

NCAA Women Coaches Academy Graduate Tracking Report

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INTRODUCTION

The percent of women head coaches of women's intercollegiate teams is currently stagnant (~40%), and has remained stagnant over the last decade despite the efforts of many to "move the needle" upward. One group, the Alliance of Women Coaches, was formed in 2011 with a mission to provide support, resources and programming for women coaches they need to stay in the game and thrive in the coaching profession. One programmatic element the Alliance of Women Coaches delivers three times a year to a cohort of 50 women, with funding support from the NCAA, is the NCAA Women Coaches Academy (WCA). Since the first NCAA WCA session in 2003 more than 1,650 women have graduated from this premiere professional development experience. Many WCA graduates hail the experiences as "life changing" and "transformative."

However, to date no data existed that tracked the occupational trajectories of graduates after they participated in the WCA. This study is the first, and perhaps only, empirical examination of women-focused coach education and professional development programming. It provides one perspective on how the NCAA WCA is effective, important and needed in the lives of women coaches.

The purpose of this study is to track the occupational trajectories of female collegiate-level coaches following their graduation from the NCAA Women Coaches Academy.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Documenting and adhering to a rigorous methodology is important for transparency, replication, comparison to other data, and consistency in tracking and reporting over time. For this report the Alliance of Women Coaches provided a database with information collected at the time of academy attendance for each coach. This dataset included the individual's name, Women Coaches Academy (WCA) class number, primary sport, self-reported ethnicity, birth year, information about the individual's position, division, and institution at the time of the academy, and the last time the Alliance of Women Coaches heard of the individual's current position, division, and institution. From this dataset, the Tucker Team checked and updated data pertaining to the attendant's current status, position, division, and institution. This updated data was collected from June 19 to July 17, 2017 by using the individual's most recent employment data from the institutional website. If the coach was not on staff of the institution marked in the Alliance original dataset, internet searches were employed using Google, LinkedIn, and Facebook or calling athletic department staffs of the former institution. When no information on the individual's current status could be ascertained, the individual was coded as "unknown".

Variables Coded

Occupational Position Move: To determine if the WCA grad had stayed in her current position, moved and/or advanced, a comparison was done between the occupational position held at the time of the WCA and the current occupational position as of July 15, 2017. The ladder of coaching positions goes as follows from highest to lowest: head coach, associate head coach, assistant coach, director of operations, graduate assistant, and volunteer coach. If a coach went from a lower position to a higher position (e.g., Associate to Head) from the time of the WCA to data collection, the coach was coded as “moved up” in position. If a coach went from a higher position to a lower position (e.g., Head to Assistant) from the time of the WCA to data collection, the individual was coded as “moving down” in position. If there was no difference in the position from the time of the WCA to the time of current data collection (i.e. Head Coach to Head Coach), then the coach was coded to have no position movement. A coach was coded as “not a coach” if they went from coach to a non-coaching job or retired. Lastly, if the individual’s current status was unknown, then the position move was coded as unknown.

Occupational Division/Competitive Level: To determine the status of the coach’s competitive level, a comparison was done between the competitive level coached at the time of the WCA and the current competitive level coached as of July 15, 2017. The ladder of competitive level was as follows from highest to lowest: National Sport Organization and Professional level, NCAA Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III, NAIA, Community College, High School or Club, Youth. When a coach remained in the same division from the time of the WCA to the data collection, the coach was coded to have “no movement” in competitive level. If the coached moved from a lower level to a higher level (e.g., D-III to D-I) from the time of the academy to the current status, then the coach was coded to have “moved up” in competitive level. If the coach moved from a higher level to a lower level (e.g., D-II to High School) from the time of the WCA to time of data collection, the coach was coded to have “moved down” in competitive level. A coach was coded as “not coaching” if she went from coaching to not coaching. When the current status of the coach was unknown, the individual was coded to have an unknown competitive level move.

Institutional Change: A coach was coded to have moved institutions if in the dataset the institution at the time of the WCA was different from the current institution. In the case a coach retired, it was coded to reflect the coach’s retirement. If the coach’s status was unknown, the individual’s code for the institution change was determined to be unknown.

Age: The individual’s age was determined from the birth year collected by the Alliance of Women Coaches. When a birth year was not given, the data was estimated by searching for the year of the individual’s birth year or year of undergraduate graduation found in their LinkedIn profile or in her online coaching biography.

Ethnicity: The ethnicity of the individual was self-reported. WCA attendees were asked at the time of the WCA they attended to identify with one of the following categories: white, African American,

Asian, Hispanic, or other. A category was added in the coding process to account for the attendees who did not answer. The Alliance of Women Coaches provided the Tucker Center with this data.

Sample

The sample in this report was comprised of 405 women who attended a NCAA Women Coaches Academy (WCA) between the years of 2014-2017 (WCA Classes #34-42). Each WCA class is comprised of ~38-48 women coaches and is assigned a number. As of July 2017, 42 classes of women have attended the WCA. Data from WCA classes prior to class #33 was incomplete and not suitable for inclusion. The ages of the WCA attendees ranged from 24 to 64 years old ($M_{age} = 35.2$, $SD_{age} = 8.1$). The individuals in the dataset varied in the year they attended the WCA, the title of the coaching position, the division level of coaching, the primary sport coached, the gender of the primary sport coached, and ethnicity. See Tables 1-6 for an explication of these variables.

