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## **A Qualitative Analysis Of Graduate Sport Administration/ Management Curricula Offered At Private And Public Institutions In Comparison To Cosma Requirements**

Kristin E. Brown  
*Indiana State University*

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## CURRICULUM VITA

Kristin E. Brown

### EDUCATION

- 2015 Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Ph.D. in Curriculum, Instruction and Media Technology, Concentration in Sport Management
- 2007 Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
M.S.Ed in Physical Education, Concentration in Exercise Science
- 2004 Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
B.S.Ed. in Physical Education, Concentration in Athletic Training
- 2003 Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
A.A.S. Physical Therapist Assistant

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2014-Present Eastern Illinois University, Instructor, Department of Kinesiology and Sport Studies, Assistant Professor
- 2013 Eastern Illinois University, Department of Kinesiology and Sport Studies, Instructor
- 2009-2013 Adjunct Faculty Member Kinesiology & Sport Studies Eastern Illinois University
- 2008-Present Carle Sports Medicine and Physical Therapy-Certified Athletic Trainer, Physical Therapist Assistant 2008-2013

### PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

- 2004-Present National Board of Certification, Certified Athletic Trainer, Certification number 120402089
- 2005-Present Illinois Licensed Athletic Trainer, License number 160004281

### GRANTS

- 2014-2015 Redden Grant for the Improvement of Undergraduate Instruction Eastern Illinois University



A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE SPORT  
ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT CURRICULA  
OFFERED AT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC  
INSTITUTIONS IN COMPARISON TO  
COSMA REQUIREMENTS

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A Dissertation

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Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

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of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Kristin E. Brown

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Co-Committee Chair: Susan Kiger, Ph.D.

Professor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology

Indiana State University

Co-Committee Chair: Thomas Sawyer, Ed.D.

Professor Emeritus of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport

Indiana State University

Committee Member: Timothy Boileau, Ph.D.

Instructor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology

Indiana State University

## ABSTRACT

The evolution of sport and the factors that are influencing it, such as industry standards and external conditions, have challenged curricula in the area of sport. The number of sport administration/management programs has increased over the years to over 500 (North American Society for Sport Management, n.d.), which, in turn, has contributed to variation among higher education programs (Eagleman & McNary, 2010). Sport administration/management programs vary in core content, specializations, educational philosophies, and ideologies (Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008). Ideologies underpinning the curricular structure are uncertain among graduate programs in sport administration/management. The information in this study was provided qualitatively through document analysis to bridge the gap of conceptual information.

Two conceptual frameworks facilitated the document analysis. Posner's (2004) *Analyzing the Curriculum* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) was used as the guideline for interpreting the curricula. Posner offered a beneficial collection of theoretical perspectives including traditional, experiential, constructivist, structure of the disciplines, traditional, and behavioral perspectives that were used in the analysis. The influencing theoretical perspectives were observed throughout the graduate sport administration/management's documents. Additionally, the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) developed accreditation principles from "best practices" that have been used through sport management (COSMA, 2013), but, prior to this study, it was relatively unknown how many graduate programs were following the principles that COSMA had

promoted. Thus, COSMA principles were used to understand the inclusiveness of the examined curricula.

A purposeful sample of 79 of the 226 graduate sport administration/management programs from all four regions of the United States (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) were evaluated for common themes and similarities. As the data were compared between regions, the Western region included the highest number of institutions that included COSMA's traditional areas of sport management education. When comparing the courses through the overall analysis, the Midwestern region included the most institutions that included the most courses. The private institutions included more courses in comparison with COSMA's traditional areas of sport management education compared to the public institutions. The main themes that developed from the research included the philosophical perspective, curricular confluence, and the impact of accreditation. Similarities and differences were found among the graduate sport administration/management programs within public and private universities in comparison to COSMA's principles. Future research will allow for an in-depth association of philosophical perspectives, effectiveness of programs, and sport management curricula.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Curriculum continues to evolve over time depending on environmental factors, industry challenges, and current conditions within the area of sport. In the early years of sport administration/management, individuals who worked in sports discovered the profession while working with sport through “hands-on experience” and the business of sport (Crosset & Hums, 2012). Although sport administration/management is a relatively new profession, it continues to advance as the industry evolves; “the need to train sport administrators/managers in a more formal fashion [has become] a necessity” (Crosset & Hums, 2012, p. 20).

Although there have been discrepancies in determining when the first sport administration/management program was developed, researchers noted a significant increase in the number of programs in the 1980s (Crosset & Hums, 2012; Parkhouse, 2005). Pedersen and Thibault (2014) reported the following:

According to the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), in 2014, there were 429 undergraduate sport management programs, 253 master’s programs, and 40 doctoral programs in Africa, Australia, Canada, China, India, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States. (p. 6)

The world of sport continues to evolve (Pitts & Stotlar, 2013); therefore, the sport administration/management curricula will change along with the evolution of the field. The sport administration/management structure creates an environment that requires sport



administrators/managers to be flexible and creative while managing sport (Crosset & Hums, 2012). “One particular sport management structure won’t work in all situations” (Crosset & Hums, 2012, p. 3) which is why individuals must acclimatize to changes throughout sport and be adaptable. Sport administration/management programs are driven by national standards but may have underlying sociopolitical influences as well. Sport administrators/managers require education and training to align with the evolving industry, and many programs have taken a holistic approach (Parkhouse, 2005).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sport administration/management professionals and students are working in a “global industry including professional sport, intercollegiate sport, Olympic and Paralympic movements, recreational sport, facility management, event management, sport for people with disabilities, health and fitness, sport club management, interscholastic sport, sport marketing, and legal aspects of sport” (Hums & MacLean, 2013, p. 2). The number of sport administration/management programs has increased over the years to more than 500 (NASSM, n.d.c), which, in turn, has contributed to variation among higher education programs (Eagleman & McNary, 2010). Sport administration/management programs vary in core content, specializations, educational philosophies, and ideologies (Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008). Despite certainty about variations among graduate programs, little is known regarding the programs’ frameworks and the ideologies underpinning the curricular structure. A qualitative document analysis provided detailed information to close the apparent knowledge gap.

The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) developed principles for institutions that are seeking accreditation or have been accredited (COSMA, 2009a).

COSMA has developed these accreditation principles from “best practices” that have been used through sport management (COSMA, 2013), but it was relatively unknown how many graduate programs were following them. Moreover, ideological perspectives or sociopolitical factors that were influencing the development and implementation of sport administration/management programs are relatively unknown. This study sought to learn if programs are following the COSMA principles or whether other particular ideological perspectives seem to undergird programs. A systematic review of stated philosophies, other programmatic materials, and the construct of the curricula should provide substantive ground from which to draw inferences as to influencing ideologies and other socio-political factors (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008; Sage, 1998).

### **Purpose**

As sport administration/management continues to grow, the academic standards, proficiencies, and principles should expand to meet the needs of the students in every area of the professional arena. The purpose of this study was to reveal the principles and ideologies driving the construct of various curricula, and to identify similarities to and differences from the COSMA principles. This was accomplished through a systematic analysis of the various graduate programs as understood from documents posted on the institutions’ official websites. A sport administration/management curricular model is described for all institutions to consider when developing an institutional sport administration/management curriculum.

### **Research Question**

The following research question allowed for analysis of similarities and differences across sport administration/management curricula in the United States. The analysis determined

the richness of each curriculum and examined emerging themes that may develop regarding educational ideologies, and sociopolitical influences.

What are the similarities and differences in the sport administration/management graduate curricula among institutions?

Although a single research question guided this study, to help illuminate the various comparisons sought, research subquestions included the following:

1. How many credits are included in the programs?
2. Does the program allow for previous coursework transferring into a graduate degree?  
If so, how many and what credits will transfer?
3. What specific content is included in the program?
4. Does the program require internship credits? If so, how long is the internship and how many credits are assigned to it?
5. How many programs are accredited by COSMA? What are the common characteristics of programs that are COSMA accredited?
6. What department, school/college hosts the sport administration/management program?
7. In what ways is the content articulated across the program?
8. How do the sport administration/management programs at the graduate level align with COSMA principles? How do the graduate programs espouse COSMA's principles?

### **Significance of the Study**

As sport continues to grow as a business (Hums & MacLean, 2013; Pedersen & Thibault, 2014; Slack, 1998), the number of sport managers will also grow. The educational discipline of

sports administration/management has grown because of the increased need for preparation of professionals (Hums & MacLean, 2013). Concomitantly, the education departments within which such professional preparation programs are housed have grown. Sport management has been traditionally found in departments that house other related degrees associated with sport, however, “there has been a recent increase in the number of programs being offered in departments or colleges of business” (Pitts & Stotlar, 2013, p. 7). As sport administration/management programs continue to multiply, the COSMA plays an important role for accredited higher education institutions, as well as those following the common core principles that COSMA has encouraged. “COSMA’s purpose is to promote and recognize excellence in sport management education worldwide in colleges and universities at the baccalaureate and graduate levels through specialized accreditation” (COSMA, 2013, para. 1). As students and young professionals embark on their careers, they should be prepared to handle situations throughout the sports industry through an aligned, accredited, and principled sport administration/management program. Individuals who enroll in sport administration/management courses should be prepared to embark on many different aspects of the sports industry (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Many sport administration/management programs may have certain content areas, or principles, that they may follow even if they are not accredited by COSMA. The result of this analysis would include a common sport administration/management curricular model for graduate programs (master’s and doctoral), which could be utilized by sport administration/management professionals to revise or develop new programs.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations for this study rested in narrowing the examination to the following.

1. The source for the curricula and other program information were limited to materials available through online website access.
2. There was difficulty in obtaining the program of study for each sport administration/management program currently listed on the North American Society for Sports Management website (NASSM, n.d.c). Thus, the study was limited to those programs for which a program of study was available.
3. The assumption was made that the NASSM website was up to date and accurate regarding the number of graduate sport administration/management programs in the United States. If this was not the case, this limited the representativeness of the study.
4. The analysis was limited to 79 out of 226 master's graduate sport management programs.

### **Delimitations**

The following were the delimitations to this study:

1. The curriculum that was analyzed had defined itself as a sport administration/management graduate program within the United States.
2. The graduate programs were identified through the North American Society for Sport Management's website.
3. The curricula were analyzed through document analysis of curricula, program philosophy, and other available sources that were found through internet access on the institutions' website.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Sport administration/management curricula have not been investigated over the past 5 years. The literature review will evaluate the national sport management curricula through the following sections: (a) a discussion about the concept of curricula, (b) the history of sports management accreditation, (c) a description of the COSMA Standards, and (d) a review of past sport management curricula studies. The thematic design of the literature review will lead to the purpose of this research. Past researchers have used quantitative research to evaluate sport management curricula. This study will use a qualitative document analysis approach.

#### **Curricula Design and Evaluation**

##### **Influences on Curriculum Design**

Curriculum design does not occur in a vacuum; various philosophical, social, political, and economic influences have influenced curricular development over time. Notable curricular theorists and historians, among them Kliebard (2004), Marshall, Sears, Allen, Roberts, and Schubert (2007), Pinar et al. (2008), and Posner (2004), have revealed how the interweaving of these influences have impacted curriculum design in various periods. As noted by Posner (2004), neutrality in curriculum design is illusory given the milieu in which curriculum is developed. Posner (2004) interchangeably uses the term *philosophy* and *perspective* when describing curriculum and its origin.

A politically neutral curriculum is difficult to achieve because curriculum developers must consider stakeholders that are involved in the process. The curricula may have a hidden political message that is hard to distinguish as neutral. Although programs may intend to create a politically neutral design, it is difficult to achieve when standards and accreditation requirements must be met. Pinar et al. (2008) noted, “No serious curriculum scholar would advance the argument that schools in general and curriculum in particular are politically neutral. . . . Political theorists tend to view American society as rife with poverty, homelessness, racism and political oppression” (p. 244). Thus, political theorists believe that neutrality will not exist because of the “economic system, i.e., capitalism” (Pinar, et al., p. 244). “When we focus our concept of curriculum on educational plans, standards and intended outcomes we are taking a political stand” (Posner, 2004, p. 5).

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Curriculum**

Just as curricula evolve, so do the theories and perspectives on which those curricula were developed. Posner (2004) offered a useful array of theoretical perspectives that form the framework for discussion. Many of the educational perspectives date back to the Greek philosophers but resurface at different times in the history of curriculum development; even though theorists may create a different approach to a philosophy, the foundations have been present for many years. Posner reviewed five theoretical perspectives, which include traditional, experiential, structure of the disciplines, behavioral, and constructivist perspectives. “The approach chosen depends on the beliefs and assumptions (often termed ‘philosophies’ or ‘perspectives’) of the people who develop the curriculum” (Posner, 2004, p. 43).

The traditional philosophy focuses on methods of using the textbook, lecture, and memorization for student learning. The students become assimilated into society while

becoming culturally civilized and productive (Posner, 2004). “Perhaps because curriculum specialists did have greater access to the schools in the past, or at least wrote as if they did, their concerns were more focused on curriculum development in and for the schools” (Pinar et al., 2008, pp. 14-15).

The traditional (sometimes termed as Humanist) curriculum focused on subjects taught in isolation and students were taught in the same manner (Pinar et al., 2008). Pinar et al. (2008) reported, “With the loss of the individual we gain curriculum standardization and social control. . . Rather than curriculum understood as an inner journey, we learned to consider curriculum as those policies and programs implemented institutionally” (p. 77). The purpose of traditional education was to pass on the western cultural heritage. But to take the traditional curriculum one step further, the curriculum was shaped by “administrative concerns” (Pinar et al., 2008, p. 78). The learner generally takes a passive role through the traditional curriculum, rather than taking an active part in the learning experience.

The traditional curriculum conceptual framework for sport management began when the NASPE joined with NASSM to create a task force to develop a set of curricular guidelines (Ross & McCullough, 2014). The need for an accrediting agency, COSMA, was established in 2007. COSMA defines traditional areas of sport management education: “The following are typical disciplinary areas in sport management: sport administration, accounting, finance, event planning, international sport management, security, marketing, athletic/sport administration” (COSMA, 2013, p. 62). Although the typical traditional instructional methods of this educational theory will not be observed through classroom experiences, the document analysis will serve as a guideline to which programs follow the “traditional sport management” curriculum. As a graduate program, COSMA requires that “50 percent or more of the total credit



hours required for a graduate degree are in the traditional areas of sport management education” (COSMA, 2010, p. 18).

The experiential philosophy focused on the experiences of the child rather than using them in a passive role like the traditionalist. The experiential philosophy focuses on the students’ perspective of the curriculum. The experiential theory is very broad and focuses on the students’ experiences throughout life and the classroom. Students gain knowledge (both social and academic) by actively participating in their learning (Posner, 2004).

The experientialists varied from the other perspectives. “Experientialists promoted their faith in the judgment of grassroots decision making (even among students) to solve problems, enhance meaning, and imagine purpose and possibility” (Marshall et al., 2007, p. 24). The experiential curriculum is focused around the natural development of the child. The curriculum will be differentiated to the individual needs of the learner. Overall, the purpose of experiential education is to reflect and meet the needs and development of the learner (Pinar et al., 2008).

Posner (2004) stated,

John Dewey believed that reality is not external to the individual; it is found within the experience of the individual, the composite of both the individual’s internal reactions, such as thoughts and feelings and external reactions, such as actions to the influences of the external world. (p. 49)

The experientialist (sometimes termed developmentalist) curriculum would evolve as the learner adjusted to the environment and or reality, which would demand continuous change (Posner, 2004). Dewey was able to add the element of the individual’s experience to the curriculum that was not included in the traditionalist/ humanists and which had not been an important aspect to previous theorists (Pinar et al., 2008; Posner, 2004).

Educators in the sport management field have recognized the need for an experiential curriculum component. Verner, Keyser, and Morrow (2005) identified two distinct types of experiential educational activities: discrete and nondiscrete. “Discrete activities are those that are self-contained and constitute a separate entity” (Verner et al., 2005, p. 336). A few examples of discrete activities that sport management students may perform are “field study, internships, practica, student teaching, clinical experiences, cooperative education, and service learning” (Verner et al., 2005, p. 336). The other types of experiential activities that may be implemented in a sport management curriculum are nondiscrete involvements. “Nondiscrete experiential education activities are more often than not extensions or components of a course or program” (Verner et al., 2005, p. 336). Innovative classroom situations or methods may be thought of as nondiscrete activities. Certain methods that sport management educators may use as nondiscrete methods may include: “field trips, simulation/games, group process, role play, laboratory work, oral interviews and participatory observations” (Verner et al., 2005, p. 336). “Discrete learning in a sport industry setting allows sport management students to grasp the connection between cognitive classroom theories and concrete sport experiences more effectively” (Southhall, Nagel, LeGrande, & Han, 2003, p. 28).

The structure of the disciplines theory returned the focus of the curriculum to the subject matter at hand. The philosophy was concerned with how well prepared students were for college. The perspective held that if the student is more active within a discipline, he or she will engage further in their learning thereby bridging a gap between the university educators and the secondary and elementary educators. World War II largely influenced the structure of the discipline’s perspective because it offered “political power” to the university scholars (Posner, 2004). Prior to World War II, there was little emphasis on specific curricula study or

specialization, and “World War II functioned to erase Progressivism’s influence” and introduced a period of “life adjustment” education (Pinar et al., 2008, p. 151; Marshall et al., 2007). World War II created an environment for

professors [that] captured the respect of the American public, and academic life was seen, for the first time perhaps, as crucial to our national survival. This development was to be underscored by the policy decision that led to the GI Bill and hundreds of thousands of war veterans flocking to the universities. (Atkin & House, 1981, p. 6)

Within the structures of the discipline perspective, university educators were able to give insight as to what the students at primary and secondary educational levels should have learned by the time they got to college (Posner, 2004). This was one of the first times noted that scholars within the university had an effect on the curriculum.

