

Gender Inequity in the University of Hawaii at Manoa Athletic Department

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Introduction

In March 2021, news about the apparent gender inequity in the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournament made national headlines. Through various social media platforms, a few female athletes provided evidence of this apparent gender inequity displayed in the tournament. While the male athletes were accommodated with a fully-equipped weight room and tables full of delicious food, the female athletes were given one rack of weights and a TV dinner. After these images flooded the world of social media, this story became a nationwide news story that triggered some uproar, and eventually, the NCAA was pressured into making some 'upgrades' to the accommodations for these female athletes (Blinder 2021).

Now although this issue of gender inequity only made national headlines this March, this has been a problem for years. Revealed in a New York Times article

that addressed this year's NCAA basketball tournament, it was said that the women's budget was nearly half of the men's budget during the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournament in the year of 2019; the women's budget was at around \$14.5 million compared to the men's budget of \$28 million. No information was given regarding the budget for this year's tournament, but the NCAA said that this year's budget was similar to that of the previous years (Blinder 2021). Hence, we see that this disparity is nothing new even though the general public were only recently made aware of this problem.

So along the topic of gender inequity in sports, curiosity started to take over my mind, and I began to wonder if this issue existed in our local community as well. Thus, I shifted my focus to the athletics department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Personally, I never heard about any huge issues involving gender inequity that revolved around UH sports, so I thought it would be interesting to look more into this topic. When I conducted a quick Google search, I found no news articles that involved any possible gender inequity in the UH athletic department. However, most of the articles that popped up were published by UH, so it makes sense that no negative press towards the athletic department would be published by UH itself.

Therefore, I wish to investigate and answer the following research question, "is there gender inequity that exists within the athletic department at the University

of Hawaii at Manoa?” Similar to the issue regarding this year’s NCAA basketball tournament, it is a possibility that there has been a gender inequity problem in UH athletics for years, but this information has simply not been brought to the public’s attention. Both male and female athletes work hard to compete at the collegiate level, and if they are not afforded an equal opportunity to succeed, then action needs to be taken in order to lead our society in a positive direction. As a result, if I find that this issue of gender inequity is present in our athletic department at UH, I hope that this paper will bring light to the situation at hand.

Methodology

To proceed in answering this research question, I need to find data in order to show that gender inequity exists in the UH athletic department, or I need to find data that shows the athletic department is equitable to both genders. Thus, to show this, I will be focusing on the economic data regarding the budgeting towards the men’s and women’s athletic programs at UH. By showing that there may be a distinction in the budget between the men’s and women’s sports, this could be an indication that there may be some bias at hand.

Accordingly, I used the [Equity in Athletics Data Analysis](#) website to collect the data that I need to prove or disprove the existence of gender inequity in the UH athletic department. From this website, I was able to download the necessary data

files that provided information about UH's athletic department. The files contained information from the years of 2003 to 2018, and the data sets incorporated the following categories of information: athletic participation, head coaching staff information, assistant coaching staff information, athletically related student aid, revenue, and total expenses.

