

Sport Management Internships: Requirements and Policies

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine undergraduate sport management internship requirements and policies in the United States. The authors identified 290 institutions in the United States offering undergraduate programs in sport management using the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) website. Of those institutions, 195 met the criteria for the study and were emailed surveys. Seventy-two surveys were completed which accounted for a 36% return rate. The majority of undergraduate sport management internship programs are comprised of the following required elements: 11-12 credit hours, which equates to 200-300 contact hours taken in the senior year (one semester) that requires a prior field experience; written weekly reports by the interns, a special project, and two site supervisor evaluations are used to assess and evaluate student performance. Concerning the faculty role in internship supervision, 38% of respondents stated that they receive a one academic course release, regardless of how many interns are under their supervision. The current study suggests that sport management internship requirements and procedures vary between universities in the United States. The findings of this study paint a unique and evolving picture of the current state of sport management internship curriculum.

Keywords: Internship, Field Experience, Undergraduate Sport Management Programs

Sport management programs in the United States continue to gain popularity, recognition, and credibility in the nearly four decades since the first master's program at Ohio University in 1966 (Spahr & Wiegand, 2012; Stier, 1993).

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There are over 400 sport management programs at the undergraduate and graduate level recognized by the North American Society for Sport Management in the United States (NASSM, 2016). In the competitive work environment with fluctuating unemployment rates, people with experience and abilities are all vying for the same positions. It is important that graduating students have the opportunity to apply classroom theory to practical work experiences that will give them the advantage they need to start their careers. Practicum or volunteer experiences are important, but in today's competitive sport industry, they are not enough. Students need to go beyond the traditional classroom experiences and explore the field of sport through an unfiltered lens of a suitably organized and implemented internship experience as part of their graduation requirements.

Internships, one form of experiential learning, play a prominent role in the academic curriculum of sport management programs. Students in these programs are awarded varying degrees of academic credit for their participation in internships. The inclusion of internship requirements into the accreditation standards, and their placement within many sport management curriculums seem to be a strong endorsement of the educational importance of this form of learning. Numerous sport management programs rely heavily on internships to teach the knowledge and skills, which are deemed valuable in the sport marketplace (Chinomona & Surujlal, 2012; Foster & Dollar, 2010; Martin, 2012; Martin & Mathner 2012; Williams, 2003). The value of an internship lies in the opportunities provided, such as a) networking with professionals; b) the ability to develop professional talents and behaviors; c) the opportunity to develop, refine and acquire specific skills; d) assistance as they prepare for an entry-level position; and e) a bridge to eliminate the gap between theory and practice (Beggs & Hurd, 2010). Employers, as evidenced by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) 2014 Job Outlook Survey, deem this type of learning valuable. Three out of four (75%) employers prefer to hire new graduates who have relevant work experience (NACE, 2014).

The importance of internships in sport management curricula is apparent, considering that 77% of sport management programs at the bachelor's, master's or doctoral level have this experiential learning requirement and it is the most common curricular component in sport management programs (Dieffenback, Murray & Zakrajsek, 2011; Schoepfer & Dodds, 2011). In fact, some have argued that no single step in a sport management career path is as valuable as an internship (Moorman, 2004).

With the significant growth of academic programs offering degrees in sport management, the curricular structure of those programs lends itself to more scrutiny. Continued focus needs to be given to the requirements and policies in which programs implement their experiential learning components of their internship curriculum. More specifically, how are undergraduate sport management programs providing the best experiential learning opportunities to its students?

Literature Review

Experiential learning has an established history within higher education, specifically within the hard sciences and arts and within the more practitioners based academic programs. These learning opportunities, commonly referred to as cooperatives, internships, practicum, and service learning, all seek to support students in bridging the gap between academia and their chosen profession by developing professional competencies that may not come from the traditional classroom setting (Kiser & Partlow, 1999).

There are many experiential learning theories; however, John Dewey (1938) and David A. Kolb (1984) set a standard for research in the area. Both models rely heavily on learning through experience. Dewey's model focused on 4 phases of education: 1) social environment, 2) knowledge and content organization, 3) learning readiness and experience, and 4) learning outcomes. Dewey believed that "all genuine education comes through experience" (p.25). Kolb's theory emphasizes, "generating an action theory from your own experiences, and then continually modifying it to improve your effectiveness" (p. 53). Kolb's model of experiential learning represents a four-stage learning sequence: concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualization; active experimentation. Students move from one stage to the next after completing specific activities with the last allowing students to apply what they learned in the classroom to the field. Moreover, Surujlal and Singh (2010) pointed out, the value of student experiential learning through internship has become widely recognized and accepted in both the public and private sector.

