

ENDGAME: A PROJECT STUDY TO DEVELOP A SPORTS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE
DEGREE PROGRAM FOR A SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Ferris State University

September 2019

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation project study was to develop a sports management associate degree program for a small rural community college in Southwest Michigan. Utilizing a mixed approach of systems thinking and document analysis for the methodology, the researcher was able to identify and develop the courses that would constitute the new program curriculum. The identification process included analyzing sports management related courses among the top university transfer partners of the small rural community college and considering how well the identified courses aligned with the desired skills and knowledge sought by the sports industry. The challenges associated with the construction of a sports management curriculum design for both transferability to university programs, as well as practical application to the sports industry, stemmed from a lack of standardization among program and course offerings in the academic field. Ultimately, through flexible design for easier adaptability to unforeseen challenges and needs, the results of this dissertation project study have contributed to the sports management academic field by providing a curriculum template for potential associate degree programs in the future.

KEY WORDS: sports management programs, community college

DEDICATION

To Kate, Jack, and Jane, I dedicate this great accomplishment to you for your love and support along this journey. To the rest of my family, friends, co-workers, dissertation committee members, and the many DCCL Cohorts, faculty, and staff that I have had the pleasure of knowing and learning from, thank you for helping me adroitly navigate through this process of becoming Dr. Richard Reynolds.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

This dissertation project was directly influenced by the challenge of declining enrollment at a small rural community college in Michigan. The unique circumstances of the situation provided an opportunity for creating a new degree program based on trending academic majors in the state. This project outlines the process and reasoning behind the multiple components that were designed and incorporated into the final curriculum of the emerging degree. In addition, this dissertation explored the challenges of educating students for a career in sports management at the associate degree level for a small rural community college.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE PROJECT

Southwestern Michigan College (SMC) is a small rural community college located in Dowagiac, Michigan, that is governed by a seven-member locally elected Board of Trustees. Throughout its history the college has maintained significant community engagement for operational input through multiple academic program boards and partnerships comprised of area businesses, local government officers, and high school personnel in the surrounding region. These combined factors have greatly expounded the institutional footprint and impact on the local region.

As a community college, SMC responds to its citizen-owners and their need for creative and collaborative means. This is evident through the various number of classes that have been offered off campus in area schools and work settings such as manufacturing facilities. Despite the deviation from traditional resources or delivery systems, such requests for these

unconventional classes ultimately meet the needs of students, employers, and employees, which align with the principles and overall mission of the college.

Additionally, SMC has afforded multiple dual enrollment opportunities for area high school students, including occupational training through structured programs called academies. These occupational academies are offered through a collaborative effort with the Lewis Cass Intermediate School District and involve vocational opportunities with students taking general high school classes supplemented by college vocational work in nursing, technology, and business. Throughout its history, SMC has maintained an unwritten policy to continually seek out partnerships to assist in better serving students and the local community.

According to SMC President David Mathews (2013) in his website welcome:

We have high quality transfer courses and curricula for students who wish to pursue their first two years of a four-year degree at SMC before transferring to a four-year college or university. Plus, SMC is committed to offering the highest quality academic experience at less than half the cost of most four-year colleges and universities.

We also offer unparalleled occupational skills training in numerous technical, business, and health-care fields geared toward preparing students for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand occupations.

We offer small class sizes, ensuring you will receive significant personalized attention from your instructors. We have campuses conveniently located in Dowagiac and Niles close to home and work.

Our Dowagiac campus has on-campus housing that offers private, two- and four-bedroom, fully furnished suites. We also have academic support services that offer assistance every step of the way from the time you apply for admission to SMC to the completion of your degree and beyond. (para. 1-6)

Yet with all these positives, SMC was not immune to the nationwide trend of declining community college enrollment. Between the 2011 and 2014 fall semesters, SMC experienced a 15.5% decline in enrollment with the head count dropping from 3,079 to 2,601 students (Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, n.d.-b). Being a small rural community college, these sharp declines could not be ignored due to the budget impact on institutional generated revenue. But this negative occurrence also provided a platform for

institutional changes and an opportunity for various innovative ideas that align with the common objective of helping increase the recruitment of potential new students.

STRATEGIC ISSUE

The goal for SMC, in response to consecutive years of decline in the total number of students enrolled at the college, was identified by the college president, Dr. David Mathews, during his Fall 2013 Faculty Orientation opening address. Dr. Mathews emphasized the need to increase the college's market share of newly graduated high school students in the surrounding local communities as a strategic issue for all areas of college, including academic programming. While new marketing strategies for enrollment, increased housing opportunities, and streamlining student services would be major components of the plan, the academic side of the house was charged with reinvigorating the college's portfolio of degree programs and certifications to further entice regional high school graduates.

Being a small college in a rural setting, the increase of 50 students or roughly 2% of the market share in new high school students could have an immediate impact on SMC's operations, whereas a decrease affects money coming into the college and can cause fewer classes being offered, a reduction in staffing, a raise in institutional fees, a reduction in services, or some combination of these aforementioned possibilities. When recruitment options are limited and budgets are tight, every local high school graduate becomes an important recruit.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

To address the declines in student enrollment, SMC administrators targeted the creation of new academic programs based on the fastest growing majors with its top five university transfer institutions. Though there were other changes identified for the student services areas and marketing, new degree programs were the charge for academic personnel. This led to the recognition of the sports and recreation career field at multiple institutional transfer partners as a

rapidly growing area of study. In turn, that provided the administration enough influence to grant exploration into developing a major for SMC.

Beyond the transfer institution influence and despite SMC lacking formal collegiate athletics, the potential to recruit high school student athletes and non-athletes with the opportunity to stay engaged with sports as a potential future profession was justifiable. According to National Center for O*NET Development (2015), occupations related to coaching and scouting in Michigan are projected to increase by an average of 11% by the year 2026. By identifying potential positives for transfer and employment options, pursuit of a new curriculum warranted further exploration.

POTENTIAL BIAS

It is pertinent to acknowledge that based on the researcher's education and career background in the field of sports management, it is relevant to admit a potential bias toward creating a degree program based on that same career and educational field. However, given the eagerness of the administration for new academic programs, the results of a shared internal academic interest survey, and the Higher Learning Commission requirement of faculty possessing 18 graduate credit hours in a particular subject area in order to teach in that discipline, it does diminish the influence of any potential bias in favor of practicality. Why create a new degree program in which the creator lacks the education, experience, and requirements with which to instruct?

SMC STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The process developed for researching, designing, implementing, and assessing a strategic plan for Southwestern Michigan College addresses the following key questions:

1. Where is our organization now, in terms of high school market share?
2. How does our organization need to grow, evolve, and improve in the future?

3. What organizational goals will lead to this improvement?
4. What resources will we need in order to accomplish our goals?
5. How do we align organizational resources (human, fiscal, physical) with the goals of the plan?
6. How should we measure our success?

Once a strategic issue has been identified, it is important to develop a process of continual action and evaluation with specific goals and objectives toward mitigating the strategic issue. In Figure 1, Bryson's (2011) Strategy Change Cycle offers a visual aid to guide the development of SMC's strategic planning process.



Source: Bryson, 2011, pp. 44-45

Figure 1. Strategy Change Cycle.

Process Oversight

The strategic planning process at SMC typically begins with the formation of a steering committee responsible for oversight of all aspects and phases of the plan. However, when the strategic plan involves the creation of a new academic curriculum, then the oversight is

entrusted to either an individual faculty member with content expertise or an academic dean in a corresponding division. This is done to ensure relevant applicable knowledge is engrained both within the formation and throughout the sequence of the curriculum being designed.

Additionally, having multiple people attempt to steer the oversight of a developing curriculum can be cumbersome due to the nature of individual perspectives potentially lacking cohesion.

When a new curriculum is deemed necessary or relevant, it often comes with a sense of urgency to capture the timeliness of that need. Minimization of avoidable obstacles toward the end result are essential in these circumstances.

The SMC steering committee or designated individual would then conduct a stakeholder analysis to ensure engagement of a broad cross section of constituents. That cross section would typically include, at minimum, representatives from the following stakeholder groups: the president's cabinet, faculty, staff, students, board of trustees, business community advisory board members, and community representatives. Engagement of constituents helps to provide insights that mitigate further problems as well as garner support for initiatives designed to remedy the strategic issue at hand, in this case, deficiencies in enrollment management. By allowing for a reasonable organizational process to occur, as indicated in Bryson's Strategy Change Cycle, the issue is tied to a process designed for a resolution with optimal support to see it through to fruition.

Assessing Internal and External Environments

The strategies developed to manage the market growth and improvement of SMC's future would likely emerge from a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. Therefore, the first action item of a steering committee or select individual would be to define and write specifications for a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. These data would provide a foundation from which to navigate toward a desired resolution.

In certain relevant instances, the committee or designated individual would procure an outside consultant to provide a thorough assessment of SMC's performance in meeting the currently stated college mission and goals. An outside consultant offers necessary objectivity and is less restricted in providing an honest assessment of an organization's internal environment, including strengths and weaknesses. Bryson (2011) points out that the implementation of decisions made today must consider the position the organization will hold in the future. Considerable and rapid changes require that external trends and forces are both recognized and emphasized during the strategic planning process.

External opportunities, challenges, and threats must be identified, analyzed, and confronted in the strategic planning process. That is why SMC hired Noel-Levitz, a nationally recognized consulting firm, to perform a comprehensive student satisfaction survey in the fall semester of 2012. This environmental scan helped to identify strategic issues confronting the organization from the external environment, specifically the deficiencies in enrollment management.

Unfortunately, a comprehensive performance review typically takes two to four months to complete based on similar previous assessments such as the Noel-Levitz survey. Given that time constraints would be an issue for the development a new curriculum, it would be ill-advised to hire an outside consultant for this particular component of the college's strategic plan.

Strategic and Aligned Operational Goal Formation

The true task of a strategic plan is to project what the institution will focus on in the future. To accomplish this, organizational goals must be strategic in nature, not tactical. In direct alignment to the identified strategic issue, SMC formulated and adopted three broad, enduring, and strategic goals that the institution would strive to achieve. These strategic goals provided direction and focus to drive the institution forward. Each department would be responsible for developing operational goals with measurable objectives that support the college's strategic

goals. The steering committee or designated individual would provide oversight of progress toward achievement of these strategic goals, while administration, support staff, faculty, and other stakeholders work toward accomplishing aligned operational goals.

Measuring Success

To help ensure the success of SMC's strategic plan for enrollment management, strategic goals would be formulated through measurable objectives with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can be developed to inform and guide implementation of the plan. According to Bryson (2011), "There is fairly clear evidence that performance measures can make a positive difference in influencing the direction of change efforts and learning from them" (p. 291). To maximize effectiveness, formative evaluations would be conducted and reported throughout implementation of the strategic plan, so that strategies could be revised if necessary.

Upon reaching the goal or the target completion date, whichever occurs first, a summative evaluation of each strategic goal would then be conducted. The summative evaluations would include both total outputs and outcomes. As defined by Bryson (2011), "Outcomes are the benefits of the outputs for stakeholders and the larger meanings of those outputs" (p. 289). In order to measure and see progress or growth, an assessment of the actions taken toward a problem must be performed. Otherwise, what indications would an institution or individual have that the resources utilized were effective in remedying the problem or that the problem had been resolved?

The final step of the process would be to develop a balanced scorecard that included KPIs for each strategic goal. Additional goals could be added, if appropriate, based on the revisions to maximize efficiency. The balanced scorecard is an effective tool with which to condense data and results in order to present the outcomes in a more simplistic and easier-to-understand format. Table 1 outlines SMC's strategic goals.

Table 1: Strategic Goals

GOAL CATEGORIES	ACTION ITEMS
<p><i>1st Goal</i></p> <p>Objective</p> <p>Strategy</p> <p>Tactic</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Cost</p>	<p><i>Increase campus-wide awareness of and involvement in the principles of strategic enrollment management (SEM)</i></p> <p>Communicate enrollment news, SEM principles, and opportunities for faculty/staff involvement in SEM activities</p> <p>Develop communications for faculty and staff to support their roles in the SEM process</p> <p>Presentations at in-service in August and January, electronic newsletters in October and March</p> <p>Presentations made, and newsletters distributed; pre-test/post-test for faculty/staff on SEM principles</p> <p>Steering committee chair and members</p> <p>Staff time</p>
<p><i>2nd Goal</i></p> <p>Objective</p> <p>Strategy</p> <p>Tactic</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Cost</p>	<p><i>Promote the development and expansion of academic programs based on community needs and interest</i></p> <p>Engage high school students in SMC curriculum</p> <p>Create dual enrollment pathways</p> <p>Review high school focus areas; link advance placement and dual enrollment courses; create promotional materials for 9th grade students outlining their progression through a program into SMC</p> <p>Number of pathways created; number of students in pathways</p> <p>Program chairs and deans</p> <p>Staff time</p>
<p><i>3rd Goal</i></p> <p>Objective</p> <p>Strategy</p> <p>Tactic</p>	<p><i>Maximize the use of technology in enrollment management</i></p> <p>Increase use of mobile technologies in delivering web content and services to students</p> <p>Develop an SMC app for mobile devices to assist in recruitment</p> <p>Review promotional apps; identifying popular apps and commonalities to create a template</p>

GOAL CATEGORIES	ACTION ITEMS
Indicator	App downloads and usage report
Responsibility	Vice President of Technology and Director of Marketing
Cost	Staff time and less than \$15,000 (based on internal IT department estimates)

Communication is another key factor to consider for the successful planning and implementation of strategic initiatives. It is sometimes necessary to communicate in simple but effective ways so that stakeholders who may lack the fluency of typical higher education terminology can also better understand a situation and its outcome. The balanced scorecard tool provides just that as a simple and straightforward communication.

To ensure effective communication among all stakeholders, a strategic planning webpage with all pertinent information and documentation would likely be created and linked to the front page of SMC's website along with other data transparency initiatives. This would primarily serve the general public but could potentially be a useful resource to employees. For employees specifically, the strategic plan progress reports would need to be a standing item on all steering committee meeting agendas. This would help keep discussions and action plans coherent throughout the subcommittees and work groups. Additionally, guiding documents for strategic planning would need to be widely distributed to ensure that organizational decision making and departmental planning is aligned with the overall college strategic plans, so that it is a living document and not one simply sitting on a shelf. The overarching theme is that all stakeholders should be educated and informed about the strategic planning processes, goals, and initiatives to see how the components fit together as well as what part or insights they may have to offer.

Identifying and Aligning Resources

The strategic plan for enrollment management would be deployed through the college-wide budget development process. Budget requests that aligned with the enrollment management strategic goals would then receive first priority and be given adequate resources to move the plan from paper to action steps. Phases would be outlined and incremental steps would be designed to allow for implementation of strategic initiatives. The strategic planning steering committee or designated individual would then evaluate funding for the implementation of a plan and modify as needed.

PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION PROJECT

The objective of this project dissertation was to build a new academic program based on three factors that are pertinent for sustainability. The first sustainability factor identified was student interest, which is pertinent given the acknowledgment that without student interest any new academic program would fail due to lack of participants. The second factor for sustainability would be for the potential recruitment of new students. It is an essential step to continually add to the cohort of students in the program, thus avoiding a finite number of participants after the initial inception. Ignoring recruitment activities would put the new program at risk for elimination due to a lack of future participants. The third factor in sustainability would be course alignment with industry needs as well as transfer institutions. The curriculum must not only stay current with required employment skills, but also expand and adapt to opportunities for future academic growth and increased employability for program graduates.

