Sport Management Curricular Evaluation and Needs Assessment: A Multifaceted Approach

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This study specifically determined (a) employer expectations of sport managers, (b) employer evaluation of educational sport management programs and curricula, (c) college/university faculty/student evaluation of components of existing sport management programs, and (d) the interrelationships among these groups. The results of this study identified the commonalities within and between business/agency groups and college/university faculty and students. Results of the business/agency needs assessment indicated major differences across settings for academic/experiential requirements, employment needs, workload distributions, and job evaluation criteria. Evaluation of the commonalities/differences provide indication for curricular planning. Also, differences were apparent between the curricular evaluations of the college/university faculty and business/agency personnel, suggesting the need to evaluate curricular content and determine where changes should/should not be made. There is support for the theoretical conjecture that one concentration will not meet the needs of personnel for all business/agency settings.

Sport has become America's 23rd largest industry with a 6.1% increase in the gross national sports product (GNSP), according to the Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates (WEFA) Group. The WEFA group has predicted a 4- to 5%- increase in the GNSP for 1988 to an estimated $52 billion industry out of the total U.S. $4.52 trillion national economy (Sandomir, 1988). The scope of sport has been expanded to include recreation and fitness as well as sport activities in general (DeSensi & Koehler, 1989). As sport has assumed an increas-
ing importance in American life, the need for a new type of specialist, the sport manager, has become obvious (Parkhouse, 1978, 1987; Parkhouse & Ulrich, 1979; Parkhouse, Ulrich, & Soucie, 1982). Subsequently, sport management professional preparation programs have struggled to become established as a respected sport/business cross-discipline, and the need to more clearly define and characterize this emerging area of study has become evident (Mullin, 1980; Quain, 1984; Quain & Parks, 1986; Silva & Parkhouse, 1982).

For a variety of reasons, colleges and universities have responded to the demand for sport managers by developing and offering professional preparation programs in this area (Mullin, 1980; Parkhouse, 1987; Quain & Parks, 1986). Some physical education and recreation departments have added sport management programs to meet student demands. New professions emerge and evolve over time as demanded by population and environmental changes (Kjeldsen, 1980; Mullin, 1980). Whatever the reasons for establishing sport management programs, educators must accept the responsibility and become more accountable for the varied courses of study offered in our colleges and universities.

Based on the scope of sport management, Parkhouse and Ulrich (1979), Mullin (1984), Hatfield, Wrenn, and Bretting (1987), and Lambrecht (1987) have noted that due to the unique competencies required of each sport management setting, a single-track curriculum failed to meet the skills each setting required. However, Jamieson (1980, 1987) investigated competencies needed for recreational sports administration in military, municipal, and institutional settings and determined there were no significant competency differences among those settings. However, Jamieson (1980, 1987) did find significant differences in the relative importance of curricular areas based on the professional level of recreational sports personnel. The pursuit of adequate curricula to meet complex and varied sport management needs is not an easy quest and must be initiated with an examination of the workplace as well as existing programs.

Some critics may think sport management educators should be beyond the point of defining the nature of and the curriculum for sport management, especially with the publication of the NASPE Task Force Guidelines (Brassie, 1987). However, there are new sport management programs in the initial stages of development while others are undergoing refinement. Faculty in these programs should continue to define and restructure the curriculum. Since the struggle for academic acceptance is widespread, it is imperative that faculty accept the responsibility to examine the credibility of these programs. As this task is undertaken, college/university professionals must assess needs and evaluate programs from different perspectives, including employers, sport management academicians, and students. The breadth of this study encompasses these three perspectives.

The scope of the present study included over 1,000 employers from 14 categories of business/agency settings (see list of definitions), approximately 80 faculty leaders of sport management programs in colleges/universities, and approximately 300 students majoring in sport management from selected universities. This work is not a proposed curriculum model; however, results from this study should contribute to the development of such a paradigm. Thus the review of the literature follows the line of curriculum content/evaluation/development.
Curricular Evaluation

 Definitions

Sport Management includes any combination of skills related to planning, organizing, directing, controlling, budgeting, leading, and evaluating within the context of an organization or department whose primary product or service is related to sport and/or physical activity.

Sport Management Categories

Agencies—Nonprofit organizations with the primary focus of providing recreation facilities, activities, and/or programs for its members or clientele or for the benefit of the community.
- Local government units—Agencies created to meet the demands for specific types of recreation/leisure opportunities in cities, counties, and other special districts (local park and recreation departments).
- Voluntary agencies—Nonprofit organizations supported primarily by membership fees and/or community funds that develop, implement, or manage recreation/sport programs and/or facilities (youth organizations, churches).
- Corporations/companies—businesses having an organized fitness and/or sports program and/or facility as an employee benefit (oil companies, hospitals, insurance companies, banks).

Facilities—The management of a profit making sports/events facility for spectator consumption (dome facilities, arenas, stadia, coliseums, racetracks).

Hostelries
- Resort—A profit oriented full-service hostelry that provides area related programs or facilities for leisure pursuits; provides at least one of the following: sun, water, mountains, snow, serenity, sport, and fitness activities.
- Hotel—A profit oriented full-service hostelry that provides a place for temporary lodging and provides health and leisure facilities and programs.

