

CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS: TOOLS FOR HARNESSING CAMPUS RESOURCES TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PREPARATION & FACILITATION OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

This presentation, based on extensive data collection with undergraduate Sport Management interns, will discuss conclusions and implications related to the progression of curricula and utilization of campus resources to ensure student preparedness for and success in internships.

- Session Agenda:
 - (a) Research Presentation (approximately 30 minutes);
 - (b) Directed break-out session (approximately 15 minutes);
 - (c) Review & discussion (approximately 15 minutes)

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

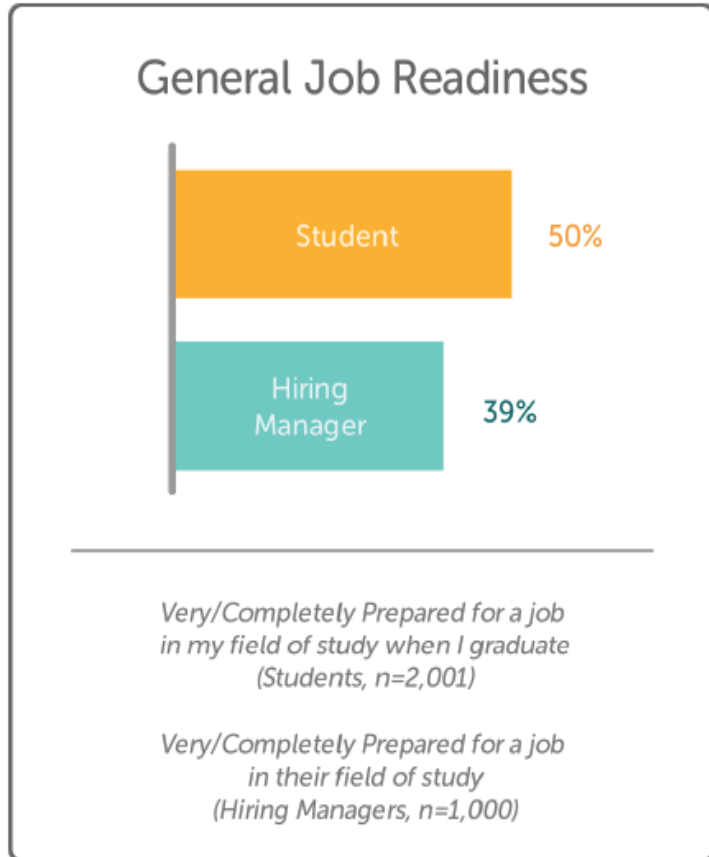
This presentation, based on extensive data collection with undergraduate Sport Management interns, will discuss conclusions and implications related to the progression of curricula and utilization of campus resources to ensure student preparedness for and success in internships.

- Session Objectives:
 - (a) A comprehensive understanding of the findings from a four-semester data collection and analysis of sport management intern preparedness;
 - (b) Recommendations for the appropriate course of practical action for the future (i.e., adaptations in curriculum, engaging internal/external resources etc.), benefiting students, faculty, and site supervisors/future employers associated with interns;
 - (c) Directed break-out discussions about how best to utilize various campus resources to bolster academic programs so that various views and experiences are shared; and
 - (d) Suggestions for how to evolve programs to meet student needs.

INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning has become a driving force of universities

(Cantor, 1995; Kuh, 2008; O'Neill, 2010; Rosenstein, Sweeney, & Gupta, 2012)



Chegg, 2013

- Particularly important for future sport industry professionals (e.g., Cuneen, 2004; Moorman, 2004; Stier, 2002; Surujlal & Singh, 2010; Young & Baker, 2004) due to the:
 - Competitive nature of the field.
 - Need for programs that prepare students for a rapidly changing industry.
 - External experience/professional development components of programs to address industry-specific needs.
 - In linking theory to practice.
 - As a mechanism for professional preparation.

INTRODUCTION

In general there is a lack of sport management-focused research regarding preparation for student field experiences/internships, however previous studies have examined:

- Program characteristics of and best practices relating to facilitating quality internships for students (e.g., Case, 2003, 2007; Chouinard, 1993; Cuneen, 2004; Jowdy et al., 2004; Kelley, 2004; Verner, 2004; Young & Baker, 2004).
- Student perspectives regarding internship experiences (Ross & Beggs, 2007; Stratta, 2004; Yoh & Choi, 2011).
- Employer perspectives of the internship experience (Ross & Beggs, 2007; Williams, 2004).
- Student's ultimate career choice (e.g., Case, 2007).
- Level of preparedness for their career (e.g., Williams, 2004).
- Curriculum coverage promoting increased levels of preparedness in that area of the field (Yoh & Choi, 2011).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this work is two-fold:

- (1) Theoretical
 - Add to/update the literature:
 - (a) Assessing preparedness and industry/curriculum needs
 - (b) Moving beyond career goals
- (2) Practical
 - To examine the preparedness and pre-professional development for (sport management) students:
 - (a) Collegiate (i.e., field experience, internship)
 - **Curriculum development and redesign**
 - **Campus and community collaborations**
 - (b) Post-collegiate (i.e., graduate school, work)
 - Alumni network

METHODS, ANALYSIS & RESULTS



Mixed method data collection:

- Sport Management Interns during Fall 2012, Winter, Spring, Summer 2013:
 - Focus groups with student (n = 59)
 - Web-based survey (qualitative & quantitative data) (n = 100)
- Industry Professionals/Site Supervisors
 - Phone calls/e-mails during time period of student internship(s) (n = 60)
- Professional panel with key campus resource offices (n=5)

Results: Three major themes identified relating to student preparedness:

- **Academic Development:** How and why curriculum change should occur in this program.
- **Experiential Development:** The importance of experiential learning as it relates to future career choice and knowledge of the industry.
- **Professional Development:** Presenting students with various opportunities to improve their professional development skills and competencies.

RESULTS:

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT



Academic Development: Clear themes about how and why curriculum change should occur emerged in the data:

- **Students**
 - Courses listed as valuable by more than 50% of respondents:
 - Sport Management
 - Introduction to the Sport Industry
 - Sport Marketing
 - Found great value in their business minor
 - Sport-sociology courses are not regarded as valuable
- **Industry Professionals**
 - Experiential learning is very helpful
 - Communication skills/courses are key so as to eliminate the “deer in headlights” look that many students possess.
 - Students need more basic computer applications & design-type courses that teach about graphics, press releases, basic software, etc.
 - Students need more sales-based education.

RESULTS: EXPERIENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Experiential Development: Data clearly demonstrated that the internship process/gaining practical experience is incredibly important for students' future careers as well as learning about the rigors of the industry:

- **Students**

- Indicated the need for and value in more than one internship and/or a longer, more substantial experience, regardless of academic credit or requirements.

- **Industry Professionals**

- Desired students to have completed a practical, applied project (e.g.: formal, business document)
- Noted the following skills could be improved upon by current interns and are important for future industry professionals:
 - Adaptability & "Coachability"
 - Leadership & Accountability
 - Communication (written & verbal)
 - Organization

RESULTS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professional Development: Research found that students need to be presented with a variety of opportunities to improve upon numerous personal and industry-related competencies:

- **Students**

- Indicated the need for increased help to find internship site placements
- Students who had already completed internships or were almost finished with the process were often unable to communicate a focused career goal
- Noted professionalism, résumé and job searching skills/training, communication were important and they felt they lacked

- **Industry Professionals**

- Pointed to industry and company-based research as lacking
- Students need to be more innovative, self-starters
- Students need to pay more attention to detail
- Students needed to demonstrate better communication and follow-up
- Recommended all students have very strong social media skills

IMPLICATIONS: CURRICULUM

Research substantiates the need to continually evaluate and ensure that students are being educated in a way that is going to prepare them for entry into the dynamic industry and professional career they are seeking to obtain.

(1) Data suggests **academic programs and curricula develop** and evolve to better suit student needs:

- Core/existing course offerings need to be modified to include more practical, applied experiences, competencies, and skills.
 - Formal, practical document(s) useful in hiring process such as portfolios and business plans.
- Create and offer new, innovative electives that push boundaries and necessitate new connections and relationships.
 - Applied Sport Marketing
 - Applied Sports Communication

IMPLICATIONS: CURRICULUM

Research substantiates the need to continually evaluate and ensure that students are being educated in a way that is going to prepare them for entry into the dynamic industry and professional career they are seeking to obtain.

(1) Data suggests **academic programs and curricula develop** and evolve to better suit student needs:

- Greater emphasis on instructors demonstrating and articulating connections and offering practical links for HOW content can be applied and considered outside the classroom.
 - How socio-cultural content is relevant to business/management.
 - How “academic” material can be applied to employment tasks/settings.
- Promote critical thinking, analysis, and focus discussion and assignments on integrating the theoretical and the practical.
 - Utilizing industry/trade publications be in the classroom.
 - Applied, simulation activities/case studies

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Research substantiates the need to continually evaluate and ensure that students are being educated in a way that is going to prepare them for entry into the dynamic industry and professional career they are seeking to obtain.