Though these three factors of sustainability provided overall guidance for the project, it was still necessary to determine what subject area would be the concentration for the degree program. Fortunately, SMC administered an educational interest survey to gain insights from current and potential members of the target population. Though the survey was not part of this project dissertation, the shared data from it was helpful. The results of the institutional survey

reinforced the decision to focus on sports management as the academic field of study for the new degree program.

DISSERTATION PROJECT DESIGN

Given the opportunity to seek innovative means to capture the attention of potential students, the focus of the project design centered on the attraction aspect of competitive sports, though the dissertation project in and of itself was designed with the explicit intent to meet the desired goal of increasing the market share of local high school graduates and stabilizing SMC's enrollment. The absence of intercollegiate athletics at SMC, in a time when sports revenues and employment opportunities are growing, presented a barrier to attracting students who enjoy competitive sports. An alternative means to recruit those sports enthusiast graduates would then be to transform their interest in sports into a career path that could be formalized into an academic credential.

The first part of the project design process was to explore academic models of sports degree programs. This included identifying what SMC's top transfer university partners offered in the way of sports-related academic programs. The researcher, knowing that the general education requirements at SMC met the MTA Agreement, essentially only needed to create and develop the remaining 30 credit hours of the 60-credit-hour associate degree. The remaining courses would need to be composed of a blend of industry-determined skills and the common core courses, within sports-related majors offered, of SMC's university partners.

The second part of the design process would be to identify a method of capturing the essential data for the formation of the proposed new degree. Understanding of key metrics, internal/external environmental analysis, diverse data collection practices, the importance of buy-in from multiple constituents, and effective time management were all essential elements to the development process. Through the qualitative method of content analysis, appropriate courses were identified through their shared usage among university partner programs and

alignment of industry needs. The purposeful sampling of identified university partner programs was justified given the likelihood that graduates of the new program were likely to seek transfer options upon completion. Additionally, employment needs within the sports industry provide numerous opportunities for graduates of advanced collegiate programs, which further encourages pursuit of a bachelor's degree beyond completion of the associate degree program. Yet the cost savings on tuition, development of fundamental skills, and enticement of early service learning opportunities are all merits from which students can be persuaded to pursue the path of an associate degree first.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sports Management: The study and practice of all people, activities, businesses, or organizations involved in producing, facilitating, promoting, or organizing any sport-related business or product (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007, p. 4).

Documentation Analysis: A form of qualitative research that utilizes both print and electronic documents that are analyzed and interpreted by the researcher to formulate meaning and credibility for the research (Bowen, 2009).

Systems Thinking: A conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past 50 years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively (Senge, 2006, p. 7).

MTA: Stands for the Michigan Transfer Agreement, which facilitated “improving the transferability of core college courses by revising the current Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (MACRAO) agreement” (Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers, n.d.-a, para. 2).

COSMA: Stands for the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation, which “is a specialized accrediting body whose purpose is to promote and recognize excellence in sport management education worldwide in colleges and universities at the baccalaureate, master's

and doctoral levels through specialized accreditation” (Commission on Sports Management Accreditation [COSMA], n.d.-b, para. 1).

PROJECT ORGANIZATION

Chapter 1 introduces and provides an overview of Southwestern Michigan College, its major strategic issue of enrollment management, and how the dissertation project is but one piece of a three-pronged approach toward bringing about resolution to the strategic issue hindering SMC. Chapter 2 establishes the curriculum trajectory and relevant skill set needed for creating an associate degree program within the career field of sports management. This review of current and established literature on sports management education highlights the need for such a unique or specialized degree. Chapter 3 identifies the methodology utilized to develop the curriculum for the new sports management associate degree program. Content analysis was the primary methodology used in the research design, data collection, and analysis of commonalities among transfer institution offerings and field competencies. Chapter 4 explains the choices and reasoning behind the selection or creation of each course that would ultimately become the final curriculum product. Chapter 5 explores the conclusions and reviews what the researcher has learned since the inception of the new degree program for future improvement.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 explores the strategic issue of enrollment management for a small rural community college. The challenges and overall strategic planning process of the college are outlined to provide context of a real-world scenario and the opportunity born from an impending organizational threat. Though the dissertation project is but one part of a greater plan to address an organizational issue, the benefit of measured action through intentional learning helped maintain the project’s alignment with the strategic goal of the institution.

Overall, this dissertation project was a beneficial exercise in planning and resource development by identifying the necessary details that go into the strategic planning process. Ultimately, strategic planning is only as useful as those engaged in the process and the level of details incorporated into the plans. Having the best plans but no authority or desire to implement them is a waste of time. Likewise, having eager cooperation toward the planning process but utilizing superficial data can lead to more problems or minimal progress toward goal achievement.

This chapter presents the context of an enrollment problem facing Southwestern Michigan College and the measured means for which the researcher chose to confront a portion of it. Those means included alignment with the college's strategic planning process, organization of a research plan, formulation of a project design, and identification of potential resources for data analysis. While maintaining alignment with the college's overall strategic goal was imperative, it was equally important that the researcher develop a comprehensive sports curriculum rather than just a superficial marketing tool for enrollment and recruiting purposes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In examining literature for the creation of a sports management associate degree program, there was a limited scope for such a focused topic. Though the sports management discipline dates back to the early 1960s by some accounts, the idea of an associate degree curriculum is still relatively new and unfolding. However, when looking into practical application and the historical context of sports management in higher education, it became clearer as to what influences should steer this project-based dissertation. Therefore, this literature review is composed of the practicality of sports management education at a community college and the reoccurring scholars that influenced on the discipline.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION

It has been recognized that no two community colleges are exactly same (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) and that's in large part due to the continually changing communities they serve. From environmental to human or even commerce changes, the formation of a different cultural identity begins to prosper, and a new set of priorities are produced. The foundation of those priorities is based on the differing beliefs, needs, skills, and resources available to the local peoples—all of which contribute toward the development of the type of community that the members desire to establish.

The influence of those priorities directly impacts the objectives of the neighboring community colleges, based on the programs and services the colleges look to provide. As guided by their mission statements, institutions of higher education must be cognizant of their historical impact on surrounding communities, the constituents and resources within their environmental surroundings, and the distinction of their competencies (Kotler & Fox, 1985). In

order to gain external support for strategic initiatives and aid in their ability to recruit new students from a diverse population, colleges make concentrated efforts to meet both the direct and indirect needs of their surrounding communities. These needs can range from filling in where high school education falters, offering opportunity where universities don't due to selective admission criteria, or developing immediate employment skills. Conversely, any opportunities offered which aren't in-tune with the local desires are likely destined for failure. Still, some pursuits must be organized and put forth based on the original intent of institutions of higher education, to further develop an individual through critical thinking and positively impact society.

Community colleges are a valuable resource and gateway for individuals who have traditionally not been afforded the opportunity of furthering their education. They are an integral component to furthering the knowledge and skills of anyone in pursuit of a better life. As stated previously, their objectives and mission vary due to the unique circumstances surrounding their community and resources. Yet all are still grounded in the same traditional elements of open access, developmental education, academic transfer, vocational/technical training, and continuing education for both personal and professional development. Given these mandates and challenges, strategic planning and resource utilization have become heightened priorities within the community college landscape.

Lake and Mrozinski (2011) identified that "strategic planners are also exploring various integration strategies in their efforts to respond to stakeholders and mandates" (p. 11). This notion is reinforced through indications that accreditation, the functions of trustees, administrative patterns, collective bargaining effects, and efficiency efforts continuously change whenever there are popular new ideas for managing institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). You can look to any area of an institution and see significant initiatives toward improvement. For example, instructional advancement in the last decade has progressed from desktop computers

in the classroom to virtual classrooms with courses taught completely online. Even the accreditation process has evolved from a once-in-10-year's self-study model (PEAQ) to a continual process of quality improvement model (AQIP). However, within all these efforts for improving their institution, community colleges have still not deviated from their traditional elements.

The longstanding and intentional purpose behind the development of community colleges was to provide open access to higher education (Crisp & Mina, 2012; Paulson, 2012; Roueche & Hurlburt, 1968). In particular, the removal of access restrictions as a barrier was focused toward groups of traditionally underrepresented students in higher education. No longer would culturally diverse or economically challenged individuals be prevented from furthering their education and an opportunity at a better quality of life. This was, and continues to be, a driving force for community colleges across the nation.

The problem with being an open access higher education institution is the varying level of preparedness and understanding that the students demonstrate. Paulson (2012) noted, "The demographics of a community college are more diverse and there is a wide range of academic preparedness" (p. 23). According to Crisp and Mina (2012), "More often than not, these students need assistance developmentally, academically, and socially" (p. 149). They see the opportunity for a better life, but either don't have the competent skills to succeed in the classroom, don't have the financial support to fully concentrate on their courses, or a combination of both. Unfortunately, a majority of students are ill-equipped to successfully handle navigating through academia (Paulson, 2012). These factors contribute to why higher education leaders and government officials are seeing is a trend toward decreased retention of students.

Yet, community colleges have diligently remained true to their fundamental purpose and overall mission to aid in the maturation process of each student as they pursue their educational goals. Every accredited higher education institution must deliver a required general education

program of some form to its students, though specific requirements are not prescribed by accrediting bodies (Young, Hall, Deaner, & Riggs, 2012). In relation to the overall mission of the college, emphasis on what each institution considers to be vital for their core curriculum is what helps them attract a target audience and define their academic specialties.

The core curriculum is the standard set of classes identified by the community college leadership to mature cognitive skills. They are the basis of knowledge that shapes every graduate from that institution. In the absence of core requirements, community colleges could revert back to being vocational schools that only graduate students with specific technical skills.

In the current fiscal reality, higher education administrators face shrinking budgets along with the increased scrutiny of the completion agenda. Tough choices are being debated as to the future direction of academe in response to declining rates of enrollment and student achievement gaps. As community college practitioners strive to achieve the completion agenda, the debate over core curriculum reform has gained momentum.

From one state to another, boards of trustees, legislatures, and governors are implementing policies designed to increase output and efficiency in public colleges and universities (Rhoades, 2012). Through these policies and increased scrutiny of community college educational outcomes, institution leaders are re-evaluating the diversity and effectiveness of their general education requirements. Administrative officials are looking at options for increasing the development of their students both personally and professionally.

Core curriculum reform is just one of many challenges that face current and future community college academic leaders. Educational leaders need to respond to a multitude of challenges that include better preparing students for a fast-evolving global economy, rapidly advancing workplace technology, maintaining an open-door admissions policy, meeting the needs for skilled labor, achieving the completion agenda, and facing the new reality of reduced government funding. But administrators must be cautious in their pursuit of diminishing these

and potential future challenges. Any overreaches, in the attempts to serve the wants and needs of all who attend community colleges, have the propensity to overburden students with academic and service options that will likely stunt their progress and potential with confusion.

PATHWAYS APPROACH

One of the most significant challenges facing current and future college leaders is the issue of student retention. In the past 10 years, this issue has gained momentum with increased scrutiny of higher education funding and the accountability of institutions to graduate their students. This increased attention has led to the formulation of the completion agenda by state and federal officials. The completion agenda has the generic purpose of creating funding incentives for colleges to graduate more students in a timely manner (Baldwin, 2017; Humphreys, 2012; Rhoades, 2012). However, it also has no specific funding officially attached and is prone to unintended consequences as it promotes certain benchmark statistics rather than core learning.

Instead of reinventing education programs to make them more assimilated and inclusive of real-world and applied learning, institutions might seek to increase graduation rates by revitalizing turnkey processes of efficiency, outsourcing general education to high schools, or perhaps even encouraging their students to get general education coursework out of the way by picking up an online class (Humphreys, 2012; O'Banion, 2010). The community college policy of open access and curriculum rigor in general would suffer as priorities and resources shift increasingly in line with the completion agenda. Rather than breaching the intellectual ceilings of our underprepared students, educators would be forced to streamline or lower standards to inflate attainment of credentials. This could stunt student learning capabilities and prevent them from achieving the broad set of intellectual skills demanded by employers in the increasingly knowledge-based global economy.

As President Barack Obama's 2009 State of the Union address highlighted a goal for America to once again be first in the world for proportion of college graduates (Obama, 2009), colleges across the nation continued to explore in greater depth the issues that influence student success and failure. In the hope of increasing student retention, the use of cognitive maps has helped simplify and guide research toward target areas of significance to further increase our understanding of student behaviors. Vincent Tinto's Theory of Student Departure graphically depicted the process by which students navigate their college experience. In looking deeper into the experiences that impact their decisions to stay or leave college, Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser explored student identity development as a process based on the influences of a student's environment. The refinement of an individual's identity from the involvements within a cognitive map of first-year collegiate experiences is the basic outline for answers higher education administrators currently seek.

What an educational institution and its programs or services learn from students' work promotes dialogue and self-reflection about the processes of teaching and learning to their relationship within the stages of student success and achievement (Maki, 2012). Assessment is a frequently used tool to inform leaders and practitioners of patterns and attitudes that can be utilized to increase operational standards and efficiency. Effective assessment includes both diverse means of assessment and engagement of all affected or pertinent groups. Once such method of assessment includes the I-E-O (input-environment-outcome) Model of Involvement. The I-E-O is designed to get results that will maximize information on potential causal relationships between various educational practices and educational outcomes and minimize the chances that the causal inferences will be erroneous (Astin & Antonio, 2012). By maximizing the probability of causal relationships and minimizing erroneous inferences, this method sets a standard of efficiency and value in order to identify valid information from which to derive the most appropriate actions and solutions.

As financial support gets tied to institutional graduation and student achievement rates, the pressure to fulfill the completion agenda will increase exponentially. As both institution and employee performances will be highly scrutinized based on these measurements, it is essential that the measurements are comprehensive in scope and clearly articulated. All constituents should be involved in the development of these measurements as the interests and needs vary among students, staff, and the surrounding community. Ewell's (2009) paper acknowledged this premise with the following:

Assessment has been stimulated by many external actors over the last quarter century including states, the federal government, accrediting organizations, and various third-party organizations—each with its own specific interests in evidence on institutional and program performance. These differing interests, some of which have changed over time, must be distinguished and clearly understood as a prerequisite for developing a proper response by the academy. (pp. 9-10)

The layers involved within this issue of higher education completion are far-reaching and vital for institution leaders as well as government officials to recognize. In an increasingly global economy, it is essential for nations to further their knowledge equity in order to remain prosperous. Given the diversity among colleges and the communities they serve, any strategic plans aimed at increasing student retention and completion are but a starting point for discussions geared toward understanding and potential improvements.

The minuscule rate of student retention and completion has not escaped the attention of state and federal government officials. The lack of college graduates has continued to negatively affect the U.S. economy as the demand for high-skill jobs has outpaced the supply of high-skill workers. Bridgeland, Milano, and Rosenblum (2011) noted:

American businesses currently demand 97 million high-skill employees—but only 45 million Americans have the necessary skills to do the work. And that lack of supply forces employers to choose among outsourcing jobs, importing skilled workers, or relocating operations to overseas markets with a rising supply of skilled workers. (p. 6)

As such, new standards tied to government funding have been established in an effort to reverse these trends and motivate community colleges to improve their practices. Trustee

boards, legislatures, and governors from one state to another are implementing policies designed to increase output and efficiency in public colleges and universities (Rhoades, 2012). Through these policies and increased scrutiny of community college educational outcomes, institutional leaders are re-evaluating the diversity and effectiveness of their educational approaches for increasing the development of their students.

