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The Changing Climates of the Sport Management Academic Job Market and Doctoral Students'  
Career Expectations

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**Abstract**

Past research shows that the job market for sport management academic positions was strong, with more job openings than qualified professors to fill the positions. Due to changing global and higher education climates, however, it was necessary to conduct further research to examine how these shifts in the external environment have impacted the sport management job market. Therefore, this study employed a content analysis methodology to examine the faculty job openings in sport management from 2010-2011. Additionally, current doctoral students were surveyed to determine their preparation and expectations for the academic job market. Results revealed much greater parity between the number of open positions and the number of doctoral student job seekers than ever before. Similarities and differences were discovered between the actual job market and students' career expectations and goals. Ultimately, the job market has become more competitive and job seekers must take steps to ensure a competitive advantage.

## Introduction

In his Dr. Earle F. Zeigler Lecture at the 17th Annual North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) Conference, Weese (2002) stated, “Doctoral students coming out of our PhD programs today and in the next few years should feel positive about the opportunities that await them in their academic careers” (p. 15). Several researchers have since examined the number of job openings in sport management academia and the qualification criteria necessary for candidates to fill these positions (e.g., Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008; Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2004; Pedersen, Fielding, & Vincent, 2007; Pedersen & Schneider, 2003; Pedersen, Whisenant, & Schneider, 2005), and concluded that there were indeed more academic sport management jobs available than there were individuals with doctoral degrees to fill the positions.

Despite the seemingly booming sport management job market, the U.S. and global economy took a downturn in 2008. According to a report by Cooper (2010), fewer faculty jobs in higher education were listed in 2008-2009 than any year in the previous decade, representing a 24% decrease in job listings from the 2007-2008 academic year. Additionally, the number of job openings in the social sciences was down 31% in 2008-2009 (Cooper, 2010). Many universities across the country also received less federal and state funding, and experienced university-wide budget cuts and/or salary freezes (Brainard, 2011; Kelderman, 2011).

Because of these changes in the global economy and higher education, it is necessary to revisit the topic of sport management academic job announcements and doctoral student preparation. The last study to examine both of these topics concurrently was Mahony et al. (2004), and both the economic and higher education climates have experienced drastic changes since that research was conducted. This study builds upon that research, but differs in its methodology. Mahony et al. (2004) stated that “it would be helpful to examine the views of

doctoral students relative to their goals and how well programs are preparing them for the faculty job market” (p. 107) since the perceptions of advisors regarding their students’ experiences can be different than those of the students. Therefore, this study surveyed current sport management doctoral students in order to uncover the students’ sense of preparation, along with their personal job preferences and expectations upon completion of their doctoral program.

The purpose of this study was threefold: first, to understand the current sport management faculty job market; second, to understand the preparation and job expectations of current sport management doctoral students; and third, to examine this data together in order to understand how prepared current doctoral students are in relation to the current sport marketing jobs available, and how well their job expectations match the jobs currently available.

### **Literature Review**

Mahony (2008) posited that “the primary issue for sport management is a lack of qualified faculty to (a) teach the increasing number of students enrolling in sport management programs and (b) conduct the research necessary to build a distinct body of knowledge” (p. 1). As such, two lines of research emerged regarding the sport management faculty job market and the doctoral students who will ideally fill open faculty positions in the future. The following review of literature examines the research conducted on these topics.

#### **Sport Management Faculty Job Market**

In response to Weese’s (2002) Zeigler Lecture, several researchers began studying the faculty job market in sport management. Mahony et al. (2004) found that the number of sport management job openings increased from 48 in 1996-1997 to 112 in 2000-2001. Pedersen and Schneider (2003) also examined faculty openings in the 2000-2001 academic year, finding 128 sport management faculty job announcements, which was more than in previous years. In a

follow-up study, Pedersen et al. (2005) examined the job announcements for the 2001-02 academic year, revealing a total of 131 announcements. Pedersen et al. (2007) continued this line of research with a five-year (2001-02 through 2005-06) investigation, during which time only the 2003-04 academic year experienced a decline in the number of open positions, while the number of positions increased during the other years. The most job postings were found in 2005-06, with 155 open positions (Pedersen et al., 2007).

Pedersen et al. (2003, 2005) surveyed the institutions with job vacancies and found that only 62% of the open positions in 2000-01 and just 61% of the openings in 2001-02 were filled. The researchers concluded that the failed searches were most likely due to a lack of qualified or available candidates. Furthermore, Mondello et al. (2002) found that search committees for sport management positions were only moderately satisfied with the pool of applicants for these open positions, suggesting “recruiting good applicants for sport management faculty positions is difficult” (p. 269). In order to better answer the question of why positions remain unfilled and to assess the candidates applying for sport management professorial positions, Mahony et al. (2004) examined the adequacy of doctoral students’ preparation for entering the job market by surveying program directors and doctoral advisors. They observed that the universities from which students received doctoral degrees were often different than the universities in which the open positions were located, which might contribute to the number of faculty positions left unfilled. In terms of student preparation, research was deemed to be the most important aspect of sport management doctoral programs, with respondents ranking “publishing in refereed journals”, “presenting at professional conferences” and “developing an established line of research” as the top three most important student-related experiences. Teaching ranked second and service was third.

Jones et al. (2008) took a closer look at the faculty comprising sport management programs in the U.S., and found that nearly 30% of programs had no female faculty members, and 47% of the programs were comprised only of white male faculty members, thus indicating a great lack of diversity in sport management faculties. Additionally, the researchers found that many faculty members in sport management programs did not hold terminal degrees and departments were comprised of several part-time faculty members. These findings seem to lend credence to Mahony's (2008) concerns regarding sport management academic programs.

