

The Shrinking Presence of Black Female Student-Athletes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Felecia Theune

University of Miami

Despite the tremendous growth in female sports participation opportunities under Title IX, black females have not benefited to the same degree as their white female counterparts. While gender complaints about female athletes still lagging behind males in participatory opportunities, scholarships, facilities and equipment are being discussed, larger structural inequities associated with being black and female remain absent from the Title IX conversation, demonstrating the *dual invisibility* of black females. Not only is this true at predominantly white institutions, it's also true at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), academic institutions which have been sources of educational and athletic opportunities for black females long before the passage of Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in any federally funded educational programs and activities.

Malgré l'importante croissance d'opportunités de participation en sport féminin grâce à Title IX, les femmes noires n'ont pas bénéficié autant que les femmes blanches. Alors que les plaintes au sujet des femmes athlètes étaient encore à la traîne des hommes en ce qui concerne les opportunités de participation, les bourses, les installations et l'équipement font l'objet de discussions, les plus grandes injustices structurales associées au fait d'être noire et d'être une femme demeurent absentes de la conversation au sujet de Title IX, démontrant la double invisibilité des femmes noires. Non seulement est-ce vrai dans les établissements à prédominance blanche, cela est également vrai dans les collèges et universités historiquement noirs, des établissements scolaires qui ont été des sources d'opportunités éducationnelles et athlétiques bien avant que Title IX ne vienne interdire la discrimination en fonction du sexe dans tous les programmes et activités éducationnels financés par le gouvernement fédéral.

This study uses NCAA data to examine the intersectionality of gender and race as well as presents new research on the impact of Title IX on black female sports participation opportunities driven by athletic scholarships at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The study reveals that the percentage of athletics aid at HBCUs awarded to black females has decreased from 79% in the 2008–2009 academic school year to 71% in 2012–2013. Furthermore, the likelihood of a female student-athlete on scholarship at an HBCU self-identifying as black decreases significantly when the participatory sport is a growth sport, instead of basketball or track and field/cross country. Nonblack females disproportionately receive athletics scholarships in growth sports, such as tennis, soccer and golf, which have been added at HBCUs to meet Title IX requirements while black females often find themselves locked out of these sporting opportunities. This study specifically focuses on scholarship student-athletes because receiving athletics aid to offset the expensive cost of college may be incentive for black females to attend college as well as incentive for nonblack females to attend predominantly black colleges.

"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 educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act

In 1971, the year before Title IX legislation, fewer than 300,000 girls competed in high school sports compared with 3.6 million boys (NFHS, 2011). Similarly, while more than 170,000 men played collegiate sports in 1971, fewer than 30,000 women participated in college athletics (NCAA, 2012). Few schools, except HBCUs, offered women athletics scholarships (Butler & Lopiano, 2003). But Title IX and the passage of time have brought about highly celebrated visible changes as well as some less obvious changes.

According to the annual High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS, 2014),

participation in high school sports reached an all-time high of 3,267,664 girls in the 2013–2014 school year—an increase of 44,941 over the previous year—and marked the 25th consecutive year of female participation growth (NFHS, 2014). The tremendous increase in female sports participation opportunities, largely facilitated by athletic scholarships, also is visibly evident in the college ranks. Females receive 45% of today's NCAA scholarships (NCAA, 2013) and more than 200,000 young women played NCAA sports in 2012–2013 (NCAA, 2013), an increase of 700% since the landmark 1972 law prohibited sex discrimination in any federally funded educational programs and activities. But hiding behind the tremendous numerical growth in female sports participation and scholarship opportunities is another growing trend that spotlights the *dual invisibility* of black females in America—the shrinking presence of black female scholarship student-athletes at HBCUs.

