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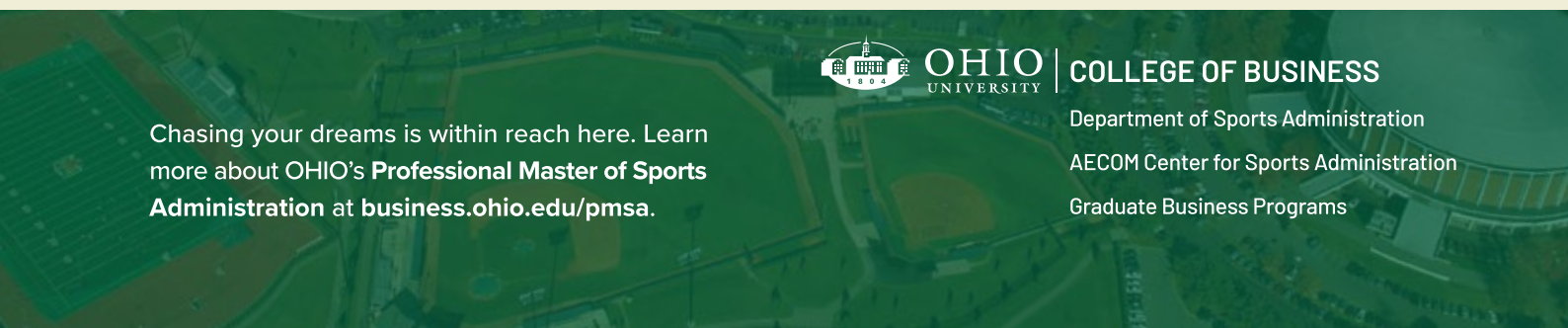
**POSTGRADUATE
RANKINGS 2020**



TOP-RANKED
program in
the world

Your Competition Has a Master's

We're competitive by nature. You may know us as the oldest post-graduate sports administration program in the country. Or as the most consistently top-ranked online postgraduate sport business program in the world, according to SportBusiness Professional. We're not in it for the glory, though. We are driven to be the best to propel our students forward into fulfilling careers. Our rigorous curriculum and engaging experiences will set you apart from the rest. We've graduated thousands of alumni who have worked in intercollegiate athletics, professional sports, sports media, and the entertainment industry.



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Chasing your dreams is within reach here. Learn more about OHIO's **Professional Master of Sports Administration** at business.ohio.edu/pmsa.

Department of Sports Administration
AECOM Center for Sports Administration
Graduate Business Programs

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POSTGRADUATE RANKINGS 2020

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Welcome to the 2020 SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings

It goes without saying that this year has been the most difficult edition of these rankings to produce. The sports and education sectors have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which will leave its mark on both for many years to come.

Nevertheless, our aim remains unchanged, and we believe we have produced the most comprehensive and detailed ranking of the world's best sport management courses in our history.

The goal, as ever, is to provide students and course leaders alike with the most dependable and respected rankings system for postgraduate sports management programmes around the world. That task gets a little more difficult and complex each year, as we continue to adjust and expand our criteria to ensure the fairest and most reliable outcome, and in 2020 we've made some significant changes to both the methodology of the rankings and the outlook of this report.

In terms of the content, given the events of 2020 so far, we have focused on the intersection of academia and the wider industry, with features on how universities are attempting to navigate the complex issues of race, gender and, of course, the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the coming pages, you will also find

interviews with some of the highest-profile graduates from the courses we survey, now employed by the likes of Fifa, the IOC and WWE, discussing how their studies helped to kick-start their careers and how their alma maters continue to support them.

We also take an in-depth look at some of the most impactful research being produced and published by the schools, to give a sense of how the sports industry still relies on work being performed in academia, and look at why universities are increasingly exploring partnerships with major sporting organisations. Meanwhile, top academics from across the sector give their views on the challenges and opportunities facing sport business education in the coming years.

As ever, profound thanks go to our advisory panel, who this year more than any previously have helped to guide the direction of our rankings, offering generous feedback on how we could adjust our criteria to improve the reliability, validity and credibility of the rankings.

And the winners are...

Ohio University's Master of Sports Administration programme has reclaimed its place on the top of the pile, marking the seventh time it has topped

our table in the nine years we've been running these rankings. Though it is the oldest sports management degree in the world, having been founded in 1966, Ohio's strength has been in its ability to modernise, and in its strength across the board, posting scores in the nineties in almost every criteria on which we evaluate.

The competition this time was closer than ever, with the gap between second and third particularly tight. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst may have lost the crown it won in 2019, but second place this year is a no less admirable achievement, while the course remained top in the Professors' Choice category, again demonstrating the esteem in which its MBA/MS Sport Management programme is held by course leaders across the sector.

CIES's Fifa Master holds on to its bronze medal placing, and is once again the highest-ranked European course. It scored highest or joint-highest in the key categories of Alumni Network and Career Value, showing the high regard in which graduates of the course hold it.

As the data table on pages 52 and 53 shows, UMass and the Fifa Master slightly out-scored Ohio in several categories, with both of them bettering the winner in the job support and alumni

The advisory panel

For the 2020 edition, we engaged the biggest advisory panel in the history of the rankings, taking guidance from course leaders at some of the highest-profile programmes across Europe and the US. Our sincerest thanks go to the following, whose help and input has been more vital than ever in shaping the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings.

Claude Stricker

Executive director of the International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS)

Jim Kahler

Director of sports gambling education at Ohio University

Kevin Tallec Marston PhD

Research fellow and academic project manager at the International Centre for Sport Studies

Scott Rosner

Academic director, Sport Management Program at Columbia University

Vassil Girginov PhD

Reader in sport management/development at Brunel University London and president of the European Association for Sport Management

Steve McKelvey

Department chair and graduate program director at the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, UMass

Scott Nestler

Academic director, MS in Business Analytics at University of Notre Dame

network criteria. Ohio's consistently high scores across almost all of our measures, however, ensured it came out on top. An extra one-quarter of a point overall would have seen CIES overtake UMass, while just over one point separated it from Ohio, demonstrating that while the latter may deservedly have claimed the top spot, the difference in quality between our top three is minimal. The three are also the only three schools to have ever finished in first place in the rankings.

George Washington University's Master of Science in Sport Management finished fourth overall, and is the third-highest placed programme in North America, coming in just behind Ohio and UMass.

Among the highest risers this year were both the MBA in Sport Management at the Real Madrid Graduate University in Spain, in 10th place, and the Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology at Switzerland-based AISTS, which finished in ninth. Moving up nine and 14 places respectively, their performances mean there are now three Europe-based schools in the top ten.

Perhaps the biggest story of the rankings this year is the performance of European programmes in general, which make up 16 out of the top 40, the highest ever proportion of courses from the continent. The University of Liverpool Management School was the only institute with two courses in the top 40; its highly specialised Football Industries and Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBAs both performing strongly. Australia's Deakin remains the only representative from outside North America and Europe.

Methodology

For 2020, we have made some significant alterations to our methodology to ensure the rankings keep up to date with the latest developments in sport business education and remain the most in-depth and detailed in the industry.

One of the biggest was a change to how we measure employability. Previously, up to 25 points were awarded based on graduates' employment status six months after finishing a course. After consultations with our advisory panel, we decided that this was too limiting.

For 2020, a maximum of 12 points are awarded based on this measure, with the remaining 13 available based on graduates' current employment status, three years after completing the course (the student surveys always go to alumni who finished their studies three years ago, with this year's being completed by the graduating classes of 2017). We believe this gives a much more rounded representation of the employability of alumni, as well as of the opportunities afforded to them.

We now award up to three points based on current salary, one more than in previous years, and have introduced a purchasing power parity to distinguish between salaries in different countries, rather than using a direct exchange rate, which occasionally led to unfair comparisons.

Two entirely new categories have been introduced to the student satisfaction scores, with up to seven points now awarded for ability to network with industry executives while studying, and the same number available based on a value for money judgement.

We removed the points allocated to schools based on ethnic diversity – a reflection of the difficulty in securing accurate data on this measure, due to the different ways in which it is recorded across different countries and institutions, rather than of decreased importance. Up to three points are still awarded for the ratio of international students on a course, as well as the ratio of female students. We have also begun awarding a single point for schools which have a strong ratio of international and female faculty members. ○



Adam Nelson, editor, SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings

How the PGR score is calculated

Number of points shown here is the maximum possible score

STUDENT MEASURES

Quality of teaching: **10 points**

Support in finding a job in the industry: **7 points**

Quality of extra-curricular support: **5 points**

Opportunities to connect with the alumni network: **7 points**

Ability to network with industry executives: **7 points**

Value for money provided by the masters program: **7 points**

Value of the degree in furthering career: **5 points**

Usefulness of the skills and knowledge provided by the programme in current position: **5 points**

EMPLOYMENT

Employment status at six months: **12 points**

Current employment status: **13 points**

OTHERS

Course Leader choice: **10 points**

Percentage of female students: **3 points**

Percentage of female teaching staff: **1 point**

Percentage of international students: **3 points**

Percentage of international teaching staff: **1 point**

Current salary: **3 points**

Work placement: **1 point**

The top 40 Postgraduate sports business courses

Rank	Provider / Course	Total Score
1	Ohio University MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	91.38
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	90.40
3	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES) The FIFA MasterAdministration	90.22
4	George Washington University Masters in Sport Management	87.83
5	Columbia University MS Sports Management	84.98
6	University of South Florida Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	84.01
7	University of South Carolina Masters of Sport and Entertainment Management	83.14
8	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business MBA in Sports Business Administration	82.92
9	AISTS Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	82.87
10	Real Madrid Graduate School MBA in Sports Management	82.85
11	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Masters of Sport Administration	82.62
12	Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for Sport Leadership Master of Sport Leadership Sport Management	82.20
13	Russian International Olympic University Master of Sport Administration	81.56
14	San Diego State University Sports MBA	80.94
15	Coventry University MSc Sport Management	80.56
16	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport MS in Sports Business	79.85
17	Sheffield Hallam University MSc Sport Business Management	78.70
18	University of Liverpool Management School Football Industries MBA	77.96
19	University of Vigo Master in Business Administration of Sport	77.68
20	Washington State University M.A. in Sport Management	76.70

Rank	Provider / Course	Total Score
21	University of Stirling MSc in Sport Management	76.63
22	Ohio State University Master of Science in Sport Management	76.06
23	University of Central Florida DeVos Sport Business Management Program	75.82
24	University of Windsor Master of Human Kinetics in Sport Management	75.43
25	Georgia State University Masters of Science in Sport Administration	75.09
26	Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF ESBS Master in International Sports ManagementManagement Program	75.01
27	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino International Master in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities Management	74.21
28	Temple University MS in Sport Business	73.81
29	University of New Haven MS Sport Management	73.77
30	Florida Atlantic University MBA Sport Management	73.03
31	University of Liverpool Management School Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBA (THIMBA) Administration	72.89
32	University of Ottawa Master of Human Kinetics Concentration in Sport Management	72.02
33	Ball State University Master of Sport Administration	70.49
34	University of Tennessee Master in Sport Management	69.48
35	Ca' Foscari University of Venice Master in Sport Business Strategies	69.01
36	Seattle University Masters in Sport Business Leadership	68.71
37	University of Bayreuth MBA Sport Management	68.55
38	Johan Cruyff Institute Master in Sport Management	68.29
39	University College Dublin MSc in Sport Management	66.10
40	Deakin University Master of Business (Sport Management)	65.39

1. Ohio's Master of Sports Administration course reclaims top spot



Ohio University's Alumni Gateway (Ohio University)

The Master of Sports Administration degree at Ohio University has been running since 1966, the oldest and most prestigious postgraduate sport management programme in the world. In the nine years that *SportBusiness* has been operating these rankings, the course has claimed the number one spot on seven occasions, demonstrating its consistency and ability to change with the times. After the most difficult academic year in living memory, we spoke to **Jim Kahler**, who stepped down as the AECOM Center for Sports Administration's executive director in July this year, and his replacement **Matthew Cacciato**, who is also the director of the Master of Sports Administration course.

Steering Ohio back to the top of the rankings is quite a way to end what must have been a tricky year.

JK: Seven out of nine – it's not bad! It was sad that we had to go online in March [after the Covid-19 lockdown] and that the kids of this year didn't get their traditional send off. It's great to be back on top, but it's really a tribute to the class of three years ago [who submit the alumni surveys for the 2020 rankings]. I stay in touch with a lot of those kids and they're just a great group. And those are the kids that are coming

back and giving us consulting projects and serving as alumni mentors – part of the strength of this course is that the relationship doesn't end at graduation; it just gets started.

Your consistently high scores for the alumni network are a key part of your consistency in these rankings. What makes it so strong?

JK: I think they buy into our culture, and our culture is not for everyone. It's one of giving back and taking care of one another. It's a certain sense of

pride when you get admitted to the programme, and a certain sense of responsibility. The old saying, 'there's no I in team', – this is really how closely connected this network is, and it's based on pride and responsibility.

MC: The class of 2017 in particular is really strong in a number of different areas. One of the things they're leading right now is a group of them, along with a few of our 2018 graduates, all black, African-American alumni have got together to come to us and say, 'let's work on increasing our diversity

and inclusion and understanding these issues in these times together. Let us be part of the solution you put in place', and that is the best example of how our alumni can give back to us.

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your plans for the coming year?

MC: It's a brave new world out there. Especially in sports, having as many students as we do, especially on the grad level at such a critical time in their career development, they've made the investment of time and money, to come to you and be a part of this, but we're hanging in there. They're really well spirited and our alumni network is stepping up and providing a lot of meaningful content and networking for them.

We're in a fortunate position that we've got great researchers, and we're going to supplement the experiential events that we're known for – the live sporting events where our students are in the middle of operations or marketing or other functions – those are gone, and we're going to replace that with research.

We're going to be much more research-focused and I think that a lot of new practices are going to come out of the data that our students can collect. So we're going to lead with research and collaborative teamwork around better understanding these complex issues: obviously Covid; but also the scheduling and the budgeting; the facilities and



Matthew Cacciato | executive director, AECOM Center for Sports Administration

mechanisms that are in place that need to be adjusted; and clearly diversity and inclusion and how that is part of everything going forward. We see an opportunity for us to publish more thought leadership, write more case studies and uncover data that can be part of the solution going forward.

What other changes can we expect?

JK: The big change is Matthew now taking over both as the programme director and as executive director of the AECOM Center. We're very fortunate to have him in those roles and I couldn't be more confident that I'm leaving it in the right hands.

What's new in the future is our jump into more executive education. The sports gambling education certificate is our first foray into online executive

education. When I decided it was time to step out away from the Center, I really wanted to hang on to this new baby called sports gambling and really look to become a leader on that, because as it opens up and becomes legalised here, it's going to have such a huge impact on the industry. It's going to mean jobs for our students, it's going to mean impact on sponsorships, impact on fan engagement.

It will be really interesting to see how professional teams use it to create a bigger connection with fans, and at the same time, we have to look at and have empathy for those people who get addicted to gambling, so there will be some work on that. I think college administrators are ill-prepared to deal with sports gambling because there just has not been enough training or education on it so far, and we now are up to 20 states where it's legal and it's forecast to be \$500bn industry. So I'm going to be overseeing our development in that area.

We're also talking about doing other topics in executive education, including a facility design course as part of our partnership with AECOM. There will be other topics – analytics keeps becoming a bigger part of what we do and the recruitment of Dr Liz Wanless is a huge step in that direction. Not only is she our analytics guru, but she is also the director of analytics at the College of Business, and that's something we're going to keep digging deeper into. ○



Sports gambling education – the time has come

Earlier this year, **Jim Kahler** stepped down as executive director of the AECOM Center for Sports Administration at Ohio University after 15 years in the role. Starting in the 2020-21 academic year Jim will become the school's first director of sports gambling education, and writes here about the importance of strong education and partnerships as the betting sector continues to open up in the United States.

When the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) was overturned by the US Supreme Court, it created a gold rush within the sports gambling industry. The United States was behind many countries around the world when it came to sports gambling, and the opportunities and challenges for sports administrators only increased the need for executive education in this space.

Ohio University saw an opportunity to become a change agent when it came to sports gambling education, and quickly formed a strategic alignment with U.S. Integrity and Cyanna Education Services. Collectively, this group has formed a partnership under the name of *SportsGamblingEducation.com* and recently launched its first in a series of microcourses designed for sports administrators. Our mission was to allow individuals to obtain knowledge, gain confidence and in many cases enact change in and around this \$500bn industry.

Sports gambling will only continue to grow and impact the lives of many executives involved with professional and college sports. Multi-million-dollar sponsorship agreements have already positively impacted the bottom line for professional teams in the 20 states that have legalised sports gambling. Companies like DraftKings, William Hill, BetMGM and FanDuel have all invested heavily as sports gambling in the United States has come out of the dark ages and the days of bookies and offshore accounts.

Marketing executives have found a new instrument to engage with loyal fans as professional sports leagues have



all but embraced this new stream of revenue. The question now becomes: “How do we do this in a responsible manner?”

College athletic administrators need to get up to speed quickly and can no longer let sports gambling education sit at the bottom of a never-ending list of priorities. In 2012, the NCAA commissioned a study on sports gambling that showed 67 per cent of college students had gambled on sports. Today, athletic directors need to be concerned about how sports gambling will impact the mental wellness of their student athletes. Winning a game against your arch rival will be taking a back seat to: “Did you cover the spread?”