While the lack of qualified candidates and misaligned priorities between the job opening and potential candidates were both suggested as contributing factors to the number of unfilled positions, another reason might be a lack of desire on the part of current faculty members to switch institutions. Mahony, Mondello, Hums, and Judd (2006) surveyed current sport management faculty members to understand the reasons faculty members might leave their current positions. The study found that sport management faculty were not likely to leave their current position for a new one, but the factors that had the greatest effect on the decision to switch jobs included location, salary, perceived fit, and the quality of the other faculty in the program (Mahony et al., 2006). Therefore, if these factors are not present in a new job opening, it is unlikely that sport management faculty members will leave their current position.

### **Sport Management Doctoral Students**

While there has been a great deal of research on the sport management academic job market in recent years, the amount of research examining sport management doctoral students has been fairly limited. Grappendorf and Morin (2005) noted that the number of sport management doctoral programs has grown over the past 20 years, indicating a greater number of scholars earning doctoral degrees in sport management, but apparently still not enough Ph.D.s to

fill all of the open sport management professorial positions when taking into account the findings of Pedersen et al. (2003, 2005).

Jisha and Pitts (2004) examined the topic of doctoral program choice by surveying 158 sport management doctoral students from North America. The results indicated that factors such as “opportunity for an assistantship, job placement, friendliness of faculty and staff, and the time required to complete the program” (p. 4) were highly rated in doctoral students’ choice process. Additionally, the demographic data captured by this study revealed that the majority (72.4%) of doctoral students were white, 68.4% were male, and the average sport management doctoral student’s age was 33 (Jisha & Pitts, 2004). Grappendorf and Morin (2005) found similar demographic information in their study. Jisha and Pitts (2004) noted the lack of gender and racial diversity amongst doctoral students and suggested that faculty members take a more active role in recruiting doctoral students. This might assist in increasing the gender and racial diversity of doctoral students, and thus impact the diversity of future sport management faculty members.

Regarding doctoral student preparation, Mahony et al. (2004) surveyed doctoral advisors, finding that doctoral students were more likely than current faculty members to have experience working in the sport industry, were as likely to have refereed publications, and were less likely to have teaching experience. The study also examined the aspects of doctoral student preparation that were deemed most important by doctoral program faculty as compared to search committee chairs. The findings revealed that doctoral program faculty ranked research record and potential as number one, while only those search committee chairs at doctoral research extensive universities ranked it first. Search committee chairs from other institutions ranked research as the fourth most important factor, and teaching as the most important.



## **Summary**

Because external forces such as the U.S. and global economy have impacted higher education, it is necessary to examine the current job market in order to assess what changes have occurred since Pedersen et al.'s 2006 study, and to provide a better understanding of the current sport management academic job market for those in this field of study. Additionally, previous researchers haven't examined sport management doctoral students' preparation from the perspective of the doctoral students themselves, so this research seeks to fill that hole in the literature. In an attempt to draw connections between the current sport management professorial job market and the expectations of current doctoral students, this study moves beyond examination of just one of these issues, and instead links the two in a way that allows sport management researchers to understand any connections that exist between the two.

## **Methodology**

This study employed two methodologies. First, content analysis was used to examine sport management job announcements over a one-year time period. This methodology mirrored that used by Pedersen et al. (2007). Content analysis is considered an unobtrusive, systematic and replicable research technique in which content is examined after it is produced (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). The researchers collected job announcements over a one-year time period (March 1, 2010 – February 28, 2011) from the Sport Management listserv, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) listserv, HigherEdJobs.com, and Chronicle.com. A total of 58 job advertisements were collected and subsequently coded. The codebook was modeled after that of Pedersen et al. (2007), and contained 48 variables including the institution's name, state, country, region, public or private status, size, research status, school in which the job was located, level of the position, tenure status, level of teaching, position status, whether teaching,

research, service, dissertation advising, advising, supervising interns, serving on committees, or industry experience was mentioned in the job ad, whether teaching or research experience were required, the minimum degree required for applicants, the area of study for the minimum degree, whether ABD candidates would be accepted, the names of the classes or research expertise mentioned in the job ad, the month and year the job ad was placed, and the salary of the position. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to report descriptive information (e.g., university location, university size, etc.) and chi-square analysis was used to determine correlations between variables. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 19) was used to calculate the statistics for this portion of the study.

Along with content analysis, a survey methodology was utilized for data collection of current doctoral students' experiences in their respective doctoral programs. The survey was developed by the researchers based on their own experiences and observations as former doctoral students and current university faculty members, as well as by adapting some of the questions from Jisha and Pitts' (2004) Sport Management Program Choice Survey. Content validity was achieved after an outside faculty member deemed to be an expert in pedagogy reviewed the survey. Based on this expert's review, the researchers made a few minor adjustments and distributed the survey via email to the NASSM listserv and NASSS listserv in May 2011. The survey remained open for two weeks, and upon its closing a total of 81 complete responses were collected.

In order to control for threats to external validity, the online survey software, Checkbox v. 4.7, only allowed one response from each IP address to help insure that each person completed just one survey. Furthermore, to insure that only doctoral students completed the survey, the first question asked, "Are you a current sport management doctoral student?" If the participant

answered “yes,” they were taken through the remainder of the survey questions. If the participant answered “no,” they were directed to a page that thanked them for their participation.

SPSS 19 was also utilized for data analysis on this portion of the study, and the specific measures utilized included frequencies, percentages, and means for descriptive data, as well as chi-square analysis for correlations.

## **Results**

The results are broken into two sections: one to reveal the findings of the job announcement content analysis and one to reveal the findings of the doctoral student survey. Frequencies and percentages are reported in each of these sections, along with means and significant chi-square results where applicable.

