Sports industry talent hunt underway

But today it’s all a matter of degrees

Just a couple of decades ago, college degrees in sports business were hard to find.

Well, the times have changed … dramatically. Opportunities in the sports industry are ripe for smart, talented people. But today, it’s a matter of degrees. To get ahead, or even just a job, credentials do matter.

Graduate programs

Different philosophies drive different graduate programs. For example, undergraduates thinking about getting an advanced degree in sports business may need to get a few years of industry work experience before being accepted into top programs. Other differences involve curriculum design, emphasis and what degrees are earned upon completion. Some programs offer a traditional MBA with a concentration in sports. Others offer a joint MBA with a Masters in Sports Administration. Others simply offer a Master in Sports Administration. Some students prefer the MBA degree as a hedge so that they will be marketable in industries other than sports. The choice depends entirely on personal goals (for more on evaluating sport management programs, see related article, page 35).

This special section provides a glimpse of some of the nation’s top sport management and marketing programs. It also presents a good cross-section of the delivery methods, curriculum strategies and other key factors that differentiate the options in today’s sport management/marketing academic world.

Arizona State University

It’s no secret. The W. P. Carey Sports Business MBA Program at Arizona State University has a very successful track record in the world of sport.

You can play sports business genius, or you can be one.

At the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, we believe the best sports business degree should be an MBA. Our academic program and the real-life “learning laboratories” are regarded as among the very finest in the country.

So, think smart and start your career ahead of the game.

To find out more, visit: wpcareymba.asu.edu/sports
According to Artigue, the Carey School prides itself on its rigorous academic requirements, as well as the program’s emphasis on multi-faceted “experiential” learning. First-year students experience the highly-ranked school’s MBA core courses, where case-based and team-oriented learning is emphasized. Courses are taught in three 10-week trimesters, putting students through a rigorous, comprehensive program of study. Integration and strategy are key to the W.P. Carey MBA curriculum. Students learn how these business disciplines relate to one another to build successful and innovative solutions for companies. During the first year, students develop skills in accounting, economics, ethics, finance, information systems, marketing, supply chain management, statistics and strategy.

Not until the last trimester of the first year do students take their first required sports business class: Sports Marketing and Reverse Generation. This class provides an overview of the sales and marketing role in sports, preparing students to distinguish themselves in their summer internships. During year two, Artigue explains that his students take an intensive array of courses that provide high-level experience, “real-world” insights, and practice and training in the art and science of being a sports business executive. “Let’s face it, you can talk about principles and theory until you’re blue in the face,” said Artigue, “but until students actually roll up their sleeves and put this new found knowledge into practice, they will not truly understand the value proposition.”

Therefore, during the summer between their first and second years, students are required to participate in a sports-related internship. In their second year, they participate in a year-long Fellowship in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Fellowships allow students the opportunity to work closely with local sponsoring corporations, teams and various organizations while enhancing their skill sets and growing their network. Just a small sample of those teams and organizations include the Seattle Seahawks, Phoenix Suns, VISA, ProLink, Arizona Diamondbacks, the Super Bowl Host Committee and many others.

McNamara explains that while 85 percent of students in the sports management concentration are California residents, the remaining 15 percent students come from a wide geographical mix. "One of the themes we're working with is peak performance, which means we're focused on giving our students the best possible sports marketing program," he says. "We also believe in the idea that the best things often come in small packages, because we're one of the smallest schools with a sports management undergraduate concentration. Because of the small size, students get highly personal attention." McNamara explains that while 85 percent of students in the sports management concentration are California residents, the remaining 15 percent students come from a wide geographical mix. The sports management program at CSUB looks to prepare students as administrators and managers, as well as entry-level management.

For example, a 2006 Wall Street Journal article named the Carey School’s sports business program one of five such programs “most often recommended” by academics and the industry throughout the country. The article also singled out the Carey program’s ability to produce students destined for executive positions within the sports industry. “Sport is the common denominator that knits together diverse societies,” says Ray Artigue, executive director of the Sports Business Program at the Carey School. “As this industry becomes more sophisticated and competitive, it will be the next generation of highly-educated professionals that ensures we will move forward with integrity and success.” Prior to joining the Carey School of Business, Artigue was senior VP of marketing for the Phoenix Suns, where he directed all of that NBA team’s sales and marketing efforts.

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positions in dozens of sports-related jobs. Through the program, students learn to work in diverse roles in the areas of sports marketing and promotions, facility management and planning, activity programming, events management and sports law. Each student experiences a 10-week internship program, getting vital on-the-job experience and employment opportunities.

"... BAKERSFIELD HAS ITS OWN EXCLUSIVE MARKET, WITH DEDICATED MEDIA OUTLETS (8 LOCAL TV, 2 CABLE TV, 50 RADIO, 3 NEWS/PRINT), FIVE FRANCHISE SPORTS TEAMS, NASCAR, AS WELL AS OTHER SPORTS, ADVERTISING, OR MERCHANDISING PROPERTIES."

Vince Carter, assistant director, CSUB

According to Vince Carter, assistant director, CSUB balances specialized sports management topics (e.g., sports marketing, facilities management, sport law and principles of sports management) with core business courses (e.g., finance, marketing, economics and accounting).

"By helping facilitate skills in communications, behavioral sciences, quantitative analysis and environmental dynamics, our sports management program provides a well-rounded education for professional and personal growth, in the context of an accredited school of business," he says.

CSUB offers undergraduates three primary options: a sports management concentration, a sports management minor and a professional sports management option: a sports management concentration, a professional and personal growth, in the context of an accredited school of business," he says.

CSUB graduates have had success in the sports management field. For instance, a recent graduate interned with the Bakersfield Jam, of the NBA Development League, and then moved to become the top sales professional with the L.A. Clippers. Another recent graduate moved from an internship with the Bakersfield Condors of the ECHL to the Austin Wranglers, the Arena Football League team owned in part by ex-NFL great Deion Sanders, and soon was hired by SportsClips, a new national hair care chain for men and boys.

Finally, with CSUB making the transition from NCAA Division II to Division I in 2007, more opportunities for students within the school’s athletic department are sure to emerge.

"It’s like we will have a sports business learning lab right here in house,” says Carter. “Plus, Bakersfield has its own exclusive market, with dedicated media outlets (eight local TV, two cable TV, 50 radio, three news/print), five franchise sports teams, NASCAR, as well as other sports, advertising or merchandising properties. So we can put together some substantive internship opportunities, just a short walk from campus.”

California State University, Long Beach

To Dr. Ketra Armstrong, a sport management program’s success hinges on one simple concept-balance.

“When you talk about sport management programs, the ones that are the most successful, the ones that really prepare students for the business of sport, effectively integrate theory and practice,” says Armstrong, program director, Graduate Program in Sport Management, Department of Kinesiology, College of Health and Human Services, California State University, Long Beach (CSULB).

Armstrong should know because the CSULB program does just that: it creatively mixes the academic with the real world. For example, at CSULB, the faculty is stocked with tenure track professors, but the program also has the added benefit in that many executives from the booming Southern California sports industry serve as adjunct teachers.

“For example, the person who teaches in our event and facilities course manages the ESPN X-Games,” Armstrong says. “Our students don’t learn just from textbooks but also from people in the sport industry trenches. And that’s one of the major benefits of our program.”