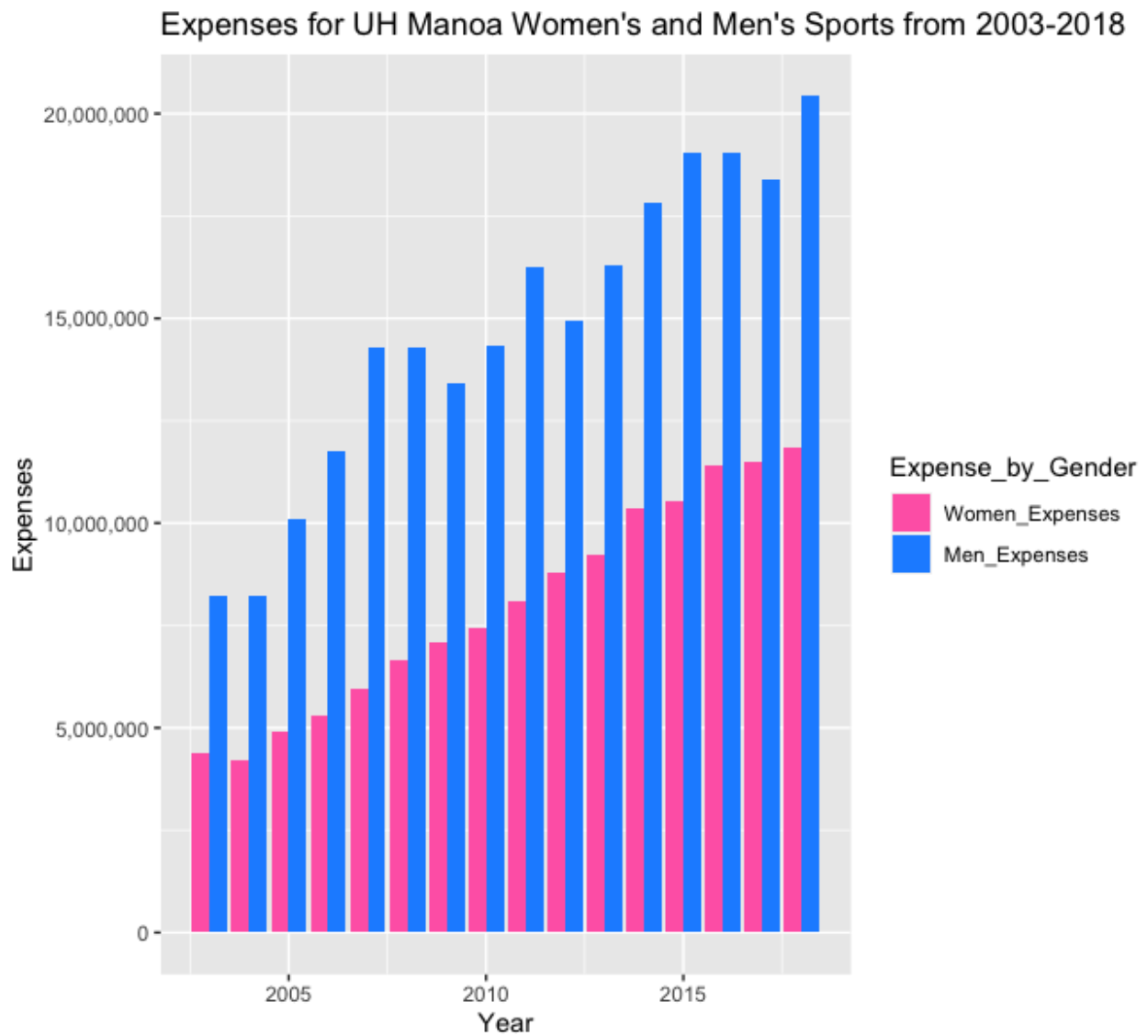
In order to answer the research question, I focused on the data provided for the total expenses, athletically related student aid, and athletic participation. As explained earlier, a difference in the total expenses put towards men's and women's sports may be an indicator of gender inequity at play. In addition, I can further analyze how an individual athlete is valued based on the data given for the student aid and athletic participation data sets. Furthermore, I decided to study the data given for the revenue generated by the men's and women's sports because I often see that revenue is used as a justification for the disparity in budget between men's and women's sports.

Total Expenses for the UH Men's and Women's Sports

Given in the methodology section above, the total expenses that are funded towards men's and women's athletic programs may be an indicator of inequity if there is seen to be an evident difference between the two. Hence, I examined the data set that provided information on the total expenses in the UH athletic

department. When comparing the expenses towards men's sports and women's sports, we find that from 2003-2018, the men's programs were funded more than the women's programs every year.

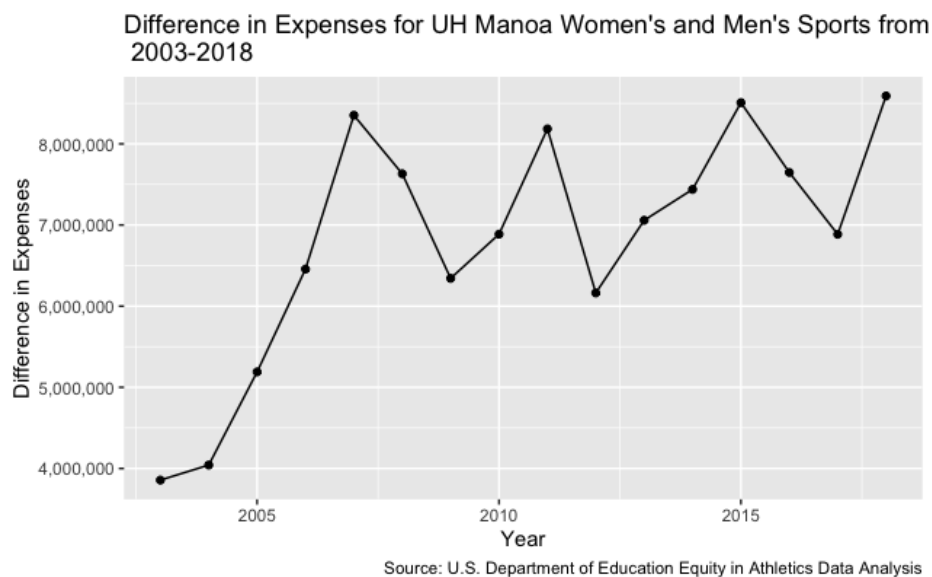
Figure 1. Expenses for UH Manoa Women's and Men's Sports from 2003-2018



On average, the difference between the men's and the women's expenses are \$6,827,154. This is nearly a \$7 million difference in the budget between men's and women's sports, and the largest difference in the expenses is at \$8,590,165 in the most recent (in terms of the data set) year of 2018. Hence, we see that there is quite a large disparity in the expenses towards the men's athletic programs and the women's athletic programs.