Of the 405 women, eight were international coaches who participated in coaching-related positions outside of the United States. At time of data collection, July 15, 2017, there were some WCA grads ($n = 24$) with unknown status, despite extensive investigation. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study—to track the occupational trajectories and retention of female collegiate coaches within the U.S.—most of the final analyses excluded the eight international coaches. For purpose of analysis the sample was comprised of U.S. female coaches ($N = 397$).

Table 1.

Distribution of Women Coaches Academy Attendees by WCA Class (N = 405)

WCA Class	U.S. Coaches		International Coaches		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
34 (2014)	38	0.1	4	0.5	42	0.1
35 (2015)	40	0.1	0	0.0	40	0.1
36 (2015)	38	0.1	0	0.0	38	0.1
37 (2015)	48	0.1	2	0.3	50	0.1
38 (2016)	47	0.1	0	0.0	47	0.1
39 (2016)	47	0.1	1	0.1	48	0.1
40 (2016)	47	0.1	1	0.1	48	0.1
41 (2017)	47	0.1	0	0.0	47	0.1
42 (2017)	45	0.1	0	0.0	45	0.1
Total	397	100.0	8	100.0	405	100.0

Table 2.

Distribution of Women Coaches by Position Title at the Time of the WCA (N = 405)

Coaches		
Position Title	N	%
Head Coach	202	49.9
Associate Head Coach	9	2.2
Assistant Coach	179	44.2
Director of Operations	5	1.2
Graduate Assistant	1	0.2
Volunteer Assistant	2	0.5
Other	4	1.0
Professors	3	0.7
Total	405	100.0

Table 3.

Distribution of Women Coaches by Division Level at the Time of the WCA (N = 405)

Coaches		
Division Level	N	%
NCAA Division I	211	52.1
NCAA Division II	66	16.3
NCAA Division III	117	28.9
Community College	2	0.5
Club	1	0.2
International	8	2.0
Total	405	100.0

Table 4.

Distribution of Women Coaches by Primary Sport Coached (N = 405)

Coaches		
Sport	N	%
Basketball	49	12.1
Bowling	3	0.7
Crew/Rowing	20	4.9
Cricket	1	0.2
Cross Country	5	1.2
Cross Country, Track & Field	15	3.7
Diving	2	0.5
Equestrian	2	0.5
Field Hockey	32	7.9

Football	1	0.2
Golf	14	3.5
Gymnastics	10	2.5
Ice Hockey	3	0.7
Lacrosse	38	9.4
Netball	1	0.2
Rugby	3	0.7
Skiing	2	0.5
Soccer	61	15.1
Softball	53	13.1
Swimming	12	3.0
Tennis	19	4.7
Touch Football	1	0.2
Track & Field	6	1.5
Triathlon	1	0.2
Volleyball	46	11.4
Water Polo	2	0.5
NA (academics)	1	0.2
Total	405	100.0

Table 5.

Distribution of Women Coaches by Gender of Sport Coached (N = 405)

Coaches		
Gender	<i>N</i>	%
Female	364	89.9
Male	1	0.2
Both	40	9.9
Total	405	100.0

Table 6.

Distribution of Women Coaches Attendees by Ethnicity (N = 405)

Coaches		
Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	%
White	298	73
African American	63	15
Asian	13	3
Hispanic	11	2
Other	10	2
Chose not to answer	10	2
Total	405	100.0

RESULTS I

How many NCAA WCA graduates are still coaching as of July 2017?

International coaches (N=8) were excluded. Women coaches from the United States who attended classes #34-42 NCAA Women Coaches Academies (N=397) were included. As of July 15, 2017 a majority (357/397, 89.9%) of WCA grads are currently coaching, a small number (N =16, 4%) were not coaching, and for some, the current occupational status is unknown (N= 24, 6%).

Table 7.

Percentage of WCA Attendees by Current Status (N= 397)

Status	Coaches	
	N	%
Still Coaching	357	89.9
Not Coaching	16	4.0
Status Unknown	24	6.0
Total	397	100.0

Note. International coaches not included

What percentage of WCA graduates with a known occupational status from the U.S. are still coaching?

For the coaches with unknown current statuses, it would be negligent to categorize them as not coaching or coaching since there is uncertainty about their current standings. Therefore we took out the 24 coaches with unknown current occupational status, which resulted in 373 WCA graduates that are definitively coaching or not coaching (See Table 9). Of these 373 coaches with a confirmed current status, 95.7% are still coaching (357 / 373), and 4.3% are not coaching (16 / 373). Considering that the national turnover rate per year for NCAA D-I collegiate coaches is approximately 6-8% (LaVoi, 2017), it is salient to note that the attrition rate (percentage not coaching) for WCA graduates is about half (4.3%) the national turnover rate. However, the national turnover rate does not mean the coach exited the coaching profession. Additional analysis is required.

Table 8.

Current Occupational Status of Confirmed WCA Attendees (N = 373)

Status	Coaches	
	<i>N</i>	%
Still Coaching	357	95.7
Not Coaching	16	4.3
Total	373	100.0

How many WCA graduates are currently coaching by class?

A chi-square test was conducted to examine the relation between the class attended and the current status of the coach (coaching/not coaching). The relation between the class number and the status of the coach was significant ($\chi^2(16) = 37.719, p = .002$). Thus, the occupational status of a coach was dependent on the class the coach attended. This dependency is logical since the more current the class, the less time for change. For example the percentage of women still coaching in Class 34 (73.7%) was less than the most recent WCA Class 42 (100%) (see Table 9).

