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It is an annual tradition at Florida State University to recognize distinguished alumni who have made a career out of pushing boundaries and redefining standards within their respective fields. Recipients of this award are those who have furthered the FSU brand and have exuded excellence for many years. The Grads Made Good award has been presented to individuals across all disciplines within FSU, and for the first time in the history of the award, a representative of the Department of Sport Management has been honored.

As a doctoral graduate of the Sport Management Department in 2004, Dr. Damon Andrew spent his following years at the University of Louisville, the University of Tennessee, Troy University, and Louisiana State University, serving as either a college dean or program director at each location. In these positions, Andrew was responsible for the formation of a degree-granting program at the University of Tennessee, the recognition of Troy University as a doctoral-granting institution, and is now responsible for the establishment of the Early Childhood Education Laboratory Preschool, fostering of several international partnerships, and oversight of the College of Human Sciences at Louisiana State University.

Andrew has accomplished all of this as an administrator while continuing the further the sport management field through his research in leadership in sport, attraction of sport to participants, spectators, sponsors, employees, and stakeholders, and the effective integration of individuals with disabilities into the sporting environment. To date, Andrew has assisted or led over 240 peer-reviewed articles or presentations and has served as an editor for several internationally recognized journals.

Only an alumnus for 13 years, Andrew has set the bar high for not only those of us to follow in his footsteps as Sport Management graduates, but for academics and administrators within our field. On paper, he has done it all, and has carried the FSU brand with pride. But there is more to an individual that what is written on paper. To understand what makes Andrew so successful, I sat down with him at the 2017 Sport Marketing Association conference and attended the 2017 Homecoming Awards Breakfast.

It became apparent that from early on in his doctoral degree, Andrew took on and maintained an excellent work ethic as he successfully wrote his dissertation and finished his doctoral degree in two years while writing grants, serving as an adjunct teacher, and taking 12 credits per semester. When asked how future academics can follow in this path, he said, “Take it one day at a time, and win every single day.”

While the work ethic is his, the desire to put his best foot forward and to not submit anything that is less than his best can be attributed to the guidance provided by Dr. Jeffrey James, the current Chair of the Sport Management Department and a last-minute addition to Andrews’ dissertation committee.

Combining quantity with quality of work, Andrew seems to have found the perfect formula for success: “Take it in smaller chunks, and you’ll get it done.” As current and future alumni of FSU and representatives of the University brand and Department of Sport Management, taking these words of wisdom from a humble, hard-working individual can only enhance the future of our field. As a recipient of the 2017 Grads Made Good Award, Dr. Damon Andrew is nothing less than deserving.
A Tallahassee native, Joshua Berrian has embraced the guidance of the local community and has used it to launch a successful career. Whether it was his parents, his friends, or his professors, Berrian considers Tallahassee to be a core part of himself.

“I was born and raised here, my parents helped me grow up and things of that nature, but it wasn’t just them. Tallahassee to me, the one word that comes to mind is a village. It really embodies that and it embodies me as a person.”

Despite receiving his Bachelor of Science in Sport Management from Florida State University in 2014, Berrian did not always envision himself as a Seminole. In fact, he originally wanted to leave his hometown and explore other schools; however, coming to Florida State and joining the Sport Management program turned out to benefit him more than he could ever have imagined. Advisors such as Dr. Jason Pappas helped fuel Berrian’s passion for sports and led him towards a career in broadcasting, as opposed to his first career path as a business major.

“Every day I came to class, I was having fun. My grades were up, I was getting A’s and B’s again, and I was being the honors student that I am. It was not because I was doing the work every day, but it was because no matter what work I was doing, I was still surrounded by sports.”

During his time at FSU, Berrian also enjoyed honing his craft at the WVFS 89.7 radio station located on campus. Sharing sports updates on the airwaves helped prove to him that he had the knowledge and the disposition to be a sports broadcaster. An internship at WTXL ABC 27 in Tallahassee also gave him the chance to work at a TV station and to showcase his talents in the field.

Today, Berrian has made it all the way up to State College, Pennsylvania. He currently works as the sports anchor and as a reporter for WTAJ-TV. In this capacity, he is tasked with covering most of Pennsylvania State University’s athletic teams. To accomplish this on a daily basis, he has made himself into a complete multimedia journalist.

“My job is exciting! I come in and look at what I have today, see what press conferences are available, grab my gear, head out to campus, and talk with both coaches and athletes.”

