of this coach, however basketball is a major sport example, and thus may not be generalizable to non-revenue sport. There have also been a few reports in the popular press discussing the coach's impact (ex. Fimrite, 1992). Coaches have written many of these reports. Dick Gould, former tennis coach at Stanford has been vocal advising coaches to become self-sufficient: "The only

way many men's tennis programs will survive is if coaches get endowments to fund them" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 37).

These ideas and words of wisdom have been circulating within non-revenue coaching circles for years, and have been put to practice by many entrepreneurial coaches. A secondary goal of this study is to transform the tacit knowledge available within these circles into explicit knowledge that can be used to preserve wrestling and other endangered non-revenue sports.

Based on the findings within these studies juxtaposed with the conceptual rationale and theoretical foundation utilized in this study, the following research questions have been developed.

### **Research Questions**

The following is a comprehensive list of the questions explored within the study, and the chapters wherein the reader can search to find data and assertions on the subject.

1. What are the criteria used by division I-A athletic directors to justify wrestling program termination?
2. How do athletic directors and coaches differ in their views regarding sport cuts and the influence of the coach?
3. What are division I-A athletic director beliefs regarding the influence of a wrestling coach on whether or not their program is cut?
4. What activities do division I-A athletic directors believe a wrestling coach can do to enhance the program's chance of vitality? How should they do these activities?

5. What entrepreneurial behaviors (i.e. the recognition and exploitation of value creating opportunities) have been employed by wrestling coaches in order to contribute to program vitality?
6. How much accountability should a wrestling coach have for their fan base and revenue?

Each research question has a tie to the surveys used, and are more deeply explored through the case studies, both of which are discussed next in the methods chapter.

### **Chapter 3 Methods**

This research has been conducted through the use of an empirical case study, specifically a multiple embedded case study with the use of survey. This method was chosen, for the case study is “the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin, 2003 p. 1). Additionally, it is the best method to use when a researcher is attempting to explain, describe, illustrate, explore, or evaluate the “presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies” (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

The multiple embedded case study with the use of survey has specifically been chosen to gain both wide-spread quantitative data through the survey, and in depth views within individual programs with the multiple embedded case studies chosen.

#### ***Surveys***

Two surveys were generated and used for the study. In order to address the validity of the instruments, a panel of experts including three athletic directors, four coaches, two survey specialists, and three sport management professors reviewed their content. These surveys were submitted to the entire population of Division I-A wrestling coaches and athletic directors.

The first instrument was designed for athletic directors. The survey was sent via email to the 41 athletic directors of Division I-A schools that currently have a wrestling program, and the eight athletic directors who have dropped their university’s wrestling

program within the last 10 years. The initial response rate was 14 (34%) responses from wrestling-sponsoring schools, and two (25%) from wrestling-dropped schools. Follow-up emails were sent to the athletic directors who did not respond to the email, and an additional four surveys were completed to make a final response rate of 41%. All of the athletic director survey data collection was conducted between July 26 and August 17 of 2005.

The second survey targeting the wrestling coaches was conducted using the same method. The wrestling coach survey was sent via email to the head and assistant coaches within the 41 Division I-A schools that currently sponsor wrestling programs. There were a total of 41 wrestling coaching staffs that were surveyed. The initial response rate was 15 (36.6%). Follow-up phone calls were made to the coaches who did not respond to the email, and an additional 9 surveys were completed via telephone by the researcher to make a final response rate of 24 (58.5%) by university. All of the coach survey data collection was conducted between July 28 and August 19 of 2005.

### *Case Studies*

Case studies were chosen on the basis of learning potential. Through survey responses in addition to popular press scanning, word of mouth, and observation, cases with the most rich data sources were selected to maximize the potential of the research. Case study data collection included interview, on-site observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted using pre-structured questions both via telephone and within the offices of the athletic directors and coaches. The primary focus of the case study research were clusters of data surrounding two coaching staffs of successful Big

Ten institutions. These coaches and their staffs were interviewed, observed on multiple occasions, and a review of literature surrounding their programs was thoroughly analyzed. In addition to these cases, the corresponding Athletic Directors of these two institutions were interviewed as well as a leader of a national wrestling association and another big ten athletic director who has been a vocal supporter of wrestling within the popular press throughout the sport's years of turmoil.

In designing the study, strict case study methodology was adhered to in order to enhance rigor. To enhance construct validity, multiple sources of evidence were used including the survey data, interviews, observation, and document analysis, which was triangulated to establish a chain of evidence to support my analytic generalizations. Further, within the telephone surveys and case interviews, member checking was used to ensure thorough understanding of uncertain responses. Between-case pattern matching and explanation building was used to enhance internal validity; and the use of theory, and multiple cases were used to augment external validity.

## Chapter IV Results

*“The elimination of a sport within a collegiate athletic program has been likened by some to a death in the family. Affected student-athletes may even experience ranges of emotion common to the grieving process—shock, anger and ultimately, one hopes, understanding. At the receiving end of those emotions are the individuals whose fingerprints are all over the pulled plug” (Steinbach, 2003).*

### **Athletic Director Discontinuation Criteria**

In order to better understand the phenomenon of sport cuts and the role that a coach can potentially play, it is important to understand the criteria used by athletic directors to terminate a program, or to justify a program termination. Thus an attempt was made to identify and explore the primary criteria used by athletic directors in the program discontinuation decision process. Based on a review of the literature and a review by a panel of experts, a list of 19 factors were compiled for this study that have been cited as potential reasons for program termination. Athletic directors surveyed were asked to rate the importance of the criteria to the decision-making process surrounding program discontinuation using a 5-point Likert scale.

Based on the responses by 17 athletic directors of Division I-A wrestling programs, and 2 athletic directors of Division I-A schools that have cut wrestling in the last 10 years, the highest average criteria of importance to the discontinuation decision making process were 1) departmental budget shortage due to budget cuts resulting from decreases in institutional support, donor support, or revenue flow, 2) financial strain of the individual program, and 3) gender equity implications. Interestingly, the category with the largest variation in answer was gender equity implications, which had a standard deviation of nearly 1.5. Next on the list of importance was 4) continuing history of

success on the mat, followed by 5) Regional popularity of the sport, and 6) Donor support. For an entire list of criteria and their corresponding statistics see **Table 4.1**.

**Athletic Director Discontinuation Criteria**  
**Table 4.1**

	No Importance		Moderate Importance		Critical Importance	Mean	Standard Deviation
Budget shortage due to budget cuts	5% (1)	0% (0)	32% (6)	<b>42% (8)</b>	21% (4)	3.7	0.97872
Financial strain of program	0% (0)	16% (3)	<b>37% (7)</b>	16% (3)	32% (6)	3.6	1.09545
Gender equity implications	16% (3)	5% (1)	21% (4)	16% (3)	<b>42% (8)</b>	3.6	1.46539
Success on the mat	5% (1)	5% (1)	<b>47% (9)</b>	21% (4)	21% (4)	3.45	1.05006
Regional Sport Popularity	17% (3)	0% (0)	<b>33% (6)</b>	22% (4)	28% (5)	3.4	1.18766
Donor Support	16% (3)	5% (1)	<b>32% (6)</b>	16% (3)	<b>32% (6)</b>	3.4	1.3917
Athlete Academic Achievement	16% (3)	0% (0)	<b>42% (8)</b>	26% (5)	16% (3)	3.25	1.20852
Fan Support	16% (3)	11% (2)	<b>32% (6)</b>	21% (4)	21% (4)	3.2	1.32188
Conference membership requirements	21% (4)	5% (1)	<b>32% (6)</b>	21% (4)	21% (4)	3.15	1.38697
Educational Value of Sport	16% (3)	5% (1)	<b>42% (8)</b>	26% (5)	11% (2)	3.1	1.16529
Athlete Actions off the mat	16% (3)	16% (3)	<b>37% (7)</b>	16% (3)	16% (3)	3	1.25656
Olympic sport popularity	16% (3)	11% (2)	<b>42% (8)</b>	21% (4)	11% (2)	3	1.16698
National sport popularity	11% (2)	16% (3)	<b>47% (9)</b>	26% (5)	0% (0)	2.9	0.91191
Requirements of NCAA classification	26% (5)	5% (1)	<b>42% (8)</b>	16% (3)	11% (2)	2.8	1.28145
Lack of facilities	26% (5)	11% (2)	<b>37% (7)</b>	21% (4)	5% (1)	2.7	1.21828
Regional coach popularity	26% (5)	16% (3)	<b>37% (7)</b>	16% (3)	5% (1)	2.6	1.18766
Budget shortage due to overspending	<b>32% (6)</b>	16% (3)	<b>32% (6)</b>	11% (2)	11% (2)	2.55	1.31689
Tenure of coach with university	<b>42% (8)</b>	16% (3)	26% (5)	11% (2)	5% (1)	2.25	1.25132
Personal relationship with coach	<b>58% (11)</b>	21% (4)	16% (3)	0% (0)	5% (1)	1.8	1.10501

Commenting on the decisions to cut a sport, one athletic director responded, “Hopefully we make decisions for the, quote, right reasons. I know whenever you make harmful decisions, meaning decisions that negatively impact student-athlete’s programs, there is always strict analysis as to why and what affect it might have. I think all of the reasons [on the list] go into decision-making, some of them more so for each of us as individuals” (A.D. 2).

### ***Financial Considerations***

In strict accordance with the theory of resource allocations pioneered by Adam Smith (1776), of primary concern among criteria, according to the Division I-A athletic directors, are financial considerations: budget shortage due to budget cuts, and financial strain of the program. These AD’s logically would act as profit-maximizers with a desire to end the fiscal year in the black, break even, or nearly break even for their often separate-entity athletic departments. As such, they reported that when they choose to cut a sport, at the top of the list of potential considerations is money. Qualitative data from interviews with three athletic directors who currently field wrestling at their Division I-A institutions supported the survey findings:

I strongly believe that the financial aspect of college sports today, especially at the Division I-A level is *the* major factor in the elimination of men’s sports, and with that financial factor comes the arms race that exists in football especially, and the need to stay up with your counterparts because of the revenue generation of those particular sports.... It’s because of those dollars, that it’s all Olympic sports, quite frankly, not just men’s sports that are being challenged (A.D. 3)

I don’t think the average person has a clue how much money has to be raised on an annual basis to carry a sport. Budgets exclude tuition costs, medical costs, strength coaches, etc., etc. We dropped [a sport at our institution] purely because I couldn’t fund the program that I wanted to have (A.D. 1)

Athletic Director 1 emphasized the extraordinary amount of money necessary to field a program. When he mentioned that budgets exclude costs, he meant that in addition to the “wrestling budget,” which is allocated to the coaches yearly, there is an additional baseline of costs that are in a blanket budget shared by all sports although they are variable relative to the number of athletes. These costs include what he mentioned: “tuition costs, medical costs, strength coaches, etc., etc.” Clearly he emphasized the role of financial pressure in the decision making process. Athletic director three echoed this sentiment:

Money is a huge issue, because we would all rather add sports than decrease, but most of us can't do that, therefore money is an issue...even our, quote, smaller programs cost us a half a million dollars. It's a lot of money that we're putting into it, and I'm not putting that money into it just to lose, and not for the kids to have a good experience. At this level, it takes a significant amount of dollars, and that's why sometimes you end up eliminating versus just adding and not putting any money into it and not giving all the scholarships, you know they're not going to be successful, they're only going to be geographic. You can't do that at this level (A.D. 3).

The reality for these athletic directors is significant financial pressures that don't stop once the budgets are allocated. Throughout the year, coaches will ask for an additional trip to be funded, for uniforms, for equipment, etc. Both A.D. 1 and 3 expressed that they were not willing to fund programs if the athletes were not going to have the resources to “win” and “have a good experience;” or as AD 1 mentioned, he “couldn't have the program [he] wanted to have.” While there is this strong emphasis on being successful, there will remain this strong financial pressure. Clearly there are strong feelings regarding the importance of financial issues as they relate to program discontinuation.

The other criterion related to finances was the overspending criterion that was rated low. The intent of this category was to nail down whether the athletic directors felt they were spending too much due to the arms race, or other facets of the budget that could perhaps be trimmed. This overspending has clearly been documented as a large problem at the Division I-A level (Knight Foundation, 2004), however athletic directors may not be the first to admit to their responsibility for this, which may be one reason for its low rating by the population. Upon follow-up with the athletic directors within the interviews, this category seemed to cause a bit of confusion. One summed the low average well by saying,

We have a balanced budget, and I have always been required to have a balanced budget wherever I've been. Also it is a little vague, who is overspending, and why? Could the coach not get through the season on the budget given because they made it into post season play? I think the low response is due to a vague understanding on what is meant (A.D. 3)

Thus the overspending category and its low average should probably be thrown out because, due to confusion related to its meaning, it is not a reliable category as it was phrased within this study. This may be the case, but it also might be possible that the athletic directors simply did not want to take responsibility for their potentially significant role in the financial issues that are so evidently foundational to the decision to discontinue sports.

### ***Gender Equity***

Not surprisingly, many of the Athletic Directors felt that gender equity was the primary criteria that catalyzed the trend of wrestling sport discontinuation. This category had the highest mode, housed within the critical importance category, but did not have

the highest average due to the large variance of responses. Following Smith's theory, the criteria in which money is of chief concern is followed by a governmental regulation criterion that in many ways alters the natural economy of collegiate athletics. All three of the athletic directors interviewed concurred that financial as well as gender equity requirements were the most significant influence in their decision making process, and that the categories were very much tied together.

One athletic director stated, "the cuts have been primarily done because of financial reasons, and it began because we needed to get gender equity" (A.D. 2).

Another athletic director expressed almost an identical position:

To some degree the budgets and proportionality are intertwined, so I don't know really how to separate them. In other words money is tight at my school but we also have a Title IX problem, so we're going to drop wrestling because it has the highest roster size. We can add two women's sports or we can eliminate wrestling (A.D. 1).

And the final athletic director mentioned this same calculus:

When you talk about the gender equity implications, I have to be conscious of the law. There's obviously a realization of 'how do I get in compliance with the law,' so that might come before even the money. Then you have to decide how to do it—do you add a sport or do you eliminate, that's the fundamental aspect we need to address (A.D. 3)

This brings us back to the importance of Title IX, and the critical role that it has played and continues to play within the wrestling sponsorship landscape. From Weight (in press) as discussed within the literature review, we learned that most athletic directors surveyed expressed a desire to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the public and not necessarily simply achieve the legal parameters necessary to achieve Title IX compliance. As such it appears that the athletic directors view sport discontinuation as a method of compliance as an increasingly politically incorrect vehicle toward gender

equity. With this knowledge, the financial link between sport sponsorship and Title IX compliance would seemingly be the main reason an athletic director would drop a sport in the face of these political pressures. This supports the high rating that was given as well as the responses given from the interviewed athletic directors.