Intramural/sport clubs—Planning, organizing, directing, controlling, budgeting, and staffing programs at the school/college/university level; associated with recreational/competitive sport programs oriented to the participant rather than primarily the spectator.

Private sport clubs—An organization providing exclusive opportunities in sport/fitness; may be supported by private memberships or by funds from the parent company (country clubs, executive fitness centers, health, golf, or tennis clubs).

Professional sport—An enterprise concerned with spectator consumption; also concerned with player management as well as the planning and management of specific sport events; uses marketing and promotional approach to sell admissions to events (professional sport teams, managers, coaches, owners, public relations personnel).

Retail sales—The management, marketing, promotion, and sales of sport equipment and clothing appropriate for consumer consumption (sporting goods stores, mail order companies).

School/college/university athletics—An enterprise such as a varsity team, individuals, and programs associated with interscholastic and/or intercollegiate competition, player

management, and the planning and promoting of such events (athletic directors, administrators, coaches, sports information directors, promotions directors, managers, facilities managers).

Sport businesses—A profit oriented organization, usually based on open memberships (transient and local), which provides opportunities for the consumer in sport and fitness; concerned with profit/loss income (sport clubs, fitness centers, racquet clubs, spas, hotel and airport clubs).

Sport management services—An organization or company associated with the promotion and/or management of athletes and/or sport events.

Sport marketing/merchandizing—The marketing and distribution by manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers of sport related equipment and clothing to amateur and professional teams and individuals; includes sales, advertising, promotion, research, and marketing management.

Sport organizations—An administrative and functional structure for professional and amateur sport. An organizing body associated with the controlling, planning, and organizing of events for various levels of sport participation; also responsible for the development and dissemination of information germane to specific sports (USLTA, ASA), national sport associations (NCAA, AAU), professional sport associations (NFL, NHL, NBA), and sport conferences/divisions (SEC, Dixie, Southwest, Big Ten).

Travel/eruise—A profit oriented full-service hostelry with programs and facilities for leisure pursuit that provides transportation via water to places of interest.

Review of Literature

As frequently stated in the literature, the lack of empirical evidence as to the nature of the field of sport management is acknowledged (Parkhouse & Ulrich, 1979; Parks & Quain, 1986; Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1982; Zeigler, 1979) and has motivated us to pursue this study. In addition to the present study, Parkhouse (1980), Parkhouse and Ulrich (1979), Ulrich and Parkhouse (1979, 1982), Parks and Quain (1986), and Quain and Parks (1986) have gathered empirical evidence regarding the nature of sport management that subsequently provided suggestions for future research directions in this field.

In the 1980 study, Parkhouse examined the current direction of graduate study in sport management. She gleaned information from those who employed graduates of sport management programs as to whether the competencies acquired from this type of preparation adequately prepared students to meet the requirements of the job. Another phase of the study investigated data on applicants, job demand, and job placement. Results of this study revealed that (a) programs were inbred, (b) physical education professional preparation courses accounted for most of the academic experiences, (c) practitioners preferred a business related emphasis, and (d) employers were dissatisfied with current preparation. In addition, Parkhouse (1980) concluded that curricula in sport management should meet the needs of a variety of specific sport related occupations.

Again, in a 1982 study by Ulrich and Parkhouse, it was noted that no one track of curricular offerings satisfied all sport management occupational needs.
Ulrich and Parkhouse’s 1982 work utilized an alumni-based evaluation model for curriculum design in order to review the work demands of graduates of sport management programs. This model relied on the assessment of curricula by alumni in addition to performance ratings of employees. The measures of satisfaction by alumni were placed in a regression model to identify the components of curricula that would lead to increased work performance and satisfaction.

Questionnaires sought responses regarding (a) assessment of satisfaction with graduate training in sport management, (b) assessment of the applicability of courses available during graduate training, and (c) assessment of alumni’s work satisfaction. Results also revealed that the alumni of graduate level sport management programs chose the internship and public relations, communications, management principles, and athletic administration courses as the most applicable of the courses offered (Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1982). Parks and Quain (1986) noted that since the sport management setting is becoming more complex, curricula must also become more flexible to meet the needs of graduates of these programs.

In their survey, Quain and Parks (1986) determined projected vacancy rates in sport management careers as well as professional competencies within the categories of fitness, promotion, marketing, management, sport, and aquatics. It was noted that sport management job opportunities were available for well prepared individuals (Quain & Parks, 1986). In addition, Parks and Quain (1986) explored curriculum content, reporting that across the six career categories utilized in their study, management, interpersonal communication, public relations, and budgeting were among the top 10 choices of general content areas for study. These findings supported the work completed by Ulrich and Parkhouse (1982).

In a recent study, Parkhouse (1987) examined 83 institutions of higher education regarding status of undergraduate and graduate sport management curricula. Her study provided empirical evidence to support what sport management professionals have conjectured, that (a) there is a proliferation of sport management programs, and (b) the quality of some of these programs is suspect. Parkhouse offered eight recommendations to improve the quality of professional preparation in sport management, one being to “utilize external sources in program development and evaluation [and that] the opinions of active practitioners have been largely unexplored” (Parkhouse, 1987, p. 113). In addition to the other research citations that follow, the present study met these recommendations, as the curricular evaluation and needs assessment of active practitioners in all categories were utilized as external sources.