Since we saw that the difference in the expenses peaked in our data set during the year of 2018, this may be a cause for concern as this can be an indicator that the difference in expenses could possibly be increasing as time progresses. Consequently, I conducted a regression analysis by setting the

Figure 2. Difference in Expenses for UH Manoa Women's and Men's Sports from 2003-2018



difference in expenses between the men's and women's programs as the dependent variable, and I set the corresponding year as the independent variable. So from this, we should be able to see if there appears to be an upward trend in the difference in expenses as time progresses.

After running the regression analysis, we see that there appears to be an increase in the difference of the expenses by \$213,173 each year. However, from the analysis we also see that the standard error for the y-intercept is \$118,285,518, and the standard error for the coefficient of the year variable is \$58,834.

Accordingly, since we see that we are looking at a large standard error, this means that we are not certain how the difference in the expenses change as time progresses, so we cannot just assume that an upward trend is occurring.

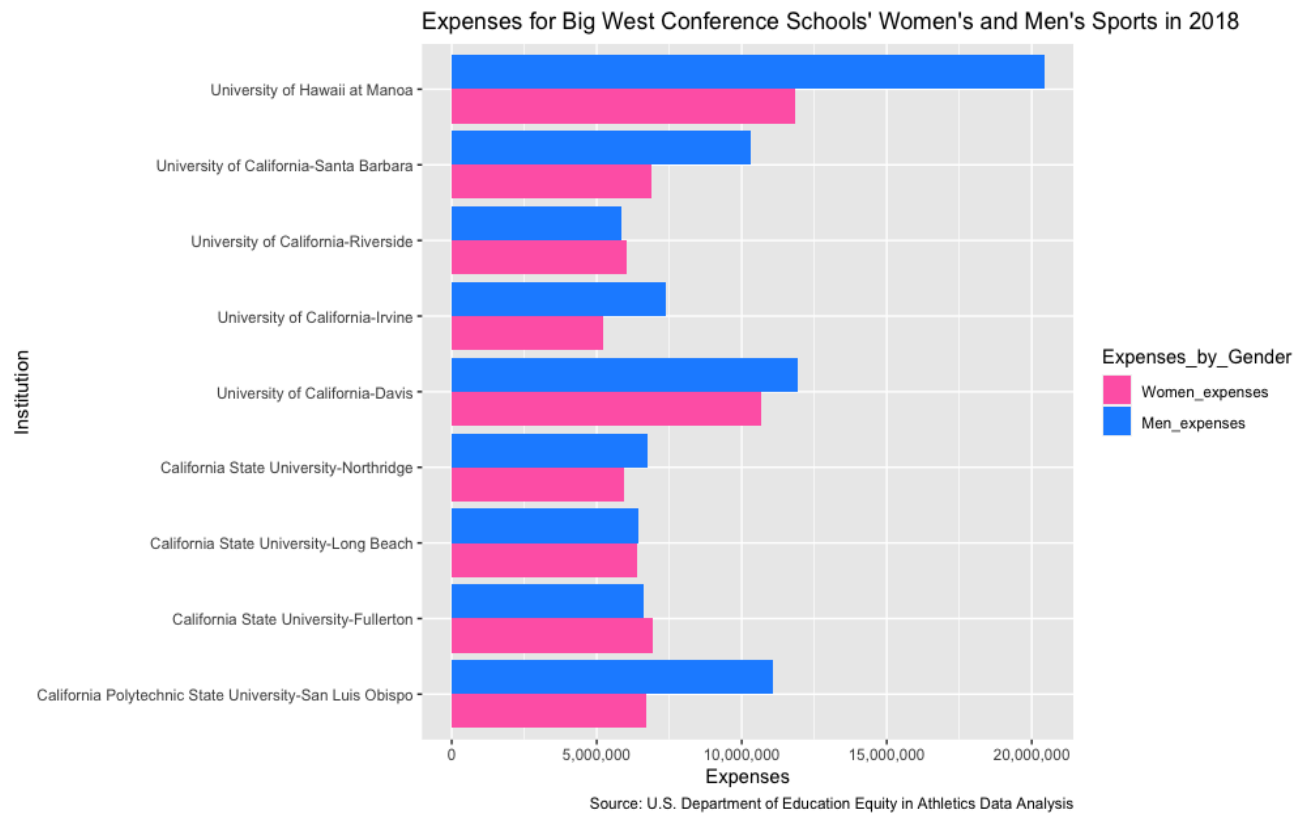
Looking at Figure 2 above, we see that it appears that there is an upward trend in the difference in the expenses from 2003-2006. Then from 2006 and onward, it appears that there is almost a cyclic trend, as we see multiple increases then decreases in the expense differences. It appears that every few years, there is a cycle involving an increase in the expense difference that is then followed by a decrease in the expense difference. We see that for the year of 2018, it appears that a cycle just ended in 2017, so we see the difference in expenses increasing in 2018. So if the data continued to follow this cyclic trend, then we would see that the

budget would not show a continually increasing trend or a continually decreasing trend in the expense differences.

