



SENIOR WOMAN ADMINISTRATOR 101

The SWA Designation

What is the SWA?

The senior woman administrator (SWA) is the highest-ranking female involved in the management of an institution's intercollegiate athletics program. The intent of the SWA designation is to promote meaningful representation of women in the leadership and management of college sports.

✓ YES

- Senior **Woman** Administrator
- Highest-ranking woman*
- Provides leadership to men's and women's sports and issues
- Designation — A leadership role

✗ NO

- Senior **Women's** Administrator
- Longest-serving or oldest woman**
- Leads only women's sports and gender equity
- Position — A job with specific responsibilities

This resource was written about institutional SWAs. Some information may be applicable to conference SWAs.

* A school with a female director of athletics may designate a different woman as SWA.

** The longest-serving or oldest woman may be designated the SWA if she is the highest-ranking woman, but not solely because of her length of service.

Why is the SWA Designation Important?

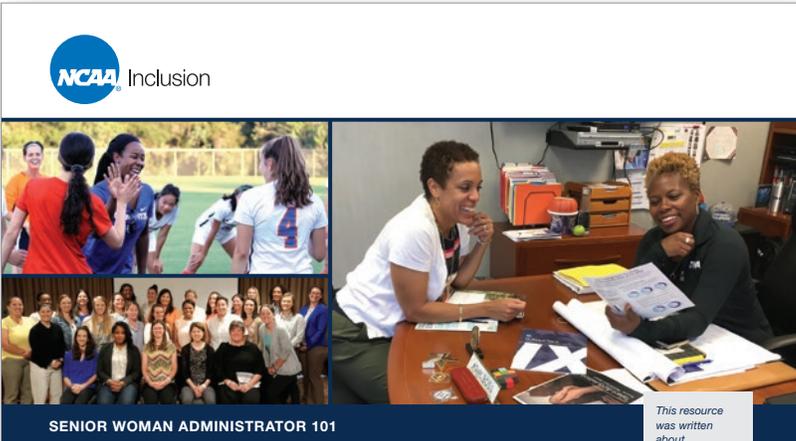
Including the unique perspectives of women in senior management has many benefits:

- Enhanced decision-making across the athletics program.
- Increased visibility of female role models in athletics leadership.
- Diverse point of contact for student-athletes and staff to bring concerns.
- Affirmation for involvement and contribution of women in intercollegiate athletics.
- Training opportunities for women to advance to more senior roles, ultimately creating leadership demographics more consistent with the student-athlete population.

Are You Maximizing the SWA's Impact?

Open communication is critical to clarify expectations and optimize the SWA's role. Athletics directors, SWAs, and conference office personnel should discuss maximizing the SWA's impact with each other, and include presidents/chancellors or athletics direct reports as appropriate.

A document that will help you start the conversation and define success in your efforts — “Are You Maximizing the SWA's Impact?” — can be [found here](#).



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1 Capitalize on Diverse Leadership Perspectives

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- What are the most significant priorities for athletics and how is the SWA engaged in leading related initiatives?
- How are the SWA's strengths and interests leveraged to provide leadership in the department?
- How is the SWA engaged in senior-level discussions and decision-making?
- How is the SWA engaged in leadership opportunities outside the athletics department (e.g., across campus, external community)?

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- The AD and SWA collaborate to define the SWA's leadership role and to manage critical departmental issues impacting men and women.
- The SWA makes meaningful decisions on the senior management team (e.g., budget oversight, sport supervision of men's and women's sports, external relations, key personnel decisions and strategic planning).
- The SWA has time and access to information and resources to fulfill the leadership role accompanying the designation.
- The SWA's job title reflects her administrative and leadership responsibilities.
- The SWA's leadership impact and visibility extend beyond the athletics department.

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