
Establishing a Sport Management Advisory Board

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Abstract: *Advisory boards can be created within any organization to assist in a variety of areas. Members of the advisory board serve as leaders for the whole organization, working together to help the organization become more successful. Advisory board members can accomplish necessary tasks for the company such as fundraising and research. This project explored the implementation of an advisory board specifically within higher education. Using the process of content analysis, best practices for establishing and implementing a university Sport Management Advisory Program Board were defined. This process is included along with the adoption of how to put these ideas into practice.*

Keywords: *Sport management, advisory board, advisory committee, board members, best practices*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word advisory as having the power or right to make suggestions about what should be done (2016). An advisory board does just that, gives advice and suggestions to the management on creating and maintaining a successful corporation, foundation, or organization. There is often the misconception that having an advisory board is the same as having a Board of Directors. However, members of a Board of Directors are often elected to represent the company, act on major issues, and manage policies related to the corporation (www.investopedia.com, 2015). Establishing an advisory board gives a broader knowledge and benefit to a company without having the responsibilities to make decisions on specific matter. The Board of Directors are much more formal when compared to advisory boards. In today's world, companies, organizations, and foundations are establishing advisory boards to gain assistance in areas such as marketing and directing regulators within the corporation (www.investopedia.com, 2015).

2. BACKGROUND

Purpose of Advisory Boards

Advisory board can be created within any organization to assist in a variety of areas. Communities, businesses,

corporations, and sport associations can all benefit from having an advisory board. The purpose of an advisory board is to help make improvements within a company, community, or university and for promotional purposes (Reiter, 2003). Members of the advisory board serve as leaders for the whole organization, working together to help the organization become more successful. Advisory boards can accomplish necessary tasks for the company such as fundraising and increasing shareholder values within the company. One area that advisory boards can assist in is with research. Research can be done by an advisory board to help address a situation the company is passionate about. For example shared by Newman et.al (2011) featured a community who created an advisory board to do research on a chronic disease. "Community advisory boards (CABs) often serve as a sources of leadership in the partnerships of community-based participatory research (CBPR) and provide structure to guide the partnership's activities" (Newman et al., 2011, p 1). Newman et al (2011) identified the common structure of CABs to be approximately 20 members. Membership consisted of an assortment of people such as for-profit, non-profits, school, faith-based, government organizations, along with community members. Like any committee, there needs to be a purpose or mission that the advisory board members want to fulfill. The research advisory board presented by Newman et al. (2011), similar to others, focused solely on the community and how the research could make the community better. The focus of this group's attention included the following five sections: "1) identify community priorities, needs, and interests; 2) set research priorities; 3) provide input or resources or both for the Center's research activities; 4) identify community members to participate on project steering committees; and 5) promote community support for and involvement with research" (Newman et al., 2011, p 2).

Universities are not exempt from the practice of utilizing community advisory boards in a variety of way. Specifically, universities have advisory boards in

place to promote the school and academic programs, establish fundraising, create resources for all aspects of the university, and help students achieve success in their career paths. The purpose of an academic advisory board on a campus is to guide program administrators and university faculty members as they work together in the right ways within the available resources (Conroy, Lefeyer, & Withian, 1996).

3. MAIN CONTRIBUTION OF THIS PROJECT

Advisory Board Best Practices

Although practices of organizations who obtain an advisory board can vary, there are some best practices that can assist a university program looking to establish a community advisory board. Through the process of conducting a content analysis, best practices for advisory board establishment was collected. Conroy, Lefeyer, and Withian (1996) conducted a study consisting of 108 two-year and four-year hospitality programs that were controlled by advisory boards. The authors found that “boards have difficulty functioning when they are either much larger or much smaller than that range of 15 to 20 persons” (Conroy & Lefever & Withian, 1996, p. 2).

When examining the make-up of the membership of advisory boards, research found that two-year programs utilized advisory boards much differently than four-year programs (Conroy et al., 1996). “The majority of respondents in four-year programs reported that industry leaders and professionals constituted at least 90 percent of board membership” (Conroy, Lefever, & Withian, 1996, p. 2). The typical two-year board was comprised of industry professionals (60 to 70 percent), academicians (20 to 25 percent), program graduates (10 percent), with a variety of other member categories making up the difference. Crucially, these researchers believed the practices of two-year programs were better because they included program graduates. Having board representation from former students was deemed important in adding insight to the meetings and helped enhance the organizations image (Conroy, Lefever, & Withian, 1996).

Another best practice recommendation for advisory boards included the topic of meeting schedules and the number of meetings that should be held each annually. Research indicated that the ideal and most effective number of meetings per year was placed between one and two (Reiter, 2003). Some boards noted that even

two meetings were too much and advocated for just one. Program directors from the universities where the advisory board members that determined the dates for the meetings. Then, this information was disseminated to the other group members.