Dual invisibility refers to a form of discrimination unique to black females that renders them virtually nonexistent because of their multiple-subordinate-group race and gender identities (Sesko & Biernat, 2010). While gender complaints about female athletes still lagging behind males in participatory opportunities, scholarships, facilities and equipment are being discussed, larger structural inequalities associated with being black and female remain absent from the Title IX conversation. As bell hooks (1981, p. 7) stated, “When black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women.” Recent research, although limited, has given attention to post-Title IX trends in black female sports opportunities in high school and college (Pickett, Dawkins, & Braddock, 2012), however there is no discussion on the impact of Title IX for black female student-athletes at HBCUs, institutions established before 1964 for the purpose of educating African Americans who previously had little or no access to higher education (Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965). This study addresses the void in the research literature. More specifically, it addresses the following question: Has the growth in female sports opportunities created by Title IX legislation enhanced opportunities for black females at HBCUs or have nonblack females benefited disproportionately to black females?

Title IX Compliance

To comply with Title IX, all colleges and universities must pass one of three tests: (1) proportionality, male and females participate in athletics in numbers substantially proportional to their respective enrollments in school; (2) history and continued practice of program expansion responsive to the developing interests and abilities of members of the underrepresented sex; and (3) full accommodation of interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex (NCAA, 2012).

Women comprise 57% of the student enrollment at HBCUs (National Center for Education Statistics,

2013), making the proportionality test more difficult to pass without drastic increases in women's sports or drastic reductions in men's sports due to the disproportionate number of female students attending these universities. For example, Southern University's Fall 2013 undergraduate enrollment was 75% female and Coppin State's undergraduate enrollment was 74% female (NCES, 2014). This gender imbalance is emblematic of a growing national trend. In 1994, 56% of black males and 48% of black females in the United States enrolled in college immediately after high school. By 2012, the percentage of U.S. black males who enrolled in college the October following high school graduation remained relatively stagnant at 57%, while the share of U.S. black women who enrolled in college the October following graduation grew to 69% for a 12-percentage point gap over black males (Pew Research Center 2012).

Some schools also face the challenge of having sizable student populations of nontraditionally aged female undergraduates who are generally uninterested in playing college sports (Fields, 2008). At Southern University, 56% of the Fall 2013 enrollment was age 25 and older (NCES, 2014); this age group represented 42% of the student population at Coppin State. While NCES did not indicate what percentages of the age 25 and older students were female, based on overall enrollment, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of these nontraditional students were female.

It's important to remember that colleges still can be Title IX compliant either by demonstrating a continued commitment to the sporting interests of female athletes or by accommodating the interests and abilities of female athletes. Although many schools are demonstrating their commitment to females by adding growth sports and providing athletics scholarships to attract participation, unfortunately these practices do not address race inequity. Even HBCUs have been forced to disregard the intersectionality of race and gender in the lives of black females and to shift toward more diverse athletes and sports programs beyond the traditional “black” sports of basketball and track and field (Evans, 1998). In the post-Title IX era, athletes and coaches are recruited without regard to race but are recruited on talent and desire (Scholand, 2007).

Growth Sports

There are factors beyond talent and desire that lock many black females out of sports opportunities, perhaps especially in so-called growth sports (i.e., sports that have been added with the specific intent to provide more sports participation opportunities for females in an effort to comply with Title IX). The NCAA requires that all Division I schools sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender (NCAA, 2014). Division II schools must sponsor at least five sports for men and five for women, (or four for men and six for women), with two team sports for each gender,

and each playing season represented by each gender (NCAA, 2014). Unlike historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs), however, HBCUs have the unique challenge of implementing “country club” growth sports such as golf, tennis and swimming usually reserved for the white elite, and “prep” growth sports such as lacrosse and field hockey (Yarbrough, 1996), even though their predominantly black student populations have little to no experience in or exposure to these sports (Dees, 2004) due to race or socioeconomic factors which impact access to facilities and resources that affect youth sports participation patterns (Hodge et al., 2008). Developing high-level skill in these sports requires considerable family financial investment, but blacks are disproportionately at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy and usually lack the means to afford private lessons in golf, tennis and swimming (Evans, 1998) or to participate on club teams for soccer and softball (Stevenson, 2007; Yarbrough, 1996). Furthermore, while Title IX has dramatically increased opportunities for white, middle-class females, structural inequalities in schools and neighborhoods have prevented black females from benefiting to the same degree (Pickett, 2009; Suggs, 2005; Mathewson, 1996). Black girls have fewer opportunities for athletics participation than white girls due to the limited availability of sports teams other than basketball or track and field at the high schools they attend (Pickett, Dawkins & Braddock, 2012; Mathewson, 1996). The lack of youth participation opportunities in growth sports leaves black females without equal opportunity to earn or qualify for athletics scholarships that would make college more accessible and more affordable.

