

# A roadmap to educating sport business leaders

The business of sports is massive and job growth is expected to increase 23% in the next 2 years. With that comes great opportunity to build a career within the sport industry. But just like life on the field, the sport industry is an ecosystem of intense competition. Even for entry-level jobs, there are far more applicants than positions available. This puts enormous pressure on job-seekers who want to turn their passion into a career—and stand out in the field.

This context spurred the University of Miami to launch an online version of their highly successful Master's in Sport Administration program in 2014. When developing the online program, the University wanted to ensure the quality of the on-campus program was maintained.

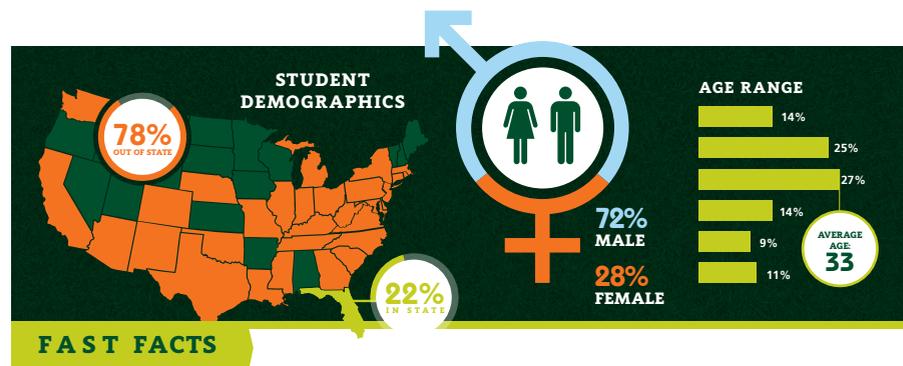
Professor Warren Whisenant, head of the Sport Administration program explains: "We didn't want to just slap what we offer on the ground into an online setting. We wanted to make sure we adapted it to the changing needs of the industry and use the benefits that an online program offers, as an advantage."

To create the right environment and a program that enables the best possible outcomes for its students, the University of Miami focused on several key dimensions:

## 1. Ensure we have a faculty that gets 'it'

The faculty teaching the UOnline program have a variety of backgrounds and interests. For instance:

- Dr. Tywan Martin's research digs into the influence and impact of media and branding on sports consumer behavior.
- Professor Alicia Jessop's background in legal practice equips budding industry pros for a future in sports law.
- Dr. Windy Dees' research focuses on the effectiveness of sports marketing and sponsorship campaigns.
- Dr. Warren Whisenant's research interests primarily focus on gender and organizational issues within interscholastic athletics.
- Dr. Sue Mullane has expertise in the areas of sport leadership and ethics, and studies how ethical decision-making creates better organizational outcomes.



University of Miami has seen a diverse class enroll in their online sport administration program.

While faculty come from a range of backgrounds, they all have two things in common: They are highly active influencers in their fields and they have a deep-rooted passion for their students. This is especially important online, as one of the key fears of online students is isolation and not receiving the support they may need.

*"Our faculty members have worked in the industry and many of us were athletes ourselves. Most importantly, all faculty actively engage our students with their networks." — Alicia Jessop, Assistant Professor*



**WINDY DEES, Ph.D.** teaches Principles of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship at UOnline.

## 2. Develop curriculum that is flexible and adaptive

Social media has changed the sports landscape. Athletes, franchises and professionals now have the ability to build their brands much more quickly. This also means what you read in a book published two years ago may now be outdated. To address this dilemma, the faculty at UM developed a program that integrates established theory with tangible, relevant topics and assignments grounded in current events. This means that faculty has the ability to frequently update their content and assignments to address pertinent issues and changes in the industry. For students, it ensures the course content is always relevant to the challenges they will face in the field.

## 3. Give students access to a network, and equally important, teach them how to network

The key to working in the sports industry—during and after your studies—is to engage, engage, engage. Getting your foot in the door, by scheduling an interview or a meeting, is often only half the battle. Being able to open, and walk in the door is the second half.

UM has a vast network of alumni as well as business contacts in the industry. Add in the significant personal networks of the faculty and UM students have instantly made their network bigger on day one of becoming a student, whether they enrolled in the online or on-campus program. Add in several events, such as the unique UM Sport Industry Conference that UOnline students have access to and you have networking opportunities that are hard to find elsewhere.

*"The networking is unbelievable—I have gotten access to front offices and influential sporting people in the industry. That access is hugely underrated." — Leslie Fitzpatrick, recent UOnline Sport Administration graduate, former World Cup soccer player for Trinidad and Tobago*

But access is nothing if you can't make the most of those opportunities and also create your own network. That's why the faculty also spend time encouraging and helping students build their personal brands by leveraging social media and other tools. UOnline launched a dedicated Twitter channel to discuss sport business topics (@UMSportBiz) and faculty members are more than willing to provide mentoring and coaching to get students ready.

*"It's not who you know, it's who knows you. Ask yourself how much of an impact you have made, which will help industry pros remember you?" — Paul Resnick, Sport Administration Internship Director & Senior Lecturer*

## 4. Give students more than a first class education, make them members of a supportive community

Alumni from The U have always had passion. But how do you ensure that online students feel like they are part of the community, especially since many don't live in the greater Miami area? To UM, this was a key challenge to address, especially since UOnline students graduate with the same degree as those who attend the on-campus program. The solution was to create a classroom environment that encourages participation and cooperation, to offer opportunities for in-person meetings and to ensure that everyone has the support they needed.

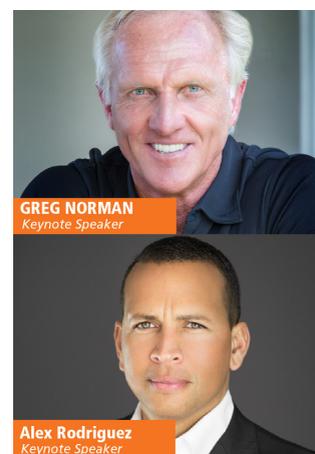
Furthermore, formal events such as the Orientation Weekend, UM Sport Industry Conference, and commencement ceremonies offer several face-to-face opportunities. Some students also take initiative to come on campus to meet both fellow students and faculty. Overall, students at UOnline feel like they walk away with not just a UM degree, but also a lifetime membership to the passionate UM community.

When enrolling at UOnline, you are not just an online student. You are a University of Miami student who is learning online. That experience, degree, and pride will always be with you and set you apart from the pack.

### PROGRAM FACTS

- **Credits:** 30 credits program total (10 courses)
- **Time to Completion:** 20 months
- **Modality:** 100% online (Asynchronous)
- **Transfer of Credit (TOC):** Yes (evaluated after enrollment)
- **Scholarships Available:** Yes, for qualified applicants

For more information about UOnline's sport administration program, go to [www.miami.edu/online](http://www.miami.edu/online) or call 888-995-2272



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2-Time World Champion

Students have access to networking/learning opportunities, like the UM Sport Industry Conference.