The Future of Diversity Research: A Symposium for Researchers Sponsored by the NASSM Diversity Committee

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As the field of sport management has evolved, the importance of examining opportunities, issues and other phenomenon interrelated to diversity has become increasingly important to researchers and practitioners alike (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Taylor & Doherty, 2008). Despite the wide range of topics, focuses, and methodologies employed to examine issues of diversity in sport, there have been calls from scholars to improve the scholarship in this area in regards to their theoretical backing (Cunningham & Fink, 2006) as well as the framework used to approach issues (Cunningham, 2008). Considering this, the purpose of this symposium hosted by the NASSM Diversity Committee is to bring together experts in diversity to discuss their perspectives on both the challenges and opportunities that both current and future scholars will face in this line of research. In this manner, the goal of this symposium is to create a dialogue between researchers focused on diversity in order to help enhance examination of diversity by sport scholars. Additional outcomes of this symposium include: providing a venue for scholars to share their views on the future of diversity research, to empower individuals working in diversity, as well as encouraging participation amongst individuals interested in conducting research and learning more about this area of sport.

This symposium presents a chance to continue the evolution of diversity-focused research workshops/symposium which has been hosted at NASSM over the last several years. Furthermore, hosting this symposium will provide a venue accessible to all NASSM members, and helps to promote the advancement of scholarship and support for diversity research and initiatives in sport and leisure among the membership (Francique, Love, Walker, & Watanabe, 2014). Previous workshops/symposiums hosted by the NASSM Diversity Committee have focused on diversity from a variety of perspectives, such as: preparing students for success in the field (Chen, Crowley, Johnson, Yu, Mc Dowell, & Olushola, 2011), manuscript preparation (Francique, Washington, Hart, Pate, & Mc Dowell, 2013), grant writing (Francique et al., 2014), and other important subjects. Considering the diversity-focused literature within the realm of sport (Cunningham, 2007; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Li & Burden, 2008), this year’s symposium focuses on the future of research within this critical area. This session will provide a unique context for interaction among experienced and new scholars in the field by presenting the thoughts of a group of renowned scholars in sport and diversity, thus allowing for a dialogue between individuals to help push forward the research and awareness in this critical area.

This symposium will start with a panel of four experts in diversity research to each individually give a prepared presentation (8-10 minutes for each presentation) focusing on their thoughts for diversity research into the future, including discussion of: (a) their thoughts on diversity research in the field of sport management, (b) important concerns in the advancement of diversity research, (c) considering diversity research in an ever increasingly internationalized and globalized field, and (d) issues/constraints in advancing theory, methodology, and practice, etc. The group of panelists will be chosen by the Diversity Committee and invited to take part in the panel, including the NASSM Diversity Award winner. Following the presentations by the panelists, the symposium will open up to questions from the audience, as well as questions/discussion between both the panelists and the audience, with members of the NASSM Diversity Committee facilitating the discussion. Individuals attending the symposium will also be provided with a booklet of materials about diversity research, publication, and grant writing compiled from the diversity workshops/symposiums from previous years. In this manner, the symposium will provide an array of viewpoints, perspectives, and beneficial materials to assist individuals working in the area of diversity.