***Success on the Mat, Regional Popularity, Donor Support, Fan Support, Conference Membership Requirements***

Within the interviews, the directors were asked to comment whether they would change anything within the list above. Two of the three stated that they believed that success on the mat had been rated too high. “I don’t think the success of a sport is over-  
ending, because that’s short-sighted, that can go up and down” (A.D. 3); and,

I’m not sure I would rate success on the mat as high as it is. That the sports are more likely to be cut when they’re unsuccessful than when they’re successful...you would hope that you’d use some criteria other than that, but maybe among my colleagues that is legitimate. It seems a little high to me (A.D. 2)

The same A.D. mentioned that he would place conference membership requirements a bit higher on the list.

I would have said that conference membership requirements would have been higher because I think directors do look at what sports are being offered in their colleague institutions in any conference and if others are getting rid of it...if you use a gymnastics example, the Big Ten has 6 teams right now, and if we lose one more, we’re not eligible to have a big ten conference championship, and if that happens, that will probably bear on whether the rest of us keep the sport or not...so I might rate that a little higher, but other than that I think it’s generally in the right order” (A.D. 2)

This regionalized trend has certainly been visible around the country.

The importance of regional popularity was also sustained as being high on the list of importance to the directors. One mentioned that if he is in a position where a

combination of finances and gender equity make it necessary to cut a sport, the first thing he looks at when deciding which to cut is “which sports are indigenous to the state or location” (A.D.1). He mentioned that he looked at all men and women’s sports and looked at how many high schools sponsored them and how many athletes participated in the state. Another director mentioned that if he had to cut a sport, he would look at how many high school programs there were in the country as a primary criteria, emphasizing the importance of sport popularity in the region in particular.

Donor support and the support of regional authorities also was supported in it’s high ranking on the list of cutting criteria. One athletic director said that the interest of one particular politician in the area was the sole reason that wrestling was not cut at his university. More on this topic will be covered later in this chapter when discussing the potentially influential role of an entrepreneurial coach.

***Criteria mentioning the role of the coach:***

According to the survey-generated list of terminating criteria, the categories that mentioned the coach (i.e. tenure of the coach, personal relationship with the coach, and coach regional popularity) were not largely viewed as critically important factors; in fact they were three of the lowest four ranked criteria of importance. Interestingly, all three of the athletic directors interviewed mentioned that these results may not actually reflect the true opinions of athletic directors, or may not be an accurate depiction of the reality.

One mentioned,

They may just say it shouldn’t be important. I think probably most athletics administrators would like to say that they looked at it objectively and the popularity of the coach is probably a little more subjective measure and you’d like to make these decisions in the best interest of the university, the community, and

the student-athletes involved. The popularity or lack thereof of a coach probably shouldn't enter into it, or the personal relationship either way. I think that all of those things do come into play at one level or another, but I don't know that anybody likes to say that they come into play at a higher level than what they are rated here (A.D.2).

Another AD said,

I think [the A.D.'s surveyed are] trying to say, whether it's true or not, this is a bigger picture than this immediate coach...though that relationship might be important, you don't want to let that influence this very important and long term decision (A.D. 3)

Coaches who were interviewed adamantly rejected the low rating the coach-related criteria received by the athletic directors. One said,

I don't think they'll be 100% honest with you. You can't [tell the public] 'I have a poor relationship with a coach, or he doesn't do a good job, so I'm going to kill two birds with one stone and so I'm going to cut the program.' We *know* that has happened. So I don't think you're going to get total honesty with some of these answers with some of the A.D.'s. I don't think they would be allowed to say 'I cut the program because of the coach.' What they do is kill, two, actually three birds with one stone: 'I come into Title IX compliance, we save money, and the idiot coach is gone.' I don't believe for a second that it doesn't play into things here. I just don't think they can be totally honest, because it's probably against the law to be totally honest like that" (Coach 1).

Another stated,

I disagree [with the low rating of the coach-related criteria]. Usually if you have dynamic coaches that are running a good program, they don't cut the program. A lot of it is people don't want to talk about it, and part of it you can [blame] on the athletic department because they don't give the coaches resources, or they don't fire coaches. When is the last time a wrestling coach was fired because they said we want to have a good wrestling program, so we're going to fire the coach... One of the things about basketball and football because they're driven by money, there is a lot of turnover because the cream rises to the top, because if you don't win you get fired. As a result there are opportunities for people and so the good people surface, and the bad people are weeded out and that's not just part of coaching, it's the same in the business world" (Coach 3).

The leader of a national wrestling association expressed the same ideas: "If there is an unpopular coach in football or basketball, they replace the coach. In Olympic sports

they throw the baby out with the bathwater, but I don't know that an athletic director would admit that" (Leader).

It was surprising to hear again and again athletic directors and coaches expressing their consistent views regarding the potentially cloaked views that the athletic directors may have about the coach in relation to their decisions to discontinue a sport. Before the interviews, the low ratings of the criteria related to the coach were not too much of a surprise, as the coach has of yet never been a significant part of the sport discontinuation dialogue. However, *all* of the critical factors, aside from gender equity, are very much within the sphere of influence that a coaching staff does possess. These are the areas, arguably, that should be given significant weight in a coach's agenda if he wishes to secure the longevity of their program, and fundamentally their sport. Specific guidelines are presented below in the *Activities AD's believe a wrestling coach can do to enhance their program's longevity* section of this chapter. .

### ***Literature Triangulation***

The data uncovered by the United States General Accounting Office study that investigated four-year colleges' experiences adding and discontinuing teams (2001) very much support the results attained within this inquiry. Within the GAO questionnaire, athletic directors were asked what factors affected the decision to discontinue teams. Results within the published report lumped all NCAA divisions together, however upon request, I was able to attain just the findings from the Division I-A category. Their method of inquiry, and wording of criteria was slightly different, but the top three categories of discontinuation criteria are the same. Within that study, 54% of Division I-

A athletic directors responded that gender equity goals greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue teams followed closely by 49% reporting that budget reallocation to other sports greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue teams followed next by 19% budget decreases as the next most significant criteria that greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue a men's team (U.S. GAO, 2001).

Interestingly, the next two criteria of importance within this study (4<sup>th</sup>: success on the mat, and 5<sup>th</sup>: regional sport popularity) are the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> most important criteria among the athletic directors reported within the GAO study—skill of the team, and community interest, respectively.

The top seven criteria gleaned from the GAO division I-A data are listed in **Table 4.2** beside the results of this study are the results of two similar inquiries done in the past. It is interesting to see for the most part a common theme among categories, although order and terminology appear to have changed throughout the years. The arms race in collegiate expenditures within the last decade in particular, in addition to the increasing threat of Title IX lawsuits could be a reason for the changes in order from study to study. An important factor regarding the Williamson (1983) study is that the sample within that study was the entire Division I category. This could significantly alter the criteria listed in addition to its order, however I've included it to show the history and continuity of this research topic throughout the years.

<b>Cumulative Research Into Division I Athletic Director Sport Discontinuation Criteria Table 4.2</b>				
<b>R a n k</b>	<b>This Study (2006)</b> Division I-A Wrestling	<b>GAO Study (2001)</b> Division I-A Men's sports	<b>Gray, Pelzer (1995)</b> Division I-A Wrestling	<b>Williamson (1983)</b> Division I Wrestling
1	Budget shortage due to budget cuts	Gender Equity	Conference Alignment	Lack of Student Interest
2	Financial strain of program	Reallocation of Budget	Shifting Resources	High cost
3	Gender Equity	Reduced Budget	Inconvenient Travel	Lack of recruitable prospects
4	Success on the mat	Non-Gender Equity Goals	Too costly	Lack of spectator appeal
5	Regional Sport Popularity	Skill of Team	Few spectators	
6	Donor Support	Community Interest	Low student Interest	
7	Athlete Academic Achievement	Facilities	Title IX	Title IX

### **Coaches Cutting Criteria Beliefs**

In accordance with the focus of this study on the potential role of the coach in sustaining their programs, one would argue the importance of knowing the view of coaches on why sports are discontinued. Thus, using the same list of criteria directed at the athletic directors, coaches of Division I-A wrestling programs were asked what criteria they believe would be used to cut the wrestling program at their institutions. Coach responses are displayed in **Table 4.3**

**Coach Cutting Criteria Beliefs**  
**Table 4.3**

	No Importance		Moderate Importance		Critical Importance	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender equity implications	12% (3)	12% (3)	12% (3)	17% (4)	<b>46% (11)</b>	3.71	1.4885
Regional Sport Popularity	8% (2)	17% (4)	25% (6)	<b>29% (7)</b>	21% (5)	3.38	1.2446
Donor Support	14% (3)	5% (1)	27% (6)	<b>36% (8)</b>	18% (4)	3.38	1.2091
Athlete Actions off the mat	12% (3)	12% (3)	21% (5)	<b>33% (8)</b>	21% (5)	3.38	1.3126
Athlete Academic Achievement	21%(5)	8% (2)	25% (6)	<b>38% (9)</b>	8% (2)	3.04	1.3015
Fan Support	12% (3)	17% (4)	<b>33% (8)</b>	29% (7)	8% (2)	3.04	1.1602
Conference membership requirements	<b>22% (5)</b>	17% (4)	17% (4)	<b>22% (5)</b>	<b>22% (5)</b>	3.04	1.459
Personal relationship with AD	8% (2)	25% (6)	<b>38% (9)</b>	12% (3)	17% (4)	3.04	1.1971
Success on the mat	21%(5)	12% (3)	25% (6)	<b>29% (7)</b>	12% (3)	3	1.3513
Budget shortage due to budget cuts	12% (3)	<b>29% (7)</b>	25% (6)	17% (4)	17% (4)	2.96	1.3015
Financial strain of program	12% (3)	21% (5)	<b>38% (9)</b>	17% (4)	12% (3)	2.96	1.1971
Requirements of NCAA classification	<b>26% (6)</b>	17% (4)	13% (3)	<b>26% (6)</b>	17% (4)	2.92	1.472
Olympic sport popularity	14% (3)	<b>27% (6)</b>	<b>27% (6)</b>	23% (5)	9% (2)	2.88	1.1539
Budget shortage due to overspending	12% (3)	<b>29% (7)</b>	<b>29% (7)</b>	17% (4)	12% (3)	2.88	1.227
National sport popularity	17% (4)	<b>26% (6)</b>	<b>26% (6)</b>	22% (5)	9% (2)	2.79	1.2151
Regional coach popularity	21% (5)	17% (4)	<b>38% (9)</b>	12% (3)	12% (3)	2.79	1.2847
Tenure of coach with university	13% (3)	22% (5)	<b>43% (10)</b>	17% (4)	4% (1)	2.79	1.0206
Educational Value of Sport	<b>43% (10)</b>	9% (2)	26% (6)	0% (0)	22% (5)	2.5	1.5604
Lack of facilities	<b>35% (8)</b>	30% (7)	26% (6)	9% (2)	0% (0)	2.13	0.9918

Interestingly, answers varied quite a bit from those given by the athletic directors. Coaches believed gender equity implications to be the primary threat to their program, with a mean of 3.71, followed by regional sport popularity, donor support, and athlete actions off the mat each with a mean of 3.38. These scores are different than the answers given by athletic directors which stated budget shortage due to budget cuts as the primary criteria used to justify a sport termination with a mean of 3.7 followed by the financial strain of the program and then gender equity implications with means of 3.6 each.

### *Coaches Beliefs and Gender Equity Apathy*

From many examples gleaned from the popular press, legal, and scholarly literature, it is not surprising that wrestling coaches feel the greatest threat from Title IX. This belief is unfortunate, however, because depending upon the institution's method of Title IX compliance, there may be very little a coach can do to alter their position within the gender equity goals of the institution. This lack of control may promote a sense of apathy within the coaching staff and their position in the realm of sport discontinuation. Coaches and athletic directors interviewed were asked whether they believed that coaches feel general apathy about their role in whether their sport is discontinued. There were mixed responses on this issue.

One athletic director said,

Yes, I do [believe many coaches adopt a sense of apathy about their role in saving their sports], although Mike Moyer is an exception to that. When he was a coach, he promoted his program, and he worked like crazy and he made himself and his sport indispensable. And he didn't buy into the apathy, even though the trend was toward discontinuation at that time. I think coaches can have more to do with than they think they can, but there are some that just adopt the 'woe is me' approach to it (A.D. 2)

Another athletic director responded that he hadn't found apathy in the wrestling coaches he had been associated with in the 4 institutions where he had served as an athletic administrator.

I do think that some understand there is a sense of urgency, which certainly has happened any place where they've cut sports or any place where there has been a proposal to cut sports (such as our school). I think it has increased the realization on the part of coaches that it is necessary for them to assist in raising funds to endow scholarships, for example, and I can assure you that that is criteria we would have in order to maintain their sport...The coaches that have the most difficult challenge are those who are relatively new, that don't know the community, don't know the donors, that don't really have the ability to go out and ask for the dollars that someone who has been there has. (A.D.3)

The president of the national wrestling organization who was interviewed believed that many coaches have adopted a sense of apathy because of Title IX, and actions on the part of athletic departments. “One of the things that our coaches see very clearly,” he stated,

Is that we now have 103 self-funded college club wrestling teams that are out there, that are not funded by the university at all. And our coaches know that, and the question they ask is how does barring them from intercollegiate competition benefit women? The fact that the programs are self funded, and are still not accepted into the athletic department drives home the point even more to the coaches—that it’s out of their control” (Leader).

It appears that these coaches are not currently sponsored as a part of the athletic department because of the numbers game held within the proportionality prong. This apathy that could result from believing that there is nothing they can do because Title IX is the enemy is simply unproductive. It would seem that in order to overcome the sense of apathy that wrestling coaches may feel toward their ability to curb the affects of Title IX on their sport, and to guard their program against cuts, it would be critically important to be aware of the criteria used to justify program discontinuation.

### **Coaches Beliefs vs. Athletic Director Answers**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted using SPSS 12.0 software to test the differences between means within the population samples of coaches and athletic directors. Although there were quite a few categories that the athletic directors and coaches seemed to have very congruous beliefs regarding the criteria used, the samples differed significantly within four of the categories. The budget shortage due to budget cuts criterion, and personal relationship with coach criterion were both significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The financial strain of the program criterion, and lack of facilities criterion

were also both significant at the  $p < .10$  level. For a complete compilation of athletic director and coach means and standard deviations as well as significance levels of their criteria responses see **Table 4.4**. An understanding of the differences present in the table may help coaches know where to focus their efforts in program retention efforts. The potential reasons for the differences as well as the similarities are discussed below.

