

The Athletic Directors' Dilemma: “\$\$\$ & Women's Sports”

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Abstract *The Athletic Directors' Dilemma* evaluates and ranks the Division I-A, I-AA, and I-AAA colleges according to their commitment to the spirit of Title IX in intercollegiate sports. The colleges are graded on the criteria of proportionality, scholarships, operating expenses, recruitment budget, and coaching salaries. The conferences are also evaluated and compared according to their sports' expenditures and revenues.

Keywords Scorecard · Gender equity · Title IX · Rankings · Colleges/schools · Criteria · Conferences · Athletes

Interestingly, the year 2006 marks the 25th anniversary of the NCAA sponsorship of women's championships. The first women's team to win a championship trophy in an NCAA tournament was Pfeiffer in Division II Field Hockey on Nov. 21, 1981. The Division III and Division I field hockey championships were determined within the next 24 hours. The first championship in which women competed was the 1980 National Collegiate Rifle Championship, and in the next two years, the NCAA sponsored 27 other initial championships for women's teams. Since then the NCAA has added an additional 18 championships for women's teams. Today, the NCAA sponsors 88 championships in 29 sports for both men and women's college teams.

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The year 2006 is also the year of the “big buck” in intercollegiate sports—the so-called “arms race” in which schools feel compelled to spend more money to be competitive. Major college spending on sports is expected to easily exceed \$4 billion for the 2005–06 academic year. Expenditures on sports by the major colleges hit an all-time high of \$3.6 billion for the 2003–04 academic year.

It’s estimated that the 28 bowl games, which began with the New Orleans Bowl on Dec. 20, 2005 and concluded with the Rose Bowl on Jan. 4, 2006 generated \$1.1 billion for the sponsoring communities. The 56 teams that participated in these games received approximately \$193 million. The 11 schools of the Big Ten Conference shared equally in the \$31.5 million in gross bowl revenues earned by the seven schools that played in the bowl games.

Several factors coalesced in the 1990s to turn the debate over college sports into a continuing complicated controversy. College sports increasingly became big business—the average total athletic expenditure for a Big Ten school was \$26.19 million for the ’03–’04 academic year. College sports increasingly became big business—football and basketball became major revenue producers. According to data compiled by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the average total revenue for a Big Ten school for the ’03–’04 season was \$38.46 million—an average yearly profit of \$12.27 million per school.

The average number of women in college has also continually increased since 1972, when Title IX was passed. Today, approximately 57% of the undergraduate population is female. Yet only 41% of the college athletes are women. This dramatically underscores the problem of complying with the Title IX “substantial proportionality” rule; thus the dilemma for athletic directors. They need to increase revenue and the easiest route is successful football and basketball programs. Simultaneously, they need to increase the number of women in sports in order to comply with Title IX. They are truly between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

With a successful football program, a Division I-A college can receive a major bowl invitation and substantial extra revenue. With a successful basketball program, a division I-A, I-AA, or I-AAA college can receive an invitation to the “Big Dance”—the NCAA tournament—and substantial extra revenue. It is no wonder that the six major conferences, who participate in college football’s bowl championship series (BCS) and whose member schools regularly receive multiple invitations to the “March Madness” NCAA basketball tournament, are the major revenue conferences. Of the 31 Division I conferences, only seven showed a profit for the ’03–’04 athletic season. Six of the seven were the conferences involved in the BCS series (Big Ten, ACC, Big 12, Big East, PAC-10, and SEC). The only other conference to show a profit was the West Coast Conference. The Big Ten showed the greatest profit in sports—averaging \$12.27 million per team. In second place was the SEC with an average profit of \$12.22 million per team.

The main thrust of this study, however, is to determine how well the conferences and their member colleges are doing in complying with Title IX. If you wish to determine how well the colleges are in pursuit of an invitation to the “Big Dance,” you will need to consult the sports page.

This study goes far beyond the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights’ “three-part test” governing women’s participation in sports. This study goes

beyond these criteria primarily because the “history and continuing practice” and “effective accommodation” criteria are very subjective, arguable, and very difficult to quantify and measure.

This study develops the Kennedy Index to rank the Division 1 conferences and colleges compliance with the spirit and intent of Title IX. The Index is similar to the “Gender Equity Report Card” developed by the Women’s Sports Foundation in its study of gender equity and sports in 2001. The Kennedy Index is based on the five criteria suggested by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in its study on “gender equity” in 2005. (Note: All of the statistics were obtained from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, according to data submitted to the Department of Education under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of 1994. The data is for the ’03–’04 athletic/academic year. The criteria are *participation*, *scholarship*, *operating expenses*, *recruitment budget*, and *coaching salaries*.)

The Index is the sum total of the college’s score on the five criteria. On each of the criteria, a standard or goal was established. The college receives a +/- score depending on how close they came to meeting the goal. The goals for *participation* and *scholarship* were 0.0% and the goals for *operating expenses*, *recruitment budget*, and *coaching salaries* were 40%.

Participation is one of the three federal guidelines for a college to determine if it has enough opportunities for female athletes. This is the simplest approach and the one most colleges follow. In this test, the percentage of female athletes should be proportional to the percentage of women in the student body. The Index is based on how close the colleges come to reaching the optimal proportionality of 0.0.

For instance, my alma mater, St. Francis College of Loretto, Pennsylvania, is a I-AA school and a member of the Northeast Conference. Women comprised 58.34% of the total undergraduates and 45.55% of all athletes in ’03–’04, for a difference of -12.79 . Thus, St. Francis’ score on the Index would be -12.79 , a rank of 6th in the conference.

Scholarship is actually the only purely numerical section of guidelines, issued under Title IX regulations, governing scholarship funds allocated to women athletes. The Department’s Office for Civil Rights has specified that colleges must award the same proportion of aid to female athletes as there are women participating in varsity sports. The proportion is to be within one percentage point. The Index is based on the “same proportion” principle, so it would be 0.0.

St Francis’ proportion of female athletes was 45.77% and the women’s proportion of the scholarship budget was 53.02% for a difference of $+7.25$, a rank of 8th in the conference.

Operating Expenses is not included in any specific guidelines. Interestingly, however, the Equity in Athletic Disclosure Act does chart how much of athletic departments’ budgets should be allocated to women’s teams. For purposes of the Index, a standard of 40% was established as the goal to be achieved. This is based on the findings by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that the median for operating expenses for women’s teams for ’03–’04 was 38% for all Division 1 teams.

At St. Francis, the women's share of the operating budget was 49.43%. This would give the Frankies an Index score of +9.43, a rank of 5th in the conference.

Recruitment Budget is not mandated by Title IX regulations. If equal treatment for men's and women's sports is the goal, then the recruiting budget for women's teams should be equivalent to the recruiting budget for men's teams. Again, the 40% standard was selected as the goal.

The women's share of the recruiting budget at St. Francis was 48.64% for an Index score of +8.64, a rank of 4th in the conference.

Coaching Salaries is also not mandated by Title IX regulations. Equity in salaries, however, should strongly indicate that the salary for coaches of women's teams should be equivalent to the salary of coaches of men's teams. The 40% standard is again used for the Index.

The women's proportion of the coaches' salaries for the Frankies was 42.39% for an Index score of +2.39, a rank of 5th in the conference.

St. Francis' combined scores would equal +14.92, which enabled the Frankies to rank 4th in the Northeast Conference for compliance with the spirit and intent of Title IX. The conference champion was Long Island University at +46.10. This extremely high score enabled the Blackbirds to rank 3rd in the entire country. Additionally the conference ranked 2nd in the entire country. The score of the Frankies per category:

Score	
Participation	-12.79
Scholarship	+7.25
Operating Expenses	+9.43
Recruitment Budget	+8.64
Coaching Salaries	+2.39
Total	+14.92

In my previous study, "College Sports & Title IX: The Kennedy Index #3," I focused on the six major BCS conferences (ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-10, and SEC) and four of the "mid-major" conferences that have recently had schools potentially eligible for BCS consideration. These conferences were the Mid-American (MAC), the Mountain West, the Western Athletic (WAC), and Conference USA. The Kennedy Index was computed for each conference for the '03-'04 season. (*Note:* Notre Dame was listed in the Big East, where the Fighting Irish participate in basketball. The I-AA schools, such as the Villanova Wildcats and Georgetown Hoyas in the Big East, were not included. Data for the Air Force Academy was not available.)

The Kennedy Index was computed for each conference. The MAC was the #1 conference with a score of -21.34 and the WAC finished 2nd at -27.50 . Conference USA finished in last place with a score of -48.38 . The rank of the conferences:

Rank	Conference	Kennedy Index
1.	MAC	-21.34
2.	WAC	-27.50
3.	Mt. West	-32.03
4.	Big Ten	-32.82
5.	PAC-10	-35.72
6.	Big East	-36.90
7.	Big 12	-36.90
8.	ACC	-40.17
9.	SEC	-41.51
10.	Conf. USA	-48.35

This study, however, includes the 31 conferences eligible for an invitation to the NCAA Division I basketball tournament, thus I-AA and I-AAA conferences and schools are also included. There were a total of 319 colleges evaluated. (*Note:* Data on some schools were not available and the Independents were not included.)

The Top Ten for the March Madness schools yields some very interesting results. Nine of the ten conferences finished with a positive score on the Kennedy Index. None of the I-A conferences made the Top Ten. The Big West Conference was the champion at $+16.69$, followed by the Northeast conference with a $+14.09$ score. The rank of the March Madness conferences:

Rank	Top Ten Conferences	Kennedy Index
1.	Big West	$+16.09$
2.	Northeast	$+14.09$
3.	American East	$+14.01$
4.	Metro Athletic	$+7.67$
5.	Horizon	$+7.12$
6.	West Coast	$+5.39$
7.	Mid Continent	$+4.20$
8.	Atlantic 10	$+1.27$
9.	Colonial Athletic	$+0.17$
10.	Atlantic Sun	-0.18

When we flip the coin and examine the Bottom Ten conferences, the obvious fact that literally jumps off the page is the dominance of the Division I-A conferences. They have eight of the ten positions. They are joined by the Southern (#22) and the Southwestern Athletic (#30). The last place position goes to the SEC, which

narrowly edged out the Southwestern Athletic. This underscores the dilemma the I-A colleges face in trying to comply with Title IX and field a bowl-eligible football team. The sheer number of players, number of coaches, equipment costs, operating expenses, etc. creates an enormous compliance challenge for the I-A conferences and colleges. The Bottom Ten of the March Madness conferences:

Rank	Bottom Ten Conferences	Kennedy Index
22.	Southern	-26.56
23.	WAC	-27.50
24.	Mt. West	-32.03
25.	Conf. USA	-32.37
26.	Big Ten	-32.82
27.	PAC-10	-35.72
28.	Big 12	-39.66
29.	ACC	-40.17
30.	Southwestern Athletic	-41.35
31.	SEC	-41.51

(Note: The scores for Conference USA and the Big East have changed, since the non-I-A colleges in their conference were excluded from the previous study.)

For the Top Ten of the 319 colleges in the study, the Big West is the dominant conference with four teams in the Top Ten. In order, they are: California State-Northridge, University of the Pacific, California State-Long Beach, and California State-Fullerton. The MEAC also had two colleges in the Top Ten, including the overall champion, Maryland-Eastern Shore. The Sea Gulls had scores of +20.54 on *Operating Expenses* and +20.67 on *Recruitment Expenses*.

Rank	Top Ten	Kennedy Index
1.	Maryland-Eastern Shore	+63.17
2.	Cal State-Northridge	+52.35
3.	Long Island	+46.10
4.	Siena	+45.04
5.	George Washington	+42.81
6.	Pacific	+41.09
7.	Texas-Arlington	+37.17
8.	Cal State-Long Beach	+36.99
9.	Coppin State	+34.70
10.	Cal State-Fullerton	+34.51

The Big West continues its dominance in the Top Twenty by placing three more schools (Cal State-Santa Barbara, Cal State-Riverside, and Utah Valley State).

Thus, the conference finished with seven of the top 16. The other members of the Top Twenty:

Rank	Top Twenty	Kennedy Index
11.	Georgia State	+32.30
12.	Saint Francis-New York	+29.86
13.	Cal State-Santa Barbara	+29.49
14.	Cal State-Riverside	+29.40
15.	College of Charleston	+29.23
16.	Utah Valley State	+28.54
17.	Radford	+28.04
18.	Drake	+27.61
19.	Hartford	+27.42
20.	Loyola-Marymount	+26.34

The Terrible Twenty consisted of the schools ranked #300 through #319. There were four from Conference USA (Southern Mississippi, Memphis, TCU, and East Carolina) and three were from the Sun Belt Conference (Arkansas State, Middle Tennessee State, and Louisiana-Lafayette). The obvious conclusion is the overabundance of southern teams. Only the Oregon Ducks and the Oklahoma State Cowboys were non-southern colleges or not in a predominantly southern conference.