This is the catalyst behind the necessary change from the traditional cafeteria-style of academic offerings to a career pathway approach that community colleges across the nation are implementing. Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015) surmise:

Instead of expecting students to find their own way through college, colleges need to create clear, educationally coherent program pathways that are aligned with students' end goals, help students explore and select a pathway of interest, and track and support students' progress along their chosen pathway. (p. 199)

It is within this new approach that an opportunity arose to explore innovative academic programs that coincide with this changing dynamic.

As institutions have implemented changes, the consciousness and materialistic nature of our society hasn't slowed and the need for new skills and knowledge in the workforce has increased. Demand for new programs and specialists in the areas of consumer recreation and leisure time have outpaced traditional standards for academic program development. According to Ross, Jamieson, and Young (1998):

The recreative aspect of sport in American culture today is a well-established, and a well-recognized contributor to human enjoyment and vitality. Changing times, continual awareness, and the increasing interest in sport participation and fitness by all age groups have spurred the growth of diverse professional preparation programs in sport management. (pp. 2-3)

Customers and patrons are no longer satisfied with just going to a game and cheering on the home team. They demand a full sensory experience that caters to their physical, social, technological, and entertainment needs. As such, the evolution of sports management as an

academic major has greatly expanded in the last 30 years, in order to keep pace with an industry demand for uniquely skilled personnel.

So what part can a community college play in this rapid expansion to feed a multibillion-dollar model of commerce? The answer is access for the underrepresented groups to strengthen their talents and skill sets in order to further develop this staple of American culture and growing global enterprise.

DESCRIPTIVE HISTORY OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM

The idea of a tailored curriculum to capture the nuances and intricacies of any profession is necessary in order to both recruit potential students and teach them the essential knowledge to be successful in their career pursuits. Sports management is no different; it merely requires identification of a foundation of essential skills that are unique to the profession. But achieving consensus across the interrelated professional occupations has proved to be an ongoing source of debate. Pitts (2001) noted:

A field of study needs to attain and sustain a certain level of credibility within its own group and among other fields. Credibility has to do with quality, account-ability, and credentials. Criteria to measure credibility might be found in the level of quality and rigor in such areas as curriculum standards, credentials of faculty, student quality, meeting the demands of the job market, the literature, and scholarly associations, conferences, and awards. (p. 7)

Still, in its relative curriculum infancy there is an ongoing need for further research to expand the knowledge base and further increase credibility within the field of study. Such topics of increased attention include the inception of sports management as an academic field of study and where to house it among the subset of departments within an institution. Regarding the former, Parkhouse (1996) explained:

Although there has been no historical study to determine the history of sport management as a university program, Ohio University claims to have had the first in 1966. Two decades earlier, however, between 1949 and 1959, Florida Southern University offered a sports management curriculum approved by the State Department of Education of Florida. (p. 4)

In looking deeper into the pedigree of sports management academics, this revelation sparked disputes over the proper origin. Should a shortly lived defunct program serve as a cornerstone or does that distinction belong to one that has maintained its prominence prior to any others still in existence? Adding to the discussion, Parkhouse (1996) further revealed:

The Sports Administration Program at Ohio University was a master's offering that actually had its roots at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida. James G. Mason, a physical education professor there, prepared a curriculum for a proposed program in sports management at the encouragement of Walter O'Malley, then president of the Brooklyn (soon to be Los Angeles) Dodgers. O'Malley first approached Mason in 1957 with the idea. (p. 5)

Though the influence of Walter O'Malley has traditionally been acknowledged as the seed for sports management curriculum, that foundational pillar of knowledge has lost validity with the discovery of the Florida Southern University curriculum. Yet even beyond the discerning arguments regarding its proper origin, there is also the continual examination of where such a program should reside within an institution of higher learning. According to Kerr (2003):

In decades past, many college and university physical education programs concerning professional preparation and career development placed an emphasis on coaching and teacher training curricula. But the area of physical education has expanded rapidly in recent years, with a resulting proliferation of dynamic physical education career possibilities. Demand for teachers and coaches is ongoing, but there is also a growing need for qualified sport professionals in the area of sport management. (para. 1)

As the knowledge base has continued to evolve, so too has the need to redevelop the emphasis of curriculum offerings. Though there are shared competencies with physical education, there are also dynamics of the sports industry that are separate and require unique or additional skill sets. Pitts and Pedersen (2005) acknowledged:

Sport Management was an outgrowth of the field of Physical Education. Many early sport management programs were so connected with physical education and athletics that they were named, appropriately, athletic administration. But the field of sport management, today, is one that is much larger than athletic administration. (p. 46)

Acknowledging these unique skill sets helped differentiate sports management from physical education as a separate field of study, but it also opened the door to more challenges.

In trying to establish a standalone discipline, there was still a need for continuity in order to maintain the credibility that had already been established. In the absence of some form of established foundational criteria, the individualistic nature of programs would help increase the competition for students while concurrently being a detriment to the discipline. The need for further development and discipline legitimacy would ultimately bring academics and practitioners together for this very purpose.

ACCREDITATION

In 1986, members of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) and North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) convened to create a foundation for sports management curriculum and research. The objective was to create a shared vision of pertinent skills and knowledge to influence the establishment of commonality in course and program curriculum. This commonality would serve as the underpinning to legitimize the field of sports management among the various collegiate programs.

Standards of accountability were created and refined in the years to follow, but ultimately this gathering was an essential first step toward future discipline growth. The various follow-up assemblies over the coming years eventually culminated in the creation of a joint entity of both AAHPERD and NASSM members known as the Commission on Sports Management Accreditation (COSMA) in 2007. This new entity provided guidance over program standards and outcomes, which eventually developed into an accrediting process for sports management degree programs. Today, COSMA still serves as the only accrediting body that is specific to the field of sports management (Eagleman & McNary, 2010).

The many efforts to establish cohesion among knowledge, skills, and standards in existing programs have continued to increase discipline credibility. Through the increased rigor of academic research into the field of sports management, there is a growing foundation of

shared knowledge that steers the formation of revised outcomes and assessment. As legitimacy has been gained, so too has the merit of such an education for its intended practitioners and employers.

VALUE OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

In the researcher's review of recent studies in sports management education, many of the topics focused on two areas that predisposed this dissertation project study. The first area of focus highlights the exponential growth within probable career fields. The estimations of the sports management industry have projected to be greater than average over the next 10 years in terms of employment openings (National Center for O*NET Development, 2015). Given the increased influence of government funding toward degrees with higher job placement potential, this would likely help to ease the potential concerns of many of SMC's academic leaders toward the creation of a new degree program.

The second area of focus involves the foundations of course curriculum as well as the undecidedness of where the courses belong among traditional collegiate departments. Kerr (2003) noted:

Professional positions in sport require knowledge, skill, and ability beyond even what is represented by a degree in physical education. Many colleges and universities have established undergraduate and/or graduate sport management programs in an effort to provide the requisite knowledge, training, and field experience to students planning careers in the managerial and administrative portions of the sport industry. Other colleges and universities are just now choosing to implement such programs to keep pace with student interest in the sport industry. (para. 2)

Emery (2010) examined the growing magnitude of sporting events and the need for better prepared sport managers. The professional field has been in a state of rapid growth over the past 10 years and isn't showing signs of slowing down. This growth requires an increase in the number of qualified professionals that are highly skilled, knowledgeable, and ready to enter the job market.

Horine and Stotlar (2013) analyzed the growth and advancement of sports management curriculum from the associate degree level to doctoral degree level programs in developed nations around the world. As the professional field grows, so too does the need for curriculum growth and revision. Their study identified a lack of advancement within program curriculum and called for further revision among sports management programs to meet the current needs of the field. Those revisions center on heightened skills in data interpretation and analysis along with integration and upkeep of advanced technology.

Kelley, Beitel, DeSensi, and Blanton (1994) studied the expectations of graduating sports management students along with employer and faculty evaluations of educational curriculum. This helped expose the need for program flexibility and yearly reviews of the individual courses within program curriculum, as the preferred employment skills tended to vary among different employers.

To meet the perceptions of students and the needs of potential employers today, sports management programs should incorporate a flexible design in terms of individual course content, practical application within the scope of relevant job skills, and possession of a fundamental foundation in business theory.

SPORTS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION OPPOSITION

Opponents of a sports management education at the associate degree level support their argument with multiple factors that inhibit the growth and acceptance of such endeavors. Duplication of business curriculum, niche career opportunities, lack of continuity among national curriculums, and a limited body of knowledge within the research of the sports management academic field are all contributing factors of disapproval. According to bestdegreeprograms.org (n.d.):

A specialized education in sports management can prepare you for a number of roles handling the business side of sports events and organizations. However, its narrow

focus might not make the path the best choice for students who aren't sure working in the sports industry is their long-term career goal. (para. 1)

At a time of emerging academic majors and fiscal constraints among many institutions of higher education, potential solutions are more closely examined for long-term positive impacts rather than being copacetic to a passing trend. Any misgivings or lapses in appropriate support can have far-reaching effects and give way to various unintended consequences. Still, while community college leaders must have an eye toward the future, their responsibilities are centered on the challenges of today. In the current state of the economy, fiscal constraints require sacrifice and budget adjustments. There will always be some degree of risk involved with any new ventures. As such, these critical decisions should be undertaken with utmost concern for how they align with the mission of the college and if they could ultimately affect student learning and retention outcomes.

CURRICULUM HINDRANCES

Each community college has its own philosophical principles that guide their overall mission and curriculum standards. For those that have existing sports management programs, there are no requirements for which academic department they must be housed or any form of standardized curriculum among programs. Jones, Brooke, and Mak (2008) note:

The historical evolution of sport management programs in the United States moved from the physical education model to a more business-oriented curriculum. Given this historical development, debate exists among sport management professionals regarding administrative housing of current and future sport management programs. (para.1)

In the absence of the requirements, sports management programs have evolved in disciplines of physical education, business, recreation, and even their own independent divisions. This can be viewed as a weakness of continuity that has held back the foundation from which to begin building and furthering the legitimacy of the academic field.

For community colleges, they also face the difficult task of creating classes and programs that can transfer to four-year universities. This is done with students in mind to

increase their earning power and employment opportunities with further development at the baccalaureate level and beyond. Much work continues to be done with transfer agreements among specific colleges to simplify the transition, but those continue to be under the guise of negotiations and not ultimatums or mandates. Likewise, community colleges are not merely feeder schools for universities and as such do not have to emulate the exact practices of four-year institutions. But the lack of continuity with sports management education makes creating a transferable program very problematic. If some institutions focus more on a management-based concentration of major courses, while others focus on recreational programming or journalism, then it becomes nearly impossible to create a platform that is applicable to the various incarnations of the sports management major across universities.

Niche Employment

The global marketplace for sports is a rapidly growing and expanding industry; accordingly, sports management students are being educated and trained to meet the unique and evolving needs of practitioners, whereas graduates of general business programs have diverse skills sets and knowledge to work among a greater range of industries. Certainly, there are crossovers within both disciplines, but sports management graduates tend to require a more specialized concentration due to the unique traits of their trade.

A problem emerges when an unexpected change occurs during a sports management graduate's career journey. Suddenly this specialized concentration of skills and knowledge, though necessary for the sports industry, can cause problems of employability should the interests or circumstances of a graduate change. Conversely, business students who are educated more so on a broad range of business-centered topics accumulate the versatility to avoid being pigeonholed into a single industry (bestdegreeprograms.org, n.d., para. 1). It's not that sports management programs leave students with no broad-based skills or knowledge; their close alignment with business curriculum deters that negative outcome. But, acquiring a

specialized education does limit options should one choose to seek alternative means of employment in the future.

Body of Knowledge and Academic Research

The credibility of sports management as a standalone academic field has and continues to be a point of contention for opponents. Though the rapid expansion of programs has continued to increase over the past decade, this has not lessened the charge of detractors. Even the esteemed faculty and practitioners, who have helped nurture and grow the field thus far, admit that much more comprehensive research is needed to further add credence to the discipline. Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011) noted, "Overall, the experts clearly felt that sports management research had not yet attained levels of success commensurate with the importance of many of its facets" (p. 14). Despite its relative infancy and rapid growth, credibility concerns will continue to plague sports management education until it clearly establishes a comprehensive theoretical base that is generalizable to varied practitioners and platforms.

CONCLUSION

Filling in the cracks within the system of higher education often puts community colleges at a disadvantage. This is especially true in regard to state and federal funding, as financial rewards are increasingly being tied to institutional performance standards. "Community colleges are among the most distinctive types of institutions in American postsecondary education. Largely as a result, they are ill-served by the kinds of performance measures that are typically used in determining institutional effectiveness," noted Ewell (2011, p. 27). Across the nation, community colleges continue to struggle with dwindling enrollment and are seeking new means to generate student interest. This places leadership among community colleges in a precarious position needing to uphold its traditional mission of serving all students, while also exploring

alternative means of recruitment and sustainability with fewer resources. This presents an opportunity for new academic programs for innovative and emerging career fields.

Though still early in its relative history, the academic field of sports management has continued to expand and gain credibility with the inception of new academic programs and supportive foundational research. Additionally, the advent of the Commission on Sports Management Accreditation in 2007 elevated the legitimacy of the discipline through the establishment of shared program standards and skilled concentrations at the bachelor's and graduate school levels. These factors coupled with the positive forecast for above-average growth in future employment opportunities have served as a catalyst for academic administrators to support further program creation and development.

As the multibillion-dollar sports industry endures expansion and societal influence, the value of sports management education remains a priority of vital importance for all stakeholders. Expectations for patrons, competitors, and administrators have paralleled the rising financial implications of the global marketplace for sports. Therefore, the demand for a uniquely trained and knowledgeable workforce is likely to increase in order to sustain productivity for an industry whose resources and demands continue to not only grow but rapidly evolve.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

There are numerous potential factors of influence, both internal and external to an institution of higher education, that could prompt a decline in enrollment. For example, improved regional economic climate (more jobs for people to enter into the workforce), smaller local area graduating class sizes (fewer prospective students to recruit), and a stagnant portfolio of academic programs (no new or trending academic programs to market to potential students) are all reasons, either individually or some form of combination, that could be at the foundation of an enrollment decline for a college. When examining the context of the situation that developed at Southwestern Michigan College, there are undoubtedly several factors that led to the charge for new academic programs and curriculum development. But the most significant factor, among those discovered by the researcher, was the overall declining enrollment. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019), SMC displayed a gradual decline in enrollment from 2010 to 2014, except for 2013, as depicted in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Southwestern Michigan College Total Yearly Enrollment

YEAR	ENROLLMENT
2010	3,262
2011	3,029
2012	2,639
2013	2,802
2014	2,567

Given the financial impact of downward trending enrollment for a small rural community college, the timing and opportunity to explore new ambitions was appropriate in the eyes of academic and administrative leadership. That is why one of the goals for SMC's strategic planning process encouraged faculty to pursue and develop new academic programs based on the trending majors at regional universities.

PROJECT DESIGN

In order to evaluate interest in a new program major, it was necessary to explore what the top transfer institutions to SMC were offering as a related major and how their courses aligned. These transfer institutions included Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, Aquinas College, and Bethel College. Upon reviewing each institution's academic catalog, the only two programs within the physical education departments that were identified consistently among the transfer institutions were exercise science and sports management. Though this limited the potential new curriculum options, it also simplified the process for collecting useful data toward the creation of a new academic degree program.

In a separate venture, as the researcher was in the process of analyzing potential program possibilities, SMC conducted an educational interest survey to further refine and identify potentially new academic programs. The survey was administered during the fall 2013 semester with the results shared in the spring 2014 semester. The outcomes identified sports management as a popular and potentially viable option based on the interest of those who participated in the survey.

