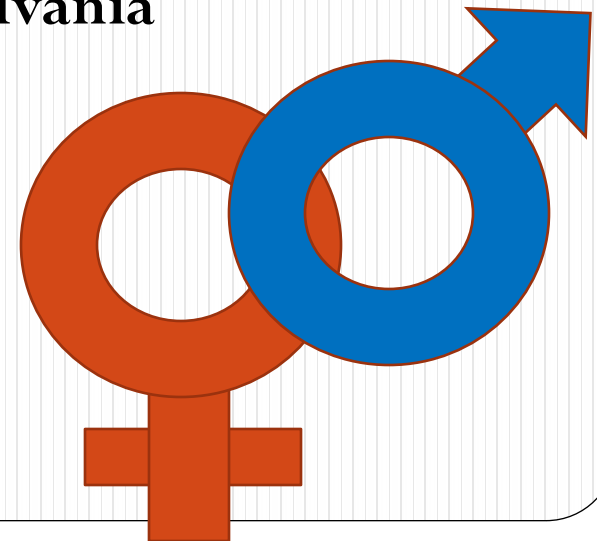


# *Virtual Compliance?* *Online Education and Title IX*

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# Observations

- Universities have undergone substantial changes since Title IX was enacted in 1972.
- Specifically, students can earn a degree via online learning without ever setting foot on campus.
- Many of these students are located hundreds, if not thousands, of miles from campus.
- The ability to participate in most “campus life” activities, including athletics, is almost non-existent.

# Online Learning in U.S. Higher Ed.

(The Sloan Consortium, Allen & Seaman, 2008)

- The 12.9 percent growth rate for online enrollments far exceeds the 1.2 percent growth of the overall higher education student population.
- One in five institutions with online courses introduced their first offerings in 2007
- Over 80 percent of online offerings were at the undergraduate level in all major disciplines (except engineering)

# The Conundrum

- How have advances in online education impacted an institution's ability to comply with Title IX?
- Can fulltime undergraduate students, who are 100% online, participate in intercollegiate athletics?
- \*\*\*If an online student is separated by a “significant geographic distance”, can one make an argument for excluding him/her from proportionality calculations?

# OCR Responds

Q1. Is it pragmatic or feasible for a fulltime, 100% online undergraduate student – separated by a significant geographic distance – to participate in the institution’s athletic program?

## OCR:

“Depending on how an institution chooses to operate or sponsor its athletics program, *it may be feasible for a full-time, 100 percent online undergraduate student, separated by a significant geographic distance, to participate in the institution’s athletic program.*”