As in the previously mentioned Jamieson (1980) research, Jennings (1984), using the Jamieson Recreational Sports Competency Analysis, determined entry level competencies for recreational sports personnel based on the responses from physical education and recreation departments in colleges/universities. According to Jennings, there were significant differences between physical education and recreation educators when contrasted with recreational sports practitioners in regard to their respective views on needed competencies in the recreational sports field. Ellard (1984) completed a competency analysis of managers of commercial recreational sport enterprises and, through cluster analysis, grouped competencies into five categories: business procedures, resource management, personnel management, planning and evaluation, and programming techniques. Although the practitioners’ viewpoints were incorporated into the works cited
above, each of these researchers—Jamieson (1980), Jennings (1984), and Ellard (1984)—examined one facet of sport management (i.e., recreational sports) rather than the broad spectrum of sport management.

In addition to the recreational sports studies, a few studies have been conducted in other settings. Lambrecht (1987) identified the competencies needed to manage athletic clubs of various sizes and found a difference in the competencies needed for managing large sport/athletic clubs versus smaller clubs. An analysis and comparison of the importance of job responsibilities, rather than competencies, was made between general managers of professional sport and athletic directors of NCAA Division I-A football programs. Labor relations and personnel evaluations were rated as most important by the general managers, while the athletic directors identified marketing, financial management, administration, and public relations as most important (Hatfield et al., 1987).

Although Parkhouse indicated that the practitioners' perspectives have largely been ignored, Jamieson (1980, 1987) and Jennings (1984) both surveyed recreational sports practitioners to determine competencies for various recreational settings, and Hatfield et al. (1987) and Lambrecht (1987) investigated the athletic/professional sport and athletic club settings, respectively. Given that there have been only these few field studies, information from practitioners within the myriad of sport management settings has been neglected.

**Procedures**

The present study incorporated needs assessment from employers in business/agency categories that employ sport managers. This series of studies was designed to contribute to the body of knowledge in sport management and to the theoretical basis for sport management programs. This work specifically determined (a) employer expectations of sport managers, (b) employer evaluation of educational sport management programs and curricula from diverse, sport-related, occupational perspectives, (c) college/university faculty identification and evaluation of existing components of sport management programs and curricula, (d) student career objectives and program evaluation, and (e) the interrelationships among these components. Initially, 14 occupational categories of sport management were designated and defined (see list of definitions).

Respondents for the three surveys included random selection of employers within the 14 categories of businesses and agencies with sport related programs, university faculty responsible for all known sport management programs, and undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in selected sport management programs. The sample for the study included over 1,000 employers with stratification across the 14 business/agency categories and across the nation using the AAHPERD districts as well as all colleges/universities known to offer sport management programs. There was a return rate of approximately 70% from both samples of these two components of the study. Although a proportionally smaller number of colleges/universities agreed to participate in the student evaluation component of the study, there was consistency from the approximately 300 student responses across these colleges/universities for undergraduate and graduate programs. The interrelationships among the perspectives of business/agency personnel, college/university faculty, and student majors concerning the nature of programs, degrees, and positions were also determined.
Business/Agency Needs Assessment

In order to exemplify the scope of differences across the business/agency groups, the following were selected for evaluation in this part of the study: college/university intramural/sport clubs, private sport clubs, college/university athletics, professional sport, local government agencies, and voluntary agencies. The theoretical frame of reference for comparing and contrasting these six sport management categories was based on the concepts that each pair provided similar services but in different settings, that is, private sport clubs versus college/university intramural/sport clubs; professional sport versus college/university athletics (Beitel, Kelley, DeSensi, & Blanton, 1989); and local government agencies versus voluntary agencies (Blanton, Beitel, DeSensi, & Kelley, 1988). In addition, the three pairs represented different perspectives (entertainment vs. participation), different funding (public vs. private), and different objectives (services vs. profit).

Findings of the needs assessment provided evidence among the diverse business/agency categories noting the relative degree of importance of criteria for hiring sport management personnel, criteria for on-the-job success, types of management/leadership tasks and workload, and specific certifications and training. The Kruskall-Wallis analysis of variance or Mann-Whitney U nonparametric statistics were used to determine between-group differences; the Spearman rank order correlation technique was used where appropriate to determine the degree of relationship; and .05 was established as the alpha criterion (Joyner, 1985; Siegel, 1956). Cross-tabulation procedures were used to determine the percent of respondents from each respective category (Saffer, 1985).

Criteria for Hiring

The basis for the results of degree of importance of eight criteria for both hiring and on-the-job success was a 5-point Likert response of very important, important, neutral, unimportant, or very unimportant. The percent of respondents from each business/agency setting was calculated to indicate the relative degree of importance of each criterion for hiring (Figure 1). Several key points can be made here. First, more than 60% of the respondents thought that all eight criteria were important considerations for hiring sport management personnel. Second, communication skills and personality were considered to be important criteria for hiring by all five of the six professional settings, the exception being from voluntary agency personnel. And third, leadership was considered important as a criterion for hiring by all the respondents of four of the six categories: intramural/sport clubs, college/university athletics (Kelley, DeSensi, Blanton, & Beitel, 1988), and local government and voluntary agencies (Blanton et al., 1988).

