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The Changing Campus Portrayal of
Female Athletes:
A Comparative Study of Trinity College and Smith College
From 1970 to 2000

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Introduction

1970 to 2000 marked a period filled with pivotal turning points in female empowerment. Many of these turning points dealt with females and their involvement in athletics. One major law that was placed into affect that changed female athletics was the Title IX Act of 1972. "Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is the landmark legislation that bans sex discrimination in schools, whether it be in academics or athletics. Title IX states: "No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid.""

(http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/ge/Title_IX.html)

This act enforced equity on the institutes and the students of colleges and universities across the United States. The schools were forced to comply with the law; however the students were not forced to accept females as athletes. During the 70's and into the 80's the women's movement was in high gear. Many women in society were determined to gain equal opportunities and change the popular concept of what a "real lady" should look like and what activities they should participate in.

This can be exemplified through a few historical examples. In 1973 Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in a "Battle of the Sexes" match. In 1974 the United States Merchant Marine Academy became the first American Service academy to enroll woman. By 1979 for the first time, more women then men are enrolled in college in the U.S. The 1988 Olympics was graced with the speedy Florence Griffith Joyner, it was here where she set a world record in the 2000-meter sprint. 1997 marked the beginning of the first

ever women's professional basketball league. And in 1998 Women's ice hockey made its first appearance at a Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan as a full medal sport.

These changes and pivotal events were also taking place at universities and colleges across the U.S. My research attempts to investigate these changes that have occurred in female athletics through exploring campus portrayals of such athletes. My research defines portrayal as how much focus was placed on female athletes and what kind of image school publications such as yearbooks and campus newspapers were giving to its student body.

In the book Game of Life the concept of the changing portrayal is exemplified. "Even in the 1970's, when newly created women's teams were enduring second-class facilities and support, the media paid little attention. Merily Dean Baker (the first director of women's athletics at Princeton and later the athletic director at Michigan State) recalls that in the 1970's she would write and hand-deliver stories of the women's exploits to the Daily Princetonian, only to have the paper refuse to print them." (p.110)

The book continues to discuss that female athletics have changed and is still changing today. The authors provide a thought provoking statement that leads the author to believe that female athletics have even more room for improvement. "Fans may or may not someday flock to a women's field hockey games (though in many parts of the country they are already flocking to women's basketball games), but who is to say that, with a hundred years of history and high levels of institutional support behind them, women's sports might not capture the collective imagination of alumni/ ae the way that football games did in the past and, in some cases, still do today? (p.110)

Research Question

Since 1970 there has been a dramatic change in female athletics. Not only has the participation rate rose, but the portrayal and physical appearance of the athletes has changed also. How has Campus portrayals of female athletes changed from 1970 to 2000 at Smith College and Trinity College? Does the student body affect the change?

Background Information

The two institutes that were chose for this research project are similar in location and size; however there is one distinct feature that separates them. Trinity College is a small liberal arts college located in Hartford, Connecticut which was founded in 1823. The school was originally all male until in 1969 the school decided to go coed. Today the undergraduate student body of Trinity College consists of 2,098 students, 51% female, and 49% male. Trinity places a high emphasis not only education learned in the classroom, but also the lessons learned on a playing field. Trinity College offers fourteen male varsity sports, thirteen female sports, and a variety of club sports are offered including: flag football, softball, soccer, basketball, and tennis. All which are available to both men and women.

As stated in the school's online available athletic page the mission statement states: "Trinity College embraces intercollegiate athletics as an educational experience that is an integral component of the academic mission of the College." The statement provides evidence that the College as an institute and the student body is dedicated to it athletic program. In the concern of equity the school is quoted on the online resource: "The Physical Education/Athletic Department is committed to the following: A vigorous,

equitable intercollegiate men's and women's sport's program that strives for achievement and excellence with an emphasis on the health and personal development of the student-athlete.

Smith College is also small liberal arts located in Northampton, Massachusetts and it was founded in 1875. Smith College is an all women's college, and today it has 2,500 undergraduates. As stated in their online campus resource the college's mission states: "Smith College seeks to provide the finest liberal arts education for women of diverse backgrounds, ages and outlooks who have the ability and promise to meet the demands of an academically rigorous curriculum."