Understanding the Disparity in the Expenses at UH

From the analysis of the total expenses going towards the men's and women's sports at UH, it is evident that there is a large disparity in the funding that goes towards each. When looking at this huge disparity, I wanted to understand why this disparity occurs, and I wanted to figure out where all of this funding for the men's sports is going. As a result, I decided to make a comparison between the total expenses for the men's and women's athletic programs at UH and the total expenses for the men's and women's athletic programs at the other institutions competing in the Big West conference (the athletic conference that UH is a member of) in the year of 2018. If I see that there is a disparity in the expenses between the women's sports and men's sports across the entire conference, then it can indicate that this is an issue that is prevalent throughout all these conference schools. On the other hand, if it is not seen that there is a large disparity throughout the conference, then I can pinpoint what may specifically cause this disparity at UH.

Figure 3. Expenses for Big West Conference Schools' Women's and Men's Sports in 2018



Comparing the other Big West Schools' expenses towards their respective men's and women's sports, it appears that UH has one of the largest disparities in their men's and women's expenses within the conference. In addition to UH, this disparity is also seen at schools like California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO) and the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). From here, I took a deeper dive into the data set to try to figure out what distinguishes these three schools from the other schools in the conference.

After taking a deeper look into the data, I found that only three of the schools within the Big West conference have a men's football team. The reasoning

for these other schools not having a football team is because the Big West conference does not sponsor men's football as a sport. As a result of this, UH competes in the Mountain West conference for football, and in the majority of the other sports teams, they compete in the Big West. Thus, we find that two of the three schools with a large disparity in their expenses, UH and UCSB, field a football team. The other school in the conference that has a football team is the University of California at Davis (UC Davis), and looking at Figure 3 above, there is a slight disparity that can be seen in the expenses for the men's and women's sports at UC Davis. However, we see that this disparity is not as large as the three schools I named previously.

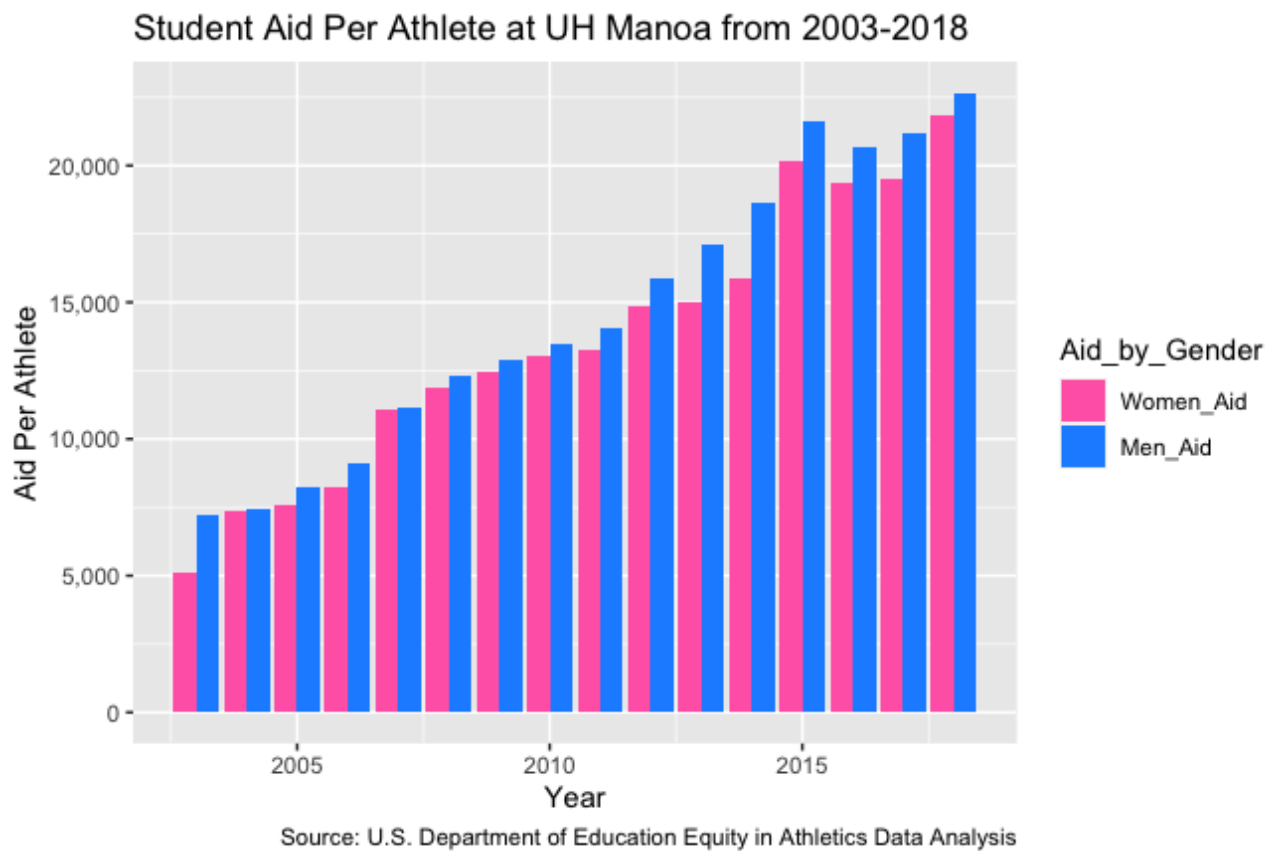
Thus, now examining the expenses of the men's football team at UH, we find that in 2018, \$12,737,691 was spent towards the football team. This covers more than half of the total expenses that went towards the men's sports (\$20,426,398), and these expenses are more than the total expenses that went towards all of the women's sports combined (\$11,836,233). If UH did not have a football team in the year of 2018, then the women's sports would actually get more funding than the men's sports. Hence, we see that the men's football team is a huge part of the disparity in the expenses because there is no equivalent to men's football on the women's side. In 2018, the UH women's sport that had the most funding was women's basketball with \$2,348,133 in expenses, which is only