Ironically, before the enactment of Title IX, HBCUs afforded sports opportunities for black women, accommodating their interests and abilities. For example, Tennessee State’s legendary track coach Edward Temple produced 40 Olympians and 34 AAU national titles during his 44-year career. Tennessee State’s Tigerbelles dominated track and field from the 1950s through the 1970s (Fulks, 1996). Of those 40 Tigerbelle Olympians, 39 graduated from college, 28 earned master’s degrees and 14 earned either a M.D. or Ph.D. (Woolum, 1998). These accomplishments were achieved even though the university did not offer athletic scholarships to the women’s track program until 1967. Coach Temple arranged financial support in the form of work-study packages to create educational and sports opportunities for black female student-athletes who often were from poor rural areas and working-class communities in the South (Gissendanner, 1996). “Sports really changed my life,” said Wyomia Tyus, a Tigerbelle from 1963 to 1968 and founding member of the Women’s Sports Foundation. “To be African-American in Georgia at that time, there was nothing to do. And if you were poor, you could do even less. Track gave me opportunities” (Woolum, 1998, p. 277).

Opportunities still exist for black female athletes in track and basketball, but opportunities are severely limited in many other sports. In the 2012–2013 academic

year, black females across all NCAA teams were under-represented in 21 of the 25 sports (NCAA Race and Gender Demographics Search Database 2013) but were clustered and overrepresented in basketball, bowling and track and field (See Table 1). Clustering refers to high participation rates in some sports but very low participation rates in others (Butler & Lopiano, 2003). For example, while blacks make up only 11% of all females competing in NCAA Division I, Division II and Division III sports, black females have higher than expected participation levels in basketball (33%) and bowling (33%) but small participation patterns in the major growth sports such as rowing (2%), golf (2%), lacrosse (3%) and soccer (4%). Women’s sports has experienced tremendous growth since Title IX and the number of black female participants has increased; however the share of female student-athletes who identify themselves as black has remained stagnant around 11% since 1999–2000, the first year of the NCAA Student-Athlete Race and Ethnicity Report.

Table 1 NCAA Overall Black Female Student-Athletes 2012–2013

Sport	Black	Total	Pct.
Basketball	5,289	16,186	33%
Bowling	189	570	33%
Cross Country	1,205	15,752	8%
Equestrian	18	1,543	1%
Fencing	31	657	5%
Field Hockey	78	5,820	1%
Golf	101	4,884	2%
Gymnastics	94	1,488	6%
Ice Hockey	9	2,090	0%
Lacrosse	281	9,521	3%
Rifle	9	191	5%
Rowing	176	7,520	2%
Rugby	16	176	9%
Sand Volleyball	17	416	4%
Skiing	1	462	0%
Soccer	957	26,084	4%
Softball	1,021	18,671	5%
Squash	9	438	2%
Swimming	167	12,348	1%
Synch Swimming	2	39	5%
Tennis	576	8,974	6%
Track, Indoor	5,017	25,180	20%
Track, Outdoor	5,478	27,127	20%
Volleyball	1,511	16,261	9%
Water Polo	10	1,173	1%