However, it is important to look within each business/agency to contrast the relative order of importance of the criteria for hiring (DeSensi, Kelley, Beitel, & Blanton, 1988). For example, when intramural/sport clubs and private sport clubs were contrasted (Figure 1a), leadership had a higher ranking for hiring in the former than in private sport clubs whereas public relations and management skills had lower rankings by intramural/sport clubs. In the comparison of college/university athletics and professional sport (Figure 1b), leadership skills and management skills elicited inverse relationships. Between the two agency categories (Figure 1c), public relations (PR) was ranked as an important hiring
Figure 1 — Significant business/agency category difference ($p<.05$) for the order of percent of respondents regarding the criteria that are important for hiring sport management personnel.
criterion by all of the local government agency respondents, in contrast to 7% of the voluntary agency respondents. Three other major distinctions of criteria for hiring between the two agencies were general education, management skills, and personal appearance.

**Criteria for On-the-Job Success**

All of the respondents from five of the six business/agency categories and 98% of those from the voluntary agencies indicated that communication skills were important for success on the job (Figure 2). Except for this commonality, there were major distinctions between businesses and agencies with different settings concerning the relative rank order of importance of criteria for on-the-job success between the paired settings.

There was a significant negative relationship in the order between respondents from college/university intramural/sports clubs and private sport clubs (Figure 2a). The contrast between responses from college/university athletic personnel and professional sport personnel indicated major distinctions in the importance for the criteria of personal appearance, public relations, work stamina, and general education (Figure 2b). The two agency categories had similar percentages of respondents indicating that seven of the eight criteria were important: leadership, communication, management, work stamina, public relations, personality, and general education (Figure 2c). The one distinction between the two agencies was that approximately 90% of the voluntary agency respondents indicated that personal appearance was an important criterion for on-the-job success while only approximately 15% of the local government agency respondents felt it was important.

**Within Business/Agency Contrast**

The order of importance of the criteria for hiring (Figure 1) were contrasted with those for on-the-job success (Figure 2) for each business/agency. Within the intramural/sport club, college/university athletics, and local government agency settings, the comparison of criteria for hiring to the respective criteria for on-the-job success produced similar patterns of relative importance.

In contrast, the other three business/agency categories produced marked differences between some of these criteria. Based on the responses of the private sport club personnel, (a) management skills, appearance, and general education were considered more important for on-the-job success than for hiring; (b) public relations seemed to be more important for hiring than for on-the-job success; and (c) communication skills, work stamina, leadership, and personality retained approximately the same position in the patterns. The respondents from the professional sport setting produced a similar pattern of the relative importance of criteria for hiring versus on-the-job success, but there were discrepancies of 5 to 10 percentage points in some of the criteria; the greater differences concerned the importance of leadership and general education. In comparison, the distinctions were more pronounced between the relative importance of criteria for hiring and on-the-job success for the voluntary agency category. Seven criteria were considered important for on-the-job success by 85 to 100% of the respondents, with public relations, general education, appearance, and work stamina being perceived by more respondents as important for on-the-job success than for hiring.
Figure 2 — Significant business/agency category difference ($p<.05$) for the order of percent of respondents regarding the criteria that are important for on-the-job success of sport management personnel.
Based on the differences between the criteria for hiring (Figure 1) and on-the-job success (Figure 2) within the business/agency categories, curriculum theorists must design and incorporate learning experiences that will enable students to be hired in a variety of sport settings as well as to provide them with the background to develop job skills. Based on the Hatfield et al. (1987) findings that labor relations and personnel evaluations were the most important job responsibilities of general managers in professional sport, it seems as though the management/administrative level as well as the specific sport setting may determine the competencies/skills that are needed. Jamieson (1980) supported the notion that level of employment is an important variable when determining needs or competencies. Thus, while the development of specific skills enables students to acquire sport management positions, once employed, students must have an adequate background and foundation that will enable them to develop additional skills to enhance both their success on the job and their chance for advancement.

**Workload Distribution**

The basis for the results in percent of workload for management tasks were open-ended questions indicating the percent of workload across all business/agency categories for a total of eight tasks and an opportunity to indicate other tasks. Most responses across business/agency categories consistently fell into the following specified management tasks and workload: (a) communicating and directing accounted for 20–25% of the workload, (b) planning and organizing comprised 10–20% of the workload, and (c) evaluating, staffing, budgeting, and controlling contributed to 5–10% of the workload. Other identified tasks included as component parts of the workload were public relations, teaching, sales, fund-raising, lobbying, and facility supervision.

Once again, communication skills were perceived to be critical, as at least 20–25% of the workload required these skills. In addition, other tasks such as teaching, selling, evaluating, and lobbying obviously require effective communication skills. Quain and Parks (1986) found that effective communication (i.e., writing and public speaking) skills were identified as being of paramount importance to sport promotions and sport marketing as well as to management in general. Throughout the present study, communication skills were identified as being of paramount importance in all business/agency categories. In fact, effective communication skills were the only course/curricular areas that personnel from all business/agency categories identified as being either first or second in importance when determining criteria for hiring and for on-the-job success.