After the results of the SMC's educational interest survey were revealed late in the spring semester of 2014, the process for developing a new curriculum gained momentum. The interest-based data from the survey provided motivation to SMC's administration to highlight a

new program in a recreation- or sports-related discipline as a priority. The researcher was then charged with creating the new academic program before the end of the upcoming fall semester of 2014.

The new degree proposal was to be presented at the November meeting of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for SMC. The Curriculum and Instruction Committee, or C & I, as it's often referred to, is the governing entity for academic programs and compliance. The November meeting deadline provided less than 12 weeks to complete the planning and development of the new potential curriculum. The researcher would utilize multiple qualitative methodologies based on their inclination toward best fit given the type of data collected and synthesized, the unique circumstances of the project dissertation, and the timeframe to produce the resulting project deliverable.

INSTRUMENTATION PROCESS

For the purposes of creating a new degree program aligned with SMC's top transfer programs in related fields of study, document analysis and systems thinking were utilized as research methodologies to create the curriculum. These tools were chosen to increase the internal reliability of the research instrument design. Additionally, both were deemed appropriate by the researcher based on the type of data to be collected, analyzed, and ultimately manipulated into a new curriculum.

Document analysis is a qualitative research methodology in which the researcher systematically reviews print and/or electronic documentation materials (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). This methodology was identified as an appropriate design given the aim of the dissertation project to create a degree program in field of study that closely mirrors the existing programs at SMC's top transfer schools. According to Bowen (2009), "The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, and appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents" (p. 28). Chris Adams (2010) also noted:

Document Analysis is a technique used to gather requirements during the requirements elicitation phase of a project. It describes the act of reviewing the existing documentation of comparable business processes or systems in order to extract pieces of information that are relevant to the current project, and therefore should be consider projects requirements. (para. 1)

The second methodology incorporated into the design of the new curriculum was systems thinking. Systems thinking is a matter depicting how part of an organization, or subject of interest, interacts with the other components of the whole. There are a few general principles such as big picture realization, finding balance between short and long-term outlooks, identifying the multifaceted and symbiotic relationships of the systems while acknowledging the measureable and unmeasurable dynamics, and understanding that each element is both part of a system as well as influential to and influenced by said system (Anderson & Johnson, 1997).

According to Soliman (2005):

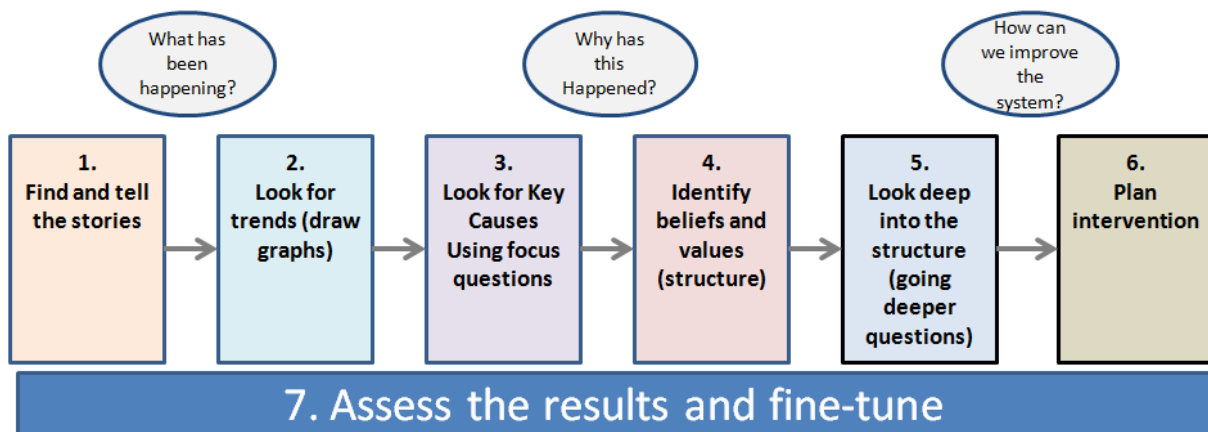
The approach of systems thinking is fundamentally different from that of traditional forms of analysis. Traditional analysis focuses on separating the individual pieces of what is being studied; in fact, the word “analysis” actually comes from the root meaning “to break into constituent parts.” Systems thinking, in contrast, focuses on how the thing being studied interacts with the other constituents of the system—a set of elements that interact to produce behavior—of which it is a part. (p. 4)

Looking deeper into this strategy, you will find that beyond the produced behavior of these interactions are patterns that you can assign a value. These values will help you to evaluate the behaviors with an organized and structured approach. Davis, Dent, and Wharff (2015) explain further:

The systems thinking practices of discovering underlying values and assumptions of stakeholders and justifying boundaries; framing problems as patterns and discerning interrelationships of subsystems; and acting systemically when implementing change were the most valuable practices for community college leaders. (para. 1)

Systems thinking provides a flexible vision for identifying potential change components as well as an inclination as to how those changes will affect both the immediate project and the organization as a whole.

Clark (2012) defined systems thinking as, “Problem solving by viewing ‘problems’ as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to a specific part, outcome or event and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences” (Systems Thinking section, para. 2). Trying to incorporate multiple subject areas, of varying levels of aptitude, from numerous universities into one cohesive program is just such an exercise for systems thinking. Figure 2 below is an illustration that Clark used to better explain the systems thinking methodology.



Source: Clark, 2012

Figure 2. Systems Thinking Process Illustration.

Each course selected and/or created for the new degree program was done so with a thorough investigation based on the existing documents from each corresponding university’s yearly catalog, Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) compliance, and identified industry competencies. As the intention was to create an associate degree at Southwestern Michigan College, the findings were not to be generalized to larger populations across higher education. Also, there were no models or templates for creating an associate degree program in sports management. Given the rarity of such a program, university undergraduate and graduate degrees form the basis of the current structure but are advanced beyond the scope of what a community college can offer in some subject areas. That is why documentation analysis and

systems thinking combined methodologies are necessary to formulate the project. Adams (2010) surmised:

However, document analysis is particularly valuable when replacing one or more existing systems with a new system that will offer increased functionality or a better overall user experience. Existing documentation can be scoured to gain an understanding of key functions, business rules, business entities, and business entity attributes. Document analysis may also be necessary when stakeholders are not available to offer insight into existing business processes or systems. (para. 2)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The concepts of support, compliance, and competency provided the conceptual framework of the research for the project study. To operationalize the development of a new sports management associate degree in such a limited amount of time, it is imperative to know the level of support from the institution, compliance with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) policies for instruction, and field competencies that will form the foundation of the curriculum. Having been tasked with creating a new program proposal within a limited timeframe, the researcher adopted that the administration's priority of a degree in a sports- or recreation-related field thus satisfied the aforementioned first component of operational development. The researcher then focused on the current hot topic of faculty compliance with the HLC.

Acknowledging the college's concerns with remaining aligned with the HLC standards, the likelihood of compliance with the HLC was enhanced given the researcher's achievement of a master's degree in sports management to satisfy the second operational development component. Lastly, the researcher possessed firsthand knowledge of potential competencies in the field from nine years of previous work experiences in the sports industry, which fulfilled the final operational development component. These factors, though ostensibly convenient, allowed for the development process to be expedited as was dictated by the unique circumstances of the situation. This posed the essential research question of this dissertation project study of how to design a sports management associate degree program.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When performing any sort of scientific research, be it qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, it is imperative to understand the norms of right and wrong to avoid harmful consequences to any parties involved. It was the aim of the researcher to avoid all forms of scientific or research dishonesty. Markers of the efforts the researcher employed to conduct ethical research included acknowledgment of the potential bias of the researcher, utilizing known research methodologies, and recognizing the limitations of the project study.

The intent of this project study was not to perpetuate any form of deception throughout the development process. Professional standards of research conduct were followed while leading the data collection and analysis toward the development of the new associate degree. These standards included acquiring all public documents in a legal manner, refraining from the elimination of data that did not support the goals of the researcher or the project, and identifying potential weaknesses or bias within the process of data collection or analysis. An intentionally high degree of objectivity was the key to maintaining a professional standard of research conduct.

DATA ANALYSIS

The core general education requirements that allow for a student to graduate from SMC are also aligned with the MTA requirements for course transferability among Michigan colleges and universities. These core courses provide the foundation of any transferable degree at SMC and are considered the dependent variables given that they would not change as part of the development process for the creation of the new degree program. The remaining courses needed to reach the minimum credit hour threshold for an associate degree would then represent the independent variables. These independent variables would be selected based on their transferability to the previously mentioned top transfer university partners and identified competencies within the sports management career field.

Utilizing the content analysis technique, the sports management courses of all the identified transfer institutions were assembled, ranked for probable use, and analyzed for patterns. According to Krippendorff (2004), "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 18).

The final decision of the researcher was to propose the new degree in sports management as an Associate of Applied Science degree rather than a traditional Associate of Arts (AA) or Sciences (AS) degree program. Though the initial premise of the project study stemmed from transferability to SMC's top transfer partners, there was no requirement or structure in place to confine students to taking the adopted courses of the new major with either of the traditional AA or AS degree options. However, the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) did offer such structure by requiring students to take all classes listed within the degree program guide. That definitive course structure, along with an MTA compliant design by the researcher, provided the final product that served as both a specifically structured curriculum and alignment for those students interested in continuing on with one of SMC's top university transfer destinations.

LIMITATIONS, VALIDITY, AND RELIABILITY

Mitigating threats to validity and reliability was challenging, given the choices in design, measurement, and analysis. As Vogt (2007) explains, "Threats to external validity, or mistakes that make it hard to generalize the findings of the study, arise from and are most easily reduced by paying attention to research design" (p. 122). Given this acknowledgement, there are three main limitations to this research.

The first limitation was generalizability to a larger population. As the sample groups were nonprobability and purposive, the likelihood of accurate representation to nationwide associate-level degree programs in sports management was remote. The proposed sample groups were

diverse, but it is without denial that they provided a true representation of the total target population given they are SMC's top transfer partners.

A second limitation of this research was that the independent variables are not actions, but rather attributes of a potential new curriculum. This research didn't encompass an actual template for sports management education at the associate degree level; rather, it analyzed the interests of course attributes in a rapidly growing education field based on industry needs and elevated academic standards. The attributes are based on subjective data and can change; thus, the data retrieved are naturally flawed.

The third potential limitation was within the construction and use of the document analysis itself and systems thinking. Though guided by qualitative research design literature, there can still be limitations to using these forms of research instrumentation. All forms of instrumentation have flaws; it is pertinent to acknowledge those flaws when using any research methodology or instrumentation.

SUMMARY

The essential research question of this project study was how to design a sports management associate degree program. Given the context of the situation, the researcher chose two qualitative methodologies to collect the data necessary to proceed with the project study. Utilization of both document analysis and systems thinking provided a framework to the project design through identification of patterns in similar foundational courses across the purposeful sample of SMC's top transfer institutions. Additionally, those patterns were cross referenced against their alignment with acknowledged industry needs through the research tool of content analysis.

There were two main influential factors that led to the selection and implementation of the various forms of qualitative research that were undertaken. The first included the unique circumstances within the context of the situation at SMC that brought about the desire for a new

academic program within an established timeframe. The second was the desire to maintain a high level of objectivity throughout the data collection, analysis, and end project design based on the credentials of the researcher and the sincere desire to maintain scientific research honesty.

Through transparency and a focus on objectivity, the project culminated in the design of a sports management Associate of Applied Science degree with some unique characteristics. Unlike traditional Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, the new sports management degree followed the framework of an Associate of Science (AS) degree from SMC in that it was MTA compliant. This allowed for more flexibility for students should they decide transfer on to a university program after graduation, unlike a typical AAS, which is designed for immediate employment. This unique design also provided a defined structure to the degree in that it required students to take the specifically listed courses of the AAS, as opposed to an AS that allows the student to choose from a variety of options or electives.

CHAPTER 4: THE SPORTS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation project study culminated in the creation of a new associate degree program in sports management for Southwestern Michigan College. As part of SMC's second strategic goal in their strategic planning process, to promote the development and expansion of academic programs based on community needs and interests, this project directly aligned with an identified potential solution for declining enrollment. Upon receiving the support of SMC's administration to explore the potential of a sports management associate degree program, the process of data collection and synthesis began. Chapter 4 examines the researcher's decisions and thought processes that would ultimately shape the final product.

The professional field of sports management had been in a state of rapid growth over the past decade and wasn't showing signs of slowing down. Emery (2010) examined the growing magnitude of sporting events and the need for better prepared sport managers. Both the attraction and scale of events such as the National Football League's Superbowl, the Olympics, the X Games, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association's March Madness Basketball Tournament require more than just facilities to host the competitors and competitions. Organizers and sports managers must look to capitalize on a large influx of visitors and capture both monetary gains as well as future interest for visitors to return through diverse entertainment, social experiences, and culturally engaging activities that promote the uniqueness of the host communities. These trends toward growth require an increase in the number of qualified sports management professionals that are highly skilled, knowledgeable,

and ready to enter the job market with the ability to increase organizational value, revenue, and market share.

In academia over the past 10 years, studies in sports management have focused mainly on two themes that predisposed the project study. The first theme was that of exponential growth within the career field, which was a positive aspect of consideration for the probable new major. Given that SMC's academic leadership is greatly influenced by job placement potential, the growth theme would help to ease potential concerns toward creating a new degree program. The second theme involved the academic foundation of the proposed major, which included the uncertainty of where a sports management degree program should be housed among traditional collegiate departments. Pitts (2001) noted:

Beginning with the question of what constitutes a field of study, sport management can be measured against the answer. Among other things, a field of study is recognized as consisting of a body of knowledge and literature in relation to theory and practice, professionals-those who educate, those who pursue research, those who practice, professional organizations dedicated to the advancement of the field, professional preparation, and, dare I say it, credibility. (p. 2)

Both of these themes provided an advantage despite the latter being exposed as a potential weakness. The ability of SMC sports management graduates to find immediate employment would certainly be advantageous for the college to heighten the value of the program for any potential marketing or student recruitment campaigns.

Of equal importance was the flexibility to design the program based on available resources and the ability to assimilate it into multiple academic departments. Physical education, business, and even standalone departments dedicated to sports management have been the norm since its inception as a recognized curriculum with no consistency of placement. That is why flexible design was key not only to developing the curriculum, but also an attempt to ensure its acceptance to numerous transfer institutions that housed their sports management programs in differing departments. The researcher believed the flexible design would likely increase the potential for success through variable modes of support and access for the new

degree program. Kelley et al. (1994) studied the expectations of graduating sports management students along with employer and faculty evaluations of educational curriculum. This helped expose the need for program flexibility and yearly reviews of curriculum, as the preferred employment skills tend to vary among different employers and evolve over time. So, by not having a standardized foundation of shared courses or stipulations as to which department such a program can belong, the ability to customize the course offerings and services was uninhibited. The degree program would have more freedom to adapt to changes based on student, college, or industry needs without such restrictions.

The creation of the sports management degree program also necessitated the identification of required industry skills and knowledge as accomplished through the literature review. To meet the perceptions of students and the needs of potential employers today, sports management programs require a flexible design of course content to remain relevant, scope and practicality of job-related skills, and possession of a fundamental understanding of business theory. These themes were often at the forefront of the researcher's mind when delineating among the various choices of courses from which to construct the new sports management curriculum. Ultimately, a concentration of these factors would form the basis of the degree program and help to differentiate it from similar curriculum already offered at SMC. However, there was the additional challenge to try and ensure that most, if not all, courses in the program were transferable to SMC's top transfer schools in order to broaden the program's appeal to potential audiences.