Of course, there are other benefits. For example, the Long Beach location turns all of the Southern California "sportscape" into one big, multi-layered classroom. After all, you have the Home Depot Center, Dodger Stadium, the Honda Center, the Staples Center, the Anaheim Angels, the Long Beach Grand Prix, professional beach volleyball, college sports and many other venues, teams, leagues and sports-related organizations too numerous to mention.

"With our geography and wealth of facilities, our students learn well beyond the CSULB campus,” she says. “They are learning throughout Southern California, in real time with real sports. That gives our students a critical advantage.”

CSULB offers its graduate program in...
McGlumphy explains that all graduating students plan to continue their pursuit of continuing education offered by the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM), with several students continuing in the school’s post-graduate certificate programs.

In last 14 years as a college educator, McGlumphy states that the “Cal U” M.S. program, part of the DeVos College of Business Administration, is arguably the first of its kind in the area of sport management graduate studies. The program, launched in 2002, was the vision of Rich and Helen DeVos, owners of RDV Sports and the NBA’s Orlando Magic. The endowment for the program is a $2.5 million gift by Mr. & Mrs. DeVos, which was matched by the State of Florida. In addition, to the donated scholarships, the endowment has allowed the program to have either scholarships or graduate assistant positions for virtually all students.

Along with the DeVos’ vision, the UCF program has another major cornerstone in its charismatic director, Dr. Richard Lapchick, human rights activist, pioneer for racial equality, internationally recognized expert on sports issues, scholar and author. When Lapchick came to UCF in 2001, he brought along his commitment to equality and his belief that diversity can be an effective force for change in the U.S.
The day before graduation, University of Central Florida students were honored at half-time of an Orlando Magic game.

So under Lapchick’s leadership, one critical component is students in the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate program must complete 15 hours per month of community work as part of their degree requirement. For example, UCF Sport Business Management graduate students volunteered for work in the devastated Ninth Ward neighborhood of New Orleans. The initial effort, called the Hope for Stanley Foundation, had UCF grad students helping a long-time New Orleans resident, Stanley Stewart, rebuild his home destroyed by Katrina. The Hope for Stanley project has mushroomed into dozens of restoration projects with the help of Lapchick and, most importantly, the UCF students.

In a recent SIU editorial, Inside Out columnist John Genzale wrote of the UCF program, “In their [students'] giving, they are getting a broader education, a better one that includes not only financial values but also human values. What is sports if not an attempt to improve the human condition? UCF teaches good citizenship along with good business practices. An enlightened employer would do well to look there first for its next junior executive.”

“We really believe that our program stands out as one that teaches good citizenship along with good business practices. An enlightened employer would do well to look there first for its next junior executive.”

The DeVos integrative concept combines the “living classroom” aspect with a rigorous, comprehensive academic schedule that keeps teams of students together throughout their two-year coursework. The core curriculum incorporates UCF College of Business Administration core classes, specific sport business classes, and other unique classes that emphasize the social impact of sport. Students receive interactive projects and programs that allow them to work alongside world-class sport business leaders, while building a network of contacts that help create rewarding post-graduation opportunities. Additionally, graduates discover the role of sport in society, how the power of sport can help create a more inclusive society, and the responsibility of sport to use that power to make a difference.

Lapchick brought his well-known commitment to equality and his belief that sport can be an effective instrument of positive social change to UCF. So in following with Lapchick's tradition of human rights activism, the curriculum includes courses with an emphasis on diversity, community service and philanthropy, sport and social issues, and ethics in addition to UCF's strong business curriculum.

Along those lines, the Master’s in Sport Business Management Program at UCF seeks to develop professionals who have critical sports business management knowledge and skills, as well as a commitment for using sport to improve life in society.

Columbia University

In Fall 2006, Columbia University decided to do something no other Ivy League school had ever done: it launched the Ivy League’s first graduate sports management program.

Part of Columbia’s School of Continuing Education, the Master of Science in Sports Management is designed to broadly educate sports managers about the industry, while providing industry-specific training in finance, personnel management, law, marketing, and facility superintendence.

“The mission of Columbia's School of Continuing Education is to mount innovative programs that meet Columbia’s standard of excellence, and take the best advantage of University resources,” says Lucas Rubin, program director. “We developed the Sports Management program in concert with our NCAA Division I Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education. At the same time, it takes effective advantage of Columbia’s traditional strengths in finance, marketing, management, and law, as well as its location in New York City – a nexus of the sports industry.”

The Columbia M.S. in Sports Management was created to train students for management positions in all sectors of the sports industry. It offers a combination of broad-based and industry-specific skill training – a hallmark of the program – that is evident in both the content of individual courses and the sequence in which degree candidates take the courses.

Professionals working in the field helped design the sports management curriculum. Other courses rigorous, highly focused executive-style program (no electives) in a cohort fashion that is based upon conveying broad-based business knowledge and then applying it into industry-specific areas.

“This equips students with the basis for comprehending and understanding management issues in sports in a fashion that few other schools are able to provide,” notes Dr. Rubin.

The program is designed to meet the needs of a range of people, including: those working in the industry who would like to advance their career by completing a graduate program that offers industry-specific training; students with undergraduate degrees in sports or recreation management who are looking to complete a graduate degree in the field; those seeking to turn their passion for sports into a new career; and those with advanced degrees in business, law or journalism seeking to expand their credentials in the sports world.

“Though jobs as sports managers are plentiful, it’s a very competitive field,” Lucas says. “Our M.S. in Sports Management expands professional opportunities by providing students with advanced, industry-specific training in finance, personnel management, law, marketing, and facility and event superintendence.”

Columbia’s M.S. in Sports Management helps its graduates:

• Master the management skills and techniques necessary for success in the sports industry
• Gain a broad understanding of the sports industry
• Develop or enhance industry-specific management skills.
• Learn from experienced, practicing professionals.
• Study and network with a select group of peers.

Schedule-wise, the M.S. in Sports Management is a part-time program designed to accommodate working professionals. During the academic year, most courses are 14 weeks long, meeting on weekday evenings.

“It’s a rigorous, concentrated program that demands a serious commitment of time and energy,” says Dr. Rubin. “Students are expected to devote significant time to completing reading assignments, class assignments, and term projects outside class.”

Rubin notes that the Columbia program differs from many other programs in that it is a true management-oriented program with emphasis on communicating broad-based knowledge as well as industry (and position) appropriate skills and techniques. But unlike an MBA program, the Columbia graduate program in sports management lets students understand managerial issues and challenges in the context of the sports industry.
Researching sport management programs

When choosing a sport management program, the top factors are a program’s track record of placing graduates in high-quality sports jobs and the program’s “fit” with your individual goals and learning objectives.

In preparation
The right program should provide an understanding of sports business history and knowledge of different industry segment inner-workings. You should receive the analytical business tools to not only explore current issues and trends but also provide effective solutions to a wide array of employers. Different sport segments included in many curriculums include: professional, amateur and college, event and facilities, sports marketing and management agencies, sports media and sportsing goods.

Also, check with friends, family and other contacts within the sport industry while gathering opinions on programs. It might also be useful to find people doing jobs similar to the one you see yourself doing when you finish your degree. Ask if they have any insight on different programs’ strengths and weaknesses.