The award for the “NADIR of Title IX Compliance” for ’03–’04 goes to the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin’ Cajuns of the Sun Belt Conference. The Ragin’ Cajuns broke the –80 barrier with a score of –80.22. The Ragin’ Cajuns won the award by scoring lower than the East Carolina Pirates, who finished last in my previous study, “College Sports and Title IX #3.” The rank of the Terrible Twenty:

Rank	Terrible Twenty	Kennedy Index
300	VMI	–53.30
301	Troy	–53.47
302	Arkansas State	–54.88
303	Middle Tennessee State	–55.10
304	Bethune-Cookman	–56.97
305	Southern Mississippi	–57.22
306	Clemson	–58.75
307	Louisiana-Monroe	–58.93
308	Vanderbilt	–59.23
309	Memphis	–60.45

Rank	Terrible Ten	Kennedy Index
310	Tennessee State	-60.83
311	Delaware State	-60.97
312	Wofford	-61.74
313	TCU	-64.59
314	Alabama A&M	-65.07
315	Oregon	-67.53
316	Alabama State	-71.44
317	Oklahoma State	-71.64
318	East Carolina	-72.90
319	Louisiana-Lafayette	-80.22

Earlier, I briefly examined how college sports has gradually become big business. The conference with the highest total revenue is the Big Ten with an average of \$38.46 million per school, followed closely by the SEC at \$37.39 million per school. For the highest total expenditures per school the Big Ten leads at \$26.19 million per school and the PAC-10 is second at \$25.59 million. For the highest profit margin (expenditures-revenue differential) the Big Ten leads with an average of +\$12.27 million per school and the SEC is second at +\$12.22 million. The Big East has the lowest average revenue and the lowest average expenditures, \$20.08 million and \$19.34 million per school, respectively. However, the PAC-10 has the lowest revenue-expenditure differential with an average of +\$0.45 million.

Again, it should be emphasized that all of the 31 conferences lost money on sports with the exception of the six BCS conferences and the West Coast Conference with an average of +\$0.70 million per school. As the Big Ten was highest at +\$12.27 million, the MAC was lowest at -\$4.75 million. Of the mid-major conferences (Mt. West, MAC, WAC, and Conference USA), the Mt. West had both the highest expenditures and revenue with an average per school of \$14.0 and \$12.9 million, respectively. The MAC was lowest with \$9.90 million. Of the other 21 conferences the Atlantic Ten and the Patriot League had the highest average expenditure per conference. The Atlantic Ten had an average of \$9.50 million per school and the Patriot League had an average of \$9.34 million. The Ivy League was in third place with an average of \$8.53 million. Four of the conferences had an average expenditure of less than \$4.00 million per school. These were in order: Southland = \$3.85 million, Big South = \$3.62 million, Mid-Continent = \$3.53 million, and Southwestern Athletic Conference = \$2.99 million.

Of the other 17 conferences, the Patriot League and the Atlantic Ten had the highest average revenue per school. The Patriot League had \$7.82 million and the Atlantic Ten had \$7.64 million. The Ivy League again was third with \$6.78 million. There were four conferences below \$3.00 million average revenue per school: Mid-Continent = \$2.90 million, Southwestern Athletic = \$2.73 million, Southland = \$2.24 million, and Southern = \$1.90 million.

The enormous differential in revenue and expenditures between the different conferences must also be emphasized. The average expenditure for each team in the six BCS conferences was \$23.38 million and the average revenue was \$29.12 million for an average profit margin of +\$5.92 million per school. The average expenditure for each school in the four mid-major conferences was \$11.80 million and the average revenue was \$9.50 million for an average profit margin of -\$2.30 million per school. For the 21 other conferences the average expenditure per team was \$5.70 million and the average revenue was \$4.35 million for an average profit margin of -\$1.42 million per team. The differences stand out in the following chart:

Conferences	Average expenditure per team	Average revenue per team	Average profit per team
6 BCS	\$23.38	\$29.12	+\$5.92
4 Mid-Majors	11.80	9.50	-2.30
21 Other	5.70	4.35	-1.42

It is also interesting to examine the number of athletic teams (men's and women's soccer, field hockey, softball, baseball, etc.) that are fielded by the different conferences. This is particularly important since the argument is frequently made by the BCS conference teams that revenue from football and basketball is used to support the other athletic teams. Of the 31 conferences, 27 field more women's teams than men's teams. Nine of those field two more women's teams and 18 field an average of one more. Four of the conferences field an equal number of male-female teams.