Ohio University is given credit for being the birthplace of sports business education, going back to 1966 when the university created the first ever Masters in Sports Administration Program. In 2005 the school founded the AECOM Center for Sports Administration to serve as a resource to solve the increasingly difficult issues facing the industry and serve as

a platform, bringing together various constituent groups associated with the Sports Administration Program. With sports gambling education becoming a necessity and no longer a luxury, the AECOM Center for Sports Administration drew up a game plan to meet this need and sought to find the right partners. Integrity will become essential for the sports gambling industry to continue to prosper.

Ohio University saw U.S. Integrity as the perfect partner, as the organization was founded on the core principal of offering “conflict-free services”. They do not recommend any betting-related or risk-management actions and do not distribute event data to operators. Additionally, US Integrity has multiple relationships with licensed, regulated sportsbooks that provide the company access to real betting data. This direct-from-the-source data makes their monitoring system more accurate and provides a closer analysis of betting activity and any possible correlation to other events as a sign of suspicious activity.

Implementing an online education programme on sports gambling can be a real challenge, especially if you need to move fast and get a product to market during a pandemic. Cyanna Education Services has provided Ohio University with a host of services including assistance with course design, software, technology, video production and the ability to meet the expectations and needs that come with executive online education. Their experience in breaking down those brick-and-mortar walls has given us the opportunity to create asynchronous courses that line up with the busy schedules of our students. [O](#)

Emilio Collins, chief business officer, Excel Sports Management

Emilio Collins graduated Ohio University with a Masters in Sports Administration in 1996, and this year was named as the recipient of the department's Charles R. Higgins Distinguished Alumni Award for 2020. He is currently chief business officer at Excel Sports Management, joining the agency in 2017 after spending 16 years with the National Basketball Association, latterly as its executive vice-president of global marketing partnerships.

Why did you choose to pursue a sports management degree at Ohio?

I was an athlete at undergraduate level at Michigan State and, going to a 'Big 10' university, I started to get a lot of exposure to career opportunities in sports. I did a couple of internships in the athletic department at Michigan State, and just really fell in love with the idea of having a career in sports. There were actually two administrators the athletic department there who had both gone to the Ohio University programme, and they turned me on to it. And so at the time, I felt a clear interest in a career in sports, but didn't know exactly what it was I wanted to do specifically, which track I wanted to take in sports business. I felt going into the graduate programme would give me a lot more hands-on experience.

What were the main ways that you feel the programme at Ohio prepared you for a career?

I would say three things primarily. One was the coursework and giving me a really good sense of the entire landscape of the industry and determining the appropriate paths, looking both at the different sectors of the industry, from media companies to brands, to properties, to agencies in the various sectors across the industry and potential paths you can take, and also the types of work that you can do within each of those sectors and what will be most suited for you. So academically, there was really great exposure there and much learning about all sides of the business.

Second was the strong hands-on experience we had. The programme was always known for conducting a class project that was incredibly intensive.




It was an interesting time for me going into the programme because the class project had been taking place for about 20 years, it was a student Fight Night, and there was a desire to change it that year, so my class actually had the opportunity to come up with the next programme. I pitched to our class the idea that we ultimately carried through, which was an idea called Friday Night Mud Slam, which was kind of building on the competitive nature of the student Fight Night but in a different format. The experience of ideating, conceiving a new platform, pulling it together operationally, building all the different committees that you need to make an event like that be successful – those kind of experiences are really helpful in giving students a true hands-on experience.

Third is absolutely the network. Being the oldest and longest-standing programme in the country, the network is phenomenal. The network is what led to my first internship, my first job, and it has been a network that I have relied on throughout the entirety of my career.

Is that the biggest way that the programme continues to define your career?

Yeah, absolutely. I still get my directory every year, I still keep tabs on everyone in the network. When I look at the network that I always ask people to prioritise in their careers, for me it always starts first with Ohio. Thinking about how so many people in that network are related to the world that I operate in right now, whether it's clients that we work with, whether it's what other brands that are looking to do work with the athletes represent, whether it's clients that we can advise and build strategies for... there's so many connections across the network. I'd say probably a week doesn't go by where I'm not interacting with one of the alumni in some form or capacity, whether it's a personal or business relationship.

What advice would you offer to someone just starting the course?

My advice would be to leverage the network early on. Really think about it, study the connections in the marketplace, learn very quickly what it is that you want to do and be very purposeful and intentional about building a network of connections oriented around where you want to go in your career. Second, make sure you're going above and beyond academically to get the most out of the programme. It's evolved so much since my time there, I think it really is at the cutting edge in terms of the curriculum and where the state of sports is today, so the more you dive into that, the more prepared you're going to be for the other side, and sports business today is more dynamic than it's ever been. I think students are fortunate to be able to experience a programme like Ohio's to fully prepare them for that world. 

2. University of Massachusetts, Amherst MBA/MS in Sport Management

The University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS in Sport Management will celebrate its 50th anniversary edition in the 2020-21 academic year, and claims the number two spot in this year's rankings. The programme also retained its place at the top of the Professors' Choice category and tied first place for its alumni network, showing the esteem in which it is held by the industry and its students past and present. Associate department chair and graduate program director **Steve McKelvey** talks to *SportBusiness* about the course's continued success.

What are your reflections on this year's rankings?

SM: Obviously, we'd love to be ranked number one, but we seem to go neck-and-neck every year with Ohio University, which is obviously a top-notch programme as well. Being second to them is no discredit to our programme at all. Finishing first in the Professors' Choice category is equally important, because it's a statement of how our peers view us and what they think about the quality of our programme. To be ranked number one in that category for the past two years is something we are very proud of.

What has the past year been like at UMass?

It's been a huge challenge for us, as it has been for any sport management programme. We went to remote teaching right after spring break, and the benefit of that, given that our programme is going to be entirely remote this fall, is that we all got a little practice in understanding how best to deliver our graduate-level classes remotely. We still plan to have all of our graduate programme courses offered synchronously. The students will 'go to class' at their assigned times, and we have spent a lot of time this summer thinking about how to add value to that. We'll continue to tap into our huge alumni network, bringing them into the classroom to engage the students in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

The pandemic has forced us to think about how we add value. One of the great examples is last spring, we hosted



Steve McKelvey | associate department chair and graduate program director

a series of panels with some alumni and some non-alums from across the industry. It was in part professional development, but in part it was just to help the grad students feel that they weren't alone out there and give them some insights into what the industry practitioners were experiencing. It's not rocket science, but it's not something that we had thought of before the pandemic, and so we will continue those.

You came out joint-top for your alumni network. How do you keep your alums engaged?

That's great to hear. We know there are other programmes out there that have an extremely strong alumni network as well – any schools that have been doing this for as long as we have will have a pretty rich and broad and deep alumni network. One of the things we do is run

an array of events around the year where we go to various industry conferences and have alumni gatherings, typically an alumni breakfast. We have a fundraising development team here within the Isenberg School of Management, and they put together events around the country to get alums together. The panels that we did are another great example. When we posted out on Facebook to our alums, 'is anybody interested in jumping on board and speaking to our current students', we had a tremendous response, far more than we could use. Any time that we go out to our alumni, we always get very positive feedback. One of the biggest pieces where we engage our alumni is through our grad mentoring programme, which is now in its 15th year. That continues to be kind of a lynchpin of our course.

Do you feel the remote teaching you've been forced to adopt in the past few months is a long-term solution?

You're not going to replace the value of the in-class, face-to-face teaching, particularly with the amount of group work, group projects, group discussion, case study work that we do. But I think it will lead to some extensions of the on-ground experience rather than replace it. Everybody, at least within the context of my grad programme, both faculty and students, can't wait to be back in person. In the meantime, we'll make the best of it that we can, and try to think outside the box around how to engage the students not only in the classroom but outside as well. ○

Burke Magnus, executive vice-president, programming and scheduling, ESPN

Burke Magnus graduated from University of Massachusetts Amherst's MBA/MS in Sport Management in 1994 and joined ESPN in 2008, taking up his current role in 2015. In 2011, he was the recipient of UMass' Distinguished Alumnus Award by the McCormack Department of Sport Management.

Why did you decide to pursue a postgraduate degree in sports management?

It was really kind of a means to an end, relative to my professional pursuit. I was a history major in college, which I absolutely loved, and it was a great combination for me because I enjoyed the material and so I did well in that as a major. But when I finished my undergrad, I was really looking for a way into the sports business, which at the time was even smaller than it is now.

It was a bit of a closed industry, I didn't know anybody. And all I knew was I wanted to make that my initial career, and I had a history degree and not much else on my resume.

And so when I found out that sport management was a discipline which was emerging at the time, it was relatively small discipline and only offered at a couple of universities. I investigated it immediately really as a way to round out my educational experience with some coursework that was specific to the industry, but primarily, to get connections and meet people who could help me get on my way from a career perspective.

What was it about UMass that attracted you?

UMass, in a lot of ways, was the founding institution in the US for this discipline, so I felt like it had the cachet. It had this incredible reputation for a very tight alumni network, particularly among grad students, just because the programme was so small, relatively speaking. Looking forward to starting a career, it was attractive to me that people really took pride in that.

As I've gone forward in my career I've come across other UMass grads.



Two of my good friends are Jay Monahan at the PGA Tour and Howie Nuchow at CAA Sports, and there's always that moment where you realise, 'oh, you're a UMass person too!'

How did the course prepare you for your time in the industry?

First of all, the coursework was really well-rounded. I knew I wanted to be in the industry, but I didn't really have a pre-conceived notion of what that would be, other than a professional business pursuit. And so getting that wide view of the industry – across finance and accounting and law, and sport and society, and those kinds of experiences – everybody got a similar academic experience which I think was good.


But really the payoff was that the final thing you had to do was an internship, and it was on you to figure out where you wanted to concentrate your internship experiences as a launching pad for a job. And it just so happened that an internship at CBS

Sports opened up for me, and one thing led to another and I happened to guess right in terms of what would interest me professionally. The internship was an absolutely critical decision for me to get right, because that really was the opportunity to prove yourself professionally.

Does being a UMass alum continue to benefit you professionally?

They do a great job connecting the professional network of alumni they have in the big cities, in New York, Chicago, LA: they fish where the fish are, so to speak, and create opportunities for us to connect with each other. The hallmark of the programme for me is the alumni network. People supported me and in turn I've supported other people. One of the great aspects of the programme is that you can help people directly and very individually, without being concerned about a tsunami of resumes coming in your direction because the programme is so tight and intimate.

What advice would you offer to grads starting the programme this year?

Too often I talk to people who have a very specific idea of what they want to do or where they see themselves. Opportunity comes in a variety of different ways to people in their lives and you have to be open to those opportunities, especially in this industry, which is relatively small, and you can go a long time without getting the opportunity you're waiting for. So be open to opportunities outside the vision you have for yourself. Because you'd be surprised at what avenues it may open for you. 

Reculture sport – the shifting culture of sport

Professor Nefertiti A. Walker is a lecturer in the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Mark H. McCormack School of Sport Management, as well as UMass' interim vice-chancellor for diversity, equity, and inclusion and its chief diversity officer. Here, she discusses how her commitment to diversity has informed her research, and how UMass has supported that commitment.

Through my research, industry partnerships and teaching, my goal remains the same: to leave the culture of sport better than how I found it.

For much of the past decade, my research has centered on sport culture. I have conducted research in collaboration with espnW and Dr Nicole Melton in which we examined the role of inclusion in college athletics. We concluded that college athletic departments that are both inclusive and diverse perform the best in terms of overall department success (a combination of wins and revenue). This research is important because it demonstrates that it is not enough to hire people from diverse demographic groups, but that sport managers must also work to develop inclusive organisations where employees feel a strong sense of belonging. These findings were shared at the espnW Women + Sport Summit in California.

The next theme of my research examines sport cultures and the role of gender. Specifically, I examine the treatment of women working in male-dominant spaces such as men's college basketball or the front office of men's professional sports. I was intrigued as to why there were so few women working in men's basketball. Over the years I have interviewed women who have coached men's basketball at the collegiate and professional level, as well as men who have worked with women coaches of men's basketball. The findings from these various studies suggest that women are just as capable and effective at coaching men's basketball as their male counterparts.

However, even though women were rated just as highly on items such as competence to do the job, they were rated significantly lower on hiring recommendation – thereby providing



“with the increased attention on gender pay equity and the #MeToo movement, sexism in sport is overdue for its reckoning.”

evidence of gender discrimination. I have presented this research to numerous front office executives of men's sports leagues and teams. When I began this research a decade ago, there were no women coaching in the NBA and only Nancy Lieberman coaching in the G-League.

Now, at least 11 women work as a coach or basketball operations executives in the NBA. Upwards of 40-plus women work across the NBA with various teams in basketball operations. This is a significant shift in culture. Therefore, my next research project will examine how behaviours, policies, and processes have changed, to allow for the inclusion of women in the NBA. Certainly, having an NBA Commissioner in Adam Silver who, per the *New York Times*, says: “We are very focused on a woman being a head coach in our league,” has helped propel the NBA towards the inclusion of women. But I intend to investigate other factors that have led to this significant change.

Finally, my most recent research comes from collaborating on projects led by McCormack Graduate Student and PhD candidate Lauren Hindman. Lauren and I have spent the last few years examining sexism in sport. One project explored the experiences of women working in professional sports. Our results suggest that all women who participated in our study experienced significant levels of sexism. Some women dealt with subtle forms of sexism, like being left out of networking opportunities or being nudged out of the ‘old boys’ club’ lunch dates. Others experienced overt verbal abuse and harassment. In another study we examined the culture of professional cheerleaders. In this project, we found that cheerleaders were verbally abused, forced to dress in revealing clothes even when not performing, held to unreasonable fraternisation standards, and were grossly underpaid, even compared to the team mascot. Again, this suggests that sexism is deeply entrenched into the culture of sport. However, with the increased attention on gender pay equity and the #MeToo movement, sexism in sport is overdue for its reckoning.

Overall, my previously mentioned research coupled with industry partnerships has led to the incorporation of students on much of what I do as a professor. For example, my students have worked with executives from ESPN, MLS, and NCAA. Every course that I teach incorporates aspects of industry research and partnerships, related to the shifting culture of sport. Therefore, students leave my courses understanding the ways that sport culture is shifting and develop the inclusive leadership skills needed to lead this shift. McCormack students graduate being better prepared to lead the future of sports. 

3. The Fifa Master at the International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)

The Fifa Master retains its podium place in 2020 and is again the highest-ranked European course – a position it has occupied in eight of the nine years we have run these rankings. One of just three courses to have occupied the top spot, which it achieved in 2014, the Fifa Master is a perennial contender at the top end of our table thanks to its international outlook and the consistently strong employment record of its alumni. **Professor Denis Oswald**, CIES and Fifa Master scientific committee director, tells *SportBusiness* about the challenges of managing a course across three countries.

The Fifa Master retained its third place in the rankings and closed the gap to second place. What are the strengths of the course that keep you up at the top?

To stay at the top for so long, two things are essential: to be student-focused and to be innovative. To achieve that, we have placed particular emphasis on student recruitment, the content of the Fifa Master programme, and job placement.

In the last few years, we have undertaken an in-depth analysis of our programme that allowed us to identify and implement new topics that we thought were essential. With such incredible university partners in SDA Bocconi in Milan, De Montfort in Leicester and Neuchâtel in Switzerland, which are constantly challenging themselves to teach better, to produce original research, we can confidently look to the future. In addition, we have listened to the industry and have revamped the curriculum in order to provide up-to-date academic content as well as enriching the experience for the students. For example, we have included new sub-modules on human rights and sport, equality and inclusion, CSR and sustainability.

This year was the 20th edition of the Fifa Master. What have been some of the highlights of the two decades?

We have been fortunate to attract such great students over the years, something we witness every time we have a global alumni gathering, which began in 2006 for the first time. We are a people-centred educational endeavour. So it is rewarding



to see students develop themselves, be entrusted with greater responsibilities and become great sport leaders and even better people.

Growing the partnership between the three universities, our foundation CIES and Fifa has been a real adventure. It has been incredible to see the fruit of the collaborative work from our staff – for example I remember the conferences and publications around research about sport and legacy at a time when the topic was just beginning to garner attention.

Also, providing more scholarship opportunities than we had in the first years – we only had two scholarships at the start – allows us to support more of the best candidates to attend. Now we support around half the students with at least partial scholarships. Last year marked the Fifa Master's 20th anniversary and we celebrated this milestone by organising a special conference on the theme of 'Female Leadership in International Sport', with several alumni invited as guest speakers.

The course scored very highly for international students. How important an aspect of the course

is it that you maintain that global outlook and attract students from all around the world?

The global outlook of the Fifa Master is an essential aspect of the programme. On average, in a class of 30 students, we have at least 25 different nationalities, normally coming from all continents, and that cultural exchange is a fantastic addition to the students' experience. That outlook proves to be valuable also after graduation. Today the Fifa Master Alumni Association comprises over 560 alumni, from 108 nationalities, currently based in about 80 different countries. That means that you can find a Fifa Master alumnus almost anywhere in the world, and that has proved to be extremely valuable to our network of alumni.

It's clearly been a very challenging year for the entire sector. What has your experience of 2020 been and how are you planning for the future?

Yes it has and our experience, like everyone else's, was obviously full of surprises and crisis management, especially when you consider that we have students who come from all over the world and who are supposed to move across three countries for their studies at a time when international travel became almost impossible.

We learned the value of flexibility, doing more virtually, and still relying on teamwork across our institutional partners.

We had already been planning how to better integrate the digital learning environment, but 2020 has helped accelerate that process which we hope will help us to face our third decade. ○

Pierre Ducrey, Olympic Games operations director, International Olympic Committee

Pierre Ducrey was part of the third intake of students on the CIES Fifa Master, which he graduated with distinction in 2003. He was appointed as Olympic Games operations director in March 2020, having joined the International Olympic Committee as an intern shortly after finishing his Masters degree.

