I’m not that kind of Doctor: What to Expect when Expecting a Ph.D. A Roundtable Discussion on Academic and Non-Academic pathways

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60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop

(Conference Center A)

Generally, Ph.D. students at all levels have formulated at least a basic set of career goals and expectations they would like to pursue after graduation. However, research shows that most Ph.D. students are ill-prepared for the skills needed and the psycho-social challenges that await them post graduation (e.g., Morrison, Rudd, & Nerad, 2011). Further, this problem may perpetuate due to students’ lack of awareness on the dynamic evolving landscape of career opportunities in both academic and non-academic pathways. As a result, students’ ability to make appropriate career decisions may be impeded or become misaligned with their perceived career goals (Golde & Dore, 2001). In Boucher’s (1998) Zeigler speech, he emphasized fostering an environment that places improved decision-making capability as a focal point for future sport managers. Currently, this seems particularly relevant to doctoral students' career choices on the cusp of entering the sport management field (Solem, Kollasch, & Lee, 2013).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002) suggests a dynamic, cyclical interplay between personal goals, outcome expectations, and self-efficacy, important foundational tenets of career development and personal agency. SCCT posits that strengthening people’s beliefs about their capabilities (i.e., self-efficacy) and the consequences of performing particular behaviors (i.e., outcome expectations) lead to enhanced decision-making potential and personal goal attainment (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Further, personal support engendered by social agents, like academic mentors and colleagues, are key influencers that shape the acquisition of self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Cunningham, Bruening, Sartore, Sagas, and Fink’s (2005) empirical study supported SCCT in students wishing to enter the sport and leisure industry, but underscored the importance of professors in the field continuing to cultivate student’s intentions. Thus, students will gain valuable clarity and self-confidence in their career pursuits through an increased interactive learning experience from the tutelage of a distinguished and diverse sport management faculty panel.

Not surprisingly, preparing doctoral students for future faculty positions must begin in graduate school (Slevin, 1992). Didactic training seminars that address teaching methods (e.g., student integration), research skills (e.g., grant writing), and career development (e.g., understanding the tenure-track process) are potential preparation strategies recommended to meet the needs of doctoral students (Meyers, Reid, & Quina, 1998). Further, SCCT explains the effects of self-efficacy and outcome expectations on students’ career-related choices via their career interests (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Feedback from NASSM student members’ survey following the 2013 NASSM conference strongly suggested that careers in academia, career planning, and bridging practitioners and scholars were of primary interest.

The proposed roundtable style symposium will address these NASSM student member interests through an interactive and intimate discussion with an esteemed sport management panel. This panel was designed and constructed to inform students of the realities of a career post Ph.D. Faculty will discuss different perspectives concerning necessary skills, challenges, and potential career outlets that can be leveraged with a doctoral degree. The roundtable style format will facilitate panel members addressing less than ten students at a time on a specific topic created to stimulate intimate conversations. Each student will have the opportunity to receive direct advice from each panel member during the session. Finally, the results of the discussions will be recorded and consolidated for the function of mass distribution to NASSM student members after the conclusion of the conference. This will serve as a heuristic device for those student members who were unable to attend.

The function of this year’s symposium is to deliver a candid dialectic concerning career expectations while boosting career self-efficacy, purposed to enhancing career decision-making capabilities. The expected implications would include increasing the chances of career success for sport management scholars through more realistic goal setting,
and helping to create sustainable as well as impactful contributions in sport management. Ultimately, the sport management industry, as well as the academy will reap the benefits of a more prepared, self-confident, and robust workforce.

Specific topics/questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. What are the necessary skills needed for a research-oriented career? Teaching-oriented?
2. What are the requirements for a research-heavy institution? Teaching?
3. What are the leading trends in research? In teaching?
4. What are the most promising avenues for soliciting grant funding?
5. What does the tenure-track process entail? Research? Teaching?
6. What are the biggest challenges of the first 3 years after graduation?
7. What is the most essential component to a successful job-search?
8. What are the other Ph.D. career pathways outside of academia?
9. How can we bridge the gap between scholars and practitioners?

Panel Members:

- Dr. Lauren Brown (Assistant Professor, DeSales University)
- Dr. Karen Danylchuk, (Associate Professor, Western University)
- Dr. Aubrey Kent (Associate Professor, Temple University)
- Dr. Yu Kyoum Kim (Associate Professor, Florida State University)
- Dr. Stephen Ross (Associate Professor, University of Minnesota)
- Dr. Stacy Warner (Assistant Professor, East Carolina University)