CURRENT NCAA POSITION REGARDING TRANSGENDER STUDENT-ATHLETE PARTICIPATION AND RESOURCE LIST

1. NCAA rules do not prohibit transgender student-athletes from competing in the NCAA. NCAA core values include a commitment to creating and supporting an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.

2. Transgender student-athletes who compete in the NCAA must compete in the gender classification that matches their state classification, as determined by their institution.

3. NCAA recommends that institutions use the gender classification that student-athletes have from their state (driver's license, taxes, voter registration, etc.) in the eligibility certification process.

4. Current NCAA championship-access rules may be impacted by the institution's certification decision:

    - NCAA rules state that a male participating in competition on a female team makes the team a "mixed team." The mixed team can be used for sports sponsorship numbers (provided other conditions, such as being an acceptable NCAA sport, outlined in Bylaw 20.9 (Division I), 20.10 (Division II) and 20.11 (Division III) are met) and counts toward the mixed/men's team minimums within the membership sports-sponsorship requirements. Such a team is ineligible for a women's NCAA championship but is eligible for a men's NCAA championship.

    - A female on a men's team does not impact sports sponsorship in the application of the rule-the team still counts toward the mixed/men's numbers. Such a team is eligible for a men's NCAA championship.

    - Once a team is classified as a mixed team, it retains that status through the remainder of the academic year without exception.

5. Development of a formal NCAA policy would have to come through the normal governance structure involving our member colleges and universities, who establish NCAA rules.

6. No statistics are kept on the number of transgender student-athletes competing in the NCAA – gender is calculated based on the data supplied by NCAA member institutions.

7. The use of medication that falls under a banned drug class must be reviewed by the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports for approval. For a list of banned drugs class go to www.ncaa.org/health-safety select Drug Testing, then Exceptions/Procedures

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Resource List:

It Takes a Team - www.ittakesateam.org

Women's Sports Foundation - www.womenssportsfoundation.org

National Center for Transgender Equality - www.nctequality.org

National Transgender Advocacy list - http://www.genderadvocates.org/links/national.html

Transgender Law Center - www.transgenderlawcenter.org

U.S. jurisdictions with laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression [Summer 2009; Source – Transgender Law Center]:

Type of jurisdiction	Number
States:	13 + DC
Cities and counties:	93
Total	107

Transgender Law and Policy Institute - www.transgenderlaw.org

Colleges, Universities and K-12 schools: http://www.transgenderlaw.org/college/index.htm

268 Colleges and Universities Have Non-Discrimination Policies that Include Gender Identity/Expression [Summer 2009]

National Center for Lesbian Rights - www.nclrights.org

PFLAG: http://community.pflag.org/Page.aspx?pid=237

Articles of Interest:

Fordham article: *Far from the finish line: Transsexualism and Athletic Competition* by Jill Pilgrim, David Martin and Will Binder

Inside Higher Ed.com: *The Transgender Athlete by Pat Griffin and Helen Carroll*

NCAA NEWS April 10, 2006 article: *Transgendered Athletes create a 'new frontier' of issues*

AP February 6, 2006 article: *Weight Thrower takes male identity while competing as female*

Chalk Talk: Inclusion of Transgender Athletes on Sports Teams Pat Griffin, Women's Sports Foundation: It Takes A Team!

Washington State Support Policy for Participation of Transgender Athletes: Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Sample Gender Identity Policy, Published: October 3, 2008. Available at the Women's Sports Foundation:
http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/Content/Articles/Issues/Homophobia/W/WIAA-Policy.aspx

SI.com June 24, 2003 article: *A level playing field? Transgender athletes pose new questions about competition* by Mike Fish

SFGate.com June 14, 2004 article: *Olympics' transgender quandary Debate rages on the fairness of new inclusion rule* by Rona Marech

http://www.activeaustralia.org/women/transgender.htm *Transgender in Sport*

Transsexual fears after new Olympic ruling - Duncan Mackay
http://sport.guardian.co.uk/athletics/story/0,10082,1222411,00.html
Saturday May 22, 2004

Transsexuals Push Sports to Think Anew: Who Is Male, Female? By Curtis Eichelberger Bloomberg News
November 9, 2006