Why did you choose a postgraduate degree in sports management?

I was already studying for a master's degree in International Relations, and I was really trying to figure out where that would take me. I wanted to work in an international environment and sport was always something present in my life, so I tried to figure out, 'okay, what's my next move?' And then I happened to have dinner with a friend of a friend who turned out to be the former secretary general of Fifa, and he mentioned the programme. And it seemed to tick all the boxes I was looking for, so I thought international sports management could be a place I would fit.

What in particular about the Fifa Master appealed to you?

The fact that it was across three countries, so you would get a little bit of insight into three different industries and different ways of doing things at three different universities; one of them, SDA Bocconi in Milan, being really recognised for business. I knew that to get into the sports environment you would need kind of a pathway, because it's not something where you can just be suddenly knocking on the door of some of the bigger companies and be welcomed in. So I thought it would be a good way in, and I liked the idea of living for a year with a group of people from international backgrounds as well.

It was a risky move. I was 28 when I signed up and the Fifa Master wasn't very well known at the time, I was in the third intake of the course, so there were very few alumni already in position. Today, it's a much safer path because you can see how many people have managed to go through the course and ended up in the industry, which is a very high



number, and you know that you have a lot of alumni you can contact, but we didn't really have that at the time. The fact that it was endorsed by Fifa, that the universities were well reputed, there were lots of things that appealed to me.

How did the course help to prepare you for your career at the IOC?

I had a solid background in social economy, politics, management, but not at all focused on sport. I figured that if I wanted to go into the sport industry, I'd better learn a lot. And the thing I really enjoyed about the course was that it really gave you the opportunity to see from the inside a lot of events, a lot of clubs, federations – it's very well connected with the industry. Beyond the alumni, you're also getting opportunities to meet people that you probably would not get a chance to meet be outside of the programme if you tried to create those connections by yourself. A lot of well-known people, reputable companies, clubs and agencies came to present or we went to visit, and that also gives you a good idea of what it takes to be in that industry and create your network, or at least the first steps of it.

And how does being a Fifa Master alum continue to play a role in your career today?

I think really the value of the course today is that it has grown to become a very well established programme that is recognised so when you refer to it, people are favourably impressed because the other alumni are also in important positions today. When you're going through a programme in the early days, you're hoping that it will develop to be something that will be a good line on your CV, and the Fifa Master definitely is. The alumni network has grown, I'm very close to all the people in my class, we still have monthly video calls trying to update each other on where we're at. It's kind of a big family. When you live for a year with people abroad, you create bonds that you can't really create in other circumstances, so that's really important to me.

What advice would you give to someone starting the course this year?

If you invest in the course, you will be rewarded. You can do this course and sit back and not really talk to anybody, just receive the information and pass the grades but to me that's not what it's about. I'd say if you really invest yourself and be smart during the course, you maximise your chances to have an easier way into the industry afterwards.

Getting in is just a starting point; contributing and making sure that the class stands out – that you stand out – and that you also establish communication with the alumni during the course, that makes it a much more rewarding experience than just taking the course for the sake of it. [O](#)

Fifa Master and De Montfort University share commitment to anti-racist action

The CIES Fifa Master takes place across three European universities – Neuchâtel in Switzerland, Milan’s SDA Bocconi, and De Montfort in Leicester, England. **Professor Martin Polley**, director of the International Centre for Sports History and Culture at De Montfort, discusses how Fifa Master students at the school have taken a lead on anti-racist research in sport.

De Montfort has a huge historical commitment to anti-discrimination in every form imaginable. It’s a very high priority on campus that every population, every community, every individual student is made to feel welcome and protected.

What’s so special about the Fifa Master is the international spread. In the 20th edition last year, we had a student from Rwanda who was able to bring his experiences of the legacy of the genocide there. We had a student from Israel and a student from Palestine who were able to discuss what has been taught to them through schooling and other settings at home, and how they can look at that differently with different perspectives when they move abroad and think about race in a broader sense. We’ve had black and white Americans in the same room talking about their experiences through this lens. It’s been fantastic for using an academic project with a very resonant personal basis to get students exploring what these issues can mean in their own societies. And then from there, of course we bring it back to sport.

For example, as part of Black History Month we put on a series of events with prominent anti-racist campaigners from within sport, and we made that a compulsory class for the Fifa Master students. We had [Olympic gold medallist 200m runner] Tommie Smith, which was a huge pull, and the important thing there was that he talked about how he didn’t see the salute on the podium at the Mexico ’68 Games as a Black Power salute, but as a human rights salute. We also got [former Liverpool and England footballer] John Barnes, who talked about his experiences as a


black man from a relatively elite family background, being the only black kid at the posh schools he went to. He was really encouraging students to think about more than just race; don’t reduce an individual to the colour of their skin, but think about their wider biography when you’re trying to understand their sporting experiences.



One of the most successful pieces of research came from a group made up of a South Korean guy, someone from the Philippines, a girl from the Netherlands, and a guy from Botswana, who collaborated together on a project on how social media can be used both as a channel for racists to express their racism – with all of the usual social media problems about anonymity and relative impunity, and looking at what regulations exist – but also looking at how sports organisations, from clubs right through to international federations, could develop more positive educational materials around

racial issues through social media. They looked how authorities could try and combat this not just through punishment and banning people, but also through education, through positive stories.

The nature of the Fifa Master is that all the final projects have to be interdisciplinary; they have to represent humanities, management and law, and the group pulled that off really well. For humanities they were looking at history, language, culture, and how this all comes into play in social media. For management they looked at what leadership can do to try and make social media a better place. And then for the legal aspect, they were looking at the legal regulations on hate speech and freedom of speech in different legislative settings, and how social media is a very problematic one, because of its obviously transnational nature. They did a great survey where they had over 300 people from across the industry and elsewhere replying to their questionnaire. They interviewed the head of diversity at the Football Association, figures from Kick It Out and various other anti-racism organisations.

Because the time they were writing was relatively early in the pandemic, they looked the racist trope of how a number of Korean and Japanese footballers were being portrayed as carriers of disease. There was one meme where you had the Spurs team all celebrating around Son and somebody photoshopped face mask on to them for example. The multinational make-up of the group meant they were able to bring a postcolonial but also an incredibly progressive political perspective to that conversation. 

The sports management higher education sector facing the aftermath of Covid-19



Palais DuPeyrou, the CIES headquarters in Neuchâtel (CIES)

Kevin Tallec Marston, academic coordinator, research fellow and academic project manager for the Fifa Master at the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES), discusses the challenges and potential opportunities that are facing the sports management education sector and academia more widely, as the world recovers from the coronavirus pandemic of 2020.

Few sectors or industries have gone untouched by the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet higher education, and more specifically the sports management sector, is fundamentally dependent on the proximity, interaction, and exchange that the global lockdown has mostly rendered impossible. From in-class collaboration to on-site learning experiences, the model of regular face-to-face interaction between teachers and students, industry experts, and general campus life has been turned on its head. What have we learned so far during these tumultuous times?

I see a number of challenges and opportunities which may force the sector to refocus and, maybe for some,

redefine their *raison d'être*. Some in wider higher education announce a reckoning with the university sector to finally face the consequences of recent trends in astronomical price inflation, matched with largely inflexible cost structures¹. If sports management remains a niche subject in education, it still involves hundreds of universities worldwide and a safe estimate of at least three-to-seven thousand students annually enrolled worldwide². So what does it mean for the sector? I see three inter-related issues: impacts on the course life cycle; the curriculum; and cost structure.

Every course has its own life cycle from promotion and recruitment to placement and career services. Beginning

with recruitment, how will courses fare with the effects of travel bans and quarantines – particularly with regard to international students? Even if courses with strong reputations and longer waiting lists may not suffer as much, every programme will face a larger (than normal) percentage of applicants unwilling to risk leaving jobs or to take on debt. Some applicants will also prefer to apply later or need more time to commit and accept offers, all of which has a knock-on effect in the admissions process for every programme in the sector.

At the other end, student placement, and more generally career services, have already been, and will undoubtedly

continue to be, affected by the hiring freezes across the industry. The Covid world will test the relationships that sports management courses have with the labour market. In terms of supporting positive short-term career outcomes for graduates, schools may begin to rethink some career skills training, like how to prepare students for videoconference interviews.

In any crisis, some sectors of industry may thrive and if schools can correctly anticipate some of these trends in sport, then their graduates will be better placed to transition into the workplace. Recently, the head of recruitment for Bain & Co. noted how the consulting sector surprisingly did 20-30 per cent more business than usual in the wake of the financial crisis and that this was a boon for hiring MBA and business school graduates ten years ago³. Is an area like esports one that will have a similar unexpected growing demand for labour in the next two years?

This, of course, raises questions about the types of links that courses have with the market. While the independence and critical thinking space of academia are paramount to a university's identity, no modern institution, even less a sports management programme, can truly exist for long without some relationship to the wider world. The freedom of academia comes with responsibility and a commitment to the values of education and research. In the case of sports management, it is a responsibility to prepare the citizens of the global sporting republic if you will allow the analogy. It is the trust that the wider world – in this case, sport – holds in the academy that serves, in part, as a guarantee for the university's legitimacy. Where and when that relationship breaks or is affected, due in this case to a crisis that halts the industry as a whole, no university will have an easy time continuing as normal. Sports management is no different.

This is linked to the second issue I see facing courses: the curriculum. In terms of course content, how will courses adapt to a new landscape where online delivery



Kevin Tallec Marston | academic coordinator, research fellow and academic project manager for the Fifa Master at the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES)

will certainly gain importance? The use of videoconferencing – which most have used by now – will become essential in providing teachers with the possibility to add more supplemental digital content, but also deal with unexpected changes to the academic year. Similarly, as we have all witnessed, the technology is there to include more guest lecturers or outside speakers who never would normally come to campus. For example, we were able to organise some *ad hoc* Zoom sessions for our Fifa Master students this June with alumni who work in, or with, five of the six football confederations around the world, providing added learning and exchanges that normally would not happen – it is hardly feasible to bring 25 alumni working from Malaysia to Miami to the classroom! The on-site learning through field visits, so important to sports management courses, is something that will be more of a challenge to conduct virtually – but we should begin to think about it.

The situation also poses challenges to teaching methods and assessment. Some courses which may have to deliver lectures at least partly online in the coming months need to be adapted to the constraints and opportunities of this new format. Whether it is time

zone differences for students studying internationally or lecturers connecting from abroad, online methods have limits. Even the best annotation tools on a learning platform or virtual breakout rooms have to be thought through in a way that fits each learning objective. Innovation and flexibility are essential here.

The third issue of relevance I see for the coming year is cost structure. What kind of margins do sports management courses operate with? With tuition inflation across much of higher education and the resulting impact on recruitment, this will undoubtedly affect the demand for sports management courses, which, let's face it, is a leisure industry. With the industry largely on hold, will students flock to courses with the same enthusiasm in the next 12 months? For programmes that are largely tuition-dependent and have rigid cost structures, this may be a difficult situation to manage. Courses which can rely on university endowments to weather the storm or scholarships that allow them to retain top applicants may have an easier time. Perhaps this is where the role of alumni will be essential against this institutional financial vulnerability. Business school INSEAD recently boasted one of the largest one-time donations (€66m) gifted by an anonymous alumni. Will sports management courses be able to appeal to alumni who have succeeded and are willing to give back?

Ultimately, the Covid crisis is pushing schools to return to their core values, which is not such a bad thing. Why do we do what we do? What are our core values as an education sector? How do we continue to marry research and teaching for a valuable learning experience for our students in this constantly changing environment? If we can confidently answer those questions, and successfully address recruitment, career services, curriculum, and our funding models, then sports management higher education will hopefully navigate through stormy waters to future calmer seas. ○

¹ Professor Scott Galloway talks to Anderson Cooper | How the pandemic could disrupt higher education – NYU Stern School of Business Professor – both in an article <https://marker.medium.com/this-chart-predicts-which-colleges-will-survive-the-coronavirus-8aa3a4f4c9e6> and interview with CNN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P314uMc2X0k&feature=share>

² I estimated here based on the figures in the ranking and NASSM. The courses surveyed in the SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings have a median 27 students (38 on average but that is with outliers) in the Top 40 since 2017 and NASSM lists more than 300 schools with Masters programmes in sports management. Some programmes I know in Europe are not even listed, so I would guess the figure is higher.

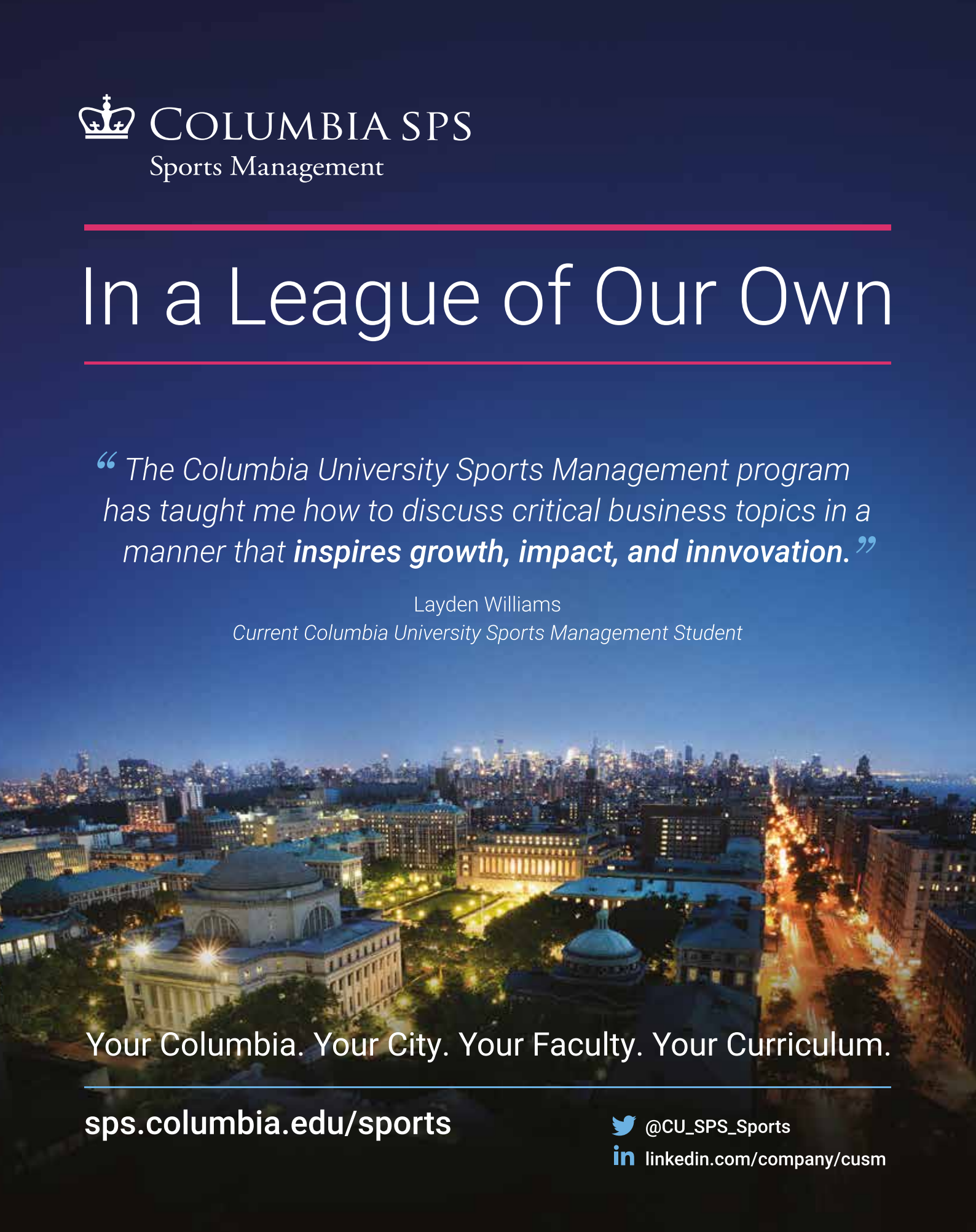
³ <https://poetsandquants.com/2020/06/15/bain-on-mba-recruitment-during-covid-19/>

In a League of Our Own

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Thayssa Plum, senior media relations manager, Fifa

Thayssa Plum took the Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology at the International Academy of Sports Science and Technology (AISTS) in 2011 and began working for Fifa ahead of the 2014 World Cup in her home country of Brazil. She is now the body's senior media relations manager, based in its headquarters in Zurich.

Why did you choose to do pursue a postgraduate degree in sports management?

I was working as a sports journalist in Brazil for a radio station, and we had just been awarded the two big events, both the World Cup in 2014, and the Olympics in 2016. I realised that we had this huge opportunity as Brazilians, and I thought that I needed to better prepare myself, I needed to understand, to study this business. I always had this idea and understanding that Europe was the place to be when it came to the sports industry, so I was also very interested from a cultural point of view, to exchange and understand more about the culture, to get to know new places.

And then what made everything possible was that AISTS offered me a scholarship. For me it was still not possible to afford one year living in Switzerland, which is an expensive country, plus the tuition fees. But AISTS offered a scholarship for women coming from developing countries, and fortunately I qualified for a grant from the June Canavan Foundation, which changed my life and all my perspectives. When I came to Europe in 2011, I thought I was coming to prepare myself to be a better journalist, because I would understand more about the sports business. But then once I got here and I started experiencing the backstage, I realised how amazing and how rich it was and I really enjoyed it. I decided to shift from a career in journalism to a career in sports events and communications.

