



Photo by Kevin Higley

Aleen Swofford, UNL women's athletic director, was hired in July to head the post at \$18,000 a year. Swofford and women's sports information director Jay Davis have been speaking to groups about Title IX as one means of obtaining financial support.

Women's athletic budget short

Three years ago, UNL's women's athletics received \$25 annually for each sport. In comparison, the present \$132,000 budget seems adequate.

But, in order to provide enough monies for the nine women's sports at UNL, that budget will have to be tripled, according to Aleen Swofford, UNL women's athletic director.

Athletics has been the most discussed aspect of the Title IX regulations. The critical sentence in the guidelines concerning athletics state unequal expenditures for separate male and female teams does not constitute noncompliance with the regulations.

However, the Athletic Director has the responsibility to provide necessary funds for separate teams in assessing what is needed for equal opportunity for members of one sex.

Time needed

But "things won't be equalized overnight," Swofford said. "Title IX provides a three year implementation period. We won't wait three years for the big crunch—we're easing into it. We don't want to do it by taking away from the men's programs."

One reason Swofford gave for the needed increase is that nine teams share two sets of warm ups, which don't fit some players. The gymnastics, track and field, golf and tennis teams have no uniforms and the basketball and swimming teams have uniforms that are "stained and outmoded," she said.

In addition, equipment used by the Women's Athletic Dept. is owned by the Women's Physical Education Dept., she said, adding that salaries for most coaches (many of whom also teach), are jointly paid by both departments.

Another reason she gave for the needed increase is that the Athletic Dept. pays one-quarter of coaches salaries, but takes the majority of their time. "We're asking them to do an awful lot for the salary they're getting," she said.

Swofford added that UNL offers 55 tuition scholarships to in-state women athletics, although the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) guidelines allow for 120 scholarships.

Limited team funds

Still another reason for a needed budget increase is that each team receives about \$1,500 of the

budget, which is used mainly for travel expenses, she said. Unlike four other Big 8 schools, UNL's teams drive cars to every event.

Also, the women's Physical Education Building houses all women's teams, she noted. However, the building's priority is for physical education classes and according to Swofford, "We sit on egg shells because the Physical Education Dept. may have to use for classes the time and space we now occupy."

In five of nine sports, UNL plays fewer games than the average Big 8 women's team in respective sports; plays the same number in two sports and more games in two others.

Comparing budget size to program size, Nebraska ranks seventh in the Big 8, she said, adding that UNL has the only Big 8 women's athletic program (besides Oklahoma and Oklahoma State), which utilizes athletic department funds.

Officials underpaid

She also noted that the average pay UNL gives officials for games is \$8, while the average suggested pay is \$24.

Presently, the Athletic Dept. provides \$80,000 of the budget. Another \$35,000 comes from the Chancellor's office and the remaining \$17,000 from the 711 line of the University budget.

The Legislature recently adjourned a special session to cut state spending, so it's doubtful needed funds will be appropriated for UNL women's athletics.

Therefore, Swofford said she's trying to increase interest in women's sports to the point where they can become self-supporting.

"Women's athletics were strong in the 1920s," Swofford said. "The change in economy over the years has reflected the mood and philosophy about women's athletics."

Local fans help

Swofford and women's sports information director Jay Davis already have obtained support from local fans who have started the Boost Her club.

Funds also have been raised through a run to Omaha by the volleyball team (which bought a second set of warm ups). Speaking engagements by Swofford and Davis and tonight's Valentino's Women's Athletics Night (where 25 cents of every pizza goes to women's athletics), are other fund raising projects.


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