Given the extensive use of internships in sport management curricula, information regarding sport management internship requirements, as well as the faculty role in coordinating internships, is minimal (Jowdy, McDonald, & Spence, 2004).

Despite the increasing popularity of sport management programs, little research has been conducted regarding the internship roles/requirements from the programs standpoint.

Early studies involving internships provided suggestions laying the groundwork as a template for future programs. As one of the first foundational studies, reviewing sport management internships, Chouinard (1993), stated that based upon the opinions of working professionals in the field and researchers in sport management, there is a clear indication of the importance of an internship course component in professional preparation programs. Chouinard(1993) provided a rationale for the importance of internships within sport management, as well as providing insight into internship supervision.

The study on meaningful insights into sport management internship provided a solid foundation for support of well-rounded internship opportunities for students. In addition, (Chouinard, 1993) noted that professors and/or coordinators of sport management programs that incorporate an internship must be highly skilled to meet the needs of students and must act as change agents to further improve the quality of student internships. Chouinard is not only supporting the importance of the overall internship experience for sport management students, he is also supporting an all-inclusive assessment of internship programs.

Another early study suggested that the practicum and internship experience within sport management be a series of professionally related work experiences that move from general experience to a more specific focus as each student progresses through the curriculum (Kelley, Beitel, DeSensi, &Blanton, 1994). In addition,(Kelley et. al., 1994) suggested that internships account for approximately 15 percent of the total curriculum and be the culminating experience in an undergraduate program of study. The internship should be, at a minimum, a one-semester, full-time applied work experience directly focused toward each student's professional sport management career goals (Kelley et al., 1994). Since then, several scholars have continued research in the area of internships and added valuable knowledge to the field. Verner, Keyser, and Morrow (2001) reviewed experiential learning through field experience and observed a major component of internships that is oftentimes overlooked.

Verner et al. (2001) suggested that internships allow the university and sport management programs to gain exposure, also providing the opportunities to nurture contacts within the field, and expand teaching methods and curriculum by remaining aware of developments. As literature has suggested, there are positive effects of internships not only to the student, but to the sport management program as well.

Williams (2003) studied the factors that were relevant to providing students with a quality internship, specifically in sport. Data obtained from 77 institutions with sport management programs at the graduate and undergraduate level suggested that a quality internship for students within sport is based on two important factors. They include student preparation followed by the development of strong relationships with the internship site (Williams, 2003). This suggests that the quality of the internship experience is dependent on the sport management program, as well as the internship site.

Jones, Brooks and Mak (2008) noted that because of the substantial growth in sport management programs, universities have started to expand the scope of their curriculum from a teaching based model to a more holistic approach, which includes requiring more field experience. By moving to a more holistic approach concerning sport management, as Jones et al. have suggested, it should challenge those individuals in pursuit of a sport management career to have a more in-depth knowledge of the field and a broader range of competences once they graduate.

Foster and Dollar's (2010) book, *Experiential learning in sport management: Internship and beyond*, provided an overview for students and faculty preparing for work based experiential learning, or internships, in the field of sport management. Foster and Dollar (2010) both have extensive experience coordinating internship programs, and suggest the experiential learning process should be part of the complete course of study, and not just a stand-alone component. Similar to Dieffenback et al. (2011), and Chouinard (1993), Foster and Dollar (2010) also support an inclusive internship learning environment, suggesting that the collaboration between the student and the organization and academic supervisors should enhance the internship experiences. Both supervisors should act as a mentor to the student in achieving academic and initial career goals.

In addition, Foster and Dollar (2010) suggested an experiential learning model that recommended a cooperative education process throughout the degree. The model involves integrating on campus classroom activities with volunteering, apprenticeship, pre practicum elective experiences and culminating in a capstone internship. Dieffenback et al. (2011) and Foster and Dollar (2010) also support an inclusive internship learning environment, suggesting that the collaboration between the student and the organization and academic supervisors should enhance the internship experiences. Academic and field supervisors should act as a mentor to the student in achieving both academic and initial career goals.