University professors had long been lamenting the quality of precollege education in the battles over teacher education policy. They had been saying for 50 years that students were arriving at the university without necessary preparation. The information high school graduates possessed was insufficient, inaccurate or unimportant—sometimes all three. What the education system needed was more involvement by the university professors in the creation of curriculum for the schools; more involvement that is by professors in the academic disciplines that constituted the high school curriculum. (Atkin & House, 1981, p. 6)

World War II had a significant impact on the importance of math and science in the curriculum, and subject matter experts who espoused a structure of the disciplines perspective were given primary roles in curriculum development. This influence was further strengthened with the launch of Sputnik (Posner, 2004).

As the prominence of science and mathematics in curriculum continued, the behaviorists became concerned with the learners and how those learners were experiencing the classroom and content. Behaviorists were concerned that instructional strategies promoted in a structure of the disciplines approach may not be effective for learners. According to these psychologists, curriculum development needed to focus not on content, but on what students should be able to do—i.e., the behaviors they learn—as a consequence of instruction. While considering the behavioral perspective and how students were learning, otherwise known as the “conditions of learning,” educators would reflect how students would acquire these behaviors “as they (educators) plan for instruction” (Posner, 2004, p. 58).

The structure of the disciplines curriculum applies to the sport management field if courses are required to be taken in a certain order or structure. Many times throughout degree programs, different courses will add depth and synthesis regarding the content matter. Certain courses or requirements may be recommended in succession, or prior to entering the internship experience. The program that includes the structure of the disciplines sport management program will build inquiry, especially with the emphasis in the evolving concentration on mathematics and science-based courses.

The curricular activities promoted through the behavioral theory would be student-focused rather than traditional-content focused. The behavioral theory focuses on what the student is able to achieve from instruction rather than focusing on the content. Educators who use this theory of learning focus more on the performance of the student while planning their instruction. The behavioral theory provides students with an environment to succeed, stressing the importance of competency skills, and providing the students with the ability to practice those

skills. Tyler (1949) developed behavioral objectives that met the technical focus and addressed the learners as well (Posner, 2004).

Through sport management curriculum, the focus of the objectives would be on the learner rather than on the content. The sport management classroom would be focused on the future sport manager rather than strictly focusing on the content itself. The behavioral theory will be the hardest to identify through document analysis without direct observation of classroom or interviews of students or professors.

The constructivist theory emerged causing challenges to the behaviorists throughout the curriculum sector (Posner, 2004). The constructivists were concerned with creating *meaningful learning*, which was a term that Ausubel (1968 as cited in Posner, 2004) offered to promote the development of learner-centered meaning as a way to increase the learner's ability to learn in the classroom (Posner, 2004). The constructivist theory involves the educator engaging the student to discover the intrinsic concepts and mesh them with new ideas and concepts. The constructivist theory focuses on what the student already has learned as a foundation for introducing content and engaging the learner in new areas of knowledge building. Student success depends on critical skills like problem solving, cooperation, and the ability to make productive decisions (Posner, 2004).

Constructivists, such as Immanuel Kant and Jean Piaget, suggested that the mind constructs information and builds upon the experience (Posner, 2004). The constructivists believed that, through their perspective, the educator serves as the facilitator rather than the primary source of knowledge in the classroom. Constructivists have developed different methods to assist the learner to build upon prior knowledge that may promote learning (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2009). The constructivists have taken an interest in the developmental level of

the learner as it contributes to the learner's abilities (Posner, 2004). The educator provides the framework for success in the constructivist classroom.

The business of sport continues to evolve, as should an instructional model that is associated with sport management curricula. The sport management classroom allows for putting theory into practice with the constructivist approach (Dane-Staples, 2013). Although there is limited research on the constructivist theory in sport management curriculum, it may be seen if prerequisites or requirements are needed prior to the admittance to the program. By using prerequisites, or prior work experience, as an admission requirement to the sport management graduate programs, the universities are recognizing the importance of using the undergraduate curriculum as a building block for the graduate level courses. Programs may also include a comprehensive exam or capstone experience, in which all of the prior knowledge would be required to complete the program. Dane-Staples (2013) documented the use of constructivist strategies within the sport management classroom, but this may be difficult to observe from a document analysis.

Even though each perspective is vastly different, many theorists and or educators have dabbled among different philosophies to determine what works in the classroom. Many sport management curricula have identified with a philosophy or perspective depending on the university's or program's mission, goals, or objectives for learning. In this study, the philosophy or perspective that underpins the sport management curricula will be identified to determine how the sport management field is portrayed by administrators, educators, and students.

### **Curricula Concepts**

When describing curricula, it is important to illustrate the concepts that are intertwined within the model of curriculum. As Posner (2004) noted, many items may contribute to a

curriculum. The curriculum may reflect seven common concepts, which will include scope and sequence, the syllabus, content outlines, standards, textbooks, course of study, and planned experiences. The scope and sequence of a curriculum provide what will be taught and how it will be articulated over the life of a student's tenure in the program. The scope and sequence include the outcomes that will be structured according to theme, content, or topic area. The syllabus describes the "plan for the course, which includes the goals or rationale for the course, topics covered, resources used, assignments given, and evaluation strategies recommended" (Posner, 2004, p. 6). The content outline is the blueprint for what the curriculum will cover. Many times when questions arise about a curriculum, individuals will provide a content outline. The curriculum standards are associated with learning outcomes and objectives and demonstrate the knowledge and skills that the students should possess. Textbooks are provided to guide the instruction. "Traditional texts present the content without much guidance as to what is important to learn or how to teach. Contemporary texts are more appropriately described as instructional systems" (Posner, 2004, pp. 6-7). Posner described the texts as instructional systems, because generally they include instructional packets or workbooks that guide the instructor and may even include materials for the student. The course of study is the series of courses a student must proceed through to prove proficiency or mastery of the content. The planned experiences were a thought from the progressive educators. The progressive educators suggested that a curriculum is more than just a series of documents. The planned experiences come from the thought that everything a student does in and around school (classes and extracurricular activities) is a part of the curriculum and shapes the student academically, mentally, physically, and socially (Posner, 2004).

Analyzing the documents associated with Posner's (2004) seven concepts of curriculum will reveal the philosophical perspective and sociopolitical influences that contributed to the development of the curriculum under examination. The analysis of these curricular documents will allow for emergence and understanding of the underpinnings of the curriculum. The foundation of the program lies within these concepts and how they are developed.

### **Types of Curriculum**

As the discussion of curricula continues, it is impossible to disregard the different types, which include the official, operational, hidden, null, and extra curriculum. The types of curricula will be evaluated through document analysis in this research. Although it may be difficult to differentiate each type through document analysis, the observation of documents may provide an idea of how the curricular elements are constructed. It also may provide insight into guiding elements regarding the hidden curriculum or driving elements that may influence the curriculum.

Each curricular type plays a role in each educational system. "The official curriculum, or written curriculum, is documented in scope and sequence charts, syllabi, curriculum guides, course outlines, standards, and lists of objectives" (Posner, 2004, p. 12). Curricular standards help administrators hold teachers responsible for their teaching and student learning. The official curriculum will be analyzed for each institution during this research in order to reveal what the institutions promote as central to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their graduates.

The next type of curriculum is the operational curriculum, which includes the content that is presented by the instructor and how it is presented to the student. Posner (2004) described the operational curriculum as including two characteristics: "(1) the content included and emphasized by the teaching in class, i.e., what the teacher teaches, and (2) the learning outcomes or standards for which students are actually held responsible, i.e., what counts" (p. 13). The



information used in the classroom that will be tested and taught are both included in the operational curriculum (Posner, 2004). By deciding what to teach from the curricula; teachers operationalize their viewpoints about the validity of their subject and give the students a specific perception (whether implicitly or explicitly) about what they cover in the classroom. The operational curriculum was difficult to observe through document analysis; however, I evaluated the documents for any information that assisted in the analysis.

The hidden curriculum is not generally acknowledged by school officials but may have a deeper and more durable impact on students than either the official or operational curriculum. Schools are institutions and, as such, embody a set of norms and values (Posner, 2004). The topics of the hidden curricula go beyond content. The hidden curricula generally include, but are not limited to, norms and values related to gender, race, sex, and socioeconomic class. These subtle cues tell students volumes about roles in society. Examining the hidden curricula may offer information regarding the underlying values and expected behaviors promoted by each program and how it was constructed.

The null curriculum (Eisner, 1994) consists of those subject matters not taught, and any consideration of it must focus on why these subjects are ignored. Thus, my analysis considered what is excluded as well as what is included in the documents. The extra curriculum comprises all those planned experiences outside of the school subjects. It contrasts with the official curriculum by virtue of its voluntary nature and its responsiveness to student interests (Posner, 2004). The extra curriculum may also enrich the school subjects that are included within the physical time allotment for subjects. The extra curriculum was challenging to detect through document analysis, but it was noted when it offered support to the curricula.

## **A Curriculum Framework**

Many researchers recognize Tyler as the designer of a “dominant curricular framework” (Posner, 2004, p. 15). The rationale for Tyler, developed here, begins with identifying four fundamental questions that must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan for instruction. These are

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler, 1949, p. 1)

Tyler (1949) wrote, “Many educational programs do not have clearly defined purposes” (p. 3). Tyler explained that many times educational plans will be made and improvements will be necessary to meet the goals of the program. “These educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed and tests and examinations are prepared” (Tyler, 1949, p. 3).

Tyler’s objectives were concerned with the learner’s experiences. When considering the learner’s experience, it was important to consider everything around the learner including the environment in which he or she learns, and that may include a formal classroom or informal field experience. Tyler (1949) believed,

Hence, the means of education are educational experiences that are had by the learner. In planning an educational program to attain given objectives we face the question of deciding on the particular educational experiences to be provided, because it is through these experiences, that learning will take place and educational objectives will be attained. (p. 63)

So as students learn, it is important for the information to produce a “cumulative effect” (Tyler, p. 83). “Organization is thus seen as an important aspect in curriculum development because it greatly influences the efficiency of instruction and the degree to which major educational changes are brought about in the learners” (Tyler, 1949, p. 83).

After the objectives have been created, it is important to determine if the learning that took place is associated with the objectives, along with the student’s satisfaction in the material. “It is important to make a more inclusive check as to whether these plans for learning experiences actually function to guide the teacher in producing the sort of outcomes desired” (Tyler, 1949, pp. 104-105). “The criterion for success is behavioral evidence that the objectives of the curriculum have been attained” (Posner, 2004, p. 15).

The curriculum framework served as a guideline for how I examined the curriculum. Because only documents were analyzed, I was looking for overt statements regarding the program’s purpose, experiences, organization, and evaluation. Overall, the framework served as a heuristic tool through which the documents were evaluated, and it determined what and who guided the curricula.

### **History of Accreditation in Sport Administration/Management**

It is important to understand the history of sport administration/management programs to develop a clear appreciation of where we should move in the future. This is most definitely the time to consider sport management from the standpoint of its past, its present, and its possible future (Andrews, 1953; Zeigler, 1987). Like many programs, sport administration/management has evolved over time (Pedersen & Thibault, 2014).

Even though sport administration/management may have gained popularity in the 1980s, the “first attempt of a program was in baseball administration at Florida Southern College”

(Baker & Esherick, 2013, p. 7). Much of the content was similar to those of a sport administration/management program; however, the program only lasted approximately 10 years, between 1949 and 1959 (Baker & Esherick, 2013). The next program was developed when Walter O'Malley of the Brooklyn Dodgers approached James Mason, a professor at the University of Miami, about the need for a sports administration program. The program became a reality in 1966 at Ohio University, which developed the first master's program in sport administration (Mason, Higgins, & Owen, 1981). From 1980 to 1985, the number of sport administration/management programs increased from 20 to 83, "40 under-graduate, 32 graduate, and 11 at both levels" (Parkhouse & Pitts, 2005, p. 5).

In 1985, a group of educators gathered, at the urging of Earle F. Zeigler, to identify the needs and concerns of sport management. The result was the formation of the North American Society for Sport Management. By 1986, 176 individuals had shown interest in joining. NASSM was created to assist with the stimulation and growth of research and scholarship in sport management (NASSM, n.d.a).

The authority over physical education and sport rests with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (National PE Standards, n.d.). According to Zieff, Lumpkin, Guedes, and Eguaioje (2009), "Since its founding in 1974, NASPE has been recognized as a leading advocate for federal legislation promoting daily, school-based physical education and funding for youth sport programs" (p. 46). The NASPE is made up of "17,000 members [which] include K-12 education teachers, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, sport management professionals, researchers, and college and university faculty who prepare physical activity professionals" (Sawyer & Judge, 2012, p. 205). Zieff et al. (2009) reported,

Among the organization's most important accomplishments, however, has been the establishment of national standards for sport and physical education and its involvement with the four accreditation programs that implement these standards (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education [NCACE], Sport Management Program Review Council/Commission on Sport Management Accreditation [SMPRC/COSMA], and Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences [CoAES]). (p. 46)

Due to the influx in the sport administration/management programs in the 1980s, the NASSM and the NASPE recognized the need for guidance and regulation for the programs. The two organizations felt it was important to guide not only students but also employers and educators in the field of sports management (COSMA, 2013). Sport management required guidance, consequently

the organizations (NASSM and NASPE) formally joined together in 1989 to create the NASPE-NASSM Joint Committee that would oversee the continued development of curricula guidelines for sport management. These guidelines were approved by the NASPE and NASSM members at their annual conferences in 1990. From this work came the creation in 1993 of the Sport Management Program Review Council (SMPRC), an independent entity acting on behalf of both NASSM and NASPE for the purpose of reviewing sport management programs. Since the formation of the SMPRC, the standards used for program approval have evolved. There has also been much discussion about moving toward an Accreditation process, a more recognized approach within academia. (COSMA, 2013)

Originally, NASPE-NASSM developed standards for sport management programs to use as a guideline prior to the development of COSMA. The NASPE-NASSM task force believed that the faculty that developed the curricula should continue to take ownership at the undergraduate and graduate levels and be a part of the curricula to ensure success in each of the sport management programs. The faculty plays a large role in the curriculum, and the joint task force noted the importance of contemporary knowledge, scholarship, service, and professional involvement (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993). The core standards for content at the undergraduate level developed by NASPE/NASSM included behavioral dimensions in sport, management and organizational skills in sport, ethics in sport management, marketing in sport, communication in sport, finance in sport, economics in sport, legal aspects in sport, governance in sport, and field experience in sport (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993).

The core content at the graduate level of sports administration/management programs from the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force's perspective should be congruent with the information the individuals learned from an undergraduate curriculum. The graduate core content, much like the undergraduate core content, is generic, which may allow for an institution to establish specializations within content (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993). The graduate core content included management leadership and organization in sport, research in sport, legal aspects of sport, marketing in sport, sport business in the social context, financial management in sport, ethics in sport management, and field experience in sport management. The Task Force made specific suggestions for doctoral programs that included breadth and depth of scholarship and research. The doctoral students may engage in courses that are highly specific to the content area or areas they choose to study (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993). The Task Force recommended that doctoral degrees be based on the students' undergraduate and

master's degrees. "The background includes familiarity with the behavioral dimensions of sport, management and organizational skills, marketing and sales in sport, communication in sport, research in sport, ethics in sport, and field experience in sport" (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993, p. 168). If students have no previous sport management experience, they should be expected to obtain the background areas in which they have no previous experience. Further suggestions for doctoral students include research foundations, sport management theory in an area of specialization, advanced cognate area (taught outside of the department), and an internship (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993).

Just as the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force had instilled guidelines and principles, so has the COSMA (COSMA, 2013). COSMA began the Accreditation Guidelines by calling for characteristics of excellence. "Characteristics of excellence" may include goals, guidelines, strategic plans, and continuous improvements that are consistent with the university and marketplace (COSMA, 2010, p. 2). Not only is COSMA concerned with the program development, but also how the faculty portrays the development of the program, evaluation, ethical viewpoints, and principles within their teaching (COSMA, 2010).

### **Commission on Sport Management Accreditation**

Again, just as a task force was needed when the first competencies were formed, NASSM, along with additional representatives, created additional movements with the SMPRC for accreditation. While working together, two additional forces were formed, including the "Accreditation Task Force and the Standards Task Force" (COSMA, 2009a). The goal of the task force was to examine policies, procedures and standards through a Sports Management Accreditation lens. The report was completed and presented at a roundtable discussion at the

2006 NASSM annual meeting, which allowed feedback from members from the previous attributers of the NASPE- NASSM (COSMA, 2009a). The discussions led to

the formation of the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) was proposed in January 2007 and draft accreditation manuals were provided to NASSM and NASPE members for review and feedback. Additional meetings were held at the 2007 NASSM and NASPE annual conference to present the refined model. In September 2007, NASSM and NASPE identified a timeline to officially launch the COSMA organization in July 2008. (COSMA, 2009a, para. 5)

“The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation is a specialized accrediting body whose purpose is to promote and recognize excellence in sport management education in colleges and universities at the baccalaureate and graduate levels through specialized accreditation” (COSMA, 2009b, para. 1). There are many benefits from COSMA by providing a “qualified accreditation process” students, future employers and academic institutions may feel comfortable that individuals were involved in a regulated program (COSMA, 2013). COSMA is not only committed to providing a quality accreditation system but continuously updates the curriculum as the field of sport administration/management evolves with the industry.

Institutions, students, employers, and the public all benefit from the external verification of quality provided through COSMA’s accreditation process. COSMA bases its accrediting process on principles rather than standards (COSMA, 2013).

COSMA’s Accreditation Principles represent its criteria for accreditation. The accreditation principles are based on best practices in sport management education, as defined by COSMA’s “Characteristics of Excellence in Sport Management Education.”

The principles are used to create a bond between each feature of sport



administration/management that allows for positive outcomes, evaluations, and improvements. (COSMA, 2013, p. 61)

COSMA is very descriptive in the use of its terms in regard to accreditation, because the accrediting body wants to assess outcomes in the most effective manner possible. COSMA suggests that standards cannot be applicable to each institution, but principles may be applicable to each institution and program. COSMA not only provides characteristics of excellence in sport management programs but also the scope of accreditation. COSMA created seven principles that entail the scope of accreditation that institutions should follow. COSMA's accreditation principles include outcomes assessment, strategic planning, curriculum, faculty, scholarly and professional activities, resources, and internal and external relationships (COSMA, 2010).

One national association, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), has been instrumental in the development of sport management curriculum in the United States (Sawyer & Judge, 2012). Professional organizations such as NASPE and NASSM have also expressed concerns about educational quality (Fielding, Pitts, & Miller, 1991). Accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting agency composed of professional educators within a particular field is the highest-level assessment (Fielding et al., 1991, p. 3). Past president of NASSM, Ming Li (2009), reported,

It is very important for us to have a national standard. Every institution can say we have sport management program. Maybe this is a way that the sport management circle can regulate itself: Establish some guidelines so that if you're not accredited, you have no business having a program. That would protect the industry and protect the students. (as cited in King, 2009, p. 4)

Fielding et al. (1991) reported concerns regarding accreditation that may include cost, strict guidelines, execution and overall superiority. “However, accreditation is a double-edged sword. To view accreditation’s real purpose—the improvement of educational quality—as an automatic outcome is naïve” (Fielding et al., 1991, p. 13). Just like many other attempts to solve education, accreditation may not be the correct answer for improving all of education; however, it does serve a purpose by providing guidelines for the programs that use it. Just like many attempts for educational improvements, it may take more than the accrediting agency.

### **Sport Management Curricula**

van der Smissen (1984) quoted a minister who preached on Voltaire’s saying, “‘Mightier than an army with flying banners is an idea whose time has come.’ . . . That time has come for Sport Management Curricula” (as cited in Zanger & Parks, 1984, p. 5). The quote continues to ring true today as curricula continue to evolve regarding sports administration/management field. Parkhouse (1987) stated, “Sport is of major importance in American society. The job requires a myriad of management, marketing, communications, and legal skills applicable to the sport setting and specific to the increasingly complex and multifaceted areas it represents” (Parkhouse, 1987, p. 93). As curriculum has been developed, so have curricular issues. Sport administration/management curricula are not immune to these issues. The issues will help define what a curriculum should include for most institutions.

### **Issues**

Over the years, the field of sports management has grown significantly (Hums & MacLean, 2013). “In the year 2009, it was estimated that graduates of sport management programs would join approximately 8,000 individuals who graduated with a focus in sports management or administration” (King, 2009, p. 1). With an increase of sport

administration/management programs and students, there will be a flood of individuals entering the job market.

Issues may arise throughout sport administration/management programs as sport management programs continue to evolve. But Case (2003) brought up an interesting question: “Why is your college or university going into sports management?” (p. 226). One of the most common “wrong reasons” is to offset declining student enrollments in other majors such as physical education and recreation (Case, 2003, p. 226). Many colleges and universities have noticed an increase in enrollment in sport management majors (Mahoney, 2008). So as the institutions have influxes of students, are institutions serving the sport management students in the most effective way possible? Schwab et al. (2013) reported,

The [sports administration/management] students receive a general management-oriented education that requires them to apply what they learn to the context of sport. This can result in a highly problematic teaching and learning environment for sport management students and the parks, recreation, and tourism faculty members who serve them. (p. 17)

With the growing number of sport administration/management students there will also be a need for increased qualified faculty. Mahoney (2008) reflected in the Zeigler lecture that faculty of a program reflect deeply on how “strong or weak” a sports management program will be. The administration should consider this fact when hiring new faculty for programs.

The push for curriculum coverage as a driving force in sport management education creates challenges for sport management educators who aspire to cultivate critical thinking and an issues-based approach to teaching and learning (Skinner & Gilbert, 2007, p. 126). Other researchers have not limited the approach of teaching or learning due to curricular approaches.

Although the issues of sport administration/management education exist, the main concern is what the sport administration/management curricula should include?

### **Courses Offered in the Sport Administration/Management Curricula**

What type of courses should be offered in sport administration/management curricula? In the “late 1970s, most sport management curricula were specializations within physical education programs, most faculty were physical educators, there were no sport management textbooks, and there were no scholarly associations or journals” (Sawyer & Judge, 2012, p. 8). Sawyer and Judge (2012) reported,

The future growth of academic programs in the United States will continue to originate from community colleges preparing students primarily to transfer to four year institutions and private institutions that will continue to reduce their reliance on physical education—teacher education programs and adds sport management programs or replace physical education programs with sport management programs. (p. 8)

The reasoning behind the transition is due to the flexibility with sport management curricula and the transferability to an online format, opposed to other programs that may require costly equipment and laboratories (Sawyer & Judge, 2012).

Physical education was one of the main emphases during the initial curriculum (in the early eighties). It moved from that focus to a more generalist format. Over the past decade, the movement has been toward an applied business focus” (Sawyer & Judge, 2012). Ratten (2011) identified sport-based entrepreneurship as being a useful theoretical framework for understanding sports management (p. 66). Since the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force formation and the development of COSMA, sport administration/management curricula have evolved over time not only in the United States but also on an international level (Pedersen &

Thibault, 2014). The new accreditation, COSMA, focus leans strongly toward an applied business focus (COSMA, 2013; Sawyer & Judge, 2012). COSMA has recommended principles for sport administration/management programs to follow for consistency (COSMA, 2013). COSMA suggests eight principles that should be followed for sport management programs. The eight principles that are included in the COSMA Accreditation Principles and Self Study Preparation are outcomes assessment, strategic planning, curriculum, faculty, scholarly and professional activities, resources, internal and external relationships and educational innovation (COSMA, 2010). The curriculum principle includes the “Common Professional Components,” which for undergraduates include social, psychological, and international foundations of sport, management, ethics in sport management, sport marketing and communication, finance/accounting/economics, legal aspects of sport, and integrative experience (COSMA, 2010).

Although some programs may choose to offer a specialty, the “sport management curriculum should prepare you for a career in one of the sport industries” (Ross & McCullough, 2014, p. 35). Sport administration/management is an important field to continue with current events, changes and new ideas that will be crucial for students entering the field (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Encouragement for scholarship, additional research, and readings should be promoted for sport administration/management students to prepare them for the industry. The curriculum should encourage outside opportunities through workshops or conferences in which students can network and ask questions of those outside of their current university. Additional experiences, such as employment, volunteering, and community service, will provide students with additional leadership qualities necessary for sports management (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Inviting sport administration/management “experts from at least 60 miles away”

(Mahoney, 2008, p. 7). will assist the academic leaders in providing the most up-to-date information

Merriman and Conn (1988) reported,

Everyone in a sport production environment, public or private, must practice sound risk management practices or jeopardize the entire production staff and sport business or institution itself. Reactions to sport law classes and risk management in services indicate that many people of all levels of responsibility lack appreciation of their legal duties in sport settings be they athletic, physical education, recreation, or intramural sponsored.

(p. 97)

Sports managers should prepare for the worst and hope for the best; however, it is important to implement sports law and risk management in curricula to continue to incorporate these concepts. “A field experience allows students to observe and assist professionals and learn about managerial responsibilities and the scope of the sport organizing in which they are employed” (Ross & McCullough, 2014, p. 36). Students will grow as a professional in the field experience (Cuneen & Sidwell, 1994; Gower & Mulvaney, 2012; Ross & McCullough, 2014). Many students may find that the field experience will complement the information they learned in the classroom setting (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Ross and McCullough (2014) reported,

Some students may be interested in complementing their education by obtaining specialized training. Students who have completed courses in subjects such as sport marketing, management, promotions, and sales are interested in further developing and refining these skills may benefit by participant in programs offered by professional trainers. (p. 37)

The field experience (otherwise known as the internship) will lead to growth of the student as a professional.

### **Graduate Curricula**

Graduate curricula began to expand in the 1900s to meet the needs of the educational system.

One impetus for adding on new research and doctoral programs was that in the late 1940s projections by some economists led to the conclusion that the expansion of American higher education, especially to accommodate mass higher education, would leave the nation with a serious shortage of qualified college and university faculty. (Thelin, 2004, p. 280)

If the United States economy was to depend on the expertise of scholars, both as scientists in industry and as professors in all fields, the pipeline was inadequate in terms of both capacity and quality. If national commitment to extending mass higher education was to play out in the coming decade, American universities were going to have to drastically increase their ability to educate, and graduate, students with Ph.D.s in a variety of disciplines—the future professors for a wide variety of institutions, ranging from small colleges to large research universities (Thelin 2004).

“Baccalaureate programs prepare students for entry-level positions in sport industry,” reported Ross and McCullough (2014, p. 34). Sport management undergraduate students are generally those who are interested sport management, or those from a variety of majors that are seeking opportunity within the sport industry (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Generally, the sport management curriculum at the undergraduate level consists of three components: general education, major courses, and field experiences (Ross & McCullough, 2014). COSMA has

provided recommendations for undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees in sport administration/management. COSMA refers to a common professional component (CPC) that should be included in all areas of sport management programs. COSMA recommends that the CPC should be included in each area of study.

- A. Social, psychological, and international foundations of sport
- B. Management
  - 1. Sport management principles
  - 2. Sport leadership
  - 3. Sport operations management/event & venue management
  - 4. Sport Governance
- C. Ethics in sport management
- D. Sport Marketing & Communication
- E. Finance/Accounting/Economics
  - 1. Principles of sport finance
  - 2. Accounting
  - 3. Economics of sport
- F. Legal aspects of sport
- G. Integrative Experience, such as:
  - 1. Strategic Management/Policy
  - 2. Internship
  - 3. Capstone experience (an experience that enables a student to demonstrate the capacity to synthesize and apply knowledge, such as a thesis, project, comprehensive examination or course, etc.). (COSMA, 2010, p. 11)



Undergraduate programs are expected to cover the CPC in a broad direction of the sport industry, which will benefit the students accordingly (COSMA, 2010, p. 11).

As students begin to embark on the career of sport administration/management, choosing an advanced degree may be an option. Each educational degree serves as a building block to the next degree, so, after the student finishes a bachelor's degree, the master's degree may complement the information they learned with additional coursework (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Some students may choose an advanced degree for additional graduate assistantship opportunities that are linked with an educational experience, especially if searching for a job after graduation is unsuccessful. Students may want to choose the graduate program according to their industry interests, research interests or internship interests. According to Ross and McCullough (2014), "Some programs are geared toward preparing students for positions in athletic administration with an educational structure, while others may focus in the private sector (professional sport) or public sector (e.g., community sport)" (p. 39).

As students contemplate entering the advanced degrees programs, there are two levels to consider: masters and doctoral. Typically, master's degrees will take the student 1 to 2 years of post-baccalaureate study (Ross & McCullough, 2014). Both the master's and doctoral degree use the baccalaureate study as a foundation for advanced study. Doctoral education is focused on a specific area of study and is pertinent for those individuals who seek the professional life in academia (Ross & McCullough, 2014).

The graduate programs in sport administration/management may vary from the undergraduate degree. According to the COSMA (2010),

Master's degree programs in sport management should require a minimum of thirty semester credit hours (forty-five quarter hours) of graduate-level course work. These

courses should be beyond the level of the undergraduate CPC courses. The thirty semester hours of graduate-level course work should be in courses normally reserved for graduate students. At least 50% of the course work in the graduate program should be offered by the academic unit/sport management program. (p. 18)

Doctoral programs are advancements to previous knowledge in the field, and sport administration/management is no different. Individuals who seek doctoral degrees are preparing to work in academia. The doctoral degree may require additional research and activities of scholarship, compared to the master's degree, to contribute to the field of sports management (COSMA, 2010). According to the COSMA (2010),

In addition, professional ethics relevant to the purpose of the degree should be emphasized in the program. The COSMA expects that the curriculum of accredited doctoral degree programs will be appropriate to the goals of the program and will contribute to the development of doctoral degree students into individuals capable of contributing to the academy. All doctoral courses should be rigorous and challenging. While it is acceptable for doctoral students to take some masters-level courses in a doctoral program, a substantial percentage of the required course work should be in courses reserved for doctoral students. (p. 19)

COSMA has also created admission suggestions for students that are enrolling in both the master's level and doctoral level programs. The COSMA Self Study Guide (2010) has recommended, "Each institution should have master's degree program admission standards in place that will help to ensure that students have a reasonable chance to succeed in the program" (p. 61). Each institution may have different admission criteria that may relate to student success. "Criteria may include such factors as performance on graduate entrance examinations such as the

GMAT or GRE, undergraduate grades, professional experience, performance in required prerequisite courses, or graduate courses taken prior to admission” (COSMA, 2010, p. 61).

The location in which a sport administration/management program is housed may be a marketing tool for colleges and universities. The school and department that the program is housed within may vary at institutions between the department of business; health, physical education, and recreation (kinesiology); public health; education; recreation; sport management; or a combination. Eagleman and McNary (2010) evaluated undergraduate programs and found that,

School of Health Physical Education was the most popular at 34.8 %; School of Business with 24.7%; School of Education with 16.7%, Other with 15.9%, School of Sport Management with 5.3%, Unknown with 1.8%, and School of Public Health with 0.9%.  
(p. 6)

Eagleman and McNary (2010) also included the frequency for the program name. Their results demonstrated that,

Sport Management was the most common name (89.3%). Other names that were included Sport Recreation/Leisure Studies (6.6%), Sport Studies (2.6%), Sport/Athletic Administration (2.2%), Sport and Entertainment Management (0.4%), Sport Hospitality/Tourism Management (0.4%) and (4.4%) of the programs fell into the “Other” category. (p. 6)

The present study will analyze the data to determine if there is a relationship between where the program is housed and what courses are offered. For example, if the program is housed within the school of business, are the courses driven by a business curriculum rather than a sport administration/management curriculum? How are these courses related to the

advancements of COSMA's CPC? The undergraduate research from Eagleman and McNary (2010) will lead to an interesting comparison with the graduate programs that will be analyzed for this research.

### **Conclusion**

When evaluating curricula it is imperative to determine what curricula represent both the educator and the student. Many different principles and concepts may influence the student and the educator. Learning philosophies and perspectives differ depending on curricula and assessment practices. Each sport management program may vary depending on how the courses are designed, assessed, and learning objectives are stated. As sport administration/management programs continue to multiply, it is imperative that students are learning important principles that will be applicable to the sports industry. COSMA was developed to create a unified curriculum throughout sport administration/management (COSMA, 2010). Even though many programs may not be COSMA accredited, I compared the graduate curricula with the COSMA principles to determine who was following similar principles within their programs.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using case study methodology to analyze graduate sport management curricula within the United States. Stake (2005) stated, “Case study research is not a methodology but a choice of what is to be studied (i.e., bounded system, bounded by time and place)” (p. 435). Others have presented it as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2009). The focus of this study was to examine graduate sport management curricula to determine common themes and how those themes align with the COSMA principles. Eagleman and McNary (2010) and Jones et al. (2008) evaluated the undergraduate sport administration/management programs, but little research has specifically focused on graduate curricula in comparison with COSMA’s principles. This research provides further information for educators and practitioners in regard to sport administration/management curricula.

#### **Research Question**

The following research question allowed for analysis of similarities and differences across sport management curricula in the United States. Through the analysis, the hope was to determine the richness of each curriculum and examine emerging themes that may develop regarding educational philosophies and sociopolitical influences. Although a single research question guided this study, specific research subquestions were included.

What are the similarities and differences in the sport administration/management graduate curricula among institutions?

To help illuminate the various comparisons sought, research subquestions included the following:

1. How many credits are included in the programs?
2. Does the program allow for previous coursework transferring into a graduate degree? If so, how many and what credits will transfer?
3. What specific content is included in the program?
4. Does the program require internship credits? If so, how long is the internship and how many credits are assigned to it?
5. How many programs are accredited by COSMA? What are the common characteristics of programs that are COSMA accredited?
6. What department, school/college hosts the sport administration/management program?
7. In what ways is the content articulated across the program?
8. How do the sport administration/management programs at the graduate level align with COSMA principles? How do the graduate programs espouse COSMA's

### **Research Design**

#### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative approach using case study methodology to analyze graduate sport management curricula within the United States. Qualitative content analysis contrasts from quantitative content analysis in that the qualitative approach focuses on how the researcher makes meaning of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 64). The focus of this study

was to examine graduate sport management curricula to determine common themes and how those themes aligned with the COSMA principles. But further, Geertz (1973) reported, “The essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them” (p. 26).