Source: NCAA Race and Gender Demographics Search

While the overrepresentation of black females in NCAA basketball and track and the underrepresentation of black females across all other sports deserves attention, it is equally significant that black females are losing ground in sports participation opportunities created by Title IX at colleges and universities long dedicated to supporting the education of black females. Many HBCU women's athletic teams look much like those at HWCUs — predominantly black basketball and track teams and predominantly white teams in growth sports. Increasingly noticeable at HBCUs is the presence of nonblack female athletes and entire teams with no black female participants, particularly in growth sports. For example, the female enrollment at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore is 73% black (NCES, 2014), yet no bowlers on the school's 2008, 2011 and 2012 national championship teams self-identified as black. Similarly, there were no blacks on the 2013–14 Bethune-Cookman (FL) University women's golf team although the school's female enrollment is 89% black (NCES, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The limited existing literature and the aforementioned statistics illustrating the underrepresentation of black females on NCAA teams suggest that assessing the effectiveness of Title IX only in terms of gender equity is insufficient. Title IX was not specifically designed to tackle race inequity, but the ultimate effectiveness of the law's intentions, which includes the eradication of discrimination and exclusion, hinges on addressing gender equity from an intersectional perspective (Evans, 1998). Intersectionality focuses on structural oppression at the intersection of gender, race, class and, more recently, sexual orientation. At a minimum, black females are situated by race and gender in two subordinated groups. Socioeconomic factors also often come into play, further demonstrating the unique challenges faced by black females who experience "multiple jeopardy" (King, 1988) unlike white, middle-class females.

Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to explain how racism and sexism intersect on multiple levels to subordinate black women. Rather than examining gender, race and class as distinctive social hierarchies, intersectionality examines how they mutually construct one another (Hill Collins, 1998). Title IX's single axis is gender (Mathewson, 1996). Therefore, this study analyzes the impact of Title IX on female student-athletes at HBCUs on a dual axis to shine light on the invisibility of black females so that the structures that perpetuate their dual invisibility can be transformed.

Methodology

This study is limited to female scholarship student-athletes participating on NCAA Division I and Division II HBCU teams. The study specifically focuses on scholarship student-athletes because receiving athletics aid to offset the expensive cost of college may be incentive for black

females to attend college as well as incentive for nonblack females to attend predominantly black colleges. The study does not include female student-athletes who compete in Division III because they are not awarded athletics scholarships. Female student-athletes who compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) are not included because the governing body does not make public data regarding race and ethnicity. HBCU two-year institutions and community colleges also are excluded.

The data are based on female scholarship student-athletes attending 53 private and public four-year HBCUs that compete in either NCAA Division I or Division II. Although the NCAA releases an annual Race and Gender Demographics Report, the NCAA reports the data by division and sport, and not by individual school as required for the study. However, the demographic information for each institution is compiled from the Federal Graduation Success Rate database search on NCAA.org. Among the information listed in the annual reports prepared by the NCAA, based on data provided by each member institution, is the number of female student-athletes who were enrolled and received athletics aid for the fall term of each academic year and the number of women in each racial or ethnic group. Information on race is self-reported: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, nonresident alien, two or more races, White or non-Hispanic and unknown (not included in one of the other eight groups or not available) and the total (all nine groups combined). The report also includes data on the number of female student-athletes who received athletics aid in three categories: women's basketball, women's track/cross country and all other women's sports combined. Thus, the analyses on participation clustering are limited to comparisons of black and nonblack female scholarship athletes for these three categories. Nevertheless, as previously noted, basketball and track and field are the sports in which the group of interest—black females—is most highly involved. Information on each HBCU was searched for the following academic school years: 2012–2013, 2011–2012, 2010–2011, 2009–2010 and 2008–2009. The 2004–2005 academic school year is included for Division I HBCU schools as a reference point because it is the earliest academic year that race and ethnicity data are available by school. The NCAA database does not provide information for Division II HBCU schools in 2004–2005, and information for all other academic years before 2008–2009 is sporadic.