approximately 19.8% of the funding that went to men's football. Therefore, we see that a huge part of this disparity in expenses at UH is due to the large amount of funding that goes towards the men's football team.

Athletically-Related Student Aid Offered Per Athlete

Moving on from comparing the expenses going towards the entire men's and women's athletic programs, I will now investigate expenses that go towards an individual athlete in the form of student aid. Now it is possible that other expenditures towards certain programs will make some sort of impact on a student athlete, but student aid is an expense that directly affects the individual who receives this aid. Thus, we can calculate how much student aid is offered per individual athlete by taking the amount of total student aid offered and dividing that by the number of student athletes there are at UH. Moreover, we can do this separately for the individual male athlete and the individual female athlete by taking the total student aid offered towards the male athletes and dividing this by the total number of male athletes at UH, and we can do the same calculation for the female athletes.

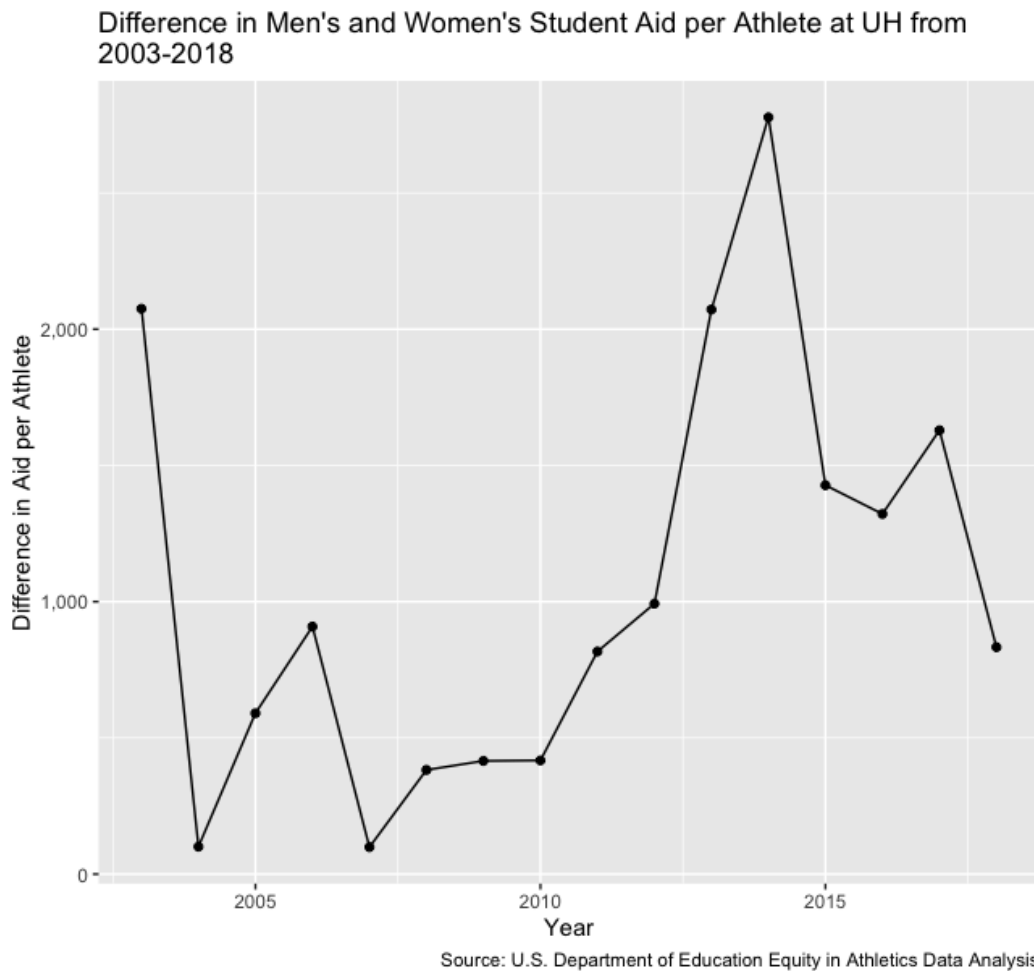
Figure 4. Student Aid Per Athlete at UH Manoa from 2003-2018



After going through the calculations, we can compare the amount of student aid offered to an individual male athlete and an individual female athlete.