For Berrian, reaching this position was not due to talent alone. Practice, hard work, and adhering to the standard set by the Tallahassee community influenced his career. He lives by one quote in particular: “Hard work beats talent when talent refuses to work hard.” All throughout his professional career, he makes sure that he stays one step ahead so that no one can claim that they outworked him. This self-driven motivation comes from his belief in himself, and he encourages other students to believe in themselves as well.

“Most kids when they leave college do not know exactly what their next step is going to be, but as long as you have faith in yourself that you are going to get it done, you have already won.”

With his motivation to succeed and the backing of the people of Tallahassee, Joshua Berrian has a bright future ahead of him. He one day aspires to return back to Florida, working in a major market such as Miami. Until that day arrives, he will continue to honor Florida State by sharing his passion for sports both on and off air.
Our department has had much success over the years due to a strong managerial staff and highly dedicated employees. Top management plays a huge role in the improvement of a department and Dr. Tony Daniels has been an amazing addition to the Sport Management family. He stepped in and has become our administrative specialist and office manager, working alongside his predecessor, Erika Bettilyon, in February of this year before officially taking over in March.

Daniels grew up in Panama City, Florida. As a child, he was very active in his high school’s music program and was specifically geared towards chorus. He has always enjoyed music, whether it is listening or performing. In addition to singing, he can play the piano, organ, and hand bells, and he took harp lessons in college.

Daniels attended the University of South Alabama in Mobile where he received his bachelor’s degree in Piano Performance. He then transferred to Florida State and worked extremely hard to receive his master’s and doctoral degrees in Arts Administration.

He began working at Florida State University seventeen years ago. For most of his life, he has served as a freelance musician/musical director for various churches, musical theater performances, and other private events. He also has been granted the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for the Quincy Music Theater in Quincy, Florida for a three-year term. His love for music has always been a priority of his and he loves the quote by Arthur O’Shaughnessy, “We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams...Yet, we are the movers and shakers of the world forever, it seems.”

As an employee of higher education at one of the most prestigious universities in America, Daniels says that he cherishes the opportunity to impact students. Among the words of wisdom he often imparts to students are:

“Be you, but be the best ‘you’ you can be. Learn from the past to make the future that much more successful. Offer a firm handshake, plenty of eye contact, and speak with confidence when meeting someone new; you never know when they could help you – or you could help them – along the way.”

We are honored to have Dr. Tony Daniels as our office manager for the Sport Management department!
Alumni Profile: Liz Delia

By Nik Webster, doctoral student

Dr. Liz Delia had never lived outside of New York until she arrived in Tallahassee in the summer of 2012. Over 1,000 miles removed from her home state, she knew that she wanted to study marketing.

Delia had spent a few years working in the industry as a research analyst for Madison Square Garden, KJT Group, and KS&R Firm, fueling her interest in research. Growing up a huge Syracuse basketball fan, it made sense that Delia wanted to study within the sport context. “I wasn’t quite sure what I was getting myself into when I arrived at Florida State’s Department of Sport Management. I just knew I wanted to study marketing and sports, and that Dr. Jeffrey James and I had similar research interests.”

Now, Delia is an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts (UMass) in the Isenberg School of Management. Looking back, Delia attributes her successes at Florida State to many things, including the diversity of the faculty. “The variety of opinions and world views offered by the faculty allowed me to understand why I did the research that I did.” Delia said that she gained confidence from the diversity of thought from sport management program. She also credited her advisor, James, to her development as a sport management scholar. “He was always accepting of my ideas despite my approach to research. He is very accepting of different views.” Delia also praises Dr. Michael Giardina for helping her become the scholar she is today. “Dr. G’s course allowed me to explore marketing through a qualitative lens. He is one of the main reasons why I conduct research the way that I do today.”

Delia also shared some of her personal and professional goals regarding her position at UMass. “Publish more. That is a goal that has always been at the forefront for me. As far as personal goals, realizing that I can’t take on everything at once, but I can prioritize my work. Making sure I take the time to self-reflect and understand what is expected of me as well as my expectations for myself.” Delia also said that even though she teaches the same (or relatively the same) courses each year, she challenges herself to keep her curricula up to date with relevant, current information. “I always try to change and stay up-to-date with what is going on in academia and in practice.”

What does she miss most about Tallahassee and Florida State? “The weather and the people who were in the program with me. I love being active, so it is nice when I can keep running outside in December. I also miss the people in my cohort, but I know that we will always be lifelong friends.”