Table 9.

Percentage of WCA Attendees' Current Status by WCA Class Number (N = 397)

WCA Class Number	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Status Unknown		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
34 (2014)	28	73.7	5	13.2	5	13.2	38	100.0
35 (2015)	37	92.5	1	2.5	2	5.0	40	100.0
36 (2015)	29	76.3	4	10.5	5	13.2	38	100.0
37 (2015)	44	91.7	0	0.0	4	8.3	48	100.0
38 (2016)	41	87.2	4	8.5	2	4.3	47	100.0
39 (2016)	42	89.4	2	4.3	3	6.4	47	100.0
40 (2016)	47	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	100.0
41 (2017)	44	93.6	0	0.0	3	6.4	47	100.0
42 (2017)	45	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	100.0

Note. International coaches not included

How many WCA graduates with known occupational status are still coaching by class?

Table 10.

Percentage of WCA Graduates' with Known Occupational Status by WCA Class Number (n = 373) Who are Coaching and Not Coaching

WCA Class Number	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
34 (2014)	28	84.8	5	15.2	33	100.0
35 (2015)	37	97.4	1	2.6	38	100.0
36 (2015)	29	87.9	4	12.1	33	100.0
37 (2015)	44	100.0	0	0.0	44	100.0
38 (2016)	41	91.1	4	8.9	45	100.0
39 (2016)	42	95.5	2	4.5	44	100.0
40 (2016)	47	100.0	0	0.0	47	100.0
41 (2017)	44	100.0	0	0.0	44	100.0
42 (2017)	45	100.0	0	0.0	45	100.0

Note. This table excluded coaches by class with unknown occupational status (n =24)

Results in Table 10 indicate that a very high percentage of graduates are still coaching, even three years after attending the WCA. In some classes (4 of 9) all graduates were still coaching.

How many WCA graduates are still coaching by position at the time of the WCA?

Table 11.

Current Occupational Status by Position at the Time of the WCA (N= 397)

Position Title	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Status Unknown		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Head Coach	187	93.0	6	3.0	8	4.00	201	100.0
Associate Head Coach	8	88.9	1	11.1	0	0.00	9	100.0
Assistant Coach	156	87.2	8	4.5	15	8.40	179	100.0
Director of Operations	5	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.00	5	100.0
Graduate Assistant	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.00	1	100.0
Volunteer Assistant	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.00	2	100.0

Based on the data, the point at which the largest percentage of coaches leave coaching is at the Assistant Coach level. Educational and programmatic interventions should particularly target this point of the leaky pipeline of the coaching profession.

How many WCA graduates known occupational status are still coaching by position at the time of the WCA?

Table 12.

Percentage of Known Graduates' Current Status by Position at the Time of the Academy (N=373)

Position Title	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head Coach	187	96.9	6	3.0	193	100.0
Associate Head Coach	8	88.9	1	11.1	9	100.0
Assistant Coach	156	95.1	8	4.5	164	100.0
Director of Operations	5	100.0	0	0.0	5	100.0
Graduate Assistant	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Volunteer Assistant	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	100.0

How many WCA graduates are still coaching by age at time of data collection?

Table 13.

Percentage of WCA Graduates' Current Occupational Status by Age

Age Group	Total Coaches		Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Status Unknown	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
20s	102	25.7	91	89.2	2	2.0	9	8.8
30s	200	50.4	182	91.0	9	4.5	9	4.5
40s	63	15.9	53	84.1	4	6.3	6	9.5
50s	28	7.1	27	96.4	1	3.6	0	0.0
60s	4	1.0	4	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	397	100	357	89.9	16	4.0	24	6.0

It appears the older the coach, the more likely she is to have stayed in coaching over time (albeit there are fewer coaches in the sample in their 50s and 60s!).

How many WCA attendees are currently coaching by competitive level at the time of the WCA?

Table 14.

Current Occupational Status by Competitive Level at the Time of the WCA

Competitive Level	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Status Unknown		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Division I	189	88.2	11	5.2	14	6.6	211	100.0
Division II	64	97.0	0	0.0	2	3.0	66	100.0
Division III	104	88.9	5	4.3	8	6.8	117	100.0
Community College	2	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Club	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0

Table 15.

Percentage of Known Current Occupational Status by Competitive Level at the Time of the WCA

Competitive Level	Still Coaching		Not Coaching		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Division I	189	95.9	11	5.6	197	100.0
Division II	64	100.0	0	0.0	64	100.0
Division III	104	95.4	5	4.6	109	100.0
Community College	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
Club	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0

Of women known to be currently coaching, what is their current occupational status compared to their occupational status at the time of the WCA?

Of the 357 who are still coaching, 205 are head coaches (57.4%), 11 are associate head coaches (3.1%), 133 are assistant coaches (37.3%), five are directors of operations (1.4%), three hold other coaching positions such as graduate assistant (0.3%), volunteer assistant (0.3%), and technical advisor (0.3%). Since the time of the academy, there are more head coaches and associate head coaches, the same number of directors of operations and graduate assistants, less assistant coaches, and additions of the positions volunteer assistant and technical advisor (see Table 17).

Table 16.