# We (*mostly*) Disagree...Here's Why:

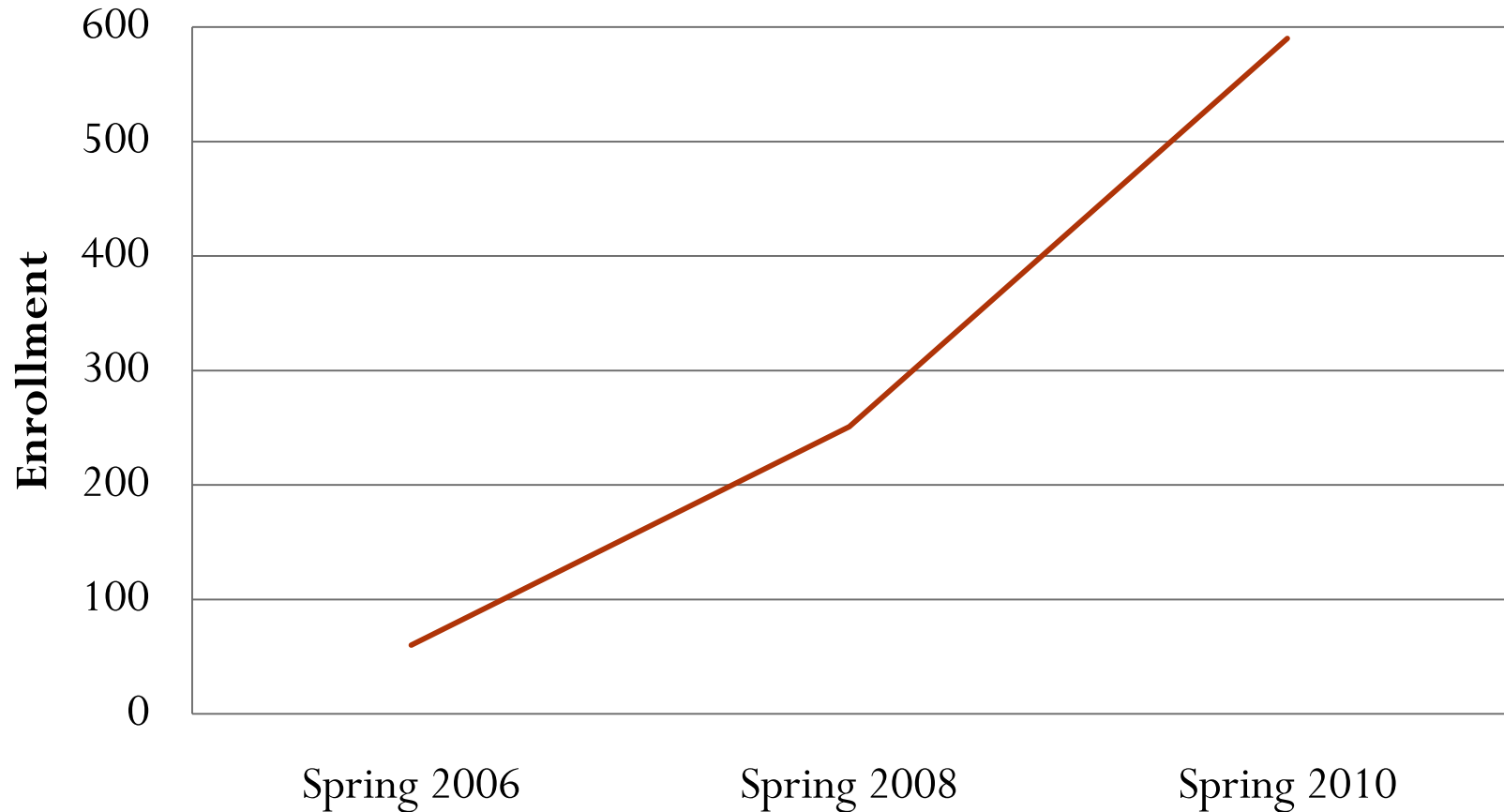
- Examined one section of SPT 100 (Introduction to Sport Management) from the summer of 2008.
  - This class was specifically part of a 100% online cohort in California University of PA's Sport Management program (Wellness and Fitness concentration)
- A relatively small class ( $N = 32$ ), but representative of the program's enrollment.
  - 30 of 32 students (93.75%) resided in the United States
  - 2 of 32 students (6.25%) resided in foreign locations (Iwakuni, Japan and Shanghai, China)
- Closest domestic student to campus: 174 miles (Erie, PA)
- Farthest domestic student to campus: 2,644 miles (San Jose, CA)
- AVERAGE distance from campus: 1090 miles