Delia also gave the following advice for graduate students: “As hard as it is, try to find a balance. I never had a rigid plan for relaxing. For me, it was running every day as well as getting the occasional lunch, coffee, or drinks with my cohort and others in the department. Everyone needs to take some time to themselves.” Delia said that her parents and friends helped her throughout the Ph.D. process. “It can be tough, but having support around you goes a long way.”

Today, Delia continues her research and teaching at UMass, enjoys her morning runs, and still loves Syracuse basketball.
Admitting and advising master’s students in Sport Management is a priority for the Department. Mr. Jeffrey Hoh recently took over those important duties as the Department’s new academic program specialist. In this position, he is able to combine skill, talent, and effort while guiding graduate students to do the same. He aims to embody world-class runner, Steve Prefontaine: “To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift.”

Hoh grew up in New Jersey and North Carolina. He spent most of his childhood devoted to competitive swimming and music. He attended the University of Florida, receiving his bachelor’s in Music Education. While attending UF, he decided to step away from competitive swimming and found a passion for distance running and triathlon racing. After earning his degree, he decided to become a Seminole to continue his education in music. He later received a master’s degree in Arts Administration from FSU. Music has continued to be his biggest non-athletic passion.

After graduating from Florida State, he was able to work with young musicians as a high school band and orchestra director at Clearwater High School and Seminole High School. He was later offered an opportunity to work in higher education as the admissions director for Florida State University’s College of Music. He worked for the College of Music for five years until moving to Colorado. He lived in Colorado for a year and a half before returning to Florida State for his current position with Sport Management.

“One of the most surprising things to me has been how different a career trajectory can look compared to what we typically envision as students and young professionals,” said Hoh. He has a passion for wanting his students to succeed, and often gives this advice: “Success isn’t always a straight line. Don’t be afraid to pursue an exciting opportunity, even if it wasn’t originally in your plans. And always, always remember why you got started.”

We are excited to have Mr. Jeffrey Hoh as a new member of our department!
The study of sociocultural aspects of sport is a field that has been rapidly evolving over the last several years. Dr. Joshua Newman and Dr. Michael Giardina have led the charge to continue the expansion of knowledge on this topic at Florida State University.

Both Newman and Giardina teach classes at the undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral levels. They teach elements of the sociology of sport to students who can then apply those concepts to the field of sport management.

The North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), of which both Newman and Giardina are members, is an organization composed of several hundred members worldwide, all of whom are dedicated to studying the sociocultural elements of sport. According to the mission of this organization, NASSS exists to promote, stimulate, and encourage the sociological study of play, games, sport and contemporary physical culture.

This organization holds an annual conference, which just took place in Windsor, Canada. The theme of this year’s conference was “Sport Matters: Physics, Politics, Performances, Pedagogies.” Dozens of students, alumni, and faculty members from FSU presented at the event this year; however, the strong presence of Florida State University at this conference was mainly due to the current roles of Newman and Giardina.

Giardina led the discussion portion of a plenary session on Sport Institutions and Social Justice at the conference. Giardina is also the editor-in-chief for the Sociology of Sport Journal, the official publication of NASSS. Distributed quarterly, the aim of the journal is to publish original research framed by social theory on exercise, sport, physical culture, and the (physically active) body.

Newman has spent the last year as the president-elect for NASSS, and was just sworn in as president at November’s conference. As president of NASSS, he is responsible for leading the executive board of the organization, which has hundreds of professors and students from around the world serving in positions of leadership for social change and social justice through sport. Both Newman and Giardina were also recently awarded prestigious NASSS Research Fellowships as further evidence of their contribution to the field.

Newman and Giardina have been working extremely hard to increase the awareness of the sociocultural aspects of sport both at Florida State University and within the field of sport management. Their contributions have led to the graduates of the sport management program at Florida State receiving the most well rounded and diverse education as possible before entering the field.
This fall, the Sport Management Student Association (SMSA) took 44 of its members, along with Dr. Jason Pappas, to network in Nashville, Tennessee. SMSA got the opportunity to meet with the Tennessee Titans, the Nashville Predators, and the Nashville Sounds. The students were also able to participate in service learning through volunteering with the Nashville Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K and had the chance to attend the Tennessee Titans football game against the Cincinnati Bengals.

The first full day in Nashville consisted of tours and meetings with the three sports teams. The first stop the students made was to Nissan Stadium, the home of the Tennessee Titans. The group got to meet with Ticket Sales Executive Drew Silver and Group Sales Coordinator Jim Rice. The tour of Nissan Stadium included the Owner’s Suite, Mascot Room, Locker Room, and a view of the Titans’ field. SMSA also got the opportunity to speak to a panel of four Titans employees from various departments within the organization. The presenters answered any questions the students had about their experiences within the sport industry and how they got to their current position with the Tennessee Titans.