Smith College similar to Trinity College not only stresses academics the institute also offers fourteen intercollegiate sports, twelve club sports, intramural activities and individual instruction in more than twenty activities. In the college's online athletic page it also states that "Smith's broad-based athletic program—one of the largest for women in the country. It's an unparalleled opportunity to test your athletic gifts, to challenge your limits in competition and to make the most of your athletic ambitions."

Thesis

The campus portrayal of female athletes has changed drastically which can be proved through yearbook photographs and newspaper articles. Similar changes in both Trinity College and Smith College took place within the time frame of 1970 to 2000; coeducation was not an effect on the change. The amount of photographs, space allotted for women's sports teams, descriptive adjectives used, and the location of certain articles sport related clearly depicts that the portrayal of athletes through these venues exemplifies a change that the student body would have exposed to.

Significance

Women's roles have been changing drastically throughout history. One of these roles includes their participation in athletics and their portrayal as athletes. The Title IX Act that guaranteed equity in female athletics largely affected the involvement of females in athletics. It gave them opportunities that some women had never had before. Through this historical investigation one will be able to see the change that has occurred in female athletics and the progress it has made.

This research aims to prove that there have been drastic changes in the portrayal of female athletics. In the book American Sports it states: "Both men and women tended to identify sports with men and manliness rather than as gender neutral." (pg 213)

Through this investigation one will be able to clearly see that even as recent as 1970 female athletes were not portrayed how they are now. It is important to understand this change and be able to hopefully reconstruct societies concept of what a female athlete should look like and how she should be portrayed.

Methodology

The research involved collecting primary research from Trinity College archives and Smith College archives. Archival research at Trinity College's Watkinson's Library and at Smith College's archives with assistance from Nanci Young. Through careful analysis of what materials would be useful for my research I chose to focus on yearbooks, school newspaper articles, and student handbooks that have been published.

The yearbooks that were selected to look at are from 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. These years were chosen to represent a longitudinal study of change in the representation of female athletes in years given.

There are several main areas in which I focused on to depict the change that was being researched. One main area is to see how much literal space and attention is given to females and athletics. This includes the amount of photos, the size, and the athletics portrayed within the photos. The page allotment also was focused on because it provided a concrete example of how more attention was being given to female athletics.

The team's photographs, which I chose to look at, were field hockey, basketball, and soccer. These particular sports were chosen for two main reasons: they were representative of two sets of seasons, both fall and winter, both schools for comparative purposes both offered these sports in the years being studied. Within the team photographs again I looked at the amount of space on the pages and or "attention" given to the teams. The team pictures were also used to look at the team's uniforms; shorts vs. skirts, long sleeves vs. short or no sleeves.

Within the teams particular pages the individual player's pictures that were often present were analyzed. Within these photographs there were certain criteria that I paid close attention to. For instance the types of photos; were they action displaying movement, certain facial expressions, or non action, no movement, standing, sitting. The physical appearance of the athletes was another point of analysis, skinnier vs. more muscular looking, and the appearance of the athlete's thighs or arms.

The next point of analysis was the school's newspapers. I have chosen to look at two different seasons, one paper from each fall and winter of the various years 1970,

1980, 1990, and 2000. At random early October and early December issues were chosen, because they were the best representative of the sports being investigated which occur during either the fall or winter season. In these articles I used similar investigative techniques as the yearbooks in that I looked at space allotted for each woman's team, descriptive adjectives used, pictures if any and what kind of pictures they were (action vs. non action, full body vs. head shots), and the amount present. Another issue which was drawn to my attention was what particular sports were mentioned, compared to what sports were available.

The final source for analysis was intended to look at student handbooks from the years 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. In the handbooks I had hoped to examine the mission statements. The purpose of this would be to see if the school equally supported at Trinity College female and male involvement, and at both institutions Smith College and Trinity College to see if the schools supported athletics as part student body experience. At both schools the student handbooks did not provide me with the information that I was seeking. Therefore I used the most recent statements, both the school statement and the athletic mission statements. Even though it is only representative of one year, it mentions in both of them the institute's individual dedication to their athletics programs.