THE CHALLENGE

Southwestern Michigan College (SMC) is a two-year public community college located on the fringe of Dowagiac, Michigan, in rural Cass County, 25 minutes north of South Bend, Indiana. It is a rural county, with the population per square mile at 106.7 and is the smallest county in Michigan by total area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The mission of Southwestern

Michigan College is “to serve our community by providing affordable local access to high quality postsecondary career preparation and college education—including the total college life experience” (Southwestern Michigan College, 2016). To date, the overall enrollment currently stands at a headcount just over 2,200 students, but the institution has experienced primarily fluctuations of decline since the 2010-2011 academic year. The related decrease in tuition revenue has posed additional stress to the college’s finances and the ability to comprehensively enact measured actions to fulfill its overall mission. This challenge has been addressed by conservative projections in tuition revenue, continuing investment in campus infrastructure, and strategic initiatives to increase enrollment.

At the charge of the president and the academic leadership, faculty were asked to explore the possibility of creating new programs to reinvigorate SMC’s student recruiting efforts with the overall goal of increasing enrollment. The development of new programs isn’t a novel idea; historically, new courses and programs have originated based on perceived needs, interests, or fortuitous opportunities that organically developed. In a climate of financial stress and uncertainty, the pacing had been intentionally altered due to an increased focus on a macro-level threat to SMC’s operations and the accompanying sense of urgency from the administration.

The research problem centered on how best to develop a new academic credential that would capture the interest of potential new students within SMC’s traditional and non-traditional market share for enrollment. The focus of the dissertation project was geared toward the formulation of a new degree program within a specialization of the physical education career field known as sports management. This decision was also influenced by the analysis of job market projections that are promising for sports managers, the qualifications of current SMC faculty within the Physical Education Department to satisfy accreditation standards, and the administrations’ identification of sports-related majors at SMC’s top transfer institutions

(Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, Aquinas College, Ferris State University, and Bethel College) to be among the fastest growing majors at the bachelor level.

CORE EDUCATION

Before looking into sports management specific courses and related electives, it was necessary to identify courses that would meet SMC's general education requirements. In looking to create a degree program that would also transfer well to SMC's top transfer partners, it made sense to the researcher to also target courses that transfer well and would meet both of these variables. Transferability was a fundamental component of the project given the influence of university sports management programs for which the researcher used as guidelines to establish the core courses within the major. Fortunately, SMC's general education requirements were in alignment of the forthcoming Michigan Transfer Agreement. This agreement was a state government mandate between Michigan's community colleges and its baccalaureate colleges or universities to increase the transferability of general education courses. After a period of negotiation, the core requirements for general education were agreed to and implemented during the fall semester of 2014 (Michigan Transfer Agreement, n.d.). According to SMC's 2014 Course Catalog (Southwestern Michigan College, 2014):

All curricula at Southwestern Michigan College include a set of instructional values that we believe are an integral part of any higher education experience. These values include understanding and valuing cultural and global diversity; being able to work effectively as part of a team; and thinking critically and solving problems. The College strives to embed these values into our courses and other college experiences through enculturation and professional development of faculty and staff; faculty training in appropriate pedagogical strategies; and the incorporation of these principles into multiple extracurricular experiences. (p. 3)

This was an important distinction to recognize as it lessened a significant potential burden in regard to the issue of course transferability. If each individual course within the program needed to be negotiated through an articulation process, in order to transfer well to

SMC’s various university partner programs, that would present a considerable hindrance of time. The timeline for which the researcher had to develop the sports management proposal, in order to present it to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for official approval as a new degree program, was finite and required efficiency. The utilization of established transfer eligible courses was a key component to streamlining the successful development of the sports management curriculum.

Additionally, the 2015 SMC College Catalog acknowledged the purpose of the MTA (2015):

The Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) is designed to facilitate the transfer of general education requirements between participating Michigan institutions. The agreement provides for the transferability of a block of core requirements at participating Michigan institutions. Students who complete specified courses included in the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science degrees of the General Education certificate will be well on their way to a four-year degree. (p. 5)

The similarities and alignment of SMC’s general education requirements and the MTA are too numerous to be written out in long form. Table 3 represents a visualization of such a comparison to more clearly identify and align the various subject areas and individual course components.

There was only one difference among the two documents of general education requirements for SMC’s graduation requirements and the MTA’s list of transfer approved courses, that difference being ENGL 104 as an option for SMC’s English Composition subject area requirement, whereas the MTA would only allow acceptance of ENGL 104 as an elective to meet the Communications subject area requirement.

Table 3: *Comparison of SMC’s General Education Requirements to the MTA*

SUBJECT AREA	SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE	MICHIGAN TRANSFER AGREEMENT
English Composition (1 Course)	ENGL 103 or ENGL 104	ENGL 103

SUBJECT AREA	SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE	MICHIGAN TRANSFER AGREEMENT
Communications (1 Course)	SPEE 102 or SPEE 104	ENGL 104 or SPEE 102 or SPEE 104
Mathematics (1 Course)	MATH 127 or above (excluding MATH 153, MATH 154)	MATH 127 or above (excluding MATH 153, MATH 154)
Natural Science (2 Course)	BISC 111 BIOL 101, 102, 110, 202, 214, 215 CHEM 100, 101, 102, 201, 202 ENST 112 GEOG 110 PHYS 101, 102, 201, 202	BISC 111 BIOL 101, 102, 110, 202, 214, 215 CHEM 100, 101, 102, 201, 202 ENST 112 GEOG 110 PHYS 101, 102, 201, 202
Social Science (2 Course)	ECON 201, 202 EDUC 215 GEOG 105 HIST 201, 202, 290 POSC 201 PSYC 101, 102, 260, 296 SOC 101, 201, 202, 203, 204	ECON 201, 202 EDUC 215 GEOG 105 HIST 201, 202, 290 POSC 201 PSYC 101, 102, 260, 296 SOC 101, 201, 202, 203, 204
Humanities (2 Course)	ART 110, 148, 200, 203, 204 ENGL 223, 231, 232, 235, 241, 256, 261, 263, 264, 265, 281, 282, 291, 292 GERM 201, 202 HIST 101, 102 HUMA 202, 204, 205, 210, 225 MUSI 101, 102, 110, 111, 201, 202, 203, 204, 240 PHIL 101, 201, 210, 220 SOCI 240 THEA 110	ART 110, 148, 200, 203, 204 ENGL 223, 231, 232, 235, 241, 256, 261, 263, 264, 265, 281, 282, 291, 292 GERM 201, 202 HIST 101, 102 HUMA 202, 204, 205, 210, 225 MUSI 101, 102, 110, 111, 201, 202, 203, 204, 240 PHIL 101, 201, 210, 220 SOCI 240 THEA 110

The next challenge required identifying which courses to recommend for the general education subject areas with multiple choices. If all the choices transfer equally well due to MTA compliance, the next step would be to identify what courses are common to SMC's top transfer universities in their sports-related curriculum in addition to those courses that align with recognized industry needs. Otherwise, students could conceivably load up on MTA compliant courses and end up transferring credits that are not applicable to their desired sports

management degree, a waste of both their time and money spent on courses that aren't helpful toward reaching their desired academic credential.

PROFILES OF COMPARABLE UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

At the time that the project study began in the summer of 2014, SMC's university partners that offered a sports management or comparable academic program consisted of Ferris State University, Bethel College, Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, and Aquinas College. Four of these six universities specifically had sports management degree programs, with the exceptions being Grand Valley State University and Ferris State University. Grand Valley State University offered a Sports Leadership concentration among its Bachelor of Science in Physical Education curriculum, while Ferris State University had in the past academic year introduced a new Bachelor of Science degree in Sports Communication. The Ferris State University Sports Communication program had multiple content specialties for students to choose from, including multimedia journalism, management and leadership, event management, and integrated marketing techniques.

To begin the process of individual program and course analysis, the researcher created the following profiles for each institution and their corresponding sports management-related curriculum. These profiles would serve to simplify the comparison process and aid in the formulation of both the general education needs and the identification of commonalities among the majors. This required the use of academic catalogs from each of the six university partners over a period of multiple academic years. Each catalog provided an academic guide that outlined the required general education, program major, and elective courses for the constituted programs. Similarities among the programs are highlighted on each institutional profile.

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY (2015-2016 Catalog, pp. 1095-1097)
Sports Communication Major

COMM 101 – Intro to Communication Study
COMM 121 – Fundamentals of Public Speaking
COMM 299 – Theories of Human Communication
COMM 300 – Research Methods in Communication
COMM 366 – Diversity and Communication
COMM 389 – Sports Communication
COMM 493 – Internship in Communication
COMM 489 – Seminar in Sports Communication

Select one:

COMM 105 – Interpersonal Communication
COMM 221 – Small Group Decision Making
MGMT 302 – Team Dynamics – Org Behavior

Select One:

COMM 301 – Interviewing
COMM 336 – Tech and Prof Presentation

Select One:

COMM 383 – Mass and Social Media
TDMP 110 – Intro to Video Productions
RNL 251 – Understanding Mass Media

Select One:

COMM 381 – COMM in Sports Organizations
MGMT 301 – Applied Management

Operations / Facility Management Concentration

RFIM 110 – Intro to Hospitality Industry

Select One:

HOMT 301 – Property-Facilities Management
FMAN 321 – Principles of Facility Management

Select One:

HOMT 401 – Special Event Planning
FMAN 322 – Project Management

Select One:

HOMT 302 – Ski Recreation Management
MKTG 321 – Principles of Marketing

Select One:

HSMG 305 – Convention and Meeting Sales
BLAW 321 – Contracts and Sales

**CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (2014-2015 Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 224)
Sports Management Major**

Required Courses I (26-37 hours)

ECO 211 – Economics of Professional Team Sports 3(3-0)
PES 118 – Sport in America 3(3-0)
PES 190 – Introduction to Sport Management 3(3-0)
PES 318 – Social, Historical, and Global Issues in Sport 3(3-0)
PES 320 – Foundations of Sport Management 3(3-0)
PES 393 – Field Study in Sport Management 1-4(Spec)
PES 499 – Internship in Sport Management 2-12(Spec) (4-hour Minimum)
PES 550 – Sport Fundraising 3(3-0)
PES 564 – Sport Governance: Ethics, Morals, and Values 3(3-0)

Required Courses II (3 hours)

Select one of the following:

ACC 201 – Concepts of Financial Accounting 3(3-0)
ACC 210/ENT 210 – Accounting Information for Entrepreneurial Decision Making 3(3-0)

Required Courses III (3 hours)

Select one of the following:

MKT 151 – Marketing and Society 3(3-0)
MKT 300 – Introduction to Marketing 3(3-0)

Electives (0-8 hours) May select any of the following:

ART 135 – Introduction to Graphic Design 3(0-6)
BLR 202 – Legal Environment of Business 3(3-0)
COM 361 – Interpersonal Communication 3(3-0)
JRN 350 – Public Relations Principles and Practices 3(3-0)
RPL 420 – Planning and Facility Design for Leisure 3(3-0)
Total: 40 semester hours

Additional Requirements:

1. At least 12 hours of credit must be completed at CMU.
2. Students may elect up to 10 hours of course work on a credit/no credit basis.

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (2014-2015 Catalog)
Sports Management Degree (73 Hours)**

Required Cognates (17 hours)

BUS 1750 – Business Enterprise Credits: 3 hours
COM 2000 – Human Communication Theory Credits: 3 hours
ECON 2020 – Principles of Macroeconomics Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 1110 – Healthy Living Credits: 2 hours
HPHE 1490 – Computer Applications in HPHE Credits: 3 hours

Choose one from the following:

COM 1000 – Communication and Community Engagement Credits: 3 hours
COM 1040 – Public Speaking Credits: 3 hours

Required HPHE Courses (32 hours)

HPHE 1700 – Introduction to Recreation/Sport Management Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 2720 – Administration of Recreational Sports Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 3710 – Practical Recreational Programming and Leadership Credits: 3 hours

HPHE 4320 – Research and Writing in Recreation/Sport Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 3760 – Management of Recreational/Sport Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 3990 – Practicum in Recreation/Sport Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 4700 – Facilities and Risk Management Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 5610 – Legal Issues in Sport Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 4970 – Senior Seminar in Recreation/Sport Credits: 2 hours
HPHE 4990 – Recreation/Sport Internship Credits: 6 hours

Additional General Business Courses (15 hours)

ACTY 2100 – Principles of Accounting I Credits: 3 hours
CIS 2700 – Business-Driven Information Technology Credits: 3 hours
MGMT 2500 – Organizational Behavior Credits: 3 hours
MKTG 2500 – Marketing Principles Credits: 3 hours

Choose one from the following:

FIN 3200 – Business Finance Credits: 3 hours
LAW 3800 – Legal Environment Credits: 3 hours

Required Electives (Choose 9 hours)

COM 1000 – Communication and Community Engagement Credits: 3 hours (If not chosen as a cognate)
ECON 2010 – Principles of Microeconomics Credits: 3 hours
ECON 3150 – Sports Economics Credits: 3 hours
FIN 2420 – Entrepreneurial Finance Credits: 3 hours
HIST 2125 – Sport in American Culture Credits: 3 hours
HPHE 1810 – First Aid Credits: 2 hours
HPHE 2350 – Theory of Coaching Credits: 2 hours
HPHE 3810 – Instructor First Aid Credits: 2 hours
MKTG 3800 – Sport Marketing Credits: 3 hours
PHIL 2010 – Introduction to Ethics Credits: 4 hours

Choose one from the following:

STAT 1600 – Statistics and Data Analysis Credits: 3 hours
STAT 3660 – Introduction to Statistics Credits: 4 hours

AQUINAS COLLEGE (2014-2015 Catalog, p. 195)
Business Administration/Sports Management Degree

Required Courses (58–64) semester hours:

AG210 – Principles of Accounting I
AG211 – Principles of Accounting II
BS201 – Principles of Management
BS202 – Principles of Marketing
BS305 – Financial Management
BS415 – Sales Management
CN101 – Introduction to Communication
CN205 – Public Speaking
CS152 – Spreadsheets
ES211 – Microeconomic Principles
ES212 – Macroeconomic Principles
MS151 – Elementary Statistics
BS/CN/PS 212 – Parliamentary Procedure

One Case Study Course

BS442 – Cases in Marketing Management
BS457 – Cases in Public Relations
BS492 – Cases in Business Policy

Sports Major Courses

KN159 – Introduction to Kinesiology
KN332 – Promoting and Funding Sport and Recreation
KN362 – Administration of Sport and Recreation
KN402 – Ethics and the Law in Sport Management
KN397 – Internship

Upon completion of the program students will:

1. Understand sport management theoretical concepts and their practical application.
2. Recognize the relationship between a career in sport management and service to others.
3. Develop critical and ethical thinking and decision-making skills needed for entry level positions.
4. Demonstrate competency in the skills and knowledge required for entry level positions in professional, educational, corporate, and community level sport, fitness and recreation programs.