What to learn?
Curriculum, teaching philosophy and student-to-teacher ratios are common ways of looking at the classroom experience a program provides. In addition, think about looking at:

- Current student profiles (experience, goals, past education)
- Examples of real-world learning brought into the classroom (class work, practicum projects, assistantships, internships, consulting)
- Instructors teaching subjects of particular interest to you (industry experience in area, involvement in topic associations, research and publishing, accolades)

Faculty considerations
There are many different ways to evaluate a program’s faculty. Experience in the industry is of key importance in sports. For additional ways to look at different faculties consider:

- Faculty size (number, full-time vs. part-time, subject specialization) – An indication of faculty expertise and involvement in student learning
- Non-academic experience (past careers, associations, consulting activities) – Makes for powerful connections between theory and real-world environment
- Teaching tenure – A sign of teaching excellence as tenure is earned over time through reviews by administrators and fellow faculty
- Accolades (from institutions and industry organizations) – Denotes special achievement in an area of study or service
- Areas of interest and study – Are faculty on the forefront of industry trends and challenges?
- Current course materials (syllabus, course Web sites, past student projects)
- Sheds light on individual course/class structure, learning opportunities and expectations

To get a sense of the educational environment fostered by faculty, don’t hesitate to ask:
- Does the curriculum incorporate general business management studies and does it have opportunities to focus on specific concentrations?
- Also, are the classes the program offers suitable for my goals?

Employment chances
The community connected to a program is a powerful resource for sport management students. Building or having a large, active network within the sports industry can also greatly expand your job prospect contact options. This comes into play not only when prospecting for permanent positions, but also when working on class projects developing mentor relationships and landing internships. To begin evaluating a program’s alumni power, consider:

- The years a program has existed
- Number of alumni and their positions within different areas of the sports industry

Web sites that work

- NASSM.com (North American Society for Sport Management)
- FilInfoTech.com (International publisher of sport and fitness information)
- SportsBusinessJournal.com
- MBA.com (GMAT home)
- PrincetonReview.com (Test preparation service)
- Kaplan.com (Test preparation service)

When looking for a program, longevity is one consideration. Ohio University, the first sport management program in the nation (launched in 1946), offers the Grover Center as home for its Center for Sports Administration.

Earn Your Master’s Degree in 18 Months!

- Networking and Internship opportunities with Sport Industry Professionals
- Distinguished faculty comprised of tenure-track professors and executives from the Sport Industry
- Moderate temperatures year round and close proximity to the beaches in Southern California

For more information, contact Diane Higgs, Program Manager, at (562) 985-2044 email lhiggs@csulb.edu, or visit www.csulb.edu/sportmanagement

Sport Management Education at 'The Beach'!
Ketra L. Armstrong, Ph.D., Program Director

Ketra L. Armstrong, Ph.D., Program Director
“We recognize that sport is a business, so our first priority is to instill business skills in our students,” he says. “We may be a new program, but we take very seriously the quality of students and graduates, which is reflected in the small number of students we accept each year.”

University of Dallas

Down in Texas, they do things in a big way. And that fact is obvious at the University of Dallas, which offers two graduate degrees — an MBA in Sports & Entertainment Management, and the Master of Management (MM) in Sports & Entertainment Management Program Design — to prepare students for a career as an executive in the sports and entertainment industry.

“We didn’t want to limit our MBA students to strictly sports or entertainment, so we offer a combined program, which gives our graduates more flexibility career-wise,” says Scott Wysong, University of Dallas academic program director.

Students in the Sports and Entertainment MBA program learn about a wide range of topics, including: marketing and business plans, understanding fan behavior, setting ticket prices, creating and leveraging sponsorships, dealing with the media, planning and coordinating events, managing a crowd, funding the construction of a new venue, negotiating a contract, licensing your property, and others.

The Master of Management (MM) degree program provides profession-specific graduate management education for those who have already earned an MBA.

“We feel the two degree programs meet the needs of a wide range of professionals,” Wysong explains.

The University of Dallas designed its Sports and Entertainment Management programs to present a well-balanced view of the sports and entertainment industries from a business perspective. Unlike other programs that may only provide marketing courses, the University of Dallas program gives students a look at marketing as well as finance, facility operations and the legal environment. Also, students cover both sports (professional and amateur) and entertainment (TV, film, radio/music and performing arts) within each class.

While some students may only be interested in one of the industries (sports or entertainment), we believe that the two industries share a lot in common, and in some cases, they overlap or are one in the same,” Wysong says. “So sports executives would be wise to examine and borrow successful examples from the entertainment industry and vice versa. The latest news in the Dallas MBA in Sports & Entertainment Management program is that it now can be completed entirely via traditional classroom courses and/or on-line courses.

Whether on-site or online, the Dallas MBA core curriculum courses are designed to build critical management skills and competencies across all of the various management disciplines, in order to prepare you for a management role. All MBA students complete the 34-hour core. Classes may be taken in any order as long as prerequisites are required. On the next level, students take 15 hours of specialized electives.

“Movies, television, football, theatre - whatever a person’s interests, our program can help achieve that satisfying feeling of mixing business with pleasure. Our program liberates students from the idea that work is never fun.”

Duquesne University

Sometimes, it makes very good sense to give people what they want.

For example, Duquesne University developed the first ever Master of Science in Sports Leadership (MSSL) degree in response to feedback from professional sports employers and managers who indicated a strong demand for leadership skills in today’s dynamic global marketplace. According to Steve Greenberg, executive in residence, sports marketing, and associate director of Duquesne’s MSSL, the knowledge and skills mastered in the Duquesne program will expand the leadership and ethical “tool set” among sports industry managers.

“Until now, many sports professionals looking to develop their leadership skills have had to rely upon on-the-job training and informal mentorship among colleagues,” says Greenberg, formerly vice president of New Ballpark Development and Communication for the Pittsburgh Pirates (in that role, he coordinated the design and construction of PNC Park).

For its graduate program, Duquesne (it also offers a B.S. in Sports Marketing) identified two target markets: existing sports executives and also recent graduates of sports marketing or sports management undergrad programs.

Greenberg says he was amazed at the diversity of the students in the program, ranging from very high executives to coaches on the sports side and account representatives to assistant public relations directors on the marketing side. Current students include collegiate team coaches, senior directors, ticket managers and other professionals representing major league baseball, stadiums, and minor league baseball teams.

“Duquesne is one of the industries (sports or entertainment), we offer a combined program, which gives our graduates more flexibility career-wise,” says Scott Wysong, University of Dallas academic program director. “While some students may only be interested in one of the industries (sports or entertainment), we believe that the two industries share a lot in common, and in some cases, they overlap or are one in the same,” Wysong says. “So sports executives would be wise to examine and borrow successful examples from the entertainment industry and vice versa. The latest news in the Dallas MBA in Sports & Entertainment Management program is that it now can be completed entirely via traditional classroom courses and/or on-line courses.

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Duquesne University had 32 students in year two for its online M.S. in Sports Leadership program, and it expects that number to reach 100 for Fall 2007.

“ALSO, CONTINUING MY EDUCATION AT DUQUESNE HAS BEEN THE CATALYST FOR RENEWING, REFOCUSING AND REVITALIZING MY LEADERSHIP STYLE AND APPROACH.”