**Certification Requirements**

Business/agency sport management respondents indicated that certain certifications were expected for sport management employees across all categories (Figure 3). There was an extreme range in terms of how each business/agency viewed which certifications were the most important. In contrasting intramural/sport clubs and private sport clubs, there was almost an inverse relationship of the rank orders of certification expectations (Figure 3a). In college/university athletics and in professional sport settings, support for certifications were similar but not strong (i.e., indicated by 50% or less of the respondents) (Figure 3b). The one place the two groups differed was that about half of the professional sport respondents
Figure 3 — Significant difference ($p<.05$) of the order of percent of respondents from six business/agency categories regarding certification expectations for sport management personnel in each respective setting.
suggested American College of Sports Medicine certifications were expected whereas only about 12% of the college/university athletics respondents concurred (Figure 3b). In comparing the certification expectations of local government agencies with those of voluntary agencies (Figure 3c), the patterns in general were similar. However, life saving and YMCA certifications were expected by more voluntary agencies than local government agencies.

It is obvious that different employment categories have different certification requirements/needs. This is an important consideration for program planners, and specific certifications could be incorporated into the present course offerings with relatively minor modifications. Academic advisors must become cognizant of certification requirements/needs in specific sport management settings when working with students who are formulating career goals.

**Business/Agency Curricular Evaluation**

Results of the program evaluations from the business/agency categories indicated the amounts or degree of importance of (a) degree requirements, (b) importance of sport/leisure study areas, (c) emphasis on program areas within the curriculum, (d) management/leadership task related courses, and (e) job related experiences/practica/internships.

**Degree Requirements**

In examining the required degree levels for personnel in business/agency categories (Figure 4), we found personnel holding all three degree levels employed in sport management positions within the business/agency settings. At least 50% of the respondents in the intramural/sport clubs (Figure 4a), college/university athletics (Figure 4b), and voluntary agencies (Figure 4c) indicated that a bachelor’s degree was required for up to five sport management positions in their setting. In contrast, 84% of the respondents in the intramural/sport club settings indicated that a master’s degree in sport management (Figure 4a) was required. Over 40% of college/university athletics also indicated that a master’s degree was required for up to 10 positions (Figure 4b). Doctoral degrees were required for some sport management positions, as indicated by 18% of the professionals in intramural/sport clubs, 12% in college/university athletics, 12% in professional sport, and 20% in local government agencies. The results of the present study supported the Hatfield et al. (1987) order, but not the same percentages, of types of degrees for both college/university athletic directors and general managers within professional sport.

The results of the analysis of required/preferred sport management major/minor for full-time employment in sport management business/ agencies pointed to a significant ($p<.05$) difference in the rank order (Figure 5). In five of the six business agency categories, the largest percentage of respondents indicated they preferred a sport management major: 70% from local government agencies, 69% from college/university athletics, 52% from intramural/sport clubs, 50% from private sport clubs, and 47% from professional sport (Figure 5).

These results indicated that respondents from a wide variety of sport settings recognized the need for qualified sport managers to assume specific responsibilities for this multimillion-dollar industry. This supports and extends the premise of Quain and Parks (1986) that there are positions, particularly in fitness
Figure 4 — Significant business/agency difference ($p < .05$) for percent of respondents regarding required degree levels for sport management personnel in the specific business/agency settings.
Figure 5 — Significant business/agency difference ($p<.05$) for the relative order of importance of a required or preferred sport management major or minor.
management, sport marketing, and sport management, for well-trained, highly qualified graduates from sport management programs.

**Curricular Areas**

Businesses and agencies were asked to evaluate 23 curricular areas and/or courses important for prospective employees in their particular setting. Based upon a Likert response to 23 courses or curricular areas, the least important courses and/or curricular areas generated very moderate responses and the majority of these least important responses were in the neutral range. However, 90% or more of the respondents thought that within each respective business/agency setting the five most important courses and/or curricular areas were as follows:

1. In intramural/sport club settings—communication, administration, policy development, program planning, and supervision.
2. In private sport club settings—communication, finance, marketing, program planning, and public relations.
3. In college/university athletic settings—administration, public relations, leadership, organization/management and personnel management, and communication.
4. In professional sport settings—communication, computer utilization, motor/sport skills, budgeting, and finance.
5. In local government agency settings—budgeting, communication, finance, leadership, and personnel management.
6. In voluntary agency settings—program management, program planning, leadership, communication, and budgeting.

This supported the general perspective of Jamieson (1980) for recreational sports professionals and of Hatfield et al. (1987) for athletic and professional sport personnel. Specifically, Jamieson determined that for military, municipal, and institutional settings there were significantly different curricular needs for business procedures, communications, facility/maintenance, governance, legality, management techniques, officiating, philosophy, programming techniques, research, safety/accident prevention, and science. Within the college/university athletic setting for NCAA Division I-A institutions (Hatfield et al., 1987), athletic directors identified athletic administration, speech communication, public relations, marketing, and business management as the most important curricular areas. In contrast, the Hatfield et al. (1987) study also indicated that general managers of professional sport teams emphasized the curricular areas of business and sport law, public relations, speech communication, labor relations, and marketing as being important for career preparation. Thus, based on the literature and the results of the present study, sport management employers in different settings perceive different curricular areas as important based on their own sport management setting.

The results suggest that curriculum designers should examine employer expectations when implementing sport management programs or revising current courses. It is not economically feasible to have separate courses and concentrations for each sport setting, but it is possible to incorporate specific examples from a variety of sport settings. Also, it is feasible to encourage projects and writing assignments within the present course structure that would encompass
different types of sport management jobs. In summary, the curricular area of communication was ranked very important by 95% of all respondents, suggesting that effective communication skills of speaking and writing should be encouraged in all courses.

