If You Build It, Will They Come?: A Demographic Assessment of Undergraduate and Graduate Sport Management Programs in the U.S.

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The composition of the United States labor force and college/university student populations has changed dramatically in the last 30 years. Participation by women and members of different racial and ethnic minority groups is on the rise. Today, women comprise 47.3% of the labor force – an increase of 5.3% since 1980 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). In 2009, ethnic minorities (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans) represented nearly 30% of the labor force compared to less than 15% in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). In addition, women earned 57% of the bachelor’s degrees conferred in 2009 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). The percentage of Hispanics and Asian Americans earning bachelors’ degrees has increased to 8% and 7%, respectively, since 1980 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

While the increase in gender and ethnic diversity of the workforce and higher education is impressive, studies have shown that the demographics sport organizations and sport management education programs may be lagging behind (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; Cawley, 1999; Cunningham, Bruening, & Straub, 2006; Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Danylchuck & McLean, 2001; Fink & Cunningham, 2005; Hums, 1994; Lapchick, 2009; Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2001). For example, the most recent Racial and Gender Report Card (Lapchick, 2009) found that between 2000 and 2009, the representation of women in high-level management positions declined in every major professional North American sport league with the exception of the WNBA. In addition, the report also found that “NCAA member institutions and their conferences lost ground for both their record for gender hiring practices and hiring practices by race” (Lapchick 2009, p. 6). Acosta and Carpenter (2010) noted that the number of female athletic directors at NCAA institutions has dropped to less than 20% -- a 2.2% decline from 2008. Conversely, the number of African American men serving as general managers and coaches in professional sport increased 10% and 2%, respectively (Lapchick, 2009). Women’s representation in management positions in the Olympic Movement is also low, with numbers falling below designated International Olympic Committee target levels (International Olympic Committee, 2009).

In a 1994 presentation at the North American Society for Sport Management, Hums addressed increasing opportunities for women and minority students in sport management. At that time, men (75%) outnumbered women (25%) four to one in sport management undergraduate programs. African-American men represented 11% of students in sport management compared to just 3% of African-American women. Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans represented less than 3%. Men made up 63% of Master’s students and 80% of doctoral students (Hums, 1994). A 1999 follow-up study by the Sports Business Journal found that, after combining graduate and undergraduate sport management programs, women comprised 27.8% of sport management students. The number of minority men (12.7%) and women (6.1%) also remained relatively unchanged (Cawley, 1999). In 2002, Larsen reported that the number of Black sport marketing students has increased to 14.9% and women's enrollment declined by 9%. To date, no other study has measured the demographics of sport management undergraduate and graduate students. It is time to reassess the demographics of students in our field to gain a better understanding of our student body and the implications for sport management educators and practitioners.

Several sport management scholars (DeSensi, Kelley, Blanton, & Bleitel, 1990; DeSensi, 1994; Hums, 1994; Moore, 2008; Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004; Parks & Robertson, 2002) and scholars from other disciplines (Leverett, Parker, & McDonald, 2007; Levsen, Goettel, Chong, & Farris, 2001) have argued that obtaining equity in the workplace begins with obtaining equity in the classroom. Classrooms and organizations rich in multiculturalism have lower incidences of conflict and discrimination (DeSensi, 1994). Valuing differences and personal experiences promotes awareness, tolerance, and interpersonal and intrapersonal development (DeSensi, 1994). Educational programs can help foster a multicultural environment; however, it is important for students and employees to understand cultural diversity, as well as the appropriate management techniques for a group of diverse individuals (DeSensi, 1994; Moore 2008; Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004). The management of diversity is critical to the success of a 21st century sport organization (Moore, 2008), including the sport management classroom.

In order to assess the diversity of the student body in sport management academic programs, e-mail links to surveys will be sent to directors of the 314 institutions with undergraduate and/or graduate sport management programs listed on the NASSM website. Data will be collected using SurveyMonkey. In this mixed-methods study, subjects will be asked to provide the following information: (a) total number of currently enrolled students (undergraduate, masters, and/or doctoral) by gender, (b) number of currently enrolled racial/ethnic minority students (undergraduate, masters, and/or doctoral) by gender, (c) perceived barriers for women or racial/ethnic minority students wanting to major in sport management, and (d) suggestions for increasing

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the number of female and racial/ethnic minority students sport management majors. This presentation will (a) provide a demographic profile of today’s sport management undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students, (b) identify potential barriers to women or racial/ethnic minority students choosing sport management as a major, and (c) how to overcome the barriers. As sport management educators, we have the opportunity to contribute to a more diverse workforce by increasing gender and racial/ethnic diversity in sport management classroom. Results of this study will help sport management faculty members develop strategies for retaining female and racial/ethnic minority students as sport management majors.