Aussie Trannie Wins Right to Play By Cyd Zeigler jr.
http://www.outsports.com/moresports/050624transsoccer.htm

Statement of the Stockholm consensus on sex reassignment in sports and Explanatory note to the recommendation on sex reassignment and Sports

Olympics' transgender quandary Debate rages on the fairness of new inclusion rule
- Rona Marech, Chronicle Staff Writer Monday, June 14, 2004

Transsexual People and Sports, Guidance for Sporting Bodies
UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Endocrine Treatment of Transsexual People: A Review of Treatment Regimens, Outcomes, and Adverse Effects EVA MOORE, AMY WISNIEWSKI, AND ADRIAN DOBS
The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism 88(8):3467–3473
Copyright © 2003 by The Endocrine Society

Change Candidates, Paul Steinbach Athletic Business, August 2008
http://athleticbusiness.com/articles/article.aspx?articleid=1817&zoneid=28
As some young athletes wrestle with gender identity, athletics policymakers are preparing for a sexual evolution.

Chalk Talk: Inclusion of Transgender Athletes on Sports Teams

Pat Griffin, Women's Sport Foundation, "It Takes a Team"

The inclusion of transgender athletes is one of the latest equality challenges for sport governing organizations worldwide. No sport organization prior to 2003 had any policy at all governing the participation of transgender athletes. Historically, the International Olympic Committee's sex verification policy was focused on preventing male competitors from participating in female events. As a reaction to this concern, sex verification tests for female (but not male) athletes began in 1968. The tests were discontinued in 1999 as sports authorities struggled unsuccessfully to develop reasonable and medically sound tests that were fairly administered and interpreted in the face of mounting social, medical and legal objections to the tests.

The International Olympic Committee became the first mainstream sport governing body to develop a policy governing the participation of transgender athletes in the Olympic Games. This policy, known as the Stockholm Consensus, became effective at the 2004 Games in Athens, Greece. Based on a report and recommendations from a committee of medical doctors, the IOC policy includes a list of three criteria for approval of transsexual athlete participation.

Since the IOC policy went into effect, the Ladies Golf Union (Great Britain), the Ladies European Golf Tour, Women's Golf Australia, the United States Golf Association, USA Track and Field, and the Gay and Lesbian International Sports Association have created policies governing transgender athlete participation in events sponsored by their organizations. In addition, the Women's Sports Foundation, United Kingdom and the United States-based Women's Sports Foundation issued policy statements supporting the inclusion of transgender athletes in sport.

Most of these organizations have used the IOC standards as a guide for the development of their policies. In contrast, the National Collegiate Athletic Association requires that athletes compete in the gender designated on their official government documents, for example, driver's license, birth certificate or passport (This policy is currently under review). To date, no high school governing bodies have announced policies addressing the participation of transgender athletes. However, it is clear that the issue of transgender athlete eligibility to participate in school-based sports will need to be addressed in the near future. Each of these early attempts at developing policy governing the participation of transgender athletes is problematic in different ways. As sports governing organizations continue to better understand and address issues of transgender discrimination and competitive equity for all competitors, we can expect better and more consistent policies to emerge.

The goals for all sport organizations developing policies governing transgender athlete participation should be to identify ways to ensure fair competition for all participants and avoid discrimination against transgender athletes without invading the privacy of athletes who transition to a new gender. To achieve this end, sport governing bodies need to examine legal and medical information related to transgender participation in sport. Separating this information from the confusion, prejudice and misinformation about transgender identity in

general and athletic participation by transgender people in particular is essential in developing fair policy.

Education: An important step.

One of the most important first steps for a sport organization or school athletic department to take is to educate athletic staff and athletes about transgender issues in sport. This step is the most effective way to provide information and answer questions about transgender athletic participation and lays the groundwork for developing and following fair policy governing the participation of transgender athletes. The NCAA has established a committee to begin to develop educational materials for athletic administrators, coaches and others on this topic. It Takes A Team! Education Campaign for LGBT Issues in Sport is a participant on this committee and is developing educational materials and programs for athletic administrators, coaches, athletes, and parents on transgender issues in sport.