Of Coaches with Known Occupational Status: Comparison of Occupational Status at the Time of the WCA to Current Occupational Status

Position	Time of WCA		Current	
	n	%	n	%
Head Coach	187	52.4	205	57.4
Associate Head Coach	8	2.2	11	3.1
Assistant Coach	156	43.7	133	37.3
Director of Operations	5	1.4	5	1.4
Graduate Assistant	1	0.3	1	0.3
Volunteer Assistant	0	0.0	1	0.3
Other (technical advisor)	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	357	100	357	100

Table 17.

Comparison of Competitive Level Coached at the Time of the WCA to Current Competitive Level

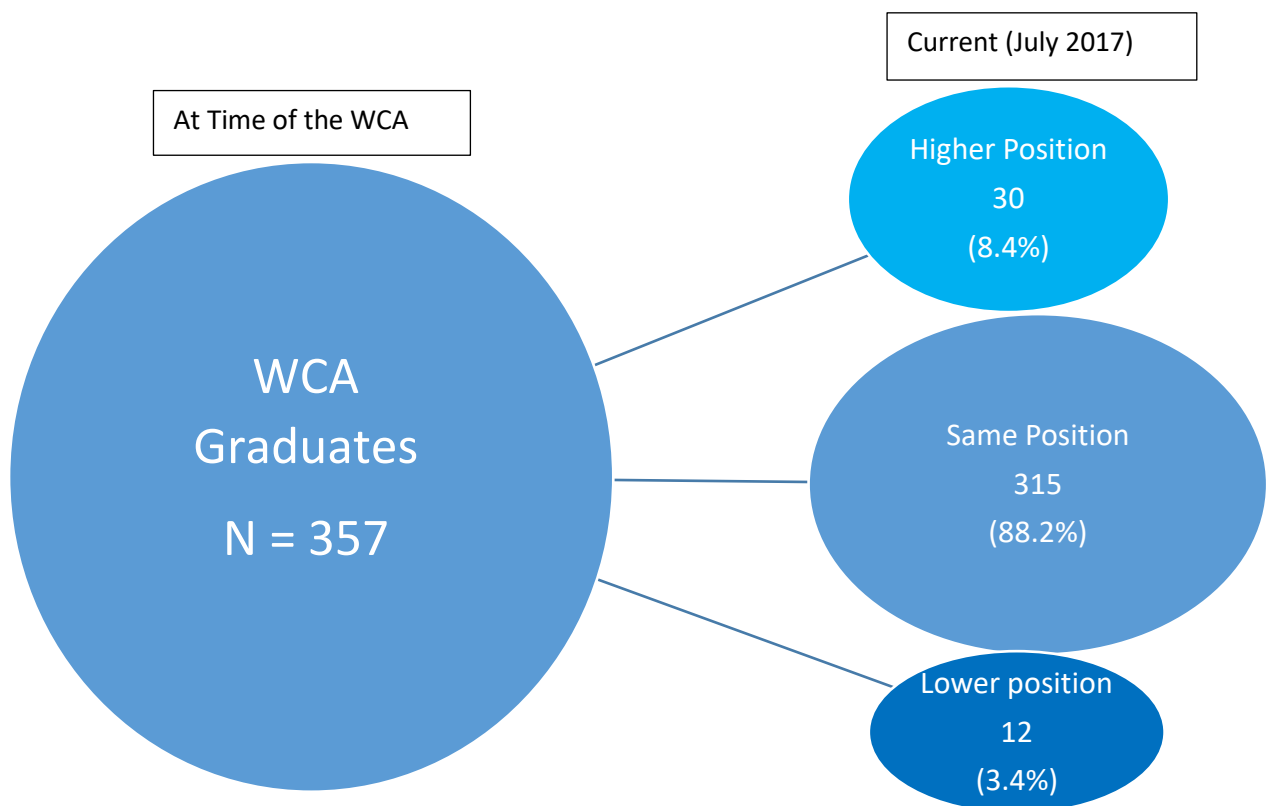
Division/Competitive Level	At Time of WCA		Current	
	n	%	n	%
Pro / Natl Sport Org	0	0.0	3	0.8
NCAA Division I	186	52.1	173	48.5
NCAA Division II	64	17.9	62	17.4
NCAA Division III	104	29.1	106	29.7
Community College	2	0.6	3	0.8
Club	1	0.3	4	1.1
High School	0	0.0	5	1.4
International Club	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	357	100	357	100

Three former NCAA D-I Assistant Coaches moved to professional or national sport organization positions including moves to: U.S. Soccer Regional Training Center, U.S. Soccer Girls' Development Academy, USA Volleyball. One international coach who at the time of the WCA was a D-III Assistant Coach and is not represented in Table 18 is now coaching a South African National Team.

Of those WCA graduates still coaching, what are the patterns of occupational position movement?

One way to determine the effectiveness of the Women Coaches Academies is to look at the movement of occupational position levels from the time of the academy to currently as of July 2017. Of the 357 attendants of Classes #34-42 of Women Coaches Academies who are currently still coaching, a large majority stayed at the same position level (315/357, 88.2%); 30 moved up in position level (8.4%), and 12 moved down in position level (3.4%). Therefore, the majority of WCA graduates remained at the same level of coaching position (e.g. an individual who was a head coach at the time of the academy was still currently a head coach), while some moved up in position, and even less went down in position (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Occupational position movement from time of WCA attendance (n = 357)



Based on the WCA Class attended, what percentage of coaches moved occupational position level?