### **Job Announcements**

#### **Region**

Of the 58 announcements, 8.6% were based outside of the United States. See Table 1 for the regional breakdown of the U.S. job postings. The states comprising each U.S. region were developed by the U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.).

<INSERT TABLE 1 HERE>

The state with the most job postings was Tennessee, with five openings. Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, and New York all tied for second with four job openings each.

#### **University status**

Universities were coded as public, private, or unknown. Each university’s status was determined by consulting the institution lookup tool on the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s website (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.). The five international

universities, or 8.6% of the job announcements, were coded as unknown, 53.4% were public, and 37.9% were private.

### **University size**

The size of the international universities was unknown, as the Carnegie Foundation's classifications only included those colleges and universities located within the U.S. The majority (56.9%) of universities were found to be large four-year institutions, while 17.2% were medium four-year institutions, and 17.2% were small four-year schools.

### **University research status**

Based on the Carnegie classifications, 16 of the 58 schools (27.6%) were deemed to have very high research activity, which many refer to as research one institutions. Those universities with high research activity constituted 22.4% of the job announcements, 1.7% were classified as doctoral/research universities, 29.3% were labeled as master's universities, 10.3% were classified as undergraduate universities, and 8.6% were unknown. Chi-square analysis revealed a significant correlation between the university's research status and its status as public or private ( $\chi^2 = 80.73$ ,  $df = 10$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that those with a higher focus on research were more likely to be public, and those with a greater teaching focus were more likely to be private institutions.

### **School in which job position is located**

Sport management programs are often housed in different school units within a university, so the researchers coded this variable based on the school in which the job position was housed. A total of 15.5% of the universities did not indicate the school, while 34.5% were in the School of Education, 19.0% were coded as "other", 15.5% were housed in the School of Business, and 15.5% were housed in a School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, or

a very similar name. Of those coded as “other”, some of the school names were School of Health Sciences, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Health Professions, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, and College of Human Ecology.

Chi-square analysis revealed a significant correlation between the school in which the position was located and the size of the university ( $\chi^2 = 26.65$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The results indicate that larger universities tend to house sport management in schools of education, while in smaller universities it tends to reside in the school of business or one of the “other” categories.

### **Position level and track**

Each job posting was coded based on the level of the position. Of the 58 announcements, 6.9% did not specify the position level/rank, 29.3% were for an assistant professor position, 25.9% were for assistant or associate professor, 10.34% were for a chair or director, 8.6% were at the lecturer or clinical faculty rank, 8.6% were listed as open rank, 6.9% were for associate or full professor, 1.7% were for associate professor, and 1.7% were for visiting faculty positions.

In addition to coding the position’s level/rank, each position’s status as tenure-track or non-tenure-track was also coded. In total, 72.4% of the job announcements were for tenure-track positions. Of the remaining jobs, 12.1% were specifically non-tenure-track, and 15.5% were unknown. Many of the unknown positions were at the assistant professor level, so it is assumed that many of these positions were likely tenure-track, though it was not stated explicitly in the job announcement and therefore were coded as unknown.

### **Job duties**

The job duties mentioned in each announcement were coded. Variables for this measure included teaching, research, service, dissertation advising, academic advising, supervising

interns, and serving on committees. Each announcement was coded as either yes or no on those seven variables. The results are shown in Table 2.

<INSERT TABLE 2 HERE>

### **Applicant qualifications**

Variables for applicant qualifications included industry experience, teaching experience, research experience, minimum degree, field the degree should be in, and whether or not ABD applicants would be accepted. Only 25.9% of the job announcements indicated that industry experience was preferred. Teaching experience was required by 69.0% of the announcements, preferred by 15.5%, and not specified in 15.5%. Research experience was required in 62.1% of the announcements, preferred in 6.9%, and not mentioned in 31.0%.

Regarding the minimum degree of applicants, 75.9% indicated that a doctoral degree was required, while 3.4% indicated that a doctoral degree was preferred. A master's degree was the highest minimum degree qualification for 10.3% of the advertisements, and 10.3% of the ads did not specify a minimum degree. Of those that stated the academic discipline in which the degree should be, 74.1% indicated that the degree should be in sport management or athletic administration, 6.9% were coded as "other", 1.7% were coded as Business, and 17.2% did not specify a field of study.

Only 13.8% of the job announcements indicated that ABD candidates would be considered for the job, while the remaining 86.2% did not mention ABD candidates. No job ads explicitly stated that ABD candidates would not be considered.

### **Area of expertise**

Each job announcement was coded based on whether or not it indicated a research or teaching area of expertise. The most frequently mentioned area of expertise was Sport Finance

( $N = 26$ ). Tying for second were sport marketing and facility management ( $N = 21$ ). For a complete listing of the areas of expertise mentioned, see Table 3.

<INSERT TABLE 3 HERE>

The findings from this portion of the study were quite consistent with those of Pedersen et al. (2007), which indicated that finance, law, facility management and event management were top areas of expertise preferred by hiring institutions. These results differ in that the number of institutions requesting an area of expertise in sport communication, organizational behavior/theory, governance, and athletic administration has risen considerably since Pedersen et al.'s (2007) review of job ads from 2001-2006, and the number of institutions requesting leadership has dropped considerably.

### **Doctoral Students**

A total of 81 usable surveys were collected from current sport management doctoral students over a two-week period in May 2011. The following sections report on the variables examined in this survey.

#### **Demographic information**

Of the 81 respondents, 60.5% ( $N=49$ ) were male and 39.5% ( $N=32$ ) were female. The average age of respondents was 31.3 years ( $SD = 9.20$ ). The youngest respondent was 23 years old and the oldest was 48. Male respondents tended to be slightly older than females, with an average age of 32.6 ( $SD = 6.22$ ) for males and 29.3 ( $SD = 4.49$ ) for females.

In terms of race, 82.7% of the respondents indicated that they were White or Caucasian. The remaining respondents were Black or African-American (8.6%), Asian or Asian-American (4.9%), Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin (2.5%), or "Other" (1.2%). There was greater racial diversity amongst female doctoral students than males. Of the female students, 71.9% were

White, while 28.1% were Black, Asian, Latino, or “other”. In terms of the male students, 89.8% were White and 10.2% were Black or Asian.

Regarding location, 40.7% of the students’ doctoral programs were located in the South region of the United States, while 22.2% were enrolled in doctoral programs in the Midwest, 9.9% in the West, 2.5% in the Northeast, and 22.2% were enrolled in programs outside of the U.S. Of those respondents, five were from Australia, four from Canada, three from Greece, three from the United Kingdom, one from New Zealand, one from South Africa, and one from the Netherlands.

### **Student status, assistantships, and work**

Students were asked to classify themselves as either a full-time or part-time student. The majority (82.7%) indicated that they were full-time doctoral students. Regarding gender, there was a slightly higher percentage of female part-time students (18.7%) than males (16.3%).

Almost half (48.1%) of the respondents had reached “all but dissertation” (ABD) status. Of those, 56.4% were male and 43.6% were female. See Table 4 for a comprehensive breakdown of the stage of the doctoral process of respondents.

<INSERT TABLE 4 HERE>

The majority of respondents expected to complete their doctoral degree sometime in 2011 (28.4%) or 2012 (38.3%). Beyond those two years, 25.9% expected to earn their degree in 2013, 6.2% in 2014 and 1.2% after 2014.

In terms of assistantships, 69 of the 81 students (85.1%) indicated that they held an assistantship position. Of those, 48 held teaching assistantships and 21 held research assistantships. The percentage of males with assistantships (91.8%) was much higher than that of females (75.0%). Students were asked if they worked in addition to being a doctoral student, and



22.2% reported having a part-time job, while 27.2% reported having a full-time job. Only four students indicated that they did not have an assistantship or a job. Of those students with an assistantship, 19 also worked at a part-time job and four worked at a full-time job.

### **Industry experience**

Students were asked questions regarding their experience working in the sport industry prior to pursuing their doctorate degree. The average number of years worked in the industry was 4.8 ( $SD = 6.15$ ). Two respondents indicated that they worked in the sport industry for 25 years, the longest amount of time of any of the respondents, and 19 respondents (23.5%) indicated that they never worked in the sport industry. Of those with industry experience, working for a collegiate athletic department or conference was the most popular response, with 39.5% of respondents indicating that they worked in this area. Facility management (22.2%) ranked second, followed by professional team or league (19.8%), national governing body of sport (13.6%), sport media (9.9%), sport retail store (4.9%), sports agency (3.7%), and athletic apparel/footwear/equipment manufacturer (2.5%). Respondents were able to select more than one answer if they worked in multiple areas of the industry.

### **Research expertise and experience**

Students were asked to indicate their primary area of research within sport management, as well as a secondary area of research if applicable. In terms of the primary area of research, management was the most popular focus area at 27.2%. Following management were marketing (22.2%), sociology (16.0%), other (8.6%), economics (6.2%), communication (4.9%), psychology (4.9%), ethics (3.7%), finance (2.5%), law (2.5%), and pedagogy (1.2%). Of those who responded “other”, the answers given included academics and athletics, development, higher education, leadership, organizational culture, risk management, and sport and disability.

For the secondary area of research, management ranked first with 21.0%, followed by marketing (17.3%), sociology (14.8%), psychology (8.6%), communication (7.4%), governance (7.4%), other (7.4%), finance (6.2%), economics (2.5%), pedagogy (2.5%), history (1.2%), and law (1.2%). Two respondents (2.5%) indicated that they did not have a secondary area of research. Of those who answered “other”, the responses included organizational behavior ( $N = 2$ ), risk management, organization of mega sporting events, operations research, and social psychology.

In order to measure research experience, students were asked questions regarding their number of peer-reviewed publications, publications in press, manuscripts under review, and conference presentations. See Table 5 for the results of these questions.

<INSERT TABLE 5 HERE>

Since the results from Table 5 include information from students in their first year of a doctoral program, it is possible that the numbers do not accurately reflect the preparation of students engaged in a job search. Therefore, in order to gain a better sense of the research experiences of those students who have begun or will begin applying for academic positions in the near future, the results were divided by the students' ABD status. Findings revealed that those who were ABD had, on average, 1.00 peer-reviewed publications ( $SD = 1.40$ ), 0.62 manuscripts in press ( $SD = 0.99$ ), and 1.23 manuscripts under review ( $SD = 1.05$ ). Additionally, ABD students indicated an average of 1.13 state conference presentations ( $SD = 1.75$ ), 0.74 regional presentations ( $SD = 1.02$ ), 2.73 national presentations ( $SD = 3.83$ ) and 1.88 international presentations ( $SD = 2.33$ ).

### **Teaching experience and preparation**

Of the 81 students surveyed, only 11 indicated that they had no teaching experience. The remaining 70 students had experience teaching an average of 3.56 different courses per person

( $SD = 4.07$ ). The most frequently taught course was introduction to sport management (44.4%). Next was sport marketing (30.9%), current issues in sport (22.2%), sport facility management (19.8%), sport sociology (19.8%), sport organizational behavior or theory (18.5%), sport event management (17.3%), legal issues in sport (16.0%), sport governance (16.0%), sport leadership (13.6%), sport finance (11.1%), sport communication (9.9%), athletic administration (8.6%), sport ethics (8.6%), strategic management in sport (6.2%), sport psychology (4.9%), sport sales (4.9%), and sport economics (2.5%). Additionally, 32.1% of the respondents indicated that they had taught “other” courses. These courses included research methods in sport management, sport history, hospitality, diversity in sport, international sport business, women in sport, service learning in sport, internships, health and fitness, coaching, and activity courses such as basketball or soccer.

