Creating Beneficial Relationships: A Diversity and Inclusion Workshop for Researchers
Sponsored by the NASSM Diversity Committee

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60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop

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3:20 PM (Legacy South 1)

The field of sport management is increasingly recognizing the value of and embracing research opportunities with a focus on diversity and inclusion (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Taylor & Doherty, 2008). The Diversity Committee of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) is committed to maintaining avenues for scholars within the NASSM community to create beneficial relationships that offer a focus on diversity and inclusion research. Beneficial relationships include those initiated through mentoring and networking opportunities that lead to collaboration efforts in research.

According to Weaver and Chelladurai (1999), mentoring is the process by which a mentor (i.e., a person with more experience in the field) “serves as a role model [and] provides guidance and support” to a mentee with less experience (p. 25). Compared to the assigned relationships present in formal mentoring, informal mentoring relationships are naturally-occurring and voluntary, in which the mentor and the mentee choose each other (Gibson, Tesone, & Buchalski, 2000; Sosik, Lee, Bouquillion, 2005). Informal mentoring relationships provide benefits to both the mentor and the mentee, such as career-related and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985). Leslie, Lingard, and Whyte (2005) found that informal mentoring relationships contribute to networking and support among colleagues.

Despite the positive attributes associated with mentoring relationships, the literature found that women and racial minorities might experience difficulties developing mentoring relationships when the mentor pool is largely occupied by white men (Kram, 2009). Further, formal mentors in positions of societal privilege (e.g., male, Caucasian) struggle with diverse mentoring relationships due to the limits of their ability to role model, stereotypes, public scrutiny, and rapport (Kram, 2009; Noe, 1987). As such, it is imperative to create opportunities for mentoring relationships that are diverse, voluntary, and mutually beneficial. The Diversity Committee aims to provide such an opportunity with this workshop.

In addition to mentoring, networking is an important tool for faculty in creating beneficial relationships that may lead to more diverse research opportunities. According to Šadl (2009), social networks are of “equal if not greater” (p. 1239) importance in academia than career merit alone. Upholding the old adage, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know,” Ismail and Rasdi (2007) argued that networking facilitates faculty ability in “keeping up with the literature, doing innovative work, and presenting research work at conferences and in publications with other academics of the same interests” (p. 153). Further, Fetzer (2003) noted that networking allows faculty to create and maintain a sense of community among scholars within a specified field. Combined, mentoring and networking may lead to collaborative opportunities in academia, creating beneficial relationships for all those involved. The Diversity Committee supports the facilitation of these beneficial relationships in the NASSM community.

The purpose of the workshop is to facilitate mentoring, networking and collaboration efforts among NASSM members interested in diversity and inclusion in sport. Toward this end, we will use the World Café method during the workshop to ensure attendees not only discover ways to create new relationships, but also have the opportunity to meet prominent scholars in the field. This methodology is an effective and flexible format for large group discussion, and encourages greater interaction among attendees and panelists (Brown & Isaacs, 2005).

The workshop will begin with a brief presentation on best practices for building mutually beneficial relationships, including an overview of how to identify and organically network with potential mentors or collaborators. After the brief presentation, we will then offer an opportunity to meet people with similar interests and discuss issues related to one’s research. Specifically, we will invite attendees to join one of five small conversation groups to discuss topics related to diversity research and scholarship. After 15 minutes of discussing the topic, attendees will then be asked to...
switch groups. We will repeat this process until everyone meets with three different groups. The discussion groups will be facilitated by a pair of diversity scholars and relate to the topics listed below.

**Topic/Facilitators**

**Gender and LGBT in Sport:**
- Dr. Laura Burton, University of Connecticut
- Dr. Meg Hancock, University of Louisville

**Mental and Physical Ability in Sport:**
- Dr. Mary Hums, University of Louisville
- Dr. Joshua Pate, James Madison University

**Race and Ethnicity in Sport:**
- Dr. Joseph Cooper, University of Connecticut
- Dr. Jacqueline McDowell, George Mason University

**Qualitative Methods in Diversity Research:**
- Dr. Sally Shaw, University of Otago
- Dr. Jon Welty Peachey, University of Illinois

**Quantitative Methods in Diversity Research:**
- Dr. Janet Fink, University of Massachusetts
- Dr. George Cunningham, Texas A&M University

To stimulate conversation, each round will start with facilitators asking a scholarly question related to the topic of interest. However, attendees are strongly encouraged to ask additional questions during the discussion. After the small groups portion of the workshop ends, individuals will be invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group.

The workshop and method of delivery can benefit the NASSM membership in a number of ways. First, we will provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for members of NASSM to network with people who share similar interests. Second, rather than strictly follow a predetermined set of presentation slides or talking points, we will explore questions and issues that matter to attendees. Workshop facilitators will accomplish this by encouraging group members to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the conversation. Third, attendees can connect with diverse perspectives. Having the opportunity to move between groups, meet new people, learn new approaches, and exchange ideas greatly enhances the possibility for surprising new insights. Fourth, members of the diversity committee will capture the themes that emerge from the workshop and distribute them to attendees after the conference. Ideally, these conversations will help our collective diversity and inclusion research by identifying gaps in the literature, recognizing opportunities, learning ways to overcome challenges, and forming new collaborations to address the issues raised during the workshop.