**Relative Importance of Leisure Study Areas**

The level of importance for sport/leisure study areas identified on the survey were evaluated with Likert responses. Again, across business/agency categories, differences regarding the importance of particular study areas occurred in terms of uniqueness of the setting (Figure 6). Private sport club personnel (Figure 6a) called for major strength in three areas: current issues in sport, sociology of sport, and philosophy of sport. Although 60–75% of the respondents in intramural sport clubs felt that current issues in sport, psychology of sport, and philosophy of leisure/recreation were important, the support was not as strong as in the private sport club category (Figure 6a). For local government and voluntary agency responses, over 50% of the responses from voluntary agencies indicated that all curricular areas were important to have except history of sport or philosophy of leisure and recreation (Figure 6c).

Some 70% of the college/university athletic professionals placed an importance on current issues in sport while 50–55% placed an importance on psychology of sport and philosophy of sport (Figure 6b). In contrast, professional sport respondents had the greatest support for courses in sociology of sport and history of sport. Also, more than 60% of them indicated that current issues in sport, psychology of sport, and philosophy of sport were important (Figure 6b). Fifty percent of the local government respondents agreed that history of sport was less important, but they identified philosophy of leisure and recreation as the most important sport study area for prospective employees in local government agencies.

Hatfield et al. (1987) found that general managers in professional sport identified technical evaluation and training of athletes as important. This seems to imply that, although exercise and sport science courses were not directly identified, courses in biomechanics, exercise physiology, and sport psychology are important curricular considerations. Jamieson (1980) identified philosophy as an area for curricular offerings necessary for recreational sports personnel in military, municipal, and institutional settings. General managers in professional sports and college/university athletic directors were “highly concerned with the regulation of ethical conduct within their programs” (Hatfield et al., 1987, p. 143), which suggests a need for philosophy of sport in the course of study for sport managers in these settings.

In this age of disparity in sport at the professional and collegiate levels, drug abuse, and continued racial and sex discrimination (DeSensi & Koehler, 1989), it behooves all sport management academicians to prepare students for the social responsibilities of managing the sport enterprise. This preparation may need to include coursework in history/philosophy of sport and leisure as well as courses in sociocultural aspects of sport and leisure. While it is important to examine the uniqueness of specific businesses and agencies, it is also important to remember that individuals in sport management preparation need a theoretical foundation upon which to base ethical/moral decisions and to be able to exercise sound social responsibility.
Figure 6 — Significant difference ($p<.05$) in the relative importance of sport/leisure study areas as part of the curriculum for sport management majors as indicated by the respondents from each business/agency category.
Nature of Work Related Experiences

The nature of the work experiences for best preparation of sport management majors for business/agency positions was examined. Across all business/agency categories, personnel identified work related experiences as the most important type of experience beyond the college curriculum. Extracurricular activities were also expressed as being an important experience for potential sport managers.

The type of work related experiences expected were summarized into three categories. First, respondents identified the following administrative tasks as being important work experiences: personnel management, organization and planning, budgeting, public relations, computer applications, marketing, sales, facility management, research, and writing reports. Second, selected programming experiences cited were scheduling, officiating, general programming, planning tournaments, informal recreation experience, fitness testing, instructing, and organizing special events. Third, business/agency personnel in all categories expected prospective employees to have work related experiences unique to each business or agency setting in which the prospective employee was interested (e.g., personnel in private sport clubs expected prospective employees to have work related experiences in a private club setting).

Practica/Internship Experiences

Within the business/agency categories, personnel indicated that both practica and internship experiences were very important (Figure 7). In some business/agency categories, practica were indicated as more important than internships, while in others it was the reverse. There seemed to be no clear pattern in terms of which was more important across business/agency categories. Respondents expressed the view that sport management is a unique area of study and that knowledge in all aspects of sport is important. It was noted that generic management skills alone are insufficient preparation for the sport manager and that the practica/internship experience is important in order to better understand the sport management setting. Finally, respondents in all business/agency categories deemed it imperative that students have the experience of applying business/management theory in practice.

College and University Curricular Evaluation

This portion of the article focuses on the responses from professional colleagues at colleges and universities from across the country. Student opinions and perceptions based on data from student responses to questionnaires were incorporated when appropriate.

Part of the faculty questionnaire dealt with the dissemination of the educational philosophy and/or program objectives for the graduate and undergraduate programs. Approximately half of the reporting institutions indicated that this information was formulated and distributed in written form, and of those, about three fourths indicated that the information was conveyed to students through class materials. Forty percent disseminated the information through the college/university catalog and 20% put the information in student handbooks. One third of the respondents indicated that course check-sheets were used to disseminate program philosophy and objectives.
Figure 7 — Significant difference ($p<.05$) in the relative importance of sport/leisure study areas as part of the curriculum for sport management majors as indicated by the respondents from each business/agency category.
Apparently, 50% of the institutions have not developed a program philosophy, and in many instances the absence of a written program philosophy and a limited distribution process are weaknesses in the system. Clearly defined program objectives must be developed and distinctions must be made between the purposes of undergraduate versus graduate education. The implications from the present study support the parallel conjectures for undergraduate and graduate professional preparation (Jamieson, 1980) regarding recreational sports personnel. Also, it is imperative that this information be disseminated to prospective students, current students, professional colleagues, and practicing sport managers.