When asked how they learned to teach, results revealed that very few students ever received formal training in teaching. The majority (58%) indicated that they learned through observations, and 54.3% said they learned from mentors, while 28.4% reported that they received no method of teaching training. Only 24.7% had taken a pedagogy course, 18.5% received guidance from their campus teaching and learning center, and 12.3% were offered training through their department.

### **Job preferences**

Respondents were asked several questions about their job preferences after completing their doctoral degree. The first question asked which job field they would most likely pursue upon completion of the Ph.D., with the majority (71.6%) responding that they would pursue a tenure-track academic position at a college or university. The remaining respondents answered that they would pursue a professional position outside of academia (11.1%), a non-tenure track

academic position (7.4%), an administrative position within an institution of higher education (6.2%), or “other” (3.7%).

The students were also asked to indicate the type of institution they wished to work for, the size of the institution, and the region(s) within the U.S. where they planned to focus their search. Those who indicated they did not wish to work in academia were excluded from these results in order to more accurately capture the preferences of those who planned to pursue jobs in higher education. In terms of the institution type, 38.6% preferred an institution with a research and teaching balance, 31.4% preferred to be at an institution with a research focus, 22.9% preferred to be at an institution with a teaching focus, and 7.1% said that the institution type does not matter. When asked to indicate whether they preferred to work at a public or private institution, 68.4% said that the institution type did not matter, while 22.4% preferred to work at a public institution and 9.2% preferred a private institution.

When asked about the preferred size of the institution, 50% said the institution’s size did not matter, while 27.1% preferred a large university, which is described as having 10,000 or more degree-seeking students by the Carnegie Foundation (n.d.). A medium-sized university of 3,000 to 9,999 students was preferred by 17.1%, and a small university of less than 3,000 degree-seeking students was preferred by 5.8%. Chi-square analysis revealed a significant correlation between the students’ preferred institution type and size ( $\chi^2 = 32.19$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Respondents could select more than one region of the country in which they planned to focus their job search. Of the four U.S. regions, the South was the most popular among respondents, with 51.9% indicating that they would search for jobs there. Next were the Midwest (43.2%), then the West and Northeast (39.5%). Additionally, 29.6% of respondents said they would search for jobs outside of the U.S.

Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between those students whose doctoral programs were located in the South and their intentions of searching for jobs in the South ( $\chi^2 = 16.18$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), those attending programs in the Midwest and their intentions of searching for jobs in the Midwest ( $\chi^2 = 11.27$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and those whose programs were located internationally and their intentions of searching for jobs internationally ( $\chi^2 = 38.98$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). No correlations were found to exist for those doctoral students whose programs were in the Northeast or the West.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their expected salary in their first position after completing their Ph.D. The majority of respondents said they expected to receive over \$50,000 U.S. dollars per year, with 40.7% expecting to make between \$50,000 and \$59,999, 27.2% expecting between \$60,000 and \$69,999, and 12.3% expecting to make over \$70,000 in their first year. Bivariate correlation analysis revealed no significant relationships between salary expectations and institution type or size.

### **Job search concerns**

Respondents were asked the open-ended question, “What concerns do you have regarding the sport management academic job search?” The primary concern was about job availability. As one respondent said, “The job I might be the best fit for, and that might be the best fit for me, may not be available when I conduct my search.” Others echoed this sentiment, expressing concerns that the sport management job market was saturated and fewer positions will be available when they are ready to begin their search. A second concern voiced by many respondents was that of competition, both against fellow doctoral students and more seasoned faculty members who want to change jobs. Additionally, many respondents indicated that they

were concerned about not knowing why they did not receive an offer or interview for a position for which they applied.

Two other themes emerged from these answers, one of which was the geographic location of available jobs, and the second being a concern about sport management professors receiving lower salaries compared to other academic disciplines. One respondent said, “I am not sure I can make enough money as a first year professor to ensure that I don’t take a pay cut from my professional job.”

### **Discussion**

The results from this study yielded many interesting findings worthy of further discussion. The following section is divided into sub-sections to discuss each of the noteworthy findings.

#### **Demographics of Doctoral Students**

Jones et al. (2008) indicated a lack of diversity in sport management faculties, and previous research by Jisha and Pitts (2004) revealed that nearly 70% of sport management doctoral students were male, and 72.4% were White. This study discovered mixed results regarding diversity among sport management doctoral students compared to previous research. Nearly 40% of survey respondents were female, which is almost 10% higher than Jisha et al.’s (2004) findings, but 82.7% of the respondents in this survey were White, showing less racial diversity than previous studies found. Furthermore, 28.1% of the females were Black, Latino, or Asian, while only 10.2% of males represented racial minorities. This seems to highlight the point made by Jones et al. (2008) that “a lack of diversity within sport management programs remains an area of concern” (p. 88). In their research on recruiting and retaining faculty, Mahony et al.

(2006) indicated that institutions looking to increase diversity amongst their faculty would face difficulties due to the prevalence of White males in the field of sport management.

