Sport Business Program Celebrates Fall Semester Success

The Sport Business program at Texas A&M University-Kingsville would be categorized in the “infancy” stages of a product life cycle. The program has only existed for a few years, but that hasn’t stopped its students from making an impact on the sport industry both regionally and nationally.

This past semester alone (Fall 2013) students have developed relationships or attended events with the Houston Texans, Rockets, Astros, and Dynamo; San Antonio Spurs; AmericanBank Center; Corpus Christi Hooks; the Cotton Bowl; the Alamo Bowl; LoneStar Entertainment; Teamworkonline; and ESPN. These relationships have resulted in involvement anywhere from facility tours to job shadowing experiences. The Sport Business program, headed by new program coordinator Dr. Bruce Lund, prides itself on placing its students in positions to succeed each semester. Dr. Daniel Burt also instructs in the program and is involved with advising students and supporting the overall direction of the program.

“Our program operates from a specific set of core values that must be shared by myself and our students to be successful,” said Dr. Lund, age 30. “If the core values are not shared then we will continually butt heads and that’s not good for any of us. In this industry it’s not enough to simply be a ‘fan’ of sports. This is something that I have tried to instill in our students on the front-end and is something that was instilled in me early in my career.”

Dr. Lund received his PhD in Sport Management from Middle Tennessee State University (Murfreesboro, TN) in May. He has previous sport industry experience working in Public Relations in Minor League Baseball (Nashville Sounds) and as a sport journalist with the Grand Rapids Press. He has also worked in corporate settings serving in similar Public Relations roles with emphasis on brand management, marketing, and development.

Student Success Stories

It would appear that students have been receptive to Dr. Lund’s core values as they celebrate much success in just one semester. One success story in particular came out of his Sport Event and Facility Management class where students were expected to develop and manage an event from start to finish. A pair of baseball players knocked the assignment out of the park. Senior Brian Frazier and Junior Clint Wallace raised nearly $23,000 for the baseball program through a one-day golf scramble.

“As a ‘younger’ professor Dr. Lund brings a lot of positive energy with a focus that ‘every day in our current role is an interview for our next role,’” said Frazier. “This class project started as a small idea that turned into an event that our baseball program will now run annually. We were able to learn so much about the process of actually running an event ourselves versus simply reading about it from a textbook, and is something we can now put on our resumes.”
Other assignments included sections in all of Dr. Lund’s classes titled, “Spend Time with Talent” where sport industry professionals visited the class either in-person or via Skype. Experts represented organizations such as the San Francisco 49ers, ESPN, the Indiana Pacers, the Miami Hurricanes, and many others. During these sessions students were able to hear specific “how-to” stories and ask questions that were particular to their own career adventures.

Many of the program’s “in-class” assignments ultimately turn into “out-of-class” opportunities for students. Michelle Zapata turned a networking event with the Houston Texans, where she met video board operator Josh Hubel, into a job shadowing experience. That experience also served to fulfill a mentorship project. Zapata continued to reach out to Hubel and her persistence paid off as she secured a trip of a lifetime by working with him during the Texans’ Sunday Night Football game.

Students are made aware of networking opportunities like the one Zapata attended throughout the semester. The newly founded Sport Business Club serves as a professional development tool to prepare students to seize such opportunities and provide them with tips anywhere from resume building to proper business etiquette. The student-run club, advised by Dr. Lund and Dr. Daniel Burt, also gives students the responsibility to manage and develop an organization with an emphasis on sport business content and events that are important for their career success.

**Bowl Game Opportunities**

Even after the fall semester concluded, many students carried the momentum of their successes with them into Christmas break. With six different bowl games hosted in the state of Texas, Dr. Lund reached out to each of the bowl games’ event coordinators to volunteer the services of its students. That led to members working three bowl games: the Heart of Dallas Bowl, the Alamo Bowl, and the Texas Bowl.

Not only were students able to see the behind-the-scenes activities that go into running such events, but they were also allowed to get all-access field passes for their efforts. Dr. Lund accompanied four students to the Heart of Dallas Bowl on January 1st, held at historic Cotton Bowl Stadium, where students helped set-up for the event the day before and worked the day of the event. ESPN provided and paid for hotel arrangements for the students. The event directors were so impressed with the students’ efforts that they are already in talks about more responsibilities leading up to next year’s game.

“I’m a non-traditional student having spent nearly twenty years in the military so it’s easy for me to understand all the opportunities that the Sport Business program is providing for its students,” said Orlando Rosa, now in his second semester at the University. “Dr. Lund wants to hear
student feedback about the direction the program is headed and to grow this thing together. He continues to push hands-on experiences that he makes available to students, while allowing us to take part in such initiatives as developing the brand and slogan for the program.”

**How to Get Involved this Spring Semester**

The spring semester will focus on the development of financial aid opportunities through internal and external grants for the Sport Business Clubs to help fund the various expenses associated with attending networking events. In addition, students are already in strategic talks about their involvement with the LoneStar Conferences’ annual Track & Field event that is hosted on campus among many other opportunities. These experiences coincide with the multiple Apprenticeship and Internships required of Sport Business majors. The program has a partnership with the Athletic Department for apprenticeship assignments each semester. One thing is certain, there is never a dull semester in the program. Students operate through the program’s slogan, “Your game is our business.”

If you are interested in learning more about a major or minor in Sport Business at Texas A&M University-Kingsville or would like to get involved with the Sport Business Club (open to all students regardless of major/minor) then contact Dr. Lund at Bruce.Lund@tamuk.edu. Follow us on Twitter @TAMUKSportBiz.