Steps To Organize and Implement a High Quality, Short-Term Study Abroad Program

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In a recent Earle F. Zeigler Lecture, Dr. Karen Danylchuk asked the question, “Are our students being prepared to understand and become engaged as world-minded citizens? Do we as sport management academicians have a responsibility in this regard? And if so, are we achieving this task?” (Danylchuk, 2011, p. 3). Lucie Thibault (2009), indicated that current students needed to have an understanding and sensitivity to multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multidisciplinarity in order to succeed in the global realm of sport. How do we prepare our students for an understanding of competition in the global theatre of sport? What kind of experiential learning activities can sport management educators provide that will enable students to achieve that knowledge? The authors of this presentation will describe one method to help achieve those goals.

Thomas Friedman (2005) in The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, aptly described a “shrinking” world in terms of technology, economics, politics, business, and culture. Some scholars have advocated that an international perspective involves making the campus more oriented to international events and understanding (Hanson & Meyerson, 1995). Others such as Harari (1992), argued that a systematic approach of incorporating global thinking should be infused into curriculum in all disciplines. Knight (2003), stated that internationalization is “the process of integrating an international or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education” (p.2). Globalization of the Sport Industry has rapidly increased over the past few decades. Growth in the labor exchange in the form of foreign players in college and professional sport leagues (Li, Hofacre & Mahoney, 2001); foreign club ownership and investment by American businessmen; telecommunication giants like AOL-Time-Warner, News Corporation involvement in global sport enterprises; and international management and marketing companies such as Octagon and International Management Group (IMG) with specific expertise in athlete representation, have expanded their efforts worldwide (Wright, 1999). As sport business borders expand, it is reasonable to assume that the need for sport managers with globalized training and experience will be in future demand.

Li, Ammon, and Kanters (2002), described six methods for developing a global perspective and understanding within a Sport Management Curriculum: 1. Infusion of international components in courses taught; 2. The development of new international courses; 3. The offering of an international sport minor; 4. The provision of opportunities for students to participate in learning activities held abroad; and 5. The recruitment of international students for your university program; and 6. Faculty participation in professional, international activities.

The authors, with more than 16 years of international experience leading educational groups to over 7 countries, will explain a step-by-step process for creation, development, organization, marketing/recruitment, implementation, and evaluation of a high quality, short-term education abroad experience for students.

Student and faculty experiences in study-abroad programs have included exchanges, co-op programs, internships, service learning and a variety of short and long-term for-credit studies. While the numbers of overall students studying abroad are relatively low, they are increasing. About 2% of Canadian students studied abroad in 2006 (AUCP, 2007). About 260,327 students from the U.S. studied abroad in 2008/09. Social Sciences and Business/Management were the leading fields of study, and European and Latin American countries were the most common destinations. Short-term (summer, mini-terms and under 8-week periods) accounted for 54.6% of study-abroad, with 41.1% studying for one semester in second place (Open Doors, 2009). The authors will share their expertise and experience on how to establish a study-abroad program that will be easily adaptable to any location or destination.