The purposes of this article are:

- To provide some clarifying information about basic gender terminology
- To summarize legal and medical information related to transgender athlete participation in sport
- To make some recommendations for policy related to the inclusion of transgender athletes in school-based athletic programs
- To identify resources on transgender athletic participation for sports administrators, coaches, and parents

Clarification of Gender Terminology

Before we can explore policy recommendations related to transgender athlete participation in sport, it is important to provide some clarifying information about gender terminology and to address some common misconception about transgender identity. To that end, we offer the following definitions:

Birth/Assigned Sex refers to sex assigned at birth based on the anatomical, physiological and chromosomal characteristics associated with males, females, or intersex people.

Intersex refers to people who are born with both male and female anatomical, physiological or chromosomal characteristics.

Gender Identity refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being a man or a woman. A person's gender identity can be different from their gender assigned at birth.

Gender Expression refers to socially constructed sets of behaviors, appearance, mannerisms, speech patterns, and dress associated with men (masculine), women (feminine) or a mixture of masculine and feminine (often called androgynous), or any other less

traditional expressions.

Transgender is an umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or expression does not conform to prevailing social expectations and can be used to describe people whose gender identity or expression is different from their gender assigned at birth.

Transsexual is a term commonly used to refer to someone who transitions from one gender to another. It includes people who were identified as male at birth but whose gender identity is woman or girl (MTF) and people who were identified as female at birth, but whose gender identity is man or boy (FTM), and people whose gender identity is neither man nor woman. Transition often consists of a change in gender expression, name, and pronoun preference. Transition often also includes hormone therapy, counseling, and surgery.

Transitioned is a descriptor preferred by some people who have completed their gender transition and no longer want to be referred to as either transgender or transsexual. Instead they want to be referred as the new gender to which they have transitioned (woman or man, without the qualifiers, "transgender" or "transsexual").

Gender Non-Conforming or Gender Variant refers to people who are perceived to have gender characteristics or gender expression that do not conform to traditional social expectations. Gender Variant or gender non-conforming people may or may not identify as transgender.

Sexual Orientation refers to a person's emotional and sexual attraction to other people based on the gender of the other person. A person may identify their sexual orientation as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different aspects of a person's identity. Not all lesbian, gay, bisexual people are gender non-conforming and not all transgender people identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Assumptions about the relationship among a person's sex assigned at birth, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation are often made. Misunderstanding the differences among these terms can lead to misconceptions about people. For example, transgender/transitioned people or people who display gender variant behavior or appearance are often assumed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Similarly, gay men are often stereotyped as having a feminine gender expression and lesbians are often stereotyped as having a masculine gender expression. However, a person's gender identity or expression is unrelated to their sexual orientation. We each have a sexual orientation and a gender identity. Knowing a person's gender identity provides little information about that person's sexual orientation and vice versa.

Summary of Legal Information

Though no federal legislation explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or expression, the United States Constitution's equal protection clause, Title VII, and Title IX may be interpreted to address discrimination against transgender people or gender non-conforming people. Moreover, the First Amendment and Due Process Clause of the U.S. Constitution may prohibit school officials from censoring student speech, dress, or expression

without a compelling reason.

Legal protection from discrimination based on gender identity or expression is currently available in a limited number of states and localities and more states are adding gender identity and expression to their general non-discrimination laws and to laws and policies that apply specifically to students in schools. States that have non-discrimination laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, but not gender identity include Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and Wisconsin (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2006).

States that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity include California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Washington. The District of Columbia also provides legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2006).

Only eight states (Washington, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin) and the District of Columbia currently have statewide legal protections for students based on sexual orientation. Only California, Minnesota and New Jersey include protections based on gender identity or expression (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, 2006).

Regardless of whether there are explicit legal protections for students based on gender identity in a particular state, discrimination against transgender and gender-variant athletes may still result in liability for coaches or schools under other federal or state laws that prohibit gender or sex discrimination.

The most prominent legal case to date involving a transsexual athlete in the United States was Renee Richards v. United States Tennis Association. Richards, a male to female transsexual, sued to participate in the U.S. Open's Women's Division in 1977 without submitting to a sex verification test. The New York court ruled that the USTA was in violation of the state Human Rights Law and was discriminating against Richards. She played in the U.S. Open that year where she lost her first round singles match, but reached the finals in doubles before losing. Athletes identifying as transsexual, transgender or transitioned currently compete in many women's sports including mountain biking, ice hockey, track and field and golf.