Ron Rolston, head coach of USA Hockey’s U-18 National Team

is this unique, but it really has merit. Many executives want to take their careers to next level and help the organizations they already work for.”

The online format is rigorous yet flexible. It allows busy professionals to do coursework on their schedules and not be restricted to logging in at certain hours.

What’s your game plan? Western New England College’s MBA Sport program is designed for any sport industry professional or businessperson looking to get a jump on the competition.

Revenue development is the key to the sport industry’s success in the 21st century and is also the backbone of the MBA Sport. As a student, you will learn ways to create new revenue streams, maintain and build new technologically advanced facilities, cultivate personnel, maximize equipment resources, and lead the sport industry into the future.

Isn’t it time you got into the game? Visit www.wne.edu/sportsbusiness for more information.
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<td>M.A. (Sports Administration)</td>
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<td>State University of New York at Cortland</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.cortland.edu/sportmgt">www.cortland.edu/sportmgt</a></td>
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Ron Rolston, head coach of USA Hockey’s U-18 National Team, says Duquesne’s Sports Leadership program proved beneficial to his professional growth in three ways. First, as a coach, the delivery format has allowed him to further his education while maintaining a rigorous coaching schedule.

“Also, continuing my education at Duquesne has been the catalyst for renewing, refocusing and revitalizing my leadership style and approach,” he says. “And the Program has exposed me to new experiences, which has been the catalyst for growth and development in my professional career.”

FL, inaugurated its MBA in Sport Management (MBASport) program in back in 2000. Now, seven years later, the rising program has hit a watershed, as it recently moved its home base from its original Fort Lauderdale campus location to the FAU central campus in Boca Raton. MBASport is housed in the Barry Kaye College of Business.

“This move really signifies that we are moving to another level,” says Jim Riordan, director of FAU’s MBASport program. “When we started, we were the only AACSB accredited program in Florida, and only the second in the country at the time.”

Even before the move, FAU’s MBASport has delivered the goods. Since its inception, more than 90 percent of the program’s graduates are employed in permanent, and full-time sport and/or entertainment industry positions. The Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, University of Miami, Florida Panthers, Florida Marlins, USOCC, Toronto Maple Leafs, the LPGA, Conference USA, South Florida PGA, and the ACC are a small sample of the organizations that have hired FAU MBASport students over the years.

According to Riordan, MBASport combines a rigorous graduate business curriculum with a specialization module that emphasizes the business of sport. The program is practitioner-oriented and students are required to participate in out-of-classroom practical experiences at local and regional sport and/or entertainment entities. The faculty at MBASport is also practitioner-oriented.

“If they don’t work it during the day, they don’t teach it for us at night,” says Riordan. “It cannot be over-emphasized that MBASport is geared for those who are or wish to become managers and executives in the business side of the sport and entertainment industry.”

MBASport does not offer a thesis option, nor does it offer part-time study or a certificate option. In addition, MBASport students can’t be employed outside the sport industry during their time in the program.

“While our graduates earn the most prestigious MBA (AACSB) possible, many of them chose to work in media relations, inter-collegiate athletics management and facility management,” Riordan says.

Riordan explains that new students are required to be involved with internships/or industry-related employment the first day they step on campus. MBASport assists in securing these positions.

Most of all, MBASport is a very selective two to two-and-a-half year program, with no more than 50 students at a time. Applicants must undergo an intensive interview process and an evaluation committee. There’s a good reason for the tough admissions criteria.

“We need a good mix, people who will be able to work together,” Riordan explains. “We’ve denied admissions to students with close-to-perfect scores on their GMATs. Our students have to be able to work well with other people (internally and externally). It’s not just about the book smarts. We look for personalities that will mesh, too.”

With that said, 90 percent placement success rate, no one is going to argue with Riordan’s strategy.

“We are always working to help students get internships and jobs,” he says. “Our alumni also help in this regard. They are eager to give back to the program.”

Loyola University Chicago

Located just off North Michigan Avenue (aka the “Magnificent Mile”) in downtown Chicago, Loyola University Chicago’s Water Tower Campus is right in the thick of the Windy City’s sports and entertainment center.

But even more than that, the Chicago location serves as home to the School of Business Administration’s B.B.A. and MBA in Sport Management degree programs. And that means students who choose Loyola University Chicago get an excellent education plus the bonus of being in one of the nation’s most rabid sports towns at all levels – professional, collegiate, and amateur.

“Having our Sport Management program residing in the school of business administration means our students will get all they need to succeed in the business of sports,” says Keith W. Lambrecht, director, Sport Management Programs, Loyola Chicago.

In the past year our students have:
- Sold $20,000 in sponsorships and implemented the 5th Annual Clif Bar SoccerFest tournament featuring over 100 teams, 3,000 spectators and $15,000 in sponsorships
- Developed marketing strategies for Octagon Consulting clients
- Implemented a community relations program for the Boston Celtics
- Sold over $10,000 in sponsorships for the Holyoke Giants (NECBL)
- Designed and implemented internet research for U.S. Soccer
- Telemarketed tickets for NCAA Division II Men’s Basketball Championships
- Developed marketing plans for Fenway Sports Group
- Performed Research and offered advice on CRM practices to UMass Athletics

For more information contact Tracy Schoenadel, Director of Center for Spectator Sports Research, Isenberg School of Management Sports Management Department, 121 Presidents Dr., Amherst, MA 01003 413-545-5590 tracy@sportsmgt.umass.edu

\section*{U Mass Sports Management}

\subsection*{Bringing the classroom to the industry...}

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We provide the theory, but we're more interested in what's happening in the actual business of sports.” Curtis says, adding that the rich Florida sports landscape gives the small school a massive menu of internship opportunities.

Apart from interning, Lynn's program offers one-of-a-kind study tours. The school took five students to Major League Baseball's 2006 winter meetings for three days of intense informational interviews with baseball execs and merchandisers. It also created a class called "The Final Four Experience," which had a dozen students and two faculty members spending one week at the 2007 NCAA Men's Final Four. The trip included visits with executives from the NCAA, Braves, Hawks, Thrashers and the area's major sports venues. Lynn students also have gone on learning missions to China, South Africa and Thailand.

It’s a huge part of our philosophy,” Curtis says. “Everyone in the industry understands what we are doing. Bottom line, a great sport management program is not just about what happens in the classroom – it’s more about bringing the real world of sports to our students.”

Manhattanville College

Manhattanville College’s, beautiful 100-acre campus set in prosperous and thriving Westchester County in Purchase, N.Y., is new to the sport management graduate degree game. The campus offers a suburban location along with the resources of New York City that gives it just the right blend of academics, location, class size and convenience.

“Networking remains very important, but if you are not prepared, it won’t mean anything in the long run,” Lambrecht says. “We give our students a tremendous curriculum, but just as critical is the out-of-the-classroom efforts certainly demonstrate it. For starters, students must rack up 12 credits of internship work. “We get them out into the field, so they can experience the reality of sports business,” Curtis says, adding that the rich Florida sports landscape gives the small school a massive menu of internship opportunities.

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Lynn University

At Lynn University, in Boca Raton, FL, the sports management focus is on innovation, primarily by delivering an individualized, hands-on learning approach.