**Comparison of Athletic Director Cutting Criteria and Coach Cutting Criteria Beliefs**  
**Table 4.4**

Cutting Criteria	AD Means	AD Standard Deviations	Coach Means	Coach Standard Deviations	1-way ANOVA Significance
Budget shortage due to budget cuts	3.7	0.97872	2.96	1.3015	.042**
Financial strain of program	3.6	1.09545	2.96	1.1971	.073*
Gender equity implications	3.6	1.46539	3.71	1.4885	0.81
Success on the mat	3.45	1.05006	3	1.3513	0.232
Regional Sport Popularity	3.4	1.18766	3.38	1.2446	0.949
Donor Support	3.4	1.3917	3.38	1.2091	0.949
Athlete Academic Achievement	3.25	1.20852	3.04	1.3015	0.588
Fan Support	3.2	1.32188	3.04	1.1602	0.674
Conference membership requirements	3.15	1.38697	3.04	1.459	0.803
Educational Value of Sport	3.1	1.16529	2.5	1.5604	0.163
Athlete Actions off the mat	3	1.25656	3.38	1.3126	0.342
Olympic sport popularity	3	1.16698	2.88	1.1539	0.724
National sport popularity	2.9	0.91191	2.79	1.2151	0.744
Requirements of NCAA classification	2.8	1.28145	2.92	1.472	0.783
Lack of facilities	2.7	1.21828	2.13	0.9918	.092*
Regional coach popularity	2.6	1.18766	2.79	1.2847	0.613
Budget shortage due to overspending	2.55	1.31689	2.88	1.227	0.402
Tenure of coach with university	2.25	1.25132	2.79	1.0206	0.121
Personal relationship with coach/AD	1.8	1.10501	3.04	1.1971	.001**

\*Significant at  $p < .10$

\*\*Significant at  $p < .05$

Interviewed coaches and athletic directors did not express surprise regarding the differences in inter-group responses. The coaches all agreed with their fellow coaches list of criteria, and the athletic directors supported the list compiled by the athletic directors. Two athletic directors expressed potential reasons for the disagreement:

I think it's an understandable thing [that coaches and AD's differ on the way they see things], and it's the great thing about what we do, we all think through different colored glasses, and I think that's healthy. I'm not so sure that the coach fully appreciates what it's like to be an administrator, and I'm not sure we AD's appreciate always what it's like to be a coach even if we were one.... Part of the reason that you have athletic directors, is we're forced to look at the 25-sport program, and to look at the big picture, whereas a coach is not, and that is again understandable (A.D. 2)

Another athletic director expressed that the different view between athletic directors and coaches "doesn't surprise me at all. I think coaches and athletic directors frequently see the world differently" (A.D.3).

***Budget shortage due to budget cuts, and financial strain of the program***

Qualitative inquiry into the categories that the A.D.'s and coaches significantly differed in response revealed that the differences appeared to be deeply rooted. Within the top two categories of importance to athletic directors of budget shortage due to budget cuts and the financial strain of the program, the coaches believed the money to be a much smaller issue than was reported by the athletic directors. They viewed the large budgets and surpluses within the departments and found it hard to believe that the financial strain of wrestling was truly the most important criteria.

One coach stated,

I think the coach sits there and thinks, [our athletic department has] a 40 million dollar budget, and all of the sudden you're going to say that the 500 or 600,000 dollars, whatever our sport costs, is the reason you're going to cut wrestling? You don't view that as significant when you see the millions of dollars spent. I know you have to start cutting the fat somewhere, but instead of cutting a sport, you think, is there not a way to rein in football...we pay guys millions of dollars, 6 figure assistant coach salaries, staying at hotels at home, chartering planes instead of 3 ½ hour bus rides...I understand you have to keep up with the Joneses, but we see it as there is a lot of fat around that can be cut, and they see wrestling as part of the fat (Coach 3).

An athletic director expressed a contrary opinion,

I find [discrepancies between coaches and AD's] in everything I do. If one of my programs feels that they need something that I have not allowed them to have, but then I turn around and give more money to a coach because they've had tremendous success, they then say to me wait a minute, how come you give the money to them, and not to us? I respect that, in some ways they are right, and I am right. You can appropriate the money the way you want to appropriate the money. If I want to give all the money to football, I can do it. I probably wouldn't be the AD very long, but I do get to make those kinds of decisions. Coaches just want you to make the decisions based on their sport, therefore they don't think it is a money issue, because they see us spending money significantly different than they would spend it, therefore they don't see it as a financial issue (A.D. 3).

The leader of the national wrestling association presented a potential position expressed by both sides: "I'm sure some coaches do not realize the value of fundraising, and I'm sure there are also athletic directors who blame it on the budget when it is really other things" (Leader).

### ***Lack of Facilities***

All of the athletic directors interviewed mentioned at some point within the interview the desire they had for all of the programs within their department to have the best possible opportunity to be successful. For two of the athletic directors, this meant for the teams to be fully funded, and to have state-of-the-art facilities. One AD said that the good recruits "will come to [a good coach] if he is fully funded and has good facilities" (A.D. 1). Another athletic director, commenting on a sport he had cut earlier in his career said that a lack of a good facility was one of the primary reasons he chose the sport he did to terminate. Thus, for the athletic directors, the lack of facility criterion is a moderately important aspect that is taken into account when making program-altering decisions. The coaches felt that this was rated higher than it should be.

One coach commented,

Most programs that have a wrestling room, and the [athletic administrators] want to turn it into a bigger weight room. We've seen that happen, so I can see where we disagree on that. We need a fairly big room, but once you have a wrestling room, you don't have up-keep. You don't cut grass, etc...I think AD's think that because they need to expand something else it's a lack of facilities problem. It's not wrestling's problem, but it becomes wrestling's problem. We've seen all kinds of those wrestling programs taken over and become a weight room or a training room (Coach 1).

### ***Personal Relationship with Coach***

This category was explored above in the *athletic director discontinuation criteria* section within the *criteria mentioning the role of the coach* subheading. Those interviewed agreed, with one coach who mentioned, "The relationship between an athletic director and a coach is more than it is [valued in the survey responses by athletic directors], because I don't think an AD can legally be totally honest" (Coach 1). The relationship appears to be important, and according to those interviewed it was understated by the athletic directors and rated about where it should be among the coaches, so perhaps this significant difference is not so significant after all. The relationship appears to be an important one and should as such be regarded as *a* valuable key to program longevity.

Pinpointing each of these divergences between the two populations is fundamental to taking steps to bridge these gaps. The athletic directors emphasized in the survey responses and in the interviews that financial issues are paramount to the sport discontinuation decision process. Yes, the finances may be tied with gender equity issues, but the gender equity pressures are not as insurmountable as many of the coaches expressed. Until coaches overcome the gender-equity-related apathy, accept the financial

realities, and act; these significant differences will continue to occur, and their sport may continue to dwindle.

Clearly knowing the criteria used to terminate a sport would help one who is attempting to enhance the longevity of their program. If a coach is searching for criteria to be met in order to help the cause of promoting their sport and preserving their program, the list of athletic director criteria could be used as a valuable guide to direct their efforts. Before this effort is expended, however, it is important to ascertain whether the athletic director views a coach as capable of creating necessary changes in a vulnerable program, and what specifically they would suggest a coach do to enhance their chances of increased longevity.

### **The Influence of a Wrestling Coach on Sport Cuts**

*The UMass Associate Athletic Director commented on informing the coaches and athletes their sports would be discontinued after the athletic department announced that seven sports would be cut: “There’s no right way to do it, if you don’t give them lead time, they’re upset that you did not communicate with them properly. If you do give them lead time, it gets leaked to the media and played out in the press, causing you even more problems. You can’t win” (qtd. in Steinbach, 2003 p. 38).*

In the previous section, the criteria for sport discontinuation were discussed, and differences in beliefs regarding these criteria between coaches and athletic directors were identified. These gaps may be responsible for the current lack of action that is taking place by coaching staff members throughout the country in an effort to save their programs. Within this section, an exploration is conducted into whether Division I-A athletic directors believe that wrestling coaches influence whether or not their program is

cut; and what activities these A.D.'s believe a wrestling coach can do to enhance the program's chance of vitality.

While there may not be a right way to discontinue a sport, perhaps there is a better way—give coaches specific criteria that must be met in order for the sport to remain afloat. Let the entire athletic department have clear guidelines for the actions necessary to allow the student-athletes the opportunity to have the longest, most fulfilling educational experience possible. What follows is an attempt to get one step closer to clear guidelines for the wrestling coach.

Based on the responses by 17 athletic directors of Division I-A wrestling programs, and 2 athletic directors of Division I-A schools that have cut wrestling in the last 10 years, there was a wide range of beliefs regarding the influence of a wrestling coach on whether or not a sport gets discontinued. The mean response was 3.1 in the moderate influence range. The mode was also within this category, with 7 athletic directors responding they believe a wrestling coach can have a moderate influence on whether or not their sport gets cut at their institution. Division I-A wrestling coaches were also asked how much influenced they believe they have over whether or not their sport gets cut, and this sample reported a slightly larger mean of 3.54. An independent samples T-test was conducted using SPSS 12.0 in order to compare the means of the two groups, and the results indicated that athletic directors and coaches within this sample did not report significantly different views on the influence of a wrestling coach. For a complete listing of statistics regarding athletic director responses as well as coach responses to the same question, see **Table 4.5**.

**The Influence of a Wrestling Coach on Sport Cuts**  
Table 4.5

	No Influence		Moderate Influence		Critical Influence	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-Value
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
Athletic Directors	20% (4)	5% (1)	<b>35% (7)</b>	25% (5)	15% (3)	3.1	1.33	.267
Coach	17% (4)	8% (2)	17% (4)	21% (5)	<b>38% (9)</b>	3.54	1.50	

A few of the survey respondents included written answers to this question in addition to their numerical response. The range of beliefs was evident within these replies. One athletic director reported,

I do not believe that coaches in general can influence whether or not their particular program can be saved. Were that true, they would already be doing the things your questionnaire addresses. Regardless of what one hears from various sources, the biggest single reason for the dropping of men's non-revenue programs is the need to be in compliance with gender equity (Respondent 18).

Athletic directors who believed that coaches have moderate influence had varying opinions about what coaches should do to influence continuation. One AD noted,

Each program is different. At [our school] we do not promote booster clubs for our individual sports nor do we require our coaches to be responsible for attendance and marketing. Certainly we ask them to participate in promotions we decide to do as a department but we do not want our coaches focused on marketing the sport and trying to grow the fan base. That is the job of the marketing staff. The coaches have enough to do with recruiting and coaching (Respondent 5).

Another athletic director expressed a similar sentiment: "A coach is a role model, responsible for producing athletes who learn self-discipline, courage, self-control, sportsmanship, and leadership. All the rest will take care of itself" (Respondent 8). Other remarks, however, given by athletic directors who viewed coaches as having moderate to critical influence, included statements that a coach could influence the

decisions by helping with finances, communicating effectively with the department, and promoting the scholastic participation of the athletes.

Interviewed athletic directors expressed a similar range of responses as well, however they each believed that there were measures coaches could take to enhance the programs chances of longevity.

### **Activities AD's believe a wrestling coach can do to enhance their program's longevity**

Athletic Directors were asked specifically what a coach could do to enhance their program's chance of longevity. Responses differed by athletic director, but common themes emerged and included: building indispensable relationships with donors, athletic department administrators, prominent figures, & alumni; fundraising; promoting the sport; and promoting the programs public perception.

#### ***Building Relationships***

Building indispensable relationships is a key action for coaches to pursue according to two athletic directors and the leader of a national wrestling association. "If you know influential people," one athletic director informed,

If you know the governor, if you know the president of the university, the president of [local companies], I would think it would be helpful. Again, good A.D.'s aren't going to be influenced just because a significant person calls them, but at the same time you listen to that person more than you listen to the person off the street, hey, I'm human too...but most significantly is utilizing those people to generate revenue which is huge, which is the most important thing (A.D. 3).

The leader of a national wrestling association agreed with the development of relationships as the most important thing coaches can do to help sustain their programs:

“I believe a coach has significant influence over whether the program is cut. A lot of it goes to building relationships with key decision-making people on your campus and within your community. That’s number one” (Leader). Another athletic director commented on this importance:

I think the coach needs to do whatever it takes to make themselves and the program indispensable to their department, and that is different things at different times at different institutions. Maybe it’s being the guy who says, ‘you need somebody to sell those programs at the football game, I’ll take that on, and do a good job at it.’ Or maybe somebody needs somebody to go out and do a speaking engagement, and he is willing to do it. Maybe we’ve got an indoor track championship coming up and we need some extra hands and some extra bodies, and he’s the guy that says “I’ll do it, and I’ll get my guys to help too.’ I think anybody that’s fighting for a leg up in a program and wants to make himself indispensable. Make yourself the last person and the last program they want to get rid of instead of the first program and the first person they want to get rid of (A.D. 2).

### ***Fundraising***

Two of the athletic directors, and the national wrestling association leader commented on the importance of fundraising. A.D. three said, “I think [the influence of a coach begins] with their fundraising ability. I think if they can go out and make the dollars to support their sport they can have a significant impact.” One other athletic director and the leader of the national wrestling association commented on the importance of fundraising as an essential action for coaches to be engaged in, but explained that the relationship-building was perhaps a necessary precursor and partner in fundraising goals.

### *Sport Promotion*

One of the AD's felt sport promotion to be of leading value,

More important than raising money or being successful is the promotion of your sport...doing more with you're high school coaches, more promotional kinds of activities, having more clinics, taking your product to neutral sites to wrestle in the state. Coaches need to feel some responsibility to their sport. The reason sports die is participation. You need to have more and more kids out to wrestle. More programs die at the college level when there are fewer opportunities for participation. Right now, our region is for the most part great for wrestling, wrestling all over the Midwest is really strong, but if we don't pay attention to or nurture it, we could see a drop off in participation (A.D. 1)

### *Promoting the Program's Public Perception*

Two athletic directors commented on the perhaps secondary, yet influential role that public perception could have in the sport discontinuation decision-making process.

I think success and public perception brings people on your side. Lack of success doesn't bring people on your side. Good social conduct by your student athletes has people on your side; bad social conduct doesn't have people on your side. Good academic accomplishments has people on your side, poor academic performance does not. So all those kinds of things, I'll be honest with you, as an AD I don't totally look at, because those are immediate statistics, those aren't 50-year statistics, and I try to make long-term decisions, not just immediate decisions...but the public perception is better received if the immediate perception is positive or negative, but I personally try not to let that affect me (A.D. 3).

Similarly, another AD remarked,

Our program has been a prominent one throughout the years in wrestling, and yet we just ran some numbers on the percentage of athletes by sport that get arrested and wrestling is the highest one we have on campus. So those sorts of things...they're not going to make you drop the sport, but when you start looking at who you've got to drop, if you've got to drop, it makes them an easy target...or an easier target (A.D. 2).

Fundraising, building relationships, promoting the sport, and building public perceptions all require skills that not every type of person may feel comfortable pursuing.

These activities are generally necessary for individuals who actively seek and exploit value creating opportunities—entrepreneurs, and thus throughout this research process, the term “entrepreneurial” coach has been used to describe an individual who possesses the skills necessary to raise funds, build relationships, promote their sport, etc. Thus, athletic directors were asked how important they believed it was to the longevity of the program to have a person within the wrestling coaching staff who served as a “program entrepreneur.”