Results are similar to current status breakdown by WCA Class. In general, the earlier the date of the WCA Class (34 being the farthest back and 42 being the most current), the lower the percentage of graduates who hold the same position level as they did at the time of the WCA. The lower percent of attendees in the same position level implies more change given that class number. The class with the most advancement of positions was WCA Class #34 with 21.4% of the class holding higher positions than at the time they attended the academy back in 2014. The class that had the most attendees move down in position level since the time of the academy was WCA Class #35, which was also held in 2014, with 16.2% of coaches moving down position levels (See Table 18).

Table 18.

Breakdown of occupational position level movement by WCA Class

WCA Class number	Coaches still coaching	Up Position Level		Down Position Level		Same Position Level	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
34	28	6	21.4	0	0.0	22	78.6
35	37	5	13.5	6	16.2	26	70.3
36	29	4	13.8	1	3.4	24	82.8
37	44	4	9.1	3	6.8	37	84.1
38	41	3	7.3	0	0.0	38	92.7
39	42	5	11.9	1	2.4	36	85.7
40	47	3	6.4	1	2.1	43	91.5
41	44	0	0.0	0	0.0	44	100.0
42	45	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	100.0

Table 19.

Movement in occupational position level by occupational positive at time of WCA

Position at time of WCA	Coach still coaching	Up Position Level		Down Position Level		Same Position Level	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Head Coach	187	0	0.0	9	4.8	178	95.2
Associate Coach	8	1	12.5	1	12.5	6	75.0
Assistant Coach	156	28	17.9	2	1.3	126	80.8
Director of Operations	5	1	20.0	0	0.0	4	80.0
Graduate Assistant	1	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Total	357	30	8.4	12	3.4	315	88.2

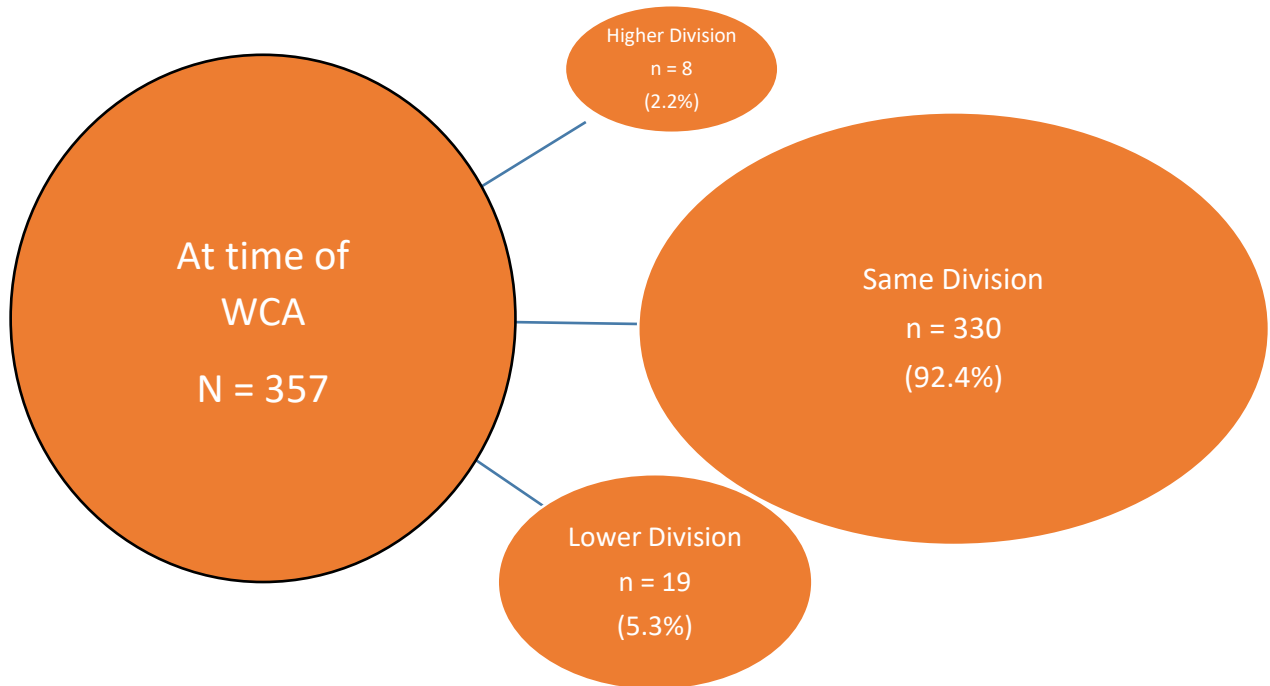
Assistant coaches had the greatest number of women who exhibited occupational position advancement (n= 28) and “moved up”.

What percentage of coaches moved an occupational division level?

Of the 357 attendees of the WCA who are currently coaching, a majority of women (330/357; 92.4%) continued to coach in the same division they were coaching in at the time of the academy. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Occupational division movement



Based on the WCA Class attended, what percentage of coaches moved an occupational division level?

Table 20.