BETHEL COLLEGE (2014-2015 Catalog, p. 110)
Sport Management Interdisciplinary Major

General Education Hours

BIBL 215 – Old Testament Literature 3
BIBL 216 – New Testament Literature 3
COMM 171 – Speech Communication 3
ENGL 101 – Written Communication II 3
ENGL 102 – Written Communication III 3
Art/Drama/Music 3
Foreign Language (two semesters) 6
History Elective 3
KINE 252 – Fitness/Wellness 1
KINE 117 – On the Ball Training, or 1
KINE 124 – Aerobics, or (1)
KINE 128 – Physical Fitness, or (1)
KINE 135 – Weight Training (1)
Literature 3
College level Mathematics 3
PHIL 150 – Logic and Critical Thinking 2
PHIL 250 – Introduction to Philosophy 3
PHIL 452 – Senior Experience 1
PSYC 182 – General Psychology 3
Science with Lab 4
SOC 151 – Principles of Sociology 3
THEO 110 – Exploring the Christian Faith 3

Major Courses

ACCT 203 – Fundamentals of Accounting I 3
ACCT 204 – Fundamentals of Accounting II 3
BADM 121 – Introduction to Business 3
BADM 221 – Business Law 3
BADM 222 – Business Communication 3
BADM 321 – Principles of Management 3
BADM 322 – Principles of Marketing 3
BADM 334 – Human Resource Management 3
COMM 251 – Introduction to Public Relations 3
KINE 166 – Introduction of Kinesiology 3
KINE 350 – Psychosocial Dimension of Kinesiology 3
KINE 459 – Sport Management 3
KINE 460 – Administration & Organization of PE & Recreation 3
KINE 470 – Internship in Sport Management 9
Electives needed to complete the degree 22
Total credits 124

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY (2014-2015 Catalog)
Sport Leadership Emphasis (para. 7)

First Year:

BMS 105 – Basic Nutrition Credits: 3
MOV 101 – Foundations of Human Movement Science Credits: 3
MOV 102 – First Aid, CPR and AED Credits: 2

Second Year:

BMS 202 – Anatomy and Physiology Credits: 4
BUS 201 – Legal Environment for Business Credits: 3
COM 201 – Speech Credits: 3
MOV 201 – Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Education and Sport Credits: 3
MOV 202 – Social Cultural Dimensions of Sport Credits: 3
PED 218 – Officiating Seasonal Sports Credits: 2
STA 215 – Introductory Applied Statistics Credits: 3

Third Year:

CAP 305 – Sports Promotion Credits: 3
ECO 330 – Sports Economics Credits: 3
MOV 300 – Kinesiology Credits: 3
MOV 304 – Introduction to Exercise Physiology Credits: 3
MOV 310 – Motor Skill Development Credits: 3
PED 355 – Current Topics in Coaching Credits: 3

Fourth Year:

PED 460 – Fieldwork in Sport Leadership Credits: 3
PED 490 – Internship in Sport Leadership Credits: 6 to 12
PED 495 – Administration in Sport Leadership Credits: 3

Recommended Sequences:

MOV 202 taken before PED 356
MOV 102 taken before PED 460
PED 355 or PED 356 taken before PED 460
PED 460 taken before PED 490
PED 490 and PED 495 taken concurrently (corequisites)

The highlighted similarities among SMC's top transfer institutions with a related sports management curriculum include subject or academic content areas consisting of introduction to the sports management career field, administration of sport, ethics, principles of marketing, general psychology, macroeconomics, interpersonal communication, public speaking, and applied statistics. By identifying these common academic topics, the researcher was able to then synthesize SMC courses that would fit the shared fundamental components of the transfer partner sports management-related programs.

SPORTS MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY COMPETENCIES

Kerr (2003) examined the implementation of a sports management program and noted the top competencies according to practitioners included communication, critical thinking, time management, goal development, skill with modern technology, and personnel management. Horine and Stotlar (2013) analyzed the growth and advancement of sports management curriculum from the associate degree level to doctoral degree level programs in developed nations around the world. As the professional field grew, so too did the need for curriculum growth and revision. Their study identified a lack of advancement within program curriculum and called for further revisions among sports management programs to meet the current needs of the expanding industry. Those revisions centered on heightened skills in data interpretation and analysis along with integration and upkeep of advanced technology.

These two sources, along with the comprehensive studies of industry and curriculum needs from the literature review in chapter 2, helped to both identify as well as begin to narrow down the expansive list of skills and knowledge necessary for sports management practitioners. To further refine the results, the researcher explored professional and academic associations related to the sports industry. This led to the discovery of the only accrediting body that is discipline-specific for sports management, the Commission on Sports Management Accreditation, or COSMA, as it is often referred to.

COSMA was developed from a joint effort of both the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) and National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE) to better serve students and the sports industry with recognized standards for curriculum. According to the website for COSMA (n.d.-a), the organization was officially launched in July of 2008 and through its work has increased the credibility of sports management as an academic field of study. The COSMA accreditation processes, policies, and standards for bachelor's,

master's, and doctoral programs in sports management have enhanced the legitimacy by establishing high levels of quality and consistency for instruction across the curriculum.

For the researcher, COSMA's identification of Common Professional Components (CPC) provided further refinement of the essential sports management competencies for the new associate degree program. The CPCs were a list of acknowledged industry related topic areas that would form the required basis for undergraduate program content. The CPCs (COSMA, 2010, p. 12) include:

- A. Foundations of Sport: Historical, Sociological, and Psychological
- B. Foundations of Sport Management
 - a. Management Concepts
 - b. Governance & Policy
 - c. International Sport
- C. Functions of Sport Management
 - a. Sport Operations
 - b. Sport Marketing
 - c. Sport Communications
 - d. Sport Finance and Economics
- D. Sport Management Environment
 - a. Legal aspects of sport management
 - b. Ethical aspects of sport management
 - c. Diversity issues in sport management
 - d. Technological advances in sport management
- E. Integrative Experiences & Career Planning
 - a. Internship/Practical/Experiential Learning
 - b. Capstone Experience

Having collected and organized the various sources identifying sports management industry competencies along with the related university curriculums, the researcher possessed the comprehensive data necessary to begin the project study analysis.

CURRICULUM SYNTHESIS

The researcher utilized the collected data by employing the two qualitative methodologies of document analysis and systems thinking. The document analysis method helped the researcher to identify patterns of subject matter that were consistently offered among

the transfer institutions. This was based on the comparison of the academic program guides for each identified transfer institution, along with their corresponding general education requirements. Systems thinking provided the researcher with the insight to look beyond the recognition of common courses offered and explore both why these select courses were common and how courses were influenced by industry needs. This helped guide the researcher to establish any relationships among the patterns to better understand the opportunities and influences for sustained academic and industry success. In combining the two methodologies, the processes undertaken were able to more efficiently expose the similarities of the university program courses with one another in conjunction with the industry competencies that were identified. The complexity of the project study favored efficiency due to the imposed deadline to present the final product.

The systems thinking approach, through document analysis, allowed the researcher to better understand how and why certain courses and subject matter areas coincided based on the relationship between academic offerings and industry needs. This series of analysis and synthesis took into account the appropriateness of offering certain subject matters based on perceived level of aptitude. For example, as community colleges cannot offer 300 level or above courses due to their advanced nature and content, it would be irresponsible to try and include any classes outside of the 100 and 200 level courses among the university curriculums. However, if there is a subject matter that would aid a student by having a 100 or 200 level course to prepare them for a 300 or above level course at a university, it would be considered an option due to fact that it would be beneficial to the student in the future. But any such subject matter course that creates a foundation of knowledge for future intent would also have to align with identified industry competencies.

In addition to aptitude appropriateness, items such as course title, number of credit and contact hours, course description, textbook utilized, employment trends, faculty qualifications,

facility needs, and technology resources were all factors of influence to be measured in consideration of the final deliverable. Also of note, the limit of credit hours within an associate degree program precludes curriculum designers from offering a large and expansive list of subjects offered. Having these guidelines for the factors of influence helped establish priorities within the organization of courses recommended for inclusion.

Results from the series of comparisons revealed common subject areas that included writing, verbal and non-verbal communication, statistics, biology, economics, government, business principles, marketing, sports industry dynamics, computer technology, and ethics from the various data pieces collected. The overarching themes from industry competencies and common subject areas included critical thinking, sales aptitude, leadership, communication, and fluency in technology. The researcher used these elements to synthesize a draft of recommended courses and the sequence for which they should be taken.

SPORTS MANAGEMENT DEGREE DRAFT

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, identification of the proper general education courses was the first focal point toward the composition of the degree. Outside of the definitive courses, such as ENGL 103 as there isn't a choice involved, the table represented in Appendix B visually represents the process of how courses were selected utilizing the SMC MTA compliant courses (listed in rows) and their alignment with the identified sports industry and academic competencies (listed in columns). Given the outcomes of the systems thinking analysis, the suggested general education courses included:

- ENGL 103 – Freshman English II
- ENGL 104 – Freshman English III
- SPEE 102 – Fundamentals of Public Speaking
- MATH 150 – Statistics
- BISC 111 – Biological Science
- CHEM 101 – General Chemistry I

- POSC 201 – American Government
- ECON 201 – Macroeconomics
- PHIL 210 – Intro to Ethics
- ART 110 – Art Appreciation

In addition to the general education core, the analysis produced the following suggested SMC courses:

- EDUC 120 – Education Exploration
- PHED 103 – Life Wellness
- ACCO 201 – Principles of Accounting I
- BUS 101 – Intro to Business
- BUS 220 – Marketing
- ISYS 110 – Intro to Computer Technology
- PHED 111 – Intro to Coaching

The final components of the degree program required the reactivation of PHED 215 Intro to Recreation and PHED 210 Administration of Intramural Sports, as both courses had been deactivated and not offered by SMC in over 10 years. Previously, both courses were standalone courses and not part of any degree or certificate offered by the college. Their purpose for being developed is unknown by the researcher, but their deactivation was due to continual low enrollment. Being unattached to a credential offered by SMC and lack of enrollment was justification to deactivate both courses. However, the researcher saw the potential of both to serve as part of a new core of sports management courses as identified through the research process of SMC's top transfer institutions for the project study. Both course descriptions contained fundamental concepts that closely aligned with their transfer university counterparts, making reactivation a more pertinent solution rather than creating multiple new courses.

The research analysis also suggested a practical application of knowledge and skills in the form of either an internship or a practicum course. As universities tended to prefer their own

internships at the higher aptitude levels of undergraduate coursework, the researcher opted to create a practicum course designated as PHED 199 for purposes of the associate degree program proposal.

The first draft of classes for the proposed associate degree program in sports management at SMC is more easily represented in Table 4 below.

In addition to listing out the chosen courses and potential electives, a separate section was provided to include the recommended sequence and preferred selection of courses for sports management majors to follow throughout their educational path at SMC. Table 5 outlines the preferred courses and recommended sequence for students to navigate through the program.

Table 4: Associate Degree in Sports Management Draft

SMC CORE	SPORT MGT OFFERINGS	REMAINING MTA OPTIONS	ELECTIVES <i>PICK 4 ELECTIVES</i>
EDUC 120 -2cr Education Exploration	PHED 111 – 3cr Intro to Coaching	<i>Pick 2 Natural Science Courses</i>	ACCO 201 – 3cr Principles of Accounting I
ENGL 103 – 3cr Freshman English II	PHED 210 – 3cr (new) Admin. of Recreational Sports	BISC 111 – 4cr Biological Science	ART 204 – 3cr Art History II
ENGL 104 – 3cr Freshman English III	PHED 215 – 3cr (reactivate) Intro to Sport/Recreation	CHEM 101 – 5cr General Chemistry I	BUS 101 – 3cr Intro to Business
MATH 150 – 4cr Statistics	PHED 199 – 3cr (new) Practicum	PHYS 101 – 5cr Introductory Physics I or PHYS 201 – 5cr General Physics I	BUS 220 – 3cr Marketing
SPEE 102 – 3cr Fundamentals of Public Speaking		<i>Pick 2 Social Science Courses</i>	ECON 202– 3cr Microeconomics
PHED 103 – 2cr Lifetime Wellness		ECON 201 – 3cr Macroeconomics	HIST 202 – 3cr US History II

SMC CORE	SPORT MGT OFFERINGS	REMAINING MTA OPTIONS	ELECTIVES <i>PICK 4 ELECTIVES</i>
		HIST 201 – 3cr US History I	ISYS 110 – 3cr Intro to Computer Tech.
		POSC 201 – 3cr American Government	MUSI 111 – 3cr Jazz and Pop Music in America
		<i>Pick 2 Humanities Courses</i>	PHIL 280 – 4cr Biomedical Ethics
		ART 110 – 3cr Art Appreciation	SPEE 104 – 3cr Intro to Human Communication
		MUSI 110 – 3cr Music Appreciation	
		PHIL 210 – 4cr Intro to Ethics	
Total = 17-20cr	Total = 12cr	Total = 21-23cr	Total = 9-13cr

Table 5: Recommended Sequence and Choice of Courses to Total 63 Credits

YEAR ONE: FALL SEMESTER (17CR TOTAL)	YEAR ONE: SPRING SEMESTER (16CR TOTAL)
EDUC 120 – Education Exploration 2cr	ENGL 104 – Freshman English III 3cr
ENGL 103 – Freshman English II 3cr	SPEE 102 – Fundamentals of Public Speaking 3cr
PHED 103 – Life Wellness 2cr	MATH 150 – Statistics 4cr
PHED 215 – Intro to Recreation 3cr	PHED 210 – Admin. of Recreational Sports 3cr
BISC 111 – Biological Science 4cr	ART 110 – Art Appreciation 3cr
ISYS 110 – Intro to Computer Tech. 3cr	
Year Two: Fall Semester (15cr total)	Year Two: Spring Semester (15cr total)
PHED 111 – Intro to Coaching 3cr	PHED 199 – Practicum 3cr

CHEM 101 – General Chemistry I 5cr	POSC 201 – American Government 3cr
ECON 201 – Macroeconomics 3cr	ACCO 201 – Principles of Accounting I 3cr
PHIL 210 – Intro to Ethics 4cr	BUSI 101 – Intro to Business 3cr
	BUS 220 – Marketing 3cr

Both of these tables were included with the formal presentation that determined whether or not the new academic program would be officially implemented into SMC’s catalog of academic programs. However, there was one problem that the researcher hadn’t anticipated that came to light shortly after the initial draft of the program was composed. The problem centered on the ability to get students to elect the recommended courses as opposed to something that would satisfy graduation requirements but ill serve their future endeavors. For example, an SMC student could elect to take HIST 202 – United States History II rather than ECON 202 – Macroeconomics. Both courses are MTA compliant and would meet the general education requirement for the social science elective that SMC requires in order to graduate. However, the HIST 202 – United States History II course would neither prepare a student for a future required course in a transfer institution’s sports management program nor provide them with a skill set or knowledge base that is required of a sports management professional. Providing students with a choice of courses is ideal, but the priority is to educate them in areas of significance to aid in their transfer program academic pursuits and their future career responsibilities.

Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees are specifically designed with the intent of students to transfer into a four-year college after graduating from SMC. But while there are limited controls, such as the use of prerequisites for both the AA and AS, they can be cumbersome and lead to unintended consequences with scheduling issues for students and faculty. The other option would be to design the new degree program as an Associate of

Applied Science (AAS) degree, as each course within the AAS must be taken without exception. The downside to converting the sports management degree to an AAS is the lack of flexibility for students to choose courses, and the design would have to be aligned with the initial goal of developing skills and knowledge for immediate employment upon graduation. This, however, wouldn't prevent an AAS from being designed with the mindset for the potential of transferability, too.