The analysis examines racial parity (equality or similarity) trends in athletic participation among black female scholarship student-athletes and nonblack female scholarship student-athletes attending HBCUs. The parity index is an odds-ratio indicator representing the ratio of nonblack female scholarship student-athletes to black female scholarship student-athletes. The parity index is calculated by dividing the percentage of enrolled nonblack female scholarship student-athletes by the percentage of enrolled black female scholarship student-athletes at each Division I and Division II HBCU. Standardizing participa-

tion among black and nonblack females on athletics scholarship in this fashion allows for meaningful comparisons across time, despite fluctuations in relative group sizes. If the sports participation ratio among nonblack female scholarship student-athletes and black female scholarship student-athletes is equal, the parity index will be 1. A parity index value less than 1 indicates that nonblack females are less likely than black females to be scholarship student-athletes at that HBCU. A parity index value greater than 1 indicates that nonblack females are more likely than black females to be scholarship student-athletes at that HBCU.

Findings

This study examines the intersectionality of gender and race and presents new research on the impact of Title IX on black female sports participation opportunities driven by athletics scholarships at HBCUs. The study reveals that black females have not benefited from the expansion of growth sports such as golf, tennis, rowing and lacrosse produced by Title IX legislation to the same degree as

nonblack females, resulting in an overall decrease in the black female share of athletics scholarships at HBCUs. Since 2008–2009, the first academic year that detailed NCAA race and ethnicity data by sport has been made available, the percentage of nonblack female scholarship student-athletes at HBCUs has increased and the percentage of black female scholarship student-athletes at HBCUs has decreased. Among female student-athletes receiving athletics aid, blacks occupied 71% of the roster spots on the 2012–2013 HBCU teams examined in this study, down from 79% in 2008–2009. Furthermore, the likelihood of a female scholarship student-athlete at an HBCU self-identifying as black decreases significantly when the participatory sport is a sport other than basketball or track and field/cross country. The practice of sports clustering found at HWCUs was found to be just as prominent at HBCUs. Among nonblack female scholarship student-athletes at HBCUs, 80% played a sport other than basketball and track and field/cross country. Black females made up 89% of basketball players and 84% of cross country/track team members who received athletics aid in Fall 2012. However, in the other sports

Table 2 College Variation in Nonblack/Black Female Sports Participation at Division I HBCUs

	2004–2005	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–2013	Change
HBCU	Parity	Parity	Parity	Parity	Parity	Parity	
Alabama A&M	0.12	0.18	0.20	0.23	0.27	0.27	+0.15
Alabama State	0.13	0.16	0.22	0.25	0.30	0.50	+0.37
Alcorn State	0.15	0.39	0.59	0.69	0.69	0.56	+0.41
Bethune-Cookman	0.40	0.96	0.35	0.64	#	0.55	+0.15
Coppin State	0.12	0.19	0.10	0.00	0.37	0.53	+0.41
Delaware State	0.27	1.17	1.70	0.72	1.63	1.86	+1.59
Florida A&M	0.19	0.12	0.15	0.23	0.15	0.29	+0.10
Grambling State	0.08	0.16	0.12	0.23	0.08	0.18	+0.10
Hampton	0.19	0.30	0.37	0.37	0.20	0.21	+0.02
Howard	0.13	0.10	0.06	0.22	0.23	0.32	+0.19
Jackson State	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.46	+0.46
Mississippi Valley State	0.13	0.52	0.25	0.64	0.64	0.63	+0.50
Morgan State	0.03	0.12	0.19	0.27	0.27	0.49	+0.46
Norfolk State	0.16	0.54	0.49	0.72	0.72	0.55	+0.39
North Carolina A&T	0.15	0.10	0.16	0.12	0.12	0.17	+0.02
North Carolina Central	#	0.49	0.45	0.59	0.59	0.92	+0.43
Prairie View A&M	0.11	0.28	0.41	0.61	0.61	0.62	+0.51
Savannah State	#	0.00	0.09	0.23	0.23	0.41	+0.41
South Carolina State	#	0.12	0.02	0.32	0.32	0.21	+0.09
Southern University/A&M	0.09	0.08	0.06	0.43	0.43	0.33	+0.24
Tennessee State	0.16	0.41	0.45	0.27	0.27	0.37	+0.21
Texas Southern	0.16	0.39	0.52	0.35	0.35	0.50	+0.34
University of Ark., Pine Bluff	0.12	0.82	0.67	0.52	0.52	0.76	+0.64
Maryland Eastern Shore	0.33	0.85	0.16	1.38	1.38	1.25	+0.92
Average	.15	.35	.33	.43	.46	.54	

No data available

The parity index is an odds-ratio indicator representing the ratio of each ethnic groups' participation to total female participation. Values above unity (1.00) reflect over-representation, values below unity reflect under-representation.

combined, 60% of the scholarship student-athletes self-identified as black females and 40% self-identified as nonblack females.