Most recently, DeLuca and Braunstein-Minkove(2016), and Koo et. al.(2016) looked at the effects of internship on student preparedness and satisfaction. DeLuca and Braunstein-Minkove (2016) revealed that students found great value in the mandate to have an internship. In addition, the study found that students were lacking leadership skills based on site supervisors' evaluations. Koo et. al.(2016) measured the effects of internship satisfaction on the pursuit of employment in sport management and found that students were more likely to enter the field after graduation if they reported satisfaction in their internship.

Purpose of the Study

The extensive review of literature on internships provides a foundation for the incorporation of internships into the curriculum. However, it does not provide insight on trends occurring at universities related to internship policies and procedures. The purpose of this study is practical in nature, seeking to examine undergraduate sport management internship requirements and policies in the United States. To do this, three research questions were developed; 1) what are the characteristics of sport management internship programs? 2) what are the similarities and/or differences between program sizes?and,3) how are current internships administered and supervised?

The increasing importance of experiential learning opportunities within higher education has led to three fundamental reasons for examining sport management internships. First, there is limited research specifically related to programmatic internship requirements and best practices. Second, the job market in sport management is very competitive, and an internship experience can provide students with an advantage for entry into the job market.

Finally, internships provide potential employers with an opportunity to recruit and train students, as well as providing students a window of opportunity to prove them to an organization.

Previous analysis of sport management internships has evaluated the benefits of internships, student satisfaction, professional preparation, school to work transition, etc. (Foster & Dollar, 2010; Kelley, Beitel, DeSensi, & Blanton, 1994; Stratta, 2004; Williams, 2003). By examining sport management internship requirements and procedures, academicians in the field of sport management can further evaluate their own internship programs and examine standards that can identify elements that foster student learning and job placement, and have insights on how to structure their internship programs. Specifically, this research can provide a framework for future and established sport management programs to help design and implement curriculum.

Methodology

Participants

The authors identified 290 institutions in the United States offering undergraduate programs in sport management/administration using the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) website. Schools on the undergraduate program list that did not have an internship requirement were eliminated from the data set. To determine if the program offered an internship, the authors completed a detailed search of each school's curriculum via the programs website. Two hundred and nine schools met the criteria and the survey was emailed to the internship coordinator listed on each programs website. Fourteen emails were undeliverable; therefore 195 surveys were sent to potential participants. Seventy-two surveys were completed which accounted for a 36% return rate.

Instrumentation

After conducting a comprehensive review of the literature, the researchers concluded that a survey was needed in order to gain knowledge on the requirements and procedures of undergraduate sport management internship programs. Therefore, a multiple choice style questionnaire was created to shed light on these topics.

The survey contained four sections: demographics; internship description; internship assessment and evaluation; and administration and workload. Under demographics, researchers gathered information on the size of school and sport management program, whether the school was public or private, accreditation status, and number of faculty/staff teaching in sport management. The internship description consisted of formulated questions relative to the number of credit and contact hours required, if there was a field experience or required GPA before internship, grading options, timing of internships and internship site locations. Under assessment and evaluation, researchers gathered information on course requirements (written logs, project, supervisor evaluations, etc.), the number of site visits and personal contacts faculty had with students, and if students were employed following graduation. Lastly, the final section of the survey looked at the number of interns assigned to faculty supervisors and the release time provided to accomplish their responsibilities.

The initial survey was given to a panel of reviewers in the field for analysis. Two reviewers were full-time faculty serving as internship coordinators and one reviewer was a full-time faculty member that had served as an internship coordinator for 12 years but was no longer in that position. Reviewers were informed of the purpose of the study and asked to comment on the survey design, content, question formation and length. Based on the feedback, suggestions were taken into consideration and changes were implemented. The final survey consisted of 32 questions and took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Procedures

The research followed the Tailored Design Method (TDM) for online questionnaire distribution (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The TDM is considered the standard for conducting electronic surveys in the social sciences and can lead to increased response rates as well as elimination of common sources of error in survey research. An email list of internship coordinators for undergraduate sport management programs with an internship requirement was developed for the project. Following TDM protocol, the research team sent an advance notice email to internship coordinators at each of the participating sport management programs describing the need for, and purpose of the survey. Included within the initial email, was an electronic cover letter along with a link to the online questionnaire.