What was it in particular about the course at AISTS that appealed to you?

Of course, in Brazil, I was completely focused on football, because that's our biggest passion, but I really love the



Olympics as well and I thought it was amazing to have this connection with the International Olympic Committee, and the fact that it was based in Lausanne, the Olympic City.

The curriculum was very interesting to me in terms of event management. I think also what really attracted me was the international make-up. Our class was 30-35 people, and there might have been four or five Swiss people and all the others came from Brazil, China, Canada, the US, Colombia...I have friends literally from every single part of the globe. And that exchange was extremely interesting and a really big asset for starting out in the sports industry which of course is very global.

How well do you feel the course prepared you for a career in the sports industry?

It's really important to stop sometimes and study and look at things with a more critical eye. When you are just doing your work every single day, either the way I was as a journalist or in the industry, you don't get chance to stop to critically look at things and think about where this industry comes from and where it is going. So I think the way it prepared me was that it provided me with a set of cues in relation to sporting events, in relation to project management, but also put me

in a position where I could be a little bit away from the day-to-day life and look at things with a critical eye.

Also what is very important in the market is networking, and the course, with all the alumni and also the people in my current class and the lecturers we had, definitely provides you with a network of very interesting people that you can speak to. Now, constantly I receive emails, messages from current students that are interested in seeking some advice about how to work in football, because there is this connection and as soon as they say, I am a student or I'm in alumni from AISTS, that opens the door for them, and it definitely opens doors for me as well.

How does being an alumni of AISTS continue to impact your career to this day?

Definitely through networking. You're basically connected to hundreds of people in the sports industry, all over the world. I've been at Fifa for more than five years now, but if you are looking for a job and you see that there is an alumni in a company, you can immediately get in touch and get some more information and advice. Besides that, they also offer workshops, they offer events where you can really talk again to the students, to alumni and to the industry and always meet new people.

AISTS also offers a mentorship programme, which has been interesting for me - I had three or four mentees now that I've been in touch with, and all this exchange hopefully helps them but it also helps me in terms of my knowledge, my skills, my professional development, and I see that as extremely enriching to keep that network as we as we move forward in our careers. 



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Felicia Ganthier, director of operations, community relations, WWE

Felicia Ganthier was part of Columbia's graduating class of 2012, and joined World Wrestling Entertainment in 2019 after spending four years with the Madison Square Garden Company. She has also worked as assistant director, corporate and foundation relations at the Columbia Business School, and for the NHL's New York Rangers.

Why did you choose to pursue a sports management postgraduate degree?

I did a sports management undergraduate degree as well, so I knew that this was my path and what I wanted to do with my life. I kind of fell into it but when I found out this was a job, that people can have fun and make money in sports, I was like, 'sign me up!' But I wanted to take the next step, and I knew I needed to 1) build a deeper network bench, if you will, and 2) get more training and skills.

What attracted you to Columbia?

I figured, 'if you're going to do this, you might as well go Ivy!' And they were willing to give me a chance. Coming out of high school, I never considered myself Ivy League material, but now that I've been in it for so long, both as a student and an employee, I realised it was accessible for me and it was something I was limiting in myself. They had just started the sports management programme and they were prepared to give me a shot.

How did the course prepare you for working in the industry?

Through the network. I really didn't understand that aspect of it when I started; I thought it was more based on the coursework and I thought it would be more like undergrad where I would just learn a tonne of things from the best and the brightest, because it's Columbia. But I didn't realise the value of the network that I was going to be a part of.

My instructors brought amazing guest speakers, whether it was



[commissioner of the Big East Conference] Val Ackerman or [NHL commissioner] Gary Bettman. I also met Adam Silver just before he became the NBA commissioner. So it introduces you to the best in the industry, but it also gives you the network of people you're studying with who go on to senior roles across the sector.

How does being a Columbia alum continue to impact your career?

It plays a huge role because it gives me leadership opportunities. I was selected to serve on the inaugural alumni leadership council, it was the first time I'd served on a board or anything like that but they tapped me up to wave the sports management flag and be the representative of the

programme.

Opportunities like this and just speaking with current students and giving something back to them [has had a huge impact]. I had quite a circuitous route here, I was a student athlete and I didn't transition well, but that was good – part of my journey with Columbia is coming back and talking to students and showing people that it's okay to have messed up and have done different things, and that it may take you a long time to get to where you're supposed to be. Columbia opens doors. It gets you in the room, because of the cachet that comes with being a Columbia graduate. It won't keep you in the room, but in this industry in particular, getting there is half the battle. So that's huge, and that's something that I'm keen to keep sharing with the Columbia community.

What advice would you give to someone starting the programme this year?

I would say: loosely plan. Because you never know what is going to pop up, and sometimes the unexpected journey, embracing the adventure, is how you get to where you want to go. Have an idea of what you want to do, but be flexible and open to new opportunities, because you never know where you are going to land.

And stay connected – with people in general, and with the Columbia community in particular. Read those alumni newsletters, go back for things, donate. It's not necessarily about the amount that you give, but the fact that what you give supports the school and helps to grow the programme. ○

The balancing act | Universities attempt to address sport's gender gap



Former NBA commissioner David Stern speaks to a UMass graduate class during his Executive in Residence visit last Fall (UMass)

Though slow progress continues to be made, the sports industry remains an overwhelmingly male-dominated one. In recent years, the London-based charity Women in Sport has published research finding that the number of women in leadership roles in the sports industry has remained static since the start of the last decade, at around 30 per cent, while 40 per cent of women in the sector claim to have experienced discrimination based on their gender.

Universities preparing the next generation of leaders in sport are playing their part in bridging that gap, but even with the work that has been done in this regard, our own research for the 2020 Postgraduate Rankings found that only two of the sports management programmes surveyed – Georgia State and Ohio State – currently

have a 50-per-cent or better gender ratio for both student body and faculty.

Nefertiti Walker, interim vice-chancellor for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, tells *SportBusiness* that this is indicative of the challenge facing the sector, and emphasises the role education can continue to play. “To be completely frank, I think that higher education and sports management programmes have a responsibility to ensure that they’re doing all that they can to recruit a diverse pool of students,” she says. “Because if not, we’re perpetuating the same lack of diversity that we see in the industry.”

Faculty make-up

Walker says that those running UMass’s Mark H. McCormack Department of

Sport Management have been “very intentional in ensuring that we consider the demographic make-up of our faculty”, adding that almost everyone in the department has carried out work in some capacity in the area of diversity and inclusion. Walker and her colleague Nicole Melton are the co-directors of the department’s Laboratory of Inclusion and Diversity (LIDs), which is dedicated to “real research that will be applied to the industry in the field of representation and diversity”, she says.

In this year’s survey, the Department of Sport Management faculty showed a 50/50 ratio of males to females, while one third of its student body was women. Walker says she thinks the former figure can help in the mission to improve the latter.

“There’s a lot of research that supports the fact that people need to

see people like themselves in leadership roles, they need to see it in the people that are teaching them in order to feel like they can achieve that.

“In most sports organisations, women are somewhere around 20 per cent of the folks in leadership. If you look at some of the professional men’s sports organisations at the level of general manager, president, commissioner, women just do not exist. I think women who are looking for programmes see us and they see our commitment to diversity, not just in gender terms but as something that’s quite radical.”

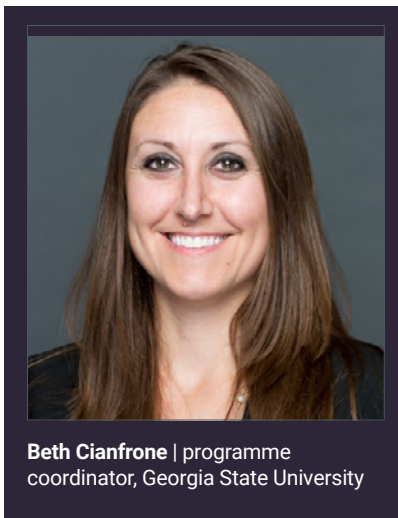
Walker says that students have told her directly that the number of women in leadership positions on the department faculty was a major influencing factor in choosing the programme at UMass. “Female students know the uphill battle they’re facing with a career in sport,” she says. “This is the reason why they feel at home in this programme, because they feel very comfortable in their ability to ask questions about being a woman in the industry that they wouldn’t normally be able to ask if they weren’t in a programme that didn’t have that 50/50 split.”

Diverse recruitment

Brian Turner, associate professor and coordinator of sport management at Ohio State University, says that achieving an equal gender split was not an easy process, in part simply because the industry wasn’t doing a good enough job making pathways open to women.

“I’ve been at Ohio State for 16 years, and in the early years I could look out at my classes at Masters level and only see a handful of female students,” he says. “I particularly remember one incoming class where we only had two or three female students. Now, we are consistently achieving 50 per cent. Our 2020 intake is right at 50 per cent, 16 out of 31 students are female.

“Ten years ago, I don’t think a lot of students across the board, really, but especially female students, saw this as a career option. We, meaning OSU as well as the industry at large, were not really communicating the availability of jobs in the sports sector. With the things we have done promoting the programme, we see that more female students are



Beth Cianfrone | programme coordinator, Georgia State University

seeing this as a pathway to a career in sports.”

One of the main shifts has been in the volume of applications from female students. Beth Cianfrone, professor and programme coordinator of the Sport Administration programme at Georgia State University, says that while diversity plays a role in the school’s wider goals, it doesn’t come into its thinking when approving applicants, and that instead the quality of applications coming in from across the board now consistently leads to a 50/50 split.

“We are fortunate to have a lot of applications every year,” she says. “We have a very large programme, and that gives us the opportunity to select from a wider range of people, but we’re not consciously counting people, like, ‘here’s one male, so here’s one female’. We just get that many talented female and male applicants that it works out roughly equal every year, which is how it should be.”

Turner agrees. “Early on when we started running the course, there were not a lot of female applicants out there, and if there’s not a lot of applicants there’s not a lot of room to improve your numbers. That is why we’ve made a conscious effort to promote the course to more female students and get more applications from them, rather than consciously picking female applicants just to improve our numbers.”

Ohio State and Georgia State’s routes to achieving that 50/50 gender balance among their student intakes have been markedly different. While OSU

turned to its 500-strong undergraduate programme, recreational sports department and athletics department, GSU used its position in Atlanta, surrounded by major league sports organisations, to recruit nationwide and internationally.

“Our biggest benefit has definitely been the relationship with our recreational sports department,” says Turner. “They recruit from all over the country and then people who join there often come through to us, so they’ve been a great partner in helping us to diversify not just in gender but in race, geography, different backgrounds. They are great recruiters for us.

“We’re also helped by the emphasis that Gene Smith, our athletic director, places on life after sports. He really focuses with the student athletes on career development and helps them to see what’s out there after they finish, he runs a podcast called the Buckeyes Future Podcast that I’ve been a guest on, which helps us get in front of student athletes and explain to them that we offer a major in sport management, and I think that has really helped recruit a lot more females into our programme.”

Conversely, GSU has only recently launched an undergraduate programme, with most of its recruitment to its MS in Sport Administration coming from across the US.

“I think our proximity to sports organisations that are themselves really diverse helps,” says Cianfrone. “We’re right down the street from the Atlanta Hawks, which was one of the first sports organisations to have a chief diversity officer. The Falcons and the Braves are really close by. I think because we have that proximity and students know they can work there, that lets us draw on and recruit from a more equitable number of male and female applicants.

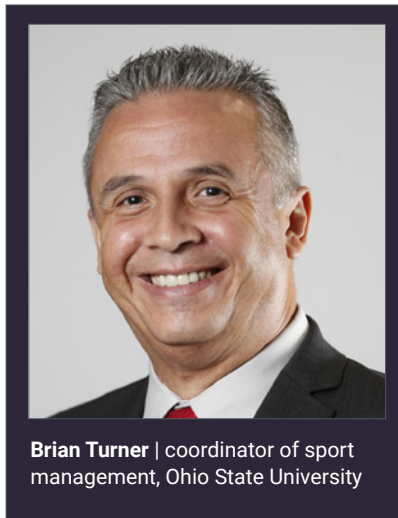
“We also have a really strong social media presence, where potentially students get to see the diversity of our student body, and across our promotional materials we do use the numbers that we get from the Postgraduate Rankings to show students that we’re inclusive, which we hope encourages them to spend the money to apply for our programme.”

Alumni support

Walker adds that as well as putting women in leadership positions within the programme, UMass has emphasised the roles its female students go on to when promoting the course to potential applicants. “Our women are knocking it out of the park,” she says. “They get really good jobs and they’re doing well in the industry, and I think that’s both testament to the fact that they get to see women in powerful positions in our classrooms, and also it creates more role models within the industry for our current students to look up to.”

Crucially, she adds, UMass alumni recognise the importance of utilising their network from the university for support in furthering those diversity goals at their current employers. “I have former students who have reached back to me, especially in the aftermath of the protests we’ve seen this year, to say, ‘I’m leading this diversity and inclusion initiative, what do you think about this programme’ and asking me to support them as they’re trying to lead change in their sports organisations, which is really cool to see.”

Turner says that the OSU alumni are “our best salespeople”. The programme there now boasts over 1,000 graduates who are working various positions



Brian Turner | coordinator of sport management, Ohio State University

across the industry, and the school launched a YouTube programme this summer to highlight the success of its alumni. “We were very conscious to get alumni in every area, and to have a gender balance, to really show to all our students that the sports industry can be an equal opportunity one if we keep producing outstanding talent,” he says.

Industry-wide benefits

Achieving greater diversity across the sports industry should not just be viewed as beneficial to the women who make their way in the sector, Cianfrone

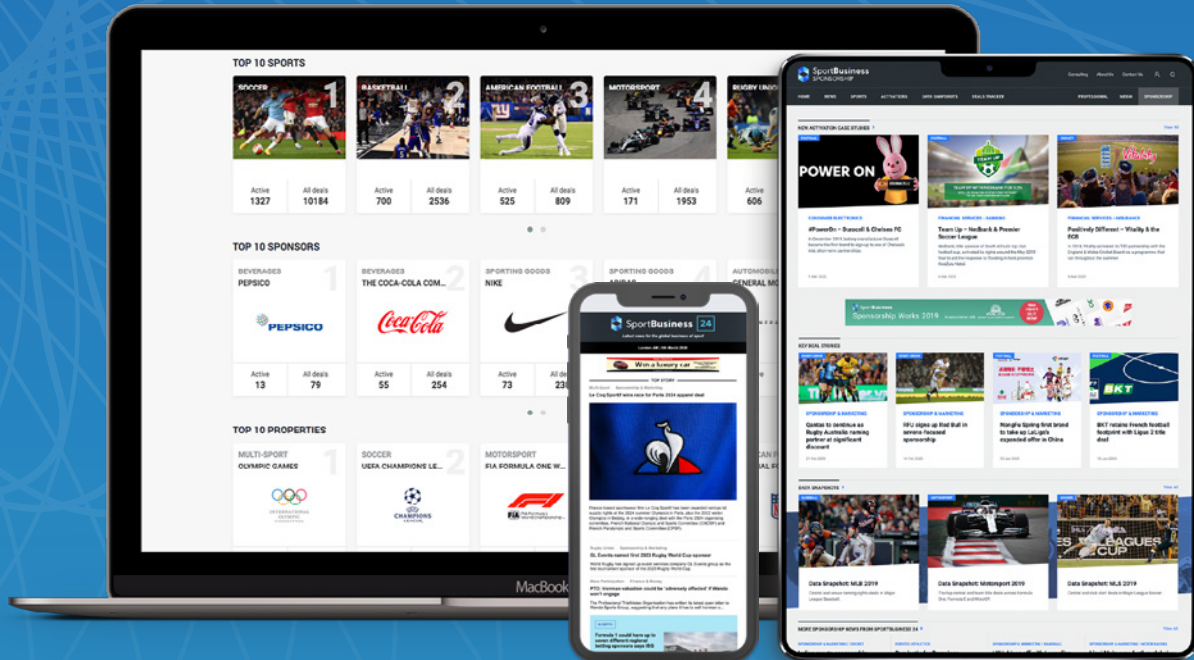
adds. “It’s just as important for the men in the room to see that women work in sports, and to look around themselves and see just as many female faces as they see male. I think for us, having classrooms that are 50/50 is just as much about opening the male students’ eyes to what the industry should look like as it is graduating female students and getting them into leadership roles. If you are in a classroom which is 80-per-cent men, it’s going to impact their behaviour and their outlook moving forward.”

Walker agrees, adding that the male faculty at UMass – “who happen to be all white” – play a major role in calling out sexism in the classroom and in the industry, hopefully sending graduates into the workplace prepared to do the same. “It’s one thing for me to call out sexism in the classroom, and it’s one thing for me to constantly drive home the importance for equity in the workplace,” she says. “But when the students see their male professors also doing it, it sends a different message that this is just who we are as a programme. These are the things that we tolerate, these are the things that we teach, these are the things that are important to us. Our students take that into the workplace.” ○





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Partnerships help universities bridge the gap between academia and industry



Fifa Master students on a visit to the All England Lawn Tennis Club (CIES)

As the ties between universities and sports organisations grow closer and educational institutes continue to look for new ways to strengthen their connections with the industry, *SportBusiness* takes a look at how the growth in partnerships is offering benefits to all parties.