Addressing Competitive Athletic Performance Concerns

Ensuring that transgender/transitioned athletes are treated fairly in sport presents a unique challenge because, for the most part, competitive athletics is a sex-segregated activity. Most athletic teams are separated into those for boys and men and those for girls and women. Men and women compete against or with each other in far fewer sports (archery, equestrian, shooting, for example). Moreover, there are well documented physical and physiological differences between males and females that lead to the conventional wisdom that most sports are best conducted as sex segregated activities in order to ensure that women and men have

equitable opportunities to compete against others of similar physical and physiological capabilities. The actual overlap in male and female athletic performance, however, is quite large, rather than clearly separated into two distinct groups. The range of physiological characteristics and athletic performance within each of the categories of female and male is also quite wide. Nonetheless, transgender athletes, particularly transsexual or transitioned athletes, challenge accepted boundaries of eligibility and raise concerns about fair competition in sex segregated sport.

A broad spectrum of identities is included under the umbrella of transgender identity. Transsexual or transitioned athletes may pose the greatest challenge to equity in sex segregated sport competition. Athletes who have completed a transition from male to female are most likely to be seen as having an unfair competitive advantage in contests against women who are female at birth. Athletes who have completed a transition from female to male also pose challenges if they are taking testosterone as part of their hormone therapy because of concerns about athletes' use of performance enhancing drugs.

Other transgender athletes; whose gender identity does not match their birth sex, but do not undergo surgery or take hormones; pose less of a competitive equity challenge. Instead, they present a challenge to traditional gender expectations and might be subjected to discrimination or harassment because of stereotypes or prejudice. Athletes whose gender expression is non-conforming, but whose birth sex and gender identity match (i.e. masculine women or feminine men) pose the least challenge to competitive equity. However, these athletes might be subjected to discrimination or harassment based on their gender expression.

Athletic Performance Parity and Transsexual Athletes

Many medical doctors who specialize in treating people who transition make the case that these athletes should be allowed to compete in their new gender. The International Olympic Committee policy on the participation of transsexual athletes in the Olympic Games reflects this perspective. In 2003 the Executive Committee of the IOC approved a set of criteria to determine the eligibility of transsexual/transitioned athletes recommended by the IOC Medical Commission. The IOC policy is as follows:

Sex reassignment before puberty: Individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery of male to female before puberty should be regarded as girls and women (female). This also applies to individuals undergoing female to male reassignment, who should be regarded as boys and men (male).

Sex reassignment after puberty: Individuals undergoing sex reassignment from male to female after puberty (and vice versa) are eligible for participation in female or male competitions, respectively, under the following conditions:

- Surgical anatomical changes have been completed, including external genitalia changes and gonadectomy

- Legal recognition of their reassigned sex has been conferred by the appropriate official

authorities

- Hormonal therapy appropriate for the assigned sex has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time to minimize gender-related advantages in sports competition

- Eligibility should begin no sooner than two years after gonadectomy

- It is understood that a confidential case by case evaluation will occur. In the event that the gender of a competing athlete is questioned, the medical delegate (or equivalent) of the relevant sporting body shall have the authority to take all appropriate measures for the determination of the gender of the competitor.

This policy is based on the medical opinion that, under these conditions, any residual competitive advantage for an athlete who transitions from male to female will be neutralized and she can compete fairly with athletes who are female at birth. Many women athletes and coaches are skeptical of this opinion and believe that transitioned women continue to have a competitive advantage over other women. This assumption ignores the already existing wide range of size, height, skill, strength, ability, speed and other components of athletic ability among females at birth.

The IOC policy, although it expressly includes FTM people, does not address issues that FTMs would encounter, specifically steroid test problems. It is our position that FTM athletes should be allowed to compete as men if their testosterone levels are in the normal range for athletes who are male at birth.

Recommendations for Interactions: Pronouns, Name Changes and Name Calling

Many transgender people adopt new names as one aspect of expressing their gender identity. Not all transgender people choose to change their names, but when they do, it is important to respect these requests. For coaches and teammates who know an athlete while they are in the midst of this change, it can be a challenge to get used to using a new name or different pronouns. Slipping up and using the "old" name is probably inevitable as everyone adjusts to these changes.