“We deliver a real-world concept of learning to students,” says Ted Curtis, director of sports management at Lynn University’s College of Hospitality Management (the school offers B.S. degrees with concentrations in sports administration and recreation management). “We understand that many schools might teach only theory. We provide the theory, but we’re more interested in what’s happening in the actual business of sports.”

If “experiential” learning is the thing at Lynn, its out-of-the-classroom efforts certainly demonstrate it. For starters, students must rack up 12 credits of internship work. “We get them out into the field, so they can experience the reality of sports business,” Curtis says, adding that the rich Florida sports landscape gives the small school a massive menu of internship opportunities.

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to improve their business management and leadership skills.

- Graduating seniors and working professionals outside the industry who wish to enter this growing, $260B market.
- Sports enthusiasts looking to secure a management position in the industry.

The 36-credit SBM program’s key advantages, according to Torromeo, include convenient weekday schedules, small class size, up to six challenge credits and six transfer credits, no internship requirement for those who qualify, no GMAT or GRE required, proximity to most major sports leagues and organizations, and the SBM internship program.

The SBM program includes 12 courses, including seven required within the sports field, and four taken from a list of eight advanced business electives (including electives such as Sport Communication and the Business of Baseball).

The optional three-credit internship completes the program and demonstrates the student’s ability to implement his or her newly acquired knowledge and skills.


“We had just over 50 students in the program for year one, but by the fall, we anticipate close to 100,” says Torromeo, who formerly served as VP of Operations for the National Football Foundation and the College Hall of Fame, 15 years in collegiate athletics, and as a consultant.

“It’s a great mix of industry professionals as well as athletic administrators and other professionals who want to learn the business side of sports. We also draw from people with great business skills who are interested in a career change and want to move into the sports marketplace.

“Networking is also a major part of what we have to offer,” he adds. “From the professionals we attract for adjunct professor positions, to our advisory board, the students in the program receive tremendous exposure and unique networking opportunities in the field.”

University of Massachusetts

Up in Amherst, Mass. , the University of Massachusetts Department of Sport Management program is one of the oldest, and best, in the nation. After all, you won’t last that long if you aren’t doing things right.

Housed within the Isenberg School of Business, the UMass Sport Management program has the nation’s largest faculty (12 full-time faculty members) solely dedicated to the study of spectator sports (professional sports, collegiate sports, corporate sponsors, sporting goods, sports facilities, sport tourism, etc.). In addition, the faculty has extensive industry connections given their well over 100 combined years of sport industry experience. And none of the UMass classes are “farmed out” to other departments on campus.

Another plus is the program’s comprehensive, action-oriented curriculum, says Lisa Masteralexis, department head for Sport Management. For example, she asks where else can you take elective courses to market and manage a grassroots soccer tournament, conduct market research for a sport organization, sell sponsorships and ticket packages for a local sports organization, participate in an international sport trip, and participate in a simulated negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement?

Graduate-wise, UMass Sport Management has over 2,800 alumni, with about half working in the sports industry, many in mid-level or executive positions.

“We’ve been around for 36 years,” Masteralexis says. “In fact, with our strong alumni network and additional networks possessed by each faculty member, we offer connections to students across the sport industry that can help further their own personal networks.”

Location is another upside. UMass has proximity to not one, but three major markets: Boston (90 miles), New York (160 miles), and Philadelphia (approximately 300 miles). “We conduct alumni events and take students to each of these markets nearly every year,” Masteralexis says.

Finally, the UMass program, which offers undergrad, Master’s and Ph.D. degrees in Sport Management, is the centerpiece of the Manhattanville College campus in Purchase, NY.
Research, as an agency for sport industry projects, the Center for Spectator Sport Industry right into the classroom. We were one of UMiami graduate students Josh Harris (left) and Chris Nyland (right) with Andy Gillentine, associate dean, at a University graduate and upper undergrad level that bring the industry experience,” she says. “Within our graduate classes small (20 maximum), so that each student has opportunity to receive more individualized attention from both faculty members and the placement coordinator.

“Our focus is merging classroom work with industry experience,” she says. “Within our programs, there are a number of courses at the graduate and upper undergrad level that bring the industry right into the classroom. We were one of the first schools that adopted this model, whereby students solve industry problems or work with industry through a course assignment.”

UMass Sport Management also offers a re-search arm, the Center for Spectator Sport Research, as an agency for sport industry projects. The program offers both an M.S. Ed and a B.S. Ed in sport administration.

For starters, the M.S. Ed program takes just one year. Students starting in the fall can complete their degree in following summer session. Admittedly, that makes for a heavy student work-load, but, Gillentine explains, the graduate students entering the program typically are anxious to get to work.

“As we sat down and considered ways to be more competitive, students let us know that they wanted to finish the program as soon as possible,” says Jeremy Jordan, who directs the graduate program. “We also noticed more students staying during summer term, taking a heavy course load, so providing the reduced length option made sense.”

It’s no wonder grads are anxious to get to work. A sample of organizations that have hired Miami sport administration graduates include: American Airlines Arena, Baltimore Orioles, Buffalo Bills, Cleveland Browns, Chicago Bears, Dolphin Stadium, Minnesota Timberwolves, Homestead-Miami Speedway, IMG, Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, Nashville Predators, Orange Bowl Committee, PGA, Minnesota Twins, Florida Marlins, Miami Sports International, Sony Ericsson Tennis Open, Washington & Lee University, University of Connecticut and the University of Miami.

Advantage number two is the program’s sport industry partnership program, which offers a 12-month, funded internship with a partner organization. This fall, 10 students will be placed in funded internships with several local sport partners, including IMG Academies, University of Miami Athletics, Hurricane Sports Properties, Florida Marlins, PR Racing Inc., Miami-Date Sports Commission, Ransom Everglades School and World Golf Championships – CA Championship at Doral. The paid internships offer tuition assistance and a stipend for graduate students.

“It’s worked out very well,” says Gillentine. “It not only offsets the cost of their educations, but students also can tailor an internship to their specific needs. It’s a very exciting situation. The partners were so happy with the students, they didn’t want to lose them. On the flip side, the students made such good contacts, people wanted to hire them.”

Advantage number three is a special relationship with IMG Academies (IMGAA), the multi-sport training and educational facility for athletes in Bradenton, Fla. Under this arrangement, IMG will be offering a Master’s program at IMG Academies.

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In addition, the NYU program works with Madison Square Garden, Major League Baseball, the National Football League, Major League Soccer and many other sports enterprises. “We are involved with the major and minor leagues, and our students have internships with the NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB almost every semester,” says Jonathan Rosenberg, the program’s internship and career development manager. “Students are remembered and recruited by organizations when they graduate.” Rosenberg adds that the program also has relationships with IMG Sports, Octagon, SFX Sports Group, and SME Branding.

Internships, of course, play a key role in both the undergrad and grad programs, as the former requires two internships in the junior and senior years (300 and 400 hours respectively), and graduate students complete one internship of 300 hours. “Today’s sports industry is increasingly sophisticated, so 8 years ago we morphed former health, recreation and parks degrees into a comprehensive undergraduate degree to prepare students for the profession of sports business,” Lambert says. “And our graduate program, though only 4 years old, is thriving.”