It is a practice that has been gathering pace in the sports management education sector, demonstrated by this year's Postgraduate Rankings survey which showed that NYU, Columbia and George Washington University have all taken advantage of their locations to strike formal partnerships with major leagues, clubs and agencies in the US.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the Fifa Master at the International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES) and the International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS) also put up strong showings for their industry partnerships. Both are based at the heart of the European sports industry

in Switzerland, surrounded by the headquarters of the world's governing bodies and international federations, and have leveraged those positions.

Though the partnerships data was not used to decide the final rankings, it nevertheless helps to paint a picture of the increasingly symbiotic links between universities and the industry.

"Real world" connections

Within the university ecosystem, there is a tendency to see what happens in the industry as 'the real world', says Kevin Tallec Marston, academic project manager at CIES, though as he points out, "the university is my real world!"

He sympathises, however, with the sense that drawing connections and building bridges between the two can only be a positive thing. "It's about listening to the industry," he says. "You can't have a successful course if you don't listen to the industry and know what's going on in the industry. We strike partnerships, some of them formalised,

some of them more informal thanks to relationships that we build through our alumni and through events, so that we can build that stronger insight into the 'real world' of the industry."

An illustration of this is that NYU School of Professional Studies employs an assistant dean of real-world courses. "Essentially, a person who spends much of his time cultivating partnerships", Vince Gennaro, associate dean at the school's Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport, tells *SportBusiness*. "Because we are New York-based, it is critical that we are able to incorporate industry partners into our curriculum. Philosophically, it is just a very important part of our identity. The fact that we're a part of the School of Professional Studies is all about building that bridge to a career path; it's a trademark of ours at the School of Professional Studies to have deep connections with the industries."

The key aspects to the partnerships tend to be knowledge sharing – bringing



Vince Gennaro | Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport

in industry expert speakers to talk to students about their field, and taking students on visits to high-profile organisations – and practical, creating opportunities for students to take up internships and work placements in the industry. NYU’s partnership with the New York Jets has even seen it source two members of faculty from the NFL team who teach full, annual courses at the Tisch Institute.

Partnerships allow the Tisch Institute to do “real, meaningful work with our students”, says Gennaro. He points to the example of a project carried out in collaboration with the US Conference of Mayors’ Sports Alliance, which saw students conduct real-world research into the economic impact of esports facilities. Jeff Williams, the mayor of Arlington, Texas, later directly credited this research with leading to the construction of one of the US’s largest esports stadiums in his city. “So the students are getting very hands-on experience – at a young age – of directly impacting the business of sport,” says Gennaro.

Utilising the network

The difference between a fully-fledged partnership and simply inviting a high-profile industry figure to give a guest lecture is crucial, says Tallec Marston. “I insist on the word ‘relationship’. I don’t think inviting one speaker for a one-off lecture truly has much value in it. We need to be building long-term, sustainable relationships with organisations to ensure the biggest

benefits to both sides.”

The “Fifa Master spirit”, as Tallec Marston calls it, has helped to build partnerships across the industry, with alumni of the course frequently offering their services, including internships, to current students. “Our alumni go all over the world and all over the industry, and that creates an incredible opportunity when they reach back and say ‘I’m gonna start an internship programme within our organisation and I’d like to have you guys involved’.” The course’s long-standing arrangement with the City Football Group arose like this, and Manchester City is now a frequent destination for visits from the course as well as for an annual work placement.

He adds to this the importance of building relationships outside of the alumni network, however: “The sports industry is much bigger than that, so we have to be actively seeking new knowledge partners all the time, through our attendance at events like SportAccord and Soccerex. We really value having relationships that are completely independent to our existing connections; I think it’s important to not be too incestuous.”

Partnerships are also important in generating job opportunities, says Gennaro. “We’re fortunate to be where we are in New York City, but we still need to foster those links so that NYU graduates are foremost in the minds of recruiters. Certainly the relationships that we have with FC Barcelona and FC Bayern Munich through their New York offices have been particularly fruitful. We have three people at the Bayern office now, one of whom is a full-time employee who started out as an intern then kept the role after he graduated.”

Educating the industry

Dino Ruta, professor of practice at the SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan, Italy, says his institution has taken a different approach to these kinds of relationships. Its partnership with the organising body for the 2022 Fifa World Cup, Qatar’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, is a case in point. Because Bocconi is a business school rather than a traditional university, it allows much

deeper integration between the two parties, he explains.

“We partner together to deliver educational projects, with courses that are co-designed between us and the Supreme Committee. We go to Doha and deliver lectures, and people there, working in the Qatar Football Association or elsewhere in their sports ecosystem, enrol on our courses. In Qatar they are doing a lot very quickly, they’re working on the World Cup and delivering 60 more international sporting events, so they come to us because they feel the need to increase the quality of knowledge and talent available in the country.”

Meanwhile, a partnership with the NBA Players’ Association has been developed to offer current NBA stars the chance to put the foundations in place for a future career in business, with a course called Branding in the Global Economy.

“We teach them about the relevance of international brands,” says Ruta. “How brands are created, built and developed. Since they are becoming more international brands as players, it is important that they know about how brand building in the overall international business environment works.”

Ruta says that these kinds of partnerships are “the future”, and something that only offers advantages to both sides. “From my own observations, Bocconi is the main business school that is partnering with sporting institutions on this level – the



Dino Ruta | SDA Bocconi School of Management

universities are there, but business schools are still a little behind.”

There is, he says, “too much separation” between sports organisations and business schools. While in other sectors there tends to be closer relations, the sports industry remains “naïve” to the benefits available from working more closely with schools like Bocconi. “Business schools need sports organisations, and *vice-versa*, to maximise the benefit to everyone.”

Ruta is also working on securing partnerships with both individuals and sporting organisations to improve the level of education available for the practitioners on whose efforts the whole industry is built.

“I think that business schools should offer something more in line with athletes’ and coaches’ expectations,” he says. “The way in which they learn is different, especially managerial concepts, it is different from traditional executives and managers that attend our classes. But without athletes and coaches, we wouldn’t have an industry, so I have designed a specific learning methodology for current and former players to help them transition from sport to business

in a way that works for them.”

Ruta has begun to put together one-to-one teaching initiatives as part of his work with the NBAPA for players who are thinking of a business career after retirement, something he intends to widen and offer to athletes across different sports. “We make it so that they don’t feel like a fish out of the bowl. Often they prefer to go to their technical centres, to their associations, so I make a step forward, in line with our vision of creating partnerships, to create partnerships with individuals so that they can find at Bocconi a place where they can learn.”

“Business schools need sports organisations, and vice-versa, to maximise the benefit to everyone.”

Dino Ruta | professor of practice, SDA Bocconi School of Management

Critical balance

Using partnerships to bridge the gap between the academic world and the business world also plays an important

role in allowing universities to maintain a crucial independence from the wider industry, says Tallec Marston.

“These partnerships help us to keep that connection between the university and the quote-unquote ‘real world’, and I think it is important to maintain that balance and not go too far in either direction. As an academic institute, we cannot become so embedded in the industry that we are not working with the the critical distance, the independence, and the autonomy that the academy requires. The industry doesn’t have time to stop and think, to critically analyse what is coming and what has happened, whereas we can take a step back and provide insight, research and findings on the social, ethical, historical and legal sides that we wouldn’t be able to do if we were 100-per-cent industry-focused.

“Likewise, if we were completely in our three respective ivory towers of the universities, with no links to the industry through these myriad partnerships that we have, both formal and informal, then we wouldn’t be preparing students who would be really ready to go on to roles and applying those learnings that we create.” ○



NYU students visit the offices of the New York Jets as part of the university's partnership with the NFL side (NYU)

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How sport management courses faced the Covid-19 crisis



Columbia University campus displays a warning sign during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images)

While the Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably touched almost every aspect of modern life, the two sectors with which this publication is concerned were arguably among the hardest hit.

For sport, the implications are obvious. The industry suddenly found itself without a product for several months, and what has returned since is a shadow of its former self, largely played out in crowdless stadiums to a backdrop of silence or artificial crowd noise.

Education has been an even trickier case. While at university level it is easier to take some aspects of the teaching online – indeed, many of the schools we profile here already offer wholly-online courses, while almost all involve some form of remote learning – being faced with doing this over a prolonged period has been a daunting proposition.

“So much of what we do is enhanced

by the face-to-face aspect,” says Scott Rosner, academic director and professor of professional practice on the Sport Management programme at Columbia University. “We do almost everything in person, so for us it was really all-hands-on-deck when we got the word that we’d have to be shutting down.”

The response needed to be “swift and very hands-on,” says Rosner, as he recalls having 48 hours in which to transition from having all faculty and students on campus to arranging for them all to be teaching, or learning, from their homes.

“Especially for a lot of the students, they were like Joe Strummer: should they stay or should they go? We have a lot of international students, and they didn’t want to be stuck in New York indefinitely.” In the initial few days, the focus was on supporting students and ensuring everyone was safe, before putting plans in place for the rest of the academic year.

Brunel University London went as far as to charter a private flight for its Chinese students who did not wish to stay in the UK capital after the lockdown began. “We have a sizeable Chinese community and didn’t want them to feel vulnerable or be sitting on waiting lists at the whim of commercial airlines,” says Vassil Girginov, who leads the school’s sport management course. “We also offered students extensions regarding their assignments, of course, and because of the different time zones students were in, we allowed them to take their exams at different times that were convenient for them.”

While the timing was not the disaster it could have been – Girginov says that most students had concluded their active classes and were about to embark on dissertations and exams when the lockdown began – the implications on university life were wide-ranging.

“We had to essentially reconsider the



Brunel's campus has been "transformed" to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic, says Girginov. (Brunel)

whole *modus operandi* of the university on the level of logistics. We have had to redesign our modules, what we teach and how we teach it, because the question is not just delivery. The question is also how do you ensure meaningful engagement with students so you can keep them involved and interested. It's a massive challenge for most of us, especially those who haven't delivered online courses before."

Planning ahead

Rosner says that Columbia initially announced a two-week period of distance learning, though it quickly became clear that this situation was going to last beyond the fortnight, and the school has now outlined plans for three-quarters of all classes in the 2020-21 academic year to be taught online. Those that are taught physically will still see classrooms at only 28 per cent of their usual capacity, with students rotating days on which they

will be present or learning virtually – and then only if they feel comfortable attending. "Right now, half our students just don't want to be in the classroom, they're more comfortable being remote, and I don't want anyone to do anything they're not comfortable with," says Rosner.

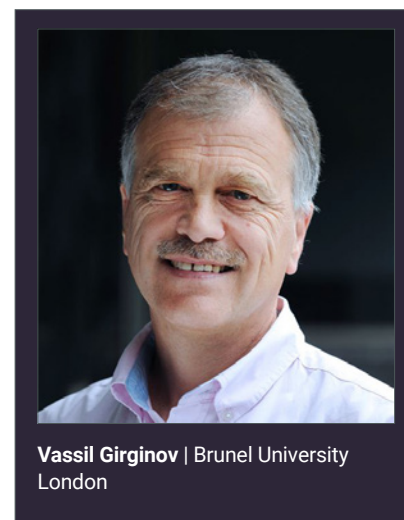
The situation is similar across the academic world, at least in Europe and the US. While some European universities, particularly the Swiss-based institutions like CIES and AISTS, where the pandemic has been better controlled, are re-opening, few are rushing a return to full classrooms. Girginov notes that the Brunel campus has been "transformed" over the summer to adhere to the UK government's policies on social distancing and hygiene, while the university will take a "blended approach" to teaching this year, "whereby content will be delivered online, but there will be somewhat limited interactions on campus".

While Rosner is confident in his and his faculty's ability to deal with the situation in terms of teaching, he is concerned by the loss of the sense of community he has attempted to foster on campus – though he adds that this culture is precisely what has enabled Columbia to navigate the last six months so smoothly.

"I'm a self-professed big-culture guy," he says, "and I think that's a really important part of our offering at Columbia. Our programme takes 12-to-16 months, and it'd be very easy to have a transactional relationship with our students: they pay their money, get their education, we position them for success for their careers and then push them out the door.

"But that's not what motivates me. We have a lifelong relationship with our students, and that's more difficult to foster when our interaction with them is on the other end of a computer screen. But I should add that having that culture in place has allowed us to get through this in a pretty strong fashion, because the students know that not only have we got their backs, but they've all got each others' backs – the alumni supporting the current students, all reaching out to one another. What we've heard from the students is that their bonds are stronger than ever, they've been arranging get-togethers in Central Park and it's been great to see."

Ultimately, this is likely to be what sees institutions through the coming turbulence, he says. "If your culture was strong, and your programme or your organisation was effective and was high



Vassil Girginov | Brunel University London

quality before, you stood a very good chance of getting through this relatively unscathed. But if there was if there was a lack of leadership, if there was dysfunction, if there were inefficiencies under normal conditions, then under these conditions you are going to face a Herculean task to maintain any sort of quality. And I think, honestly, that's not just true in education."

Opportunities

At Washington DC's American University, Matt Winkler, professor and director of the school's Master of Science in Sports Analytics and Management, used the outbreak as an opportunity to launch a series of short courses over the summer. Titled the "Entrepreneurial Toolkit for the Sports Industry: The Covid-19 Playbook" – a moniker which Winkler admits "sounds gimmicky, but it also captures what it is" – the series of webinars took place over the course of the summer, between June and August, aimed largely at mid-career professionals looking to brush up their skills in the new marketplace.

"Thanks to Covid, we're all solo practitioners," he says. "Everybody is exposed by this, and some people felt they didn't have the skills to compete and stay up to date in this new world – especially a lot of 30–50-somethings who maybe weren't involved in digital strategy before but now they have to be."

The pandemic has also encouraged some soul-searching, and Winkler says people have come to the short courses to get a taste for sports management education after either deciding to pursue a new career or after being furloughed or made redundant from existing roles.

"It's giving people the tools for making that career change in a short space of delivery," he says. "It's obviously not a hugely in-depth look into the sports industry, but we're helping people get a grounding and preparing them to make that move if they choose to. It's a quick shot to give everybody not just a tune-up of existing skills but also give them an exercise in experiencing what skills will be more valuable moving forward."

Launching any kind of course at a university is always a lengthy process, says Winkler – "it has to go through the starting committee, through each

relevant school, to a final committee and then to the board of directors, so it's not easy to launch" – but adds that short courses, taking place over just a few weeks, also offer much greater flexibility. "One thing that's great with this solution is that it's easy to update them and tailor them to what's going on."

Girginov agrees, noting that while courses at Brunel will be updated to take the pandemic into account where it is relevant, "it has to be considered that a course is a logically considered set of different topics".



Matt Winkler | American University, Washington DC

"It's not that simple and straightforward to just introduce new ideas into the situation because it always has many more implications," he says. "In terms of managing risks, in terms of the impact and the need to think creatively about the situation, Covid creates many challenges and provides a number of opportunities so, yes, we will certainly reflect it in our teaching, but it's not as straightforward as saying 'Covid has happened' as part of an existing course of study."

Rosner also adds that amid the chaos, Columbia was able to take advantage of distance learning to approach a wider range of guest speakers and lecturers. "We broadened our base of industry talks. The benefit of being in New York is that, like being in London, we have a huge advantage to who we can access and bring into our classrooms and who our students can network with. But this enabled us to reach outside of New York City and bring speakers in from all over the world."

Future implications

The lockdown and subsequent use of remote teaching while campuses remained closed is likely to accelerate the widespread adoption of online learning, though Rosner doubts that it will represent a "tipping point" where the majority of academic goes virtual.

"Both sport and education are industries where relationships are vital," he says. "I don't see everything going remote or a mass move away from campus and classroom-based teaching, because the relationships you forge and the connections you are able to make in person are always going to be more valuable than those done over an internet connection. But, yes, I do think we'll see more individual online pieces to it now."

Girginov concurs, saying that while "new pedagogical approaches will emerge", it will tend to accelerate existing trends rather than cause universities to re-write their strategies to focus exclusively online. "We've had to come up with different activities to address the challenges posed by this delivery process, so that we can ensure engagement, because obviously in an online mode you can't really have one person talking for more than 10, 15 minutes. We have to think about how we bring people together and make them collaborate when they're in different rooms and even different parts of the world. But it will be an extension of existing online pedagogies, not completely new ones."

Rosner also feels that the pandemic will leave its mark on the higher education sector, in terms of causing both universities and students to address whether a sports administration course is viable. "There are, and for a long time have been, too many sports management programmes," he says. "The supply of jobs that are available in the industry is far outpaced by the demand of annual graduates. So I think that the programmes that are of lesser quality may have a hard time getting through this. I think you might see a separation between the courses that appear in the Postgraduate Rankings, some of the others that are on the edges of the top 40, and then the ones below that." ○

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Razan Baker, director of international communication at the SAOC

Razan Baker graduated from Brunel University London with a PhD in sports sciences in 2014 and was appointed director of international communication at the Saudi Arabian Olympic Committee earlier this year, after joining the organisation in 2018.

What made you decide to study a sports management postgraduate degree?

After graduating from university, I started working as a journalist covering sports and cultural events in 2005 at the *Arab News*. I found myself keen on learning more and enhancing my skills, but I felt I had reached the point where staying in place would not help me achieve that. I decided to get my MA in international journalism with a specialism in sports at City University, and that got me more interested in understanding the field of sports sciences.

At that time, Saudi Arabia didn't have undergraduate or postgraduate degrees in sport sciences for women. I was already settled in London and started contacting supervisors to discuss my PhD proposal before I ended my MA. The Olympics was also happening soon, and I was lucky to be accepted at Brunel under the supervision of Vassil Girginov in 2010. It was a wakeup call for me, it was a new journey that I was willing to take because I wanted to make a difference in my country and the only way to do it was to do something different, and I'm happy I did it.