After three weeks, researchers sent a follow-up email thanking internship coordinators who had already responded and requesting a response from those who had not. Two weeks after that, the researchers sent another thank you email and a final reminder to all remaining potential participants with an announcement of the survey's final closing date. Access to the survey was available for eight weeks giving ample time for participants to take part in the research study. Survey Monkey was utilized to design the survey and collect data while SPSS version 20 was utilized to analyze the results.

Results

Demographics

More than fifty percent of programs that responded to the study came from private institutions (55.56%), with 44.44% of the respondents from public institutions. Sport management programs with less than 100 students were the largest response rate at 36.11%, followed by 100 – 200 (31.94%) and more than 400 students at 31.94%. The majority of programs had two full time faculties at 27.78%, followed by more than 5 with 20.83%. Programs with three full time faculties had a 19.44% response rate, followed by 5 full time faculties with 13.98%.

Many sport management programs rely on part time/adjunct faculty. Programs with 1-part time/adjunct faculty had the highest response rate at 28.57%, followed by 2 with 25.40%. Only 13.33% of the programs were COSMA accredited while 86.67% had no formal accreditation. Thirty percent of the programs have been in existence for 5 – 10 years, 25% have been in existence for over 20 years, 23.61% have been around for 11 – 15 years, and approximately 8.33% of programs have only been around for less than 5 years.

In addition, the researchers also wanted to portion out programs based on size for better application of the results. Table 1 illustrates program requirements based on small (<100 students), medium (101-200 students) and large (>201 students) sport management programs.

Internship Characteristics

Internship requirements vary between all programs. For example, 40% of the programs require students to register for greater than 9 credit hours for their internship, which equates to 200-300 contact hours. Additionally, over half (55%) of all programs require students to complete field/work experience prior to internship, and 80% of the programs require a minimum GPA before students are eligible for internship.

When results were broken down by program size, some similarities and differences between programs appeared. For example, with regard to credit hours, smaller programs (<100) and larger programs (>201) seem to agree on internship credit hours. Both sized programs offer more credit hours for internship compared to medium programs. Sixty percent of medium size programs (101-200) require prior field experience, more so than both small and larger size programs. Also, smaller programs (<100) seem to require limited or no GPA requirement for internship eligibility, compared to medium (101-200) and larger (>201) programs, which had higher GPA requirements (See Table 1).

Internship Assessment and Evaluation

All programs that responded do provide grades for internship, however, how that grade is awarded is different. Sixty-six percent of respondents provide a letter grade for internship and only 33% give a pass/fail grade. Based on program size, medium programs (101-200) are more inclined to offer a letter grade compared to the other sized programs.

Ninety-six percent of all programs require some form of written logs. Of those respondents who required written logs, the frequency of those logs vary with 55% of the programs requiring weekly logs, 10.61% requiring bi-monthly logs, and 13.64% requiring a monthly log during internship. Twenty percent of the respondents answered "other," which included variations of bi-weekly reports and reports only at mid-term and finals.

Requiring special projects during an internship was customary, with 64.17% of all respondents requiring a project from students while on internship. Thirty-five percent did not require a project during internship.

Site supervisor evaluations received overwhelming support as a requirement with (91%) of respondents requiring supervisor evaluations of interns. For those that required supervisor evaluations of internship, the frequency of those evaluations differed. Most respondents required at least two evaluations (62.69%) during the semester, while some respondents only required one evaluation (23.88%) during internship.

Fifty percent of the respondents complete at least one in person site visit during the semester, whereas 35.29% do not complete a single site visit. Internship supervisors stay in contact with students during internship with 62% percent making at least 1 – 3 personal contacts to students during the semester, and 22.08% making at least 4 – 6 contacts.

Administration and Supervision

There were many differences in how programs administered and supervised the internship. Over half of all programs that responded have one full time internship coordinator that supervises all sport management internships (49.30%), which is consistent across all sized programs. In some cases, a select few faculty members were involved in supervision (26.76%). Fourteen percent of the respondents stated that every faculty in sport management is involved in internship supervision. Finally, 9.86% of the respondents did not have a clear designation of anyone who was responsible for supervising internships. In addition, an overwhelming majority of programs (86.84%) have the responsibility of securing internships on the student. All sized programs were very consistent requiring students to locate their own internship. However, when broken down by size, programs of 100 students or less actually placed their students for internship (24%) at the highest rate.

