

Opportunities and Challenges in Offering a Sport Management Program in the B-School

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Sport has undergone remarkable growth in the past decade and is now recognized as one of the main cultural components of modern American society. Sport is big business. The size of the sport industry was \$152 billion in 1995 and today sport is over a 213 billion-dollar industry and is ranked in the top 20 largest industries, the 4th largest growth industry, in the United States, and the 11th fastest growth industry in the world. The sport industry is larger than the automobile, petroleum, and air transportation sectors of the United States economy. In addition to the rapid growth of the sport industry, the nature of sport business has changed as well. Sport is now a major component of the entertainment industry, thus competing for discretionary income of consumers world-wide. With the growth of the sport industry, employment opportunities have increased along with the need for training of sport professionals to direct and manage the numerous sport organizations within the sport industry. The Sports Market Place Registry, an industry directory, reported more than 24,000 listings for sport people and organizations. A USA Today report estimates that there are upward of 4.5 million sport-related jobs in the area of marketing, entrepreneurship, administration, representation, and media. This increase has created a huge need for competent personnel to fill these wide varieties of jobs in all segments of the sport industry.

Typical sport industry segments include: sport and athletic clubs, intercollegiate athletics, campus recreation, sport marketing, sport communications, sport tourism, semi-professional sports, professional sports, sport event and facility management, and international sport. In forecasting the sport industry growth for 2015, it is estimated that sport/leisure time activities will account for 50% of the gross national product. Many colleges and universities offer programs of study, which prepare personnel for management careers within the sport industry, often called 'Sport Management' programs. In 1980, 20 colleges and universities in the U.S. offered programs in sport management. By 1985 this number had grown to 83 programs: 40 undergraduate, 32 graduate and 11 at both levels. In 1988, 109 programs were reported, with 51 offering undergraduate degrees, 33 master's level and 25 sponsored both undergraduate and master's programs (Parkhouse, 1988). Today, it is estimated that over 200 colleges and universities offer degree programs in sport management with over 125 programs at the undergraduate level, 65 master programs and 45 institutions offer both graduate and undergraduate programs, with 6 only institutions offering doctoral programs (Parkhouse and Pitts, 2001). Sport management degree programs are among the fastest growing areas of study in America universities. More and more students want to enroll in these programs, and universities, starving for students, are expanding their programs to accommodate this great demand. It was reported that in 2002 there were 210 entry-level faculty positions open and that many doctoral students are able to find a teaching position in a university before or upon graduation (Street & Smith's SportsBusiness Journal, 2005).

While sport management programs have traditionally been housed in a College of Education or Liberal Arts in a Department of Physical Education, Kinesiology or Leisure Studies, some colleges and universities are beginning to offer sport management degree programs in a schools of business, similar to the Sport Management program at Loyola University Chicago. To date, there are a limited number of schools which offer sport management degree programs in the school of business. Sport management programs have been scrutinized in the academic press and the media. While sport management programs in Colleges of Education have purportedly trained students for careers in sports business, they often had nothing to do with college business schools. These programs often required students to take courses in anatomy and physiology, which make no sense in operating a sport business. It becomes critical for the discipline to develop a consistent knowledge structure that sufficiently meets the merit of other disciplines (Slack, 1991). "The primary issue for sport management is a lack of qualified faculty to (a) teach the increasing number of students enrolling in sport management programs and (b) conduct research necessary to build a distinct body of knowledge" (Mahony, 2008, p. 1). Faculty members in some of these programs have retooled from other disciplines and/or have no practical experience in the sport industry. As the impact of sport management programs on the industry continues to grow, it will important to find a balance in teaching both theory and practicality. Further, there is no accreditation for sport management program, but rather an approval rating conferred by the academic group noted as the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM). NASSM has established guidelines for which only a limited number of schools have been approved.

Sport management programs in business schools have also received criticism, as programs sometimes appear to be driven by the tuition model as it is an easy way to fill the classroom. Some business academics are concerned that sport management programs do not adhere to program standards established by the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

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Further, practitioners and employers in the sport industry are often dismayed by many sport management graduates' paucity of practical skills (Helyar, 2006).

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with offering sport management programs in school of business. Issues to be explored, but not limited to, include: 1. NASSM approval vs. AACSB accreditation 2. Faculty and program acceptance 3. Faculty preparedness: academic and professional qualifications 4. Faculty and student perceptions 5. Student preparedness: business foundation vs. leisure/recreation foundation 6. Internship opportunities 7. Job opportunities

While this presentation proposal is submitted as a 25-minute oral presentation (including questions), it might be appropriate to extend the presentation to a 75-minute full session roundtable discussion at the discretion of the review committee.