Most transgender people also want to be referred to with the pronoun that best corresponds to their gender identity. Some transgender people prefer neutral pronouns such as "hir" (for her or his) or "ze" (for he or she). Regardless of whether an athlete is on a men's or women's team, it is important to abide by a transgender athlete's preferences because names and pronouns are an essential part of validating and respecting a transgender athlete's gender identity and expression.

Gender non-conforming people who do not identity as transgender are often teased or harassed about their non-conformity. For example, a male athlete named Patrick who enjoys dancing might be called "Patricia" as a means to disparage his masculinity. This kind of teasing or harassment makes athletes feel that they must conform to gender expectations or

risk the friendship of their peers.

An unfortunate practice on some boy's and men's athletic teams is deriding an athlete's performance by calling him a "girl" or referring to him with a girl's name. The message is that not only is he not performing up to the standards expected of him as a male athlete, but also that the athletic performances of girls and women are inferior. This practice should never be tolerated because it creates an unsafe environment for all athletes and is a discriminatory strategy for motivating better athletic performance.

Similarly, when strong athletic girls or women are called "masculine," referred to by men's names, or compared to boys and men, the message is that high performing female athletes are exhibiting athletic skills that only men have. Sometimes male and female athletes or coaches taunt opponents by using inappropriate pronouns or names as a way to distract them or taunt them during competition. This practice is also unacceptable and creates a hostile and unsafe climate for all athletes, especially those whose gender identity or expression is non-conforming.

A related problem occurs when a male athlete loses a sport contest with a female athlete. When male athletes are teased or ridiculed because they "lost to a girl" or the winning girl is teased because of her victory, the message sent is that female athletes are inferior and that all athletes must conform to stereotypical gender roles and athletic performance expectations or have their gender identity (or sexuality) questioned.

Recommendations for Policy Governing the Participation of Transgender Athletes

As noted earlier, some sport governing bodies are beginning to address the need to develop policy about the participation of transgender and transsexual athletes. These efforts can be divided into several categories:

- Non-discrimination policy
- Transgender participation policy
- Policies addressing access to locker rooms and bathrooms
- Policies addressing team hotel accommodations
- Dress code policies.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Sport organizations should include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression in their existing non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. The National Center for Lesbian Rights defines harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity as follows:

- **Sexual Orientation Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's real or perceived sexual orientation, such as negative name calling and

imitating mannerisms.

- **Gender Identity Harassment:** Harassment on the basis of gender identity is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's real or perceived gender identity, such as negative name calling and imitating mannerisms.

Transgender Athlete Participation Policies. Schools and sport governing organizations will need to develop policy addressing the participation of athletes who have completed or are in the process of transitioning to a new gender through surgery and/or hormone treatments. The IOC policy described earlier, with all of its limitations, is a first attempt to develop a medically-based policy that identifies the conditions under which transgender athletes can participate in their new gender while ensuring that competitive fairness is maintained for all competitors. However, eligibility limits on high school and college athletes complicate the utility of policies like the IOC policy for school-based sports. Policies that are more refined and inclusive for school-age athletes transitioning during their competitive eligibility need to be developed.

Athletes whose gender identity or expression do not match their birth sex must be allowed to participate on teams on the basis of their birth sex as long as they are not taking hormones or undergoing sex assignment surgery. If these athletes choose to compete in their preferred gender though, fair competition issues may arise and must be addressed. For example, an athlete whose birth sex is male, but who identifies as a woman and is not taking hormones or planning to undergo sex reassignment surgery, may have an unfair competitive advantage if competing against women who were female at birth. This may not be the case for athletes transitioning from female to male. Currently, there is no policy that would enable these athletes to compete in their preferred gender.

Policies Addressing Access to Locker Rooms and Bathrooms. Locker rooms and toilet facilities are, by tradition, sex-segregated and pose challenges to administrators who are working to accommodate transgender athletes and coaches. The issue of where to change clothes, shower, and use the toilet when locker rooms are designed for men only or for women only requires some creative thinking to ensure that every athlete has access to these facilities in a safe, comfortable and convenient environment.