According to Krathwohl (2009),

These studies are primary efforts to understand a person, group, or situation. Such studies:

- may or may not build on previous research;
- have a question only in the sense of focusing on some phenomenon or process;
- usually present only selected data (that is often the extent of the analysis); and
- draw no conclusions, which allows for variability among the researcher. (p. 69)

From a research perspective, the case study approach that Krathwohl (2009) described will be sufficiently malleable to appropriately analyze the different spectra of curricula among graduate sport administration/management programs. The case study method is an investigation used to investigate a specific event, subject, or phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1989). Through a case study approach, the researcher draws attention to the question of “what can be learned from the single case” (Stake, 2005, p. 443). The case study investigates a phenomena or a “bounded system” and creates comparisons within a “single case or multiple cases” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Stake (2005) reported, “For a qualitative research community, case study concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of ties social, political, and other contexts” (p. 444).

Case studies have been conducted for a range of research projects. The case study is an inductive approach that creates an environment in which the researchers may develop theory as

they examine the information throughout the process. Intrinsic interests also motivate case studies because researchers will gain further knowledge regarding certain phenomenon (Stake, 2005). When a case study is used to gain generalizations about a process, situation, or case then it is termed as an instrumental case study.

Previous studies by Eagleman and McNary (2010) and Jones et al. (2008) examined undergraduate sport administration/management programs from a quantitative approach; thus, use of a qualitative lens to examine the depth of graduate sports management programs should add to the breadth of the knowledgebase. When examining sport administration/management graduate curricula, both an intrinsic and instrumental case study approach was taken. An intrinsic approach was fitting for this study because, as the researcher, I wanted to understand similarities and differences among sport administration/management graduate curricula and determine relative alignment with national standards. Although the purpose of this case was not to “build theory” specifically about the graduate curricula, the “case itself [was] of interest” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). The research also took an instrumental approach, because I hoped to provide “insight into an issue” (Stake, 2005, p. 445). Stake (2005) reported, “There is no hard-and-fast line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental, but rather a zone of combined purpose” (p. 445).

### **Researcher Role**

As the primary researcher of this case study, I was the primary instrument used to analyze and interpret the data from the document analysis. “Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants” (Creswell, 2013, p. 45). The qualitative researcher takes a holistic approach to “develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 47).



As the primary instrument of the current research study, ethics and admitting biases that may create misunderstandings was a concern for this investigation. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) reported, “Qualitative research is distinguished partly by its admission of the subjective perception and biases of both participants and research into the research frame” (p. 92). Qualitative researchers are concerned with the effect that their own subjectivity may have on the data and papers they produce (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; LeCompte, 1987).

The potential for bias was addressed in this examination to avoid misconception and misrepresentation. I am currently an instructor at a mid-sized, postsecondary institution in the Midwest, teaching in a sports administration/management program. The program houses approximately 200 sports administration/management majors. The institution includes both undergraduate sport administration/management, as well as a master’s level sports administration/management program. While working in sports management in a variety of different roles for approximately 15 years, I have been exposed to a variation of experiences, including youth sport clubs and recreational, fitness, and sports medicine facilities. I have been a certified athletic trainer for 10 years, working with intercollegiate athletics as well as interscholastic athletics. As a young professional, I understand the importance of a diverse curriculum for sport managers.

One of my committee members has been recognized for his significant contribution to the sport and recreation management field through his published works and has been a prolific writer on the topic. *Facility Management and Design for Health, Physical Activity, Recreation and Sport*, (Sawyer, 2013) “is considered the decisive text for planning, designing, constructing, and managing activity based facilities” (Indiana State University, 2010, para. 8). His contribution relates to the curricular changes within my current study, because he was a faculty member as

sport administration/management was evolving through the establishment of the NASPE-NASSM standards and the transition to the COSMA principles. While admitting biases toward the improvement of sports administration/management programs, the committee members assisted me throughout the research process in addressing my bias. The research proceeded through multiple reviews and consultations with my committee prior to submission to address any additional biases that may have gone unnoticed. The goal for this study was very similar to the suggestion by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) that “to become more reflective and conscious of how who you are may shape and enrich what you do, not eliminate it” (p. 38).

### **Ethical Concerns**

As the primary researcher, it was important to address my own individual biases. Assistance was requested from the committee to address any personal bias and any unforeseen situations within the data. At the completion of the investigation of documents, I was careful to avoid assumptions from the data. The data were examined with accuracy using methods of internal and external validity, which are the “coin of the realm, experimentally and morally” (Christians, 2011, p. 66). As a member of NASSM, the ethical creed for sport managers was followed and maintained during the research and professional service for all individuals and institutions.

### **Site Selection**

The site selection was determined specifically by which institutions included a graduate level sports administration/management master’s program. A preliminary search of programs for possible inclusion in the study was conducted in spring 2014 through the NASSM website. The preliminary sites included institutions that were located within the Midwest region of the United States. The institutions that were chosen included Eastern Illinois University, Indiana State

University, Southern Illinois University–Carbondale, Wichita State University, Eastern Michigan University, Lindenwood University, Defiance University, Illinois State University, University of Illinois, and Ball State University. The preliminary research sites included sites in which I was an instructor and a student.

The primary research sites included the institutions that were listed on the NASSM website as having a sport administration/management master's program. Only the programs that were listed currently on the NASSM database were examined for this current research study and were not limited due to location. At the time of this study, there were approximately 226 master's and master of business administration programs. As the research began, additional programs may have been added to the NASSM website, but I did not check all of the undergraduate programs for masters programs. For the purpose of this research study, 79 graduate level master's sport administration/management programs were evaluated out of 226 programs, which would account for approximately 35% of the total programs. The rationale for the sample size is addressed in the sampling section following.

### **Results from Preliminary Work**

As I began the preliminary work of only Midwest institutions, many themes developed throughout the data. The data were coded through an open coding technique, which allowed for the major categories within the research to develop (Creswell, 2013). From the open coding, I examined the documents further, with more detail, and performed axial coding. The axial coding provided depth to category of the data and allowed me to build connections (Strauss, 1987). The preliminary codes provided small amounts of data regarding graduate sport administration/management programs. However, I recognized the need for a dense description of the data, rather than the shallow overview that was performed during the preliminary work.

The themes of the preliminary research guided the methodology for the current research. As I evaluated the curricula, one apparent theme was the department in which the sport administration/management program was housed. This has been a questionable area about where sport administration/management is best housed, and there was variation among the institutions that were evaluated. As I evaluated the curricula, the departments in which the sport administration/management program was housed molded the core curricular components. In the 10 curricula that were evaluated for this preliminary work, the programs were housed as follows:

- Four programs were housed in the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Studies; or Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport; or Kinesiology and Recreation.
- Two programs were housed in Business and Entrepreneurship or the Division of Business Education and Social Work.
- One program was housed in the Department of Physical Education and Sport.
- One program was housed in the Department of Health, Promotion, and Human Performance.
- One program was housed in the Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism.
- Lastly, one program was housed in the Department of Sports Management.

Another theme that developed was the traditional areas that COSMA recommends. At the graduate level, COSMA does not instill the same common professional components as it does at the undergraduate level. Rather, it recognizes the needs for “traditional areas of sport management education: sport management, sport administration, sport marketing, sport business, athletic administration, event management, sport finance, sport leadership, and sport law” (COSMA, 2010, p. 5). COSMA recognized a graduate program as a sport management program

if 50% of the course work included the traditional core courses. The evaluation of the COSMA traditional courses led me to the question of how many programs were following COSMA's principles. Also in regard to COSMA, how many institutions were accredited? And if they were not accredited, does the institution value the information that COSMA had instilled in regards to sport administration/management curricula? As the programs were evaluated, it was thought-provoking if the programs were focused on a specific area of sport administration/management.

Lastly, the preliminary work provided me with a question regarding internships and length of internship for sport administration/management graduate programs. Sports administration/management programs included internships as a course requirement, as an elective, or as the final option, opposed to a research project or thesis. The amount of focus was apparent during the analysis of this small number of programs. The programs that included the internship mentioned work with intercollegiate athletics, professional sports, recreational facilities, and the possibilities for graduate assistantships. The programs that included the internship were focused on professional experiences that students could engage in. The programs that include the internship focus also included missions or program descriptions that focused on the experiential learning of the student. The learning experience of the student was evident when evaluating the internships, which lead me to investigate the educational philosophy/perspective of sport administration/management curricula.

### **Data Collection**

This study examined 79 sport administration/management programs, selected through purposeful sampling, that are currently recognized by the NASSM. The sample included master's programs extending to the master of science, master of education, master of science in education, master of arts, master of sport business, master of business administration, and a few

others less common. The data collection included performing an internet search for the sport administration/management graduate curricula from the institutions identified from the NASSM database (NASSM, n.d.c). The schools were divided among the regions of the United States as described by the United States Census Bureau as West, Midwest, Northeast, and South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). From those regions, the institutions were defined as public or private. Random sampling was enabled by the algorithm (random sample function) in Microsoft Excel. The first 10 private schools and the first 10 public schools in each region were chosen, which allowed for 20 schools in each region except for the West region. The West region only included a total number of nine private universities, so all institutions were included in this sample, but 10 universities were still included for the public universities in the West region. A review of the current curriculum from each individual institution's website was performed. I also identified any additional documents, such as program missions or descriptions, to identify themes, sociopolitical influences, or types of learning philosophies that take place within the program. The information was then analyzed and interpreted for emerging themes that addressed the research questions. Each program that was not accessible through internet access was listed on hold, or did not appear to be a sport administration/management program, and was excluded from the research if the data were not published through an online interface.

Data collection began with an internet search for the sport administration/management graduate curricula and associated program materials from the institutions identified from the NASSM website (NASSM, n.d.c). Current curricular materials from each individual institution from the institution's website were gathered and cataloged. Each curriculum was divided into regions of the United States as described by the United States Census Bureau as the West, Midwest, Northeast, and South. The programs were divided into regions to determine if there is

a difference geographically in the content and focus of the graduate sport administration/management programs. The division into regions also provided information as to where the COSMA accredited schools are located within the United States. The programs were divided into public and private institutions to determine if there was a difference on where the program was housed, what types of courses were offered, and how many different types of courses were offered. The information was analyzed and interpreted for emerging themes that addressed the research questions.

After evaluating the 79 different master's sport administration/management programs that were identified through the NASSM website with a purposeful yet random sample, many similarities and differences among each institution were found. Each institution was separated into regions and divided by whether they were a public or private institution. From the division of the public and private institutions, a random sample was taken to determine what universities would be evaluated.

Through evaluation of curricula, mission statements, learning objectives and other documentation, each institution was classified into the category of traditional, experiential, structure of the disciplines, behavioral, and constructivist. When evaluating the curricula, many times more than just one perspective was prevalent. While trying to distinguish between the perspectives, the focus was how I defined the perspectives in the literature review. Traditional curricula were identified as those that follow the previously established standards by NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force (1993) and COSMA's (2013) "traditional areas of sport management education" (p. 5). COSMA further defines sport management education programs as those that include at least "50 percent of the credit hours required for a graduate degree in the traditional areas of sport management education" (COSMA, 2013, p. 6). The experiential curricula could

include elements that are discrete or nondiscrete, meaning the experience may be more of a hands-on internship, practicum, or externship, or it may be more nondiscrete and be embedded within the curriculum. The structure of the disciplines was more difficult to identify within the sport management curricula. Further, the structure of the disciplines is not only focused on the order and structure of the curriculum but also the emphasis that is placed on mathematics and science courses. The behavioral perspective is focused specifically on the learner, which was difficult to observe through curricula; however, it was noted on a few occasions. Lastly, the constructive perspective was noted through curricula if the courses were more discussion in format and if they included concepts of Vygotsky's social development theory. Powell and Kalina (2009) noted, "Vygotsky is a firm believer that social interaction and cultural influences have a huge effect on a student and how learning occurs" (p. 245). The constructivist philosophical perspective and theory was displayed through similar instructional design models as Dick et al. (2009) systematic design of instruction.

### **Data Analysis**

As I analyzed the data, the research questions were addressed. "The first level of data analysis will develop meaning to the insider," or in this case myself (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 2). The next step of the analysis entailed creating meaning for sport managers, sport administrators, and educators.

The theoretical framework used to interpret the data was Posner's (2004) *Analyzing the Curriculum* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). This framework was used to determine what type of philosophy or perspective the sport administration/management curriculum is following. Posner identified five different philosophies that were used to analyze the curriculum in this research: traditional, experiential, structure of the disciplines, behavioral, and constructivist. The philosophy was



documented if it was identifiable through the document analysis of the mission of the program, institution, and curricular concepts. The curricular concepts were analyzed to determine how a curriculum is developed and if it has underlying ideological themes that have contributed to the curriculum.

The coding began with an open coding technique, which allowed for the development of major categories within the research (Creswell, 2013). From the open coding, the examination of the documents was taken further, with more detail and axial coding performed. Axial coding allowed me to build “dense texture of relationships around the axis of the category being focused on either implicitly or explicitly” (Strauss, 1987, p. 64).

The second phase included developing meaning for the outsider or the reader (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Patton (1987), an evaluation researcher, said that analysis does three things:

- It brings order to the piles of data that the researcher has accumulated.
- It turns big piles of raw data into smaller piles of crunched or summarized data.
- It permits the research to discover patterns and themes in the data and to link them with other patterns and themes. (p. 3)

As themes developed through the analysis, it was determined that interpretation of those themes was necessary. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) recognized that the interpretation phase includes addressing questions that the researchers and non-researchers ask. Questions that were considered throughout this research were what forms of curriculum were apparent through the document analysis. The forms of curriculum that were evaluated through the document analysis were formal, operational, null, hidden, and extra. Once the curricula forms were identified, relationships to COSMA were determined. Specifically, I determined if there was a relationship

to the principles that COSMA had developed and the sport administration/management curriculum.

The data collected for the research question and subquestions were recorded to organize and document the information. The data set allowed me to determine the frequency of occurrence for the following: credit hours for program completion, internship credits, program accreditation status by COSMA, the hosting school/college of sport administration/management programs, and how the sport administration/management programs were in line with COSMA principles/competencies. The data were collected within a table with frequencies only and then parsed by institutional demographics. The mean was determined for the program credits and internships that were required. That data and other data gleaned from document review allowed me to examine the programs more closely and develop themes that existed among the types of courses that were offered among sport administration/management programs.

### **Trustworthiness**

As the primary researcher in this study, validation strategies were developed through the help of my committee members. As the primary researcher, I admitted and am aware of my potential biases. The data were compared with different sources, such as COSMA's Accreditation Manual (COSMA, 2013) and COSMA's Self Study Guide (COSMA, 2010), Posner's (2004) forms of curriculum and philosophical perspectives, and other documents found during the document analysis. "When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity of their findings" (Creswell, 2013, p. 250). As the data were examined, I looked for evidence of themes that reinforced the inclusiveness of my interpretations of the data from the sport administration/management programs. The confirmation of themes was evident as

saturation existed among the themes that developed. Lastly, my committee members, who are well established in the field of both education and sports management, assisted me through peer review or debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined the peer review as individuals who will challenge my “methods, meanings and interpretations” by asking the difficult questions.

### **Conclusion**

A qualitative case study approach was utilized to analyze 79 graduate sport management curricula within the United States. The focus of this case study was to analyze graduate curricula and determine how they aligned with COSMA. The research also determined educational philosophies that were prevalent among the sport administration/management programs. The main themes that emerged through the analysis were philosophical perspectives, curricula confluences, and accreditation in accordance with COSMA.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to perform a systematic analysis between graduate sport management/administration programs in comparison with COSMA. The research developed specific curricular philosophies that are associated with sport administration/management curricular constructs. Many schools consulted the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force (1993) standards for curriculum and voluntary accreditation prior to the development of COSMA. The current research will allow for further expansion and improvement of existing programs and the development of new programs. Educators and practitioners may use this research not only to compare content but also to identify educational philosophies that drive sport management curricula.

The theoretical framework used in the evaluation of the curricula was Posner's (2004) curricular perspectives and philosophies. When evaluating curricula, it is imperative to acknowledge that curricular constructs vary in respect to their foundational philosophies and perspectives, and it is essential to recognize that each curriculum should be viewed as whole, not just by courses within the curriculum. If attempting to review programmatic curriculum in light of courses singly, it is difficult to draw a distinctive dichotomy between curriculum and instruction, and the attempt ends in obfuscating identification of the foundational educational perspective or philosophy. Many times the instructional methods embedded in given courses

differ from the program's guiding philosophy or vice versa. Generally, there is no one perspective or philosophy that is directly followed by each course within a curriculum, and the development of any curriculum may be influenced by more than one philosophy or perspective (Posner, 2004). In various situations the assessment practice reveals the educational perspective or philosophy. In this study, it was difficult to identify assessments at all universities, further confounding attempts to demarcate between foundational philosophies. In identifying foundational philosophies and perspectives, it is difficult to reach conclusions when one separates curriculum from instruction and assessment practices. Although I identified perspectives throughout the level of data collected, the limits of documents retrieved for analysis in my search restricted my ability to identify instructional practices.

The research question and subquestions guided the reporting of results for this chapter. Although one main research question was the driving query for this research study, many subquestions were addressed for additional support. The research question and subquestions are addressed below.

### **What are the Similarities and Differences in the Sport**

#### **Administration/Management Graduate**

##### **Curricula Among Institutions?**

When comparing curricula, I first identified the foundational philosophy. I examined the sample of 79 universities out of 226 total sport administration/management programs (approximately 35% of the total programs that offered a master's program) to determine how they aligned with the traditional philosophy as articulated through the conceptual framework identified by the NASPE and NASSM task force (Ross & McCullough, 2014) and further elaborated by COSMA (COSMA, 2013). When evaluating the curricula, 26 out of 79 (32.9%)

were following both the standards that COSMA and the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force put into place. The same number of programs, 26 out of 79 (32.9%), were following only NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force standards. Fifty-three programs (67.1%) did not align with NASPE-NASSM standards. When evaluating the curricula for COSMA's traditional areas of sport management education, 54 (68.4%) of the universities were aligned with COSMA's "traditional areas of sport management education." Twenty-five programs (31.6%) did not follow COSMA's traditional areas of sport management education but were close to aligning with COSMA. Even though those programs did not directly resemble a sport management program, the curriculum did resemble a traditional curricular format regarding the course descriptions and curricular format. For example, a master of science in physical education included a variety of courses that did not incorporate 50% of the traditional core courses that COSMA included. However, the program did include a few of the courses, such as athletics and the law and leadership and administration of physical education and athletic programs.

I next examined the programs to determine whether an experiential curricular philosophy existed. The experiential component was found during the evaluation of course descriptions, learning outcomes, and types of courses that are offered, such as theses or field component. The experiential philosophy was the most prevalent of the other four philosophies, with 67 (84.8%) of the institutions including some type of experiential learning component for the students. The experiences varied from the program description or mission, course descriptions, learning objectives, internships, practicum, capstone, and research or thesis experience.

When evaluating the curricula for philosophies, I did not find any obvious evidence of structure of the disciplines while conducting the document analysis. The structure of the disciplines philosophy would have had a curriculum that was rich with mathematics. When

evaluating the structure of the disciplines philosophy, the inquiry would have been evident through the assessment practices and what methods were used for mathematics-based courses, such as finance, statistics, and possibly marketing. Without the evaluation of assessment practices, it was difficult to determine if more emphasis was placed in the mathematics areas compared to other courses. Assessment practices would have guided the research and determined if more universities were following a structure of the disciplines philosophy.

The next type of philosophy evaluated was the behavioral philosophy. During the evaluation of the curricula, only two (less than 1%) of the institutions were noted as having behavioral components within the course descriptions, learning objectives, mission statements, or other website components. The behavioral components were difficult to observe through document analysis without the ability to know the assessment practices and activities that were included within the courses.

Although the constructivist philosophy had little documentation in relationship to sport management education, it was evident throughout the course descriptions, learning objectives, and mission statements. One program included a learning objective that stated, “Apply critical thinking skills acquired from exposure to specific functional theories and practices to strategic organizational and managerial issues in a sports setting” (St. Thomas University, 2015, para. 3). Seventeen out of 79 (21.5%) of the programs included constructivist elements, such as that noted above, within their programs. If the assessment pieces were evaluated, I believe the constructivist philosophy may have been more evident in more programs, even if the program was not aware.

Sixty-eight out of 79 (86%) of the programs included two different educational philosophies. Seventeen out of 79 (21.5%) of the programs included three different educational

philosophies. The most common philosophy was the traditional and next was the constructivist philosophy; least frequently occurring was the behavioral philosophy. As noted by Posner (2004), a program can have different learning philosophies within a single curriculum, and this was affirmed in the documentation examined.

When comparing the institutions, it was also important to consider the information within the sport management program. To help illuminate the various comparisons sought, the following research subquestions were examined.

1. How many credits were included in the programs?
2. Does the program allow for previous coursework transferring into a graduate degree?  
If so, how many and what credits will transfer?
3. What specific content was included in the program?
4. Does the program require internship credits? If so, how long was the internship and how many credits are assigned to it? When was the internship completed in relationship to the delivery of program content?
5. How many programs were accredited by COSMA? What were the common characteristics of programs that are COSMA accredited?
6. What department, school/college hosted the sport administration/management program?
7. In what ways was the content articulated across the program?
8. How do the sport administration/management programs at the graduate level align with COSMA principles? How do the graduate programs espouse COSMA's principles?



### How Many Credits Are Included in the Programs?

A range of credit hours was required when evaluating the number of credits required for graduation. The minimum credit hour requirement listed for graduation was the credit amount that was documented. The most frequent credit requirement was 36 credit hours; the next amount that occurred most frequently was 30 credit hours. Table 1 displays the number of credits that the programs required as a minimum requirement, which varied depending on these or internship requirements. COSMA recommends at least 30 credit hours for a sport management master level program.

Table 1

#### *Number of Credit Hours Within the Programs*

Credits Required	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage of Occurrence
30-33	28	35.4%
34-37	42	53.2%
38-41	5	6.3%
42-48	4	5.1%

### Does the Program Allow for Previous Coursework Transferring Into a Graduate Degree? If so, How Many and What Credits Will Transfer?

Although many schools may allow credits to transfer in for their graduate programs, that information was not readily available through Internet access. As an outside researcher, it was difficult to identify where this information could be found. This information was only found on 5 school sites in the 79 institutions. The following information was found:

- Two institutions accept 3-6 credits to transfer.
- Two institutions will allow up to 6 credits to transfer.

- One institution accepts 10 credits maximum.

This is valuable information for students, and it may be worthwhile to make this more readily available for future applicants.

### **What Specific Content Is Included in the Program?**

Attention was next turned to the specific content and its articulation across the program.

To compare the institutions, the first step was to create a spreadsheet with each of the universities and the courses they offered in the program; only those courses termed as sport administration/management according to the NASSM website were included in the review. The courses were first classified by category, which aligned with the traditional areas of sport management, and then additional courses that were suggested from the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force (1993) were included. Finally, frequent business courses were added. From the business courses, I added the additional courses to the analysis that started to occur frequently.

The categories that were analyzed included

- Does the program include a law class?
- Is the law class specific to business or sport?
- Does the program include a marketing class?
- Is the marketing class specific to business or sport
- Does the program include a sport management class?
- Does the program include a sport administration class
- Does the program include a facilities or event management class?
- Does the program include a finance class?
- Does the program include a business class?

- Does the program include an ethics class?
- Does the program include a research class?
- Does the program include an internship?
- Does the program include a sociology, society in sport, or cultural class?
- Does the program include economics class?
- Does the program include an accounting class?
- Does the program include an organizational behavior class?
- Does the program have a sports media, or communication type of class?
- Does the program have a governance, policies, or compliance class?
- Does the class include a class specific to statistics separate from research?
- Does the program include a sport psychology course?

Multiple electives were also included in some of these categories; however, if there was a duplicate course, it was not calculated, because a course was already counted for that specific content area for that university. Once the content was analyzed, it was inserted into SPSS and descriptive statistics were generated with a cross tabulation with the four regions of the United States (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West). The data were also inserted in a cross tabulation with a comparison of private and public universities.

The first course compared was law and the first step was to determine if the school included a law course within its curriculum. When evaluating the curriculum, it was found that 86.1% of the schools included a law course. Then the review was narrowed to the evaluation of sport law courses to determine how many public universities included sport law, how many private universities included sport law, and what regions demonstrated more prevalence of

courses with sport law. As shown in Table 2, the greatest prevalence of sport law classes were documented in the West region (84.2%) and the fewest were documented in the Northeast (65%). A relative balance existed between public (74.4%) and private (74.7%) institutions.

Once curricula that included a sport law class was identified, examination was undertaken to determine if the programs included a business law course—either a business law course or a sport law course. Comparative data are presented fully in Table 2. The Midwest region had the highest number of business law courses (20%), but the least amount of business law courses was in the Western region (5.3%). Business law was more frequently documented in the private institutions (17.9%) when paralleled to the public universities (5%).

The next step was to compare if the institutions included a law class of any type at all, whether it was a business law or sport law course within the sport administration/management program. In this step of the analysis, no concern was given as to what type of law course(s) the programs offered, as attention was directed to whether or not the law class was offered for the program. Table 2 displays the data found throughout the analysis regarding the umbrella law term that is offered within the sport administration/management programs. The comparison for the law course was remarkably high; both the Midwest and the Southern region included a law course in 90% of their programs that were analyzed for this research, and the Northeast was scarcest (75%). Private universities had a higher incidence of a documented law course (92.3%) when compared to the public universities (80%).

Marketing was the next course compared. Due to the variety of marketing courses, the first step was to determine how many programs included a sport-focused marketing course, then how many included a business-focused marketing course, then how many included a marketing course regardless of focus. As shown in Table 2, the greatest prevalence of a sport focused

marketing course was in the Southern region (85%); the least documented was in the Western region (57.9%). Public universities (75%) were more predisposed to document a sport-based marketing course when compared to private universities (64.1%).

The next comparison was if the program included a marketing course that was of a business focus. Table 2 displays the results of the analysis. In comparison, the most frequent region that offered a business-focused marketing course was Midwest region (25%), with the least frequent being the Northeast (10%). Larger frequencies of the business marketing courses were documented within private institutions (25.6%) compared to public (7.5%) institutions.

Table 2

*Programs That Include Sport Law; Business Law; a Law Course Within the Program; Marketing in Sport; or a Marketing in Business*

Region of the United States	Percentage of Programs That Include				
	Sport Law	Business Law	A Law Course Within the Program	Marketing in Sport	Marketing in Business
Northeast	65.0%	10.0%	75.0%	70.0%	10.0%
South	80.0%	10.0%	90.0%	85.0%	15.0%
Midwest	70.0%	20.0%	90.0%	65.0%	25.0%
West	84.2%	5.3%	89.5%	57.9%	15.8%
Type of Institution					
Public	74.4%	5.0%	80.0%	75.0%	7.5%
Private	74.7%	17.9%	92.3%	64.1%	25.6%

The next step was to determine, as a whole, which programs in this study included marketing within sport administration/management curricula study. Table 3 displays the documented results for the marketing course. While a comparison in the umbrella marketing

term may be noted, the most prevalent was in the Midwest (90%), and the least prevalent was in the South (10%). A larger number of private (89.7%) universities compared to the public (82%) universities included a marketing course within their sport administration/management program.

The next courses that were evaluated were sport management and sport administration. The sport management course content ranged from introduction to sport management, strategic sport management, sport management, global sport management, professional sport management, special topics in sport management, and a few others. Titles of courses that were included within the sport administration category included, but were not limited to, sports administration, administration in sport and recreation, administration in interscholastic athletics, college sport administration, and administration of sports programming. The sport administration course was combined in the same column in Table 3 because the findings were the exact same, between regions and between public and private universities. Though Table 3 displays the documented results of the analysis, a comparison between regions demonstrates that the West (52.6%) was the most prevalent, and Northeast and Midwest (30%) were the least prevalent in the documentation of sport management and sport administration courses within the programs for this research. Private universities (43.6%) included the sport administration and sport management courses within documentation more frequently than the public universities (32.5%).

The next course that was evaluated in sport administration/management programs was finance. Finance courses varied from sport finance, financial aspects of sport, advanced fiscal management, financial policy, and issues in financial management, managerial/corporate finance, financial management, fiscal practices in recreation and sport administration and a few other names. Although the data is fully conveyed in Table 3, a comparison can be made between the most prevalent in the Southern region (65%), and the least prevalent in the Northeast region

(55%). When comparing the differences between public and private institutions, 62.5% of the public universities included a finance course, and 59% of the private institutions included a finance course.

The next course that was evaluated in the curricula was the inclusion of a leadership course. The content of the leadership courses varied; topics included leadership in sport management, leadership dynamics, sport leadership, management leadership, executive strategies and leadership in the sport industry, administration in sport and recreation in leadership, leadership in structured situations, leadership and management of business organizations, and a few others. While the data from the analysis regarding the leadership course is documented in Table 3, a comparison was noted between the most prevalent incidence of courses in the West (63.2%) and the least prevalent in the Midwest and South (50%). Leadership courses were more prevalent within the private universities (56.4%) compared to the public (52.5%) universities that offered the leadership courses within the sport administration/management programs.

The course that was evaluated next in the analysis was a business course. The business courses varied in designations of course titles such as sport business, sport enterprise, sport business and personnel development. While Table 3 displays the results from the analysis, the most frequent region to include a business courses was the Midwest (30%), while the least occurring region to include the business course was the South (10%). Business courses were more prevalent within the private universities (20.5%) when compared to the public universities (17.5%).

Table 3

*Programs That Include Marketing; Sport Management; Finance; Sport Leadership; and Sport Business*

Region of the United States	Percentage of Programs That Include				
	Marketing	Sport Management/ Administration	Finance	Sport Leadership	Sport Business
Northeast	80.0%	30.0%	55.0%	55.0%	15.0%
South	10.0%	40.0%	65.0%	50.0%	10.0%
Midwest	90.0%	30.0%	60.0%	50.0%	30.0%
West	73.7%	52.6%	63.2%	63.2%	21.1%
Type of Institution					
Public	82.5%	32.5%	62.5%	52.5%	17.5%
Private	89.7%	43.6%	59.0%	56.4%	20.5%

The next curricular offering that was evaluated in the document analysis was ethics, which was combined with another course such as law at times. Quite a few programs included ethics as its own course, and some of the course titles for ethics included ethical issues in sport administration, sports ethics, and ethical perspectives in sport, ethics in sports, business ethics, professional ethics, management ethics, and a few other titles. The data for the ethics course is presented in Table 4. A comparison can be noted between the most prevalent region South (60%), and the least prevalent region the Northeast (25%). Private universities (20.5%) documented an ethics course more frequently than the public universities (17.5%).

The next course that was evaluated within the sport administration/management programs was to determine if the programs included a research course. Many programs included a research element and these varied in title from the methods of research in marketing, research seminar, introduction to research methods, research methods, research and statistics, research in



kinesiology or sport studies, research and design in experiments, to research methods in sport, and a few other titles. Although the data for the research course is displayed in Table 4, a comparison can be noted between the most prevalent region in the West (89.5%) and the least prevalent within the regions, which was the Northeast and Midwest (70%). Private universities (79.5%) included the research component more frequently than the public universities (72.5%).

The next step was to compare if the universities offered a culminating field or thesis component, regardless of whether this component was a field-based experience or a thesis. Because a field-based experience was the primary offering for the culminating component, that only is represented in the data collected. The field component, which may have been labeled as an internship, an externship, or a practicum, was compared by including it in a cross tabulation with the regions and the number of institutions that included a field component. The data for the field based component is noted in Table 4, however, the most frequent region that includes the field component was the Southern region (75%), and the least frequent region was the Midwest (65%). There was a balanced amount between public and private when comparing types of universities for the field component, 70% of the public universities include a field component and 69.2% of the private universities included a field component.

The next course topic evaluated in the analysis was a sociology-based course. When evaluating this course, I tried to include courses that were based in culture, society, and sociology of sport and of business. The courses in this category varied in title and description; some of the course titles included sport in society, sociology in sport, sociocultural aspects of sport, and sport in the social context, social historical foundations, historical and sociocultural aspects of physical education/sport, and multiple others. Although the data for the sociology-based course is noted in Table 4, documented comparisons can be drawn in the prevalence of the

sociology-based course in the West (57.9%) and the lack of incidence in the Northeast (35%). Of universities that offered the sociology-based course, private institutions documented the sociology course more frequently (51.3%) when compared to public universities (45%).

The next course topic that was evaluated in the analysis was an economics course. The economics courses presented a variety of titles from applied economics, managerial economics, the economics of business, to microeconomics and macroeconomics, and a few other titles. The data for the economics course is displayed in Table 4; however, comparisons can be noted between the most predominant regions which were the Midwest (25%), in contrast to the less dominant region which was the South (10%). Like many of the other courses, the private institutions (12.8%), had a higher incidence of the economics course when compared with the public institutions (10%) that offered the economics course within the sample.

Table 4

*Programs That Include Ethics; Research in Sport; Internship; Sociology or a Society-Based Course; and Economics*

Region of the United States	Percentage of Programs That Include				
	Ethics	Research in Sport	Internship	Sociology or a Society-Based Course	Economics
Northeast	25.0%	70.0%	70.0%	35.0%	20.0%
South	60.0%	75.0%	75.0%	50.0%	10.0%
Midwest	35.0%	70.0%	65.0%	50.0%	25.0%
West	52.6%	89.5%	68.4%	57.9%	10.5%
Type of Institution					
Public	17.5%	72.5%	70.0%	45.0%	10.0%
Private	20.5%	79.5%	69.2%	51.3%	12.8%

Accounting was the next course topic that was evaluated in through the analysis throughout the curricula. Accounting courses varied in titles such as managerial accounting, financial accounting and financial accounting for managers, accounting for decisions, management accounting, analyzing and interpreting accounting information, and a few other titles. Although the data is conveyed in Table 5, comparisons can be noted between the prevalence of the regions that offer accounting; the Northeast and Midwest (25%) with the highest incidence, with the lowest incidence in the West (10.5%). During the comparative analysis, out of the universities that were analyzed and included economics; 22.5 % were public and were predisposed to document an accounting course, compared to the 15.4% of the private universities that documented the course.

Another course topic that was evaluated in the analysis was operations management. The operations management category included courses such as operations management, human resource management, managing human resources, and a few others. The data that is included and documented in Table 5 compares the regions, but the most frequently noted region that offers the operations management course is the Midwest (25%) compared to the least frequent region that offers the course, the West (10.5%). Even though the incidence was not as frequent with the operations management course, the public institutions (17.5%) had a higher prevalence of the course offering when compared to the private institutions (10.3%).

The next course topic that was evaluated through the analysis was organizational behavior. The organizational behavior courses varied in title and descriptions from consumer behavior, consumer behavior and strategy, management of organizations, understanding fan behavior, organizational behavior and leadership in sport, and a few other titles. The next step was to determine the extent to which regions included the organizational behavior course.

Although the data for the organizational behavior course is displayed through Table 5, the data between regions was relatively balanced; there was only .8% difference between the highest region (West 15.8%) and the other three regions (15%). The balance between public and private university stayed consistent with the regions and varied by only .4% of an increase with the private universities.

Another course topic that occurred frequently was regarding media or communications. The descriptions and titles in this category varied as well. Titles included sport and the media, sports communication and public relations, sport media relations, strategic sport communications, media relations, communications in sport, organizational communications, communications in organizations, sport communication in the digital age, social media enterprise, and a few other titles. Although the information for this course is listed in Table 5, comparisons were noted for the most predominant region, which included the Midwest and the South (35%), and the least dominant being the Northeast (20%). There was larger gap between the private (38.5%) universities and public (20%) universities that offered the sport communication course.

A course topic that was also reoccurring during the analysis when evaluating the courses was related to governance, policies, or compliance. The group was categorized into a single classification because many times when discussing governance, policy development and compliance were topics that were covered. Course titles that were covered within this category included NCAA compliance, governance of intercollegiate athletics, Title IX compliance, governance, sport governance, policy and governance in sport, sport and policy, and a few other titles. The data for the governance, policies, or compliance course is noted in Table 5, but the Southern region had highest incidence (35%), and the lowest incidence was in the West (21.1%).

There was variation between private universities (41%) and public universities (17.5%) that offered governance or a policies or compliance course.

Table 5

*Programs That Include Operations Management; Organizational Behavior; Media or Communications; and Governance, Policies, or Compliance*

Region of the United States	Percentage of Programs That Include				Governance, Policies, or Compliance
	Accounting	Operations Management	Organizational Behavior	Media or Communications	
Northeast	25.0%	15.0%	15.0%	20.0%	30.0%
South	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%	35.0%	35.0%
Midwest	25.0%	10.0%	15.0%	35.0%	30.0%
West	10.5%	15.8%	15.8%	26.3%	21.1%
Type of Institution					
Public	22.5%	17.5%	15.0%	20.0%	17.5%
Private	15.4%	10.3%	15.4%	38.5%	41.0%

Statistics was another course that occurred frequently within the curricula among the programs. At some universities, statistics was included within the research course; however, other schools kept the statistics as a separate course. Frequently occurring statistics titles included statistical methods, educational statistics, analytical methods and information systems for business, and a few others. The data for the statistics course is conveyed in Table 6, and the balance between the most frequent (West 10.5% varying between only .5% to the Midwest) and least frequent were similar between regions Northeast and South (5%). Statistics was more prevalent within the private universities (10.3%) compared to the public universities (5%).

The last course topic that emerged through the curricula analysis was sport psychology. The group was classified as sport psychology because it was the most common psychology class, but other variations included applied sport psychology, sport and exercise psychology, advanced studies in psychology, social psychology of sport, and a few others. Although the data is documented in Table 6, the highest incidence was noted in the Western region (31.6%) and the least amount of sport psychology courses was recorded in the Southern region (20%). There was a higher prevalence in the sport psychology course among the private universities (33.3%) compared to the public universities (17.5%).

Table 6

*Programs That Include Statistics and Sport Psychology*

Region of the United States	Percentage of Programs That Include	
	Statistics	Sport Psychology
Northeast	5.0%	25.0%
South	5.0%	20.0%
Midwest	10.0%	25.0%
West	10.5%	31.6%
Type of Institution		
Public	5.0%	17.5%
Private	10.3%	33.3%

A large number of electives and other courses were included within the programs. Although the analysis allowed for variations of each course to be included within the categorization, these courses did not fit in the 22 categories that I developed. As I tried to identify basic, descriptive topics in these courses, these outliers defied categorization, so these courses were left out of the evaluation.

### **In What Ways Is the Content Articulated Across the Program?**

In determining how content was articulated across the curriculum, alignments with both COSMA and NASPE-NASSM standards were identified. Also, data associated with these specific themes were focused on in the evaluation of the courses in the preceding section. I started with the traditional courses of sport management, which include “sport management, sport administration, sport marketing, sport business, athletic administration, event management, sport finance, sport leadership, and sport law” (COSMA, 2013, p. 5). Courses that were included with the standardization of the curricula through the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force were added; these included “management leadership and organization in sport, research in sport, legal aspects of sport, marketing in sport, sport business in the social context, financial management in sport, ethics in sport management, and field experience in sport management (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993, pp. 165-167). I then compared both COSMA’s recommended courses and NASPE-NASSM’s recommended courses to see how they would compare across the regions and to determine which institutions were following the recommendations.

### **Does the Program Require Internship Credits? If so, How Long Is the Internship and How Many Credits Are Assigned to it? When Is the Internship Completed in Relationship to the Delivery of Program Content?**

The next important question when comparing sport management curricula was determining if programs required an internship. Each school may call it something different, such as internship, externship, or practicum, but, overall, it is a professional field experience that a student would not acquire in the classroom. The range of internship credits was 3 to 12. When comparing the field component from region to region, I was more general in how the comparison was performed. Specific data related to the field component is portrayed in Table 7. In

examining the internship requirement further, the following was found: one (1.3%) university did not require the internship for the students who were taking courses online, but they did require the internship for the non-thesis students. A number of schools (27.8%) did not require a field component or a professional experience, and 47 (59.5%) schools required the component. Some of schools required students to have professional experience upon admittance to the program, so this would eliminate the need for the internship. Other schools made the field component optional (2.5%) or offered the field component as an option to a thesis or research project (11.9%).

Table 7

*Internship Requirements for Programs*

Internship Required	Frequency of Occurrence	%
No	22	27.8%
Yes	47	59.5%
Internship Optional	2	2.5%
Internship or Thesis, Practicum or Thesis	7	11.9%
No for Online option, yes for Non-thesis Option	1	1.3%

**How Many Programs Are Accredited by COSMA? What Are the Common****Characteristics of Programs That Are COSMA Accredited?**

When evaluating the programs, many programs follow the recommendations of the traditional core areas of sport management education. But in the sample of 79 universities, only 3 (3.8%) were accredited by COSMA. I performed a cross tabulation between regions, then again between public and private universities. One of the accredited universities was in the Southern region and two were in the Midwest. Two of the schools were public universities and one was a private university. Two of the programs were labeled as sport administration, and one



of the programs was labeled as sport management. Two of the programs were in the College of Education and Human Development, and the third was in the College of Sport Sciences. The programs included an internship component, and one of the schools offered the choice between the internship and a thesis. Each of the programs included the traditional curricular component following COSMA. The traditional curriculum that follows COSMA groups the programs into the traditional philosophical perspective. The three accredited schools also have experiential components included with the internship and are indicated through the course descriptions and program descriptions which followed the experiential philosophical perspective. One of the programs also included a constructivist philosophy within its course descriptions with how students are engaged within the classroom.

Each of the three accredited programs was within a different department:

- Department of Health and Sport Sciences
- Department of Sport Management
- Department of Movement, Sport and Leisure Studies.

Other differences between the accredited programs included the type of degree that the students would earn when graduating. At each accredited school, the students would earn a different degree; one school awards a master of science, one awards a master of arts, and the last awards a master of education. The grade point average for acceptance into the programs also varied from 2.5, 2.75, and 3.0 on a 4.0-point scale. One of the schools also included an extracurricular component with student field trips posted on the website.

Although there were only three (3.8%) accredited sport administration/management programs included in the sample, the schools that offered an accredited program had some similarities and some small differences. Even though 76 of the 79 (96.2%) programs were not

accredited by COSMA, many followed the traditional core of courses recommended by COSMA (68.4%). Some of the programs (32.9%) that did not follow the traditional core that was designed by COSMA were still following the standards that were instilled by the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force (1993).

### **What Department, School/College Hosts the Sport Administration/Management Program?**

When conducting the research for the graduate sport/administration programs, it was difficult to determine the department, school/college housing the program. Many times the website or the course catalog listed the school/college or the department, but it did not always list both. Moreover, the variation in the names of colleges with which the programs were associated presented specific challenges to clustering attributions. There were 32 different college names that host a sport administration/management program, and 14 programs (17.7%) did not list a college. The programs that did not list a college may belong to a college, but I had difficulty identifying the college from the Internet search of the course catalog and the program website. Programs were most frequently housed in the College of Education (17.7%), with a close second being the College of Business (10.1%); there may have been others that could have been associated with either of these colleges but the attribution was not clear because of the name of the college. Thus, because of the variation of the names of colleges, these data were too broad to determine an accurate cross tabulation. Table 8 represents the findings generally.

Table 8

*College Location of Program*

College	Frequency	% of Occurrence
Administrative Science	1	1.3%
Applied Arts & Sciences	1	1.3%
Applied Science & Technology	2	2.5%
Arts & Sciences	3	3.8%
Behavioral & Applied Science	1	1.3%
Business	8	10.1%
Business & Economics	1	1.3%
Business & Entrepreneurship	1	1.3%
Business & Management	2	2.5%
Business, Education, & Social Work	1	1.3%
College of the Pacific	1	1.3%
Education, Health, & Human Services	1	1.3%
Education	14	17.7%
Education & Human Development	4	5.0%
Education & Human Sciences	1	1.3%
Education & Human Ecology	1	1.3%
Education & Professional Studies	1	1.3%
Education Human & Health Services	1	1.3%
Graduate & Professional Studies	1	1.3%
Health, Human Performance & Recreation	1	1.3%
Health & Human Sciences	2	2.5%
Health & Human Services	1	1.3%
Health Sciences	2	2.5%
Hospitality, Sport & Recreation Management	1	1.3%
Kinesiology & Sports Studies	1	1.3%
Kinesiology Recreation & Sport	1	1.3%
Leadership	1	1.3%
Natural Resources	1	1.3%
None listed	14	17.7%
Professional Studies	1	1.3%
Sport & Human Dynamics	1	1.3%
Sport Sciences	1	1.3%
Tourism & Hospitality Management	1	1.3%
Total	79	100.0%

The next comparison in the data was also a broad comparison, because it compared the department in which the program was housed. When examining some of the universities, it was difficult to identify the department. It may have been assumed that the sport administration/management program was its own department, but I did not make that assumption. If the department listed was not clear, I labeled it as none listed. The most frequent department listed was the Sport Management Department with 15 (18.9%) universities. The next most frequently identified department was the Kinesiology, which was found at 12 (15.2%) universities, a few more included variations of names. The next highest occurrence was the Business Department with 7 (8.8%) universities, but there were a few variations of business titles that increased the frequency. Nine (11.4%) programs did not include a department, or it was not easily found through document analysis. Overall, of the 79 programs examined, there were 37 different variations in department names, and 9 programs did not have their department listed. The findings are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

*Department Where Program Is Housed*

Department	Frequency	% of Occurrence
Applied Physiology & Wellness	1	1.3%
Business	7	8.8%
Business & Economics	1	1.3%
Business & Entrepreneurship	1	1.3%
Center for Sport Leadership	1	1.3%
Communication	1	1.3%
Education	1	1.3%
Educational Leadership	1	1.3%
Educational Leadership, Sport Studies, & Educational Psychology	1	1.3%
Exercise & Sport Science	1	1.3%
Exercise Science & Physical Education	1	1.3%
Exercise Science, Health Studies, Physical Education, & Sport Management	1	1.3%
Foundations Leadership & Administration	1	1.3%
Health & Sports Sciences	2	2.5%
Health Exercise, & Sport Sciences	1	1.3%
Health, Exercise, & Sport Sciences	1	1.3%
Health, Human Performance, & Recreation	1	1.3%
Human Movement, Sport, & Leisure Studies	1	1.3%
Human Performance & Physical Education	1	1.3%
Human Science	1	1.3%
Kinesiology	12	15.2%
Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education	1	1.3%
Kinesiology & Recreation	1	1.3%
Kinesiology and Health	1	1.3%
Kinesiology, Sport, & Leisure Studies	1	1.3%
Leadership	1	1.3%
None listed	9	11.4%
Parks, Recreation, & Tourism Management	1	1.3%
Physical Education School & Public Health	1	1.3%
Recreation & Sport Administration	1	1.3%
Recreation & Sport Management	1	1.3%
Sport & Entertainment Management	1	1.3%
Sport Business Management	1	1.3%
Sport Management	15	18.9%
Sport Management Studies	1	1.3%
Sport Science	1	1.3%
Sport Studies	1	1.3%
Sports & Physical Education	1	1.3%
Sports Administration	1	1.3%
Total	79	100%

**How Do the Sport Administration/Management Programs at the Graduate Level Align With COSMA Principles? How Do the Graduate Programs Espouse COSMA's Principles?**

COSMA focuses learning on principles rather than standards because it can measure the learning objectives of education while “promoting excellence in sport management education” (COSMA, 2013, p. 3). Difficulty arose when examining the curricula for objectives and how they align with COSMA principles, because many universities do not post syllabi online or, if they do, one must use a passcode to attain access. The focus of this study was on COSMA's Principle 3 Curriculum, specifically, 3.6 the Masters Curriculum. Overall, when comparing the universities to that COSMA principle, although only 3.8% of the programs were accredited, 68.4% of the programs were aligned with COSMA's traditional core areas of sport management education. The universities that were accredited by COSMA were more forthcoming about their program, their objectives, and what is provided in terms of curriculum. For example, one of the accredited programs stated

Master of Arts in Sport Administration program prepares you for a career in a variety of sport-related occupations through our intensive academic regimen along with numerous opportunities to gain practical, hands-on experience. Courses include sport marketing & promotion, sport law, sport finance, sport facility & venue management, and sport organization & administration—to name a few. (Wingate University, 2015, para. 2)

The programs that are accredited list the COSMA logo and explain the importance of accreditation for each of their programs. Some institutions noted that they were following COSMA's principles. Some of the institutions also noted they were following the NASPE-NASSM standards.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the results demonstrated themes among the similarities and differences among regions between the graduate sport administration/management programs. Three main themes of philosophical perspective, coursework in the curricula, and accreditation and its association with COSMA developed and emerged throughout the results. Additional subthemes emerged among the larger themes.

The first theme that evolved through the results was the philosophical perspective. The philosophical perspective of graduate sport management curricula was guided primarily by COSMA's traditional core sport management courses. COSMA's recommendation of traditional education was guided by a confluence of Posner's (2004) philosophical perspectives with traditional and experiential seeming to be dominant followed by constructivism. The experiential and constructivist are the most conducive to implementing the COSMA/traditional sport management curriculum. It seemed as if the experiential and constructivist philosophical perspectives were most favorable because these were the most detectible through program and learning objectives, and course descriptions.

Another theme that emerged from the data was the coursework within the curriculum. Coursework varied between institutions; however, many of the programs (68.4%) were following recommendations of COSMA by including 50% of the traditional core sport management courses. Subthemes that emerged from the coursework included the number of credit hours, the transfer credits, and the coursework that was included within the program. Similarities were found on the amount of emphasis or requirement that the university placed on the internship. Over half of the programs continue to place emphasis on the field experience, and other programs continue to make it optional. Less than 30% of the programs have eliminated the

field experience. The elimination of the field experience may be due to requirements of professional experience prior to program admittance or the program focus. For example, some business programs did not require a field experience.

A subtheme that emerged was the comparison between regions, including the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West. The next comparison was between the types of institution—public or private. The curricula were examined by regions and by public and private institutions. When the curricula was compared within regions, the region that was the most compliant with the courses examined in this study was the Midwest. The Midwest predominantly led with the business-oriented courses. The region that included the highest amount of institutions with courses that were in COSMA's traditional core was the Western region. The region included the most institutions that were following the recommendations made by the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force was the Western Region. When comparing public and private institutions, a few courses were very similar, such as organizational behavior and the comparisons law course offering as a general term. However, overall when comparing the types of institutions, the private institutions included more of the courses that were evaluated in this research study. However, when the comparison was narrowed to courses that were included within the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force recommendations, the public and the private institutions included the same amount of courses. Nonetheless, when comparing the institutions for COSMA's traditional core areas of sport management education, the private institutions evaluated in this study included more of the traditional areas of sport management education compared to the public institutions that were evaluated for this research.

The third theme that emerged was accreditation and its association with COSMA. The research demonstrated that only 3.8% of the programs from the entire sample were accredited by



COSMA. According to COSMA, only 16 programs at 14 universities are accredited currently by COSMA (COSMA, 2009c). The small amount of accredited graduate programs demonstrates that programs may follow the traditional core principles without going through accreditation procedures. There are multiple other principles that universities must comply with before accreditation, and being compliant with the curricular principle may be the first step.

Themes evolved and similarities were found among the educational philosophies, course content, program requirements, and the colleges and department within which that program is housed. The programs were compared to COSMA's principles for curriculum to determine if the curricula were aligned with the accrediting agency for sport management. Educational philosophies were rich with traditional content, but also included experiential and constructivist philosophical perspectives, which were recognizable throughout the analysis. Although few programs in this research were accredited, programs continued to follow the traditional areas of sport management education. The Western region was the most compliant with the traditional areas of sport management education instituted by COSMA. The private institutions were more compliant in the traditional areas of sport management education according to COSMA, and overall for courses in this research. However, when compared with the NASPE-NASSM, the public and private universities included the same amount of courses that complied with the standards that the joint task force had recommended.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A transformation in sanctioning organizations from the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force to the COSMA has contributed to compliance questions regarding curricula. According to COSMA, only 17 graduate sport management programs are currently accredited at 10 universities (COSMA, n.d.). NASSM lists 226 graduate sport administration/management programs, which leaves 209 that are not accredited (NASSM, n.d.c). Although accreditation is not a requirement for sport management programs, a major purpose of this study was to evaluate the similarities and differences among the sport administration/management programs with COSMA's principles as a major focus.