SUNY Cortland

When the State University of New York (SUNY) at Cortland launched a rebirth of its Sport Management program eight years ago from a concentration in Physical Education (1985-1999) to a business management-based major, it chose to focus on some very specific differentiators. The goal: to mold its program into one of the most unique in the nation, not just in the northeast region.

Specifically, that meant focusing its program on four primary sport industry areas:
- An international approach
- A commitment to technology in sports
- A commitment to training students for careers in sport sales and marketing
- An emerging alumni network working in sport

Based on enrollment, low attrition, affordable tuition and job placement, the strategy is working. Now, there is a new challenge on the horizon. Within the next 3-5 years, the program anticipates expanding its graduate student enrollment, which currently has 25 students (there are also 375 undergraduates in the sport management program), by launching its two new Master of Science degrees, one professional online in Sport Management (Fall 2007) and one residential in International Sport Management (Fall 2008).

“We are also finalizing plans with London Metropolitan University for a dual-degree in international sport management, and an M.S./MBA with Binghamton University, also anticipated to start fall 2008,” says Dr Ted Fay, chair, Sport Management Department. “This will allow us to grow to a total of 15 full-time faculty fully dedicated to sport management undergraduate and graduate classes.” That increase would give SUNY Cortland the largest staff of sport management faculty in the country.

“We make it no secret that our commitment is to make our program competitive enough to be considered a Top 10 program in the country by our peers,” Fay explains. With Fay and Associate Professor/Graduate Coordinator Dr. James Reese coming from UMass and Ohio University respectively, there is no delusion about what it will take to build a national caliber program.

After the international/online strategy, technology is another differentiator, says Reese. In fact, there is a “technology corridor” at SUNY Cortland, controlled exclusively by the sport management department, including approximately $8 million of hardware and proprietary software from Dartfish and XOS. In all, there are four rooms with 112 computer terminals, and a video production studio. In addition, SUNY Cortland has 12 courses dedicated to sport information above: student leaders from the NYU Tisch Center student club, “Sports Business Society,” at their annual career fair. Left: Tisch Center full-time sports business faculty Dr. Lee Igel, Professor Wayne McDonnell and Professor Robert Boland with recent guest lecturer Mike Cramer (second from right).
Lashbrook already was president and founder of Sports Management Worldwide (www.smww.com), the first ever online sports management company with a primary mission to educate future sports business executives. As such, SMWW trains thousands of students every year for sports business careers. Rather than reinvent the wheel, NCU turned to Lashbrook to direct its online Master's and Doctorate programs in sports management.

"You could say our company is a ‘front porch’ for students who come to NCU looking to earn an advanced sport management degree," says Lashbrook, who served at the collegiate level as a coach, scout, recruiter, athletic academic advisor, compliance officer, and athletic director. He was an assistant athletic director at the University of Missouri, before becoming a director of athletics at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Lashbrook turned down the AD job at Western Michigan University so he could begin developing his own sports management company. Now, he’s also directing the graduate programs in sport management for NCU.

"Our company is a preferred partner with NCU," Lashbrook explains. "NCU already offers many degrees and opportunities, but what we do is take my unique background as professor, coach and academic advisor, and offer a cutting edge curriculum. NCU, in fact, has allowed me to create a curriculum for future leaders."

Lashbrook, a definite online evangelist, says even today, getting a master’s degree to work for say, the Phillies or Seahawks, is not necessarily the best way to go. But anyone who wants to be an AD or work on a college campus should pursue a graduate degree.

"You can’t defeat yourself in sports," he says.

"Of course, I am not knocking education because we certainly try to place people in the industry. But it’s in the college environment and workplace where advanced degrees mean the most." Lashbrook says it’s unfortunate that many in higher education today still don’t quite grasp the online/distance learning experience. And that’s where NCU’s programs have a leg up on the competition.

"You have to understand online. Just do a live, interactive audio chat on WebEx," he says.

"Anywhere students are in the world, they can do interactive audio chats.”

He predicts that in years ahead, colleges and universities will require students to have both an advanced sports degree and understand online education.

"We believe you will see a total shift to consolidation, and when it comes to career opportunities in college sports, having the ability to wear more than one hat will be critical,” he says.

Online courses within the NCU Sport Management curriculum include The Pre-Game Warm-up to Sports Management, Leadership in Collegiate Athletics, Leadership and the Professional World of Sports, Sports Leadership and Ethics, Advising the Student Athlete, and Level the Playing Field: Diversity in Sports.

"We’re different than anyone else in the world when it comes to sport management education,” Lashbrook says.

Northcentral University

When Northcentral University decided to launch a sport management and leadership graduate program just under three years ago, it figured that handling the job over to an expert made a lot of sense. So NCU formed a partnership with Dr. G. Lynn Lashbrook, a professional with a lifelong passion for growing dynamic sports programs, who has been working and teaching in sports management for over 35 years. Lashbrook already was president and founder of Northcentral University, which offers its sports management degrees online, moved into a new 52,000-square-foot world headquarters in May.

technology, sport videography, and sport media at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Finally, the third key component at SUNY Cortland is its student-centered, applied learning focus.

“Everything we do is designed to impart the ability of students to have a great learning experience and secure a job in the industry,” Renee says. For example, faculty members are required to have sport industry experience. Also, SUNY Cortland offers an “applied research” focus, with practical application to the sport industry. Faculty do not conduct research geared exclusively for academic journals. In fact, research is conducted with the help of students to have useful applications by industry professionals.

“SUNY Cortland Sport Management is known nationally for having several specific niche areas,” says Fay. “Of those, we believe international focus is critical. We really feel programs that remain focused on the domestic sport industry will be left behind. We are a leader in this area and plan to continue to expand our international reach.”

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Jeff Urban, director of sports marketing at Gatorade, was a guest speaker in the Northwestern University’s ‘Fundamentals of Sports Marketing’ class.

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Northwestern University

It’s no secret that sports has become a mature, multibillion-dollar industry. The growth in all aspects of the business of sport — including media, apparel, sponsorship, labor relations, licensing, and marketing — has been continuous and dynamic. This growth has created a demand for professionals with solid strategic planning skills, strong analytical prowess, and creative and sophisticated management techniques.

Northwestern University’s Master of Arts in Sports Administration (MSA) program addresses this need by combining guest speakers’ academic credentials with a real-world, practical approach that provides professionals with the necessary tools for success in the sports industry.

“The biggest difference in our program is the format,” says Maureen Harty, Northwestern’s assistant athletic director and MSA faculty member. “We are teaching what I learned in my MBA program, but everything is in the sports realm, including high-level speakers from the industry. The advantage is that we can offer the best of both the academic and the sports worlds.”

Well-known sports executives, such as John McDonough, president of the Chicago Cubs, and Amy Krees, director of mass communications for the Chicago White Sox, serve on the MSA advisory board and have helped create courses that mimic traditional MBA offerings — with topics including management, marketing, negotiations and ethics — and are tailored to the sports administration and the sports industry. In addition to the robust academic curriculum, the program offers practical, real-world insight from the experienced sport industry professionals who teach many of the MSA courses. Instructors frequently invite prominent sports professionals to address their classes. Recent guest speakers include Scott Nelson, director of operations of the Cubs, Kevin Hallinan, director of security for Major League Baseball, and Jeff Urban, director of sports marketing at Gatorade.

