A Message from Dr. Jeffrey James  
Chair, Department of Sport Management

It is summertime in Tallahassee. That means it is hot, humid, and will likely rain some time each day (probably between 3:00-4:00 p.m.). Basically, Tallahassee summers are still the same. It is a busy time around Tully Gymnasium; we have summer classes taking place, but classes actually account for only a portion of the activities that are keeping the faculty, staff, and students very busy.

Late spring and early summer is generally a time when faculty members and doctoral students attend annual conferences. Most recently, we have had folks attending the annual conference for the North American Society for Sport Management in Orlando, Florida. There were also some who attended the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in Champaign, Illinois. Summer is also a time for some to participate in international travels. The Global Sport Management program will take place in London during July and early August. Additionally, some of the faculty members completed a marathon trip to China. We are exploring opportunities to increase our global presence, and look forward to providing updates on those efforts in coming issues of the newsletter.

A major task for summer is planning for the upcoming academic year. We are making decisions about the master’s program, including options to revise and reposition the degree to better serve the sport industry. We are considering new options for completion of the dissertation; we may soon allow students to utilize the three-article or the traditional dissertation model. Perhaps most importantly, we are making plans to integrate our new faculty members into the program.

I am very pleased to announce that two new faculty members will be joining the Department of Sport Management at FSU in August 2016: Dr. Hanhan Xue and Dr. James Du. Dr. Xue comes to us from the University of Alberta. She has been working at FSU as a postdoctoral fellow and has worked into a full-time position. Her research interests include stakeholder theory, institutional logics and organizational change, and globalization. Dr. James Du comes to us from Temple University. Dr. Du’s content area is sport marketing, with specific interests in consumer behavior in the various participatory sporting event settings. We are pleased to have both joining us, and are looking forward to having a “full staff” once again. One of our next endeavors will be to add more positions – but that is for another newsletter.

Thank you as always for your support of the students, staff, and faculty members in the Department of Sport Management. Have a wonderful summer!
Alumni Spotlight – Vratik Sharma, Sports Marketing Analyst for the PGA Tour  
By Jacob Kotick, master’s student

FSU Sport Management alumnus, Vratik Sharma, is currently a Sport Marketing Analyst for the PGA Tour. He joined us for the Spring edition of our newsletter to share some of his experiences and advice that have led to his success in the sport industry, and to talk about how the program at FSU, including mentoring, internships, and the inspiration he received from faculty, benefited him and aided him in securing his current position.

Within the first few months of his time at FSU, Vratik knew that golf was the area of sport in which he wanted to pursue his career. Through a finance class with Dr. Farr and collaboration with Dr. Pappas, two members of our faculty he considers to be his mentors, he secured three internships that helped him achieve the experience required for a position with the PGA. These internships, which included the positions in the International Junior Golf Tour at Hilton Head Island, SC; Seminole Sports Marketing; and ESPN Wide World of Sports helped to set himself apart from his peers. Taking the advice of Dr. Pappas, Vratik recalled, “I took the initiative to reach out to the president of the PGA of India to discuss the possibility of bringing the PGA Tour to India. My meeting with him was featured in the Times of India. This platform helped me to market myself while thinking outside the box, with a focus on international business development.”

Reflecting on his experiences as a student, Vratik realized that being an international student forced him to gain a better understanding of the sport industry. He attributes his success to the fact that he has access to a research-based curriculum that our faculty strives to provide to our students. This research-based curriculum helped Sharma immensely in gaining a better understanding of the U.S. sports industry from an international student's perspective.

When asked for his key pieces of advice for current and future students, Vratik says, “Make the most out of every moment in the program, and network, network, network!” In his current position, he reviews hundreds of resumes. He suggests that in order to stand out, you must be willing to think creatively and in such a way that will separate you from other applicants. He also recommends that students take advantage of the resources offered by the department, including the advice and guidance of faculty. He believes his rise to success would not have been possible without correctly positioning himself for his desired career and taking advantage of these resources.
Alumni Spotlight – Julie Gomez, Operations Manager at the VenuWorks Bridge View Center
By Hailey Dudley, bachelor’s student

We recently had the pleasure of catching up with an astounding alumna of the undergraduate Sport Management program, Julie Gomez. Gomez graduated from Florida State University in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport Management and a minor in Psychology. As a first generation college student, she performed highly both inside and outside of the classroom. While at FSU, she was selected for the Dean’s List and President’s List for multiple terms. Julie excelled far beyond academics; she completed multiple internships throughout her college career and was extensively involved throughout campus. Julie has had the privilege of working in many different avenues of the sport industry since her graduation, and she was excited to share her experiences with us.

