

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

information was compared across divisions and years to evaluate how colleges hired executives with experience that reflects the changing capability needs. Results of the archival data were then triangulated with interviews of 8 athletic directors, including participants from each level.

Questions covered the trends identified by the quantitative data and sought to assess how the allocation of time directed towards different responsibilities had changed. Further, athletic directors were asked about hiring goals and how the organization acquires the necessary knowledge to adapt to the industry's evolution. Coding of interview transcripts was conducted to compare the qualitative and quantitative data.

Results and Discussion

Results demonstrate changes in skills possessed by athletic directors and deeper knowledge stocks and capability development by athletic departments. Our research notes that current athletic directors possess different educational and work backgrounds as those from just twenty years ago. Business and administrative experience has replaced coaching or playing experience as one of the leading hiring indicators. Although this effect is stronger at the Division I level, Division II and Division III also experience the phenomenon. To access this new knowledge, the tenure of athletic directors has decreased and outgoing administrators are replaced with younger, more specialized individuals. The proliferation of sport management programs has led to an increase in hires with an educational background in sport, as well as those possessing a graduate level degree. Accessing these additional skills has brought a greater diversity (of race and gender) to college athletic departments.

This paper contributes to theory providing greater depth and understanding to how organizations adapt longitudinally to the need for different capabilities. This suggests that athletic departments adapt to the need for new capabilities by placing greater emphasis on hiring administrators with these skills. The study also illustrates how these resource constrained organizations transfer newly acquired knowledge throughout the organization, including through the adaptation of organizational structures and technologies. Practical contributions of this paper include recognition of the increased number of career paths for those seeking to become involved in collegiate athletics. As college athletic departments continue to evolve, matching changing capability needs to workers who possess these skills will be essential for organizations to remain competitive.