Roy Kessel, president of SportsLoop Management and MSA faculty member said, “I became involved in the program because in the business world I saw a need for a training ground that would provide a strong educational basis for teaching students about the sports industry. Through our program we provide mentoring and connect students to job opportunities.”

With evening courses designed for working adults, the program attracts students with a diverse mix of experiences and backgrounds. “We really look forward to classes because my instructors and classmates bring real-world experience to discussions,” says MSA student Kathleen Brown.

The MSA program is comprised of two courses in a specialization — either sports management, sport administration and the sports industry. In addition to the robust academic curriculum, the program offers practical, real-world insight from the experienced sport industry professionals who teach many of the MSA courses. Instructors frequently invite prominent sports professionals to address their classes. Recent guest speakers include Scott Nelson, director of operations of the Cubs, Kevin Hallinan, director of security for Major League Baseball, and Jeff Urban, director of sports marketing at Gatorade.

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Ohio University

When it comes to bringing the sports business under the academic microscope, Ohio University started it all.

Back in 1946, the Athens, Ohio, school was the first institution of higher learning to integrate the study of sports as a business into its curriculum. Helped along by the support of Walter O’Malley, legendary owner of the then-Brooklyn (now Los Angeles) Dodgers, Ohio U’s Dr. James Mason of Ohio U developed the first sports administration program at the university in 1946. The rest, as they say, is history.

“One of the things we’re known for is our alumni network. Of course, being the oldest sports management program in the world can be an advantage on that front,” says Jim Kahler, Executive Director of the Center of Sports Administration at Ohio U (and a 1981 graduate with a Master’s in Sports Administration). “We’ve also gone to great lengths to create a curriculum that may be the most practical in the category.”

Regarding the Ohio U network, more than 85 percent of School of Recreation and Sport Sciences graduates are employed in key positions within intercollegiate athletics, professional sports, public assembly facilities, sports tours, motor sports, corporate sports organizations, sports media, and the entertainment industries. Naturally, the loyalty of Ohio U alumni and the reputation of the program translate into a wide variety of excellent internship and employment opportunities.

Ohio University Distinguished Alums, from left: Jim Kahler, Ohio U’s executive director of the Center for Sports Administration; Derrick Hall, president, Arizona Diamondbacks; Mike Hamrick, UNLV athletic director; and Dr. Charles Higgins, Professor Emeritus, Ohio University.

The model at the U of O is built around the Ohio University Sports Marketing Center. Unlike other academic programs. In fact, Sports Illustrated, in its October 7, 2002 issue, recognized the University of Oregon as owning the best sports business program in the nation.

That success is driven by the James H. Warsaw Sports Marketing Center. Unlike other academic settings, the Warsaw Center, which opened in 1993, provides a very strong focus for the school’s sports business program offerings. Above all, the Warsaw Center is all about fostering an environment where both academic study and industry “street smarts” meet to educate each generation of sports marketers.

“Sports marketing is not sports management,” says Jim Warsaw, the Center’s founder. “Both are important. However, the real business of sports revolves around understanding consumer behavior and motivating target markets to purchase goods and services. Without consumers, there would be no sports industry.”

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The Sports Administration & Facility Management (SAFM) Program at Ohio University offers three degree options: Master of Business Administration/Master of Sports Administration (MBA/MSA) Dual-Degree Program, Juris Doctor/Master of Sports Administration (JD/MSA) Dual-Degree Program (in cooperation with Capital Law School), and the Master of Sports Administration (MSA) Degree Program (available for students with previous graduate degrees in law or business).

The two-year MBA/MSA program prepares students for leadership positions by combining the business teaching of the Ohio University MBA program with sport-specific knowledge during the MSA program. Kahler says the degree combination is testament to the growing complexity of the sports, facility and entertainment industries and reinforces Ohio University’s commitment to preparing students for future leadership challenges.

The MBA phase of the program uses a problem-based learning style, immersing students in collaborative projects and working situations that are commonplace in the business world. The MSA program combines classroom and practical experience to prepare individuals for leadership positions in the sport industry.

“In year one, students are picking up 300 hours of consulting experience, through a partnership with the University’s Voinovich Center for Leadership & Public Affairs,” Kahler says. The Center was created to help spur economic development in Southeastern Ohio. “We match up our students with consulting projects, and they are put on teams. They are learning all that while earning their MBA.”

Kahler says today’s sports industry puts a major emphasis on revenue generation, whether that be through sponsorship sales, ticket sales or fund-raising, and sponsorship sales.

“Our philosophy is to listen where the needs and problems are and model the curriculum to meet those needs and solve those problems,” he says. “After all, a curriculum is designed to be redesigned.”

University of Oregon

For the last 15 years, the University of Oregon’s Lundquist College of Business has served as home to one of the nation’s top sports marketing programs. In fact, Sports Illustrated, in its October 7, 2002 issue, recognized the University of Oregon as owning the best sports business program in the nation.

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becoming very relevant to sports marketers,” he says. “We believe that China and the Pacific Rim are key markets for companies doing business in Asia. The Warsaw Center has a solid base of alumni working and living in China, so it was a natural fit, along with the school’s Pacific Rim location. For example, the head of sponsorship for VISA in China is a Warsaw alum.”

“We’re taking all of our MBAs to China every year, so they can learn the business, the culture, etc.,” Swangard says. “That helped move a lot of this kind of learning into business schools, a trend that has really taken off in the past 5-6 years.”

The next frontier for the U of O appears to be the Asia region. The Warsaw Center has a solid base of alumni working and living in China, so it was a natural fit, along with the school’s Pacific Rim location. For example, the head of sponsorship for VISA in China is a Warsaw alum.

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“Since 1999, we have had a partnership with Fudan University, collaborating with the school to create a sports marketing research center there. “We believe that China and the Pacific Rim are becoming very relevant to sports marketers,” he adds. “And the University of Oregon has one of the top Asian studies programs in the country. It’s a natural fit for us.”

In the end, students at the Warsaw Center get a degree from the Lundquist School of Business but the words “sport” or “sports” is conspicuously absent.

“Thats by design,” says Swangard. “Our students don’t major in sport studies. They learn here with an undergraduate or graduate degree in business recognizing they are well-trained business people, not just graduates who have studied sports.”

San Diego State University

There may be many ways to differentiate one sports MBA program from another. But the Sports Business Management MBA program at San Diego State University (SDSU) boasts a competitive advantage no other program can; it is the only sports-focused graduate program that has a formal partnership with a professional sports team, the San Diego Padres.

“We wanted to partner with a university because we see an increasing need for specifically trained executives and business managers in Major League Baseball and in other professional sports,” according to San Diego Padres Owner and Chairman John Moores.

“It’s made a very big difference for us,” says Karen Courtney, director of Executive & Specialized Programs at SDSU’s College of Business Administration. “It’s made a difference in terms of our Board of Advisors, with our internship program, our guest lecturers, you name it.”

Though the Padres partnership heavily influences the curriculum and is enormously helpful for the students’ professional development, alumni of the SDSU program enter the sports world in management positions throughout the industry, not just baseball. SDSU MBA alumni have gone on to work with myriad sports organizations, including the NFL, MLB, NBA, AFI, IMG, Under Armour, action sports and mixed martial arts.