Julie currently works in Ottumwa, Iowa, serving as the Operations Manager at the VenuWorks Bridge View Center, a multi-purpose venue that hosts everything from Florida Georgia Line and Cole Swindell, to TNA Impact Wrestling and Larry the Cable Guy. Julie had multiple exposures to operations throughout college, including internships with the Florida Panthers and the Miami Marlins. When asked about the challenges she faces as a young woman working in the operations side of the industry, she explained that there is occasionally some hesitancy from clients that she will be the one making the event happen. She stated, “I love the challenge, and I love proving to the clients that ‘Hey, I can get you what you need to make your event successful’.”

While at FSU, Julie worked in the Facilities and Event Management department within the FSU Athletics Department, served as an Athletics and Recreational Assistant, worked as an Office Assistant within the FSU Department of Sport Management, and was also involved in the Sport Information Department, Seminole Boosters, and Florida High (FSUS) Athletics. When asked how she made all of these commitments work, she replied, “I made the choice to start focusing on my career in college, rather than waiting until I graduated.” Her recommendation to students is, “Have fun and go out with your friends, but take advantage of your time at FSU. You’re living in a sport leading university. Go for it!”

When reflecting on her time at FSU and her post-grad experiences so far, Julie provided one last final piece of advice to the FSU Sport Management students:

“You are at the greatest university in the world. You are surrounded by people who want to see you achieve, and you have to take advantage of every single second and minute that you are at Florida State University. Reach out. Ask questions. Get those experiences. Get your hands dirty. Make your time count!”

Be on the lookout for Julie, as she will be speaking at the 2016 Sport Management Conference in September!
Alumni Spotlight – Dr. Paul Pedersen, Director of Sport Management at Indiana University

By James Harwood, doctoral student

As part of the Department of Sport Management’s Spring Colloquium series, the doctoral students and faculty were visited by Dr. Paul Pedersen (Ph.D. ’00). Dr. Pedersen used his colloquium to share advice, thoughts, and experiences from his academic journey, including his doctoral studies as well as his current position as the Director of Sport Management at Indiana University.

Dr. Pedersen’s career in academia began with a degree in business administration from Palm Beach Atlantic University, and following stops at Emerson College and the University of Central Florida, he began his doctoral studies at FSU in the Fall of 1997. His early research related to his professional experiences as a sport writer, with his interest in sport communication stemming from his desire to become a sport broadcaster. Reflecting on his experiences as a doctoral student at FSU, Dr. Pedersen spoke fondly of his experiences working with the faculty of the department, and the personal growth as a scholar that his time at FSU afforded him.

Dr. Pedersen’s advice to current doctoral students centered on the quote “I don’t know what the secret to success is, but I know what the secret to failure is,” advising the assembled audience to “find out what interests you, and focus on your internal attribution of it”. Dr. Pedersen spoke to the students at length about what it takes to become a successful scholar in the field, the roadblocks to expect along the way, and how to prepare themselves for the journey ahead. He also provided a time to answer questions from faculty and students relating to his experiences in job application processes, manuscript publication, and sport communication research.

Dr. Pedersen joined the faculty at Indiana University in 2005 after serving as an Assistant Professor at Bowling Green State University and his alma mater, Palm Beach Atlantic University. He is viewed by his peers as a leader in the subject of Sport Communication and serves as the editor of the International Journal of Sport Communication. He is a member of editorial review boards of ten other publications in the field, has published over 85 peer-reviewed articles. He has also edited nine books, including Contemporary Sport Management, and Research Methods and Design in Sport Management, which are mainstays in sport management curricula across the globe. A celebrated scholar, Dr. Pedersen was honored as a Research Fellow of the North American Society of Sport Management (NASSM) in 2009, along with a Who’s Who of Emerging Leaders award in 2007, and the Who’s Who among America’s Teachers award in 2005/2006.