(2) Data suggests stronger collaborations across campus are necessary in order to accommodate current students, particularly in relation to **experiential & professional development-related** competencies:

- Academic Advising
- Office of Student Activities
- Campus Recreation
- University Athletics
- Study Abroad
- Career Center

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Academic Advising

- Utilizes student employees and volunteers.
- Promotes and coordinates freshman & transfer advising.
- Works with students in academic trouble.
- Offers counseling to undecided majors.

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- Willing and able to offer programs to students regarding how they can augment their **professional development** skills, seek **experiential learning opportunities**, better prepare for field experiences, and connect with other resources on campus.

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Student Activities

- Utilizes student employees.
- Offers students opportunities in the areas of: leadership development, community service, marketing/communication, event management, and the administration of student-run organizations.

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- Offers students a **professional development** opportunity in the form of a formal document referred to as "Student Engagement Record."
 - This is a collection of information about student's leadership activities that helps them articulate how their campus activities correlate to their academic competencies; particularly useful during internship and job-seeking.
- **Experiential learning** in the way of involvement and leadership roles on campus.

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Campus Recreation

- Utilizes student employees and volunteers (largest student employer on campus).
- Student operated facility & programs (students are managers and front-line workers) 17 hours/day, 7 days/week.
- Students liaise with many offices on campus (i.e.: Risk Management, Marketing, Facility Management, etc.).
- Students provide education through courses designed to teach health & fitness, recreation, and safety-related competencies.

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- Instrumental in offering students **experiential learning** and **professional development** opportunity through employment.
 - Assist in building a network, access to certification opportunities.
- Desire to establish and augment practicum-based learning opportunities for students.

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



University Athletics

- Utilizes student employees and volunteers.
- Students gain experience in a variety of college athletics-related roles and responsibilities (i.e.: operations, compliance, marketing, fan development, external relations, sales, fan development).

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- Instrumental in offering students **experiential learning** and **professional development** opportunity through employment.
 - Assist in building a network.
 - Build understanding of collegiate athletics, a specialized sport industry segment.
- Desire to establish and augment practicum-based learning opportunities for students.
- Desire to engage with faculty to implement unique opportunities into coursework (i.e.: Applied Sport Marketing, "Pack the Arena").

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Study Abroad Office

- Work to incorporate the study abroad experience into students' education and prepare them for the global work force.

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- Offers students a **professional development** opportunity in the form of "Re-entry training" designed to help students turn their study abroad experience into an effective marketing tool.
- Faculty are the "critical conduit" between students and Study Abroad Office.
- Looking to work with faculty and students to communicate the message about **experiential learning** and internship opportunities during their study abroad experience.
- Want to collaborate in order to better strategize how to internationalize curricula.

IMPLICATIONS: CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS



Career Center

- Helps students determine their career direction.
- Offers resources for students to improve their self-marketing (i.e.: resume writing, mock interviewing, networking).
- Connects students and employers.

Role in Bridging the Gap between Academics & Campus Resources:

- New initiatives:
 - Cross-campus internship coordination committee in order to promote more collaboration.
 - Looking to provide general professional preparedness training.
- Faculty engagement is crucial to reach students and refer them.
- Office mission includes a strong focus on **professional development** training so as to facilitate **experiential learning** through formal internships and job acquisition.

WORKSHOP & DISCUSSION

What can University professional staff and faculty do to help student preparedness?

What can University professional staff and faculty do to better integrate these six areas of campus collaboration into classroom learning?

- Academic programs under-utilizing campus resources offices and resource staff doesn't know how/who to contact to facilitate ideas.
 - High turnover, busy schedules, alternate agendas often prevent meaningful collaborations, **yet its crucially important we bridge this gap.**

What are other areas of campus collaboration that we could be utilizing?

How do we balance administrative push for experiential learning & assessment of such experiences?

Is it always feasible to be conducting research on best practices?

- This research was important for our students but unsustainable by us, as faculty members, in the long term.

How do we balance academic coursework with experiential learning?

How do you encourage faculty to consider program evolution?/How do you work with faculty to encourage the evolution of programs?

Who should be driving these meaningful collaborations? Students? Staff? Faculty?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM EVOLUTION



Always question the status quo and allow for program evolution.

Work to collaborate with campus resources in meaningful ways.

Campus resource offices should reach out to faculty and develop formal methods in which they can reach students through faculty.

Faculty should work to collaborate with both internal resources as well as external constituents to help facilitate meaningful experiences/connections for students.

Encourage campus committees comprised of both faculty and staff to promote experiential learning and cross-campus collaboration.

Conduct research on programs via current students as well as alumni.

Push for experiential, applied learning to occur within upper-level course offerings in many majors.