Effectively Positioning Sport Management Programs in the Business School: Issues, Challenges, and Coping Strategies

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Professional preparation: Friday, May 25, 2012
60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop (Salon C)

Abstract 2012-218

Over the past 45 years (dating back to the first full-fledged sport management program founded at Ohio University), there has been considerable discourse (e.g. Mahony, 2008; Sawyer, 1993) over sport management programs’ fit within a particular unit, school, or standalone alternatives. During the explosion of sport management as a field and several programs commencing or significantly expanding operations in the 2000’s, a pivotal trend sees more business schools embracing the field by either starting or migrating sport management programs from different units within the same institution. As of autumn 2011, there are 122 sport management programs housed in a business school (many more standalone, continuing or professional studies programs are intimately linked to the school of business on the respective campus) (Zaharia & Kaburakis, 2011). Almost half of these programs (56) are operating under the auspices of a business school accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the most prestigious accrediting body in business. Enumerating more than 1,200 member institutions around the world, the AACSB reviews and accredits most R1 business schools in the US and confers accredited status to the most highly regarded business schools internationally. The remaining sport management programs are housed in a business school that is accredited by either the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) or the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). The members of these two accrediting bodies are usually small business schools with a teaching and learning focus.

This instrumental moment in the history of the field necessitates careful observation, research, and collaboration among sport management faculty, to ensure that the interests of the field on all matters pertaining to teaching, research, service, and administration will be duly considered and well served by business school and university executives. More than a fad, sport management programs housed in business schools do not merely carry their weight by means of credit-hours and income generation. They may certainly be the most active unit in their business school by means of student engagement, quality research output, service outreach, as well as industry relations, in some occasions outperforming other business school units/programs even in the difficult front of external funding.

This symposium is proposed for a panel of sport management educators whose programs are currently housed in a business school to provide their insightful perspectives on issues and challenges facing their programs and discuss strategies on how these issues and challenges can be dealt with so as to effectively position sport management programs in a business school. Specifically, the panel will address a number of issues and challenges in the following areas with examples:

- Curriculum
- Research Expectations
- Degree issues
- Accreditation Issues
- Organizational issues
A survey of the state of sport management education and sport management faculty in business school units will be provided. Business school administrators require as much quantifiable data as possible prior to deciding whether or not to invest in or realign a sport management program from a different campus unit. The survey analyzes sport Management programs in business schools according to accrediting agency of the parent unit/school, degrees offered (undergraduate/graduate), geographic location, public/private status, research classification, and other variables. The survey also provides benchmarking information pertaining to curricula, research metrics/journals' impact, measures of service, evaluations of administrative performance for sport management program directors and department chairs, as well as for external funding and industry involvement with the program.

It is the panel's hope that the symposium will provide information not only to institutions contemplating movement to or establishment of a sport management program in a school of business, but also to institutions whose sport management programs have already been housed in the business school. Thus, the panel will discuss strategies to deal with several issues and challenges confronting sport management programs in business schools, toward gaining a better understanding of the particular intricacies and entanglements whilst navigating processes with traditionally established business programs, faculty, and administrators.

The format of the symposium will include a short presentation to be given by each panel member on a particular issue followed by a Q&A session. During the Q&A session, the panel moderator will first ask the panel members to address a number of questions. The moderator will also invite symposium attendees to participate in the session by posing questions and providing feedback.