Why did you choose the the course at Brunel?

As mentioned previously, I was already happy in London and Brunel is considered one of the top universities in the sports sector. I had contacted several supervisors but I found Dr Girginov had a great background related to my idea and area of study. This encouraged me to apply and to start a new journey with a supervisor who understood where I came from and was supportive throughout my journey.

How do you feel the course helped you prepare for a career in the sports industry?


From day one I was learning something new, as we started with the literature review to understand different ideas and studies. My knowledge before was limited to covering sports events and interviewing athletes. The PhD gave me a new direction; to be more precise, a broader perspective to why athletes would say what they say, and how they do what they do. I was able to learn not only from studying, but also from participating at conferences and sports events and meeting people in the field who shared similar interests but were from different backgrounds. It was really fascinating to just absorb the knowledge and communicate with the field in so many different ways. It was a bit difficult to adapt, I remember my supervisor telling me, 'forget your journalist hat and put it on the side for a while, you are a researcher now, think differently'. This helped me a lot in my career and in decision-making, strategy

planning and communicating in general.

How does being a Brunel graduate continue to support your career?

I think it's going to be a similar answer to the previous question, but in addition to that I'm still happy to meet my colleagues from Brunel and hear about their success. I'm always happy to stay in touch with my supervisor and learn about Brunel news. It felt like home, so it is my pleasure to cooperate through my field or career whenever needed.

What advice would you offer to someone starting on the course this year?

First, be sure of your topic of interest, then find a course that will help you understand it more and will help you offer something new and valid when you graduate. Trending topics may seem important now, but it doesn't mean it will continue to be important in four or five years. Therefore, my advice is to invest your time and choose your topic or idea to study carefully. 



Dr Razan Baker (left) and her family at her graduation from Brunel

The importance of storytelling in sports marketing – and education

Joe Favorito has over 35 years of strategic communications, marketing, business development and public relations expertise in sports, and teaches a course on these subjects and more at Columbia University. The third edition of his book, *Sports Publicity: A Practical Approach*, was published earlier this year.

I was lucky enough to spend some time with the late former NBA commissioner David Stern during the last few years, and one of the things he would always tell groups, especially groups of young people, was that there were two skills that were essential in any industry...the ability to sell and the ability to concisely tell your story. If you can do those two things well, you would be ahead of many others trying to climb the ladder.

The ability to tell stories effectively is not new at all. It is a skill that has been used as long as people have walked the earth. The difference today is the space and the time that we have to effectively tell the story of who we work with, what we do, and who we are. While in times of yore that space was maybe a few blocks or a village, now the space is the world and, who knows for sure, maybe worlds beyond in the coming years. The means may have changed, but the basic skills to communicate effectively – listening, consensus building, writing, community – are pretty basic.

That was really the original impetus for my book, *Sports Publicity: A Practical Approach*, first published at the suggestion of my colleague John Gonzales in 2007. It was to build a repository of best practices, examples, and cases of storytelling in and around sport, told by those who do the work. The marketplace was not just for “PR types”. It was really to have anyone who touches the industry understand the means and the messages of communication.

Fast forward 13 years, and the third edition of the book came out this



“No matter what level of business you are at, you can take a second and think about the value of storytelling and how your story is told”


spring. While many of the basic tools, and some of the best stories, remain intact, the vastness and importance of effective storytelling has grown greatly. Chapters on corporate communications, digital and social media and crisis communications have advanced, while sections on areas that were once emerging are now mainstream and flow throughout the book. One of the best exercises we conducted was not just in looking forward, but in looking back to what the hot topics were when first printing. “New media” was a big

one. esports did not even warrant a mention, nor did audio storytelling. Today, can we go anywhere without talking about podcasting?

Even with the evolution of topics, the biggest message to convey remains with the words of commissioner Stern: you have to know how to tell your story, and having a strategic plan where a communications executive is at the table in the decision-making process is more valuable than ever before. It’s an essential point that anyone in the business needs to understand and employ. If you can’t tell your story effectively, how you can get any larger stages of business done?

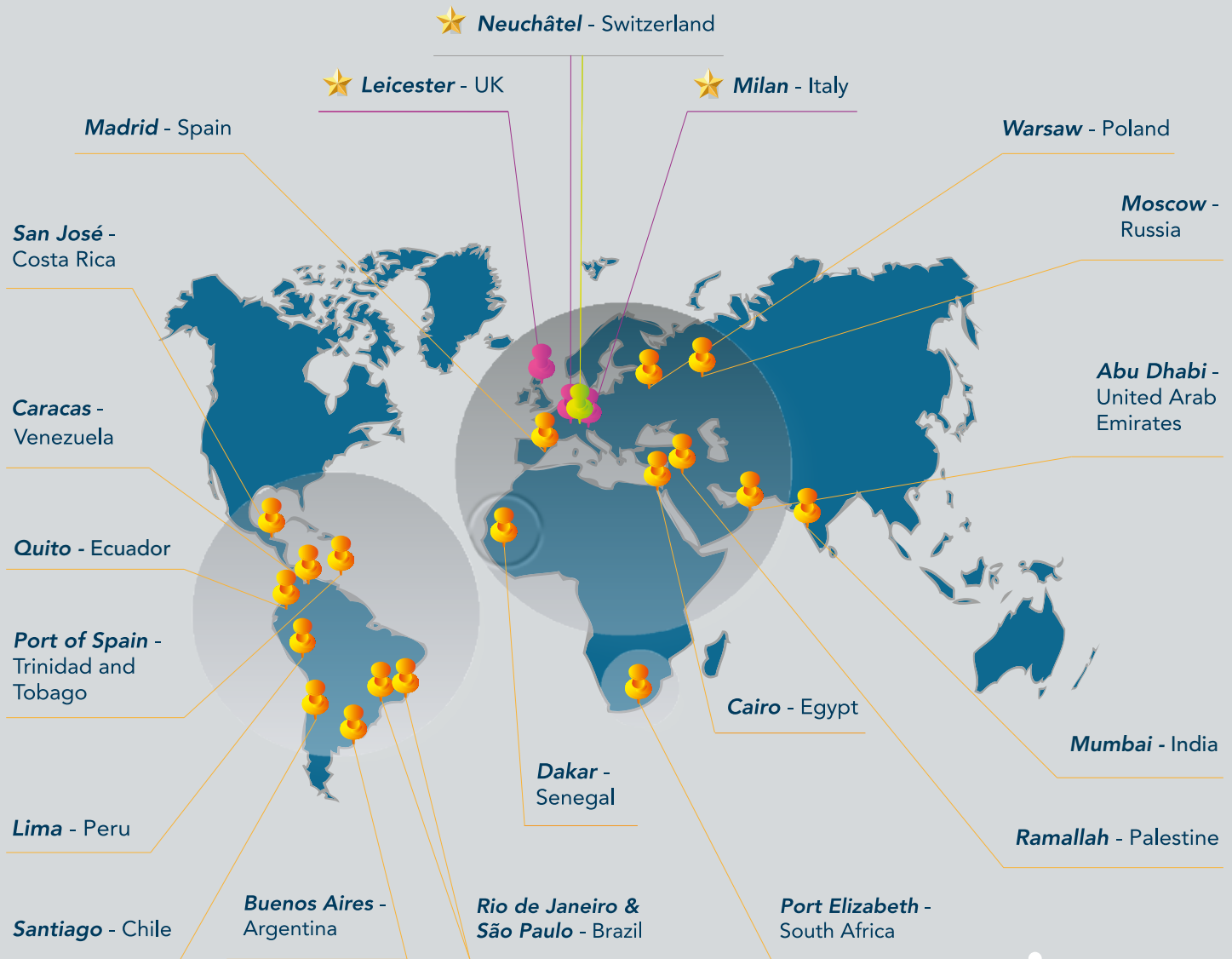
That’s the good news about updating the text and the value of storytelling in our business. The bad news is we put the book to bed in early February, and we all know the world since then has changed dramatically. While most of the content in the book still holds true, and the value of effectively communicating, especially in constant crisis, has never been more important, some of the lessons we are learning in real-time since March 12 can fill a whole new volume (and, yes, that has been discussed).

For now, however, we hope that no matter what level of business you are at, you can take a second and think about the value of storytelling, how your story is told, how you need to tell it, to who, and when.

Just ask all those who learned from commissioner Stern. You will probably hear a great story. 

For more information on Joe Favorito and his book, visit joefavorito.com.

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Shoko Tsuji, Head of Partnership Success at MyCujoo and FIFA Master Alumna

ADVERTISING FEATURE

The Japanese Shoko Tsuji is yet another talented woman who benefited from her FIFA Master experience to boost her career in sports. She had already studied Sports Sciences at Waseda University, in Japan, and then did a Masters' degree in Sports Journalism in Spain, when, in 2012, she got her first gig in sports – as an intern at the renowned Diario AS, for a few months. "Right after that I was lucky to land a job in Barcelona, where I was responsible for doing TV production for the rights holding broadcaster of La Liga", she recalls. "I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to the football industry and I truly enjoyed broadcasting the Clásico, interviewing La Liga players and managers, and travelling around the world to produce football documentaries".

However, during her five years in Spain, she could already see the world shifting from traditional broadcasting to online streaming, and Shoko felt that she needed to make the transition as well. "Therefore, after completing the FIFA Master, I joined MyCujoo, an innovative OTT platform, as it seemed like the perfect opportunity to move into the digital space and also explore the long-tail of football", she says. In her first role at MyCujoo, she was based in Singapore and responsible for the "AFC Live Streaming Project", where she worked alongside the Asian Football Confederation to implement live streaming within its member associations. A year later, she moved to the Amsterdam HQ, where she is currently responsible for creating and implementing a global strategy to support MyCujoo's partners and help them achieve their strategic objectives.

In addition to all that, Shoko has recently co-founded a new venture called SPORT GLOBAL (sportglobal.jp). "Having worked overseas during the last decade, I have seen how the Japanese (and Asians in general) are hugely underrepresented in international sport organisations, despite the constant discourse of 'The Future is Asia'. I have also experienced first-hand how challenging it can be to get a work permit outside my own country", she explains. "One of the key issues I identified was the lack of information and guidance for those aspiring to go abroad. That is why together with two friends, I created SPORT GLOBAL, a one-stop platform that inspires, informs and empowers Japanese students and professionals to pursue an education or career in sport overseas"

Read more of Shoko Tsuji's interview:

Why did you choose to do the FIFA Master?

I first found out about the FIFA Master during my third year at Waseda University. I was strongly drawn to the international, multidisciplinary nature of the course and from that moment onwards, it was always on my agenda. When I was in Spain, I had the opportunity to work with Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, former captain of the Japan national team, who played in 2 World Cups, and had graduated a few years before me, and he spoke very highly of the course as well.

How important was the FIFA Master for your career?

It was definitely a turning point for me. It allowed me to reset my sport career and opened my mind to new perspectives and opportunities. The experience of thinking critically, exchanging ideas and working together with colleagues from different nationalities and backgrounds prepared me for my role today, where I am working across multiple departments in a multicultural environment. The vast network of FIFA Master alumni worldwide has also been a huge asset to me both on a professional and personal level. Knowing that I can reach out to someone from the network to seek advice in any country on any topic is a true privilege.

Are you still in touch with classmates or other alumni? How important is that network for you?

Yes, every single day! I currently work with alumni on a daily basis, and when I was relocated to Malaysia, Singapore and the Netherlands, it was the alumni in these countries that helped me to settle down and with whom I developed the strongest friendships. Although it has been three years since I graduated, I feel that the FIFA Master experience is still ongoing and I always look forward to catching up with alumni at different events and locations around the globe.



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Evidence-led policy in community sport for public health and well-being

Louise Mansfield, professor of sport, health and social sciences at the Institute for Environment, Health and Societies at Brunel University in London, discusses her research, which is focused on the relationship between communities, sport, physical activity and public health. In 2020, her work was nominated for a Research Impact Award.

My work since 2013 has been underpinned by this package of research, funded by various bodies, around making a difference to people's health and well-being through community sport. In doing that, we have focused on increasing the number of people taking part who started off as inactive. But we have also changed decision-making at a policy level, particularly with Sport England and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, around how they evaluate activity and how they know their initiatives are working.

We were involved in the policy and decision-making development post-London 2012, when we had the physical activity and health legacy targets from the Games, targets which it quickly became obvious were not being reached. We knew there needed to be a strategic approach to raising physical activity levels through community sport, so we have been involved in that in a sustained way and from the outset, through a number of research projects and academic publications. So the impact measurement is based on a package of published research and funding grants and then the work that we do with organisations in order to translate and disseminate that information.

We first published what we call a 'protocol paper', about how we were going to do the research, using some Sport England funding to explore the impact of community sport on health and well-being for the least active. Once we conducted the study – a large, mixed-methods project which involved quantitative survey data collection, repeated measures and also the qualitative work with the groups and with the sports coaches – we published


a paper on the role of sports coaches in this whole agenda. In this paper we argued that they were what we called a 'community asset' or resource, an alternative to the medical profession, to really support inactive people to take part in physical activity.

In the community sport project we took an intersectional approach, it was about social diversity in different and complex communities. The common feature of the population involved was that they had to be inactive, that was who we were targeting, but apart from that we were trying to look at who were the least active across a range of social diversity groups in Hounslow, London, where the studies were carried out. We worked in schools with sixth-form girls. We worked with an organisation called Urban Youth Network that delivers to Somali populations and other black and minority ethnic groups to deliver a football project. We worked with a group called Integrated Neurological Services, who work with people who have got neurological conditions, where we delivered a yoga project. So we targeted specific groups within the inactive population to get a view across issues of gender, race and ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status.

Sport England has just written for us a corroborating evidence letter for the Research Impact Award, and I think one of the standout impacts that we have been involved in is their decision to spend a quarter of their budget on delivering to those who are inactive because, through projects like ours they can see that it works, that it makes a difference and it has an impact. So they made an investment decision to spend more of that money than they had done and up to 25 per cent on delivering to



inactive people.

The second stand-out decision on their part was to develop new evaluation approaches. We were working with Sport England on how they could evaluate their work better to demonstrate the evidence of what was working and what was not. That has led to a series of outputs from Sport England, one on the design principles – how do you design a project in order for it to have best impact? We had a significant impact on the development and content of that. They have also developed an online evaluation framework, and all projects now that Sport England fund have to follow the process of that evaluation framework, and that's been implemented through the knowledge that we've produced through our work. 

Columbia University prioritises diversity and inclusion to support students through difficult year



Scott Rosner, academic director and professor of professional practice on the Sport Management programme at Columbia University, discusses how an emphasis on inclusion has helped the school guide its students through the turbulent events of 2020 so far.

Student anxiety in our Columbia Sports Management programme was understandably high throughout the spring due to Covid-19, but reached an entirely different level during the nationwide protests against racial injustice fuelled by the murder of George Floyd. Like the city in which we are based, our programme is a melting pot of different races and other intersectional identities. Black students comprise approximately 15% of our population. The tenets of over-communication, availability, transparency and empathy guided our response. I spoke with every Black student and a number of our other students (many on multiple occasions) to check in on their well-being and

to solicit their ideas on potential programmatic changes. I similarly connected with every black member of our faculty and staff. None of these conversations was easy, many were hard and all were emotional. A lengthy, heartfelt letter to our community was crafted - though I did call on my own network of Black friends and colleagues to serve as a sounding board as I wrote it. (Though their feedback as to its content and sentiment was de Minimis, all praised me for reaching out before sending it. It is a good reminder of the importance and value of having a diversity of perspectives on your internal Board of Directors - and in your organisation.)

A first step was explaining to our

stakeholders the various initiatives, programmes and activities that the Sports Management programme already had underway regarding the topics of race and racism. We purposely had not done much in the way of public relations around these activities, as I am of the mind that great deeds are done not for optics but because they are worthy investments in and of themselves. So what were we already doing?

A significant part of our efforts focused on the Columbia University School of Professional Studies HBCU Fellowship programme, a four year-old concept that provides full tuition, housing, a modest stipend and tailored programming - a total value of over \$100,000 - to two dozen recent graduates of Historically

Black Colleges and Universities every year. Our programme has had four HBCU Fellowship students thus far. We want far more, so we undertook additional recruiting efforts at the NFL Careers in Football event in Atlanta in 2019, delivering presentations to all 200+ attendees as well as the MEAC conference and approximately 50 institutional representatives. Our plan for 2020-21 is to add the SWAC conference and its institutional representatives. These efforts yielded all-time highs in both applicants and acceptances from HBCUs.

We work on projects with major properties. In conjunction with the National Football League, we have conducted substantial independent research and delivered reports on the ongoing social justice efforts of the NFL in two separate courses during the past two academic years. Both reports were delivered and discussed with the highest levels of league leadership. We are also involved in a project with the NYC Department of Education, East Harlem Schools, and New York Rangers, conducting all of the data entry and analysis of survey work around the creation and implementation of a street hockey curriculum in NYC physical education classes. Inside the classroom, we have five members of our faculty and staff who are Black, but we could be more diverse. We added a course on Athlete Activism and Social Justice in 2018. We ensure that there is a diverse set of panelists at all sessions of our annual conference and all events hosted by the Sports Management programme. Finally, we had already planned for the creation of a public service requirement (to be part of a core course) as of January 2022, pending state approval. This would require all Sports Management programme students to perform between 20-40 hours of community service with a sports-focused non-profit organization. The programme is in the process of creating relationships with a variety of these organisations across New York City. The public service requirement will be integrated with faculty-led educational sessions. So we were quietly doing a lot of different things, but it never felt like quite enough. We should have been better.



