

Characteristics of NCAA Graduate Student Research Grant Proposals (2006-2017)

In October 2017, the NCAA Research Committee [announced](#) the recipients of financial awards as part of the 2017 NCAA Graduate Student Research Grant Program. Currently in its 12th year, the goals of this grant program are (1) to stimulate research on college athletics; (2) to foster contributions to the empirical research on college athletics; (3) to provide financial support to graduate students interested in engaging in high-quality research related to college athletics; and (4) to assist NCAA institutions and the general public in gaining access to new, outstanding research in this field.

Study abstracts of previously funded projects can be found on the NCAA Research [website](#). As part of a review of submission and funding trends, every proposal from the past 12 years was coded by demographics of the student researchers and study participants, NCAA division of study site, study topic and research methodology.

Graduate Researcher Demographics

The gender of each graduate student submitting a proposal was coded based on the gendered pronouns used to discuss the work of each applicant in the proposals' accompanying letters of support. The NCAA division of the school at which each graduate student was enrolled also was coded. Women were in the majority of those submitting proposals and had a higher funding rate than male applicants.

Gender of Student Researcher	Submitted	Funded (percent submitted that were funded)
Female	216	34 (16%)
Male	149	12 (8%)
Graduate Institution of Student Researcher*		
Division I	331	42 (13%)
Division II	14	1 (7%)
Division III	15	2 (13%)
Non-NCAA	5	1 (20%)*
*Note: Attending an NCAA-member graduate institution is now a criterion for receiving an award.		

NCAA Division for Data Collection	Submitted	Funded (percent submitted that were funded)
Division I	237	29 (12%)
Division II	13	1 (8%)
Division III	17	2 (12%)
Multi-divisional	90	14 (16%)
Non-NCAA	6	0 (0%)
Not specified	2	0 (0%)

Research Sites

The Research Committee has demonstrated a commitment to expand athletics research on topics outside of Division I. While almost all proposals have come from those enrolled at Division I graduate institutions, over a quarter of applicants proposed to analyze data from more than one NCAA division.

Areas of Research

The Graduate Student Research Grant Program invites proposals on a wide range of topics in intercollegiate athletics including student-athlete well-being, athletics policy, the role of athletics administrators, coach-athlete interactions, economics and the history of sport. While proposals for each of these topics have been submitted, the area of greatest interest among graduate scholars has been research on the general student-athlete population - be it academic experiences, career planning, identity development or the retrospective experiences of former student-athletes. Of the 365 proposals submitted since 2006, more than half have proposed to examine the general student-athlete experience.

NCAA Graduate Research Grant Submissions by Topic		
Broad Topic	Submitted	Funded (percent submitted that were funded)
Student-Athlete (SA) Experience	207	19 (9%)
African American SA Experience	28	6 (21%)
Experience of Under-represented SA Populations, non-African American	30	5 (17%)
Athletic Administration Role (ADs, SWA, Compliance, etc.)	22	5 (23%)
Coach Role and Influence	26	4 (15%)
Faculty Role in Intercollegiate Athletics	1	1 (100%)
Intercollegiate Athletics Policy	21	2 (10%)
Economics/Finance of College Sports	14	2 (14%)
Other (Media, Marketing, History)	16	2 (13%)
Total	N=365	46 (13%)

Research Participants

Of those proposals intending to use human subjects for their research, we examined how many included samples that were majority female or participants of color. These studies were funded at a higher rate than for the grant program as a whole (14%).

Participant Demographics	Submitted	Funded (percent submitted that were funded)
≥50% Female	43	8 (19%)
≥50% People of Color	39	8 (21%)

Methodologies Used in Proposed Research

The Research Committee has reviewed proposals employing a range of methodologies. While close to half of proposals proposed quantitative methods, nearly a third have been qualitative in design. Additionally, qualitative proposals have been more successfully funded (17%) than quantitative (12%).