Division movement broken down by WCA Class

WCA Class number	Coach still coaching	Up Division Level		Down Division Level		Same Division Level	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
34	28	2	7.1	3	10.7	23	82.1
35	37	2	5.4	5	13.5	30	81.1
36	29	1	3.4	3	10.3	25	86.2
37	44	2	4.5	3	6.8	39	88.6
38	41	0	0.0	1	2.4	40	97.6
39	42	1	2.4	3	7.1	38	90.5
40	47	0	0.0	1	2.1	46	97.9
41	44	0	0.0	0	0.0	44	100.0
42	45	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	100.0
Total	357	8	2.2	19	5.3	330	92.4

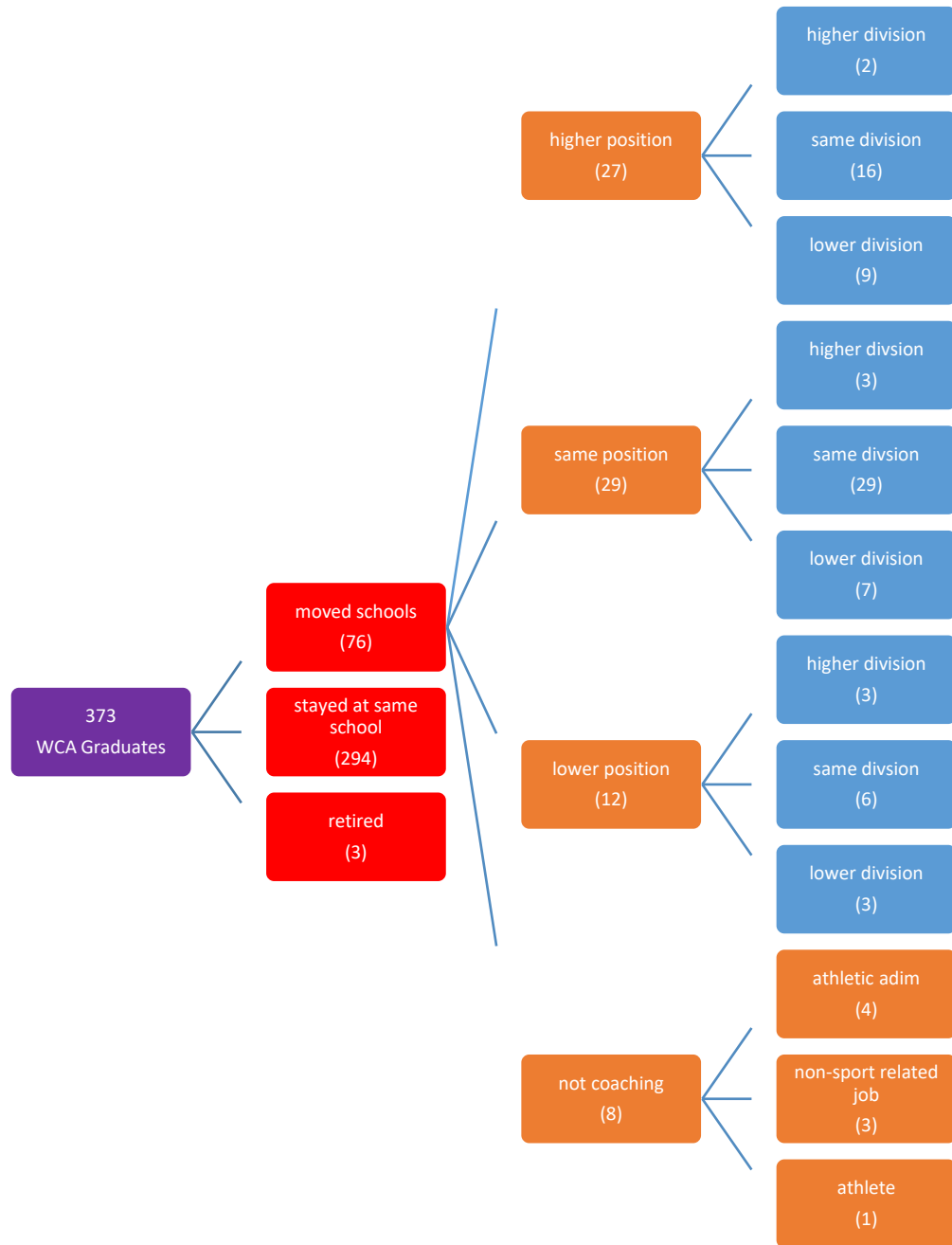
As a coach was more removed from WCA graduation, the more likely she was to move “up” or “down” a division level. A large majority of all WCA graduates remain at the same division level.

Of WCA graduates with confirmed occupational status (n =373), what is the occupational movement patterns by institution, position and divisional level?

How many WCA graduates: [see Figure 3]

- A. changed schools
- B. changed positions
- C. changed divisions

Figure 3.



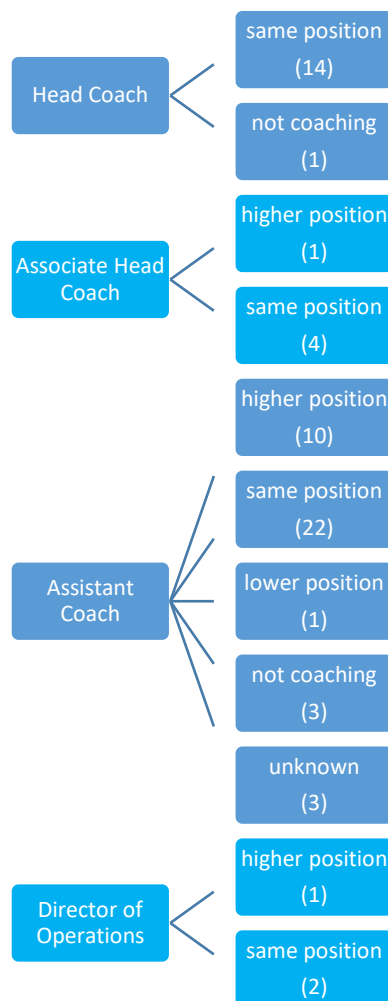
RESULTS II

FBS NCAA Division I Coaches Only

Results: Of the 397 non-international women who attended a WCA, there were 62 FBS Division I coaches (15.6%) in all coaching positions at the time of the academy. At the time of data collection, there were 50 FBS Division I coaches.

