

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

### Sport Management Accreditation: Balancing Prescriptive Standards and Institutional Flexibility

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**Professional preparation**

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**20-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)  
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**Abstract 2013-145**

**1:40 PM**

Accreditation has become an integral part of higher education (CHEA, 2009, Eaton, 2009). Faculty leaders in sport management have been concerned with the nature and role of specialized accreditation for decades (DeSensi et al, 1990). The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) was developed through the collaborative efforts of NASSM and NASPE to be the accrediting body for sport management programs regardless of home unit, program enrollment, or other concerns unique to sport management (Gladden & Williams, 2012). COSMA replaced the original NASSM-NASPE program approval process with a mission-driven, outcomes-based accreditation process that begins with a self-study and culminates with a site visit (COSMA, 2012). Yet, concerns about the accreditation process remain, and as COSMA continues to develop, it is important to identify and address these concerns. The purpose of the study was to further identify faculty perceptions regarding accreditation in sport management. Specifically, it examines faculty perceptions on the level of prescription and flexibility, the impact on resource acquisition, and the overall value of accreditation in sport management. The study also seeks to determine whether divergent interests exist among faculty in diverse programs based upon their enrollment, number of faculty, home unit, curricular content, program levels, prior SMPRC approval, and current accreditation status. The participants consisted of sport management faculty members contacted through an email list created from the NASSM program listing. Participant responses were collected via a linked Survey Monkey survey. The 22-item survey was constructed to measure faculty perceptions as they related to sport management accreditation, program resources, and the level of prescription in COSMA standards. The survey included four sections: a) individual demographic data; b) institutional and programmatic information; c) institution status with regard to COSMA membership and the perceived benefits of accreditation; d) data on COSMA standards and program resources. Additionally, an open-ended question was employed to solicit qualitative feedback from the respondents. The 197 useable responses generated by sport management faculty and administrators were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were calculated to yield demographic data. Respondents were mostly full-time faculty (76%), Data on public (68.6%) /private; institutional size (59.6% more than 10,000 students); home unit (19% education, 48.2% HPE, 17% in business, 16% other designations), program level (23.4% B.S. only; 47.2% B.S. and M.S.; 16.1% B.S., M.S., Ph.D.; and 13.% graduate only); and program size ( 39% < 100 students, 29.8% from 101-200 students, 39.9% > 201 students) were collected for comparison. Analysis of variance, based upon current status with COSMA (36.7% COSMA affiliated; 25.4% considering membership. 37.9% not considering COSMA membership), revealed significant differences for all items on the perceived benefits scale ( $F = (2, 162) > 4.905$ ). Additional significant differences were found in the importance rating for items on the management of faculty resources. Criteria used to determine sufficiency in allocating faculty resources was also analyzed using analysis of variance. No significant differences were found for the three criteria; full-time/part-time faculty ratios ( $F = (2,143) = .030, p > .05$ ), full-time faculty appointed based on the number of students in the program ( $F = (2,143) = 1.040, p > .05$ ), and full-time faculty coverage of specialized curriculum content areas ( $F = (2,143) = .277, p > .05$ ), when comparing means for the three accreditation status groups. Qualitative information about accreditation intention revealed two themes: a) perceived value of accreditation; and b) barriers to attaining accreditation. Additional results and implications will be discussed.