

Future holds changes for women's athletics

By TOM WOLFE
Of the Emerald

With a fall 1977 target date set for merging men's and women's athletics to a single department, the women's athletic department is in a quandary over what the future will bring, says Becky Sisley, director of Women's Intercollegiate Athletics (WIA).

If the departments have merged by next fall as some expect, women's coaches will probably have money for athletic grants available to them that quarter.

Immediately, this would mean recruiting high school athletes, rating returning athletes and changing job descriptions for coaches, says Sisley.

Overall, a merger probably means fundamental changes in women's athletics that are in conflict with WIA's current written philosophy that "there shall be no efforts to sway the emphasis of the program from educational to entertainment," and "there should be a stable source of funding."

Drawing large crowds of paying spectators has been the bread and butter of men's sports for years and both the men's and women's programs agree that merging systems would direct women's athletics toward entertaining spectators for revenue — something the women's department has avoided.

While admitting that recruiting is the "bane of men's athletics," athletic director John Cain says that under a single system, the women's program would probably reach the same fierce competition in recruitment the men have developed.

He adds that women's coaches would also probably be involved in fundraising activities as the men are now. "It's a long way down the road," says Cain, "but the time will come when we'll have women's teams drawing big crowds (to produce gate receipts) like the men are doing now."

Sisley, her coaches and others aren't looking forward to that time.

"Right now all the coaches work together on an equal basis," says Sisley, and with "a tremendous esprit de corps."

"We have many cooperative situations like the tennis coach helping set up a volleyball tournament."

Under the present women's system all sports are considered equally, Sisley says, and advisory committees comprised of coaches, students and faculty have a part in determining policies and operating procedures of the department.

Currently, no grants in aid are available for recruitment and coaches have no official fundraising role. Their primary role is physical educator, and some of the coaches hold positions on the physical education faculty.

In contrast, under the present model of men's athletics, coaches are expected to enter the intense competition with other schools to recruit so-called "blue chip"

athletes with athletic grants in aid, in the hope of sparking spectator interest to increase gate receipts.

When they fail, their jobs are generally less secure than those of other University personnel.

Federal Title IX requires equity in athletic funding and services that the University provides men and women, so the two programs must grow more similar. But just how much of the men's model the women's program will be expected to assume is in doubt, Sisley says.

University Pres. William Boyd suggested the merger as the most practical way to satisfy Title IX requirements, but admits that a merger isn't essential to fulfill the requirements.

For now, Sisley says she expects the departments will merge and that many questions the women's department have will be answered only after the merger takes place.

It's really fear of the unknown that the women's athletic department has, says Sisley. Many of the coaches believe that merging with men's athletics would subject them to arbitrary decision making that doesn't happen in the women's department. They fear that one day their whole job could be wiped out.



Becky Sisley

Photo by Kim Smith

Committees lack student positions

By PETER LEIBIK
Of the Emerald

Although student participation on the 38 University student-faculty committees is better than last year, dozens of positions remain vacant.

Current lack of student participation on the committees may hurt student's future chances for increasing their influence on the University, says Andrea Gellatly, member of the student Committee on Committees. The group appoints students to the student-faculty committees.

Gellatly and Committee on Committees chair, Mark Flaherty, both say the University administration rates high on the issue of student participation. Even though committees are often accused of dragging their feet, ASUO Vice-pres. Jamie Burns, a member of the same committee says they are "probably the best chance for students to make a substantive difference at the University." The committees are strictly advisory.

Jan Medrano, administrative assistant to University Pres. William Boyd, says students have the unique problem of having to wait until fall term before filling positions.

"Nobody knows the problems better than the students," she says. "I would think their participation would be invaluable."

Committees range from the Academic Requirements Committee which is "responsible for the administration

and interpretation of academic requirements for undergraduate degrees and for action on student positions for exceptions to these requirements," to the ROTC Advisory Committee or the committee in charge of naming new buildings.

The committees meet as often as every two weeks to once a year, or, as in the case of naming new buildings, when the need arises. The committees submit annual reports to Boyd.

William Lamon's D-grade proposal began its two year route to faculty approval when Lamon chaired the Committee on Academic Requirements and became familiar with grading system problems.

Last year, the Campus Planning Committee approved a master bike plan designating bike routes on campus and recommended to Boyd what capital expenditures the University should make. A student position is vacant on the committee.

Vacancies also exist on the Women Studies Committee. The Committee on Committees has submitted the name of a man to Boyd for confirmation as a new member of the women's studies group.

Committee members are expected to submit short, informal reports to the Committee on Committees in an effort to "keep in touch" and insure attendance. More information on committee openings is available in Suite 4, EMU.

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