Effectively Positioning Sport Management Programs in Institutions of Higher Learning:
Strategies and Insights for Sustained/Increased Support

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75-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop (White IBIS)

The economic downturn has dramatically changed the landscape for many academic leaders and their programs (Kellor, 2009). Many senior administrators have been required to make severe budget reductions in response to reduced university allocations, largely as a consequence of diminished government grants and lower returns on investment income (e.g., to support endowed, tenured professors). Revenue generated from fund raising activities is also in shorter supply as donors/prospective donors tighten their belts and deal with increased requests from other financially oppressed organizations and groups. Sport management professors and Sport Management Department/Program Chairs must be very skilled and strategic to maintain their resource base for their programs in this economic climate, let alone increase their base of support.

While the recent signs of an economic recovery are both encouraging and positive, the impact of this recovery on the higher education sector may not be felt immediately, if at all. Some (e.g., Barton & Preston, 2009; Kelderman, 2009) predict that governments may reduce funding levels for public service organizations, including universities, to meet stimulus program commitments and balance their own budgets. When economic prosperity does return to the higher education sector, the competition from other units/programs will be significant. The importance of sport management professors and Department Chairs having the skills and strategies needed to effectively position their programs within a Faculty or University for sustained or incremental support, while always important, will take on a heightened level of significance.

A number of researchers have contributed articles on the topic of effectively positioning programs/causes. Some have focused on the academic sector, and in doing so, offered ideas and strategies for heightening success. While the suggestions offered are helpful and will be discussed during the presentation, it is also of value to hear the experiences and suggestions of current academic Deans and administrators. These members are dealing with the economic realities of the times, and are on the evaluation end of reviewing proposals from sport management advocates, as well as from other constituent groups in a Faculty or School.

The purpose of this symposium is for current college and university administrators to offer their insights and strategies on how members can effectively position their program so it can effectively compete with other campus units who seek to maintain their resource base in the current economic climate and/or compete for incremental resources when financial times improve. The panel will discuss the situation in detail, and offer suggestions that they have seen work in the past, as well as those that may work in the future. Participants will leave the session with some ideas that will help them strategically and effectively position their program in a highly competitive, and currently constrained, environment.

The format will include questions asked by a moderator followed by responses from each of the panelists. Additionally, the moderator will invite NASSM members attending the symposium to participate by asking questions.

The questions will be derived from a number of significant issues associated with positioning a program in an academic environment, including:
1. How has the economic downturn affected your Faculty/Program?

2. How are you addressing the situation in your Faculty/Department?

3. What factors did you consider when making your budget reductions?

4. What are the key factors that university administrators consider when reviewing proposals for increased resources?

5. What factors do administrators you consider when evaluating requests for increased support?

6. What advice would you give NASSM Professors/Department Chairs members re: effectively positioning their program for sustained and or increased levels of support at their own institution?

7. What strategies might be effective in the future to secure additional:
   a. Full-time faculty and/or staff support?
   b. Part time faculty and/or staff support?
   c. Operating budget (base) increases?
   d. One time - capital budget requests?
   e. One time program enrichment requests?

References:


