Using Professional Feedback to Enhance Recreational Sport Curriculum

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Purpose

Improve and update recreational sports curriculum utilizing feedback from professionals to ensure that students are learning content and skills relevant to the emerging trends and needs in recreational sports.

Methods

Focus Groups

- Researchers conducted conference calls with six professionals in an effort to enhance curriculum content.
- Participants were directors and experienced professionals from various settings within recreational sports:
  - Campus Recreational Sports
  - City Parks and Recreation
  - U.S. Navy

Questions

- If you were to hire someone with a Master’s degree in Rec Sports Administration, what would you expect them to know – knowledge AND skill wise?
- If you were creating a curriculum, what would you name courses to prepare a graduate student to walk out the door and succeed?
- What would be the expectations that would be different between an undergraduate and a graduate student?
- What are three words or phrases that sum up what you would be looking for in a candidate coming to you with a master’s degree?
- What are some of the trends in the field and can you identify any gaps you have noticed when you hire new professionals with a master’s degree?

Expectations for what Master’s graduates in Rec Sports should know (knowledge and skills)

- Financial Management and Budgeting
- Human Resource Management
- Written and Verbal Communication Skills
- Understanding of Information Technology
- Creativity
- Subject Matter Expertise – gained through assistantships/internships
  - Supervision
  - Marketing
  - Event Planning

Recommended Course Titles for a Rec Sports Curriculum

- Event Management
- Sport Law – HIPAA, FERPA, Background checks
- Grant Writing
- Ethics
- Research and Assessment
- Human Resources
- Student Development and Leadership
- Marketing
- Advanced Public Speaking

Expectation Differences Between Undergraduate and Graduate Students

- Maturity
- Higher-level Thinking
- Higher-level Budget Planning
- Strategic Planning
- Collaboration Skills

Trends in the Field and Gaps with New Hires

- Writing and Assessing Learning Outcomes
- Sustainability Knowledge (environmental, economical, and social)
- Negotiations and Collaborations
- Identified Gaps
  - Resumes
  - Writing Skills
  - Public Speaking Skills

Words or phrases that describe an ideal candidate with a master’s degree

- PROFESSIONAL
- EXPERIENCED
- RIGHT-FIT
- CONFIDENT
- HUMBLE
- MATURE
- INITIATIVE-TAKER
- PASSIONATE
- HIGH PERFORMER

Feedback from professionals in the field can contribute to recreational sport curriculum development in a variety of ways:

- Relevant Course Material
- Course Titles
- Learning Outcomes
- Skills for Student Development
- Technology
- Resume/Interview Preparedness
- Research Skills

Feedback from professionals in the field can help prepare graduate students who have goals of entering the field so they can refine skills related to:

- Writing
- Verbal Communication
- Resume/Interview
- Content-Specific Knowledge Desired by Professionals