Given this potential obstacle and the researcher's understanding of the available format options, the choice was made to convert the draft of courses into an AAS format with some slight revisions. This option favored the structure that the researcher sought to create through the research process and had the likelihood to better serve the potential students despite the lack of freedom in course selection. Appendix A is the final draft with the conversion to an AAS that the researcher would use to present the findings of the project study.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

The final step in the creating the new sports management degree program was to propose the new curriculum of the project study to the SMC Curriculum and Instruction Committee (C & I Committee). This committee serves as the gateway and steward of all programs for the college. It is comprised of various faculty and staff members that represent different areas and services provided by the college. The purpose of the C & I Committee is to evaluate and critique curriculum changes to assure that any risks or detriments are either diminished or eliminated. This committee also possesses the authority to add or eliminate any academic programs offered by SMC.

The proposal to request adding the new sports management curriculum was guided by a set of standard questions produced by the committee to assure any proposals presented to the full committee were comprehensive in scope. The following is a copy of those questions that the

researcher prepared and distributed prior to the presentation of the new curriculum to the C & I Committee.

SMC Proposed New Program Questionnaire

1. Why should we offer this new program?

There is interest from students based on the results of an administrative review of the fastest growing majors at SMC's top transfer universities during the fall of 2013. The job market looks promising for sports managers and many of our transfer institutions (Western Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Central Michigan University, Aquinas College, Ferris State University and Bethel College) are eager to create an articulation agreement should the program be approved. Plus, the flexible design would allow students to change their mind to a business degree concentration in year two without wasting money, time, or credits.

2. Who is the student audience for the program? Present evidence that there is demand for the program.

The results from a Fall 2013 student interest survey regarding SMC potentially offering a new degree in sports management yielded 236 responses from current and potential future students (survey was administered at open houses and new student orientation). Moderate to high interest was indicated by 45% of the students who responded.

3. What jobs are graduates qualified to perform? Where are those jobs? Present evidence that such jobs are available in meaningful numbers.

According to the employment website <http://online.onecenter.org>, the outlook for sports managers is positive. This website doesn't specifically give information to sports managers, but the most relevant job opportunity category listed was general and operational manager. Typically, in the sports management field, opportunities exist such as facility manager, sales manager, customer/community relations coordinator, coach, recreation programmer, and compliance officer. Students can find both private and public sector jobs in this field; examples

would be municipal recreation department, high school athletic department, college activity center, local fitness facility, and adventure camps.

As an example of meaningful numbers, according to simplyhired.com and indeed.com (employment search engines), there are 24 to 25 new full-time jobs in sports management within 25 miles of Dowagiac that have been posted in the last two weeks. This doesn't account for local businesses and municipalities who don't use these major search engines.

4. *How many students would potentially be in the program each year? Is there an issue with "flooding" the market with graduates?*

This is being designed as an AAS degree that primarily focuses on transferring to a four-year institution. This would likely limit the potential for flooding the market. However, the knowledge and skill set achieved through this degree would provide basic entry-level employability skills in the field of sports management. Based on the survey results, the program is likely to have 15-30 students per year.

5. *What is the cost of the program to the college? Include facilities (including any upgrade costs), equipment, software and supplies.*

Our current facilities, faculty, and equipment are sufficient given the only realistic need is to reactivate two older courses and create one new practicum course to give students hands-on experience in the field.

6. *Do we have faculty qualified to teach the program?*

Yes, the current full-time faculty member in the Physical Education Department has a master's degree in sports management along with 9 years of experience in the field.

7. *How many new courses will be created to serve the program?*

Keep in mind that once we implement a program, we have an obligation to the students to run these courses, so all courses that serve only one program are courses that we could potentially have to run with only a handful of students.

We would need to create one new course, the practicum, and reactivate two old courses. All other courses that make up the degree are currently being offered.

8. Will this program compete with another SMC program for student enrollment?

Though it will involve some business courses, I don't foresee it competing against our business degree programs.

9. Do any other colleges in our region offer this program?

No, nearby community colleges (LMC, KVCC, GOCC, and KCC) mainly offer transfer degrees for students looking to become K-12 physical education teachers.

10. What is the plan for the offering of program courses, i.e., sequence, number of courses each semester, and are courses offered every semester and/or in spring?

There is a guide within the proposal that lays out the sequence for taking courses, but there is flexibility built in for students who may already have some of the coursework completed through pursuit of a different degree or transferred in from another institution. The guide includes what semester the courses are offered and for the most part each course is offered fall and spring.

11. Is there financial aid eligibility for the program?

Yes, the majority of the courses within the program currently exist in other degree programs and are financial aid eligible. I posed this question to SMC's Director of Financial Aid and, in fact, all the courses would be eligible for financial aid.

Essentially, this worksheet is designed to gather information in various forms of the six major questions for any type of project: who, what, when, where, why, and how. This helps the

researcher and committee to better see the full scope and influence that the project may provide, including consequences. For the development of the sports management curriculum, these questions guided the researcher through the process of justifying the allocation of resources in order to create the program and add value to the college. While no project is without criticism or risk, these varied questions are designed to help minimize both factors if careful consideration is evident in the corresponding responses. That is why the researcher elaborated in the written explanations, to exhibit the due diligence sought by the committee and the institution.

During the 2014 November meeting for SMC's C & I Committee, the researcher presented the findings of the project study for approval. There was only one minor critique regarding the course number used for the proposed new practicum course and that was quickly resolved with input and agreement by SMC's registrar.

CONCLUSION

The rigorous process of developing the new academic program in sports management at SMC was not without surprises and challenges. Creating a new program while having to create only one new course was certainly a surprise. It made the entire process more efficient to align industry needs with university program offerings to guide the synthesis of the project.

However, the challenge of revision into an AAS format from the original intention of a strict transfer degree format in order to include the desired subject matter of the researcher's results was unforeseen. Ultimately, even the challenges provided an opportunity for the researcher to dig deeper to compare and contrast both the individual course options and the rationale for their inclusion. The end result culminated in very minor critiques of the new sports management degree program from the C & I Committee and a quick process for officially accepting the proposal.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The fifth and final chapter of this dissertation is intended to serve as a point of reflection and evaluation on the relevance of the project study and its expected impact on SMC. While the process of data collection, organization, and development did eventually result in an approved new degree program, there were other benefits of the project study. For the researcher, in addition to creating a new degree program that Southwestern Michigan College could market within their strategic plan to increase enrollment, this project study served as an exploration into the fundamental purpose of higher education.

The fundamental purpose of higher education, to expand upon the knowledge and skills of students, continues to guide and inspire action for collegiate institutions. The evolution of classroom resources and the expansion of educational practices and services have continued to enhance the maturation of cognitive processes for the betterment of both students and society. As former President Barack Obama (2009) stated, “In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a pre-requisite” (para. 61).

In learning how to create a new degree program without any prior curriculum development experience, the project study also offered the benefit of exploring the procedures and negotiation of insights as to how curriculum is developed at a community college. This involved taking into account the best practices of how students accumulate knowledge, identifying competencies desired by industry, and negotiating the process for course transfer to four-year colleges and universities. In many ways, this project study served as an extended opportunity for growth and professional development through the refinement of the researcher’s

skill in assessment and evaluation of data. Having served in multiple employment capacities at various community colleges within his 11-year career, including assignment as a faculty member, the understanding for how an idea for a degree program can be developed into an officially approved curriculum was foreign. This project study provided an opportunity to navigate through the process of exactly how curriculum is developed and aided the researcher with a much better understanding of both the resources and role of a community college faculty member.

It's more than just developing lesson plans, advising students, and filling out curriculum documents for committee approval or accreditation demands. As the researcher discovered throughout the process, faculty must investigate various teaching, learning, and industry data resources in order to present content that, at its core, is relevant to all constituents. But that content must also maintain the balance of being specific enough for current industry needs and yet broad enough to adapt to arising challenges. To do so encompasses continually evaluating and designing flexible curriculum with a mindset for the future challenges of both industry and academia, while maintaining the internal and external relationships that are key to successfully navigating any such difficulties—not for publication as university professors are often required to undertake, but rather for the sake of best serving the students, institutions, and interrelated career industries whom they impact. This project study has forever changed the researcher's outlook of the role of faculty members. They must aspire to be equally a content expert as well as a visionary to help guide the future of their institutions and programs for continued success.

PROJECT STUDY LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A dissertation project, as opposed to a traditional research dissertation, with the intention of producing a new associate degree in sports management was not without challenges or second guessing. These challenges included the nature of curriculum creation for the project study, for which the researcher was tasked despite lacking any previous curriculum

development experience. Also, a truncated timeline of less than 12 weeks to develop the new curriculum by the requested November C & I deadline was a key challenge. Though necessary for advanced approval of the forthcoming college academic catalog of SMC, the brief timeline provided additional stress given the inexperience of the researcher. Still, it was believed that the methods and procedures undertaken were both appropriate and necessary given the context of the project. However, there is no singular process, product, or service that is above reproach in academic research. The potential to be evaluated for the sake of improvement is necessary to ensure the reasoning, methodologies for data collection, and end results meet the rigorous standards or higher education research. For this dissertation project study, there are multiple areas that the researcher readily acknowledges could be altered or perhaps improved upon. Such modifications would be especially impactful under normal or standard conditions for research.

In taking the opportunity to look back on the development of the sports management associate degree, the time constraint was a significant factor of influence within the scope of the project study. In the absence of such a limited timeframe within which to produce a new degree program, the opportunity to pursue alternative methodologies would have been available. There are numerous options that could have opened up with the utilization of several qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods measures that the researcher believes could have had the potential to impact on the final deliverable of the project study. For example, a case study or observation of a recently developed sports management degree program would likely provide valuable insights toward both the challenges and key factors for potential program success. But for this particular dissertation project study, the opportunity for curriculum exploration in the researcher's career field outweighed the limitation of an imposed deadline for the completion and presentation of the project deliverable.

Another factor affecting the project was a lack of research specifically with two-year associate degrees in sports management. Despite the rapid increase of employment opportunities within the sports management industry, associate degree programs in sports management are still a relatively new option for students. While advanced programs such as bachelor's and master's degrees in sports management have seen significant growth over the past 20 years, the advancement of two-year sports management degree programs have not experienced the same progress. Technological advancements for sports operations and the trend of sports analytics could be areas of growth that two-year programs could focus on for retraining opportunities with the current sports management workforce and a more diverse skill set for future professionals. Further research is still needed to help expose the multitude of factors that have led to the limited growth for two-year degrees in the sports management field.

Beyond the lack of generalizability toward larger populations, other threats to validity and reliability exist within this study based on the knowledge of its specifically intended purpose. If redesigned with an emphasis toward external validity and given similar results, these data could be influential for future growth. Both in terms of sport management associate degree programs and community college enrollment, this dissertation project would serve as a template to guide other community colleges in designing sports management academic programs.

But being a project study focused on a potential solution for a specific community college rather than a traditional research dissertation, the relevance of this work toward the field of study is somewhat diminished. However, every dissertation or form of academic study does provide useful information to further enhance the standing of sports management as an established academic major. Whether that contribution is immediate or of future benefit, it is still important to continue to add to the overall works within the growing field of sports management research. By doing so, the credibility of the overall discipline continues to grow and garner acceptance through the expansion of a comprehensive body of knowledge.

Outside of potentially utilizing other research methodologies and the need for further research within associate degree sports management programs, there are some practical suggestions the researcher has identified for improvement beyond the initial scope of the curriculum. Upon completion of the dissertation project study and over the course of the first few cohorts to complete the AAS in sports management at SMC, there have been noticeable weaknesses outside the control of the curriculum. Such weaknesses include student interest in highly specific areas of sports management as well as the diversity of faculty. At a small rural community college, there still needs to be emphasis on diversity in terms of personality traits and in regard to professional experience. To further guide students of varying backgrounds and career field interests, there needs to be intentionality for the diversity of instruction even with the acknowledgment of resource limitations.

As many of the contributors the researcher used in the literature review suggest, there is a definitive need for college graduates with applicable industry experience. Emery (2010), Horine and Stotlar (2013), Parkhouse (1996), Pitts and Pederson (2005), and Chelladurai (1992) are some of the more noted sports management scholars based on their many contributions to the field of sports management through their various forms of research. It is through their various lenses of research that they have shared an impetus for hands-on practical learning experience. While addressed with the inclusion of a practicum course and the requirement of multiple service-learning components throughout the sports management major courses, this is an area of contemplation that the researcher suggests prioritizing.

For example, in terms of the likelihood of providing opportunities for specific student career interests, the fact that Southwestern Michigan College does not offer competitive collegiate athletics is a threat to the degree program. Since the AAS in sports management started being offered at SMC in 2015, the researcher of this project study has been the sole faculty member overseeing and instructing its practicum course. Out of the 11 declared students

in the sports management major that have completed the practicum course, 8 have done so with the intention of pursuing a career in collegiate athletics. Whether as a coach, athletic director, or marketing manager, the core similarity has been their shared desire to work within the collegiate segment of the sports industry. Though SMC does offer limited opportunities in intramural sports and fitness center operations, those often consist of miniscule tasks of unskilled labor as opposed to the complexities of athletic department management. So, for any future students looking to work in that sector of the career field, the SMC sports management program might not be of interest due to the college lacking that resource. Conversely, there could be a community college that was geographically situated in close proximity to a significant sports industry employer. In that context, a sports management degree program could be tailored to fit that employer's needs and be an integral component of their workforce. This type of relationship would likely have a positive impact on the overall success of the sports management program through a built employment staple for the recruitment of new students. So, whether or not an institution has access to areas of student career interests and resources, such as an athletic department or a nearby sports industry employer, is something the researcher suggests as a highly prominent point of contemplation before moving forward with creating an associate degree in sports management.

The other suggestion the researcher previously alluded to pertains to the diversity of faculty to teach in the sports management discipline, not only in terms of race and gender, but in regard to variation of industry experience. The researcher has emphasized such diversity among adjuncts and guest lecturers in order to promote as many of the areas within the sports industry as possible. Students need to hear from differing perspectives in order to better understand how the sports industry truly operates and what might be the best fit for their skill set. The researcher recognizes that to further enhance the new curriculum, the ability to

incorporate elements such as student job interest and faculty diversity need to be prioritized for the program to be more desirable to both students and industry practitioners.

As aforementioned, while many of the students in the SMC sports management program had a desire to work in collegiate sports, not all focused on the same role. There are numerous employment opportunities within the field of sports management and students must be prepared to function in a variety of roles. The knowledge base and technological needs within the sports industry continue to evolve and create both opportunities and threats for current and potential employees. In terms of opportunities, there are new types of jobs such as sports analytic specialists that didn't exist just 10 years ago. Data have become a prominent industry good due to the evolution of consumer interests as well as the knowledge and increased understanding of athlete performance. Those previously unforeseen factors, along with the advancements in technology for data collection and utilization, continue to influence the demand for new skills and the evolution of sports management careers.

But for each new opportunity created there are threats to jobs that need to be refined or risk becoming obsolete, such as sports travel agents. That is why the researcher suggests incorporating more diverse perspectives from those individuals who help deliver the curriculum. Both the key insights into the success and challenges of sports management help students gain a better perspective of the type of broad career options available to them and the skills necessary to remain employable. By exposing students to a variety of employment options within the sports industry, many find that they are better suited to a particular segment of the industry that they previously had no knowledge of or interest. It is important to challenge their perceptions and abilities so that they may discover a career path that better aligns with their skills and lifestyle desires.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

As the sports industry continues to rapidly expand, so too will the opportunities for employment. But having a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is an essential element toward this continued growth and success within the industry. Given the industry emphasis on critical thinking and practical application of business principles in a quickly evolving career field, community colleges are uniquely positioned to meet those very needs.