Intercollegiate sports (40.30%) seem to be the most frequented internship opportunity for students followed closely by professional sports (37.31%). Because of the difference in program size, as well as the variation in when students can complete internship requirements, there are many inconsistencies in the amount of students supervised for internship in an academic year. Twenty-one percent of respondents supervise either 11 – 20 students or 21 – 30 students a year for internship. Fourteen percent of the respondents average 31 – 40 students a year, with 9.72% of respondents averaging 41 – 50 and over 80 students a year.

Not surprisingly, there were variations between all three sized programs. Small (<100) and medium (101-200) sized programs are similar in the number of students interning each year, with the large (>201) program averaging the highest number of student's yearly (See Table 2).

Administrative workload with regards to internship supervision in the fall and spring varied among respondents. Thirty-eight percent of respondents stated that all interns, no matter how many, are equivalent to one academic course, 16.92% responded that 10 or fewer are equivalent to one academic course. Finally, 30.77% of respondents stated that interns are considered overload to their workload. In regards to summer supervision of internship, 32% of respondents stated that all interns, no matter how many under their supervision, are equivalent to one academic course, followed by 16.92% reporting that 10 or fewer are equivalent to one academic course. Over one third (35.38%) of respondents stated that interns are considered overload to their workload during the summer semester.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine undergraduate sport management internship requirements and policies in the United States. More specifically, the goal of this study was to provide a comprehensive overview of the current internship practices of sport management programs offering internships as part of their undergraduate curriculum. The research was designed to encompass all programs (accredited, non-accredited, large, medium, & small), and the results revealed some unique characteristics.

In general, the findings suggest that program requirements and procedures relating to internship curriculum vary significantly. Research suggests that schools take very different approaches to the requirements and administration of their internship program. Fleming and Ferkins (2005) had similar findings looking at cooperative education in sport management across four countries and eight institutions. The structure, placement, supervision and hours required were all different at each institution. This may be due to a variety of factors, including but not limited to the number of students in a program, the number of full-time faculty or staff, program resources, faculty workload, and the amount of internship requirements. Based on the findings of this study, sport management internship programs present the following profile:

- They require 11-12 credit hours which equates to 200-300 contact hours.
- The internship is taken in the senior year (one semester).
- There is a requirement of a prior field experience.
- Students are responsible for securing their own internship sites.
- Students are assigned a letter grade rather than being assessed on a pass/fail basis at the completion.
- Students are required to create weekly written reports and a special project.
- Supervisors are asked to submit two evaluations regarding student performance.
- Internship coordinators make one in person visit and have 1-3 personal contacts with students during the semester long experience.
- In most instances, one internship coordinator is assigned to all student interns and is responsible for overseeing 11-30 students which equates to a workload of one academic course during each semester.

Do note that the characteristics are somewhat different when taking into account the size of the sport management program as reported in the results.

The findings of the current study raise additional questions with respect to sport management internships requirements on a global scale. While exploring this topic, the researchers also reviewed international academic sport management associations (WASM, EASM, SMAANZ, etc.) in regards to international internship procedures and requirements. International programs also vary in their internship requirements offering internships as elective credits, whereas sport management programs in the U.S. require internships as part of graduation requirements. For example, Sotiriadou (2011) revealed that only 65% of sport management programs in Australia and New Zealand have at least one sport management practicum integrated into their program.

Most were typically an elective subject rather than compulsory and subject to 80 – 120 hours of practical voluntary experience. In South Africa, Surujlal and Singh (2010) found that many students were lacking the needed skills to enter the workforce and suggest that internship be included as a compulsory component of the curriculum.

While the global studies did not reference concerns due to program growth and issues with internship administration, the findings from the current study suggest that as programs in the U.S. grow to larger numbers of students, administrators are challenged with the demands of internship oversight. Personal site visits take a tremendous amount of time and money and may not be feasible for some sport management programs, not just internship supervisors.

Institutions with a limited number of faculties also face the issue of overload. Even programs that do not have high teaching workloads still have faculty who are stretched extremely thin. As the findings show, only 27% of the programs have two full-time faculties, which could provide difficulty in the supervision of large internship programs. Almost 32% responded that they have between 101-200 majors. This means more part time and adjunct instructors are needed to teach core classes and possibly oversee student interns. Nearly half of all programs surveyed have a full time internship coordinator that supervises all sport management internships.