### **The importance of having a program “entrepreneur” within the coaching staff**

As with the majority of issues discussed within this study, the athletic directors differed substantially in responses to this question. The mean response was just under the moderate importance level at 2.94. For a complete listing of responses and corresponding statistics see **Table 4.6**.

A potential reason for the variant responses was given by one of the athletic directors in an interview. “It is becoming more and more important for [coaches to be program entrepreneurs],” he began,

Years ago, coaches just had to coach. But in the bureaucracy of coaching today, everything from compliance, to academics, to the department forms has significantly increased. I don’t know today if it is a necessity [for coaches to be entrepreneurs], but it is a help. There may become a day that it is a necessity, but it certainly is important more so today than it used to be (A.D. 3).

**A.D. Responses regarding the Importance of having a program promoter/entrepreneur within the coaching staff**

**Table 4.6**

<b>No Influence (1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>Moderate Influence (3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>Critical Influence (5)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
19% (3)	13% (2)	31% (5)	31% (5)	6% (1)	2.94	1.24

One of the athletic directors who viewed the coach as having a slightly less than moderate influence said that the type of coach he tries to hire, “are people I like to go have a beer with—basically individuals that have enough personality to successfully recruit—high character people, high achievers, people that understand higher education and push the kids” (A.D. 1).

Another director interviewed believed that it is “very important” to have a person within the wrestling coaching staff who serves in a business capacity as a program entrepreneur, however he felt it was easier said than done. “I just think finding the person that is a quality coach and also an entrepreneur to be out promoting their program is a difficult package to find” (A.D.2).

The leader of the national wrestling association felt it was absolutely critical for the wrestling coaching staff to have a member to serve as a program entrepreneur. “One of our missions is to develop the equivalent of small-business CEO skills in our college coaches. Every coaching staff needs at least one member that serves as an entrepreneur—that serves as the CEO of the program. Absolutely, we need that” (Leader).

Although the majority of surveyed athletic directors didn't explicitly say that it was necessary for a coach to serve in an entrepreneurial role, clearly there are several activities mentioned that *may help* to secure the longevity of the program if the coach does act in this capacity. In the next section, many of these activities will be discussed as we explore two current wrestling programs that are thriving amid the torrent of discontinuations. Their examples of entrepreneurship are representative of the substantial impact a coaching staff can have.

### **Individual Coaching Staff Influences: Best Practices Analysis**

*"Wrestling, like many "minor sports" is as important as you make it. The current staff has made wrestling an important contributing sport to a nationally recognized athletic department. I think the current staff has changed the image of the sport on this campus, with academic and athletic success" (A.D. 3).*

In order to get an in-depth view of the potential influence of an individual coaching staff, two Division I-A wrestling programs that can be described as "turn-around" programs were selected for case study analysis. These programs provide good examples of two separate coaching staffs that have overcome the odds and are currently among the best in the nation in a sport that is rapidly shrinking within their division. The coaches have revitalized Division I wrestling programs turning them into national powerhouses with record setting fan attendance.

#### ***Case Study Background***

***University 1:*** Coach 1 is the head coach of the University 1's Wrestling Program, where he has achieved tremendous success over his thirteen-year coaching tenure. In 1993 he took over a program that had posted two winning seasons in 10 years and has since transformed the program into a national power, having posted 12 straight winning seasons and 11 straight Top-12 finishes. Coach 2 is the assistant coach of the University 2

Wrestling program and has been coaching with Coach 1 for 16 years. He plays a vital role in the program.

Coach 1 describes the state of the program 12 years ago:

I got here and they had not won a Big Ten dual meet in 5 years. They had the maximum amount of scholarships, but they only had two coaches (you are allowed 3 full time and 1 volunteer coach). They did not have a permanent practice room; they did not have a permanent competition site, they moved around all the time. I think the respect on campus, in the community, in the state, and nationally in wrestling was about as poor as you can get, and there were a lot of people talking at the time that they were going to drop sports. Three were on the chopping block, and ours was one of them.

Coach 2 also shared similar views: [The state of the program] “was probably about as low as it could have been...I don’t think anybody in the community really cared...the program at that time was not in good shape.”

While being courted for the job at University 1, Coach 1 received an offer from a big wrestling school with a ready-made program with lots of support and reputation. But he described University 1 as being “somewhere to build my own program and legacy.” The program was definitely viewed by both coaches as a challenge “Some people thought I was nuts to come to [University 1],” Coach 1 stated. After describing the state of the meets held here before their era, 2 stated, “I wasn’t so sure that this was a good place to be.” But once the decision was made to come, the coaching duo set out to turn [1] Wrestling into a respected program.

**University 2:** Coach 3 has been the head coach at University 3 for 20 years, and has brought the program from one of moderate success and national acclaim to one of the toughest national powerhouses in collegiate wrestling. In his third season at the helm of the program he led his wrestlers to a second-place finish in the Big Ten, and two years after that, he won his first of three national titles. Not only has he led his team to

tremendous success on the mat, he has been a pioneer in the promotion and marketing of wrestling. He has been responsible for unprecedented events at his school, which have attracted record-setting crowds that he hopes, will set trends around the country. One of these events features an MC; highlight videos; instant replays; pyrotechnics; interviews with wrestlers, coaches, fans, and celebrities; and more.

Coach 3 described the evolution of his program:

When I began coaching, {University 2] wasn't bad, but it's kind of relative to where you want to be. They were always pretty good in the Big Ten. We didn't have any fans when we came, we probably went from maybe 200 or 300 fans to setting a national record of almost 16,000 people. Part of it is winning, and part of it is selling the program and the people and staff. So yes, it has evolved. One of the hardest things to do is to get people to believe you can win. You've got to be what I call the keeper of the flame. You've got to be able to believe when the other people can't believe whether your fans can't believe, whether your athletes, whether your coaches. Sometimes it's pretty hard, sometimes it's pretty lonely cause you're there by yourself, but if you stick to it and you do the things right, in the end it will work out the right way.

The University 2 athletic director commented on the evolution of the program:

They're national champions, and when he got here they weren't very good. He's been here many years, and they've definitely gotten better...I believe he deserves most, if not all of the credit. He is a very driven person. He is a tremendous coach, promoter, and recruiter...he has developed a championship program.

Both of these coaches have transformed their programs from teams with little to moderate community support, to programs of national respect and sheltered longevity.

These revolutions can be accredited to five themes that have emerged throughout the data collection: 1) Complementary coaching staffs with entrepreneurial head coaches; 2) strong positive relationships with the administration, donors, and the community; 3) program promotion and fundraising efforts; 4) promotion of the sport; and 5) a drive for success on the mat.

### *Complementary Staff with an Entrepreneurial Head Coach*

The unique role of each coach on the coaching staff is clearly recognized at both of the wrestling programs studied. At [University 1] the coaches emphasized their different roles within the coaching staff as providing their distinctive individual strengths to the coaching mix and as such contributing to the team. In describing the roles of each coach, the assistant coach stated, simply: “We utilize our strengths.” The head coach echoed that straightforward statement. He explained that his assistants are better technical coaches than he is, and that he is a better motivator. Coach 1 has delegated virtually the entire training of his athletes to Coach 2. Thus Coach 2 handles technique while Coach 1 attempts to find and exploit value-creating opportunities for his program. He utilizes his strengths within his unique role.

“Basically I’m the guy that keeps it all moving,” Coach 1 explained,

When you move up to these kinds of positions, you do less coaching, no question about it. I allow my [assistant coaches] to do a lot of the coaching. You see head coaches that get so caught up in the X’s and O’s that they forget about recruiting, they forget about PR, they forget about fundraising. There are just some things that I think are important, especially in our sport, because if you don’t promote and market and fundraise our program, it’s not going to happen.

Athletes interviewed from this program seemed very aware of the entrepreneurial role the head coach fills on the team. One athlete remarked,

I think it’s very important for a coach to fill that role. Especially since I’ve been here I’ve had a sense of pride for the coaching staff I have. I’ve wrestled for [Coach 1], or I know [Coach 1]—there is a lot behind those words. I think everybody feels that sense of pride, too (Athlete 1).

This may be evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of wrestlers on the team are non-starting walk-ons that participate because they love wrestling and feel honored to be a part of the program. “We’re his first priority,” one athlete noted, “so if he needs to spend

a lot of time promoting, he'll let one of his assistants take over and plan out what we need to do" (Athlete 2)

The head coach from [University 2] expressed a similar view on the division of roles within wrestling coaching staffs:

Every coaching staff is different. You need people that are technicians, you need coaches that are promoters, you need coaches that are good with people, and you need guys that are good recruiters. There's a whole gamut. A head coach needs to try to find a cross-section of coaches, so when you put your staff together you hit all the areas. Maybe one guy's got some vision, and another one is a leader, another guy is a motivator, another guy is the go-to guy, or the father figure, or just someone to hang out with. So you try to cover all the bases for things that kids would need with different coaches...I liken it to a conductor of an orchestra. Your job as the head coach is to be the conductor. You've got strings, and you've got brass, and all of the other parts, and your job is to put them all together so it sounds good.

To promote a successful and valued program within your institution, "There are 3 things that are important," coach 3 states, "Number one is vision--you have to know where you are going. Number two is that you have to have a plan, and three, you have to have leadership and implement it."

As in any organization, the leader plays a critical role in the quest to create value. Generally this is done by attempting to hire the best fit of complementary skilled people—marketers, finance individuals, accountants, individuals familiar with the product, etc.; and employing the individuals to work together to best help the company succeed. This makes sense. Traditionally, however, within the realm of athletics, a coach, and a coaching staff are chosen based on coaching ability, and often athletic skill. Most wrestling coaching staffs are composed of former wrestlers at the institution. Certainly these experienced individuals with coaching skills, and a love for wrestling are important,

but perhaps business skills—skills that drive demand—are becoming an imperative ingredient to have as an additional *part* of the coaching mix.

Clearly both of these programs have extremely driven coaches who lead their programs. Certainly both Coach 1 and Coach 3 epitomize the people who continually seek to recognize and exploit value-creating opportunities for their programs—they fit the definition of an entrepreneur. Both mentioned exceptional assistant's that take care of the tasks that complement their strengths.

***Building, Sustaining, and Strengthening Relationships with the Administration, Community, & Donors***

***Relationships with the Administration:*** From the state of the art newly remodeled wrestling practice room, and the office space of the head coach, to the highest paid assistant coach salaries in the Big Ten, the University 1 wrestling program appears to have significant administrative support. This support began from the beginning for the staff. During the hiring process, Coach 1 had a few conditions that needed to be met in order for him to accept the offer. He wanted a new practice facility, a permanent competition facility, and enough of a budget to be able to support a full coaching staff (three full-time coaches). The athletic director assented, which signified a commitment to the program. The “1” wrestlers now practice in a fully refurbished 6,100-square foot wrestling room, one of the largest in the country. The coaches hold a prestigious corner office position in athletic administration building, and they compete regularly in a functional historical building on campus.

The relationship between the wrestling coaching staff and the administration has been strengthened through their association throughout the staff's tenure. The first few

years of coaching, Coach 1 and company heard some rumors about wrestling possibly being cut, but they felt that they had a commitment from the administration to build the program, and they did everything they could to secure that relationship. “We do have a lot of support from the administration,” Coach 2 said.

But getting support from the administration goes both ways. ‘Coach 1’ has a good relationship with the AD. I think the fact that we’ve done well and our kids are doing well in school, they’re not causing trouble, and we’re producing All-Americans and National Champions, academic all-big ten guys, and academic All-American guys, shows the administration that those are our goals. These are the athletic department’s goals also, and once you start showing them that those are your goals, and you are actually producing, they will help support you as much as they can.

A coach can do much, but without support and encouragement from the athletic department committed to building a solid program, it may be a high mountain to climb. But, as coach B said, support goes two ways. Coach 1 summarized it by saying, “[The athletic director] made a commitment to the program, but had we not lived up to our end and kept wrestling where it is, I’m sure there would have been considerations for [cutting the program].”

The administrative support is an extremely helpful foundation to the building of a successful program because they can give a financial boost where fundraising or lack of tradition may not be sufficient. Several surveyed coaches mentioned the “financial support from the administration,” or “positive relations with the administration” as fundamental to their success. The administration can supply the needed quality practice facility, or the stable competition site, and further, the administration generally can help with marketing and public relations efforts. Some programs, like program A, are fortunate enough to have an initial display of support from the administration. Other programs are not so fortunate. The importance of the relationship, however, is still

critical. One survey respondent credited their positive program evolution to the “coaching staff that had a vision and a plan that the administration supported once it started to succeed.”

Support from the administration is a complicated issue. The administration holds the keys to the potential termination of a program, and also holds the keys to life giving budget allocations. Using the theory of resource allocations, the administration would theoretically hold the position of “the market,” or the regulator, of the collegiate athletic products. However, unlike most profit-driven markets, which arguably are in many respects comparable to how Division I-A athletic departments are run, the athletic administration is responsible for much, if not all, of the funding for the “revenue,” and “non-revenue” sports offerings within the department.

Thus, while it may not make sense to conclude that administrative support will directly drive demand for the program because the administration is the regulator; politically, administrative support may be a critical, if not the most critical, source of demand for the program available because the regulator can also play the role of the mediator—at any given time, if there is not enough external demand for the sport, the administrator is not forced to cut the program—the role of the regulator (as the administration plays) is not an executioner. The administrators, one would hope, are not waiting around for the demand to fall below a set level to cut the sport. If there is an insufficient level of demand, at that point, the regulator can 1) attempt to bring the demand for the program up through promotional or other efforts, 2) let it function at a less than desirable level with few fans and little demand, or 3) cut the program.

The administration, therefore, as explained by University 1 coaches, and cited by several of the surveyed coaches, is a critical tool that a coach can use on the road to program security. If the administration does not show support in the form of finances or manpower, the theory of the allocation of resources would lead one to believe that the program may be particularly vulnerable--that there is little demand by the administrators who ultimately decide whether the product has sufficient enough demand to bring it to market. When this is the case, a coach who is concerned about the future of his program must find other ways to generate sufficient demand in order to pay for the sport to be brought to market. Successful actions undertaken by these two programs may help to inspire a coach in this situation.

***Relationships with Community Members & Donors:*** At University 1, building relationships with the community and donors throughout the state was the primary task when striving to strengthen their new program. When asked what he did to bring the program from where it was to where it is now, Coach 1 responded that “[he] went everywhere! I went to tournaments,” he said, “where there was no kid there that was ever going to help our program, but I wanted to be visible as I could be, so I went to the tournaments—I’d be gone all the time. I told my wife, that for a couple years I’m going to need to go to places where I now don’t go.” He wanted to show the state that University 1 had made a commitment to wrestling.” “Going around the community was important, and [Coach 1’s] really good at that.” Coach 2 emphasized, “He speaks well and people like to hear him speak.... He’s great at building public relationships and because of that he’s made himself accessible to everyone in the state. Coaches are

comfortable with him; even the younger kids are comfortable with him. He makes himself visible.”