Scott Rosner | academic director and professor of professional practice on the Sport Management programme at Columbia University

“Great deeds are done not for optics but because they are worthy investments in and of themselves.”

Since the nationwide protests against systemic racial injustices that resulted from the killing of George Floyd, we have undertaken a number of different measures in an effort to make a change in our corner of the world. We began by having difficult conversations within our Columbia Sports Management community. Four-plus hours of town halls were held in which there was anger, tears, apprehension, expressions of ignorance, teaching and learning, among other things. Our international students gained an immense amount of knowledge, as most had little concept of the extent to which systematic racism exists in America. A new student club, the Black Sports Management Union, was formed with the full support of the Sports Management programme. A host of potential changes were discussed in these town halls and many ultimately will be implemented.

Our changes moving forward impact students from the very beginning of their Columbia experience and continue throughout. We are adding sessions on bias training to our own Sports Management orientation programming and creating an annual ‘book club’ with

required reading on a topic involving race and sports with a corresponding speaker event. The book for 2020 is Sport Matters: Leadership, Power, and the Quest for Respect in Sports, with author Kenneth Shropshire leading the conversation. An assignment based on the book will be a part of our core introductory course requirements in the Fall 2020 semester. We are introducing an annual two-day Race and Sports workshop, which also will be a part of a core course requirement. We will also infuse more conversation on the topics of diversity and inclusion throughout the curriculum. Where appropriate, these topics will be included as part of the course modules and include more speakers from underrepresented groups. We are altering our peer mentoring programme by putting each dyad into larger 6 person groups that are interracial/international and more broadly representative of the student population in general. We have also requested that our school leadership advocate for broader changes across the entirety of Columbia University.

Externally, the programme is going to increase the involvement of our students, faculty and staff in working with students at a public high school in Manhattan. Next steps are being planned. The Sports Management programme is also planning to create a series of weekend programming for New York City students from disadvantaged areas on careers in the sports industry. The goal is to promote awareness of the industry in an effort to diversify the pipeline of future entrants. We will increase our collaboration with groups focused on networking opportunities aimed at minorities in sports with various Black organisations, non-profits, and related groups. Finally, unlike our previous approach, we will provide continuous updates on matters of race during our regularly scheduled Sports Management student meetings. It’s still not about the optics but we owe it to our stakeholders to keep them informed. I welcome the opportunity to share further insights on any of these efforts with readers at other programmes or organisations that might be interested in taking them under consideration.○

AISTS's Master of Advanced Studies research paper

As part of the Master of Advanced Studies at the International Academy of Sport Science and Technology (AISTS), all students are required to carry out a piece of in-depth research on a relevant sports-related issue. **Magali Louis**, head of research and education, and **Claude Stricker**, executive director, discuss how the projects are developed and the real-world industry impact they have had.



ML: The research papers are the only component of the Master's programme that is free for the students to choose. We also have a team project, where external clients come in with their ideas and the students work with them, but for the projects, the students are responsible for their own research ideas. We guide them towards topics that are currently relevant, but at the end of the day, it is their choice. They need to spend nine months on something they are motivated by, or a topic that is something that they want to research in more detail.

We have external speakers come in from clients, or people from different federations, to provide guidance. We had somebody from the marketing team at Omega coming in to present what they would like to research in terms of the sponsorship deals that they have been doing around the Americas Cup in New Zealand next year. Some students might pick up that idea and make it their research paper.

The research project is like your


business card. I did the Master in 2004 and it got me my two first jobs, so I tell the students to do something that will open doors for them. It's only nine months, but that's time to get quite deep into a subject. I advise them to use their background first, and then look deeper into a field that they already know. For me it was anti-doping, and because of the connections I made in the field by interviewing people and researching it, I got jobs with two federations in their anti-doping departments after I completed the Master.

In terms of impact, last year a student wrote a paper, titled *The Reshaping of the Sports Media Content Ecosystem, Media Companies and the Increasing Role of OTT Streaming Platforms*, which was used by one of the federations and has already been picked up by other people in the industry, and published in the Swiss newspapers. The federations are especially interested in how they can use over-the-top, direct-to-consumer platforms to engage with their fans, and

we were very happy we could contribute to that.

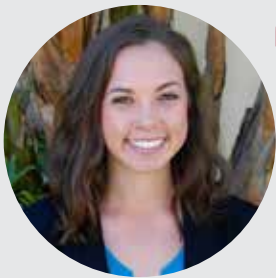
CS: Another piece of research from last year, *Major Determinants for International Federations to Adopt Esports as Part of Their Digitalisation Strategies* by our student Jidong Wang, was published by the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations. Jidong had already been doing some work for ASOIF and the topic came up of how its members were approaching esports, so he looked into the factors and the development of that.

The AISTS goal is to make sure there is a good bridge between scientific expertise – not necessarily only in sport – and the wider sports industry. Jidong worked with Professor Giovanni Derchi, whose main topic of research is not sport, but he could bring his experience in other fields and make sure that the best methodology was applied. Then it was the role of the student to bring the sports-specific knowledge, and of course with Jidong's positioning with ASOIF, it was natural for him to work on this topic.

It is not the role of ASOIF to implement the research, but to support it, to distribute it among their members and let them see the conclusions Jidong had come up with. They had a working group on esports, they had also a forum where they were discussing esports and its potential growth and how traditional sports federations can integrate it. ASOIF is an organisation providing support in terms of debating, discussing and sharing knowledge within their circle, which includes members of Olympic Federations, so it definitely helps our student's work to have that impact. Now it's up to the federations to develop their own programmes with esports. 



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SIGA University Network harnesses power of education to promote integrity within sport

This year, the Sport Integrity Global Alliance launched the SIGA University Network (SUN), an initiative that connects over 20 educational institutes from 14 different countries worldwide to help to build and promote the organisation's ideals.

Several of the institutions involved will be familiar to regular readers of these pages – the likes of NYU, De Montfort and George Washington, for example – while others, such as Qatar University, the Tswane University of Technology in South Africa and Ukraine's Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University help to provide a global outlook, as SIGA aims to seed its values in the next generation of international sports business leaders.

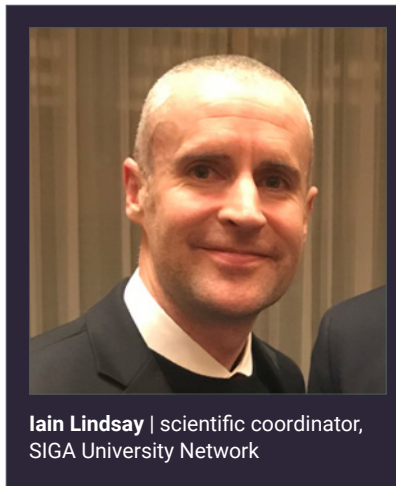
"Essentially, our mission is to have sport globally governed with the highest integrity standards," says Iain Lindsay, director of research, knowledge and innovation, and scientific coordinator of the SUN. "That's quite a broad brush, but we're working on making sport free from unethical, illicit and criminal activity. The intention of the SUN is to actively promote education and research around these matters at some of the world's leading universities."

SIGA established the network after working with "a core academic stakeholder group" on various pieces of integrity-related research over the years. Lindsay says that SIGA was receiving so many great research proposals, however, that "we became concerned we were missing opportunities", so decided to formalise those relations.

Membership is neither exclusive nor based on paying a fee to join but is instead based on "a collective commitment to contributing to our global agenda", says Lindsay. "We're not interested in expanding for the sake of expansion. It needs to have a solid reason, and everyone is expected to be productive across our three key objectives."

The first of those objectives is research

output, with SIGA hoping that it can help its member universities' academic work have a deeper impact across the industry – especially, as Lindsay notes, at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to mean reduced funding for those kinds of projects. "We're acting as a platform between academia and stakeholders to create synergies, to cultivate projects, and really to emphasise projects that have a commercial aspect as well because we know that the coming financial implications of Covid are going to make it tougher for academia and research at large.



Iain Lindsay | scientific coordinator,
SIGA University Network

"One of the key projects that we're delivering over the next 12 months is our white paper on sport integrity. We've created expert groups with top names in the world of sports – from federations, arbitration, academia – and aggregated these expectations in key areas which are: good governance and integrity, sports betting integrity, self protection and governance, safety and security and anti-doping.

"Across those groups we're going to synthesise the landscape in terms of best-practice policy, what the key issues are, and how this relates to the lived environment and how we can move forward to battle some of these issues directly. And also what we want to do

from that is to share this with the next generation."

That leads into the second objective – knowledge transfer – which is where formalising the relationships with universities into a network of partnerships is most beneficial, Lindsay says, helping new research and thinking move more freely between institutions and academics. "We want to ensure sports integrity is a key component of university curricula to try to help fill this gap between academia, and, for want of a better word, the 'real world', the lived environment."

The final objective plays into that bottom-up approach, placing the focus on the students themselves with the creation of the Future Leaders programme. The intention of that, Lindsay says, "is giving students the pathways to expand on their research through internships, through relationships, through involvement in projects where we're giving them a platform for recognition in terms of our Youth Council, in terms of our female leaders awards, our mentorship".

Ultimately, the aim is to place integrity at the top of the agenda across the sector by sending graduates into the industry prepared with the tools they need. "Integrity is a small word with a huge application," Lindsay says. "If you're interested in good governance your areas of expertise or potential career options are very broad, whereas perhaps anti-doping is a little bit more specific, but across the board integrity issues impact the range of sport from the played environment, all the way through to the board level so it's something that we see as a broad concern that impacts everything that sport stands for and sport delivers.

"So we're trying to raise awareness and make sure that everybody is cognisant of the impact of integrity and trying to forward that to the key component of sports evolution in the in the near- and medium-term future." ○

Top Of The Class

Average Salary

Rank	Provider	Salary (\$)
1	San Diego State University	92,362
2	Columbia University	90,474
3	University of Liverpool Management School - Football MBA	83,429
4	University of Bayreuth	82,635
5	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center	82,321
6	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport	80,278
7	University of Liverpool Management School - Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBA (THIMBA)	80,000
8	AISTS	74,957
9	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	73,357
10	George Washington University	70,357

Graduates' Choice Based on Student satisfaction score*

Rank	Provider	Score
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	97.64
2	George Washington University	97.39
3	University of Vigo	96.91
4	Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for Sport Leadership	96.67
5	San Diego State University	96.38
6	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	95.97
7=	Ohio University	94.86
7=	University of Windsor	94.86
9	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	94.06
10	Real Madrid Graduate School	92.74

* The student satisfaction score is the aggregated total of the following six measures: Quality of teaching, support in finding a job in the industry, quality of extra-curricular support, opportunities to connect with the alumni network, ability to network with industry executives and value for money provided by the masters program.

Top Of The Class

Peer review

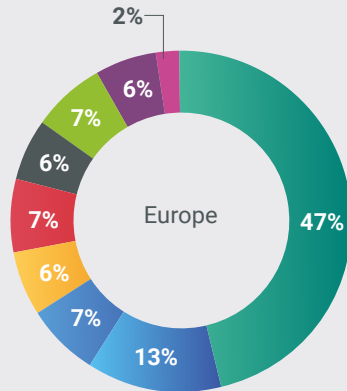
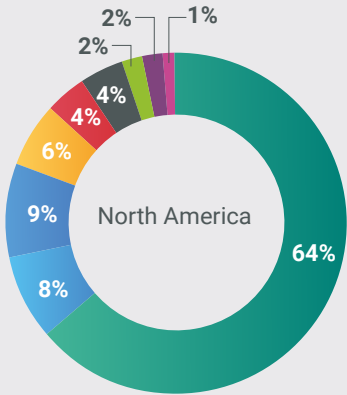
Rank	Provider
1	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management
2	Ohio University
3	University of South Florida
4	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)
5	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center
6	Deakin University
7	University of South Carolina
8=	University of Liverpool Management School - Football MBA
8=	University of San Francisco
10=	AISTS
10=	Coventry University
10=	Johan Cruyff Institute
10=	Temple University

Most valuable in furthering career Based on Career value score

Rank	Provider	Score
1=	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	95.00
1=	University of Vigo	95.00
3	Ohio University	94.81
4	San Diego State University	93.68
5	Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for Sport Leadership	93.55
6	Russian International Olympic University	93.33
7=	George Washington University	91.43
7=	Real Madrid Graduate School	91.43
9	Sheffield Hallam University	91.11
10=	AISTS	89.52
10=	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino	89.52

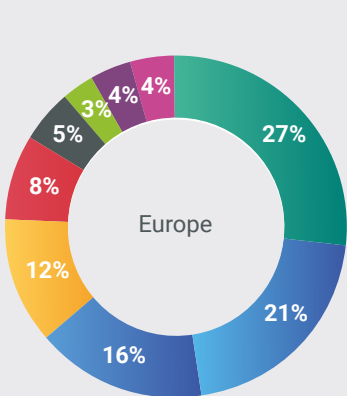
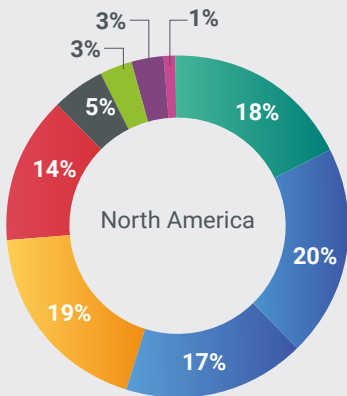
Career Prospects | Sports Masters Graduates

Employment status six months after graduation



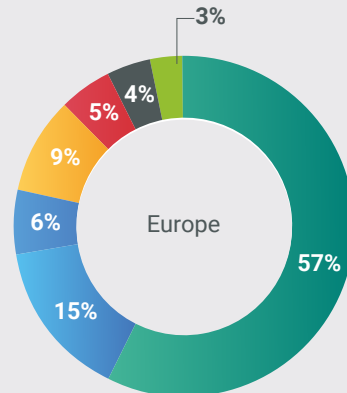
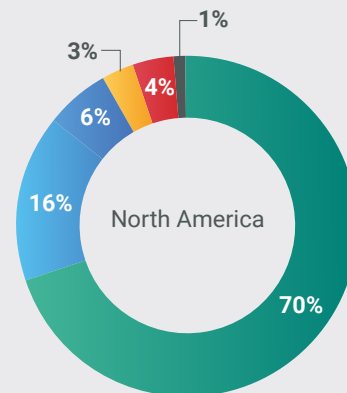
- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full or self employed outside the sports industry
- Internship within the sports industry that did not lead to a full time position in the same company
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor)
- Internship within the sports industry that led to a full time position with the same company
- Other
- Unemployed
- Self employment within the sports industry
- Enrolled on a full-time sports business-related PhD programme

Employment status before beginning course



- Full or self employed outside the sports industry
- Student - other course
- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Student - undergraduate sports course
- Part time employment
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor)
- Other
- Unemployed
- Self employment within the sports industry

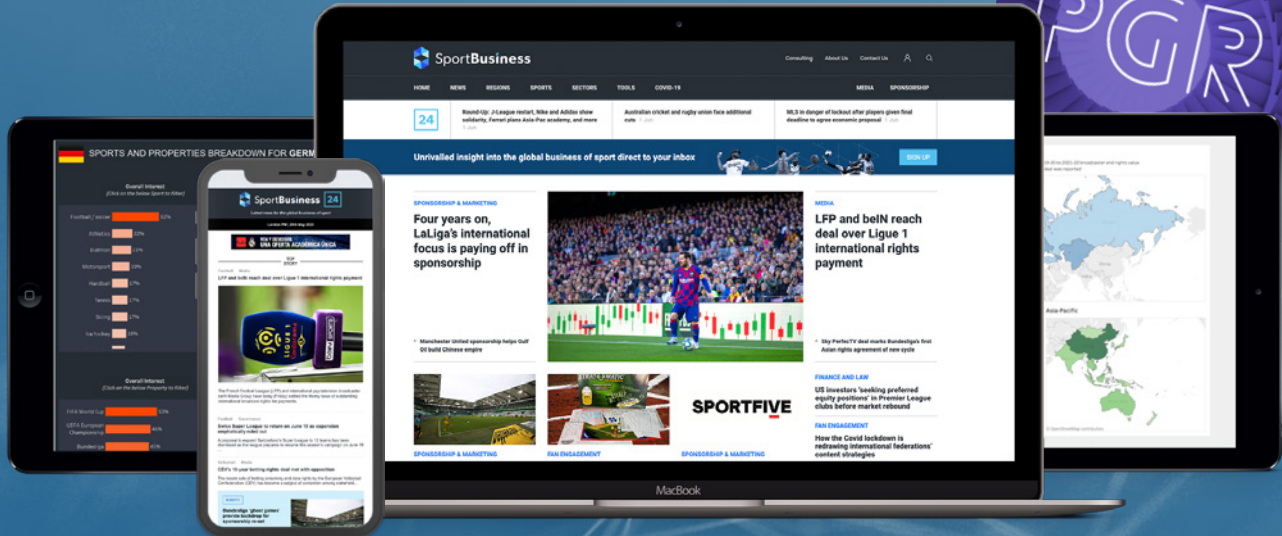
Current employment status



- Full-time employment in the sports industry
- Full or self employed outside the sports industry
- Full-time employment in a non sports industry company but connected to sport (e.g. the marketing department of a major sponsor)
- Self employment within the sports industry
- Other
- Unemployed
- Enrolled on a full-time sports business-related PhD programme



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Postgraduate Report 2020 the complete data