This type of structure paves the way for a close relationship with each student and can lend to needed feedback. In addition, since the internship must meet the needs of sport management organizations, it is beneficial to establish relationships with these entities. With this partnership, universities can meet the needs of students, students can acquire professional skills, and sport organizations can provide extended interviews to potential employees. However, the model of internship supervision in many institutions deserves scrutiny, as it appears that many faculty at a high percentage of these colleges appear to have a relatively small amount of release time to be able to provide quality mentoring and supervision. This dearth of time provided to faculty is probably a contributing factor regarding why students must research and secure their own internships.

One of the most intriguing results was that the number of credit hours and total contact hours was so diverse from university to university. A question that arises with this diversity in number of required hours is, are students adequately prepared for entry-level positions by requiring fewer hours in the internship experience? When examining similar fields, the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT), which is the accrediting organization for parks and recreation/tourism programs, requires a comprehensive internship of not less than 400 clock hours and no fewer than 10 weeks (COAPRT, 2014).

Similar to sport management, and parks and recreation/tourism programs, physical education programs also provide valuable internship experiences for students. Student teaching has been considered one of the most important aspects of professional preparation for soon to be teachers (Hynes-Dusel, 1999). According to Hynes-Dusel, (1999), most students felt the university did not teach the reality of the classroom and they were not adequately prepared for teaching so student teaching was crucial for future success.

The results of this study revealed that programs have specific times allocated to allow students to complete their internships, with over half, requiring field/work experience before students can complete an internship. Some sport organizations are looking for graduates who possess the most in depth and/or diverse experiences. Infusing experiential learning throughout the curriculum can benefit students by reinforcing the connection between theory and practice, which ultimately could make them more marketable when entering the workforce. An example of this infusion would be to have interns return to campus periodically to meet with their internship coordinator and/or peers, or require a post-internship meeting to assist in promoting deeper reflection of their internship experiences. This is difficult to do when the internship is the last component in a degree, but it is another important learning element in the internship process.

This study also generates questions that can be investigated in future research: Are students better equipped for jobs if they take part in internship programs that require more contact hours? If so, how many contact hours are ideal? Should programs include a field experience component before students take part in an internship? What are the benefits? During their academic studies, when is the ideal time for students to complete an internship? What is the best approach to student supervision and how many contact/visits should the internship supervisor have with the student and professional in the field to ensure a positive experience? What assessments are the most relative for student learning during an internship (supervisor evaluations, log reports, etc.)? Administratively, how many interns should a faculty supervise in a semester to ensure quality and excellence? As professionals in the field, we must take a proactive approach to answer these questions.

Because of the growth in sport management programs inside and outside of the United States, and the increase in qualified sport management graduates filling valuable sport management positions, the importance and understanding of the current sport management internship model is important. Since the completion of the study, there is over 85 new sport management programs listed on the NASSM website (NASSM, 2016). The study shows a similar trend as 38% of the programs who responded to the survey were less than ten years old. In order to effectively and efficiently coordinate sport management internship programs, a basic understanding of what current sport management programs are implementing is necessary to better educate current students within a comprehensive sport management curriculum.

Hopefully, this study will serve as a vehicle to encourage academicians in the field of sport management to further evaluate their own internship programs and examine policies that can delineate specific criteria and requirements that benefit student learning and job placement. In addition, it can serve as a tool for new and future sport management programs. Internship coordinators now have a snapshot of what other programs are requiring of their students. With this knowledge, they can plan and evaluate what internship requirements and processes will work best for their school and student population.

Within the field, students are oftentimes seen as extensions of the institution. By having an organized and efficient internship programs, it allows both students and internship sites the opportunity to be a part of a significant learning opportunity. A well-planned internship program can allow all students the opportunity to complete an off-campus internship that develops the student both personally and professionally, while creating new relationships between the program and the field. In addition, the importance of a well-organized and coordinated internship program will be important for the success of the student and the sport management program. In the future, with the assistance of COSMA, sport management programs will have some standard guidelines that can be followed to ensure that students are getting the most of their experiences.

Conclusion

The internship is an important component in the personal and professional development of students earning a degree in sport management.