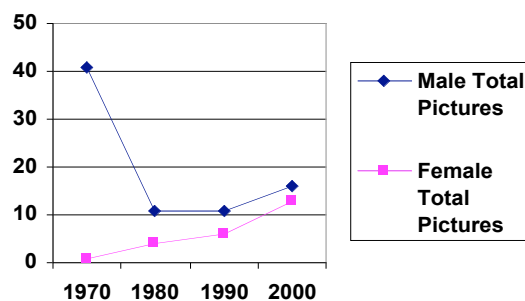
In culmination with the data that was collected, general background information was collected about each institution. The information was regarding the location, founding year, number of students enrolled, year of coeducation in Trinity College's case, and other useful material that aided in this process.

Interpretation and Analysis Primary Source Evidence

There are a three different ways in which I decided to analyze and interpret the data that was collected. The data will was compared in three different ways, Trinity College and Smith College, Trinity College throughout the years of 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000, and also Smith College from 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. These three ways has provided an appropriate manner in which the data can be analyzed.

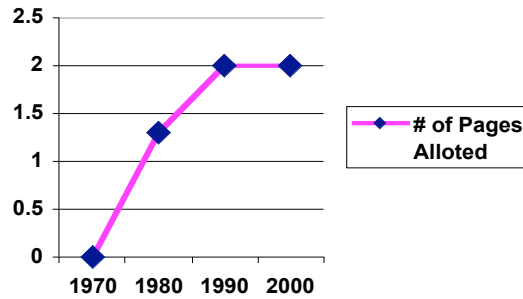
Trinity College

At Trinity College the first point of analysis was the schools yearbooks. The Trinity College Ivy is published by yearly, and is available to the whole student body. First I looked at the number of general photographs not including team photographs, or team pages. This was to see the representation generally throughout the book, without it having it to do with the individual team pages. My findings were: in 1970 there were a total of 41 male photographs and 1 female photograph, in 1980 11 male photographs and 4 female photographs, in 1990 11 male photographs and 6 female photographs, and in 2000 there were 16 male photographs and 13 female photographs.



Page allotment was another point of analysis. In each yearbook for the designated year, I counted how many pages were used for each field hockey, women's basketball, and women's soccer. The results were as follows: in 1970 an average of 0 pages, in 1980

an average of 1.3 pages, in 1990 an average of 2 pages, and in 2000 an average of 2 pages. The upward trend shows that Trinity College began to emphasize the importance of female athletics, by giving athletics more coverage in the yearbooks.



In the 1970 yearbook there were no team photographs male or female throughout the whole book. There was a list of box scores of all the men's sports; however there was no mention of female organized sports. The one picture that was present involving a female and athletics was a cheerleading photograph. This yearbook appeared not to contain much emphasis on athletics.

The 1980 Ivy marked a large improvement in the representation of female athletics. For field hockey there were two pages allotted containing, two team photographs and two action photographs of players. The action photographs were full body shots, in action, meaning the athletes were involved in a contest. One team photograph was of the twenty-nine players and two female coaches. The players were wearing dark long sleeved jerseys with plaid knee length kilts. The other team photograph was a team picture of the 1970 team, appearing to be showing a comparison. This picture contained the nineteen players and one female coach. The players' uniforms consisted of long sleeved jerseys and past knee length shorts.

Women's soccer was represented with one page containing a total of three pictures. These pictures were all full body action pictures of the players mid game. They were wearing shorts mid way down thigh, and a short sleeved jersey. Women's basketball had again one page containing two pictures. These pictures were full body action shots of players mid game. They were wearing collared short sleeved jerseys with mid thigh shorts and high tube socks.

In the 1990 there was a drastic change in the representation of female athletics, there was an average of two pages allotted for each team, and on there were more photographs and team write ups. Women's soccer had two pages containing one team photograph, three action game pictures, and one still photograph of two players talking. The pictures depicted the athletes as looking more muscular, both the players arms and legs. The team photograph was of the twenty-nine players and one male coach. The players were wearing long sleeve jerseys with shorts. Located below the pictures was a written comment about the team's season; "In the finals the Bants took revenge against Bowdoin in a 1-0 victory to clinch the championship".