In addition to his achievements, Dr. Pedersen spoke about the importance of his family, his role as a mentor to doctoral students who he says keep him relevant, and the importance of relationships with university administrators. The colloquium provided the current doctoral students with a fantastic perspective on what it takes to become a leader in the field, how to progress throughout their studies, and their early career as a scholar.
The Southern Sport Management Doctoral Symposium (SSMDS)
By Joanna Tweedie, doctoral student

In April of 2016, Florida State University hosted the first edition of The Southern Sport Management Doctoral Symposium (SSMDS), bringing together Sport Management doctoral students from Texas A&M, The University of Florida, The University of Georgia and The University of South Carolina. It is common for Ph.D. students to collaborate on research ideas and projects; however, more often than not, this occurs with other students from the same university and pertains to topics within the student’s existing interests. Additionally, Ph.D. students are encouraged to attend and present at conferences, the flagship for Sport Management being NASSM, yet there is minimal opportunity for extended constructive discussion nor is there productive interaction with other students or scholars. The SSMDS was created as a result of these limitations.

The two-day symposium provided a platform that encouraged extensive interaction and collaboration across some of the leading Sport Management doctoral programs in the country. The first day included welcoming and interaction sessions that encouraged students to get to know other students and faculty from various universities. The most formal event of the first day was the “Three Minute Thesis” presentations. A number of students and faculty from each university were provided an opportunity to introduce a new research topic that they deemed important in the advancement of the field of Sport Management. The diverse topics included social capital and mega events, child sports consumers, event markets, athlete transition, sport gambling, brand communities, and experimental design. These three-minute presentations were a source of inspiration for the next day’s seminars and related discussion ensued throughout the symposium.

Many of the informal aspects of the symposium ended up being highlights of the event. In the evening, the FSU
students introduced visitors to the local establishments, including Bird’s Aphrodisiac Oyster Shack and Proof Brewery. The evening activities provided students with less formal, but perhaps equally important, opportunities to meet colleagues and share food and many laughs. An authentic FSU experience was further ensured for the visitors on the following night when many enjoyed the giant slices offered at Momo’s Pizza and an FSU baseball game.

On the final day of the symposium, students and faculty broke up into seven different workshop groups, exploring themes such as: experimental research; sport mega events; youth sport and athlete development; e-sports; sports law; power, race and exclusion; and brand communities. Each seminar commenced with a “state of the union” address, then students convened in smaller groups to work on research proposals that were later presented to the collective audience. An impressive array of research proposals was put forward. Two proposals were awarded funding, yet all demonstrated the potential to be further developed. The first SSDMD proved to be a fruitful venture and all in attendance would likely advocate for its permanent instatement on the academic calendar.
Over the past few years, the Florida State Sport Management Student Association (SMSA) has grown into something great. The SMSA was founded by students to produce opportunities for current and future students to meet with industry professionals and Florida State alumni. Regular trips have stemmed from this founding intention, with the SMSA visiting cities across Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and parts of Texas.

Last December, the SMSA had the opportunity to volunteer at the first ever College Football Playoff National Championship held in Dallas, Texas. While in Dallas, we worked for a graduate of the FSU Sport Management program and were able to establish several great contacts in the area. It did not take long to realize that this was a new market that the SMSA and the Department of Sport Management could penetrate. The executive board had seen that we covered a large part of the South with our previous networking trips and knew that the opportunity to spread our reach all the way to Texas would benefit our current students and leave a great impression for future members.

In the past year, SMSA had the opportunity to travel to Atlanta, GA and Houston, TX. We sought to expand traditional networking trips we have previously undertaken and combine it with a volunteer experience that would leave a positive impression of our organization. Traveling to Texas would be a long ride, so we needed to ensure that our group was able to make the most of the opportunity. We utilized the time between our volunteer sessions to visit with many organizations in the area, including meetings with members of the Houston Astros, Houston Dynamo, Turner Sports, the Dallas Cowboys, and Rice University. These organizations were kind enough to be able to take the time to talk to our students about the industry, give us advice, and lead us on personal tours of their facilities. Not only did these meetings give the travelers an experience of different types of facilities, but allowed for networks and relationships to be built between our students and the professionals at the organizations similar to those that our students are interested in joining.