Research consistently shows that diverse faculty members have positive impacts on students and universities as a whole. For example, Hurtado (2001) argued that in a society in which diversity is ever increasing, it is important for colleges and universities to provide students with the skills to successfully function in such a society. Hurtado's (2001) research "suggests that such diversity may contribute significantly to students' improvement on key learning outcomes that are associated with both academic development and the critical abilities needed to work in diverse settings – skills that will be increasingly important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (p. 200). Similarly, Umbach (2006) found empirical evidence that those faculty members on racially diverse campuses were more likely employ teaching methods highlighting diversity and higher order cognitive activities than faculty on racially homogenous campuses, thus reinforcing the importance of diverse faculties. While the reason for the lack of racial diversity is unknown, it is a troubling finding given the benefits that diverse faculties bring to students, and it indicates that the future faculty outlook in sport management continues to lack diversity, which is a disservice to our students.

### **Job Availability**

The number of academic sport management job openings has decreased considerably since the last known study to assess job announcements. In the 2005-06 academic year, Pedersen et al. (2007) found 155 open positions, while the current study found just 58 position openings over a one-year time period. The sharp decline in the number of open positions is likely due to the current state of the global economy, as well as the previously mentioned trends in higher education. Interestingly, 54 of the 81 doctoral student survey respondents indicated that they

expected to earn their doctoral degree in 2011 or 2012, meaning that at least 54 students were possibly pursuing the 58 open positions found in this study, assuming that some of the students began applying for jobs when they reached ABD status. Unlike Mahony's (2008) assertion that the number of professorial positions in sport management was far greater than the number of doctoral graduates and "we can expect this to continue" (p. 2), the landscapes of the sport management job openings and applicant pool have changed drastically in a very short period of time, revealing much greater parity between the number of open positions and the number of qualified applicants to fill such positions than ever before. This will likely result in a much more competitive job market for those pursuing sport management doctoral degrees, or for those faculty members currently holding an academic position who wish to switch institutions.

Because the job market has become increasingly competitive, is quite possible that some current faculty members did not receive their ideal job right after graduating from a doctoral program, so the number of current faculty applying for jobs is likely greater than in the past. The notion of a more competitive job market was also reflected in many of the students' answers to the open-ended question relating to their job search concerns. As one respondent wrote, "[I am concerned that] the market is saturated and jobs will be difficult to come by." Another respondent indicated that they had secured a professorial position for the following academic year, but "getting a job was a lot of hustle."

Along with competition for sport management jobs between sport management doctoral students and current sport management faculty members, Mahony et al. (2004) also pointed out that faculty members in sport management programs are often hired from other fields of study such as business, leisure studies, recreation management, or physical education. The increasingly competitive job market in sport management academia indicates that more than ever before, the



sound and comprehensive preparation of doctoral students is of utmost importance. Similar to recommendations made by Mondello, Mahony, Hums, and Moorman (2002), it is likely that doctoral students will need to have experience teaching a variety of sport management classes and should have multiple conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications on their vitas in order to remain competitive against their peers. Although Mondello et al. (2002) did not recommend that doctoral students gain service experience before applying to faculty positions, the current study found that nearly 60% of job announcements mentioned service as a job duty. Therefore, in today's more competitive job market, gaining service experience during one's doctoral education might serve as a qualification that can set candidates apart from their peers if the teaching, publication, and presentation records of the candidates are all similar. Activities such as serving as a manuscript or abstract reviewer, serving on student boards for professional associations, or serving on university or department-level committees at their doctoral institution may be necessary for these students to gain a competitive advantage.

### **The Role of Research**

The next finding that merits further discussion concerns the aspect of research as it relates to sport management academic jobs. Thirty of the 58 institutions (51.72%) with job advertisements were classified as very high research activity, high research activity, or a doctoral/research university, and 77.6% of the job announcements mentioned research as a job duty. Only 62.1% of the job announcements, however, listed research experience as a required qualification. It is unknown why the disparity existed between research as a job duty and as a qualification requirement.

In terms of students' research preparation, the average number of publications for ABD students was 1.00 ( $SD = 1.40$ ) and the average number of national conference presentations was

2.73 ( $SD = 3.83$ ), indicating that by the time doctoral students reached the ABD level, they were engaged in active research and received training to prepare them for conducting research in an academic faculty position.

### **The Role of Teaching**

Teaching emerged as a very important job duty and qualification for candidates in the content analysis of job advertisements. Only three position descriptions did not mention teaching as a job duty, and all but nine institutions indicated that they preferred or required teaching experience from candidates. Although the job ads indicated that teaching was an integral part of the position, the student survey revealed that doctoral students are not properly trained in the area of teaching during their doctoral program experience. Only 12.3% of students received formal training through their department, while just 24.7% took a pedagogy course to learn to teach. Most respondents who indicated that they had received some form of pedagogical training indicated that such training was done informally through observations of other teachers or discussions with their mentor. Nearly 30% of respondents indicated that they had never received any training – formal or informal – on teaching. This finding is bothersome given the prominence of the role of teaching in the job announcements examined. Additionally, in their survey of search committee chairs, Mahony et al. (2004) found that only research one universities placed the greatest emphasis on candidates' research record when hiring. Aside from that, all other institution types rated teaching experience as the most important.

Mahony et al. (2004) found that doctoral programs placed a greater emphasis on research than teaching, noting that the finding was “troubling” (p. 106). Additionally, Mondello et al. (2002) noted that the institutions in which sport management students completed their doctoral degree were often different than those institutions seeking sport management faculty. The

doctoral program institutions were often large research-focused universities, while many of the jobs are in smaller teaching-focused institutions. Indeed, this study found that approximately half of the institutions with job openings were research universities, while the other half were not as research intensive. Although doctoral institutions seem to place a heavy focus on research, sound teaching preparation should not be overlooked in training doctoral students. It is recommended that more doctoral programs implement a required pedagogy course in their doctoral curriculum, offer formal teaching training within the department, require doctoral students to receive training from the campus teaching and learning center, or implement a combination of these suggestions.