The highest number of athletic teams is fielded by the Ivy League with an average of 30 per school, 14 male and 16 female. Harvard is the pacesetter with 35 teams (18 male and 17 female). The greatest number of women's teams is 18, fielded by both the Dartmouth Big Green and the Brown Bears, who also field 15 men's teams.

The average range of teams fielded by the six BCS conferences is 16–21. The Big 12 and SEC have the lowest number of athletic teams with 16 each (7M–9F). The pacesetter is the Big Ten with an average of 21 teams (10M–11F) per school. Both the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Stanford Cardinals field the largest number of athletic teams and both are comparable with the numbers produced by the Ivy League schools. The Buckeyes field 33 teams (16M–17F) and the Cardinals have 31 teams (14M–17F).

The range for the mid-majors is 14–16 teams. The MAC is highest with 16 (7M–9F) and the WAC is lowest with 14 teams (6M–8F). The range for the other conferences is 11–18, excluding the Ivy League with 30 teams (14M–16F) and the Patriot League with 20 teams (10M–10F). Within the 11–18 range the American East is highest with 18 teams (8M–10F). The Southland Conference is lowest with only eleven teams (5M–6F). The other schools with only twelve teams are the Big Sky (5M–7F), Big South (6M–6F), and MEAC (5M–7F). The conferences with the lowest number of women's teams with only six are the Big South and the Southland.

Thus, it appears there is some validity to the statement that revenue from football and basketball supports the other athletic teams, since the BCS schools do field on

average more athletic teams. However, I wouldn't want to make the argument too loudly since the Ivy League fields considerably more teams and the Patriot League fields more teams than all the BCS conferences except for the Big Ten. Additionally, the American East fields as many teams as the Big East and more than the Big 12 and SEC. The Atlantic Ten, Colonial Athletic, Metro Athletic, and Northeast also field more than the Big 12 and SEC. The MAC fields as many as the Big 12 and SEC, and the Mt. West, Conference USA, Atlantic Sun, Big West, Southern, and West Coast are only one team behind.

However, I definitely would not want to make the argument too loudly in a comparison with several Division III conferences. As a point of comparison, I have selected three Division III conferences in which colleges in my area are members and I regularly attend the sporting events of these schools. The range of athletic teams for these conferences is 17–20, certainly on par with the BCS conferences. The Centennial Conference, comprised of area schools Dickinson, Franklin & Marshall, and Gettysburg, averages twenty teams (10M–10F) per school. They do this on average athletic expenditures of \$1.02 million—far below the BCS conferences average of \$23.38 million and less than 18% of the average expenditures of \$5.70 million for the “other 21 conferences.”

The Commonwealth Conference, comprised of area schools Messiah, Elizabethtown, and Lebanon Valley Colleges, averages 18 teams (9M–9F) per school. This is exceeded only by five of the 31 conferences; the Big Ten, ACC, PAC-10, Ivy League, and Patriot League. They accomplish this feat with average athletic expenditures of \$685 thousand (not millions). The Capital Athletic Conference, comprised of area school York College and several Maryland colleges, averages 17 teams (8M–9F) per school. This is a higher average number of teams than 20 of the 31 conferences, including the Big 12 and the SEC. They do this with average expenditures of \$610 thousand. This is less than 3% of the average expenditures of the Big East, the conference with the lowest athletic expenditures of the BCS conferences.

It should also be emphasized that the level of competition and performance of Division II and III schools is very high—probably on a par with the I-AA schools. Arguably, the conferences are possibly on a par with the I-A schools, with the obvious exception of the major sports, such as football and basketball. The following item is only anecdotal evidence. But as the Senate Republican Leader in the 1950s and 1960s, Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois, used to say, “A million dollars here and a million dollars there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money.” (*Note:* To contemporize Dirksen, we would now probably have to say, “A hundred billion here and a hundred billion there ...”—but that's another story for another issue.) For this issue I would say an anecdote here and an anecdote there and pretty soon you have real evidence. I'm sure most readers have similar anecdotes.