Figure 4.

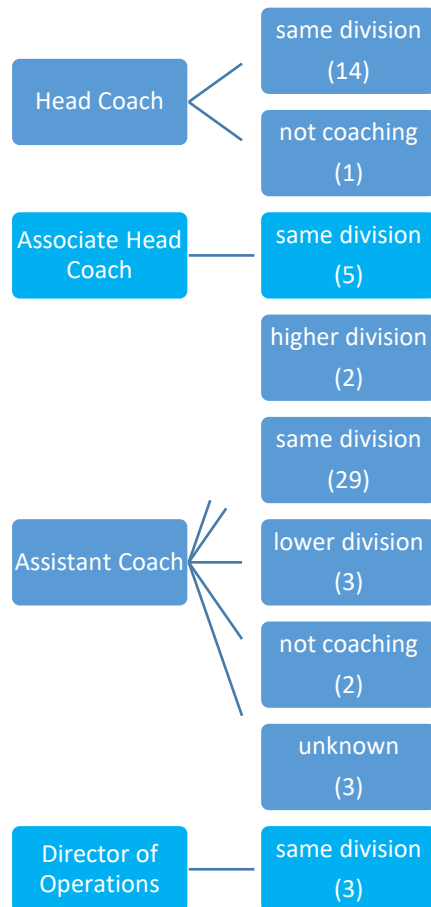
Occupational position movement for FBS NCAA Division I Coaches (n= 62)



Head Coaches in FBS institutions rarely change institutions, divisions or positions. Once this level of position is obtained, it is likely lucrative, a good fit, or they feel it would be career suicide to leave/move. Also ADs strive to keep successful women head coaches at this level happy and are more likely to give them the resources and support they need to be successful.

Figure 5.

Occupational division movement for FBS NCAA Division I Coaches (n= 62)



