



May 24, 2017

Sherika Montgomery, Chair  
Committee on Women's Athletics  
c/o National Collegiate Athletic Association  
700 W. Washington Street  
P.O. Box 6222  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Dear Sherika,

Please accept this letter of support for the efforts of the College STUNT Association (CSA) of USA Cheer to develop STUNT as an NCAA emerging sport.

As a Title IX expert witness and former CEO of the Women's Sports Foundation often called upon to express my opinion as to whether or not "cheerleading" is a legitimate sport that could be counted as athletics participation opportunities under Title IX, I am pleased to observe the progress of an organization that is making a concerted effort to follow Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Guidelines for counting STUNT as a sport within the athletics program. In my opinion, the current STUNT competition structure defined by CSA national rules meets one of the definitions of a sport as advanced by OCR. The establishment of a STUNT national championship this year was also an essential next step in fulfilling definitional requirements. While it is not possible to assess whether other OCR definitional requirements are being met until the sport is active on college campuses, the CSA initiative to request that STUNT be placed on the NCAA "emerging sport" list would advance this process.

All NCAA efforts to advance additional opportunities for women to participate in athletics and derive their important educational benefits are important. There are many girls and women who have expressed their stunt and tumbling skills through the student spirit activity of cheerleading who do not have the desire to pursue competitive gymnastics because of many factors. The development of STUNT as a sport alternative can provide an important opportunity for this group. As important, because many athletic departments are already supporting cheerleading coaches and programs, administrators may be more inclined to add STUNT as a sport compared to other more expensive or unfamiliar alternatives.

In this period of economic downturn and athletics program expense reductions in non-revenue sports due to pressures of the football and basketball arms race, STUNT may be one of the few realistic possibilities for reigniting institutional commitments to Title IX compliance – a sorely needed movement. Title IX compliance efforts have literally and figuratively "stalled" over the last decade as evidenced by the still significant participation gap between male and female athletes. The addition of STUNT as an emerging sport in the NCAA program may help close this gap in the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for the efforts of CSA to secure NCAA emerging sport status for STUNT.

Sincerely,

Donna A. Lopiano  
President