The program has established a tradition that before the official wrestling season starts, the team holds an open practice for “friends of the program,” an opportunity for perspective fans to come and preview their up-and-coming team. This year, in observing the event, the relationship-building agenda of Coach 1 was evident. A half hour before the practice began, “1” seemed almost oblivious to his players warming up. He was completely intent on mingling with the fans. He was constantly smiling, shaking hands and laughing with the people coming in. He worked his way through the visitors along the wall with glances at the door and waves every once in a while fulfilling his meet-and-greet agenda. According to the players there are regularly a few “random” people that come in to watch practice at any given time throughout the year. Coach 1 will typically talk with them throughout warm-up.

This relationship building has been key to attract the great wrestlers to their program. “2” noted, “wrestling is good in high school here, it’s a good school, coach 1 has build good relationships, and we now have much better facilities and so it’s not hard to get good kids to come here.” The hard work early on by the Univerisy 1 coaching staff to improve program visibility and build relationships has provided key networks for recruiting and fundraising that has helped to build the program and continues to feed it year after year.

During the interview with Coach 3, the emphasis on building relationships was never mentioned, but upon observation, it was quite obvious that beginning, sustaining, and developing relationships is a fundamental part of his mission. At a tournament,

where typically coaches are extremely focused on the success of their wrestlers and their standing within the competition, this focus on success was evident, but his perhaps second priority to build relationships was also clear. The coach made time to socialize, shake hands, smile, and laugh with boosters, parents, high school coaches, and other individuals. Members within the University 3 community commented that he is always quick to give away a “3 Wrestling” tee shirt or some type of “3 Wrestling” memorabilia in exchange for loyal attendance or support of the team. He has developed a strong following, and broad network, which, like University, 1, has helped to feed quality wrestlers into the program to promote the chances of future success on the mat.

Athletes from both schools reported an admiration for their coaches long before they were of an age or ability to sign with the institutions. Many of them attended the summer camps hosted by Universities 1 and 3, and were friends of the program long before they were athletes of the program. These coaches are great at developing relationships with individuals who support their mission to help their programs grow. This is demonstrated by the fact that both of the schools now have vast largely self-sufficient booster clubs that bring in thousands in annual dues, plan and carry out program-promoting events, and form a solid fan base to support the future of

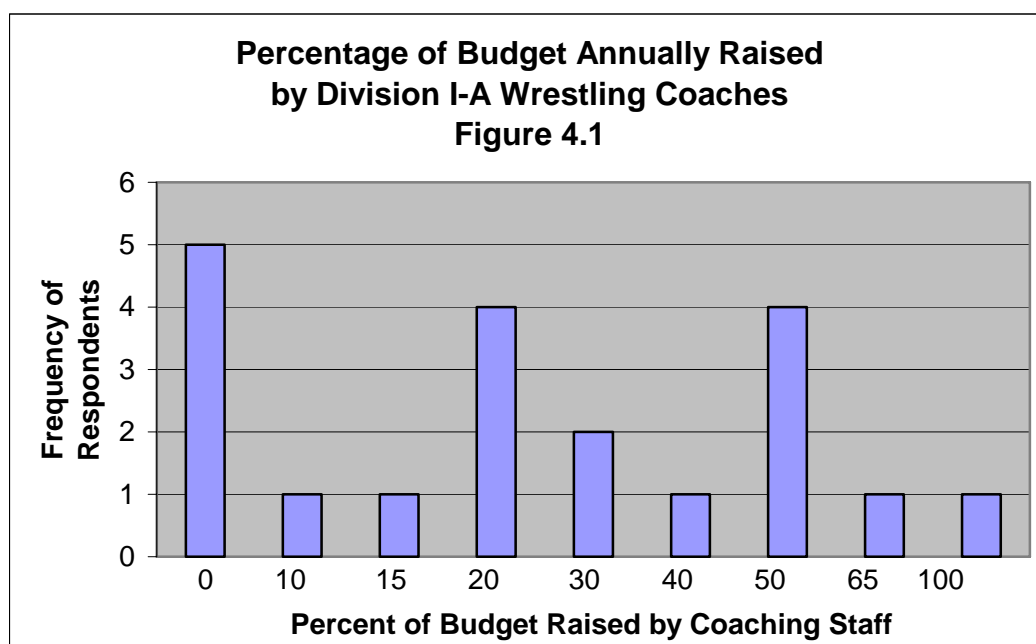
Surely 16,000 voices are louder than 300, and surely a network spread across the state can drive a significant amount of demand for a program. The coach’s role in building demand through relationships is one that has tremendous potential, and is recognized quite visibly by a few. The studied coaches have developed this demand one handshake at a time, and by doing so have taken one step toward program fortification, and many leaps toward balancing the allocation of resources equation.

### ***Program Promotion & Fundraising***

At the onset of this research project I conducted a short preliminary survey with several non-revenue coaches within a Midwestern university. I asked many of the coaches whether they felt a responsibility to do promotional activities for their programs. To my surprise, many of them did not. Within the study, 22 Division I-A non-revenue coaches were surveyed, and the mean was very close (1.06 raw score points) above the center of the distribution on a scale from 22-110. Thus, from that study, I could not conclude that collectively the coaches within the sample reported a strong affect toward or against the importance of coaches fundraising. The high standard deviation of 12.25, however, revealed that there were individuals within the sample with extreme beliefs—coaches who strongly felt that fundraising was their responsibility, and those who did not. One coach mentioned that when he was at a smaller school, he had to do promotional fundraising activities to stay afloat, but now that he is at the big-ten level, he didn't see the need. Among wrestling coaches surveyed in the pilot study, the attitude expressed by this coach was in the minority. The complete instrument, results and reliability statistics from this study are included in **Appendix 3**.

Of those surveyed within the wrestling population, 25% reported that they did not feel a responsibility to fundraise or promote their program, and the remaining 75% conducted promotional and fundraising activities on some level. Because the budgets and financial needs of the programs varied, coaches were asked how much of their annual budgets they fundraised. There was a wide range of answers from those that did not fundraise at all, to one coach who “felt the need to endow [his] program’s operating

budget so that [he] could ensure the life of [his] program,” because he feels “there is no other way” (Respondent 5). The average amount of funds raised by coaching staff members was 28.5% of the budget with a fairly large standard deviation of 26.46. The median response was 20%. The entire distribution of actual responses regarding the amount of fundraising the coaches complete yearly is displayed below in **Figure 4.1**.



In response to whether non-revenue sport coaches should be accountable for promoting their program and boosting their fan base, Coach 1 immediately responded “No question!” A similar query was posed regarding fundraising in particular, and it received an equally strong answer.

Should [fundraising] be part of [a non-revenue sport coaches job]? I don’t know...It’s part of mine, and because of that, we’re on solid ground. I don’t think people really want to drop sports. [Athletic Director’s] have a tough job. Not only [do they] have to balance gender equity, [they] have to balance the budget” (Coach 1).

“1” said that the athletic department supplied some support in program promotion, but that he pushed them to improve their coverage. “They did a good job PR-wise here, and a little bit I demanded. I wanted the [wrestling] guys to get recognized just like the football players.” The Coaches at University 1 have done several promotional and fundraising activities to boost their program’s chances of longevity.

We started things like the booster club, we started the wrestling club where we raise money. They didn’t charge for meets when I got here. I don’t care if 50 people come, you have to charge and sell something. People don’t think it’s worth going to if you don’t have to pay to get in. And so little by little the fans support has gotten better” (Coach 1).

Coach 2 echoed the staff’s emphasis on fundraising:

We’ve actually done a lot of it, and we do a lot of it for a lot of different reasons. It all goes back to what we want out of our program...we’ve done a lot of simple things, and the reason is that fundraising can be a pain in the neck. We try to do things that will incorporate our alumni and fans and make the experience of fundraising enjoyable—golf outings, alumni reunions—different things that can bring in our alumni and even the wrestlers before we were here. They come and take pride in the program and how it’s changed directions...we try to do fundraising activities that people will actually enjoy. The more they get to know your guys and get to know us they feel more comfortable with the program and the program’s direction and I think in turn are going to be able to justify giving the money.

The fundraising efforts at University 1 now are stable enough to provide a salary to the volunteer coach, and provide a financial safety net for the program. Both coaches strongly agreed that it was their responsibility to fundraise, and if you do not,

That’s where you can get yourself in trouble. The first thing you have to do as a minor sport whether it’s male or female, you have to take care of your own program...If you can keep your program afloat by fundraising, you’ve got to fundraise. If you’ve got to run camps to put money back into your own budget, there are a lot of things you need to do to take care you your own program. Fundraising, whether you like to do it or not, or think it’s your responsibility or not in this day and age is a reality. Things cost a lot of money...and it’s when you take the attitude that you don’t need to raise money, that’s when you get yourself in trouble. You’re going to short change your program (Coach 2).

Coach 1 asserted, “I think that coaches get lazy and they don’t think it’s part of their role to do PR and fundraising. You get caught up on your own little world and I disagree with them.”

***Wrestling matches promoted as events with focus on delivery system concepts and packaging:*** Promotional activities to help draw a bigger fan base have also been of concern to Coach 1. The starting athletes have theme music that the fans get accustomed to by the end of the season, the band is present at every home meet, the color guard presents the colors for the national anthem, and various other entertainment-centered activities have been established to improve the experience of the wrestling meets. “Little things I pay attention to,” Coach 1 explained. “Like when you have the crowd on one side, it doesn’t give you the best atmosphere.” This is not a problem at the facility where University 1 has its home meets, but he proceeded to draw diagrams of other facilities, that he perceived as having problems. For each facility he explained what he would do to improve the atmosphere if he were in charge, such as placing banners to fill up the empty spaces, or bringing in bleachers to fill voids. “Without the marketing and promotion you’re not going to be as successful, no question about it.” He explained, “It’s going to keep you in the game. They’re not going to drop wrestling at University A right now, if somebody comes in and says you’ve got to drop two men’s sports, wrestling’s not going to be one of them” (Coach 1).

Coach 3 is also a major proponent of marketing and promotional activities for his program. He believes that in order to promote your program and raise money, “You have to make it exciting. You have to make [each wrestling match] an entertaining experience.” Anyone who has been to a University 3 wrestling event knows that he isn’t

kidding. He has been at the forefront of wrestling entertainment and puts on a great show. Some of his meets have included an in house master of ceremonies; highlight videos of the athletes; instant replays to fill dead time and highlight exciting or controversial moves or calls; pyrotechnics; and interviews.

Coach 3 explained part of his philosophy by explaining his belief that:

A tailgate party for football is just an excuse to have a party before and after, because people are social. Wrestling people have to make wrestling social, so what we do here is we have a booster club, we have a pre game and we have a post game where all the boosters can come together and talk about the match, they can socialize, drink beer, eat fries—have family. That's one thing. Having a half time is another thing that we started along time ago. Half time is for the fans; it's not for the wrestlers. It allows the people to go to the bathroom, get something to eat, generate more money for the concessions, give a break for the fans from just sitting on the hard bleachers for an hour and a half (Coach 3).

His promotional activities have gone hand in hand with generating revenue for the program. He emphasized the need to educate those in attendance to try to turn them into fans.

There are a lot of things that you can do to educate the people. We started selling programs. You go to most wrestling meets and they have a piece of paper folded in half, now who wants that? You go to a basketball game they have a program that is four colors, it's slick, it tells stories about the people in there, about what's going on around the country, so that's what we did, and well, then we started selling a lot of programs (Coach 3).

He said he has gotten many of his promotional ideas by looking at other successful sports.

What you've got to do is look around at what other people do. When the football team plays their rivals, they jack up the ticket prices because people are going to come no matter what. So when we wrestle our rival this year, it's going to be a 20-dollar ticket instead of a 10-dollar ticket.... Money drives things, so you've got to get people there, and if they pay money and you get more money, then you get advertising and promotions and you get on TV and you get on the radio, it's one after another (Coach 3).

The program Coach 3 has built is no longer a “non-revenue” program. It brings in a significant amount of dollars in to the athletic department each year, has a large community following, and is an essential part of the athletic program at University Z.

The coaches from both programs demonstrated a deep sense of responsibility to justify their program. They felt accountable for the fan-base, and a duty to raise funding for the team. Both seemed almost appalled when talking of coaches who shirk the (in their opinion) responsibility to promote their programs. They also feel that they are on solid ground—their programs are justified, and because of that, there is no fear that their program will be cut in the near future. Both coaches both have done a lot of fundraising work and believe vehemently that the role of promotion and fundraising in non-revenue sports is vital to ensure the longevity of the program. Clearly, financial support, and fan support from individuals within the community provide a significant amount of demand that will help to pay the amount necessary to bring the sport to market.

### *Promotion of the sport*

Another common theme among the programs, emphasized particularly by Coach 3, was a responsibility felt by the head coaches to promote the sport of wrestling in addition to their individual programs. Coach 3 has gained a strong reputation as a wrestling promoter. In recent years, he has purposefully taken his team to compete in areas of the country that are dwindling in wrestling support in hopes to revitalize interest within these areas. He feels very strongly in marketing and promoting the sport of wrestling, and thinks that many wrestling coaches aren't doing enough.

“Wrestling coaches are very limited in the way that they think,” he mentioned,

They think it's all about wrestling in the wrestling room, it's all about X's and O's. They don't do anything with marketing or promotion or that kind of thing. What you should be doing is selling a product, which is wrestling, which is probably one of the best things that you could have in athletics (Coach 3).

Even mid-interview, without a prompt, he provided a discourse on his strong beliefs in positive characteristics the sport of wrestling can provide:

Wrestlers are the number one people that make it as Navy Seals...Because of what [a wrestler has] done his whole life, he already has the skills that people are looking for: he has discipline, dedication, sacrifice, hard work, the ability to function under duress; he's very individualistic, but he's very aggressive and works well in a team environment ...who wouldn't want a guy like that? Wrestling is probably the most disciplined of all sports. It's so much different than all the other sports because you live it 24 hours a day. Everybody else goes home, but a wrestler can't eat, so he takes it with him, day in and day out. He has a type of discipline that most other athletes don't have. Wrestling coaches need to be able to promote and sell those qualities to people, but we don't do a very good job at that. Because we're so concerned about the wrestling.... Most of the people that come to see wrestling are relatives or friends of the wrestlers. We need to get fans (Coach 3)!

This passion and drive to promote the sport in addition to his program has been reflected in the phenomenal increase in fan attendance he has sustained within his program from an estimated 2 to 300, to 16,000.