Examining Figure 4 above, we see that the individual male athlete receives more student aid than an individual female athlete from 2003-2018. However, it should be noted that there is not as large of a disparity in the student aid per athlete as there was in the total expenses of men's and women's sports at UH.

Figure 5. Difference in Men's and Women's Student Aid per Athlete at UH from 2013-2018



On average, we find that the difference in the amount of student aid per athlete between the male and female athletes is \$1,054 a year. Hence, when an athlete has completed their collegiate athletic career in four years, a male athlete would end up receiving around \$4,216 more in student aid than a female athlete. However, it should be noted that this calculation may not be entirely accurate because some athletes may be walk-ons, so they receive no student aid. No data was given for the total number of athletes receiving student aid, and it is a

possibility that there are more female walk-ons than male walk-ons. In the case that there are more female walk-ons, the student aid per female athlete may increase as we would decrease the amount of female athletes receiving aid. Thus, the disparity may be even smaller than it appears to be, and it all depends on the number of female and male athletes that do not receive student aid.

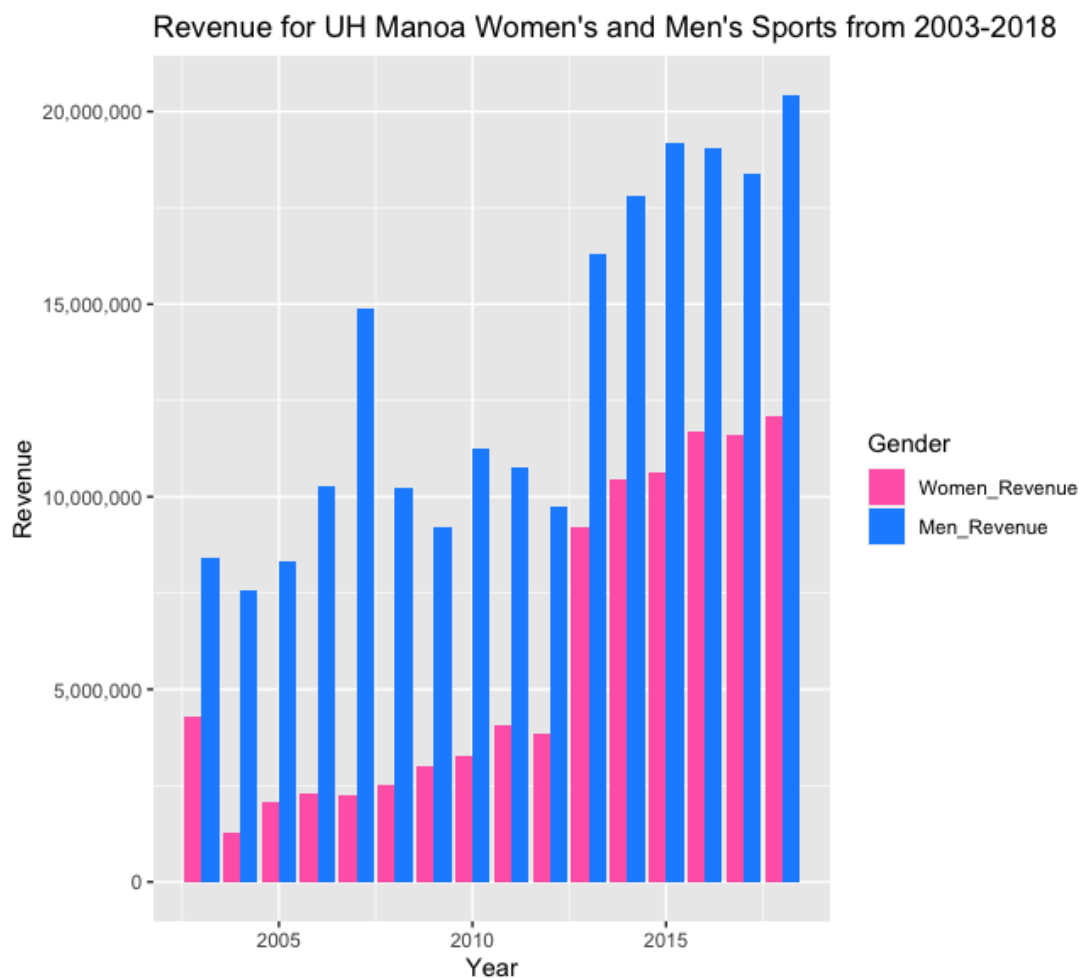
When conducting a regression analysis with the difference in student aid per athlete as the dependent variable and the corresponding year as the independent variable, we find that there is a \$64 increase in the difference a year. However, we see that the standard error for the y-intercept is \$80,560, and the standard error for the coefficient of the year variable is \$40. Thus, since we see large standard errors, this indicates that we do not know how the difference in student aid per athlete is affected as time progresses. As a result, this aligns with the qualitative analysis for Figure 5 because there appears to be no obvious trends that can be found in the difference in student aid per athlete as we progress year by year.