While black females occupy the majority of roster spots on HBCU sports teams, the data reveal that because of clustering nonblacks in growth sports, the likelihood of nonblack females receiving athletics aid to play sports at HBCUs is increasing while the likelihood of black females receiving athletics aid to play sports at HBCUs is decreasing. The findings are reported separately for Division I (Table 2) and Division II (Table 3) institutions.

Table 2 reports trends in HBCU Division I nonblack/black female sports opportunities afforded by athletics aid between the 2004–05 and 2012–13 academic years. Several interesting patterns emerge. First, inspecting the net change column, the awarding of athletics aid to nonblack females grew in each of the 24 Division I HBCUs for which data are available. Hampton University and North Carolina A&T University showed the most modest (+2%) gains. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (+92%) and Delaware State University (+159%) showed the highest gains. Second, comparing the average parity indices for each time period shows steady growth in the ratio of nonblack females on athletics aid compared with black females on athletics aid. In the 2004–2005 academic school year, nonblack females were only 15% as likely as (or 85% less likely than) black females to receive athletics aid to participate in sports at Division I HBCUs. By 2012–2013, nonblack females were 54% as likely as black females to receive athletics aid to play on a Division I HBCU team, more than triple the odds nine years earlier. Third, nonblack females were over-represented at two HBCUs in 2012–2013. Delaware State University had a parity index of 1.86, which means that nonblack females were 86% more likely than black females to be scholarship student-athletes at Delaware State University, which has an undergraduate enrollment that is 72% black (NCES, 2014). Nonblack females were also overrepresented at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), which has a 73% black undergraduate population (NCES, 2014). With a parity index of 1.25, nonblack females were 25% more likely than blacks to be scholarship athletes at UMES. Black and nonblack female scholarship student-athletes at North Carolina Central University (83% black undergraduate enrollment) were at “virtual parity” at .92.

Table 3 reports trends in HBCU Division II nonblack/black female sports opportunities afforded by athletics aid between the 2008–09 and 2012–13 academic years. Inspecting the net change column, the proportion of scholarship student-athletes who were nonblack females increased in 20, and decreased in four, of the 29 Division II HBCUs for which data are available. Lincoln University (Pa.) shows a staggering 366% gain in nonblack females receiving athletics aid. Virginia Union University (-43%) and West Virginia State University (-48%) showed great declines in nonblack female scholarship athletes. Among Division II HBCUs, in contrast to Division I HBCUs, the average parity index for each time period

showed fluctuating growth in the ratio of nonblack female scholarship athletes compared with black female scholarship athletes. In the 2008–2009 academic school year, nonblack females were 47% as likely as black females to receive athletics aid at Division II HBCUs. However, by 2012–2013, nonblack females were 54% as likely as black females to be scholarship athletes on a Division II HBCU team, a 7% gain over just five years.

Three Division II schools—Bluefield State College (2.31), Lincoln University (3.91) in Pennsylvania and Lincoln University (2.65) in Missouri—had parity indexes above 1.0 in 2012–2013 and reflected an over-representation of nonblack female scholarship student-athletes on HBCU teams. Lincoln University (Mo.) had a 50–50 black-nonblack student enrollment. Nonresident aliens (22) and whites (22) each made up 35% of the program’s female scholarship student-athletes. The University of the District of Columbia (.91) had virtual equal representation between black and nonblack scholarship student-athletes. Its undergraduate student population is 61% black (NCES, 2014). West Virginia State University did not submit data for 2012–2013 but had a parity index of 5.67 in 2011–2012, which means that a female scholarship student-athlete was 567 times more likely to be nonblack than black. It’s important to note that although West Virginia State University and Bluefield State College are HBCUs, their enrollment figures are much more akin to predominantly white institutions. West Virginia State is 43% white and just 10% black. Bluefield State is 85% white and 10% black (NCES, 2014).