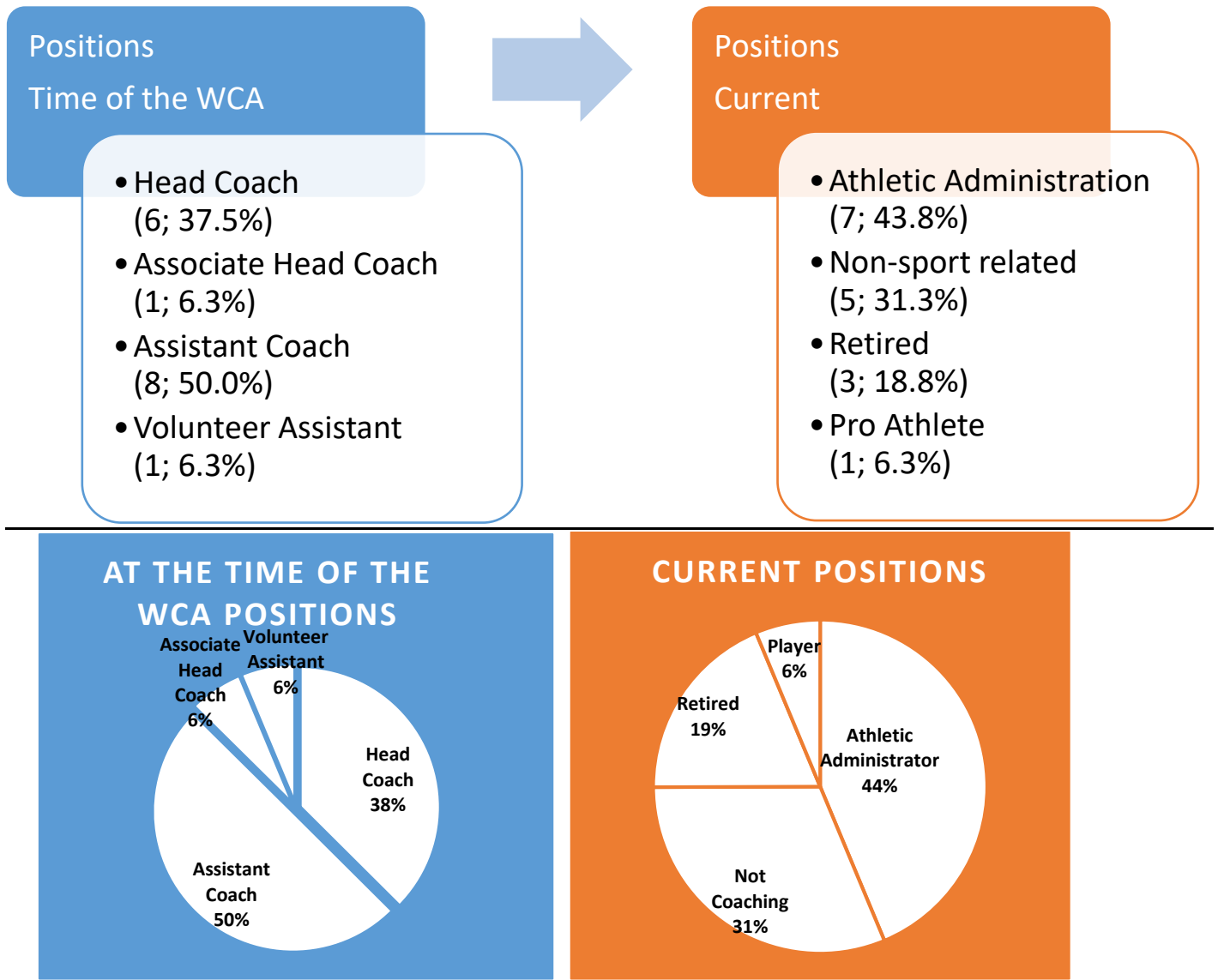
RESULTS III

DATA FOR WCA GRADUATES WITH KNOWN OCCUPATIONAL STATUS WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY COACHING

Of WCA graduates with a known occupational status who are currently not coaching (n= 16) what is their current occupational position?

Figure 6.

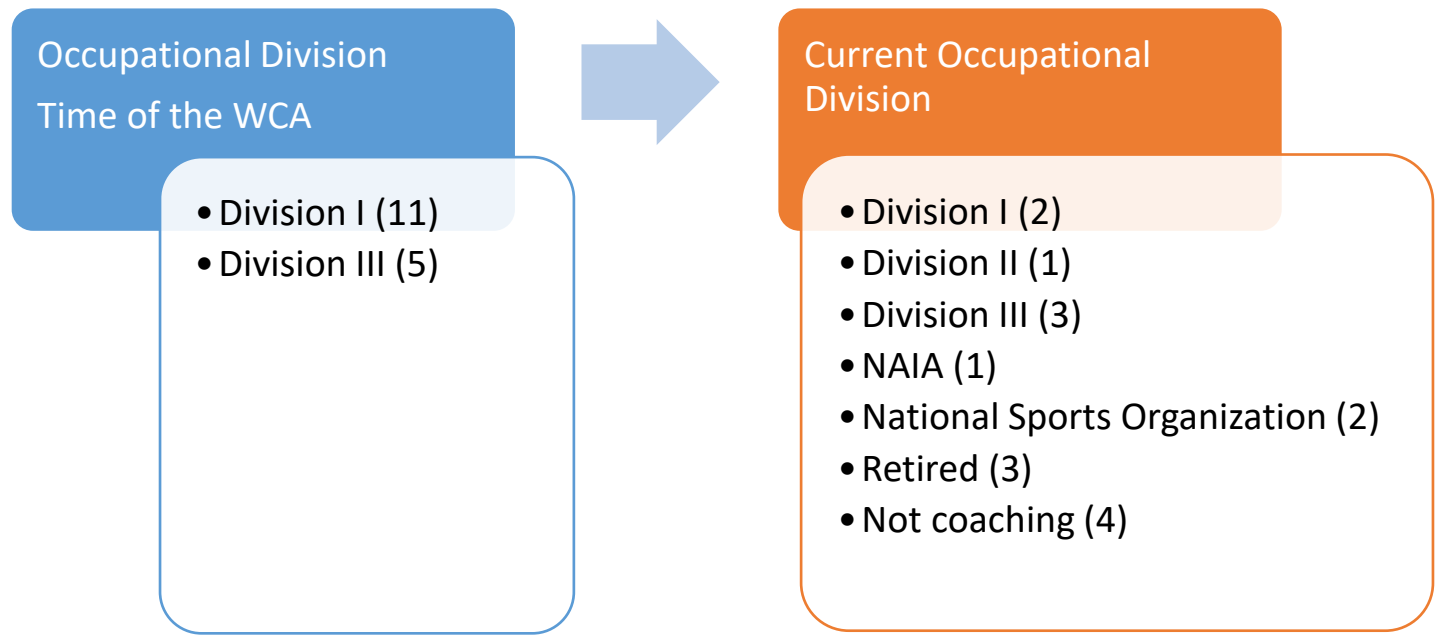
Position movement for WCA graduates not currently coaching.



The most common career pathway choice for coaches who were not currently coaching was athletic administration.

Figure 7.

Occupational division movement for WCA graduates not currently coaching (n = 16).



CONCLUSION AND KEY TAKE AWAYS

A few important findings emerged from the data over the past three years. Additional data over longer time periods is needed to make definitive conclusions to accurately track the occupational trajectories of women collegiate coaches. The conclusions below are made on a limited set of data, but the findings are promising.

1. NCAA Women Coaches Academy graduates appear to stay in the coaching profession in very high percentages. While a comparison and matched data set of non-academy grads was not within the purpose and scope of this study, based on existing data, it appears as if WCA graduates “stay in the game.”
2. A majority of NCAA Women Coaches Academy graduates stayed at the same divisional/competitive level.
3. A majority of NCAA Women Coaches Academy graduates stayed in the same occupational position, especially at NCAA FBS D-I institutions. Yet nearly 9% of WCA graduates “moved up” in occupational positions in a very short time.
4. A majority of NCAA Women Coaches Academy graduates stayed at the same institution.
5. A small percentage of NCAA Women Coaches Academy graduates left coaching and when they did, a majority of them track into athletic administration positions.
6. The greatest point of attrition and a target of opportunity to make a difference and keep more women in coaching, is at the assistant coach position.