Understanding the current requirements and policies of sport management programs within the United States can assist in creating a “best practices” opportunity for programs looking to create and implement internship programs, or assist programs who are looking to revamp their current program. Ultimately, this insight should assist in providing the best experiences for students.

The current study suggests that sport management internship requirements and procedures vary between universities in the United States. The findings of this study paint a unique and evolving picture of the current state of sport management internship curriculum. Future research on sport management internship requirements and procedures can help provide a framework, through which sport management students can undertake meaningful, career shaping experiences through quality internships.

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Table 1

Program Requirements

<100 Students Small	101-200 Medium	>201 Large					
Internship Credit Hours		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
1-4 credit hours		28.0%	7	27.2%	6	13.6%	3
5-8 credit hours		32.0%	8	45.4%	10	13.6%	3
>9 credit hours		40.0%	10	27.2%	6	72.8%	16

<100 Students Small	101-200 Medium	>201 Large					
Contact Hours		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
<200 hours		29.4%	5	14.2%	1	12.5%	1
200-400		41.1%	7	57.1%	4	62.5%	5
>400		29.4%	5	28.2%	2	25.0%	2

<100 Students Small	101-200 Medium	>201 Large					
Required Prior Field Exp.		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Yes		48.0%	12	59.0%	13	57.2%	12
No		52.0%	25	40.9%	22	42.8%	21

<100 Students Small	101-200 Medium	>201 Large					
GPA Required for Internship		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
2.0 GPA		12.0%	3	31.8%	7	18.1%	4
2.1-3.0		52.0%	13	50.0%	11	68.0%	5
3.1 or greater		0.00%	0	4.5%	1	4.5%	1
GPA not required		36.0%	9	13.6%	3	9.0%	2

<100 Students Small	101-200 Medium	>201 Large					
Internship Grade		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Pass/Fail		40.0%	10	18.1%	4	40.9%	9
Letter Grade		60.0%	15	81.9%	18	59.0%	13

	<100 Students	101-200	>201	Small		Medium		Large	
				Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Timing of Internship									
After all academic courses				29.1%	7	33.3%	7	45.4%	10
Senior year				37.5%	9	28.5%	6	41.0%	9
Any time				33.3%	8	38.1%	8	13.6%	3

	<100 Students	101-200	>201	Small		Medium		Large	
				Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Internship Enrollment									
All credits together				52.0%	13	59.0%	13	80.9%	17
Credits split over semesters				48.0%	12	41.0%	9	19.1%	4

	<100 Students	101-200	>201	Small		Medium		Large	
				Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Locating Internship									
School places				24.0%	6	4.5%	1	14.3%	3
Student locates				76.0%	19	95.4%	21	85.7%	18

	<100 Students	101-200	>201	Small		Medium		Large	
				Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Accreditation status									
COSMA accredited				00.0%	0	13.0%	3	30.4%	7
None				100.0%	15	87.0%	20	69.6%	16

Table 2

Administration & Supervision

	<100 Students	101-200	>201	Small		Medium		Large	
				Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Program Supervision									
One coordinator				56.0%	14	50.0%	11	45.4%	10
All faculty				16.0%	4	13.6%	3	13.6%	3
A select few				24.0%	8	22.7%	5	31.8%	7
Other				4.0%	1	13.6%	3	9.0%	2

<100 Students 101-200 >201

		Small		Medium		Large	
Interns Supervised Yearly		Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
1-20 students		64.0%	16	18.2%	4	4.6%	1
21-40 students		24.0%	6	54.5%	12	27.2%	6
41-60 students		12.0%	3	18.2%	4	22.7%	5
>60 students		0.0%	0	9.1%	2	45.5%	10

		Small		Medium		Large	
<100 Students	101-200	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Site visits	>201						
0		33.3%	8	31.8%	7	41.0%	9
1		54.1%	13	59.5%	12	36.3%	8
2		8.3%	2	18.2%	4	22.7%	5
3		4.2%	1	9.1%	2	0.0%	0

		Small		Medium		Large	
<100 Students	101-200	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>	Percent (%)	<i>N</i>
Personal contacts per semester	>201						
0		4.1%	1	0.0%	0	4.5%	1
1-3		50.0%	12	77.3%	17	59.1%	13
4-6		25.0%	6	18.2%	4	22.7%	5
7-8		4.2%	1	0.0%	0	9.2%	2
>8		16.6%	4	4.5%	1	4.5%	1