One distinction between graduate and undergraduate education was in the area of research opportunities (Figure 8). However, no institution reported a thesis requirement for all sport management master’s students and only 40% identified a research project as a requirement. Subsequent to the completion of this survey, it was determined that one institution did add a thesis requirement for all master’s level sport management students.

![Figure 8](image)

Figure 8 — The relative degree and type of availability of research opportunities for graduate sport management majors based on college/university faculty respondents.

Of the graduate student respondents, 15% did not find the sport management coursework challenging while 26% indicated they felt as though people in general did not respect their major. As Quain and Parks (1986) have stated, we must “demand excellence in all aspects of professional preparation” (p. 19), and through excellence we will gain more respect for self and from others. The demand for excellence in the classroom should generate more respect for the sport management curriculum from students currently enrolled in the major as well as from professional colleagues. The opportunity for graduate students to develop research skills and the assurance of providing challenging programs and coursework should help eradicate the perception of lack of respect.

The program objectives for the graduate degree in sport management centered around the preparation of students with theoretical knowledge and prac-
tical skills that would enable them to assume midlevel sport management positions in schools, corporations, and agencies. The undergraduate program objectives were more diverse and ranged from the professional preparation of students for entry level sport management positions to helping students qualify for graduate programs in sport management. At least one graduate program limited the curricular offerings to the development of health/wellness program directors, while other programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels offered a variety of specializations. Athletic administration was the most frequently offered specialization at both levels, while tourism and leisure as a specialization was offered the least.

Of the faculty respondents, 27% indicated that a minor was required and 40% of these required the minor to be in business. If a minor was not required, 69% of the respondents required some type of specialization or concentration. The practica/internship experiences at both levels appeared to be the cornerstone for many of the programs represented in this study. Practica were required within 71 and 75% of the master’s and doctoral programs, respectively (Figure 9). The percentage for required practica experiences was the lowest, at 59%, for undergraduate students.

![Figure 9](image)

Figure 9 — The degree and type of availability of practica offerings within undergraduate and graduate curricula as reported by faculty responsible for sport management programs.

Almost 60% of the responding institutions offering doctoral programs required an internship (Figure 10). The percentage of institutions requiring undergraduate students to complete an internship falls between the master’s and doctoral program requirements, with 63% indicating that the internship was a requirement in their undergraduate programs. Evaluation of faculty respondents’ comments indicated that the purpose and objectives of the practica and internships had a common thread of providing opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations. One characteristic that distinguished the graduate
from the undergraduate internship experience was the opportunity to conduct research in a specific area of interest, such as organizational behavior.

The credit hours for practica/internships ranged from 0 at the graduate level to 15 quarter hours at the undergraduate level. As one might expect, the graduate credit hour requirements were much less defined than the carefully specified undergraduate requirements. Many respondents indicated that at the graduate level the work experience varied with each student, and number of hours and types of experiences should be determined by the student and the advisor, and should be based at least partially on each student’s career goals. Some respondents voiced strong opinions that the practica/internships should be offered only as remedial courses without credit for graduate students who were deficient in the applied areas. Clearly these respondents expected that graduate students should be designing and conducting research studies, and that work related experiences for credit should have been completed prior to enrolling in a graduate program.

Within undergraduate curricula, the trend seemed to be a gradual introduction to the workplace. Some respondents indicated that one or two practica experiences of 2 to 4 quarter hours were required as a prerequisite for the internship of 12–15 quarter hours. The undergraduate and graduate practica experiences were typically held on campus in athletic and intramural departments, ticket offices, sports information offices, and budget offices. Internships at both levels were provided in a variety of settings, both on and off campus, including pro sports, league offices, and voluntary agencies. The practica/internship experiences were the most frequently required courses.

Supervision of the practica/internships was reported as a major responsibility for the faculty of those programs/institutions that offer work-related experiences for credit (Figure 11). The results suggested that (a) all parties involved (e.g., student, on-site supervisor, and sport management faculty supervisors) must
have a clear understanding of responsibilities during the practicum/internship (Figure 11) and that (b) well-defined levels of responsibilities and expectations can help avoid problems. The findings supported the recommendations of the NASPE Sport Management Task Force that practica must be supervised and evaluated by qualified faculty members and that the recommended preference is for internships to also be supervised and evaluated by qualified faculty members (Brassie, 1987).

The practica and internship experiences were generally well received by the students. Specifically, 63% of the undergraduate and 78% of the graduate students indicated their practica were effective, while 58% of the undergraduate and 83% of the graduate students indicated their internship experience was effective. When asked what would have made the practica or internship more beneficial, students most frequently cited the need for more contact with faculty and the need to be more closely supervised by faculty and on-site personnel. Part of the students' responsibilities within the practica/internship experiences implied the need to consider whether students should be required to obtain liability insurance prior to enrolling in these work related experiences. According to the results of this study, the liability insurance requirement is almost nonexistent, as only 6% of the respondents indicated that their institutions require liability insurance during the practica and/or internship experiences. Thus students as well as faculty may be vulnerable due to lax requirements in this area.

