Criteria in Sport Management Faculty Job Postings

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Management - HRM (Other)  
20-minute oral presentation (including questions)  
Abstract 2018-125  
Friday, June 8, 2018  
8:30 AM  
Room: Acadia B

In the spring of 2017, the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) email listserv was home to a lively conversation on the importance of practical experience as a requirement on faculty job postings. Some NASSM members saw practical experience being required in the majority of job postings and expressed concern that sports management programs might be valuing practical experience higher than other attributes with regard to hiring faculty members. Other members expressed the need to have faculty with robust practical working experience in the field as it provides students with real-life experiences from those who have had a career. After a brief discussion among the members of the email listserv, no consensus was reached; however, the authors were intrigued as to whether the initial premise of the conversation was true: Is practical experience required in the majority of full-time faculty positions in sport management/administration? This research question was expanded into a broader study regarding the qualifications listed on full-time sport management/administration job postings.

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Given the growth sports management/administration programs, strong faculty is needed to prepare students for professional careers. Programs “... must strategically design and deliver programs that align favorably with the demographic fit and the needs of our field” (Weese, 2002, p. 3). Due to growth, one must consider and ensure competitiveness by keeping programs both current and innovative (Porter, 1998). Clement (1990) stated, “... successful sport managers will be sensitive to trends and events, will welcome change, will anticipate the needs of society, and will develop new programs when requested” (p. 264).

Multiple studies have addressed components of the hiring process for sport management faculty. Pedersen & Schneider (2003) did one of the first studies on sport management academic job postings and found that only 62% of positions were filled and there was a need for better-trained academics in the sport management field. Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd (2006) made similar findings, concluding that doctoral institutions prepare students more thoroughly in research than in teaching, but the majority of institutions’ job postings were from smaller schools that emphasized teaching. Kian, Pedersen, & Vincent (2008) examined the number of sport management faculty positions that were posted versus how many were filled and concluded that, at the time, there were more jobs than applicants. In contrast, in 2014 Geurin-Eagleman & McNary examined the sport management academic job market and concluded there were more applicants than available positions. They also compared the criteria of the available position to doctoral students’ expectations, concluding that expectations and the actual job criteria did not align, particularly in the area of teaching preparation and teaching as a required or desired qualification. All of these studies included whether practical experience was indicated on the job posting, but none of them examined that variable in further depth. Thus, while this research has merit, little has been done to study the apparent need for practical or applied experience among sport management faculty. By building on previous research that examined trends in sport management faculty hiring, the current study aims to address this research gap by conducting a year-long study of sport management job postings from May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018. Based on procedures established by Kian et al. (2008) all jobs included in the study were posted on Highered.com, The Chronicle of Higher Education job site, or the NASSM email listserv. The study uses content analysis to examine all full-time positions in the United States and Canada, both tenure-track and term, to determine what qualifications are required, preferred, or not mentioned, as well as the level of the position and where within the institution the position is located (Sport Management Department, Business School, etc.). The authors are also determining the Carnegie Classification of each school.

Statistical analysis of the data set will include the use of frequencies and crosstabs to look at the following: Public vs. private institutions, whether the school offers bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees, geographical location of the school, schools with standalone sport management departments, whether the position is tenure-track, position rank,
educational qualifications, and requirements for practical experience in the sport field, as well as teaching and research expectations.