The universities were chosen from a purposeful sample between regions, that sample being divided between public and private institutions. Common themes resulting from the data analysis included: philosophical perspectives, confluences within the curriculum, and accreditation. This chapter discusses these findings in detail and concludes with interpretations and recommendations within the discipline.

#### **Discussion**

Three main themes emerged from the data results. The first theme was the philosophical perspective embedded in each program and its influence on the curricula. The second main theme that emerged and was generated from the data was the confluences within the coursework

and how coursework was articulated across the curriculum. The third theme was accreditation, specifically by COSMA, and how it may or may not impact a program.

### **Philosophical Perspective**

The philosophical perspective theme emerged quickly while using Posner's (2004) philosophies as the theoretical framework. When evaluating the curricula, the first task was to determine what educational philosophy the curricula most closely resembled. Initially, the traditional curriculum appeared to be the most easily identifiable. According to the COSMA (2013) Accreditation Process Manual, "The following courses are considered to be the traditional areas of sport management, sport administration, sport marketing, sport business, athletic administration, event management, sport finance, sport leadership, and sport law" (p. 5). When COSMA evaluates a sport management program, "50% or more of the total credit hours" of the courses should originate from the traditional areas of the sport management education to be considered a sport management program (COSMA, 2013). A comparison was made to the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force accreditation standards, which included generic areas such as: "management leadership and organization in sport, research in sport, legal aspects of sport, marketing in sport, sport business in the social context, financial management in sport, ethics in sport management, and field in sport management" (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993, pp. 7-9). Thus, traditional sport management education was identified as a standardization of courses for graduate sport management curricula. The programs that were labeled as traditional, without alignment to COSMA or NASPE-NASSM, were labeled as such because the programs were a more traditional format as far as education standards, according to Posner's (2004) definition. Therefore, the traditional philosophy was assigned if the program was following COSMA's curricular principles or NASPE standards.

The comparison between programs to detect COSMA's traditional areas of sport management was performed through course analysis. When evaluating the programs to determine how many were following COSMA, 54 programs (68.4%) were following the COSMA recommendations for the curriculum principle, which demonstrates that 50% of their program was originating from the traditional areas of sport management education. So, although many of the schools that were evaluated in this research were not COSMA accredited, at least 50% of the curricula that programs offered were from the sport management traditional core.

In the comparison of programs to the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force (1993) Accreditation Standards, many programs were within one or two courses of meeting the standards; however, the course that was generally missing was ethics or the internship. When analyzing the data, the many names that were used for the field experience included internship, practicum, externship, mentorship or field experience; but many programs opted for an online option, and other programs used the student's previous business experience as an admittance factor for the graduate program. Previous field or business experience would allow the elimination of an experiential learning course. However, as I was limited from document analysis, the data were limited without speaking to the specific department or a representative from the department to determine if this was the direct cause. Many times ethics is combined within the sport management curriculum and is emphasized by the NASSM's Code of Ethics for sport managers. The other course that NASPE-NASSM recognizes is sport business in the social context, which can allow for sport business courses or the sociology or sport-in-society types of courses. On one occasion, a marketing course was eliminated from following NASPE-NASSM. Marketing was generally one of the most popular courses among the programs; however, one of the programs chose to omit it.

Certain graduate sport management programs have defined a specialization or emphasis. The specializations or emphasis areas have limited the ability to focus on the traditional areas of sport management education. One program was focused on sport communications; in that case, the comparison for this research study did not work, but those programs are a crucial asset to students who want to focus on that area of expertise. Other programs were focused more on business rather than on the traditional areas of sport management. The programs that were labeled as traditional, without alignment to COSMA or NASPE-NASSM, were labeled as such because the programs were more of a traditional format as far as education standards, according to Posner's (2004) definition.

The experiential philosophy curricula was the most apparent through learning objectives, course descriptions, types of courses, course requirements, and or assessment practices. Verner et al. (2005) identified two different types of experiential learning in sport management education: discrete and nondiscrete (p. 336). Experiences or activities that are performed off-campus and are independent from the classroom are considered a discrete experience. The discrete experiences are better known as the field experiences or the internships (Verner et al., 2005). The nondiscrete experiences are within the classroom and are known as experiential classroom techniques, such as group activities that encourage role playing, field trips, and any real-world simulation activities (Verner et al., 2005). Both discrete and nondiscrete experiential learning were documented within the curricula during the analysis. The field experience is the most noted discrete experience, and the course descriptions are included in the nondiscrete experiences for the learners. Experiential learning was illustrated through the activities that the courses provided, the program's mission, the learning objectives. The thesis and internship may also be an experiential learning skill for the learner. A few of the programs were straightforward

in that they embraced experiential learning within their curricula. The experiential philosophy was the most prevalent of the other four philosophies, with 67 (84.8%) of the institutions including some type of experiential learning component for the students.

During the document analysis, the structure of the disciplines philosophy was not evident (0%) when compared to the other four types of philosophies. The lack of evidence may be because the focus of the study was on sport administration/management education rather than on evidence of research requirements within the curricula. The focus of this study was not to prove the emphasis on research, for example with finance and research requirements including statistics or qualitative methodology, but on what courses were included and how the courses were conducted. If interviews or surveys had been conducted in this research, a question may have asked what courses do you find are most important in the sport management curriculum? Each program may have answered differently, which would have left more evidence for the structure of the disciplines philosophy perspective. For example, finance is a course that is included as part of COSMA's traditional core sport management components as well as the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force standards. Finance is generally included as part of a sport administration/management program because it is pertinent to understand the financial effects and situations that a sport organization may encounter (DeSchriver, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2014). However, research methodology regarding finance was not a focus or driving focus of the program.

Although the behaviorist philosophy was documented in 2.5% of the curricula evaluation, it may have been more evident if the assessment practices were accessible. Tyler (1949) theorized that the learner should influence objectives of the instruction. In the curricula where it was observed, it was noted in the learning objectives and the course objectives. Evidence of the

behavioral perspective was noted in the curriculum when the focus was on what the learner gained from the material, instead of the traditional statement of “students will understand” from the information. Rotter (1954) and Bandura (1997) were also significant theorists when considering social learning theory and social cognitive learning theory through the behavioral perspective. Richey, Klein, and Tracey (2011) noted, “A basic assumption of social cognitive theory is that learners draw out information from observing the behaviors of others, and then make decisions about which of these behaviors to accept and perform” (p. 61). Observation and social interaction is an important element to the behavioral perspective and will be pertinent to the learning environment, as Tyler (1949), Rotter (1954), and Bandura (1997) recommended.

The constructivist philosophy was noted in 21.5% of the programs that included constructivist elements within their curricula. Through the constructivist philosophy, key terms observed through the documentation were compose, analyze, and evaluation, which is similar to the Dick et al. (2009) *Systematic Design of Instruction*. Just as noted in Chapter 4, it is very difficult to separate educational philosophy from instruction and vice versa. Dick et al. (2009) offered a constructivist method that uses many different methods to systematically offer instructional strategies. Although not all phases of this specific method were identified in course descriptions, learning objectives, or mission statements, there were correlations between the programs and this specific method that were evident to me as the researcher as I was identifying the constructivist method. Dane-Staples (2013) discussed, “The foundations of constructivist learning and specific teaching strategies that may be used in the sport management classroom such as the Fishbowl, Active Opinion and Talking Circles” (pp. 25-33). The constructivist perspective will allow those programs that are recognized as only traditional, as adopting a new method and philosophy to incorporate the learner with the material that is to be acquired. A

constructivist classroom will allow for classroom activities that encourage collaboration so the learners may learn from their peers.

Another piece that was evident was the amount of social interaction and/or discussion that was evident in the constructivist perspective. Vygotsky (1962) believed that the role of social interaction was imperative among individuals in learning. When discussing concepts, it allows the learner to affirm or disaffirm information, which in turn allows the learner to create meaning with the information, and then become part of the child's development (Vygotsky, 1978). "Along the same lines of cooperative learning, Vygotsky also used scaffolding in his theory, to understand that children learn more effectively when they have others to support them" (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 244). Vygotsky's theory of social interaction may be applicable to the graduate sport administration/management classroom, because students will be able to share previous experiences with one another. Along with social interaction, the learner will be able to use scaffolding, because, at the graduate level, many times the support of the instructor is gradually removed so the learner may work either collaboratively within one another or independently to build upon prior knowledge.

Through document analysis, there was evidence of multiple philosophies present among programs. The blend of multiple philosophies was evident and the combinations included:

- Traditional, behavioral, and constructivist.
- Traditional, experiential, and behavioral.
- Traditional, experiential, and constructivist.
- Traditional and experiential.



The combinations allowed for the conception that there is no one ideal approach for a curriculum. Instructional methods will vary from course to course and from classroom to classroom to meet the needs of the learner. Variations were noted in this research, which would lead to further research in educational philosophy and instructional methods within the sport management classroom and how it interrelates with curricula.

### **Curriculum Confluences**

As I created parallels among the programs, and themes developed, one theme that emerged was how the programs are structured. The first criteria for the curricula that was assessed was how many credits were included within the program. The most frequently occurring number was 36 credits within a sport management program, with the next in line being 30 credit hours. Thirty credit hours is the lowest number of credits; however, some programs required 24 credits plus thesis credits or 28 credits plus thesis credits. For the purpose of this study, the theses credits were added to the program requirements, with the assumption that students finished those credits for degree completion. According to the COSMA (2010) Accreditation Principles and Self Study Preparation, it is recommended that a sport management program have a “minimum of 30 credits of graduate coursework in sport management education” (p. 10). Each program always allows additional credits to be taken, but the minimum must be taken for graduation. Many times, it seemed as if the options of more credits were associated with specializations, emphasis, or more electives in a particular area. As programs are developed or revised, the credit requirement is a valuable tool for universities because it is important to determine what other comparable programs are requiring.

A curriculum theme evolved regarding the number of transferable credits that the university would allow for each student admitted to the graduate program. Transfer credit

information was more difficult to identify (12.6% of schools) through document analysis; however, as a student meets with an advisor or counselor, this information may be presented to the student. The amount of transfer credits varied: two institutions (2.5%) accepted 3-6 credits to transfer, two institutions (2.5%) allowed up to 6 credits to transfer, one institution (1.2%) accepted 10 credits maximum. The transfer credits also may be a way for the university to accept previous experience or credits from other degrees, or discredit them. A university may use this as a chance to recommend that only their courses are recommended for the degree, which in the end may be in the best interest of the student, or the university itself. The more credits required, the more money the student has to pay to attend.

There were themes among the specific content that developed through the data analysis of the sport administration/management curricula. During the analysis, 86.1% of programs included some type of law or risk management course within their curriculum. Law is a course that has been recognized by both COSMA and NASPE-NASSM as important to include within the curricula, but many programs are still without it. When considering issues such as tort law, trademarks, risk management, discrimination, and contracts, it raises a question as to why these programs are not including this type of course. Law or legal aspects of sport are common elements in the undergraduate curriculum; however, more research and discussion at the graduate level would not over-prepare a student.

During the analysis, marketing (as a content area) was analyzed specifically through sport and business, then as a general umbrella term. Marketing is a common course among sport management programs, as it too is part of the recommended curricula that has been suggested by both COSMA and NASPE-NASSM. Sport and business marketing is beneficial for students for brand awareness and is “one of the oldest aspects of management” (Armstrong, 2014, p. 294;

Barker, 2003). From the research, 86.1% of programs included a type of marketing course. The number of programs that were missing law and missing marketing was the same, which means the focus of their program was not specifically in line with traditional areas of sport management education. For future research, it would be interesting to interview programs that do not offer the traditional sport management courses and question how the curriculum was developed.

The next comparison was to determine if the program included either a sport management or sport administration course. When evaluating the courses, the frequency of the courses was the exact same—38% of the schools include a sport management course, and 38% of the schools include a sport administration course. The inclusion of the course may depend on the focus of the program, whether it is in sport administration or sport management.

The comparison of finance courses was done from a sport management position as well as a business standpoint. Financial management of sporting venues, athletic programs, and budgets is an important part of the sport administration/management program. When looking at the programs, 60.8% included some type of finance class. Pedersen and Thibault (2014) recognized, “Most sport businesses are financed differently from other businesses” (p. 13). Finance is a course that was recognized by both the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force and COSMA as a traditional area of sport management. When analyzing the programs in this study, 60.8% included some type of finance class. Finance will not only benefit sport managers throughout their life but throughout their career in any industry.

Leadership courses will ensure that sport administrators/managers are prepared to take on that role within the workplace. The evaluations of the leadership and organization course were also common among the business programs. Although leadership may have been in combination with an organization or a management course, it was observed in 54.4% of the programs. As

sport administrators/managers, a leadership course benefits students because many individuals within an organization can be a leader without being a manager (Pedersen & Thibault, 2014). Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2008) defined leadership as the ability to influence individuals collectively or individually to achieve a goal or purpose. As sport administrators/managers, it is imperative that learners recognize the roles in leadership and distinguish the difference between leadership and management. Leadership courses will prepare sport managers for future positions by preparing them for situations of conflict and organizational changes, and challenges them to prepare for complications they may encounter.

Ethics was a course that was combined within other courses such as law or business. When the course was combined with another course, it was not listed as its own course. There were programs that included ethics within their legal aspects of sport, business, or philosophy courses, so in these cases it was not categorized in the separate category for the ethics course. Overall, 43% of programs included a separate ethics course as part of their curriculum. Ethics may have been more prevalent if the course objectives were more accessible during the evaluation. Ethics is a topic that may be covered in a range of courses, but may not be classified as its own course.

Other courses that were common among programs were research and statistics. During the analysis, it was found that universities would include a statistical component within the research course, but both courses were also found independently within the curricula. Although the research did not specifically evaluate the correlation between research courses and the thesis requirement, as the analysis progressed, there was a commonality among the two courses. In the analysis, 75.9% of the programs included a research type of course and 7.6% of the programs included a separate statistics course. The course objectives would have guided the researcher to

a deeper understanding of each course and the assessment practices, but a sufficient array of syllabi were not available to study this in depth.

The comparison of the sociology component was limited to courses that were associated to sport and society, sport culture and society, sociology of sport, political, social and ethical issues in business. Although the category was very broad, it encompassed societal issues that are encountered in both sport and business. Overall, 48.1% of the programs included a sociology-based course, which allows for the students interaction with the “political, sociological, economic, and historical parameters that influence sport” (NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, 1993, p. 8).

Business programs, along with a small number of sport administration/management programs, included a few select business courses that continued to reoccur throughout the analysis. The courses were economics, accounting, operations management, and organizational behavior. Although other business courses were included within the business curricula, four were the most frequently occurring alongside the courses that were already mentioned. The economics course occurred in 16.5% of the programs, the accounting course was prevalent in 19% of the programs, the operations management course occurred in 13.9% of programs, and the organizational behavior course was present in 15.2% of the courses. Out of the four courses, accounting occurred most frequently.

The other course that was prevalent among programs but was not included within COSMA or NASPE-NASSM Joint Commission standards was a media or sport communications course. The sport communications field is becoming more popular among sport managers. According to Stoldt, Dittmore, and Branvold (2012), sport public relations is a “managerial communication-based function designed to identify a sport organization’s key publics, evaluate

its relationship with those publics, and foster desirable relationships between the sport organization and those key publics” (p. 2). The media or communications course was offered in 29.1% of the programs. Although sport communications is not included in COSMA’s traditional areas of sport management education, programs that included this as a focus appeared to be very applicable to a student who wants to focus on this content area.

The next comparison was of governance, policies, or compliance courses. Due to the reoccurrence of this content focus, a category was added for this type of course. In the analysis, 29.1% of the programs included a governance, policies, or compliance course. Business policies and procedures were also included in this category along with sport governance, policies, and compliance. As sport administrators/managers, it is vital to recognize the need, development, and implementation for policies and procedures within the business and sports field.

The last course that was included within the analysis was a sport psychology course. Sport psychology is not a requirement of COSMA or NASPE-NASSM, but programs included this either as part of their curriculum or as part of their electives. The sport psychology course occurred in 25.3% of the programs.

The outlier category included courses such as exercise physiology, exercise psychology, nutrition for sports and fitness, athletic fundraising, negotiation of sports, philosophy of sport and recreation, business of college athletics, technology of health and physical education, and many more. The outlier categories were courses that did not fit in a particular category or the course was a duplicate to a course that was already in a category for that university. Some of these courses may have been pertinent to a student’s future; however, they did not fit into a specific category for this particular research study.

