Higher education’s ongoing dialogue around diversity and inclusion has been a defining one from its earliest beginnings. Questions regarding who could pursue college degrees, where they could pursue those degrees, under what circumstances, and to what use those degrees could be applied were filtered through dominant social value systems of each era, resulting initially in the creation of segregated schools for men, women, racial minorities, and those from different religious faiths, and countries of origin. In the United States, within the context of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and influx of African-American students on predominantly White campuses, the emergence of targeted efforts to address diversity and inclusion on college and university campuses began to occur (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). In the six decades that have since passed, “Changing demographics, turbulent political and legal contexts, persistent societal inequities, and other factors have created an increasingly complex diversity environment” (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013, n.p.).

Within this complex environment, there is a changing student body. The percentage of U.S. college students who identify as Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native has been increasing. In particular, from Fall 1976 to Fall 2014, the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 4% to 17%, and the percentage of White students fell from 84% to 58% (NCES, 2016, Ch.3). The changing student body demographics in higher education also increases the need for diverse faculty. As it currently stands, the demographic representation of American college students is not mirrored by the professoriate. In fact, Hispanic, Asian, Black, Pacific Islander, and American Indian students make up approximately 42% of American college students, while faculty from these racial/ethnic groups account for only 21% of college and university faculty (NCES, 2016). In addition to racial and ethnic demographics, while 11% of undergraduates reported having a disability, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report states no known disabled faculty statistics. Furthermore, the blatant omission of sexual orientation and gender identity statistics from both the student body and faculty in the NCES report is noteworthy. These disparities and omissions necessitate both an institutional and programmatic focus on diversity and inclusion.

As the complexity has become manifest, institutions have invested more resources in designating staff positions to diversity and inclusion. How those positions are conceived of within organizational structures vary widely, however, depending on institution. The role of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) can be expansive and often oversees campus and classroom initiatives and efforts for equity, diversity and inclusion among the multiplicity of social identities and various work groups within higher education institutions (Flaherty, 2014). In turn, the identification of “chief diversity officers” (CDOs) include vast differences in institutional commitment and purpose, with some being designated at a vice-presidential level with access to central spheres of influence and power while others may be contained within limited areas of influence and resources. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) suggest that this inconsistency reflects a lack of consensus about what diversity is, resulting in a strategic deficit fueled by a misguided belief that anyone with an interest in diversity is equipped to handle such a job.

To assist in the development, hiring, integration and/or progression of a CDO, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) developed the Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers, a resource offering best practices and other guidelines. Demonstrating the enormity of such a position, the 12 standards range from the conceptualization and communication of a diversity and inclusion mission to the legal and procedural knowledge necessary for the position and the institution (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, Sr., 2014). Furthermore, given the varied individuals and administrative groups with whom the CDO works, as well as the multidimensional climate in which s/he works, it is imperative the CDO appreciate the dynamics of the
When considered within the context of what is happening within 564 sport management programs worldwide (NASSM, 2017), and the units where sport management is housed, majority led by White Heterosexual men (Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008; Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004) in terms of strategic management designed to respond to the needs of ever-increasing diverse student populations, how are issues of diversity approached? The future growth of sport management as an academic discipline rests largely on the ability of institutions to meet the disparate needs of their constituency(ies). As Weese (2002) stated in his 2001 Dr. Earle F. Zeigler lecture, “We must prepare future professors through quality educational and mentoring experience” (p. 11). As such, faculty and staff members should both reflect and be responsive to a diverse student body.

In our proposed workshop, we will address the following questions from a scholarship and practice perspective of students, faculty, and administrators: What does it mean to have a position devoted to diversity, especially if the position is part of a larger set of faculty and/or administrative responsibilities? If sport management programs are similar to the overall institutions that reside in, is there a similar lack of consistency about what diversity means and who is tasked with providing strategic management on diversity issues? And who leads various sport management stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, and administrators) in creating and implementing a vision for what diversity means within a sport management unit? The workshop will begin with an overview of the current landscape. After a brief introduction, participants will be provided an opportunity to break into three small groups focused on the diverse perspective of students, faculty, and administrators. The intimate conversational groups will allow participants the time to share common interests and discuss concerns related to their responsibilities as a student, faculty, and/or administrator. After 15 minutes, participants will be encouraged to switch groups and engage in a new topic. Time will be set aside at the end of the session to pull the threads of the conversation together and to explore areas for future research, policy development, and practice. Regardless of one’s career stage in academia, NASSM membership will be better prepared to understand and aid the constituents they are serving.