From Nissan Stadium, the group of students walked to Bridgestone Arena, home of the Nashville Predators hockey team. Students had the chance to meet and listen to Sean Henry, chief executive officer and president of the Nashville Predators. They received a tour of the arena and of the Lexus Lounge, an exclusive area for members to watch the games and socialize during hockey games. Mickey Hock, a former FSU student and now Corporate Development Manager for the Predators, led the tour and spoke to the students about his life and day-to-day responsibilities working at Bridgestone Arena.

The students then traveled to the last meeting of the day with the Nashville Sounds Minor League Baseball team. The Sounds have been affiliated with Oakland Athletics for the past three seasons. General Manager Adam Nuse spoke with SMSA about Minor League Baseball and answered any questions the students had about working in the industry. The students were then given a tour by Community Relations Manager Destiny Whitmore and Guest Relations Associate Allie Guido. They had the opportunity to walk around First Tennessee Park and see the locker room, club suites, and the band box, where guests can play mini golf, cornhole, and other lawn games all while attending a Nashville Sounds baseball game. The students learned that many people in the sports industry start out in Minor League Baseball and that it is a great way for them to get their foot in the door.

The next day included volunteering at the Nashville Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K. Students arrived at 5:00 a.m. to help with set-up for the event and got to experience the freezing weather of Nashville! SMSA was responsible for all parts of the event, including registration, t-shirts, gear check, and handing out food and drinks. The students also stood at the end of the three races announcing the runners’ names and handing them medals as they crossed the finish line. They learned every aspect of what it takes to put on an event for over 3,000 runners.

On their last day in Nashville, the students attended the Tennessee Titans football game against the Cincinnati Bengals. SMSA got the chance to spend time as a big group and get to know each other more in a social setting. They also had the time to explore downtown Nashville, where they walked around visiting different restaurants and listening to the live music played all over the city.

Nashville was a great place for students to network with sport industry professionals and to have fun with each other. SMSA organizes a networking trip for its members each semester and gives students the opportunity to meet new people within the sports industry. The students had an amazing experience in Music City, USA and can’t wait to hear what is in store for the spring!
Alumni Profile: Wesley Maas

by Mariah King, master’s student

Florida State Sport Management alum Wesley Maas has considered himself a Seminole since a family move landed him in Jacksonville when he was in high school. That loyalty and the university’s tradition of excellence are the things that ultimately drove him to pursue his master’s degree in Tallahassee.

Now, he is a positive example within our growing community and is always willing to help in any way he can. “One of the things I take a lot of pride in is servant leadership,” said Maas. “If I can do anything to help anyone in our community, I am absolutely one hundred percent engaged and willing to help.”

Maas grew up as a Naval kid and spent his childhood all across the country. He ultimately received his undergraduate degree from Newberry College in 2000. Maas was a first-generation college student, and admits that while in undergraduate, there was not necessarily a goal aligned with his degree. It was not until he landed a job with the Jacksonville Jaguars that Maas found his passion and decided to pursue it with full force.

“After finding some success, and finding something that I loved, I decided to pursue graduate school at Florida State University. That opportunity led me to academic support, and I fell in love with it and helping athletes succeed.”

Maas credits his peers within the master’s program and mentors like Mark Meleney for helping guide him to the tools and network he needed to be successful in this industry. “Everyone should aim to find mentors in their field that they can bounce ideas off of. Don’t be afraid to take risks, because ultimately that risk taking can only benefit you.”

With a military upbringing and a career that has taken him all across the country, Maas is no stranger to risk-taking career moves. He has held seven jobs in the past seventeen years and knows a thing or two about packing up and moving across the country. His career timeline includes moves to Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Wyoming, Arizona, and ultimately back to Florida where he is currently the assistant vice-president of undergraduate education and the director of the Student Athlete Academic Center at Florida International University.

“In order to grow and gain leadership responsibility, I had to move and accept new roles. People become complacent. It’s just human nature to get comfortable in a role, but that complacency often leads to unhappiness. Taking the slight risk is worth it.”

Maas stated that self-awareness was a concept that is important for students in this industry. “I would encourage students at this point to be self-aware to what their strengths and weaknesses are. Go all in on what makes you happy. Work is work, it doesn’t matter what it might be. Parts of your job will be difficult, and that is why it is so important that you love what you’re doing. Athletics is not a 9-5 job. Make sure your work ethic matches your ambition and you will go far.”

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