There were similarities and differences among regions within the graduate sport administration/management programs. The similarities were not consistent throughout the courses. For example, when comparing coursework, the greatest frequency of occurrence of courses was the overall law umbrella, which included 68 out of 79 (86.1%) programs. Each region of the United States included a law course as part of the graduate sport administration/management curricula, with the South and Midwest having the largest occurrence at 90%, followed by the West at 89.5%, and lastly the Northeast at 75% of the programs. When comparing the differences between public and private universities, 80% (32 out of 40) of the public institutions included in the research included a law course. In the private universities, 92.3% (36 out of 39) of the programs included a law course. The private universities had a higher frequency of occurrence of law when compared to the public universities. Legal issues and sport law continue to be a concern for service professions; both the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force and COSMA have listed a sport law or legal issues course as part of the graduate sport administration/management curricula. The adherence rate demonstrates that programs have recognized that this is as course of importance regarding sport management curricula. Eagleman and McNary (2010) found that 81.1% of the undergraduate programs required a law course. Although the Eagleman and McNary study focused on undergraduate education, the information may be comparable, because the same departments may support the graduate curricula.

The umbrella marketing term was compared by regions. For the purpose of this discussion, the term encompasses both sport marketing and business marketing. Marketing occurred in 90% of the programs in the Midwest, 80% in the Northeast, 73.7% in the Western region, and 10% in the Southern region. When comparing public to private universities, 82.5%

(33 out of 40) of public universities and 89.7% (35 out of 39) of private universities included a marketing course. When comparing the undergraduate programs that Eagleman and McNary (2010) evaluated, 74.9% of the undergraduate programs required a marketing course. Marketing is a course that both the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force and COSMA have suggested that programs include within their curricula, which is why it was alarming that only 10% of the programs in the Southern region included a marketing course.

When comparing the courses between regions, occurrences of the organizational behavior, statistics, and operations management courses were found to be the most similar between regions and between public and private universities. Organizational behavior was included in only 12 out of 79 programs, statistics was included in only 6 out of 79 programs, and operations management was included in only 11 out of 79 programs. Overall, throughout the analysis, when a given course occurred less frequently, it allowed for little variation among the regions.

Other courses that were similar in the analysis of regions were finance; facilities and event management; leadership; and governance, policies, and compliance. When comparing finance between the regions, 48 (60.8%) of the programs included finance, with the South being the most prevalent (65%) and the Northeast (55%) being the least prevalent. When comparing the programs with a finance course, 62.5% of the programs were public and 59% of the programs were private. The facilities course was very similar to the finance course, with the most prevalent regions including a facilities course in their programs being in the South and Midwest at 60%, then the least prevalent being in the Northeast at 50%. The data was very similar in the public and private universities; 60% of the public programs included a facilities course and 53.8% of the private universities included a facilities course. Leadership was a course that was



offered among the regions with the West being the most prevalent at 63.2% of programs offering such a course and the South and Midwest being the least prevalent at 50% of the programs. The comparison between public and private universities was very similar (only 3.9% difference) with 52.5% of the public university programs including a leadership course and 56.4% of the private programs including a leadership course. Governance, policies, and compliance was also a course that was similar between regions with the most prevalent being the Southern region (35%) and the least prevalent in the Western region at 21.1%. The governance, compliance, and policies course is not found as frequently as the leadership course, because it is only offered in 29.1% of the programs. However, governance, compliance, and policies courses were offered more frequently in the private university programs (41%) compared to the public university programs (7%).

The next courses were similar in regard to the variation there was between regions. These courses include accounting and economics, which are frequently included within the business curriculum. The other course that is offered about as frequently as accounting and economics is media communications. The incidence of programs that include accounting was lower than other courses 19% (15 out of 79). The regions in which accounting was found most frequently were the Northeast and the Midwest at 25%. The region in which accounting was found less frequently was the West at 10.5%. When comparing the difference between public and private programs, 22.5% (9 out of 40) of the programs that included accounting were public and 15.4% (6 out of 39) were private. The incidence of economics was very similar to accounting; only 16.5% (13 out 79) included an economics course. The region that included economics within the curriculum most frequently was the Midwest (25%) and least frequently was the Southern region (10%). Media communications was only offered in 23 out of 79

programs (29.1%). When comparing the regions, the Southern and the Midwestern regions offered the course the most frequently (35%), and the Northeastern region was the least frequent (20%). When comparing the type of universities, 20% of the programs that offered media communications were public and 38.5% were private programs.

There were larger variations in the frequency of offerings in the research, business, sport administration, and sport management courses. When comparing the research course, 75.9% of the programs included a research element within the program's curriculum. The highest incidence was in the Western region at 89.5%, and the lowest incidence was in the Northeast region and the Midwest region at 70%. The public universities included a research course in 72.5% of the programs, and the private programs included the research course in 79.5% of the programs. Although there was variation between regions, there was a high incidence of a research course within the sport management curriculum because, although this is not one of COSMA's traditional core areas of sport management education, it was included within the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force standards. Business was also a course that was not included as often (19% or 15 out of 79 programs) as other courses within the curriculum. The business course also had a larger variation between regions; the highest incidence of a business course was offered in the Midwest region, and the lowest occurrence was in the Southern region at 10%. The business course was observed more frequently within the private programs (20.5%) compared to the public programs (17.5%). The emphasis of the business courses may be related to where the program is housed. The sport management and sport administration courses, were the exact same in their offering of the courses. The most prevalent region for the programs that offer courses in both sport management and sport administration was the West (52.6%), but the least common regions were the Northeast and the Midwest (30%). When comparing the courses

from public to private, sport administration and sport management were more prevalent in private university programs at 43.6% and 32.5% at public university programs.

The last two courses that were compared within regions were sociology and ethics. These two courses have the most variation among regions. The sociology course was offered at 38% of the programs, and the ethics course was offered in 43% of the programs. Sociology was most prevalent in the Western region at 57.9% but least prevalent in the Northeast at 35%. Sociology was offered more frequently in private programs at 51.3% compared to public programs at 45%. The last course that was compared among regions was ethics. The Southern region was the most dominant (60%) when offering ethics; the least frequent offerings were found in the Northeast region at 25%. When comparing the public and private universities for the ethics course, 37.5% of the programs that included ethics were public and 48.7% were private.

A comparison between programs including a field experience within the graduate sport administration/management program was also performed within the analysis. The umbrella term of field experience may include course titles such as practicum, externship, or internship; but it is a professional occupational style of experience that takes place outside of the classroom. Within the programs analyzed, 59.5% of the programs included an internship, 2.5% of the programs offered an optional internship, 11.9% offered the option between a thesis or internship, and 1.3% reported no internship for the online students but required for the non-thesis students.

While comparing the content of the courses, the Northeast, South, Midwest, and West regions were also compared. While comparing the programs for each institution, no two curricula were alike. Each varied in the type of curricula and the courses they chose to offer depending on how each program was structured. For example, a program that was housed in the business department would be more likely to include more business courses than a program

housed within kinesiology. Although the inclusion of the number of courses was different throughout institutions, the Western region had the most institutions that included the traditional sport management core courses. The Western region also included the original standards of the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force. Lastly, the region that included the highest amount of courses included in the overall analysis was the Midwest. The Midwest institutions included more of the business courses than the other three regions.

Not only were the regions compared but also the different types of institutions. Both private and public institutions were compared for the types of courses they offered. When comparing the public and private universities, the private universities included more of the courses that were evaluated in this data analysis, when compared to the traditional areas of sport management according to COSMA. When comparing public and private universities to the standards that the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force recommended, both the public and private institutions were equal in the amount of courses that were offered. As the institutions were evaluated for all of the courses that were included in this research for analysis, the private institution included more courses than the public institutions. The increase in the amount of private programs may have also been associated with the addition of a number of business courses in the overall analysis.

The content of the curricula and how it is articulated is imperative to the learner, the faculty, and the university. The curriculum content varied between institutions and, although similarities existed, the programs varied in course descriptions and names of the courses. If course descriptions or course titles were similar, they were classified into the same category. If there were multiple courses in a category from one institution, only one course was counted per category, to account for each program. The rest of the courses were included in an extra or

outlier category. The content was articulated very clearly across the program at some institutions. Some programs were very specific as to what courses students should take and what semester the courses were offered. There was much variation in the course layout with 79 programs; however, the research requirement was at the beginning of the plan of study, while the field experience or theses requirement was the final requirement. Variations also existed between college, department, type of degree, course descriptions, field experience requirements, thesis requirements, and credit requirements for graduation. Similarities were found among the programs because many of the programs (68.4%) aligned with COSMA's curriculum principle, even though the majority of the programs evaluated were not accredited by COSMA (96.2%).

The department and school/college that hosted the sport administration/management program varied. The College of Education was the most frequent location of the sport administration/management program at 17.7% of the programs; the next most frequently identified was the College of Business at 10.1%. When evaluating the specific departments in which the sport administration/management program was housed, there was a variety as well. The most frequently occurring department name was sport management at 18.9%. The next most frequently occurring program department name was kinesiology at 15.2%, with business occurring less frequently in the department name at 8.8%. There could have been variations of the names of the programs, but I did not combine any of the groups for the analysis. There were also nine programs or 11.4% that did not list their department name on their website. The universities may have a specific name for the department housing the program; however, when I was trying to locate the name on the website and in the course catalog, the information was difficult to find. It seemed as if some of the programs were directly associated with the graduate school, especially at the smaller colleges and universities. Fink and Barr (2012) reported,

“Currently the two most common home units for sport management programs are business and kinesiology/education” (p. 19). When considering the two most common, it would align with Fink and Barr (2012); however, now departments are calling themselves sport management (Gillentine, Baker, & Cuneen, 2012).

### **Accreditation**

As COSMA’s principles were evaluated in this research, only the principle associated with curriculum was specifically evaluated. The principles that COSMA includes are larger than the curricular elements compared in this research. The principles include outcomes assessment, strategic planning, curriculum, program design, faculty, scholarly and professional activities, financial resources, internal and external relationships, and educational innovation.

The focus of this research was to determine what programs were embracing the changes that COSMA had made in regard to curriculum since the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force recommendations. Many programs were following the changes that COSMA included, with 50% of their graduate courses from traditional areas of sport management, even though they were not accredited universities. This demonstrates that even though they may not be aligning with the other principles, universities have started to align the curriculum within COSMA’s recommendations. Although only 3.7% of the sample was accredited by COSMA, 68.4% of the sample was following the traditional core that COSMA recommended within the curriculum principle. Currently, the estimated cost for the accreditation visit depending on school size is approximately \$3,800 (COSMA, 2013). The accreditation costs may be deterring some institutions from taking the next step for accreditation.

Nonetheless, COSMA emphasizes the need for quality sport management education and recognizes excellence. Again, COSMA accreditation is much larger than the curriculum

principle that was evaluated in this research; however, sport administration/management graduate programs are taking steps forward in complying with the recommended curriculum to prepare sport management students. The research also demonstrated that a program does not have to be accredited to follow the curricula that COSMA has instituted.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

As this study was a qualitative analysis of graduate sport management curricula, limitations and delimitations were evident. The current research included four limitations. The first limitation was the materials available for review. The source for the curricula and other program information was limited to materials available through online website access. The second limitation was the difficulty in obtaining the program of study for each sport administration/management program currently listed on the North American Society for Sport Management website (NASSM, n.d.c). Thus, the study was limited to those programs for which a program of study was available. The third limitation was the assumption that the NASSM website was up to date and accurate regarding the number of graduate sport administration/management programs in the United States. If this was not the case, this limited the representativeness of this study. The fourth limitation was the fact the research was limited to 79/226 (34.95%) of the master's sport administration/management programs in the United States.

The research also included three delimitations during the graduation sport management analysis. The first delimitation was that the curricula analyzed were self-defined as a sport administration/management graduate programs within the United States. Using self-defined curricula allowed for less error from the researcher. I assumed that, if the program identified itself as a sport administration/management program, the faculty and department chose the

courses for the curricula with a purpose and were possibly following the guidelines that had been instituted by the NASPE-NASSM Task Force or COSMA's traditional areas of sport management education

The second delimitation identified graduate programs through the NASSM's website. The programs that are listed on NASSM's website acknowledge that programs have self-identified as a graduate sport management program. The NASSM is dedicated to encourage development in both "theoretical and applied aspects" of the area of sport management (NASSM, n.d.b).

The third delimitation was that the curricula analyzed through document analysis, evaluation of curricula, program philosophy, and other available sources were found through Internet access on the institutions website. I assumed that the universities and colleges that hosted the programs kept the information regarding the sport administration/management program up to date. An institution's website should have current information for existing and future students, parents, and faculty. The research included these delimitations to contribute to the research purpose and assisted with methodology for this specific study.

### **Implications for Practice**

The document analysis demonstrated that variations of educational philosophies are present within the sport management curricula. The traditional philosophy in this research was focused not only the type of instruction but the types of courses that were offered within the curricula in this research. Both the NASPE-NASSM and COSMA found that establishing a set of traditional sport management courses as a guideline for programs to follow was essential for not only the curriculum but for the student. Combinations of the educational philosophies, for example, traditional, experiential and constructivist, may be the best lens to offer the sport



management program, because it addresses the needs of the learner. The behavioral approach may also offer benefits because it addresses the learner within the learning objectives, while planning for the curriculum.

During the analysis of curricula, common courses were noted throughout programs and within regions. Curriculum is the driving force for education, and this research assists current programs with revisions or additions to the graduate sport administration/management curricula. Graduate programs can compare current curricula to the traditional core areas that COSMA has recommended compared to the NASPE-NASSM Standards that were previously established. The overall theme of this current research was that although only 3 out of 79 (3.8%) of the programs were accredited, many of the programs were beginning to align with COSMA's traditional sport management areas. Graduate programs may consider the benefits of accreditation through COSMA and evaluate if their individual program is aligned with COSMA's curriculum principle. A benefit of accreditation through COSMA would be national recognition through an accrediting body, which may lead to increased job placement for students. COSMA accreditation is associated with educational outcomes and implementing best practices within the field of sport management (COSMA, n.d.). Accreditation would allow universities the ability to become more accountable not only to themselves but also to the students they serve. The next step for those eager universities would be to align with COSMA's seven other competency areas, to prepare for accreditation.

### **Future Research**

The findings of these data for the 79 Master's level graduate sport administration/management programs in relationship to the entire sample of 226 are only a small sample of each region of the United States sport administration/management programs.

Although this research provides a small glimpse into graduate sport administration/management curricula, it does not paint the entire picture. Further investigation may be needed to determine if the commonalities that were found in this study stay consistent throughout graduate sport administration/management curricula across the United States.

Many times throughout the analysis of the data, whether it was through the course analysis or trying to find what college or department the program was housed in, it would have served useful to contact the institution. The information needed was difficult to find when searching through the websites, course catalogs, and other resources as some of the information listed was not available or listed. Further research with surveys or interviews would allow for a more in-depth investigation of each program, the philosophies that are used, the courses that may not be displayed in the course catalog, and a further investigation of each program.

The research also attempted to provide an insight into how the sport administration/management curricula is developed and assessed. Through document analysis, course descriptions, mission statements, and learning objectives were analyzed when available, but these were not always available. Moreover, an educational philosophy may be determined through the types of assessments that are being performed, but these are generally not found unless analysis extends into other artifacts than were available for this study. In the future, interviews, or surveys may assist when searching for this type of data, especially with a group this large. The identification of educational philosophies within sport management curricula at the undergraduate level may also offer additional information as to a best practice for sport administration/management educators. Further research would allow for the detection of the effectiveness of a program and the usefulness of an underlying philosophical perspective, when compared with learning outcomes and graduation rates.

Throughout the analysis of the data, whether through the course analysis or trying to find what college or department the program was housed in, it would have served useful to contact the institution. Variation exists between colleges and departments regarding where the sport administration/management program is housed. Further research may link the graduation rates, and employment statistics between the type of department or where the program is housed to determine the program's effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

When comparing the graduate sport management curricula, similarities, differences, and common themes were found in relation to COSMA. The educational philosophy is the driving force behind the curricula, which can be evaluated through course descriptions, assessment practices, and learning objectives. The traditional philosophical perspective defined by Posner (2004) and further articulated into curricular content by COSMA was the most prevalent found throughout the research. The experiential and constructivist philosophical perspectives also seemed to closely align with the sport management curricula that was evaluated in this particular research. Instructional methods and educational philosophies are intertwined and guide the curriculum. As evidenced through the data, graduate sport administration/management programs recognized that multiple educational philosophies may be the most effective for the curriculum and the learner.

While comparing the curricular confluences, many themes emerged within this larger theme, such as the number of credits required, transfer credits, the internship requirements, course requirements, home of the department and college, a comparison between regions, and a comparison between types of universities. Although the data may vary between programs, the institutions in the Western region were following COSMA's traditional areas of sport

management education and the standards that NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force recommended with the courses that were evaluated for this specific research. When evaluating all of the courses that were analyzed, the Midwestern region included the most institutions that contained the courses analyzed for this research. When comparing public and private institutions to the traditional areas of sport management, the private institutions included more courses that were recommended by COSMA. However, when comparing public and private universities to the recommended courses by the NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force, both the public and private universities had the same number of programs that included recommended courses. While comparing the type of institutions, at times, the public and private exhibited a balance with each other; however, when comparing all of the courses that were evaluated, the private institutions included more of the categories of courses that were analyzed for this research.

Although not all institutions are accredited by COSMA, numerous universities have started to follow the curriculum principle that COSMA has introduced. COSMA promotes more than the curriculum principle; however, if institutions are respecting the curricula principle, the institution may make the choice of accreditation. The results also displayed that many institutions may respect COSMA's curricula principle without being accredited without any repercussion.

The research performed a comparison between public and private graduate sport management programs according to COSMA. The research evaluated 79 programs—39 private and 40 public institutions. Overall, the purpose of this research study was fulfilled.

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