The field hockey team also had two pages which contained one team photograph, and four action full body pictures. The team picture consisted of twenty seven players with two female coaches; they were wearing short sleeved jerseys and knee length kilts. The action pictures depicted an athlete looking stronger and more muscular.

Women's basketball also had a similar layout to field hockey's page. Their two pages consisted of one team photograph and four action pictures. There were thirteen players with one female coach. Their uniforms consisted of short sleeve jerseys with

shorts a little above mid thigh. One of the action photographs was of a player mid dribble, looking determined, sweaty and aggressively fighting off the opposing team's defender.

By 2000 the Trinity College Ivy has appeared to make an extra effort to provide an adequate amount of attention to female athletics and their teams. The field hockey two page spread consisted of one team photograph, four action pictures, and one posed picture. The team had twenty players and three female coaches. Their uniforms were either, no sleeved or short-sleeved jerseys, and short solid blue kilts. The action pictures portrayed a muscular athlete mid game, with strong, intense looking facial expressions.

Women's soccer similar to field had a two page spread containing one team photo, three action shots, and one posed "Captains" picture. The team consisted of twenty players, one male coach, and one female coach. The uniforms were short sleeved jerseys with mid thigh shorts. Women's basketball had one team photograph and one action shot. There were fourteen players and four female coaches. The uniforms were short sleeved jerseys and longer shorts just above the knee. Both soccer and basketball's action pictures depicted an athlete who was stronger, more physical, and more what an athlete is stereotypically suppose to look like.

Attached are three different depictions of female athletes taken from the Trinity College Ivy yearbook. The first is a comparison of two field hockey players from 1970 and 1979. There is a clear difference between these two pictures, the one on the left is not in action, looking down, and less muscular, and the one on the right is in action and more muscular and athletic looking. The next set of photographs depicts a similar difference between a 1975 player and two 2000 players. Looking at facial expression, the motion, and physical appearance one can see the drastic change in the two sets of

athletes. The third insert shows a typical dedicated to each team in a 2000 yearbook. This shows the amount of space and detail in each individual teams pages.

The other source of analysis of female athletics was looking at the schools newspaper. The Tripod is Trinity College's newspaper, which gets published biweekly. It reports on campus and national issues. I chose to focus on two issues per year, one being in the fall and one in the winter. Early October and December issues were chosen to represent the three sports that were being focused on. With the newspaper I focused on the page allotment for the female athletics, amount of pictures, the type of pictures, overall judging the importance of athletics in the newspaper. The importance of the newspaper to the study is that this is a publication that is seen by the whole student body. Students that did not participate in athletics were forming opinions based off the reporting that was done.

The 1970 October 6th issue of the Tripod had two pages assigned to athletics. On the back page the main sports page there were two articles and two pictures on male sports. The second to last page which was also dedicated to sports reports had two articles devoted to male sports teams. There was a small article in the middle bottom of the page titled "Girls Hockey Formed". The article begins with:

"The team is open to anyone who wants to play field hockey on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The other requirement is a good imagination because the team has been playing on an unmarked and unmowed field. Goal posts are expected to arrive this week, but a heard of cows may be the only solution to the tall grass."

The article continues with a sarcastic tone as it ends with, "The women of the field hockey world have already demonstrated fancy stick work and a great deal of enthusiasm. They are prepared to entertain you".

The December 4th 1970 issue showed similar results. Both the sports pages were dedicated to male sports. There was no mention of female sports. Within the sports section there was a section advertising trashcans, but no female athletics.

In the October 7th 1980 there is a visible improvement in the coverage of female athletics however there still did not seem to be equal coverage. Field Hockey was first mentioned on the front page under the parent's weekend 1980 schedule. There were three pages dedicated to sports. The back page, page 16, includes the head title of "Field Hockey Downs Bridgeport: Climbs to 5-0 Lady Jeffs Also Succumb to unbeaten, Untied Bantam Eleven", and a five small column was dedicated to recapping the game. Three all male pictures were also located on the back page. Page 15 was contained two all male articles, and a list of all upcoming events which did include women's athletics. Pg. 14 consisted of one male water polo article and three women's soccer photographs and an article to go with the pictures. The article was titled "Women's Soccer Bow's to Wesleyan Booters".