Coach 1 and his staff have also made it a part of their agenda to help the sport continue to grow. Annually, the 1 program holds a meet where local wrestling squads get in for free in the hope that the young wrestlers get fired up about the sport and their potential futures therein. The staff has also started a wrestling club wherein boosters donate money "to help wrestling in the state of [1]" (Coach 1). He said they just donated \$1000 dollars to the local middle school's wrestling program, they hope to increase their donations in the future, and that the coaches have been to several of the local schools to get the young wrestlers excited about the sport.

Both of the coaches within the case study analysis felt the importance of sport promotion. Without wrestling participants and wrestling stakeholders, the importance of fielding a wrestling team within an educational setting seems virtually void of meaning. Without sustained sport vitality within a region, or within a country, a slow death of the sport seems evident without another strong force of demand pulling for it. The passion Coach 3 holds about promotion, and actions both coaching staffs have taken to promote the sport, is what is necessary to continue the growth of this ancient sport. A fundamental source of demand for the sport of wrestling is a love for the sport had by participants and spectators alike. The force that this source of demand brings to the allocation of resources equation is powerful. Without opportunities to view or participate in the sport, without this source of demand, without a strong force to balance the resource allocation equation, the sport may dwindle.

### ***Success on the Mat***

Any person involved with athletics would agree that it is easier to recruit, build a fan base, and potentially justify a program when the team is successful. It is not too difficult a jump to conclude, conversely, that success on the mat is certainly facilitated by successful recruiting, a strong fan base, and a solid program.

One attempting to find the secrets of a successful coaching recipe would perhaps then ask, which comes first, the chicken or the egg...is it necessary to have success in order to attain additional perks, or must one have a fan base, recruiting network, and solidity of the program in order to attain success on the mat. There is no clear recipe, and

even if they were, on any given Saturday, 50% of the collegiate wrestling teams would probably win, and 50% would probably lose.

The coaches researched within this inquiry, however, have seemingly overcome these odds and are achieving success more frequently than simple probabilities would project. What have these coaches done to achieve such success? They have established complementary coaching staffs with an entrepreneurial coach at the helm; they have built, sustained, and strengthened relationships with their administration, community members, and donors; they have endeavored to promote and fundraise for their program; and have performed activities to promote and strengthen their sport. Certainly all of these activities are interconnected, and all contribute in some way to their success on the mat, which in turn contributes to aiding success in the different program building activities pursued.

As a proponent of *the entire sport* of wrestling, and not just a few individual programs, it is difficult to conclude that one of the keys to successful fortification of the sport is to encourage wrestling coaches to win. Surely fans like their teams to win, and successful teams may increase the demand for the program, but this is arguable. As mentioned above, no matter what is done—whether each coach throughout the nation does everything within his power to create a “successful” program—at the end of the day, only half will win. Not everyone can be a top ten school. Thus, the demand created through success needs to be captioned as perhaps a shortsighted, yet worthy goal. The more important, and certainly complementary long-term goal should perhaps be to build a solid foundation for the program by striving for success and fortification through “Complimentary EntRe-relationship Promotion:” “Complementary” coaches led by an

“Entre”preneur who builds, sustains, and strengthens “Relationships” and “Promotes” his program and the sport.

Coach 2 stated, “The thing about coaching is you’re only as good as the athletes you have most of the time. You can’t attract good athletes if you’re not a good coach.” Perhaps the definition of “being a good coach” has evolved. This lends to the question whether a wrestling coach should be held accountable for their fan base and revenue.

### **Coach Accountability**

*There was a time where I didn’t even think that was their responsibility...but that has changed. I don’t think they need to be held solely responsible, but I do believe that they need to assist in any way that they can within reason to popularize the sport and to increase the attendance, and this is true with all coaches, not just with wrestling coaches” (A.D. 3).*

Surveyed athletic directors and coaches expressed a range of accountability levels, however, the means of both groups were very near the moderate accountability level. Athletic directors as a whole voiced their expected accountability for coaches just under the moderate accountability level with a mean of 2.78, while the coaches collectively held a mean of 3.17. Both groups had a relatively high standard deviation, which indicates a fair amount of spread within the samples. For a complete listing of responses and associated statistics see **Table 4.7**.

Wrestling Coach Fan Base and Revenue Accountability Table 4.7							
	No Accountability (1)	(2)	Moderate Accountability (3)	(4)	Absolute Accountability (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Athletic Directors	22%(4)	6%(1)	<b>44%(8)</b>	28%(5)	0%(0)	2.78	1.1144
Coach	4% (1)	13% (3)	<b>52% (12)</b>	22% (5)	9% (2)	3.17	0.9367

### *Athletic Director Views on Coach Accountability*

The interviewed athletic directors expressed a similar variance in response. One athletic director felt that the coach accountability for fan base and revenue “varies from institution to institution,” but overall he felt that the coaches should not be held accountable. “It isn’t all about fan base and revenue,” he expressed,

I think the wrestlers work just as hard as the football players do, and probably even harder, but they don’t participate in a sport that is as widely consumed by the public as a football is, and so sure we want to do everything we can to market the sport, and to derive revenue, and put people in the seats if we possibly can, but the coach is there to develop athletes and mentor them as students. At our institution, the marketing department would be held accountable for that sort of thing assuming the product we’re putting out on the mat is satisfactory. I think the accountability is shared, but if our crowd started to decline and the teams are good, I’d ask the marketing department why we’re not selling tickets (A.D 2).

Two athletic directors expressed similar opinions within the survey. One mentioned his belief that each program is different, however at the respondent’s school, he mentioned,

We do not promote booster clubs for our individual sports nor do we require our coaches to be responsible for attendance and marketing. Certainly we ask them to participate in promotions we decide to do as a department but we do not want our coaches focused on marketing the sport and trying to grow the fan base. That is the job of the marketing staff. The coaches have enough to do with recruiting and coaching (Respondent 5).

Similarly, another respondent expressed: “a coach is a role model, responsible for producing athletes who learn self-discipline, courage, self-control, sportsmanship, and leadership. All the rest will take care of itself” (Respondent 8).

These beliefs are fairly traditional. Throughout the current era of coaching, the role of a coach involves these values very much. The best selling and most widely distributed coaching book currently on the market describes the attributes of a successful coach as follows:

Successful coaches help athletes master new skills, enjoy competing with others, and feel good about themselves. Successful coaches not only are well versed in the techniques and skills of their sports, they know how to teach these skills to young people. And successful coaches not only teach athletes sport skills, they also teach and model the skills needed for successful living in our society” (Martens, 1990, p. ix).

These values are fundamental to its legitimacy as a part of collegiate athletics. These values are what make sport fundamental in building character in athletes, fundamental to the greatness of sport. I am in no way arguing that these values are no longer important, only that perhaps they are no longer enough. In the era of the big time, with increasing financial pressures from multiple directions, perhaps these traditional roles are evolving. This change was noted by an interviewed AD in response to whether a wrestling coach should be held accountable for his fan base or revenue. The AD responded,

I’ve always said no to that question, and yet I believe that they today have a responsibility in trying to increase that. There was a time where I didn’t even think that was their responsibility, and I’m an old guy, so you’ve got to understand that, but that has changed. *I don’t think they need to be held solely responsible, but I do believe that they need to assist in any way that they can within reason to popularize the sport and to increase the attendance, and this is true with all coaches, not just with wrestling coaches* (A.D. 3).

There was a time, this athletic director mentioned. There was a time when a coach could just coach. There was also a time where there was just one coach for an entire athletic program including football and track, but that time has passed. We now have 3 or 4 coaches per team, often with a support staff including strength and conditioning coaches, trainers, and marketing personnel. With the onslaught of program terminations, can we truly blame the marketing departments for not promoting wrestling strongly enough? Is it too much to ask of our coaches to add promotion to their list of responsibilities? If there isn't significant interest in the sport, and there is mounting pressure in terms of gender equity and finances, will our athletic department marketing programs put the wrestling agenda at the top of their list of priorities? What about the athletic department that doesn't have a big marketing team, or has a marketing team devoted more fully to the major sports? Who then will help save the programs?

The interviewed director of a national wrestling association responded that a coach should be responsible for their fan base and revenue "assuming that they're given adequate resources. But you can't ask a coach to build a house if you're not going to give him the tools." He argued that it is critically important for coaches to put more people in the stands, and those coaches who don't have access to athletic department resources may need to find and utilize other potential resources. He shared a strategy that he used:

"One of the things I used to do when I coached is I became best friends with the dean of our business school, and he would provide some of his top students every year to do a marketing promotions plan for our team as a class project. It wasn't too long after doing it that the athletic department's marketing person felt slighted, and made wrestling a higher priority. Those are some of the resourceful skills that we need to teach our coaches to adopt...it goes back to relationship building skills and the coaches ability to form a bond with the wrestling community in and around where their program resides. That's absolutely

important. Building a bond with the alumni of the team is absolutely critical, and being able to build a bond with the students on campus. You can't ask for their support of your program unless you're willing to support the things that they're doing."

It isn't surprising that the athletic directors did not overwhelmingly believe that coaches are accountable for the fan base and revenue of their sports. Were that the case, these athletic directors would currently be demanding more from their coaches. Hiring decisions might be based upon solely what they mentioned in chapter four regarding what a coach should do to enhance the longevity of a sport—a sport business background may be a necessary element of the coach who is hired to serve in the entrepreneurial/promotion function within the coaching staff. This has not *as of yet* been a large component. Currently, most coaches that are hired at this level are those who excelled as athletes and are good coaches. They are fulfilling the traditional roles of a coach, which is wonderful...but is it enough? The athletic directors within this study generally indicated that a little less than moderate responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the athletic director; however, one interviewed athletic director, who is currently in the minority indicated his position, which, in the fragile economic reality faced within Division I-A wrestling, may be the position of the future:

"I believe that they today have a responsibility in trying to increase [the fan base and revenue of their program]. There was a time where I didn't even think that was their responsibility...but that has changed. *I don't think they need to be held solely responsible, but I do believe that they need to assist in any way that they can within reason to popularize the sport and to increase the attendance, and this is true with all coaches, not just with wrestling coaches* (A.D. 3).

### ***Coach Views on Coach Accountability***

As indicated in table 6.1, the coach's responses indicated a higher level of felt accountability for the fan base and revenue than was expressed as an expectation by the

athletic directors. There was still a wide range of deviation, however, within these responses. As would be expected, the coaches within the case studies both felt strongly about their accountability in this respect.

Coach one responded that there was “no question” that a wrestling coaching staff should be accountable for their fan base. “I don’t think we do that enough” (Coach 1). Coach two also felt this accountability. He mentioned if you have the attitude that it is not your responsibility to increase the fan base and revenue of the program,

That’s where you can get yourself in trouble. The first thing you have to do as a minor sport whether it’s male or female, you have to take care of your own program. If you can keep your program afloat by fundraising, you’ve got to fundraise. IF you’ve got to run camps to put money back into your own budget, you’ve got to do it. There are a lot of things you need to do to take care of your own program (Coach 2).

Coach three expressed this same felt-accountability, In addition to finding a way to overcome the pressures inflicted by Title IX, he felt that the future viability of wrestling was very dependent on the role of coaches. “If you look at the successful programs, you look at the coaches that really get involved. A lot of coaches don’t want to hear it, but that’s the bottom line. The bottom line is that [many] aren’t doing what [they] are supposed to be doing” (Coach 3). Coach three continued and went so far as to propose a plan for getting the rest of the coaches in the nation to shape up and own up to this responsibility he felt was so critical to the future of the sport:

If you really want to change wrestling, a couple of things you could do is have every A.D. say [to their coaches] ‘within five years, or within three years, you need to generate 10% of your budget at the gate, and if you don’t I’m going to fire you.’ I tell you what, you watch some guys scramble then. That would motivate a lot of people...and a lot of people would get fired, but what you would get is young people in there that would get motivated and get it done (Coach 3).

Clearly these coaches feel an intense responsibility to justify their sport as a part of the athletic department. Both coaching staffs mentioned that they feel that their counterparts need to do more, and this will help the future of the sport.

Many of these fellow coaches expressed their opinions within the survey. Several coaches indicated that they feel little to no accountability for their program's fan base, revenue, and longevity. A common theme among these respondents was a tendency to compare their sport to others that weren't in a crunch, and to externalize the blame for the discontinuations to other sources that they believe hold more responsibility to promote the sport. There were five written responses (of 18 who responded to the question) that reflected this lack of accountability belief.

One coach mentioned, "the football and basketball coaches primary job is to coach. The athletic department hires individuals to schedule and budget for them. The wrestling coaches have to do everything to keep the program above water. It is hard to be held accountable for revenue when you do not get the financial backing to market your program" (Respondent 22). Another coach mentioned that "Very few sports here have a fan base...we offer 27 sports and the ones that get the support are the administrations favorites. The A.D. was a football and baseball player. The assistant A.D. was a soccer coach" (Respondent 19). Other responses included: a lack of felt accountability due to gender equity, budgeting, and "educational incompetence" on the part of administrators.

Another group of six coaches (of 18) surveyed responded with moderate accountability statements with a belief that coaches are perhaps part of the problem, but the more significant responsibility for sport discontinuation were administrative problems such as budgets and gender equity.

The slight majority, seven of the surveyed coaches who responded to the open-ended question, expressed a deep felt-responsibility for their fan base and revenue.

Respondent 16 wrote one such response:

I feel pretty strongly that the coach has a Major role in whether their program gets cut. Many coaches will start hustling after the program is dropped to get it back but if they hustled like that before then there is a good chance that the cuts might not have ever happened. Wrestling has had too many practice room coaches...they think that since they know how to wrestle real well then everything else will be fine. We have to have coaches that excel in, wrestling, recruiting, promoting, fundraising and administrative roles.

The remaining six responses within this category of voiced accountability reflected a variety of different ways through which they act upon this responsibility. In addition to fundraising and promoting the sport as was mentioned by respondent 16, several of the others mentioned the critical importance of the coaches responsibility to foster a positive relationship with administrators, and a high level of performance off the mat from their athletes.

Coaches, especially outside the two major conferences, need to understand their role and standing in an athletic department. Unless your sport generates a significant amount of revenue, your standing with the administration needs to be improved through cooperation not intimidation. No one cares that you won this or that, they care that your kids don't get in trouble and they graduate. If you happen to win, that's a bonus and another positive for the program. Look at the majority of the DI programs dropped in the past ten years. There were major problems with the coach and his relationship with the administration. ie: cheating, stealing, kids in trouble, [and an opinion that the] coach recruited bandits (Respondent 17).

While many of the coaches did not express a felt accountability for the fan base and revenue of their sport or program, many did. This is impressive considering that many athletic directors do not expect them to be concerned about these issues. The fact that the coaches expressed a higher felt responsibility for the fan base and revenue than was expected by the athletic directors is an indication that this sample is perhaps

accepting this higher workload without an obligation to do so. Several coaches are taking a proactive role in securing financial fortification for their programs amid the torrent of discontinuations. Perhaps in the future, athletic directors will demand this of their coaches, as Coach three believes would help get coaches on the ball. As of now, some programs are getting cut, and others are rising to the top.

