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Faculty mentors: Exploring their impact on performance and productivity in the sport management academy

Jess Dixon, *University of Windsor*

Jeff Mott, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

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**Presentation (25-minute)
Abstract 235**

Founded in 1985, the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) is the academic association responsible for promoting, stimulating, and encouraging study, research, scholarly writing, and professional development in the field of sport management (NASSM, 2006). Consistent with the growth of sport management degree programs in North America and abroad (Comfort, 2005a; 2005b), a number of scholars have expressed concern for the preparation of doctoral candidates (e.g., Pitts, 2001), and the hiring of new faculty in this distinct field of study (e.g., Weese, 2002). Critical to the success of new sport management faculty, as well as the continued growth of the field as a whole, is the type and quality of mentoring that takes place between doctoral candidates and their dissertation advisors (Pastore, 2003).

Mentoring is an important subject of study for researchers in disciplines as far-ranging as business administration, education, psychology, and most relevant to this study, sport management (Pastore, 2003). Recently introduced to the mentoring literature is the concept of a protege network, which is defined as "...the compilation of a single mentor's proteges who have subsequently experienced upward career mobility" (Mott, Porschitz, Sherman, & Manz, in press). In the context of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I basketball coaches, Mott and his colleagues found that the characteristics of these networks can serve as powerful indicators of the mentoring potential of direct leaders. In particular, this study revealed that the upward career mobility of head basketball coaches is significantly related to the aggregate size of their mentors' protege networks.

To date, published research on protege networks has been limited to the context of NCAA basketball coaches (Mott et al., in press). With intentions of furthering this emerging line of scientific inquiry, the purpose of this research study was to explore the impact of protege networks on research productivity in the sport management academy. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions: Can a faculty advisor's success as a mentor be evaluated by his/her development of future scholars? Do outstanding patterns of scholar development by particular advisors contribute to above average scholarly performance of their proteges?

Using the degree-granting programs listed on the NASSM website along with the directories of graduate and undergraduate programs in sport management (Comfort, 2005a; 2005b) as the basis for sampling, the researchers identified a comprehensive list of faculty within sport management (broadly interpreted) during the 2006-2007 academic year ($n = 1325$). Subsequently, information pertaining to each faculty member's doctoral studies, publication record, and editorial board service activities was collected from a variety of archival sources. Faculty publication records were derived from the *Journal of Sport Management*, the *Sport Management Review*, and the *European Sport Management Quarterly* (and the former *European Journal for Sport Management*). These three journals were selected due to their affiliations with the primary professional associations of the field (i.e., NASSM, EASM, SMAANZ), along with the perceived quality of the peer-reviewed manuscripts being published within them (Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007).

Data analysis involved a mapping procedure of the mentors for all faculty members in the sample. In this study, a mentor was defined as the faculty member's doctoral dissertation advisor (or co-advisors). This mapping process assisted in developing the protege network for each identified mentor. Specifically, the research process acknowledged each current faculty member who studied under the identified mentor as a doctoral student and thus determined the size of the protege network for each mentor. Therefore, commonalities and differences in trends related to research agendas, publication records, and editorial board service activities were studied in relation to each of the protege networks. Within case (network) and cross-case analyses were conducted.

Results from this study inform the sport management field of the value of mentoring in a variety of ways. Firstly, by assessing the relationship of committed mentoring with subsequent productivity in scholarly research and service, the results of this study may assist institutions in targeting their hiring efforts, as well as in attracting doctoral students. Secondly, these results may prove beneficial to new and current faculty who are interested in aligning themselves with, and learning from, those mentors who have demonstrated excellence in developing future scholars within the field. Lastly, and most importantly, it will further emphasize Pastore's (2003) call for the study of mentoring in sport management and, hopefully, signal the importance of mentoring to future scholarly productivity.