

University nears Title IX compliance

By TOM WOLFE
Of the Emerald

For the first time since the building opened in 1906, University women athletes and their coaches are moving into McArthur Court and sharing a larger role in University athletics.

Women have been fielding athletic teams since the 1890s, but only last summer did they move any permanent athletic offices into Mac Court or begin establishing

equity with larger, wealthier men's programs.

A progress report submitted to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in July itemized 76 areas where the University has moved to remedy inequities between men's and women's athletics since January.

The changes respond to Title IX, a blanket federal law designed to end sex discrimination in any educational programs or activities assisted by federal funding.

With major budget problems

now facing University athletics, achieving equity is extremely difficult, according to Athletic Director John Caine.

"We're not really trying to make the men's and women's programs identical," says Caine. "What we're concerned with is equality of opportunity."

In 1977 Robert and Barbara Aiken filed a complaint against the University alleging discrimination on the basis of sex in the University's intercollegiate athle-

tics program and questioning the University's progress toward Title IX compliance.

Roy Lieuellen, chancellor of higher education, eventually ruled in favor of the University in the complaint, but since then the University has made progress reports about its compliance with the law and plans for additional changes.

This year women athletes at the University will receive \$75,000 in grants-in-aid, up from \$11,000 last year. Three full-time women's program positions have been added, locker facilities have been enlarged and equipment and facilities have been reassigned.

All these actions have been carried out without additional state funding to accommodate Title IX compliance.

"In my opinion, it was an abject failure of the Legislature to not provide some funding for women's athletics," Caine says.

The bulk of funding for men's athletics comes from gate receipts and donations. Women's athletics has almost no funding from either source. Now the men's program is being forced to share its relative wealth with women.

"One problem we're facing in trying to integrate is that the two programs have maintained their differences for so long," Caine says. Collegiate women's sports have been more "participation oriented" than the "intensely competitive men's athletics."

Men's and women's athletics were separate, independent programs at the University until two years ago when they began sharing services, staffing and facilities. Structures of the two programs

have since been blended into a single framework.

Becky Sisley, formerly women's athletic director and currently assistant athletic director moved offices to Mac Court in August as part of that integration.

Sisley says the University has done more than many other Northwest schools to comply with Title IX prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities assisted by federal funding.

"Most schools aren't doing reports of their progress," says Sisley, adding that the University administration is more involved with Title IX compliance than administrations at "most other schools our size."

Future plans include development of a softball diamond and discus-hammer and field hockey practice areas on the 18th Avenue and Agate Street fields.

Also planned is the construction of a glass-enclosed display case for women's trophies near the men's display cases at McArthur Court. Now women's athletic awards are scattered in offices and other obscure areas where the public is not likely to see them.

Sisley says the consolidation of men's and women's athletics will give women better support services and help with budget planning.

Women's athletics is "going in the direction of men's athletics," says Sisley, which means it is more concerned with revenue production — like the recruiting of all star athletes to build a school's reputation and ability to draw paying spectators.

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