Looking from a practical perspective, as two-year institutions of higher learning, community colleges are able to produce students knowledgeable in current trends with fundamental skill sets in less time than a four-year college or university by the very nature of their operational structure. It is without question that students are not a simple piece of merchandise that is produced in an efficient assembly line. They are flawed human beings that both develop and produce outcomes differently from one another. Also, four-year collegiate institutions have the ability expand and further refine the skills and knowledge of students for greater industry needs. But from a practical view, community colleges are best suited to meet the evolving industry needs, at least in terms of entry- and lower-level types of managerial positions due to their timeliness of producing graduates and ability to stay current with emerging trends. That is why the two-year turnaround that community colleges generally operate under can be considered an advantage.

Being able to meet the workforce needs of a booming industry would also be an opportunity for community colleges to expand their recruitment potential. Enrollment decline is not just a local or state problem; colleges across the United States are seeing declines due to the improving economic climate. According to Smith (2016):

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that last year, community colleges enrolled about 5.9 million students, while in 2014 that number stood at about six million. In fact, the colleges have been on a steady decline since 2010, ending the increases many saw when the economic downturn hit in 2008.

Community College Enrollment

Fall 2015	5,906,419	-2.4%
Fall 2014	6,052,069	-4.4%
Fall 2013	6,329,631	-3.3%
Fall 2012	6,706,913	-3.1%
Fall 2011	6,918,915	-1.6%

(para. 4)

Rather than attending college for the hope of increased employability, high school graduates are more inclined to be entering the workforce for well-paying jobs that are available now. But if community colleges were able to entice recent high school graduates with a popular alternative to direct employment, it may provide the much-needed boost to enrollment that they desire.

The popularity of the sports industry continues to grow and provide more employment opportunities for college graduates. Heitner (2015) noted, “The sports market in North America was worth \$60.5 billion in 2014. It is expected to reach \$73.5 billion by 2019” (para. 1). These data coincide with the projections of National Center for O*NET Development (2015) for occupations related to coaching and scouting in Michigan to increase by an average of 11% by the year 2026. Having both national and state forecasts for occupational growth provides additional marketing prospects and recruitment incentives for community colleges. By offering an academic program in an industry that is thriving, while still in of need a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, community colleges tout the potential for positive job placement upon graduation. However, it also increases the burden of sports management educators on how to best prepare students for the competition of a challenging and highly desirable career field.

The expansion of the sports industry also provides opportunities for community colleges to better themselves through the positive potential of industry sponsorships toward academic programs. The Network of Academic Corporate Relations Officers Benchmarking Committee (2011) noted, “Corporations no longer consider themselves to be simply donors to academia;

they consider themselves to be investors and business partners, where knowledge creation and transfer are a significant part of the equation” (p. 1). But traditionally there has been resistance from academia, outside of athletic operations, to refrain from such relationships due to the perceived infringement of corporatization on the academic freedom of faculty and institutional research. But as government funding and enrollment have continued to diminish, the exploration of such relationships with industrial partners will continue to be a source of opportunity. As long as there are protections in place for academic freedom, a carefully crafted partnership based on the strengths of all parties involved could present a win-win solution.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research hypothesis of creating a new SMC associate degree in sports management rather than alternative career fields was influenced and supported by the initial research of SMC’s administration. In identifying the subject matter concentration quickly, this allowed for the data collection and synthesis of the new sport management degree program to begin immediately and come together over the course of a few months. The new program did provide an appealing new product to enhance recruitment opportunities at SMC, with the surrounding regional school districts, in order to attempt to reverse the recent trend in declining student enrollment as stated in the college’s strategic planning process.

As Smith (2016) noted, community colleges across the nation have faced sharp declines in enrollment (para. 4). It is imperative that they don’t ignore the signs of this problem given the financial burden it can cause. Perhaps this should be looked at as an opportunity to review all academic offerings in higher education with a critical eye. Then it is up to the leadership to either make the necessary revisions or refocus campus efforts with faculty and staff to create new programs that fit both employer needs and student interests. Employability and job placement rates for college graduates are a growing concern; that’s why it makes too much

sense not to align the educational offerings with one of the highest growing fields today—sports management.

As revenue streams in higher education continue to be a focus of concern by administrators, perhaps it's worth the effort to further explore the development of sports management degree programs. The potential impact could represent the likelihood of modest to substantial enrollment gains, which in turn would increase revenue and institutional stability.

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APPENDIX A: SPORTS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM GUIDE

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The AAS in sport management provides students with the understanding and skills required for entry-level positions. Potential employment opportunities include facility and event management, sports and recreational programming, athletic coaching, sports media, etc. For occupational outlook and wage information, search sports management at: <http://online.onetcenter.org>

Students that graduate are encouraged to continue their education at four-year colleges to further refine their knowledge and abilities. Contact the program advisor to help determine the specific course requirements at the receiving institution prior to selecting any course options/electives.

Prerequisites

- ◆ You will need to demonstrate proficiencies prior to graduation in reading, mathematics, and English based on SMC assessment tests, ACT or SAT scores, or by taking the recommended courses.

Core Curriculum

- ◆ In order to graduate with a college degree, all students are required to take certain general education courses. These include speech, wellness, English composition, science, and proficiency in mathematics and computer use. These are included in the following listing of courses.

Course Sequence

Some courses in this curriculum must be taken in a given sequence because of prerequisite requirements. The following listing is a suggested sequence of part-time students should complete the courses listed under Semester I before taking the courses listed under Semester II and so forth. Consult the course descriptions as some courses are not offered every semester. **Highlighted courses are recommended options for satisfying the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA) guidelines, all others are required.**

Course		Credits
Semester I		
ECON 202	Microeconomics	3cr
ENGL 103	Freshman English II	3cr
BISC 111	Biological Science	4cr
PHED 103	Life Wellness	2cr
SPEE 102	Fundamentals of Public Speaking	3cr
Semester II		
BUSI 101	Introduction to Business	3cr
MATH 150	Statistics	4cr
CHEM 100	Fundamentals of Chemistry	4cr
PHED 101	Physical Education Activity	1cr
PHED 215	Introduction to Recreation and Sports	3cr
Semester III		
BUSI 240	Professionalism Workshop	1cr
HUMA 202	Introduction to American Pop Culture	3cr
ISYS 110	Introduction to Computer Technology	3cr
PHED 210	Organization and Administration of Sports	3cr
PSYC 101	General Psychology	3cr
SPEE 104	Introduction to Human Communication	3cr
Semester IV		
BUS 220	Marketing	3cr
PHED 111	Introduction to Coaching	3cr
PHED 199	Practicum	4cr
PHIL 210	Introduction to Ethics	4cr

**MTA Compliant Program Electives for C & I
Presentation and Discussion**

Course	Credits		Course	Credits	
<u>Natural Science Area</u>			<u>Humanities</u>		
BIOL 101	General Biology I	5cr	ENGL 223	Introduction to Drama	3cr
BIOL 110	Human Biology	4cr	ENGL 231	American Literature I	3cr
BIOL 202	Microbiology	4cr	ENGL 232	American Literature II	3cr
BIOL 215	Principles of Human Physiology	4cr	ENGL 235	American Ethnic Literature	3cr
CHEM 101	General Chemistry I	5cr	ENGL 241	Introduction to Shakespeare	3cr
CHEM 102	General Chemistry II	5cr	ENGL 256	Bible as Literature	3cr
ENST 112	Environmental Science	4cr	ENGL 261	Creative Writing/Fiction	3cr
GEOG 110	Physical Geography	4cr	ENGL 263	Creative Writing/Poetry	3cr
<u>Social Science</u>			ENGL 264	Creative Writing/Scriptwriting	3cr
GEOG 105	Human Geography	3cr	ENGL 265	Creative Nonfiction Writing	3cr
HIST 201	United States History	3cr	ENGL 282	Survey of British Literature II	3cr
HIST 202	United States History II	3cr	ENGL 291	Survey of World Literature I	3cr
HIST 290	Special Topics in History	3cr	ENGL 292	Survey of World Literature II	3cr
HIST 102	Western Civilization II	4cr	HIST 101	Western Civilization I	4cr
HUMA 204	Introduction to Film	3cr	Total Program Credits 60		
HUMA 205	Great American Films	3cr	*NOTE: A minimum of 60 credits is required to graduate.		
HUMA 210	Introduction to Non-Western Civilization	4cr			
HUMA 225	Honors Seminar - International Studies	3cr			
POSC 201	American Government	3cr			
SOCI 101	Introduction to Cultural Anthropology	3cr			
SOCI 201	Principles of Sociology	3cr			
SOCI 202	Social Problems	3cr			
SOCI 203	Marriage and Family	3cr			
SOCI 240	Minority Groups in America	3cr			

APPENDIX B: MTA COMPLIANT COURSE OPTIONS

MTA Compliant Course Options and their alignment with industry and transfer institution competencies.

	Competency Areas									
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing	
English Composition										
ENGL 103 – Freshman Engl. II 3cr	x	x	x	x	x				x	
Math										
MATH 127 – College Algebra 4cr		x								
MATH 128 – Contemp. Math 4cr		x	x			x		x		
MATH 129 – Finite Math with College Algebra 4cr		x	x		x				x	
MATH 131 – Precalculus Trig 3cr		x								
MATH 136 – Precalculus Algebra 4cr		x								
MATH 141 – Analytical Geometry and Calculus I 5cr		x								
MATH 142 – Analytical Geometry and Calculus II 5cr		x								
MATH 150 – Statistics 4cr		x	x		x	x		x	x	
MATH 153 – Math for Elem Teachers I 4cr	x	x								
MATH 154 – Math for Elem Teachers II 4cr	x	x	x			x				
MATH 201 – Calculus II 4cr		x	x							

	Competency Areas										
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing		
MATH 203 – Intro to Linear Alg 3cr		x	x								
MATH 205 – Differential Equations and Linear Algebra 4cr		x	x								
English / Communication											
ENGL 104 – Freshman Engl. III 3cr	x	x	x	x	x				x		
SPEE 102 – Fundamentals of Public Speaking 3cr	x	x	x	x				x	x		
SPEE 104 – Intro to Human Comm 3cr	x	x	x	x				x	x		
Natural Science											
BISC 111 – Biological Science 4cr		x	x		x		x				
BIOL 101 – General Biology I 5cr					x		x				
BIOL 102 – General Biology II 5cr					x		x				
BIOL 110 – Human Biology 4cr					x		x				
BIOL 202 – Microbiology 4cr		x			x		x				
BIOL 214 – Basic Human Anat 4cr					x		x				
BIOL 215 – Princ of Human Phys 4cr		x			x		x				
CHEM 100 – Fund. of Chemistry 4cr		x	x		x	x	x				

	Competency Areas									
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing	
CHEM 101 – Gen'l Chemistry I 5cr		x	x		x	x				
CHEM 102 – Gen'l Chemistry II 5cr		x	x		x	x				
CHEM 201 – Org Chemistry I 5cr		x					x			
CHEM 202 – Org Chemistry II 5cr		x					x			
ENST 112 – Environ. Science 4cr		x	x		x					
GEOG 110 – Phys Geography 4cr		x								
PHYS 101 – Intro to Physics I 5cr		x								
PHYS 102 – Intro to Physics II 5cr		x								
PHYS 201 – General Physics I 5cr		x								
PHYS 202 – General Physics II 5cr		x								
Social Science										
ECON 201 – Macroeconomics 3cr		x	x	x		x		x	x	
ECON 202 – Microeconomics 3cr	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
EDUC 215 – Human Develop & Learning 3cr		x					x			
GEOG 105 – Human Geography 3cr		x						x		

		Competency Areas									
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing		
HIST 201 – US History I 3cr		x		x				x			
HIST 202 – US History II 3cr		x		x				x			
HIST 290 – Spec Topics in Hist 3cr		x									
POSC 201 – Amer Government 3cr		x	x					x			
PSYC 101 – General Psychology 3cr		x	x	x	x						
PSYC 102 – Psyc of Adjustment 3cr		x									
PSYC 260 – Abnormal Psyc 3cr		x									
PSYC 296 – Educational Psyc 3cr		x		x							
SOCI 101 – Intro to Cult Anthro 3cr		x									
SOCI 201 – Princ of Sociology 3cr		x									
SOCI 202 – Social Problems 3cr		x									
SOCI 203 – Marriage and Family 3cr											
SOCI 240 – Minority Groups in America 3cr		x						x			

	Competency Areas									
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing	
Humanities										
ART 110 – Art Appreciation 3cr	x	x	x	x				x		x
ART 148 – Encounter with Arts 4cr	x	x								
ART 200 – Creative Process Through Art 3cr	x	x								
ART 203 – Art History I 3cr		x								
ART 204 – Art History II 3cr		x								
ENGL 223 – Intro to Drama 3cr	x	x	x							
ENGL 231 – Amer Literature I 3cr	x									
ENGL 232 – Amer Literature II 3cr	x									
ENGL 235 – Amer Ethnic Lit 3cr	x	x								
ENGL 241 – Intro to Shakespeare 3cr	x	x								
ENGL 256 – Bible as Literature 3cr		x								
ENGL 261 – Creative Writing Fiction 3cr	x	x								
ENGL 263 – Creative Writing Poetry 3cr	x									

	Competency Areas									
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing	
ENGL 264 – Creative Writing Scriptwriting 3cr	x	x								
ENGL 265 – Creative Nonfiction Writing 3cr	x	x							x	
ENGL 281 – Survey of Brit Lit I 3cr		x								
ENGL 282 – Survey of Brit Lit II 3cr		x								
ENGL 291 – Survey of World Lit I 3cr		x								
ENGL 292 – Sur. of World Lit II 3cr		x								
HIST 101 – Western Civ I 4cr		x		x				x		
HIST 102 – Western Civ II 4cr		x		x				x		
HUMA 202 – Intro to Amer Pop Culture 3cr	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	
HUMA 204 – Intro to Film 3cr		x								
HUMA 205 – Great Amer Films 3c		x								
HUMA 210 – Intro to Non-Western Civilization 4cr	x	x		x				x	x	
HUMA 225 – Honors Seminar International Studies 3cr	x	x		x				x	x	

		Competency Areas										
		Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing		
MUSI 101 – Music Theory I	3cr	x	x									
MUSI 102 – Music Theory II	3cr	x	x									
MUSI 110 – Music Appreciation	3cr	x	x						x		x	
MUSI 111 – Jazz & Pop Music in America	3cr		x									
MUSI 201 – Music Theory III	3cr	x	x									
MUSI 202 – Music Theory IV	3cr	x	x									
MUSI 203 – Music History I	3cr		x						x			
MUSI 204 – Music History II	3cr		x						x			
MUSI 240 – Music for the Classroom Teacher	3cr		x									
PHIL 101 – Intro to Phil Thought	3cr	x	x									
PHIL 201 – Intro to World Relig	3cr		x		x							
PHIL 210 – Intro to Ethics	4cr	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	
PHIL 220 – Intro to Logic	3cr	x	x	x								
SPAN 201 – Intermed. Spanish I	4cr	x		x								x

	Competency Areas										
	Written & Verbal Communication	Critical Thinking	Sports Industry Aptitude	Leadership and Ethics	Technology Fluency	Statistics	Biology	Economics	Business & Marketing		
SPAN 202 – Intermed Spanish II 4cr	x		x						x		
SPAN 203 – Spanish Comp I 3cr	x	x	x						x		
SPAN 204 – Spanish Comp II 3cr	x	x	x						x		
THEA 110 – Theatre Apprec 3cr	x	x			x						