The December 9th issue of 1980 did not contain any articles about female athletics. There were four pages dedicated to men's basketball, men's ice hockey, men's squash, men's swimming and the fencing club. There were eleven pictures throughout the sports section and zero of which were female athletes.

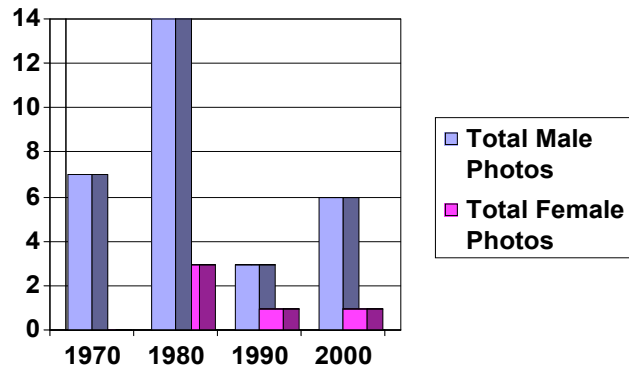
In the October 9th 1990 issues there were four pages dedicated to athletics. The back page (pg. 20) contained three articles, football, field hockey, and women's tennis, and one football picture. The field hockey article titled "Field Hockey Also Denied for First Time in Loss to Williams". Page 19 the "Scoreboard" which is a list of schedules and records. Page 18 included a football article and an intramural article. The first sports

page (pg. 17) contained several female sport related articles. A tennis photograph labeled “Maria Nevares ’91 lunges for a backhand”, a volleyball article titled “Spikers Take Tourney”, and a men’s and women’s cross country article titled “The women’s race was dominated by Trinity”.

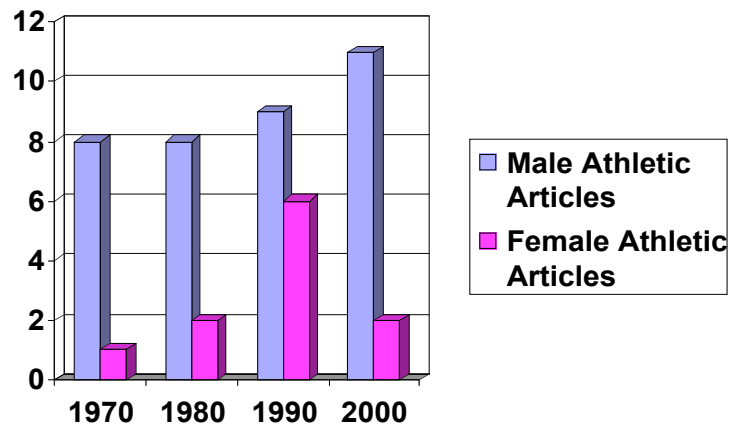
The December 4th 1990 issue of The Tripod again contained very few articles or photographs of females. The main sports page (pg 16) contained three articles all male related. Pg. 15 contained the “Scoreboard” with women’s basketball and men’s basketball. And pg. 14 had two articles one honoring Trinity athletes all male, and a men’s basketball article.

October 3rd 2000 The Tripod contained three pages dedicated to reporting on athletics. The back page (pg. 20) had two articles and two pictures. One of them was about field hockey, an article titled “Field Hockey in search of a “W”” and an action photograph labeled “Women’s Field Hockey fighting fiercely”. The last two pages did not contain any mention of female athletics. In the January 23rd 2000 issue there also was a similar trend in that there was no mention of female sports throughout the whole sports section.

Though I did find that through the years there was an upward trend of reporting on female athletics. However still in some of the recent newspapers there was still a lack of representation in certain issues of female sports teams.