A Justification for the Disparity: Revenue

One of the arguments that I have heard as a justification for the budget disparity between men's and women's sports is that men's sports simply generate the most revenue. Consequently, it may not entirely be the case that these budget disparities are unknown to the public, but instead, people have accepted that men's

sports should be funded more because they believe that those are the sports that will generate the most money. Since it is a common argument to rationalize why a disparity exists between men's and women's expenses in athletics, I decided to take a look at the revenue generated by both the men's and women's athletic programs at UH.

Figure 6. Revenue from UH Manoa Women's and Men's Sports from 2003-2018



Source: U.S. Department of Education Equity in Athletics Data Analysis

By analyzing Figure 6, it is evident that the men's sports generate more revenue than the women's sports. On average, the men's sports generate \$7,325,754 more than the women's sports at UH from 2003-2018. Compared to the average difference in expenses between men's and women's sports (\$6,827,154), it would seem that the average difference in revenue generated is greater than that amount. As a result, some may argue that since the difference in revenue is greater than the difference in expenses, more funding should actually go to the men's sports instead. However, after examining the data more closely, you find something interesting.

Figure 7. Profit Made by UH Women's Sports from 2003-2018

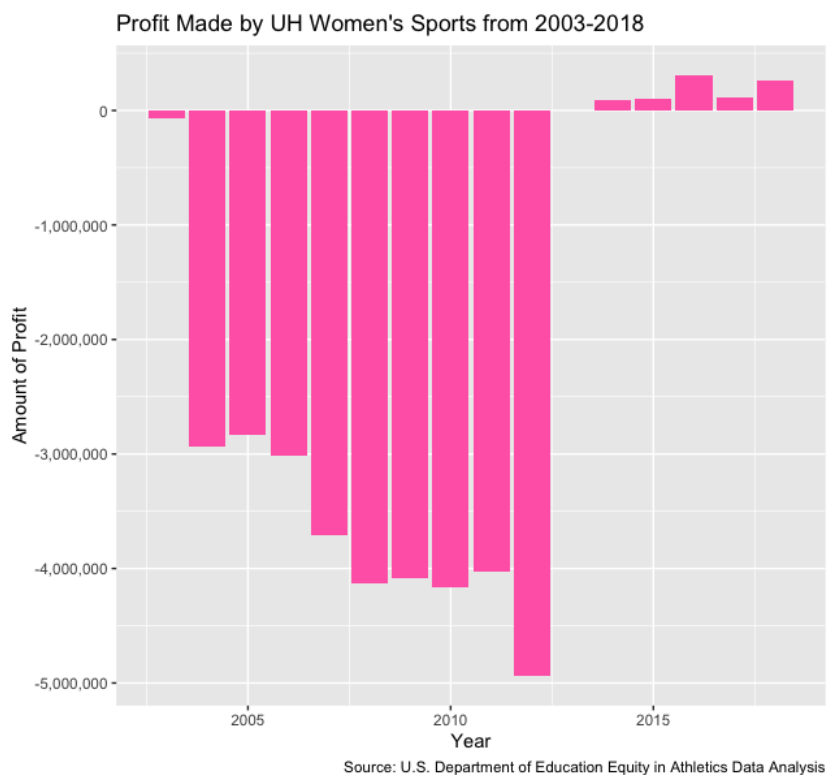
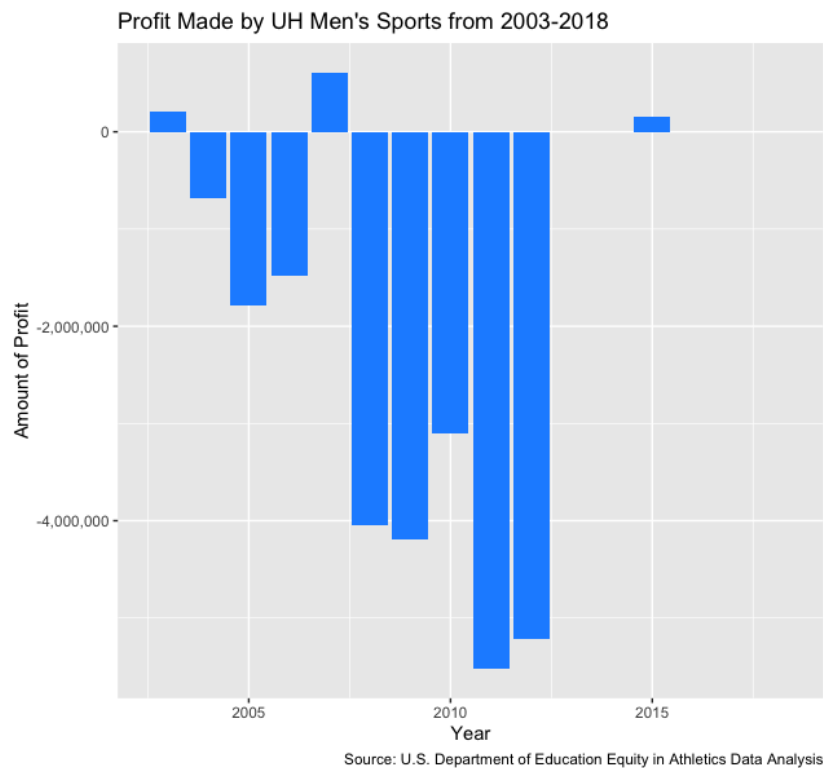