# Data Stipulations

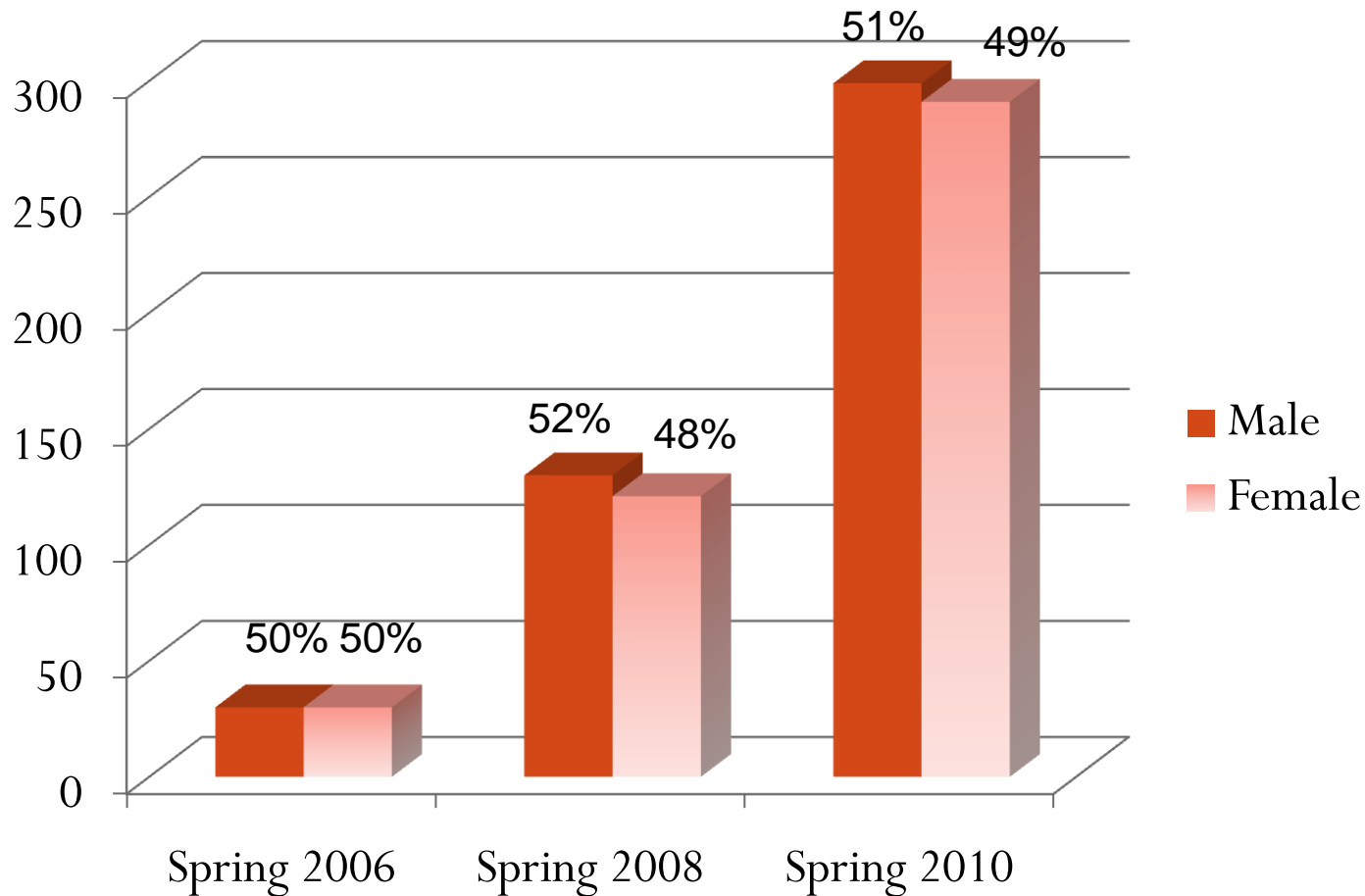
NOTE: For the purpose of CSRI and the examination of Title IX's application to athletics, researchers must:

- ONLY INCLUDE 100% online programs for fulltime undergraduate students
- Be diligent in excluding 100% online programs at institutions not sponsoring athletics (ex. University of Phoenix).
- Be aware that much of the existing data addressing online learning looks at any student (fulltime or part-time) taking “at least **one**” class online.

# Fulltime undergraduate enrollment Students 100% online at Cal U of PA



# Fulltime undergraduate enrollment Students 100% online at Cal U of PA



# Questions

- WHO are the 100% online students (age, gender, etc.) enrolled within institutions supporting athletic programs?
- HOW far do they reside from campus?
- Are 100% online students interested in participating in intercollegiate athletics?
- What is the feasibility of participating in all varsity sport-related activities?

