

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

Developing Strategic Partnerships With Sport Industry Professionals

Timothy Liptrap, Nichols College

Colleen Colles, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Professional preparation

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**60-minute symposium,
roundtable, or workshop
(Room 406)**

Abstract 2013-269

11:15 AM

According to Rothman and Sisman (2010), internships can provide valuable learning experiences; however, some sport and recreation student interns become disillusioned with their career choices. Similarly, Leberman and Shaw (2012) found that there was a disconnect between the expectations of female students regarding the demands of the sport industry and their academic preparation for a career in the industry. These findings relate to an ongoing question asked by sport management faculty, administrators and accrediting bodies: How prepared are sport management students to enter into the professional sport industry?

Traditionally, sport management programs use their alumni, advisory boards and internship sites as effective means to introduce students to the rigors of sport business careers. A trend among some larger universities is to go beyond the traditional partnerships involving guest speakers, small projects, and internship opportunities, and involve executives from professional sport in their programs. One example is Georgetown University's Sport Industry Management graduate program, which features 24 faculty members who are top executives from professional sport organizations.

While many faculty would agree that having access to sport industry professionals gives sport management students an edge in this very competitive market, the challenge lies in creating win-win situations that allow both sides to leverage their positions in order to meet needs and take advantage of unique opportunities. This is especially true for smaller schools offering only undergraduate programs.

This workshop will highlight the successful efforts of faculty, from two smaller undergraduate sport management programs, to address the issue of student preparedness through the development of unique strategic partnerships with professional sport organizations. By moving the industry into the classroom, and the classroom to the front office of organizations, the programs provide students a comprehensive view of the sport industry and help in managing their expectations.

Results from these unique partnerships have shown that the industry professionals "win" when collaborative projects save them time and/or money and when the classroom teaching provides industry professionals access to consumers that often fall within their target market: college-aged and college educated men and women. The sport management programs "win" when students gain a competitive edge from their experiences, acquire rewarding internships, and have access to industry professionals for networking purposes.

Guidelines and suggestions for building successful partnership programs will be provided.

Examples of successful collaborative projects will also be shared and discussed. Workshop attendees will be encouraged to outline a plan to begin (or improve) their strategic partnerships and to share best practices.