### **Doctoral Student Job Preferences and Expectations**

The doctoral students' job preferences and expectations were captured in the survey, and are compared to the current sport management academic job landscape in Table 6. In order to control for the students who indicated they did not have a preference for the listed criteria, the percentages in Table 6 were calculated based only on those who indicated a preference.

<INSERT TABLE 6 HERE>

It is apparent from the data that certain job criteria listed in the job announcements match favorably with the students' job preferences, while others do not. The criteria that seem to be the least cohesive between the two are the regions in which jobs are located and the regions in which students prefer to focus their job search. For example, 39.5% of students indicated that they would focus their job search efforts on the West region of the U.S., yet only 1.7% of the job announcements were from institutions located in this region. Students were able to select multiple regions, however, so it is possible that those who selected "West" were also open to searching in other parts of the country or world.

There was a discrepancy regarding doctoral students' salary expectations and the realities of faculty salaries. While none of the advertised job positions listed a salary (it was often listed as 'commensurate with experience'), the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (2011) reported the average salary for a new assistant professor in parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies was \$54,444 in 2010-11. Sport management was not listed as a discipline in this study, so in addition to the recreation, parks and leisure category, the researchers also looked at the average salary for the education discipline since 34.5% of the job announcements were from a school of education. The average salary for first-year assistant professors in education was \$55,379. Mahony et al. (2006) found that the base salary for assistant professors of sport management in the U.S. was between \$45,000-50,000 per year. The doctoral student survey revealed that 40.7% of respondents expected to earn a first-year salary of \$50,000 to \$59,999, indicating that these students' salary expectations are most realistic, but might be a bit high based on the findings of Mahony et al. (2006). However, 39.5% of the students indicated that they expected to make over \$60,000 in their first year. While there are certainly exceptions and some students might earn this figure in their first year of a professorial position, the data indicate that it is not likely for most. It is important for doctoral students to review this data in order to have more realistic salary expectations upon graduation.

Additionally, doctoral faculty advisors should become familiar with this data in order to accurately prepare doctoral students for the probable starting salaries that lie ahead of them in this field.

### **Areas of Expertise**

Perhaps the greatest inconsistency between the job announcement data and student survey data involves the area of expertise of doctoral students. The areas of preferred research

and/or teaching expertise were collected from the job announcements, and students were also asked to indicate their primary area of research and any courses they had previously taught. Careful examination of that data reveals that the most frequently requested area of expertise in the 58 job ads was sport finance ( $N=26$ ), yet only two of the 81 doctoral students indicated that this was their primary area of expertise. Nine students, however, indicated that they had taught a sport finance course. Table 7 presents this data from every area of expertise.

<INSERT TABLE 7 HERE>

It is obvious from the results in Table 7 that many of the students' areas of expertise do not match up favorably with the areas being sought by sport management programs; either more students are studying a certain subject than the job demands for that subject (i.e., management), or too few students are studying a subject to meet the job market demands (i.e., finance, communication, law). This finding raises concerns at all levels of university education. For example, at the undergraduate and master's levels, it implies that many professors teaching sport finance courses likely do not possess an expertise in the subject. It raises the question of what level of quality these students receive in such a course. It is quite possible that some universities employ adjunct or part-time faculty members with expertise in areas such as sport finance, law, or communication, although this study did not seek to determine that information. Cases in which a non-expert teaches these courses, though, raise concerns about the quality of information students receive. At the doctoral level it is troubling because it indicates a lack of sport finance experts within most current university faculties, and therefore it is not a subject area that many doctoral students will pursue. Without experts in areas such as sport finance, law, or communication employed as full-time faculty members, the amount of doctoral students who can pursue these areas of expertise is limited, thus further perpetuating the lack of experts in these

areas. If no faculty experts are available to teach such courses, it is recommended that universities hire adjuncts working in the sport management industry to teach them, and allow full-time faculty members to teach courses better suited to their area(s) of expertise.

When viewing the students' teaching experience, however, it appears that more students have taught the high-demand courses of the job market, such as marketing, facility management, organizational behavior/theory, law, and event management. The results seem to indicate that students are gaining experience teaching outside of their areas of expertise, which is potentially problematic for their students, as illustrated in the previous paragraph, but should also work to the doctoral students' advantage, as it makes them more marketable when they apply to academic positions that require teaching courses outside their primary area of interest. Despite this finding, though, it should not be overlooked that there seem to be fewer doctoral students with a primary area of interest in, or experience teaching, subjects such as communication, economics, and athletic administration. These should be viewed as areas for growth for future doctoral students and universities with doctoral programs, as both could capitalize on specializing in one of these areas. This would give doctoral students a competitive advantage in the professorial job market, and would differentiate some doctoral programs from their competitors.

### **Conclusion**

This study provided an analysis of the current job market in the academic field of sport management, along with a snapshot of the doctoral students who will enter this workforce in the years to come. The findings mirrored the changing higher education landscape, revealing fewer professorial positions than in previous years, which will likely lead to a more competitive job market for those seeking professorial positions in sport management.

While some of the findings of this study were similar to previous studies on the sport management faculty job market and doctoral student preparation (i.e., Jisha & Pitts, 2004, Jones et al., 2008, Mahony et al., 2004, Mondello et al., 2002), differences emerged as well. One of the most critical findings from this study was the importance placed on teaching in the job announcements and the lack of preparation in teaching that current sport management doctoral students receive. Based on their publication and presentation records, it appears that sport management doctoral students are receiving adequate training in research. The lack of formal training in teaching, however, is a problem that must be addressed by sport management doctoral programs if their doctoral students hope to be successful in academic positions. While some students can certainly learn to teach well without formal training, it is a disservice to doctoral students to omit such an important aspect of their future career from their doctoral training. It is especially important given that nearly 50% of the open positions were at smaller universities that are less research intensive, and therefore likely place a greater emphasis on teaching success when assessing faculty.