## Chapter V Conclusions & Discussion

This research project was embarked upon with the intent to explore the phenomenon of sport cuts and the role of an entrepreneurial coach--to *examine the perceptions and influences of coaches and athletic directors in achieving sustained viability of Division I-A wrestling programs*. In doing so, six research questions were explored through survey and case study methodology. These research questions are presented in chapter one, and the related assertions are presented within this section. The study began with an exploration of criteria used by athletic directors in the program discontinuation process and the coach's beliefs regarding the criteria.

### Conclusions

#### *Financial and gender equity considerations are the chief concerns in sport discontinuation decisions*

Based on the survey responses by 17 athletic directors of Division I-A wrestling programs, and two athletic directors of Division I-A schools that have cut wrestling in the last 10 years, the highest average criteria of importance to the discontinuation decision making process were 1) departmental budget shortage due to budget cuts resulting from decreases in institutional support, donor support, or revenue flow, and 2) financial strain of the individual program. These were followed by gender equity implications. For an entire list of criteria and their corresponding statistics see **Table 4.1**

In strict accordance with the theory of resource allocations pioneered by Adam Smith, of primary concern among criteria, according to the Division I-A athletic directors, are financial considerations: budget shortage due to budget cuts, and the financial strain of the program. These AD's logically would act as profit-maximizers

with a desire to end the fiscal year in the black, break even, or nearly break even for their often separate-entity athletic departments. As long as there is necessary financial backing by those willing to bring the sport to market, they agreed that generally the sport would not be cut. As such, they reported that when they choose to cut a sport, at the top of the list of potential considerations is money.

Third on the list of importance to athletic directors is the governmental legislation that affects the natural economy that would be collegiate athletics in a profit-driven separate entity system. This legislation creates a significant demand for women athletes, in many ways driven by the legitimacy of the public at large to create equality of opportunity, as well as the potential financial threat of a gender equity lawsuit or OCR case. Because of the cost related to funding these legislation-driven, generally unprofitable women's programs, many of the athletic directors coupled the financial aspects with the legislation as the most critical factors in the sport discontinuation decision-making process.

The data uncovered by the United States General Accounting Office study (2001) that investigated four-year colleges' experiences adding and discontinuing teams support the results attained within this inquiry. Within the GAO questionnaire, athletic directors were asked what factors affected the decision to discontinue teams. Results within the published report lumped all NCAA divisions together, however upon request, I was able to attain just the findings from the Division I-A category. Their method of inquiry, and wording of criteria was slightly different, but the top three categories of discontinuation criteria are the same. Within that study, 54% of Division I-A athletic directors responded that gender equity goals greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue teams

followed closely by 49% reporting that budget reallocation to other sports greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue teams followed next by 19% budget decreases as the next most significant criteria that greatly or very greatly affected the decision to discontinue a men's team (U.S. GAO, 2001).

Upon qualitative inquiry, the survey findings were strongly supported. Each interviewed athletic director agreed that the primary issues related to sport discontinuation decisions are financial, closely followed and influenced by gender equity considerations. The interviewed athletic directors agreed that if, because of one of these top three issues, they were "forced" to cut a sport, they would then look at a number of other criteria such as regional sport popularity, donor and fan support, conference membership requirements, athlete actions off the mat, lack of facilities, and efforts made by the coach. Interestingly, however, the surveyed and interviewed coaches did not see the criteria used by athletic director discontinuation decisions in quite that order of importance.

***Coaches and athletic directors have significantly different views on discontinuation criteria***

The survey data was quite clear that athletic directors and coaches have different views regarding sport cuts, with four criteria found significantly different. Further inquiry through interviews revealed that the two populations agreed to disagree on a number of items and that the divergences were expected and acknowledged because of the differing roles that each played within the athletic department.

Budget shortage due to budget cuts, and the financial strain of the program were two of the criteria that were rated significantly different by the athletic directors and

coaches. The athletic directors rated these categories as the most important criteria related to the sport discontinuation decision-making process. The coaches surveyed and interviewed believed the money to be of much less importance than was reported by the athletic directors. They cited the large budgets and surpluses within the departments and found it hard to believe that the financial strain of wrestling was truly the most important criteria. This discrepancy, although understood by both sides, could potentially be a barrier to program success for coaches who are striving to promote their programs. The athletic directors admitted that demand-driven dollars are the most influential factor in their decision making process, and until coaches buy into that to the extent that they can strive to financially justify their program, this rift will continue and the cuts may continue to occur.

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Pinpointing each of these divergences between the two populations is fundamental to taking steps to bridge these gaps. The athletic directors emphasized in the survey responses and in the interviews that financial issues are paramount to the sport discontinuation decision process. Yes, the finances may be tied with gender equity issues, but the gender equity pressures are not an insurmountable stand alone as many of the coaches expressed. Until coaches overcome the gender-equity-related apathy, accept

the financial realities, and act; these significant differences will continue to occur, and their sport may continue to dwindle.

Clearly knowing the criteria used to terminate a sport would help one who is attempting to sustain their program. If a coach is searching for criteria to be met in order to help the cause of promoting their sport and preserving their program, the list of athletic director criteria could be used as a valuable guide to direct their efforts. Before this effort is expended, however, it is important to ascertain whether the athletic director views a coach as capable of creating necessary changes in a vulnerable program, and what specifically they would suggest a coach do to enhance their chances of increased longevity.

***It is becoming more important for coaches to be entrepreneurs for their programs***

The variance in responses by athletic directors made it difficult to draw a firm conclusion of where the coach really can stand in relation to the decisions to terminate a sport. The mean A.D. response regarding whether or not it is important to have a coach within the coaching staff serve in the role as a program promoter or entrepreneur was just under the moderate importance level at 2.94. (For a complete listing of responses and corresponding statistics see **Table 4.6**).

One piece of data and a firm reliance upon the theoretical foundation of this study was the best-perceived way to interpret the information gathered. The piece of data referred to is the response of one of the athletic directors to whether it is important to have a program promoter/entrepreneur within the wrestling coaching staff. His response was:

It is becoming more and more important for [coaches to be program entrepreneurs]. Years ago, coaches just had to coach. But in the bureaucracy of coaching today, everything from compliance, to academics, to the department forms have significantly increased. I don't know today if it is a necessity [for coaches to be entrepreneurs], but it is a help. There may become a day that it is a necessity, but it certainly is important more so today than it used to be (A.D. 3).

This response may reveal insight into much of the conflicting opinions expressed throughout this research. Perhaps there are institutions and athletic directors that have been forced to grasp the “big-business” mentality that is inundating collegiate athletics. This inundation is due to a variety of reasons potentially including the funding structure at their institution, fiscal difficulties, or pressure to succeed in the “major” sports. Perhaps at the other end of the spectrum there are some institutions and directors that are maintaining the educational justification argument on which theoretically collegiate athletics is founded, and thus do not see the need for coaches to become program promoters in this sense. Surely there is a wide range of institutions that lie in the middle of these two extremes, but the concept lends to a hypothesis as to why there is such a wide range of responses to the issues under scrutiny within this study.

Thus, the ability to conclude that it is *necessary* to have a coach that serves as an entrepreneur for his program may be a stretch at this particular juncture. After all, only one athletic director responded that it is critically important. However, given the trend of commercialization within collegiate athletics, the trend for program discontinuations, and the view that having a program entrepreneur “certainly is important more so today than it used to be” (A.D. 3), lends me to believe that perhaps this it is *becoming* the economic reality—becoming more important—to have a determined voice and spokesperson that will push the wrestling agenda.

An important point to note is that it is not just the universities with the big business mentality that are placing wrestling on the chopping block—that are desperate for additional funding—it is every institution with a fragile economic reality. It is the majority of schools that see this disturbing, unwanted, and often feared decision in the future to discontinue a sport. If the athletic directors, marketing personnel, or development departments were focused solely on the future of wrestling, perhaps it could sit in their lap, as a few of the A.D.'s mentioned; but generally there is only one group within the athletic department that cares more about the future of wrestling than any one else, and that is the coaching staff. This is why, although not yet accepted by the majority, but visible to a few,

It is becoming more and more important for [coaches to be program entrepreneurs]...I don't know today if it is a necessity, but it is a help. There may become a day that it is a necessity, but it certainly is important more so today than it used to be" (A.D.3).

Certainly the athletic directors wouldn't argue that it is a help. According to the theory of the allocation of resources, "*The quantity of every commodity;*" the quantity of collegiate wrestling teams (when looked at through an economic standpoint)... "*Naturally regulates itself according to the demand of those who are willing to pay the whole rent, labor, and profits which must be paid in order to bring the product to market*" (Smith, 1776). There are athletic directors who believe coaches can and should carry out certain activities in an effort to support the program and its legitimacy as a part of the athletic department umbrella. There are athletic directors who believe these activities are more important today, than they were a few years ago. Is it necessary for coaches to behave as entrepreneurs and actively seek to enhance the demand for their

program? Based on the data collected within this sample, it appears that it is becoming more and more important.

***Coaches can enhance their program's chance of vitality through "Complimentary Entre-lationship Promotion"***

Both the athletic directors and successful coaches within the case study research were asked for activities that they believed coaches could do to enhance the future vitality of Division I-A wrestling programs. These lists were very similar.

The activities mentioned by the athletic directors included building indispensable relationships with donors, athletic department administrators, prominent figures, & alumni; fundraising; promoting their sport; and promoting the program's public perception. In other words, perform activities that raise demand for the program. Each of the activities mentioned served to strengthen the coach's position of being indispensable to the institution—of being the last person that would get cut in the event that a departmental program discontinuation was necessary. The role of a coach has traditionally been to take care of the X's and O's, but the athletic directors expressed that it would help their chance of survival if they would do more.

Any prominent figure who is willing to vocalize support for the program in some way, whether it be an administrator, alumnus, or donor will serve as a political advocate for the team which in and of itself creates a significant source of demand. These relationships are generally lucrative as well—for instance donors are a direct source of funding. Both sources of demand are helpful to the cause of program longevity, thus the building of these relationships is a worthwhile endeavor for any coaching staff.

Fundraising was also mentioned as an area that may help to promote the longevity of the programs. This plays the obvious function of increasing funding for the sport, and thus alleviating the financial pressure on the athletic directors, which as was revealed in chapter three is the primary criteria that athletic directors reported led to sport discontinuation decisions. This also clearly fits into the demand equation by helping to pay for the rent, labor and profits that are necessary to bring the product to market.

The athletic directors also mentioned promotion of the sport, and the public perception of the program. Without participants or fans, there would be no demand for the sport—there would be no sport. Thus, logically the opposite is true as well—the more fans and participants within the sport, the greater the demand and presence of the sport. Because of the widespread program cuts, this element of the puzzle is becoming more and more critical.

The coaches mentioned each of these activities, but added two of their own: success on the mat, and having a complementary coaching staff with an entrepreneurial head coach. Both of these lists combined lead to a conclusion that fortification of the programs can come through “Complimentary EntRe-relationship Promotion:” “Complementary” coaches led by an “Entre”preneur who builds, sustains, and strengthens “Relationships” and “Promotes” his program and the sport as he strives for success.

Each of the mentioned activities in some way raise demand for the program and help to pay the whole rent, labor, and profit that must be paid in order for the sport to be brought to market. Some of these sources of demand are strictly financial, and some are more political, but both stand to aid the wrestling product to be brought to market. All of

the above mentioned keys to success are tied together, all joined to a common thread of building demand to justify the program. At a fundamental level, we can assert that non-revenue sport coaches can ensure the longevity of their sport through self-sustaining financial support through fundraising, because the financial pressure paramount to the sport dropping decisions would no longer be an issue. However, because self-sufficiency is perhaps beyond the reach of many programs at this particular juncture, demand cannot be simply defined in terms of dollars and cents. Fundamental to the purpose of intercollegiate athletics is its educational mission. Were it not, arguably, there would not be a place for intercollegiate athletics within the academy. Given that, the demand for these sports is driven by a combination of fan support, the educational value it provides, and the participation levels in the community in addition to the revenue. Thus, as evidenced by the data, if this demand is manifest, the threat of the sport being cut is low, and consequently the quantity of [the sport] will naturally continue to flood the market.

***Wrestling coaches should be held moderately accountable for their fan base and revenue.***

Surveyed athletic directors and coaches expressed a range of accountability levels, however the means of both groups were very near the moderate accountability level. Athletic directors as a whole voiced their expected accountability for coaches just under the moderate accountability level with a mean of 2.78, while the coaches collectively held a mean of 3.17.

It isn't surprising that the athletic directors did not overwhelmingly believe that coaches are accountable for the fan base and revenue of their sports. Were that the case, these athletic directors would currently be demanding more from their coaches. Hiring decisions might be based upon solely what they mentioned in chapter 4 regarding what a

coach should do to enhance the longevity of a sport. A business background may be a necessary element of the coach who is hired to serve in the entrepreneurial/ promotion function within the coaching staff. This has not *as of yet* been a large component. Currently, most coaches that are hired at this level are those who excelled as athletes and are good coaches. They are fulfilling the traditional roles of a coach, which is wonderful...but is it enough? The athletic directors within this study generally indicated that a little less than moderate responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the athletic director; however, one interviewed athletic director, who is currently in the minority indicated his position, which in the fragile economic reality faced within Division I-A wrestling, may be the position of the future:

I believe that they today have a responsibility in trying to increase [the fan base and revenue of their program]. There was a time where I didn't even think that was their responsibility...but that has changed. *I don't think they need to be held solely responsible, but I do believe that they need to assist in any way that they can within reason to popularize the sport and to increase the attendance, and this is true with all coaches, not just with wrestling coaches (A.D. 3).*

There was a time, this athletic director mentioned. There was a time when a coach could just coach. There was also a time where there was just one coach for an entire athletic program including football and track, but that time has passed. We now have 3 or 4 coaches per team, often with a support staff including strength and conditioning coaches, trainers, and marketing personnel. With the onslaught of program terminations, can we truly blame the marketing departments for not promoting wrestling strongly enough? Is it too much to ask of our coaches to add promotion to their list of responsibilities? If there isn't significant interest in the sport, and there is mounting pressure in terms of gender equity and finances, will our athletic department marketing programs put the wrestling agenda at the top of their list of priorities? What about the

athletic department that doesn't have a big marketing team, or a marketing team devoted more fully to the major sports? Who then will help save our programs?

The coach's responses indicated a higher level of felt accountability for the fan base and revenue than was expressed as an expectation by the athletic directors. There was still a wide range of deviation, however, within these responses. While many of the coaches did not express a felt accountability for the fan base and revenue of their sport or program, many did. This is impressive considering that many athletic directors do not expect them to be concerned about these issues. The fact that the coaches expressed a higher felt responsibility for the fan base and revenue than was expected by the athletic directors is an indication that this sample is perhaps heading toward this higher workload without an obligation to do so. Several coaches are taking a proactive role in securing financial fortification for their programs amid the torrent of discontinuations. Perhaps in the future, athletic directors will demand this of their coaches. As of now, some programs are getting cut, and others are rising to the top.

