Keeping It Practical: Sport Management Faculty Experiential Engagement

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Institutions of higher education have a tremendous responsibility in preparing the nation’s future workforce, and there is an ongoing demand for college students to receive real-world experience that will help them connect the concepts from their classes to everyday dilemmas in their future career paths (Selingo, 2013). Therefore, faculty members within sport management programs must constantly evolve in order to ensure that their students are best prepared for success within internships and subsequent post collegiate endeavors within the rapidly changing sport industry (Braunstein-Minkove & DeLuca, 2015). One way for them to gain and maintain the skills necessary to meet the educational and practical needs of their students is through their engagement in sport industry-based experiential activities.

Many Sport Management faculty members serve in the dual role of practitioner and academician. As both practitioner and academician, these individuals essentially serve as sport “Pracademicians” who equally value their impact as practitioners while engaging in sport industry-based experiential activities and while disseminating content knowledge to their students in their respective academic environments. This presentation will discuss the role of a sport “Pracademician” as coined by the researchers and will also introduce the researcher-developed “Pracademician” Framework, which can serve as a guide to faculty members who seek to find ways to become involved in meaningful industry experiential endeavors.

The Pracademician Framework is specifically tailored for faculty members and through each Phase provides strategies to assist them in becoming engaged in industry-based experiential activities. The Framework introduces, acknowledges, and supports the notion that faculty members’ strategic engagement in experiential activities is beneficial to their instructional, professional growth, and career development. It also proposes five phases, which when executed in a continuum should enhance the quality and relevance of the faculty member’s engagement in the experiential learning activity: 1) Conceptualization; 2) Identification; 3) Engagement; 4) Self-Reflection; and 5) Actualization.

It is hoped that the introduction of the Pracademician Framework will assist in advancing the body of knowledge in higher education sport management by providing faculty members with a structure by which to guide their selection of and participation in quality experiential activities that are invaluable to their instructional and career growth, particularly their engagement in “learning by doing.” Through this application, faculty members can strengthen their skill sets, experiences, and understanding of the sport industry by maintaining an active awareness of its trends and demands.