The ways in which SDSU differs from other schools doesn’t stop with the Padres partnership, according to Courtney. In its inaugural year in 2005, the school launched the SDSU International Sports MBA Case Competition, the industry’s first sports-specific case competition. Hosted each year in the Padres front offices at PETCO Park, this event annually attracts top domestic and international MBA programs to San Diego to develop a solution to a multidisciplinary case study focused on international sports.

The case studies used in the first two case competitions tasked the students with developing comprehensive business plans for the World Baseball Classic and the USA Sevens rugby tournament, two international sports events hosted at PETCO Park. SDSU looks forward to welcoming top international programs to San Diego for the third annual competition in November 2007.

SDSU’s Sports MBA program, in two short years, has established itself among the elite sports-focused MBA programs in the nation and is intended for highly motivated students. The program offers an accelerated classroom experience (12 months) and sports business consulting projects (4-6 months) that allow students to complete their MBA within 18 months.

Finally, one of the major draws for the SDSU program is its location in San Diego, known as “America’s Finest City” for its active lifestyle, average annual temperature of 65 degrees and over 300 days of sunshine per year. San Diego is a worldwide destination for all forms of outdoor sports and recreation, and the SDSU program offers in-class exposure to industry leaders of every imaginable sports organization, including the Padres and Chargers, as well as golf, triathlon, surfing, sailing, extreme sports, and other organizations headquartered in the sports hotbed of Southern California.

“Who doesn’t want to live in America’s Finest City?” says Courtney, “Even if it’s only for 18 months.”

University of San Francisco

The Master’s Program in Sport Management at the University of San Francisco got its start as a relatively small endeavor (35 students), and was originally created for both working professionals and recent grads looking to beef up their academic resumes before they joined the working world.

But, according to Dan Rascher, director of academic programs and an associate professor, the program’s best value is for the former group, who are looking to boost their careers in sports management with an MA that they can earn at night while they continue to work during the day.

“With our applicant pool, we don’t like to take students right out of undergraduate school,” Rascher says. “It makes sense for them to have at least a year of experience. Our students most often work in sports, and are in lower paying jobs early in their career. Of course, we also have occasional early retirement people in their 40s, investment bankers and lawyers, who come and do the program to see if they can move into a new career in sports management. The students are a diverse group.” In fact, about 12 percent of U of SF students are international and return to their home countries upon graduation.

The U of SF MA in Sport Management 36-credit, two-year program is clearly geared towards working professionals simply by the way it is structured. Classes meet one night per week for four hours. Typically, students work full-time on a part-time basis.

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VCU SportsCenter, Sport Leadership Graduate Program

In the mid-1990s, Dr. Richard Sander had a vision of creating an innovative learning environment that would help prepare students interested in the sports industry achieve a successful career path. In 1999, Sander, who has been Virginia Commonwealth University’s athletic director for 20 years, turned that thinking into reality, when the school launched the VCU SportsCenter, an innovative sport leadership graduate program that focuses on “experiential” learning using an effective hands-on philosophy.

“The VCU SportsCenter strategy teaches students the necessary skills, giving them ownership of operational responsibility, while providing access to upper-level coaches and administrators,” says Sander. With seven years of history in the bank, the VCU SportsCenter, in fact, has matured into a leading “proving ground” for the next generation of industry leaders.

VCU MBA Sport Program focuses on revenue development

In the European Model of Sport program, for example, students travel to different countries to learn through class sessions, tours, “behind the scenes” access and sporting events.

“It’s an excellent chance to gain exposure to a global market and build contacts, as well as explore possible internship/job interests abroad or domestically,” Sander says. The European Model of Sport has included visiting numerous cities in Great Britain, Germany and Belgium.

For those who are practicing professionals, the SportsCenter offers the distance learning component to the program. One of the typical student-run projects, called The Journey, brings young, successful athletes and coaches (professional and collegiate) to VCU to discuss their journeys of individual success, offering insight and advice to young student-athletes. On April 17, “The Journey: On the Field and Beyond” featured Washington Redskins QB Jason Campbell, San Francisco 49er running back Michael Robinson, and VCU coaches Anthony Grant (men’s basketball) and Tiffany Roberts (women’s soccer).

“Our diverse panels have athletes at all levels of success,” Sander says. “And our students manage it all, from concept to execution. It’s a prime example of what experiential learning is all about.”

The VCU SportsCenter provides a solid foundation for what promises to be a successful career in the sports industry. Students not only learn about the sports industry, domestically and abroad, they experience it as a first-hand basis. The staff of the VCU SportsCenter understands the importance of networking in the sports industry, and, as a result, they have designed a program that encourages and enables students to start building a strong network from the minute they begin taking classes.

The VCU SportsCenter is committed to preparing future leaders in a way that leaves the student feeling not only well prepared but excited to embark on a career in the world of sports.

Western New England College

At Western New England College, the phrase that pays is “Show me the money!”

Translated, the Western New England College MBA Sport Program focuses on revenue development, which, says Dr. Sharadane Walker, chair of the Springfield, Mass., school’s Management and Sport Management Department, is the key to the sports industry’s success in the 21st century.

“Sports organizations on all levels are hungry for ways to create new revenue streams, maintain and build new technology and adapted service-based facilities, and maximize equipment and human resources,” says Walker, who has worked in marketing and public relations for the Boston Celtics and Commonwealth Sports Properties and has consulted with college athletic programs. “It goes from strategic partnerships to fundraising, from creative revenue solutions to effective sales strategies. The sports industry message is loud and clear: They want talented people who can generate income by either creating new revenue streams or improving existing ones.”

The Western New England business school is AACSB accredited. But even more, it offers a flexible delivery model for its MBA Sport program. Walker calls it a “flexmodel,” whereby students can take courses either in person on campus or online. They can even choose the delivery platform on a week-to-week basis, as it works for their particular situation.

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“By allowing students to learn within the framework of this educational paradigm, they are very successful in making a smooth, successful transition into the sports world,” Sander explains.

The VCU MBA Sport Program focuses on revenue development and match” online vs. classroom options). Western New England’s MBA Sport program also offers a faculty roster of experienced sport industry professionals, small classes (for non-online students), accelerated 11-week sessions, and the aforementioned flexibility (“mix and match” online vs. classroom options).

Finally, Western New England’s MBA Sport program has really embraced a global business perspective, so it devotes plenty of course time to revenue growth opportunities in the international sport marketplace.

“Many of our graduates working in both amateur and professional sports organizations confirm that they face major challenges in moving their businesses into the global sports marketplace,” Walker says. “We’ll keep improving our courses to deliver the business savvy and solutions to the cultural hurdles so our graduates can help their employers meet that unique set of challenges.”

While the sport management undergraduate program at Western New England is 11 years old, the school launched the “flexmodel” MBA Sport program just two years ago.

“Our MBA program is the result of talking to people in the sports industry to find out where their needs are and then creating a flexible program that will meet those needs. That’s the goal with MBA Sport.”

Above as part of its Sport Leadership degree program, VCU students deliver a presentation to Richmond, Va., professionals. At right: A trip to Colorado gave SportsCenter students an opportunity to tour facilities of the Denver Broncos, Denver Nuggets, Colorado Rockies, the Denver Sports Commission, the U.S. Airforce Academy and the U.S. Olympic Training Center.