While the Championship events may be remembered for the buzzer-beater from Villanova, there were many events prior to this shot that we had the pleasure of working. The Championship events were kicked off with the...
Final Four 4 Miler, where the SMSA had a large role in guiding the runners and encouraging them to finish strong. We then drove over to the March Madness Music Festival, where we acted as guest services representatives and attended to any problem or question a patron had. Our volunteering wasn’t done there. The next day, we were volunteering at different booths at the Final Four Fan Fest. Between the three different events, we totaled eleven hours of volunteering.

As the outgoing SMSA president, I would say my favorite part of the trip was looking back at each of the volunteer events and knowing that we made a positive impact. Our students made many connections and left positive impressions of Florida State and the Department in Houston. While working with fellow volunteers, we learned that they were astonished that college students from Tallahassee, FL would go out of their way and drive to Houston to help with the events. This is something I loved hearing and is what I think sets Florida State’s Sport Management program apart; there are not many other groups across the nation that can say they would go this far to work at an event. When they realized that we drove 11 hours to volunteer and meet with their organization, they realized that our students take what we do seriously. The SMSA was not there to mess around; we were there to grow and chase our dreams. The sport industry is all about going “out of your way” and making the extra effort and I believe that is what the Sport Management Student Association at Florida State has done better than any other university. Our students realize that the sport industry is competitive and that the only way to make it is to go out and do whatever is necessary. This trip would not have been possible without the support of the Sport Management department, Dr. Pappas, and Dr. James.
Faculty in the News
By Megan Mowery, master’s student

Within the Department of Sport Management at Florida State University, many faculty members are making an impact on mainstream media. While teaching classes and conducting research in their field, they are also finding time to publish their work to not only widen their own worldview, but also bridge a gap between sport and other global issues. With the goal of promoting a culture of intellectualism, faculty members like Dr. Joshua Newman and Dr. Ryan Rodenberg have worked with prestigious news outlets such as ESPN, the Washington Post, Time Magazine, the New York Times, the Atlantic, and many more.

In the publications Newman has been featured in, he has covered a wide variety of subjects relating to sport. From a Washington Post article about NASCAR displaying the confederate flag, to a Time article about homophobia in United States sports, he is not only focusing on the big issues in sports, but also the big issues facing mainstream culture. This insight into breaking down the connection between issues of inequality, civil rights, and sport is an important connection to make to spur change not only within sports, but also in other areas.

Rodenberg, a sports law professor at Florida State, naturally is featured in media less about social issues and more about legislative issues within sport and sport culture. As a regular writer on ESPN.com and other online sport outlets, he has provided much commentary on current sport issues, such as online fantasy leagues, sports gambling, sport doping, and many more. While teaching law classes each semester, Rodenberg integrates his research and articles into his lectures, teaching his students not only the basics of sports law, but also how the ideas they are learning about are affecting the world around them and the industry that they will soon be a part of. The relevance of teaching about the legality of issues like sports gambling and subsequently leading a discussion on the current sport gambling case is an invaluable resource for the students in his classes. Learning about these current issues from someone commenting in the media on this issue broadens the horizons of students and prompts critical
thinking about these issues and many others that overlap into the sport industry. Rodenberg has been featured in articles for Bloomberg, FiveThirtyEight, Time, the New York Times, as well as writing his own articles for ESPN.com, Vice, Sports Illustrated, the Atlantic, and many more.

The research and publications by Newman, Rodenberg, and other faculty members contribute not only to the understanding of the students within the Department of Sport Management, but also the understanding of the public involving sport-related issues and the rest of the world. This connection is important to make, and while the understanding may be gradual, the headway being made by the faculty at Florida State in the media is an important start to the goal of promoting a culture of intellectualism.

**News**

Dr. Ryan Rodenberg testified to Congress on May 11th, 2016 on the subject of Daily Fantasy Sports. Dr. Rodenberg was called to testify based on his expertise on the federal laws of sports wagering.

Dr. Joshua Newman has been elected as the President of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. He has also been named the Shanghai Municipal Government International Scholar of Distinction.

Dr. Jeffrey James was invited to be the Featured Speaker by the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst for their Research Seminar Day.

The Department congratulates two doctoral students who have completed the requirements for their doctorates. Dr. Simon Brandon-Lai is moving to SUNY Cortland and Dr. Jamie Kim is moving to Syracuse University.