Many schools make accommodations for transgender students by designating selected single toilet facilities in the school "gender neutral." When gender neutral toilets are not available, it is generally accepted that students should be allowed access to the bathroom that corresponds to the gender with which they identify: Transgender/transitioned women should have access to the women's bathroom and transgender/transitioned men should have access to the men's bathroom.

Some schools may have a unisex toilet/changing room in the locker room area for the purpose of wheelchair accessibility. This room can also serve transgender students needs. Other schools create private changing and showering areas inside the men's and women's locker room to which everyone has access. Providing such private areas can benefit everyone not only transgender athletes since other athletes, for reasons of personal modesty or

religious beliefs, might also prefer private changing and showering areas. In locker rooms that have private changing and showering areas, transgender students should be allowed to access the locker room that corresponds to the gender with which they identify. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to allow the transgender athlete to use the locker room at a different time then other athletes in order to provide the transgender athlete with sufficient privacy.

Policies Addressing Team Hotel Accommodations. When teams travel and overnight accommodations are made, coaches have a variety of ways they determine which teammates will share a room or if any team members will stay in a single room. Some coaches assign roommates, while other coaches leave these decisions up to team members. Coaches sometimes make these decisions based on sport strategies. For example, some softball or baseball coaches assign starting pitchers to a single room or place athletes who have a special rapport together to maximize the possibility that they will relax and get a good night's sleep. Other coaches rotate room assignments so that everyone shares a room with everyone else during a season. However these decisions are made, everyone's comfort level and privacy must be considered. If the best way to address comfort and privacy issues is to make single room accommodations for transgender athletes, coaches should consider this option.

Dress Code Policies. Some coaches institute dress codes for their teams when they travel or during the school day before home games. Whether or not there is a transgender athlete on the team, gender neutral dress codes can set a standard for the team and express team unity and identity without requiring athletes to wear gendered clothing. For example, rather than requiring a women's team to wear skirts and heels, the dress code could include dressy pants and shirt with low-heeled shoes that are dressier than casual styles typically worn to school.

Resources

An increasing number of organizations are available that can provide information about transgender issues. The following list includes resources that can be useful to athletic directors, coaches, athletes and parents:

Gay, Straight Alliance Network
Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network
GenderPAC
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Transgender Advocacy Coalition
PFLAG
Transgender Law Center
Transgender Law and Policy Center
Mianne Bagger. Myths Conceptions and Facts.

NCAA News – April 2006
Transgendered athletes create a 'new frontier' of issues

The athletics community has been wading through issues and questions related to sexual orientation for many years. But these days, with increasing frequency, administrators are grappling with what Mount Holyoke College Director of Athletics Lori Priest calls the next frontier: transgender and transsexual student-athletes.

The topic received growing attention recently after a Bates College track and field student-athlete "came out" as transgender to the campus community and to fellow New England Small College Athletic Conference schools. Last year, the 11-time all-American thrower, who was born female, announced a preference to be referred to as male. The senior changed his name to Keelin Godsey (from Kelly) and requested that the male pronoun be used in casual conversation, as well in school press releases and publications, by professors, coaches and teammates.
Godsey's announcement and the subsequent attention it drew caught some people by surprise, but the consensus is that there is more than a slim chance that at some point in the future an athletics administrator may have to navigate a situation with a transgender or transsexual student-athlete.

Transgender Law Center Director Chris Daley said it is difficult to tell just how widespread an issue it will become, but he noted that more college-age students are coming out and expecting to have their gender identity respected. Daley also said that an increasing number of students are transitioning from one gender to the other in high school with an eye toward being able to compete at the intercollegiate level.

In addition, states are beginning to include gender identity and gender expression in state nondiscrimination laws, and colleges and universities are starting to do the same with their own nondiscrimination guidelines, which means athletics departments will be responsible for complying with those laws and policies.

"Athletics directors who don't take action to prepare for the possibility of transgender or transsexual student-athletes wanting to compete are going to put themselves in crisis mode," said Pat Griffin, director of the Women's Sports Foundation's "It Takes A Team" educational campaign for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual issues in sport. "The smart ones are going to start investigating what they need to do and what the implications are, so when it does happen, they will be in a position to make good policy."