Rank	Programme provider	Programme	Class size 2016/17	Response rate	Course duration (months)	Work placement	Average age	Female students	Female teaching staff	International students	International teaching staff	Employment (at 6 months) score	Current employment score	Quality of teaching score	Job support score	Extra-curricular support	Alumni network score	Industry networking score	Value for money score	Career value score	Usefulness score	Peer review score	Total score
1	Ohio University	MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	29	93%	11-22	Yes	24	34%	50%	14%	20%	94.44	94.44	94.93	86.55	94.57	99.57	97.90	95.55	94.81	91.40	90.00	91.38
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	18	73%	12-21	Yes	26	33%	50%	14%	0%	91.18	82.35	97.25	91.76	98.62	100.00	100.00	98.62	89.41	85.99	100.00	90.40
3	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	The FIFA Master	30	53%	10	Yes	29	34%	22%	88%	34%	90.63	96.88	93.53	91.45	91.34	100.00	97.81	89.68	95.00	84.35	70.00	90.22
4	George Washington University	Masters in Sport Management	16	44%	16-24	Yes	26	45%	65%	30%	10%	92.86	100.00	96.66	100.00	93.57	100.00	100.00	93.31	91.43	78.06	30.00	87.83
5	Columbia University	MS Sports Management	71	38%	12-16	Yes	27	34%	19%	47%	3%	98.15	96.15	94.93	90.80	84.26	94.50	97.03	87.40	88.15	87.48	30.00	84.98
6	University of South Florida	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	24	83%	21	Yes	22	43%	50%	4%	25%	82.50	92.50	88.15	86.92	88.75	92.83	97.66	86.84	79.00	74.29	80.00	84.01
7	University of South Carolina	Masters of Sport and Entertainment Management	31	48%	15	Yes	25	36%	25%	14%	8%	83.33	93.33	97.00	83.88	88.33	89.89	92.44	94.00	89.33	90.87	50.00	83.14
8	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center	MBA in Sports Business	23	57%	21	Yes	28	20%	36%	12%	16%	92.31	92.31	86.39	81.02	79.62	93.45	87.43	86.27	86.15	84.16	60.00	82.92
9	AISTS	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	35	60%	15	Yes	29	34%	35%	95%	35%	87.50	95.24	86.02	87.37	80.71	92.61	91.42	86.98	89.52	75.74	30.00	82.87
10	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	20	70%	9	Yes	27	15%	12%	70%	20%	78.57	96.43	97.49	88.09	89.16	88.56	95.82	94.28	91.43	88.61	30.00	82.85
11	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	10	100%	22	Yes	24	80%	29%	10%	0%	95.00	90.00	97.66	88.00	95.00	98.83	97.66	97.66	88.00	83.81	30.00	82.62
12	Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for Sport Leadership	Master of Sport Leadership	41	76%	12-18	Yes	23	50%	25%	6%	25%	88.33	95.16	98.55	94.94	93.92	98.87	97.33	94.83	93.55	92.90	20.00	82.20
13	Russian International Olympic University	Master of Sport Administration	61	15%	10	Yes	30	45%	40%	33%	43%	94.44	100.00	96.10	72.96	100.00	93.70	78.71	94.80	93.33	82.80	20.00	81.56
14	San Diego State University	Sports MBA	28	68%	18	Yes	26	35%	25%	22%	33%	84.21	84.21	98.15	91.66	95.17	97.02	97.02	98.15	93.68	88.47	0.00	80.94
15	Coventry University	MSc Sport Management	37	49%	12	Yes	25	10%	30%	90%	50%	83.33	94.44	94.90	82.06	90.65	82.49	88.79	88.33	88.89	84.66	30.00	80.56
16	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport	MS in Sports Business	54	31%	16	Yes	26	33%	22%	54%	11%	91.67	95.83	90.55	76.94	80.83	93.18	95.75	80.42	81.67	79.46	10.00	79.85
17	Sheffield Hallam University	MSc Sport Business Management	29	62%	12	Yes	26	15%	50%	65%	30%	94.44	91.67	95.55	78.43	95.00	89.53	86.20	96.75	91.11	87.17	0.00	78.70
18	University of Liverpool Management School	Football Industries MBA	25	60%	12	No	28	8%	44%	14%	13%	90.00	93.33	91.00	72.34	81.67	94.78	91.88	89.77	86.67	75.24	40.00	77.96
19	University of Vigo	Master in Business Administration of Sport	20	40%	9	Yes	25	25%	35%	15%	5%	81.25	93.75	100	89.36	94.38	98.54	98.54	98.54	95.00	86.46	0.00	77.68
20	Washington State University	M.A. in Sport Management	13	62%	21	No	n/a	33%	25%	27%	37%	87.50	93.75	94.38	75.83	89.36	84.78	77.29	88.13	85.00	87.35	0.00	76.70
21	University of Stirling	MSc in Sport Management	33	33%	12	Yes	25	34%	43%	73%	57%	86.36	86.36	94.68	69.40	86.21	81.05	74.85	90.75	83.64	79.00	20.00	76.63
22	Ohio State University	Master of Science in Sport Management	26	58%	12-21	Yes	22	56%	50%	0%	0%	90.00	93.33	93.10	76.66	87.44	88.78	95.44	89.11	77.33	81.51	10.00	76.06
23	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	35	69%	17	Yes	25	40%	20%	20%	0%	73.91	80.43	87.29	80.62	89.44	86.05	92.43	89.50	71.67	72.92	30.00	75.82
24	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics in Sport Management	10	79%	16-24	Yes	24	60%	43%	10%	0%	86.36	68.18	98.94	91.20	92.26	92.43	95.91	95.91	70.91	77.38	0.00	75.43
25	Georgia State University	Masters of Science in Sport Administration	40	65%	24	Yes	24	50%	66%	11%	33%	88.46	88.46	89.35	80.13	85.38	88.78	84.37	87.95	74.62	76.33	0.00	75.09
26	Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF ESBS	Master in International Sports Management	17	65%	9	Yes	27	20%	30%	77%	25%	77.27	100.00	91.20	82.87	79.65	80.91	91.05	88.17	89.09	76.62	0.00	75.01
27	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino	International Master in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	25	84%	12	Yes	26	20%	5%	5%	5%	80.95	90.48	91.90	91.35	82.06	91.59	91.19	91.82	89.52	86.96	20.00	74.21
28	Temple University	MS in Sport Business	48	35%	24	Yes	23	48%	41%	30%	12%	88.24	73.53	84.41	76.96	71.27	85.09	85.29	72.45	65.88	72.83	30.00	73.81
29	University of New Haven	MS Sport Management	23	48%	12	Yes	24	45%	50%	15%	75%	77.27	85.00	96.81	82.42	76.21	85.00	89.09	80.45	74.55	72.73	0.00	73.77
30	Florida Atlantic University	MBA Sport Management	41	32%	23	Yes	24	31%	35%	13%	24%	84.62	79.17	94.74	80.25	88.71	83.08	85.90	81.28	78.46	78.94	0.00	73.03
31	University of Liverpool Management School	Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBA (THIMBA)	12	50%	24	No	38	73%	36%	20%	18%	91.67	83.33	80.57	76.40	81.40	85.00	86.95	82.22	66.67	82.54	0.00	72.89
32	University of Ottawa	Master of Human Kinetics Concentration in Sport Management	18	61%	12	Yes	23	45%	50%	0%	0%	77.27	95.45	89.69	65.61	75.30	77.57	80.15	86.05	83.64	75.22	20.00	72.02
33	Ball State University	Master of Sport Administration	17	47%	12-24	Yes	25	43%	17%	23%	14%	81.25	93.75	88.13	68.34	78.34	76.68	73.54	81.88	72.50	70.09	0.00	70.49
34	University of Tennessee	Master in Sport Management	29	72%	20	Yes	23	40%	22%	7%	22%	85.71	92.86	87.93	60.16	74.91	76.03	76.27	77.37	71.43	67.80	10.00	69.48
35	Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Master in Sport Business Strategies	36	22%	12	Yes	23	25%	35%	35%	0%	81.25	87.50	80.20	83.74	73.75	83.13	82.28	72.71	72.50	60.42	0.00	69.01
36	Seattle University	Masters in Sport Business Leadership	22	64%	22	Yes	24	46%	50%	5%	0%	76.92	83.33	91.06	73.69	75.94	82.26	79.76	77.02	68.57	68.54	0.00	68.71
37	University of Bayreuth	MBA Sport Management	42	21%	24	No	29	40%	25%	10%	25%	77.78	77.78	87.40	65.18	73.89	86.30	74.81	77.04	75.56	66.53	0.00	68.55
38	Johan Cruyff Institute	Master in Sport Management	152	21%	10-13	No	30	19%	25%	50%	12%	70.00	71.88	88.17	58.75	70.44	79.94	73.12	76.56	70.63	69.87	30.00	68.29
39	University College Dublin	MSc in Sport Management	20	45%	12	No	30	24%	50%	13%	10%	62.50	62.50	96.10	70.61	82.08	88.75	94.15	90.00	80.00	67.59	0.00	66.10
40	Deakin University	Master of Business (Sport Management)	102	10%	20	Yes	26	30%	30%	69%	30%	75.00	90.00	64.00	47.17	67.00	76.50	62.33	59.83	50.00	37.98	50.00	65.39

Top 15 North American Courses

Rank	Programme provider	Programme	Class size 2016/17	Response rate	Course duration (months)	Work placement	Average age	Female students	Female teaching staff	International students	International teaching staff	Employment (at 6 months) score	Current employment score	Quality of teaching score	Job support score	Extra-curricular support	Alumni network score	Industry networking score	Value for money score	Career value score	Usefulness score	Peer review score	Total score
1	Ohio University	MBA/MSA and Master of Sports Administration	29	93%	11-22	Yes	24	34%	50%	14%	20%	94.44	94.44	94.93	86.55	94.57	99.57	97.90	95.55	94.81	91.40	90.00	91.38
2	University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management	MBA/MS Sport Management and MS Sport Management	18	73%	12-21	Yes	26	33%	50%	14%	0%	91.18	82.35	97.25	91.76	98.62	100.00	100.00	98.62	89.41	85.99	100.00	90.40
3	George Washington University	Masters in Sport Management	16	44%	16-24	Yes	26	45%	65%	30%	10%	92.86	100.00	96.66	100.00	93.57	100.00	100.00	93.31	91.43	78.06	30.00	87.83
4	Columbia University	MS Sports Management	71	38%	12-16	Yes	27	34%	19%	47%	3%	98.15	96.15	94.93	90.80	84.26	94.50	97.03	87.40	88.15	87.48	30.00	84.98
5	University of South Florida	Vinik Sport & Entertainment Management Program	24	83%	21	Yes	22	43%	50%	4%	25%	82.50	92.50	88.15	86.92	88.75	92.83	97.66	86.84	79.00	74.29	80.00	84.01
6	University of South Carolina	Masters of Sport and Entertainment Management	31	48%	15	Yes	25	36%	25%	14%	8%	83.33	93.33	97.00	83.88	88.33	89.89	92.44	94.00	89.33	90.87	50.00	83.14
7	University of Oregon, Lundquist College of Business, Warsaw Sports Marketing Center	MBA in Sports Business	23	57%	21	Yes	28	20%	36%	12%	16%	92.31	92.31	86.39	81.02	79.62	93.45	87.43	86.27	86.15	84.16	60.00	82.92
8	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Masters of Sport Administration	10	100%	22	Yes	24	80%	29%	10%	0%	95.00	90.00	97.66	88.00	95.00	98.83	97.66	97.66	88.00	83.81	30.00	82.62
9	Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for Sport Leadership	Master of Sport Leadership	41	76%	12-18	Yes	23	50%	25%	6%	25%	88.33	95.16	98.55	94.94	93.92	98.87	97.33	94.83	93.55	92.90	20.00	82.20
10	San Diego State University	Sports MBA	28	68%	18	Yes	26	35%	25%	22%	33%	84.21	84.21	98.15	91.66	95.17	97.02	97.02	98.15	93.68	88.47	0.00	80.94
11	NYU Tisch Institute for Global Sport	MS in Sports Business	54	31%	16	Yes	26	33%	22%	54%	11%	91.67	95.83	90.55	76.94	80.83	93.18	95.75	80.42	81.67	79.46	10.00	79.85
12	Washington State University	M.A. in Sport Management	13	62%	21	No	n/a	33%	25%	27%	37%	87.50	93.75	94.38	75.83	89.36	84.78	77.29	88.13	85.00	87.35	0.00	76.70
13	Ohio State University	Master of Science in Sport Management	26	58%	12-21	Yes	22	56%	50%	0%	0%	90.00	93.33	93.10	76.66	87.44	88.78	95.44	89.11	77.33	81.51	10.00	76.06
14	University of Central Florida	DeVos Sport Business Management Program	35	69%	17	Yes	25	40%	20%	20%	0%	73.91	80.43	87.29	80.62	89.44	86.05	92.43	89.50	71.67	72.92	30.00	75.82
15	University of Windsor	Master of Human Kinetics in Sport Management	10	79%	16-24	Yes	24	60%	43%	10%	0%	86.36	68.18	98.94	91.20	92.26	92.43	95.91	95.91	70.91	77.38	0.00	75.43

Top 15 European Courses

1	The International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES)	The FIFA Master	30	53%	10	Yes	29	34%	22%	88%	34%	90.63	96.88	93.53	91.45	91.34	100.00	97.81	89.68	95.00	84.35	70.00	90.22
2	AISTS	Master of Advanced Studies in Sport Administration and Technology	35	60%	15	Yes	29	34%	35%	95%	35%	87.50	95.24	86.02	87.37	80.71	92.61	91.42	86.98	89.52	75.74	30.00	82.87
3	Real Madrid Graduate School	MBA in Sports Management	20	70%	9	Yes	27	15%	12%	70%	20%	78.57	96.43	97.49	88.09	89.16	88.56	95.82	94.28	91.43	88.61	30.00	82.85
4	Russian International Olympic University	Master of Sport Administration	61	15%	10	Yes	30	45%	40%	33%	43%	94.44	100.00	96.10	72.96	100.00	93.70	78.71	94.80	93.33	82.80	20.00	81.56
5	Coventry University	MSc Sport Management	37	49%	12	Yes	25	10%	30%	90%	50%	83.33	94.44	94.90	82.06	90.65	82.49	88.79	88.33	88.89	84.66	30.00	80.56
6	Sheffield Hallam University	MSc Sport Business Management	29	62%	12	Yes	26	15%	50%	65%	30%	94.44	91.67	95.55	78.43	95.00	89.53	86.20	96.75	91.11	87.17	0.00	78.70
7	University of Liverpool Management School	Football Industries MBA	25	60%	12	No	28	8%	44%	14%	13%	90.00	93.33	91.00	72.34	81.67	94.78	91.88	89.77	86.67	75.24	40.00	77.96
8	University of Vigo	Master in Business Administration of Sport	20	40%	9	Yes	25	25%	35%	15%	5%	81.25	93.75	100	89.36	94.38	98.54	98.54	98.54	95.00	86.46	0.00	77.68
9	University of Stirling	MSc in Sport Management	33	33%	12	Yes	25	34%	43%	73%	57%	86.36	86.36	94.68	69.40	86.21	81.05	74.85	90.75	83.64	79.00	20.00	76.63
10	Centro Formación Fundación Valencia CF ESBS	Master in International Sports Management	17	65%	9	Yes	27	20%	30%	77%	25%	77.27	100.00	91.20	82.87	79.65	80.91	91.05	88.17	89.09	76.62	0.00	75.01
11	University of Parma - University of Republic of San Marino	International Master in Strategic Management of Sports Organisations, Events and Facilities	25	84%	12	Yes	26	20%	5%	5%	5%	80.95	90.48	91.90	91.35	82.06	91.59	91.19	91.82	89.52	86.96	20.00	74.21
12	University of Liverpool Management School	Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBA (THIMBA)	12	50%	24	No	38	73%	36%	20%	18%	91.67	83.33	80.57	76.40	81.40	85.00	86.95	82.22	66.67	82.54	0.00	72.89
13	Ca' Foscari University of Venice	Master in Sport Business Strategies	36	22%	12	Yes	23	25%	35%	35%	0%	81.25	87.50	80.20	83.74	73.75	83.13	82.28	72.71	72.50	60.42	0.00	69.01
14	University of Bayreuth	MBA Sport Management	42	21%	24	No	29	40%	25%	10%	25%	77.78	77.78	87.40	65.18	73.89	86.30	74.81	77.04	75.56	66.53	0.00	68.55
15	Johan Cruyff Institute	Master in Sport Management	152	21%	10-13	No	30	19%	25%	50%	12%	70.00	71.88	88.17	58.75	70.44	79.94	73.12	76.56	70.63	69.87	30.00	68.29

Online programmes

1	Ohio University	Professional Master of Sports Administration	26	38%	21	No	30	32%	55%	0%	9%	95.00	90.00	98.83	93.16	92.17	94.33	94.33	95.50	84.00	82.98	90.00	87.35
2	Unisport Management School	MBA Sports Management	40	20%	13	No	28	27%	20%	32%	5%	62.50	64.29	76.25	51.25	64.56	71.04	63.75	62.09	50.00	51.93	0.00	53.84

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Faculty Spotlights

Danny Morrison | *past president of the Carolina Panthers*

Susan O'Malley | *first female president of a professional sport franchise*

Stephen Shapiro | *editor of Sport Marketing Quarterly*

Sporty Jeralds | *consultant and former manager of the Charlotte Coliseum*

Todd Koesters | *past VP of marketing and sales for Churchill Downs Entertainment Group*

Khalid Ballouli | *president-elect of the Sport Marketing Association*

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Danny Morrison



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