### **Discussion**

Logically, if the theory of resource allocations stands as it should—if the quantity of every wrestling program is truly naturally regulated according to the demand of those who are willing to pay the whole rent, labor, and profits which must be paid in order to bring the product to market" (Smith, 1776, p. 63), then if a program were self-sustained, and/or had significant enough demand from the community to balance the resource allocation equation, then wrestling programs would never be cut.

To garner support for this conclusion, the athletic directors were asked whether they would *ever* discontinue a sport if it garnered significant demand from the community, or if it was self-sustained. All three agreed that in both situations, it would most likely never happen. In the case of having significant demand from the community, athletic director two cautiously stated, “There could be some narrow circumstances where it could happen, but it’s fairly unlikely.” The leader of the national wrestling organization expressed another angle of this response by relaying that he has “seen situations where the program was cut and the demand in the community brought it back” (Leader 1).

As far as a program that is self sufficient, the answers were similar in their cautious optimism:

I suppose you could still get into a situation where the culture and the sport was so detrimental that it you just didn’t think it was an enhancement to what you were doing. I think you could also get into a situation like men’s gymnastics is in, where there’s only 19 programs in the entire country and you run out of people to compete against, and even if you have the money, it doesn’t do you much good if you don’t have any legitimate competition. So I suppose there are some narrow instances where you could take a fully self-sustaining program and decide to discontinue it, but if funding is in place, and you look at the top two items among the administrators, and it’s fairly highly rated among coaches too, many times it’s about money. (A.D. 2).

Based upon these answers, it is safe to conclude that demand can be garnered in a variety of ways, each of which help the equation. Perhaps there are no guarantees for the future of Division I-A wrestling, however it is clear that certain activities help to fortify the current programs against the political and financial pressures that are in many ways responsible for many of the program discontinuations thus far.

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## Appendix A Athletic Director Survey

Division I-A athletic director philosophy regarding wrestling sport cuts [Exit this survey >>](#)

**1. The information you give within this survey is confidential. Please complete this demographic information for the researcher to keep track of respondents.**

Name

University

**2. Please indicate your current position relative to wrestling and sport cuts**

- I foresee wrestling being cut at this institution in the next 5 years
- I foresee wrestling being cut at this institution in the next 10 years
- I do not believe wrestling will ever be cut at this institution
- Other (please specify)
- 

**3. What criteria would you use to cut the wrestling program at your institution?**

**Please rate the importance of the criteria to the decision making process**

	No Importance		Moderate Importance		Critical Importance
Educational Value of the sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fan support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Donor support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continuing history of student-athlete academic achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continuing history of student-athlete actions off the mat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial strain of the individual program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental budget shortage due to overspending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental budget shortage due to budget cuts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender equity implications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of success on the mat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional popularity of coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Tenure of coach with the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal relationship with the coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Core requirements of a school's membership in it's conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Core requirements of a school's NCAA division classification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympic sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**4. Would the decision criteria used in question 3 be similar for other non-revenue sports?**

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

**5. How much influence do you believe that a wrestling coaching staff has over whether or not their program is cut?**

- 5 Critical Influence
- 4
- 3 Moderate Influence
- 2
- 1 No Influence

**6. Which (if any) actions taken by a wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity?**

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if they fundraised \_\_\_ % of budget (10, 20, 30...)

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if they increased fan attendance to \_\_\_ fans/meet (50, 100, 150...)

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if they increased regional sport popularity through \_\_\_ (camps, clinics, public appearances...)

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if they increased success on the mat by maintaining a position of \_\_\_ (top 5 in conference, top 5 in nation...)

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if the coach has tenure with the university for \_\_\_ years (5, 10, 15...)

A wrestling coaching staff could enhance the team's chance of increased longevity if they promoted their own personal popularity in the community through \_\_\_ (camps, clinics, public appearances...)

What would you encourage a coach to do to enhance their team's chance of increased longevity?

**7. How important is it to the longevity of the program to have a person within the wrestling coaching staff who serves as a program promoter/entrepreneur?**

- 5 Critical Influence
- 4
- 3 Moderate Influence
- 2
- 1 No Influence

**8. Should wrestling coaches be held accountable for their fan base and revenue?**

- 5 Yes, absolute accountability
- 4
- 3 Moderate accountability
- 2
- 1 No, no accountability

**9. Please include any comments you have about sport cuts and the role of the coach**

**10. Do you believe that the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys to aide athletic departments in compliance with the third part of the "three-part test" (effective accommodation of the interests and abilities of male and female student athletes) will decrease the amount of wrestling teams being cut?**

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)
- 

**11. Does your athletic department plan to use these surveys as a primary method of Title IX compliance?**

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)
- 

**12. Please explain your reaction to the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys to aide athletic department compliance with the third part of the "three part test."**

## Appendix B Wrestling Coach Survey

Division I-A wrestling coach philosophy regarding sport cuts [Exit this survey >>](#)

**1. The information you give within this survey is confidential. Please complete this demographic information for the researcher to keep track of respondents.**

Name

University

Position

Number of years in position

**2. What criteria do you believe would be used to cut the wrestling program at your institution?**

**Please rate the importance of the criteria to the decision making process**

	No Importance		Moderate Importance		Critical Importance
Educational Value of the sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fan support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Donor support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Continuing history of student-athlete academic achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Continuing history of student-athlete actions off the mat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial strain of the individual program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental budget shortage due to overspending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Departmental budget shortage due to budget cuts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender equity implications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of success on the mat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regional popularity of coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tenure of the coach with University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal relationship with the coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Core requirements of a school's membership in it's conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Core requirements of a school's NCAA division classification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympic sport popularity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**3. How much influence do you believe that your coaching staff has over whether or not your program is cut?**

- 5 Critical Influence
- 4
- 3 Moderate Influence
- 2
- 1 No Influence

**4. Which (if any) actions has your coaching staff taken to enhance your team's chance of increased longevity?**

Fundraise ___ % of budget (10, 20, 30...)	<input type="text"/>
Increase fan attendance to ___ fans/meet (50, 100, 150...)	<input type="text"/>
Increase regional sport popularity through ___(camps, clinics, public appearances...)	<input type="text"/>
Increase success on the mat by maintaining a position of ___ (top 5 in conference, top 5 in nation...)	<input type="text"/>
Maintain tenure with the university for ___ years (5, 10, 15...)	<input type="text"/>
Promote personal popularity in the community through ___ (camps, clinics, public appearances...)	<input type="text"/>
What are the most important things your coaching staff is doing to increase your team's chance of increased longevity?	<input type="text"/>

**5. What is your PRIMARY role within the coaching staff?**

- Athlete skill technician (athlete training schedule, etc.)
- Program promoter (PR spokesperson, marketer, image-builder, etc.)
- Behind the scenes organizer (budget-balancing, trip-planning, etc.)
- Other (please specify)
- 

**6. Do the different coaches within the coaching staff of your program serve different roles? If so, please describe.**

**7. How has the program evolved under the current head coach?**

	Dramatic Decrease	Moderate Decrease	Stayed the Same	Moderate Increase	Dramatic Increase
Fan base (-100, -50, 0, +50, +100)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Success on the mat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support from the administration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Respect in the community/nation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of fundraising income (-5000, -2500, 0, 2500, 5000)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. Please explain the primary reasons that you believe this positive or negative evolution has occurred.**

**9. Should wrestling coaches be held accountable for their fan base and revenue?**

- 5 Yes, absolute accountability
- 4
- 3 Moderate accountability
- 2
- 1 No, no accountability

**10. Please include any comments you have about sport cuts and the role of the coach.**

**11. Do you believe that the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys to aide athletic department compliance with the third part of the "three part test" will decrease the amount of wrestling teams being cut?**

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

**12. Please explain your reaction to the new additional clarification regarding the use of student interest surveys to aide athletic department compliance with the third part of the "three part test."**

## Appendix C

### Opinions about the role of NCAA D-1 Non-revenue Sport Coaching Staffs in Fundraising

Fundraising and raising funds indicate initiatives to raise monies sought in addition to those given to the team by the university and athletic department—this may include corporate sponsorship, **promotions** to increase gate receipts, fundraising events, or any activity with the purpose of raising money for the team.

Coaching staff is used to refer to the decision makers within the team administration. This may be one coach, a coach and assistant coach, two head coaches and graduate assistants, etc. This is used because each coach within the staff may fulfill a different role.

Use the following response categories. Please answer all items.

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

U = Uncertain

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

- \_\_\_1. Fundraising should be among the top three priorities for a NCAA minor sport coaching staff.
- \_\_\_2. It is a good practice for coaching staffs to proactively search for additional funding for their teams.
- \_\_\_3. Fundraising is the job of the athletic department administration, not the coaching staff.
- \_\_\_4. Fundraising should not be a significant part of a coaching staff's agenda.
- \_\_\_5. Fundraising done by the coaching staff is a critical key to team success.
- \_\_\_6. It is not important for NCAA D-1 non-revenue sport coaches to fundraise.
- \_\_\_7. Non-revenue sport teams are just as likely to be successful whether or not they have additional streams of revenue sought by the coaching staff.
- \_\_\_8. Without additional funding sought by the coaching staff from outside of the university, it is difficult for a non-revenue team to be nationally competitive.
- \_\_\_9. A good coaching staff is generally a good fundraising staff.
- \_\_\_10. There is not enough time for a coaching staff to be good coaches and good fundraisers.
- \_\_\_11. Fundraising is a poor way to spend the time of a coaching staff.
- \_\_\_12. It is important for NCAA D-1 non-revenue sport coaches to fundraise.
- \_\_\_13. A coach and his/her staff should be hired on the basis of their coaching skill, not their fundraising skill.
- \_\_\_14. It is the coaching staffs responsibility to engage in fundraising activities.

**Appendix 3 (Continued)**  
**Opinions about the role of NCAA D-1 Non-revenue Sport Coaching Staffs in Fundraising**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
1	2.2941	1.1599
2	3.5882	1.1767
3	1.9412	0.8993
4	2.4118	1.1757
5	2.4118	1.0641
6	3.5294	0.8745
7	2.9412	1.088
8	2.2941	0.8489
9	2.4418	1.0641
10	2.7647	0.9701
11	3.1765	1.0744
12	3.1765	1.1311
13	1.5294	0.6245
14	2.2941	0.8489

Cronbach's Split-half Alpha: .922

# *Erienne A. Weight*

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## **Education**

### **Doctor of Philosophy, Sport Marketing, & Management**

May, 2006

*Indiana University, Bloomington, IN*

- Educational Inquiry Methodology (Statistics) & Entrepreneurship minors
- Research interests: the role of an entrepreneurial coach in sport & non-revenue sport discontinuation in collegiate athletics

### **Master of Business Administration**

*University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT*

- Entrepreneurship & Marketing focus

### **Bachelor of Science, Exercise and Sport Science**

*University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT*

## **Professional Experience**

### **Academic Experience**

#### **Part Time Faculty**

2006

*Parkland College, Champaign, IL*

- Taught Health Education & Emergency First Aid to undergraduate and continuing education students in small (17-20) class sizes.

#### **Associate Instructor**

2003-2005

*Indiana University, Bloomington, IN*

- Designed and taught Strategic Management in the Sport Industry (capstone course) to classes ranging in number between 14-65 senior undergraduates.
- Taught Sport Marketing classes to junior undergraduates with an average class size of 45 students.
- Assisted the dean in an internal marketing study
- Advised undergraduate students
- Assisted with curriculum revision of other courses in the department

### **Applied Experience**

#### **Consultant**

2003

*Center for Human Toxicology, Salt Lake City, UT*

- Developed business plan for the Sport Medicine Research Lab with the service arm funded by a consortium including the NFL, NCAA and USADA.

#### **Athletics Dept Graduate Assistant Track & Field Coach**

2002-2003

*University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT*

- Coached Division I-A track & field athletes.
- Built and updated a database with 600 track alumni.
- Started a booster club and fundraising program.
- Designed a trophy case capturing the history of Utah track from 1903 to the present.

- Store Manager** 2002  
*Del Sol, Myrtle Beach,, SC*
- Managed and coordinated daily operations of the store
  - Conducted energetic presentations for customers.
  - Updated the store's inventory management process, trained store owner and assistant manager on computer system.
  - Redesigned store façade and organization.
- Associate Director of Camps and Conferences** 1999-2001  
*College of Eastern Utah, Price, UT*
- Managed and coordinated daily operations of on-campus events.
  - Served as a liaison between the college, camp directors, and city.
  - Prepared weekly financial reports.
  - Spoke publicly to thousands of youth.
  - Contributed to marketing and PR efforts for the college.
  - Created information packets presented to each conference director.
- Fitness Floor Supervisor** 2001  
*Salt Lake City Sports Complex, Salt Lake City, UT*
- Provided personal training services to patrons
- Research Representative** 1997-1998  
*Western Wats Communications, Provo, UT*
- Conducted corporate research studies over the phone

## **Professional Service and Involvement**

### **Institutional Service**

#### **Indiana University**

- Served as a volunteer track & field coach
- Advised undergraduate students
- Assisted dean in internal marketing study
- Served as the associate instructor departmental representative in grade inflation faculty round-table discussion and research project

#### **University of Utah**

- Served as the graduate business student association advisor
- Completed independent study project with the dean of the college of health

### **Major Speaking Engagements**

- Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Meeting: May 1, 2005
- Illinois Youth Conference Keynote Speaker: June 25, 2005
- Bowling Green State University Research Presentation: "Entrepreneurship—A coaching strategy to sustain Division I-A Non-revenue sport vitality" March 16, 2006
- University of Illinois Graduate Seminar Guest Lecturer: April 14, 2006
- Doctoral Defense: May 24, 2006

**Scheduled Presentations:**

- NASSM Conference, May 2006: In pursuit of true legitimacy Division I-A Title IX compliance after the additional clarification of prong three.

**Honors and Awards****University of Utah**

- Heptathlon school record holder
- Member of 4 X 400 meter & 4 X 100 meter record holding teams
- Academic All-American
- Three time All-Conference Heptathlete
- Four time Academic All-Conference athlete
- Two year Crimson Club athlete representative

**Community Service****Price, Utah 2000-2001**

- Started and directed Saturday youth exercise programs at the local elementary school.

**Salt Lake City, Utah 2002**

- Volunteer for the 2002 Olympic Games

**Bloomington, Indiana 2003**

- Volunteer Track & Field Coach

**Champaign, Illinois 2004-2005**

- Co-director of athletics of an eight unit organization serving hundreds of youth throughout East Central Illinois
- Leader in a eight unit organization for young (12-18 year-old) women throughout East Central Illinois

**Publications**

Weight, E.A. (2006). The Pursuit of True Legitimacy—Division I-A Title IX compliance after the additional clarification of prong three. *In Press*.