Faculty respondents identified typical course offerings for graduate students in sport management (see below). Similar course titles were identified by Ulrich and Parkhouse in their 1982 study. Five of the top 15 courses identified by Ulrich and Parkhouse (1982) were communications related, such as sports writing and broadcast journalism. All of the business and agency categories in the present study identified communication skills as the first or second most important criteria for hiring and for on-the-job success. Following is a list of typical courses offered in sport management programs:

Figure 11 — Indication of the relative emphasis of responsibility for the supervision of practica/internships in the undergraduate/graduate curricula.
The undergraduate pattern of courses is similar to the graduate course requirements. One major distinction is that at the undergraduate level the word introduction is included frequently in course titles.

Several faculty respondents used this section regarding identification of course offerings to express opinions concerning the direction the sport management profession should take. Some felt that sport management should be offered only at the graduate level. There was an inconsistency within the responses regarding the use of sport in any course title: Some pointed out that the word sport should not be used in course titles directly related to business and/or management because they felt this diminishes the respect and credibility from colleagues in other disciplines; however, many others indicated the opposite and called for more sport-specific courses such as sport law and sport financing.

Similar comments regarding generic versus sport-specific courses were generated by the open-ended questions dealing with textbooks for graduate and undergraduate students. In alphabetical order, the most frequently mentioned texts for graduate students were Jackson, *Sport Administration*, Lewis and Appenzeller, *Successful Sport Management*, and Olsen, Hirsch, Breitenbach, and Saunders, *Administration of High School and Collegiate Athletic Programs*. For undergraduates the most frequently mentioned textbooks were (alphabetically) Chelladurai, *Sport Management: Macro Perspectives*, Daugherty and Bonanno, *Management Principles in Sport and Leisure Studies*, and Zeigler and Bowie, *Management Competency Development in Sport and Physical Education*.

The six journals most frequently recommended by the faculty respondents were *Athletic Business*, *Journal of Sport Management*, *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, *Athletic Administration*, *Club and Industry*, and *NIRSA Journal*. The initial issue of *Sport, inc.*, was published after this survey was completed and consequently this title was not mentioned by the respondents.

Approximately two-thirds of the faculty respondents indicated that students were encouraged to join professional organizations, yet almost three-fourths of
the students responded that they were not currently involved in professional organizations. The professional organizations the faculty felt were important for students were NASSM (North American Society for Sport Management), AAHPERD (American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), NIRSA (National Intramural and Recreational Sport Association), and AFB (Association of Fitness and Business).

**Summary**

In the business/agency needs assessment, it was determined that there were critical differences in hiring, on-the-job success, workload distribution, certification requirements, degree requirements, full-time/part-time employment needs, foundation coursework, sport/leisure studies coursework, and work related experiences among sport-specific sport management positions. The evidence suggested that a one-track curriculum will not meet the identified needs of all sport management positions.

The rank order of importance for some criteria for hiring change when these same criteria are used for determining on-the-job success characteristics. Thus it becomes important for students to gain sufficient generic skills that can be applied in specific settings or to be able to acquire expected skills on the job. However, in the open-ended portion of the curriculum evaluation section, employers and college/university personnel agreed that generic management skills alone were inadequate in the preparation of quality sport managers.

In addition, there was considerable conflict between what college/university faculty suggested as recommended degree levels and what business/agency personnel suggested as required degree levels. Several college/university respondents indicated that the bachelor's degree should not be offered in sport management; they felt that all sport management professional preparation programs should be at the master's level or higher. Business/agency respondents, on the other hand, indicated that the bachelor's degree was sufficient for certain positions.

Since there were differences in the expectations of sport managers in different settings, faculty members responsible for sport management programs should become aware of the various needs in a particular sport management setting and incorporate these into the course structure whenever possible. Although it is important to examine needs assessment across a wide spectrum of specific sport settings, as already stated, not all curricular decisions should be made solely on any one aspect (e.g., employer expectations or faculty/student demands). Naturally, sport-specific settings will generate specific needs, but it is unrealistic to expect colleges/universities to develop, implement, and staff 15–20 different tracks within sport management. What is important is for curriculum designers to be aware of specific expectations, incorporate these when appropriate, and keep in mind that curricular decisions should be made from a theoretical framework that includes information from a variety of sources. These differences identified through the needs assessment by employers from various business/agency perspectives contribute to the growing body of knowledge and expand the evidence regarding the minimum curricular requirements for quality sport management programs.
Recommendations

Quain and Parks (1986) called for a replication of the 1982 Ulrich and Parkhouse study that employed an alumni based model to examine the effectiveness of sport management programs. The present study, although not a replication of the 1982 study, does generate empirical evidence regarding program effectiveness through employers’ and faculty members’ determination of needs assessment and curricular evaluation. Based on this evidence, two recommendations are presented. First, college/university faculties need to improve the quality of sport management programs by (a) developing and disseminating program philosophy/objectives, (b) distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate programs by improving the quality of graduate courses and providing research opportunities for graduate students, (c) providing challenging coursework at undergraduate and graduate levels, and (d) encouraging students to join appropriate professional organizations. Second, accreditation standards should reflect the diversity of employment requirements across a wide range of sport management employment categories. Further, the responsibility of establishing a quality professional preparation program in sport management calls for continual evaluation and input from diverse perspectives in order to facilitate the development of the best professional sport management programs.

References