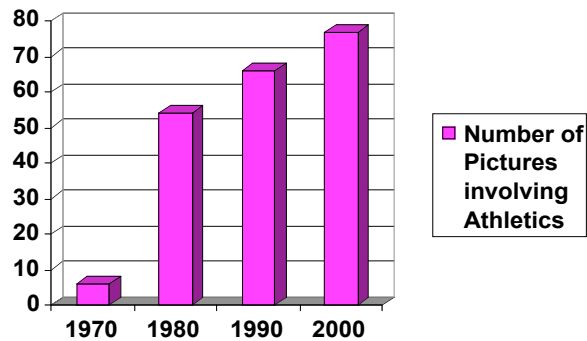
-The above graph shows the total amount of athletic photographs featured in both the fall and winter issues of The Tripod.



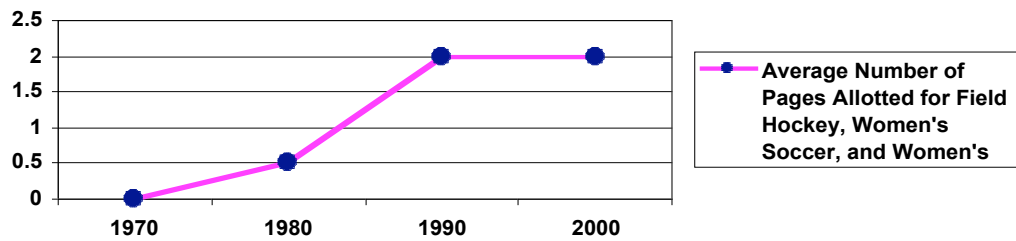
-The above graph shows the total amount of athletic articles featured in The Tripod. The amount of female article did increase however it is still substantially different from the amount of male articles.

Smith College

Similar to Trinity College at Smith College I also investigated the portrayal of female athletes again from 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 through two venues the Smith yearbook, the Madeline and the schools newspaper, The Sophian. The Madeline is also published be yearly and distributed to the student body. The first focus was generally to see how many photographs were dedicated to athletics. My findings were: in 1970 6 photographs, in 1980 54 photographs, in 1990 66 photographs, and in 2000 77 photographs.



Page allotment like Trinity College was another general point of analysis that I chose to investigate. On an average similar to Trinity College the amount of pages allotted to field hockey, women's soccer and field hockey increased. In 1970 an average of 0 pages, in 1980 an average of .5 pages and in 1990 and 2000 an average of 2 pages was allotted to athletics.



In the Smith College 1970 yearbook there was no sports section, there were however three pages that did involve athletics. These pages had three pictures of faculty involved in the athletic program, and four pictures of horseback riders that were all headshots. There were a total of six pictures of female athletes.

In 1980 there were a total of fifty-four photographs involving athletics and the book now had a section dedicated to sports. Women's Soccer had a half page containing four pictures: one team photograph, the second is of the whole team stretching, the third us if in action players, and the last one is of the coach standing with a soccer ball. Field Hockey also was allotted a half page containing three pictures: first picture is an action shot of a player wearing a kilt and collared jersey her arms and legs appear to slimmer, the second picture is of four players in action during a game, and the last picture is an action shot of one player in uniform. Women's basketball like the previous two sports had a half page spread containing three pictures. These pictures contained: one player in action shooting during a game, second the whole team walking and the third is an action shot of one player jumping. Throughout this yearbook there were no team photographs.

The 1990 yearbook of Smith College appeared to contain a substantially more amount attention given to athletics. There were a total of sixty six pictures that were sports related. The opening page of the sports section contained a large picture of women

rowers during a workout, showing their muscular biceps and an inset picture of a skier in her ski suit. The following page there was a large picture of several Smith athletes and above it, it states: "Smith Pioneers, the beginning of a Tradition" Smith athletes from all different teams unite under one banner of the "Pioneers". This was the year that Smith changed their mascot from a unicorn to the "Pioneers".

All the teams had two pages allotted to them. Women's Basketball section contained four pictures, a schedule and results and a year summary. Three of the pictures were action shots in which the athletes' legs appear more muscular and wider, and a team picture. The summary stated, "Although their close losses at the end of the season were heartbreakers, it rallied the fighting spirit of the team which will inspire the team for future victories."

Field Hockey's two-page section contained four pictures, a schedule and results and season summary. The photographs included three individual players. The pictures are full body action shots, with bigger leg muscles. Included on the page is a team photograph with fourteen players and three female coaches. Below one of the pictures it states: "Lara DeSanti has control over the ball, ready to make a move for the Pioneers".