Discussion and Summary

Education has long been considered a primary avenue for improving the socioeconomic status and the life chances of African Americans, as it has for other race-ethnic groups. Before the Civil War, there were no public institutions of higher learning for blacks; all of the existing institutions were private and funded by northern philanthropists, free blacks and religious organizations (Dees, 2004). Today, there are 105 HBCUs, which represents only 3% of the postsecondary institutions in the United States. Nevertheless, HBCUs enroll 12% of all black students and confer degrees to blacks in disproportionate numbers: 30% of all bachelors degrees; 40% of all STEM degrees; and 60% of all engineering degrees awarded (Nelms, Wilson & Bornstein, 2010).

These academic opportunities are not just limited to blacks, however. HBCUs have successfully desegregated student enrollments while, at the same time, maintained their historic mission of educating African Americans (Gasman & Hilton, 2011). In 1950, blacks made up almost 100% of HBCU enrollment. In 2011, black students made up 81% of enrollment at HBCUs followed by Whites at 14% (NCES, 2011). However, as this study shows, HBCUs have not done as well with maintaining—let alone increasing—sports participation opportunities for black females.

Table 3 College Variation in Nonblack/Black Female Sports Participation in Division II HBCUs

	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–2013	Change
HBCU	Parity	Parity	Parity	Parity	Parity	
Albany State University	0.11	0.11	0.03	0.03	0.06	-0.05
Benedict College	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.07	+0.06
Bluefield State College	2.03	2.45	2.45	#	2.31	+0.28
Bowie State University	0.25	0.10	0.19	0.19	0.30	+0.05
Central State University	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	-0.11
Cheney University of PA	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Claflin University	0.00	0.03	0.08	0.08	0.09	+0.09
Clark Atlanta University	0.22	0.23	0.15	0.15	0.13	-0.09
Elizabeth City University	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.18	0.57	+0.57
Fayetteville State University	#	0.09	0.41	0.41	0.43	+0.34
Fort Valley State University	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.05	0.03	+0.02
Johnson C. Smith University	0.01	0.12	0.16	0.16	0.22	+0.21
Kentucky State University	0.19	0.27	0.75	0.79	0.79	+0.60
Lane College	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
LeMoyne-Owen College	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.04	+0.04
Lincoln University	#	0.25	0.22	0.22	3.91	+3.66
Lincoln University (Missouri)	2.33	2.70	1.94	1.94	2.65	+0.31
Livingstone College	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miles College	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.00
Paine College	0.00	0.00	0.59	0.00	0.12	+0.12
Saint Augustine's University	0.01	0.15	0.18	0.18	0.12	+0.11
Shaw University	0.11	0.11	0.43	0.43	0.50	+0.39
Stillman College	0.04	0.02	0.35	0.35	0.48	+0.44
Tuskegee University	0.02	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.39	+0.37
Univ. of District of Columbia	0.25	0.12	0.67	0.67	0.91	+0.66
Virginia State University	0.12	0.05	0.20	0.20	0.19	+0.06
Virginia Union University	0.49	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.06	-0.43
W. Virginia State University	6.14	2.45	5.67	5.67	#	-0.48
Winston Salem State	0.20	0.04	0.20	0.20	0.63	+0.42
Average	.47	.33	.52	.43	.54	-

No data available

The parity index is an odds-ratio indicator representing the ratio of each ethnic groups' participation to total female participation. Values above unity (1.00) reflect over-representation, values below unity reflect under-representation.