Figure 8. Profits Made by UH Men's Sports from 2003-2018



Shown in Figures 7 and 8 above are bar charts for the amount of profit made by both women's and men's sports at UH from 2003-2018. From these charts, you see that for most of these years, both the men's and women's athletic programs have a negative profit, so they lose money during all of those years. In addition, we find that women's sports lose an average of \$2,062,988 a year whereas the men's sports lose an average of \$1,564,388 a year. Therefore, it seems that the women's athletic programs lose more money than the men's athletic programs from 2003-2018.

However, if we are to look at years 2014-2018 on Figures 7 and 8, we see that the women's sports seem to generate a profit during those years, and the men's sports only generate a profit during one of those years. Hence, this could mean that there is a positive trend occurring in UH women's sports as the most recent athletic years have garnered some profit. On the other hand, it is strange that the visualization shows no data for men's sports during the years of 2014 and 2016-2018. When taking a closer look into the data for these years, the men's sports programs had an equal amount of expenses and revenues. Nevertheless, it is suspicious that the men's sports programs had exactly the same amount of expenses and revenues for four of these five years (and five years if you count 2013 from the visualization as well).

Due to this oddity in the data, I decided to directly analyze the 2018 EADA (Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act) report that was released by the UH Manoa athletics department. Similar to what was seen in the visualization above, the men's team broke even with \$0 of profit, though the value listed for the men's revenue and expenses was different at \$18,381,793 (less than what is seen in the total expenses visualization data set from above). Also, like Figure 7 shows, in the report, the women's sports made a profit of \$112,015 in 2018. However, following the section where the report gives information on the total expenses and revenue, we have this supplemental information page that says, "The Athletics Department

had a net loss of \$1,916,071 for the fiscal year of 2018 ... \$1,916,071 was added to the ‘not allocated by gender/Sport’ to reflect this” (“2018 EADA Report”, 2018). Thus, it is possible that the UH athletics department has been covering up a loss of profit from men’s sports by allocating any losses to the “not allocated by gender/Sport” category. By doing this, the department saves themselves from any critique involving the expenses going towards men’s sports. Therefore, I believe that from the years of 2013-2014 and 2016-2018, the athletic department has been allocating any additional loss in money from men’s sports towards this “not allocated by gender/Sport” category.

Conclusion

Accordingly, based on the analysis of the data involving expenses, student aid, and revenue, it is difficult to come up with a definitive answer to the research question. However, from what I have examined and researched, I believe that there is gender inequity in the athletic department at UH Manoa. In terms of the total expenses, we see that there is a heavy bias towards men’s sports, though a lot of the funding goes towards the football team specifically. Also, the student aid offered per athlete slightly favors male athletes over female athletes, though additional data on the number of athletes receiving student aid could give us more accurate results for that category. The only area that could act as a justification for the budget

disparity is that the men's sports lose less money than the women's sports, but as seen in the revenue section above, the data provided by UH may not be the most trustworthy.

Thus, to get a more definitive answer to the research question, more information may be needed by the UH athletic department. From the findings in the revenue section, it seems possible that the information that is disseminated to the public may not be accurate, and there may possibly be more expenses going towards the men's sports. If this were the case, then this would indicate an even larger disparity in the expenses, and the men's sports would lose a larger amount of money on average (not comparatively to the women's sports though). However, in order to get to these new findings, updated data or an explanation of the EADA reports from the UH athletic department will be needed.

Regardless, we strive for all our athletes to be offered an equal opportunity to succeed. As it stands, the men's sports, more specifically the men's football team, is given a huge amount of funding compared to the women's sports. However, it appears that the women's sports have been doing well enough to generate profit in recent years, and our female athletes have been working just as hard as the male athletes at UH. So hopefully, the women's sports will continue to generate revenue in the years to come, and the large disparity in the budget between the men's and women's teams will decrease as time goes on. Thus, to

take the first step in becoming a more gender equitable athletic department, we need to recognize the gender inequity that is apparent in the present moment.

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