The Anecdote. Messiah College in tiny Grantham, PA, 15 miles southwest of Harrisburg, is highly competitive in most sports in Division III. In 2005 the Falcons' field hockey, women's soccer, and men's soccer teams made it to the Division III national championship game. Both soccer teams emerged as the Division III national champions. This was the fourth time in the last six years the Falcons' men's soccer team was national champion. Additionally, in 2002, all three teams also played in the Division III championship game. The Falcons frequently play or meet

the Salisbury Sea Gulls of the Capital Athletic Conference in tournament play. The Sea Gulls from Maryland are also a perennial powerhouse in Division III sports. The games between the Falcons and Sea Gulls are usually highly competitive and exciting thrillers. The Sea Gulls defeated the Falcons' field hockey team 1–0 for the 2005 national championship. In the spring of '05, the Sea Gulls emerged as the Division III men's Lacrosse champions. Before the season began, the Sea Gulls defeated the Duke Blue Devils of the ACC in a scrimmage. The Blue Devils ended up playing and losing to the Johns Hopkins Blue Jays in the Division I championship game. True, this is only one little anecdote,

but ...

As indicated, a case could possibly be made that revenue from the major sports, football and basketball, enables schools to support many other athletic teams. This statement has some credibility when the major BCS conferences are compared to other conferences—particularly conferences with Division I-AA and I-AAA teams. However, this statement surely comes into question with a cursory examination of Division III conferences, as these conferences are able to field as many teams with far, far less revenue, expenditures, and profit.

The statement certainly cannot be justified that the revenue from the major sports, football and basketball, is used to promote women's sports at the schools in the major conferences in comparison to the other conferences.

In comparing the conferences' rank on the Kennedy Index of Title IX Compliance with their rank on expenditures and revenue *vis-à-vis* sports, it was indicated earlier that the BCS and the mid-major conferences overwhelmingly dominate the Terrible Ten—ranks 22–31. Only the Big East, ranked at 21st, escaped the Terrible Ten. This is primarily because the conference rankings included their I-AA and I-AAA schools, such as Georgetown and Villanova, which compete in the Big East for basketball but not in Division I-A football. The Mid American Conference escaped the bottom ten with a rank of 18th. The Southern and Southwestern Athletic Conferences also were in the Terrible Ten. What really glaringly stands out, however, is how these conferences also rank in the Top Ten in expenditures and revenue, which was also indicated earlier.

The Bottom Ten Rankings

Conferences	Kennedy Index Rank	Expenditures Rank	Revenue Rank
Southern	22	23	31
WAC	23	8	8
Mt. West	24	7	7
Conference USA	25	9	9
Big Ten	26	1	1
PAC-10	27	2	4
Big 12	28	4	3
ACC	29	5	5
SWAC	30	31	29
SEC	31	3	2

Conversely, the top ten conferences in the Kennedy Index are the Big West, Northeast, American East, Metro Athletic, Horizon, West Coast, Mid Continent, Atlantic 10, Colonial Athletic, and Atlantic Sun. These conferences rank in the mid to the tail end in average expenditures and average revenue.

The Top Ten rankings

Conferences	Kennedy Index Rank	Expenditures Rank	Revenue Rank
Big West	1	20	20
Northeast	2	26	21
American East	3	15	14
Metro Athletic	4	21	18
Horizon	5	24	19
West Coast	6	18	13
Mid Continent	7	30	28
Atlantic 10	8	11	11
Colonial Athletic	9	14	17
Atlantic Sun	10	22	26

Similar to today's college Athletic Directors, Odysseus faced many challenges in Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*. He had to deal with the problems of drugs, as represented by the Lotus eaters ... the temptations of sex, as represented by Calypso and the Sirens ... the struggle for power, as symbolized by the one-eyed Cyclops, Polyphemus. None of these monumental tasks, however, matched the eternal struggle for survival as did the challenge of Scylla and Charybdis, the dragon on one side and the whirlpool on the other.

In the nascent 21st Century, the ADs must navigate their athletic programs through the many challenges of sexual harassment charges, the problems of drugs and steroids on campus, power struggles, and competition for the almighty dollar. These challenges also pale when compared to the challenge of the devil and the deep blue sea—the need for the athletic department to be financially viable and profitable and the need to produce a viable and competitive women's sports program and be in compliance with Title IX.

Shakespeare best described the importance and dimensions of this challenge:

There is a tide in the affairs of men (and women)
Which, when taken at the flood
Leads on to fortune
Omitted, all the voyages of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries
On such a full sea are we now afloat
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our ventures.