Transition and Change

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As the Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal (WSPAJ) finishes its 30th volume, we celebrate its continued growth and recognize the need for transition and change. Therefore, my final editorial looks at change as it applies to topics highlighted in this issue of the journal and the forthcoming transitions highlighting opportunities for growth and thriving.

Special Section: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX—Triumphs and Challenges

In 1972, the United States of America passed Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972). This federal law reads, “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 education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (20 USC §1681–§1688). As Title IX turns 50 this year, it is important to reflect on the impact the law has had on girls and women in sport and physical activity and the need for continued vigilance and change to support opportunities in these settings. Title IX has opened up opportunities for girls and women across a myriad of areas including sport and physical activity settings.

To this end, the WSPAJ editorial board has devoted a Special Section of this journal issue to Title IX. The Special Section entitled, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX: Triumphs and Challenges, explores what strides have been made in participation, resources, and support, what challenges still exist, and what changes are needed to provide opportunities for all women.

The Special Section begins with the executive summary from a recent Women in Sport Foundation report on 50 years of Title IX. In this summary, Staurowsky et al. (2022) outline the positive strides that have been made in participation of girls and women in sport and the resources devoted to women’s sports. However, the authors also point out that equity has not yet been achieved in the nature of sport; working toward transgender inclusion; addressing the potential for inequity related to Name, Image, and Likeness; examining the athletics arms race; and transforming sexual harassment and assault policies.

Overall, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX—Triumphs and Challenges helps us recognize how far we have come and how far we still have to go. I hope the reader will find their call to action among the articles within the Special Section whether that be in conducting research, developing and implementing policies, or advocating for change that will help all girls and women achieve equity.

Special Series: Engaging Conversation in Women’s Sport and Physical Activity: Traversing Generations

As noted repeatedly in the Special Section, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX—Triumphs and Challenges, women with a variety of intersecting identities have not reaped the same benefits as White, cisgender, middle-class, heterosexual, and able-bodied women (Oglesby, 2022; Schultz, 2022; Staurowsky et al., 2022). Furthermore, research exploring these intersections and the sharing of their stories has been limited. Therefore, there is a need for change within the research community to call for more scholarly work that centers the histories and stories of all women using an intersectional lens. As Carter-Francique et al. (2022) describe in their opening editorial, the aim of the WSPAJ Special Series, Engaging

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Conversation in Women’s Sport and Physical Activity: Traversing Generations, is to invite researchers to engage in intersectional and cross-generational work that tells the stories of girls and women seeking to find their place in and engage in meaningful sport and physical activity experiences. The guest editors, Kathy Jamieson, Akilah Carter-Francique, Judy Liao, DeAnne Brooks, and Yeomi Choi, describe in further detail the purpose of the Special Series and the first article in the series. This work is an exciting step forward to expand “the diversity of our perspectives on the range of sport and physical activity experiences available to girls and women” (Carter-Francique et al., 2022).

Transitions Within the WSPAJ

As I finish my tenure as the editor of WSPAJ, I am happy to report that the journal continues on a healthy trajectory. We continue to see an increase in the number and quality of submissions. For example, in 2021 the number of submissions was over 80 and the WSPAJ Scopus CiteScore climbed to 2.3 from its 0.9 level in 2019 (https://www.scopus.com/sources). Furthermore, the timeliness of submission to first decision (M days = 41) continues to improve with preprints available within 5 weeks of acceptance. Based on our progress, we are pursuing additional indexing opportunities. We have also enhanced the visibility of the journal through special issues (e.g., Women in Sport Coaching, Volume 27, Issue 2), special sections (e.g., Harassment and Abuse in Sport, Volume 28, Issue 1), and publication of the Women in Sport and Exercise Conference proceedings. Furthermore, we have enhanced marketing endeavors by increasing our email campaigns and social media exposure to encourage scholars to submit their best work to WSPAJ to further our understanding of girls and women in variety of physical activity settings. Finally, we continue to work on our efforts to enhance diversity in research submissions; seek to diversify the authors, reviewers, and editorial board members; and invite authors to submit research that is intersectional in content, methodology, and analysis (Gano-Overway, 2021). All of these improvements are directly related to the efforts of the editorial board, staff, authors, and reviewers.

It has been an honor to serve as the editor for the past 5 years and I appreciate all of the individuals who heeded my call for collaboration (Gano-Overway, 2018) to continue to grow the journal in a positive direction. Thank you to all the editorial board members and reviewers for their time and expertise, and to authors who have submitted their work. Furthermore, special thanks to Jennifer Waldron, Associate Editor; Donna Duffy; Christina Johnson, and Elizabeth Eagen-Jones, Editorial Assistants; and Doug Hoepker, Human Kinetics Senior Journal Managing Editor, for their continued support. I also want to welcome Donna Duffy as the new editor for WSPAJ. Donna Duffy played a pivotal role in helping the journal transition from SHAPE America to the Program for the Advancement of Girls and Women in Sport and Physical Activity. Her energy, expertise, and passion for research in this area means she is well positioned to move the journal forward. As I transition out of the editor role, I know the new and seasoned leaders within WSPAJ along with strong collaborative support among authors, reviewers, and staff will help the journal continue to thrive in the years to come.

References