It is important to level the playing field so that black females can benefit equally from Title IX legislation and close the gap in sports participation opportunities caused not only by gender differences but also race. Greater emphasis should be given to racial and socioeconomic considerations in Title IX's mandate against discrimination for black females to have a sporting chance equal to nonblacks. The goal is for *all* females to have an equal opportunity to enjoy the myriad of benefits that comes from playing sports such as educational attainment (Brad-dock 1981), college enrollment, and higher self-esteem just to name a few. The NCAA advertises that the benefits of playing collegiate sports are immediate and lifelong: a college education, higher graduation rates, money for college, academic support, healthy living, great experiences and preparation for life. However, because high

schools largely attended by black girls are less likely to offer the growth sports leading to college athletic scholarships in similar proportions to those available in schools with large concentrations of white girls, black females are not equipped to compete for the growing number of athletics scholarships made available by Title IX. The link between youth and high school sports and female sports participation in college is obvious. To develop the skills required to qualify as college athletes, young people need early access to participation opportunities in school as well as community based sports. Therefore, inequalities must be addressed at the lower levels of the social and athletic pyramid (Cheslock, 2008) by providing girls in low-income schools and communities access to growth sports such as soccer, tennis and lacrosse. Limited access to sports for black females in high school means

less access to college athletics and education. Institutional policies and practices must be implemented to eliminate structural arrangements that perpetuate these inequalities.

More programs are needed like Black Women in Sport Foundation (BWSF), a nonprofit that offers educational and athletic instruction in fencing, tennis, lacrosse, golf, soccer and softball to girls, particularly those attending schools in disenfranchised neighborhoods in the Philadelphia area. While our nation's urban and rural schools need to be more inclusive and diverse in their sports offerings, organizations like BWSF can help fill the gap. Similarly, a recent study shows that after-school intramural sports in middle school is a promising strategy for increasing sport participation among all students and especially children from black and/or low-income households (Kanters, et al. 2012).

This does not mean that our schools are absolved from the ethical and legal responsibility to provide equal opportunity to all girls. Focus groups and information meetings led by researchers, sociologists and former athletes should be held with school district administrators to inform them on how investing in more sports programs not only leads to greater academic outcomes but often uncovers unknown abilities currently veiled by lack of opportunity to participate in traditional "white" or "country club" sports. Overall, the responsibility lies with everyone, but perhaps especially with the historically black colleges and universities, which successfully educated former slaves who could not read or write, graduated most of today's black middle class, and advanced the interests of America's black females.

Limitations

The study found that nonblack females are benefiting much greater from Title IX than black females at historical black colleges and universities. Nonblack females receive a disproportionate number of athletic scholarships in growth sports at HBCUs while black females often find themselves locked out of these sporting opportunities. Historically, clustering has been the byproduct of economic inequalities and institutional disadvantages that exist in many black communities and impoverished school districts which offer limited growth sports. However, the author acknowledges that other factors which may contribute to declining sports opportunities for black females at HBCUs include coaches' assumptions that black girls do not play "country club" sports, the lack of recruiting at inner-city schools, black girls pursuing other interests in college, and black female student-athletes choosing to attend predominantly white institutions that were inaccessible in the past. This study sheds some light on how the manner in which Title IX gets implemented may hinder gender equality and sports participation opportunities for black females and, hopefully, will lead to discussions on the dual invisibility of black females in America.

Notes

1. Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established to serve the educational needs of black Americans. Before the time of their establishment, and for many years afterward, blacks were generally denied admission to traditionally white institutions. As a result, HBCUs became the principal means for providing postsecondary education to black Americans.
2. Historically white colleges and universities (HWCUs) refer to institutions of higher learning in which whites constitute 50% or more of the student enrollment.
3. Bowling is a popular addition to many college sports programs, including at HBCUs, because the cost of fielding a team is minimal compared with other sports. New facilities are not required as games can be played at local bowling alleys.
4. Athletics aid is a grant, scholarship, tuition waiver or other assistance from a college or university that is awarded on the basis of a student's athletics ability.
5. This reflects decisions in Missouri and West Virginia to integrate higher education much earlier than other states. Lincoln (Mo.), Bluefield State (W.Va.) and West Virginia State were founded as HBCUs but have been fully integrated for nearly half a century.

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