One of the first steps athletics administrators can take is to become educated about transgender and transsexual people and their experiences. Griffin said there's a great deal of misinformation floating around, especially about what the terms "transgender" and

"transsexual" actually mean.

According to an article Griffin penned for the "It Takes a Team" Web site, "transgender" is an umbrella term that describes individuals whose gender identity or expression does not conform to prevailing social expectations or whose gender identity or expression does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. "Transsexual" refers to someone who has transitioned from one gender to another and may include people who identify as neither man nor woman. Like in Godsey's case, transition may involve a change in gender expression, name and pronoun preference. Transition frequently includes hormone therapy, counseling and surgery, which Godsey has yet to do.

"People mistakenly believe that being transgender is the same thing as being gay," said Griffin. "When we're talking about transgender student-athletes, we are not talking about sexual orientation. We're talking about how they identify themselves in terms of gender."
Griffin cited two major overarching issues related to athletics: balancing concern for creating a nondiscriminatory policy that addresses the needs of transgender student-athletes who want to compete, and addressing competitive-equity issues within the team and the sport.

As of 2003, no major sports organization had a policy pertaining to the participation of transgender people in athletics competition. Since then, though, several have established guidelines, including the International Olympic Committee, the United States Golf Association and USA Track and Field.

The NCAA allows transgender student-athletes to compete but does not keep statistics on the number who are involved in NCAA competition. The Association follows the gender classification of student-athletes' state identification documents such as driver's licenses and voter registration, as well as their conference and institution designation. In addition, per NCAA regulations, transgender student-athletes must compete in the gender classification reflected on state identification documents. For example, Godsey competed in this year's Division III Women's Indoor Track and Field Championships.

As for concerns about competitive equity, particularly in the case of males transitioning to females, the IOC policy requires athletes to wait two years, which according to some medical experts is enough time to minimize the effects of testosterone and to establish the normal range found in biological females.

The relatively small window for NCAA eligibility complicates the matter. Although the Association does not specifically identify a waiting period, NCAA rules require a team to be classified as a mixed team if a member of the opposite gender is permitted by an institution to compete on a gender-specific team. The team would retain that classification for the remainder of the academic year, rendering it ineligible for women's championships.

Subject to institutional and conference participation guidelines, under the Association's present rules, a male student-athlete who competes on the institution's baseball team during one sport season and decides to transition during the offseason would be eligible to compete on the softball team the following season as long as that student-athlete is legally classified as female on appropriate state identification documents as required by state law. In addition, the team would remain eligible for the NCAA women's championship.

Well-prepared athletics administrators also should ensure that appropriate locker room accommodations are made available for transgender and transsexual student-athletes. Priest said concerns about such space quickly came to the forefront on the Mount Holyoke campus.

"Being that we are a women's college, we've had transgender students request use of the men's locker room. It has caused issues on all sides — obviously with the male staff and faculty and the students themselves," she said.

To resolve the issue, the school is planning to construct a smaller locker room area that will be designated as gender neutral and made available to transgender people. The area also will be accessible to others such as parents who need to assist their children who are of the opposite gender.
The Transgender Law Center's Daley said he has not seen a case in which liability has been found for providing individuals with full access based on their gender identity.

"There's a concern about making sure that a transsexual athlete who has equivalent access to a locker room could create some kind of privacy concern for nontransgender or nontranssexual athletes. What's important is that we've found those claims generally don't hold up," said Daley. "We've seen cases where people have tried to say 'I'm a nontransgender woman and I don't want a transgender woman in the same restroom.' Those cases are generally tossed pretty quickly."

Other steps Mount Holyoke has taken include gathering athletics administrators and personnel from other campuses to talk about various approaches. The school also conducts one-on-one conversations with transgender students when they request different facilities as a way of receiving input and exchanging ideas and information with them. It is a move that has been positively received, according to Priest, who said the key is more education and recognizing the breadth of the human experience.

"We have put people in boxes for years and years, and what we're finding is that with a more open and inclusive society, not everybody fits in those boxes and now we don't know what to do with them," she said. "We've been created in so many different ways and it's not good or bad. We're just more diverse than we originally thought."