The results of this study should help both doctoral students and their doctoral advisors prepare for the ever-changing sport management faculty landscape by providing insights into which geographic areas jobs are most prevalent, which research and teaching expertise areas are most highly sought-after by employers, and which skills are required or preferred for most sport management faculty jobs. This study indicates that the sport management academic job market has become much more competitive in recent years, and the findings provide valuable information that candidates for these academic positions can utilize in order to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

### **Limitations**

As with all research, this study was not without limitations. The majority of job announcements were collected from U.S. or North American-based sources such as the NASSM listserv and websites such as HigherEdJobs.com and Chronicle.com. Because of this, it is possible that there were more international sport management positions open than the study reflects. It is also possible that there are more international doctoral students than those who completed the survey. Therefore, the international aspects of this study were limited.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

It is important to continue this line of research in order for sport management scholars to remain up-to-date on the job market and doctoral student information in our field. Because the economy and other external factors are constantly changing, it is recommended that this study be replicated over time to determine what trends emerge in the sport management faculty job market and in doctoral student preparation. Additionally, a survey of both doctoral students and their advisors would provide richer data on the sport management doctoral student experience from two different perspectives.

Research that explores the topic of teaching preparation in doctoral programs in greater depth would also be useful to those in sport management academia to better determine how students are being trained and what methods could be applied to doctoral programs to result in better teaching preparation.

To echo the sentiments of Mahony et al. (2004), topics regarding the sport management faculty job market are extremely important to our field and research on this topic must continue in order to develop solutions to problems that emerge.



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Table 1

*Locations of U.S. Job Announcements*

Region	Number of announcements	Percentage of total U.S. announcements
Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont)	13	24.5%
South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia)	22	41.5%
Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin)	17	32.1%
West (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)	1	1.9%

Table 2

*Job Duties Listed in Announcements*


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Job Duty	Mentioned	Not mentioned
Teaching	94.8%	5.2%
Research	77.6%	22.4%
Service	58.6%	41.4%
Thesis or Dissertation Advising	17.2%	82.8%
Academic Advising	46.6%	53.4%
Supervising Interns	34.5%	65.5%
Serving on Committees	13.8%	86.2%

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Table 3

*Areas of Research and Teaching Expertise Sought by the Job Announcements*

Area of Expertise	Mentioned in job ads ( <i>n</i> )	Percentage
Finance	26	44.8%
Marketing	21	36.2%
Facility Management	21	36.2%
Communication	15	25.8%
Law	15	25.8%
Event Management	14	24.1%
Organizational Behavior/Theory	12	20.7%
Management	11	18.9%
Athletic Administration	9	15.5%
Economics	9	15.5%
Governance	9	15.5%
Sociology	9	15.5%
Ethics	7	12.1%
Sales	4	6.9%
Strategic Management	4	6.9%
Current Events	3	5.2%
Psychology	3	5.2%
Leadership	1	1.7%

Table 4

*Student Respondents' Stage in the Doctoral Process*

		At which stage in the doctoral process are you?				
		First year	Second year	Third year	Fourth year	> four years
Are you ABD?	Yes	1	4	16	14	4
	No	11	20	7	3	1

Table 5

*Sport Management Doctoral Students' Research Experience*

	Mean	Maximum	Minimum
Peer-reviewed publications	0.78	7 (N = 1)	0 (N = 46)
Peer-reviewed publications in press	0.42	3 (N = 3)	0 (N = 59)
Peer reviewed manuscripts under review	0.83	5 (N = 1)	0 (N = 39)
State conference presentations	1.04	30 (N = 1)	0 (N = 59)
Regional conference presentations	0.78	20 (N = 1)	0 (N = 56)
National conference presentations	2.49	30 (N = 1)	0 (N = 32)
International conference presentations	1.60	10 (N = 2)	0 (N = 44)



Table 6

*Job Announcement Criteria and Student Job Preferences*

Criterion	Percentage from job announcements	Percentage of students who prefer this
Tenure-track academic position	72.4%	71.6%
Teaching-focused institution	39.6%	25.0%
Research-focused institution	51.7%	35.3%
Large four-year university	56.9%	56.4%
Medium four-year university	17.2%	30.8%
Small four-year university	17.2%	12.8%
Northeast region of U.S.	22.4%	39.5%
South region of U.S.	37.9%	51.9%
Midwest region of U.S.	29.3%	43.2%
West region of U.S.	1.7%	39.5%
International location	8.6%	29.6%

Table 7

*Areas of Research and Teaching Expertise*

Area of Expertise	Percentage of job ads mentioning this area	Percentage of students with this area of expertise	Percentage of students who have taught this area
Finance	44.8%	2.5%	11.1%
Marketing	36.2%	22.2%	30.9%
Facility Management	36.2%	0.0%	19.8%
Communication	25.8%	4.9%	9.9%
Law	25.8%	2.5%	16.0%
Event Management	24.1%	0.0%	17.3%
Organizational Behavior/Theory	20.7%	0.0%	18.5%
Management	18.9%	27.2%	44.4%
Athletic Administration	15.5%	0.0%	8.6%
Economics	15.5%	6.2%	2.5%
Governance	15.5%	0.0%	16.0%
Sociology	15.5%	16.0%	19.8%
Ethics	12.1%	3.7%	8.6%
Sales	6.9%	0.0%	4.9%
Strategic Management	6.9%	0.0%	6.2%
Current Events	5.2%	0.0%	22.2%
Psychology	5.2%	4.9%	4.9%
Leadership	1.7%	1.2%	13.6%