The Big Picture: How Historical Studies Can Help Sport Managers

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A growing body of research from a number of perspectives is examining the various aspects of academic rigor and pedagogical substance related to the products produced by business schools and sport management programs (Glenn, 2010, 2011; Slack, 1998; de Wilde, Seifried & Adelman, 2010; Seifried, 2009). As an example, senior writer for The Chronicle of Higher Education, David Glenn (2011) recently finished a collaborative effort with The New York Times in which he called business majors “The Default Major.” In that piece, Glenn noted significant deficiencies in writing and rigor demonstrated by students as well as little appreciation for “contextual knowledge” (p. ED16). Appropriately, Glenn charged these institutions produced graduates with little flexibility and poor adaptation skills that were necessary for addressing real life management opportunities. Other advocates like Boyte (2004) similarly argue for real world engagement to help strengthen communities while Boyer (1990) challenged educators to integrate teaching and research through methods that promote discovery and the application of information to real world problems. Specifically, Boyer reminded us that “the work of the academy must relate to the world beyond the campus” (p. 75).

While not always a business discipline or in a business department, sport management scholars have focused their research and adopted many areas of business school methodology. These research areas could be characterized as focusing on theory over context (Pettigrew, 1985; Seifried, 2010). In the past decade, some sport management scholars have called for a greater emphasis on studying long-term business and administration practices and context. Trevor Slack’s call for studying change in management is an example (Slack, 1997; 1998). Others have also illustrated how using more historical methodology in business and sport management is a way to enhance both research and pedagogy (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007; Seifried, 2010; Amis & Silk, 2005; Booth & Rowlinson, 2006). At the moment, however, few scholars of sport have submitted article manuscripts to long term, "macro" or historically oriented business journals such as The Journal of Macro-Marketing, Business History, Business History Review or Management and Organization History. In addition, sport management scholars should be more interested in the longitudinal perspective as we have now seen new opportunities available, such as the Mark H. McCormack archives at the University of Massachusetts.

This 60-minute symposium will focus on the big picture in sport management research and indicate gaps between research and teaching efforts, along with the real world application of those activities. We will also highlight valuable primary source material now open to sport management scholars. The symposium will primarily feature scholars working in both teaching and research institutions, and how they use historical methodology in their research and teaching to connect to real world problems. We believe it is necessary and timely to assemble individuals at the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Conference to present and discuss the key issues related to this topic because scholars in our field are regularly challenged by institutional, community, regional, and national organizations to produce high-quality students and programs capable of meeting the needs and demands of today and tomorrow. We also recognize that many sport management programs are possibly restricted by their department and in some cases their business schools, should they exist in a separate college. Thus, this topic presents a viable and untapped area for sport management scholars to explore to help their research and teaching needs. This session is comprised of five presentations that examine different aspects of sport management research and teaching. Each presenter will provide a short overview of their research or teaching, as outlined below, followed by a concluding discussion led by the chair between presenters and attendees.

The first presentation by scholars at both a research university and teaching college provides a: a) general description about the historical research design process; b) the paucity of historical research methods in sport
The benefits and challenges of the historical research process will also be presented during this time. Overall, the first presentation focuses on explaining the historical research methods and expounding how scholars can control their academic environment to produce better prepared thinkers and leaders for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The second presenter will discuss the importance and opportunities offered for researchers at the Mark H. McCormack archives at the University of Massachusetts. Mark McCormack's family, famed founder of International Management Group (I.M.G.) gave the Isenberg School of Management a $1.5 million dollar gift to endow the Mark H. McCormack Sport Management Program at the University of Massachusetts. In addition, the gift provides Mark H. McCormack's extensive papers, 10,000 boxes of material relating to his life (1930-2003) and storied career (Blaguszewski, 2010, para. 2). The third presenter reports on directions for current and future research topics within sport management and demonstrates the relative impact of historical study and the availability of historical-based journals. The presenter will examine how business historians work at business schools such as the Harvard Business School and the Wharton School of Business and the discipline of business history generally. The fourth presenter will discuss the upcoming special issue on sport in the Journal of Historical Research in Marketing. The journal's editorial board issued the call for papers in a special issue titled, "Marketing Sport Through the Ages," which will focus on the "historical experience of sport marketing" in 2010 (Ross & Hardy, 2010, para. 1). The call was sent to listservs in the fields of sport management, sport history and business history. The journal evolved out of the much older Journal of Macro-Marketing, a topic on which few scholars of sport have completed research. The fifth presenter will discuss challenges and opportunities for those engaged in non-traditional sport management research at a research one university. Specifically, the presenter will discuss how, for example, the University of Toronto published a scholarly book on the business history of hockey and how it was perceived.

This symposium was designed to cover a wide range of topics related to historical research for business schools and sport management programs and is not meant to be exclusive. We welcome and encourage important feedback and scholarly discussion related to teaching ideas and research tactics. The presenters will provide sufficient time after the presentations for dialogue exchange between the audience and presenters.