Moving from Research Idea to Research Agenda: How to Develop Your Research Road Map as a Graduate Student

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Effective and quality research agendas of sport management researchers can have a profound impact on the advancement of theory and empirical evidence in the field. Numerous sport management researchers have called for greater emphasis on quality, systematic research (Chalip, 2006; Costa, Chalip, & Parks, 2006; Frisby, 2004). For newer researchers, such as graduate students, an effective and purposeful research agenda will set them up to succeed for their entire careers. It is critical for graduate students to develop the skills necessary to be successful in the professoriate during the graduate years (Austin, 2002a). Developing the research agenda, however, can be difficult for these newer researchers, yet it is these individuals who will shape the sport management field for decades to come (Costa, 2005). Graduate students seeking to develop a research agenda may face difficulty depending on their mentor’s resources (Pastore, 2003).

In today’s academic climate, a research agenda that is both comprehensive but also adaptable is necessary for long term success (Thomas, 2003). A research agenda serves as a road map for the researcher to stay on track with research productivity, and also a way to demonstrate to hiring and tenure committees a plan for success. It is a critical tool for developing an intellectual vision, and a way to develop and demonstrate creative thinking (Austin, 2002b). A research agenda should also serve to demonstrate a clear and specific plan of inquiry, how a researcher plans to be a producer of knowledge, and short, medium, and long-term goals.

This symposium has three main objectives: (a) for students to understand what a research agenda entails; (b) for students to think through their own topic and potential pattern of inquiry; and (c) for students to begin to develop a plan for articulating their research agenda to potential employers. This symposium will address the challenges of developing a research agenda for new scholars, by inviting a panel of faculty members to discuss their own research agendas and their advice and observations for effectively designing an agenda.

The format of the symposium will follow recent successful student symposia in that the first half of the symposium will feature sport management faculty discussing their challenges in developing a research agenda, and strategies they have employed. Faculty will be from different stages of the career spectrum and have varied research foci to allow for different perspectives on developing a research agenda. During the second half of the symposium, the moderators will invite questions and discussion from the audience. The panel will be moderated by the NASSM student board, which will also bring specific topics for discussion such as:

- Resources for helping students develop long-term agendas
- How to navigate faculty expectations with changing research interests
- Developing cohesive branches of a research agenda
- Identifying areas within the sport management field for growing research agendas
- How to identify important factors in choosing a problem or project to research
- Evaluating costs/benefits/risks associated with choosing a research project
- Techniques for developing and honing research ideas
- How to set reasonable and attainable goals for research, writing, and publication
• Effective ways to connect teaching and research
• How to keep one’s research agenda updated over time

The symposium will be appropriate for graduate students in all stages of their graduate work due to the fluid and continuous nature of developing a research agenda. Students attending the symposium will benefit from an increased understanding of the importance of a research agenda and how to best employ it.

References