# Methodology

- Study included a sample of 590 online undergraduate students
  - 514 Health & Wellness majors
  - 76 Legal Studies majors
- Access to email addresses was provided through the office of Web-based programs at Cal U (IRB approval was provided as well)
- Excluded duplicate responses and 4 digit zip code entries
- 10-item questionnaire via SurveyMonkey
  - Program of Study, Age, Gender, Zip Code, Active Military
  - Currently participate in University athletics (which sports)? If no, does an interest in participating exist (which sports)? What is the feasibility of participating in all varsity sport-related activities?
- 160 usable surveys returned (27% return rate)

# Data Analysis

## Age/Gender

- Mean age = 34.20
  - Mean age males (n = 68): 32.85
  - Mean age females (n = 90): 35.22
- Range: 19-61
  - Range males (n = 68): 19-51
  - Range females (n = 90): 19-61

# Data Analysis

## Proximity to Campus (driving distance)

- Methodology:
  - Students' 5 digit zip code & University's zip code entered into MapQuest.
- Closest domestic student to campus: 0 miles (California, PA)
- Farthest domestic student to campus: Hawaii (2 students) and
  - Alaska (4064.87 miles)
- AVERAGE distance from campus: 931.74 miles

# Data Analysis

## Proximity to Campus (driving time)

- Methodology:
  - Students' 5 digit zip code & University's zip code entered into MapQuest.
- Closest domestic student to campus: 0 minutes (California, PA)
- Farthest domestic student to campus
  - Alaska (70.93 hours)
- AVERAGE driving time to campus: 14.6 hours

# Data Analysis

## Currently participating in University varsity sports

- NONE!

## Interest in participating in University varsity sports

- 18 out of 160 respondents
- Approximate equal distribution within sport of interest
- Refer to hand-out
  - Males vs. females
  - Driving distance and time
  - Feasibility

# Acknowledged Outliers

It **IS** possible for a student:

- to live on-campus or within a reasonable distance from campus,
- enroll in a fulltime, undergraduate 100% online program, and
- participate in athletics

**Possible reasons:**

- Personal preference: online learning environment over classroom environment
- Flexibility of online courses to work around athletic schedule.
- Online courses may be perceived as easier or less academically rigorous.

# Case Analysis: Future Implications for California University of PA



	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Fulltime Undergraduate Enrollment	49.4%	50.6%
Total Participants	58.8%	41.2%
Unduplicated Count of Participants	59.1%	40.9%

Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act data. Reporting year: 7/1/2007-6/30/2008.  
Reporting Official: Dr. Karen Hjerpe

# Case Analysis:

- About 10% of all institutions with online learning have specifically been designed to serve the U.S. military and this need is increasing
- An increase of “eArmyU schools” to provide online educations brings about another issue of “gender” and the proportionality test
- Affect of other “gender-dominated” fields such as nursing

# Projected Implications for California University of PA Due to the GoArmy Initiative

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Fulltime Undergraduate Enrollment	49.4% 	50.6% 
Total Participants	58.8%	41.2%
Unduplicated Count of Participants	59.1%	40.9%

Assumption: Substantially more males enroll in the Army, therefore possibly and significantly altering the fulltime undergraduate enrollment

# Projected Implications for California University of PA Due to the GoArmy Initiative

## Therefore:

- The proportion of male students will increase, thus assisting with overall Title IX compliance for the institution.
- NONE of the enrolled soldiers/students can participate in athletics due to significant geographic barriers

## Repercussions:

- Administrators may not provide additional participation opportunities to women because the university is “closer” to substantial proportionality.

# Future Direction

- Expand sample to include all students across the nation receiving their undergraduate degrees completely online
- Determine interest and feasibility as it relates to online education and varsity athletic participation
- Determine whether institutions are aware of the impact online education has on Title IX and proportionality compliance
- Assess the need and rationale for excluding online undergraduate students, who are separated by a significant geographical distance, from the proportionality calculation

# *Virtual compliance? Online Education and Title IX*

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