The soccer team's two pages included four pictures, the schedule and a season summary. Three of the photographs are single player action photos, with fierce facial expressions and their leg muscles are leaner and larger looking. The team photo includes twenty-five players and two male coaches. Below one of the pictures it states: "Leigh Jerner protects the Smith goal against even the fiercest competitors".

In the 2000 Smith's yearbook there were seventy-seven total related athletic photographs. At the start of the athletic pages there is a quote that describes the athletes at Smith's attitudes and dedication towards athletics.

“Athletes at Smith are all about dedication. That's what it takes to push yourself to the limit physically and emotionally for your team while juggling the stress that comes with being a student at Smith. Ridiculously early or late practices, consolidated dining, and weekend games are just some of the things that Smith athletes undergo for their sport, their sport, their team and for themselves.”

Throughout all of the teams pages there were similar differences in the athletes portrayed. The athletes featured in the action photographs on the field hockey, soccer, and basketball pages all seemed to have developed muscularly. Most of the photographs were of athletes involved in competitions. Through Smith's yearbooks' it is clear that through space allotment and the athlete's physical appearance that students at Smith are viewing a changing portrayal of female athletes.

Similar to Trinity College, Smith College also has a newspaper, The Sophian, which is printed biweekly. I researched again two issues from the fall and winter, one from October and one from December. In the 1970 issues both the October and December issues had no mention of athletics. The 1980 issues started to dedicate the back page to athletics. The October 6th issue had a total of four articles with two pictures featuring horseback riders. This page was the only place where athletics was mentioned. The December 4th issue contained three articles, which were interrupted by a large advertisement for a local restaurant. One of titles of these articles was: “Smith's Wild Bunch strokes to it 2nd Straight Victory”.

In the October 8th 1990 issue the sports section was in the middle of the newspaper. It only had one article written about the crew team, with no pictures. The

December 3rd 1990 contained four articles dispersed within the middle of the paper amongst advertisements. These articles have titles such as: “Ski team Hopes for Snow” and “Smith Intramurals: Building on Past Tradition”. Throughout the 90’s and 80’s the amount of sports coverage in the newspaper was very limited. The pages were not consistently designated for athletics, and the articles were often short and often uninformative.

In the October 5th 2000 issue the whole back page was dedicated to athletic articles. There were three articles written, “Crew Squad Opens Season with a Splash at MHC Regatta”, an athletic profile of a Smith Athlete, and an article titled “What role do women play in sports”. The December 7th 2000 issue again had two articles on the back page. These articles generalized overview of two games that had occurred earlier that week. It became apparent that the sports coverage in these newspapers was still not considered to be too important.

Smith vs. Trinity

In terms of photographs in the yearbooks it became apparent that Trinity College started earlier with more focus on females and their athletics. Even though Smith is an all female institute it seemed that sports coverage took longer to develop. Both schools showed an upward trend in the amount of space allotted for each team. By 1990 and 2000 an average of two pages were provided for each team.

In regards to both the institutes’ newspapers, Trinity College made more of an effort to effectively portray female athletes through more articles and more pictures present in the more recent issues. Only in the 2000 issues at Smith College did a large section, most frequently the back page, get allotted to athletics.

Conclusion

Through my research I have found clear evidence by my definition of the portrayal of female athletics has changed from 1970 to 2000 at both Trinity College and Smith College. Both the yearbooks and newspaper articles depict changes in the imagery of female athletes which is exposed to the institute's student body.

Through this research it became clear that there are several more venues which could further the investigation. A deeper in depth look at each of these institutes through interviews and more archival research could provide more answers to questions such as, why the portrayal changed, was it because the schools students attitudes towards female athletes changed? These questions are not answered through my research; however I have opened a door to further investigation that has rarely been discussed. The more institutes and students are aware of the changes that have occurred towards the effort to portray female athletes equal to male athletes, the more likely they are to continue along a similar pathway. Hopefully one day in the future all athletes will be looked at as athletes and not expected to fit male athlete role or female athlete role.

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