The transition from graduate teaching assistant to assistant professor can be a stressful experience as newcomers in the academic workplace hope to thrive in a new environment. New faculty members attempt to use their graduate teaching experiences to help guide them during their first year of teaching, however, little is known about how to properly navigate this transition and the new set of expectations that comes with it (Boice, 1992). While Boice (2000) describes the academic profession as an idyllic career that is both stimulating and fun, Boice goes on to say that “its attractiveness is matched only by its risks of failure – especially at the outset” (p. 1). Moreover, the socialization process within academia is often taken with a sense of naiveté (Boice, 2000), and as a result, 95 percent of new faculty members make mistakes that cost them not only productivity, but time and sanity as well (Boice, 1992).

The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (2017) has identified 15 of the biggest mistakes that new faculty make in an effort to both identify issues, and create effective strategies to combat them. Furthermore, Moody (1992) identified typical stresses, (i.e., not enough time, inadequate feedback and recognition, unrealistic expectations, lack of collegiality, and work-life balance), as well as special stresses, (i.e., excessive student demands, excessive committee assignments, and internalizing failure), and ways to cope with them. Indeed, past research has demonstrated that the faculty role can bear a plethora of risks, issues, and stresses, especially for new faculty members (Boice, 1992; Boice, 2000; Felder & Brent, 2000; Moody, 1992). Fortunately, researchers have also developed strategies and suggestions in hopes of eliminating barriers in the new faculty transition. For example, Felder and Brent (2000) describe an effective orientation program for new faculty members, that included ways for department heads to support new faculty, faculty mentoring models, interventions to help in research, writing, teaching, and time management, as well as motivational efforts to become effective professors in these areas. While researchers have developed such strategies, it is important to focus on this transition within the sport management field.

As an interdisciplinary field with hundreds of degree programs across North America and beyond, sport management offers a distinctive perspective. While each program provides unique academic experiences for both students and faculty, new faculty members may experience similar challenges. Therefore, the purpose of this symposium will be to help North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) graduate students identify the biggest mistakes new faculty make as well as recognize successful strategies that can be implemented to help reduce the stresses, risks, and issues that come with the transition from graduate student to faculty. A diverse panel of new and experienced faculty will provide an open discussion on personal experiences in order to explore their transitions and the issues they faced during their time. Panelists will come from both research and teaching-focused universities as well as different genders and races to ensure a variety of backgrounds and experiences are incorporated and shared during the symposium.

The symposium will not only appeal to current NASSM student members who hope to become faculty, but also to current new faculty members who may still be navigating with some of the inherent challenges associated with their transition from graduate student to faculty member. Overall, the symposium will cover: 1) common challenges new faculty face and common errors made early in their careers, 2) the biggest stressors for new faculty, and 3) suggestions and advice from the panelists on how to overcome these issues. As previously stated, panel members will include a mix of both early-career faculty and experienced faculty in order to obtain a diverse viewpoint into the “then and now” of graduate student to faculty transition. Members will be asked about the biggest mistakes new faculty make as well as the aforementioned topics. After open discussion commences, participants will be provided the opportunity to ask questions related to the topics at hand and describe personal experiences within their.
programs. Overall, the symposium on issues in faculty transition in the field of sport management will serve as a professional development tool to help prepare future academics for their new roles and academic careers.