Based on this research for best practice recommendations for advisory boards, the recommendation for a newly formed advisory board would be to establish a mission statement or purpose for the group. Then, determine who from the community would best bring diversity and resources to the meetings. Having a program director from the university set up the two at least two meetings for the first year would assist the advisory board to get a feel for the specific program and role of the board. However, as the board progresses, the members may determine that only one meeting a year is necessary.

4. METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

Concordia University Sport Management Advisory Board and Purpose

The Sport Management Advisory Board at Concordia University, Saint Paul is set to begin fall of 2016. This board will need to have governing rules and guidelines to follow. Since the advisory board will be new to the Sport Management program, board members will need to understand the goals and purpose of the group in order to make it successful. The main concept intended to help the board succeed would be the meeting times and location. Most members are familiar with university campus, so Thompson Hall will serve as the location. Additionally, Thompson Hall is where all sport management classes and professors are housed. The assembly of all board members will take place in the morning before the typical workday begins. Meetings will be held twice a year to assure development and promotion of the program is being met, and also to guarantee the resources are being used adequately. One meeting will be held in the fall as classes resume for the fall semester and the other meeting will be held at the end of the year before spring classes conclude. This timeline will allow board members to assist the university Sport Management program planning for the academic year. Essentially the first meeting would be to look forward to the upcoming year's goals and guidelines. The second meeting would involve board review of the successes and challenges of the program and allow for evaluation to occur.

Rules regarding to the Sport Management advisory board for Concordia, St. Paul all members will be encouraged to attend the meetings. Dates will be sent out by the Program Director Members approximately six months in advance to allow ample time for planning. Members will be encouraged to contribute their ideas in advance via email, or at the meeting. To ensure this committee is effective in providing feedback and resources to the university program, members should plan to offer advice on topics related to curriculum, fundraising, promotion of the program, and other relevant industry matters. Additionally, the top priority of this group will involve board members serving as mentors. Sport Management students involved in the program would greatly benefit from these mentorship opportunities as they relate to opportunities surrounding internships and employment. With the purpose of this advisory board, following these identified rules and regulations will help the group to be effective by promoting a positive image to current and future sport management students.

Concordia University Sport Management Advisory Board Purpose

The purpose for the Concordia Sport Management Advisory Board should reflect the best practices as determined for groups within a university setting. In the article *The Value of College Advisory Boards*, written by Conroy et al., (1996) authors stated, "the mission of an advisory board in our experience is threefold: to enhance a program's image, to advocate for the program, and to develop resources for the program (p. 3). Concordia's Sport Management Advisory Board mission should involve members who promote a positive image for the sport management program for incoming and current students, advocate for the program outside of our university, and expand resources to make the program effective.

5. RESULTS

The agenda for the first meeting utilized the best practices as found through the content analysis. The agenda will promote participation in the board by getting everyone engaged and excited about the service opportunity, the sport management program, and the mentorship prospect (Appendix A). With sport management focusing around the business of sport and the marketing of a brand, product, or event, this first meeting will focus on the university faculty members selling the idea of creating this advisory board. Key to

this sales process is the discussion of the purpose of the committee along with the mission statement. Also, enrollment in CSP's sport management tradition and online programs will be shared with the advisory board members at this first meeting. These programs are offered at both the graduate and undergraduate level and have experienced growth over the past four years. Another topic for the agenda will include board member opportunities to positively impact students in the sport management program at Concordia. And finally, sport management faculty updates, as well as our advisory committee issues and concerns will be shared. This meeting and agenda plan will help affirm our prosperity for the future of our advisory board.

6. CONCLUSION

Research has shown that advisory boards can be beneficial for organizations in many ways (Conroy et al., 1996; Reiter, 2003; Newman et al., 2011). For Concordia University, St. Paul's Sport Management program, having an advisory board will help promote the sport management program. With the help of knowledgeable, skillful, and passionate board members, students can gain advantages within the sport and recreation industry. Through the involvement of various industry professionals on the advisory board, students will have access to resources to more effectively assist them from college into their careers. Concordia will also gain promotion based on the program hopefully increasing revenue in tuition. The creation of the advisory board will bring the community of Concordia together to attain great things. Overall, following the rules and guidelines for our advisory board and having everyone engaged and animated will help make this program successful. As Helen Keller so graciously stated, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

Appendix A

Concordia, St. Paul Sport Management Advisory Committee

Tuesday, November 8, 2016 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
Thompson Hall Room 214

- I. Welcome & Introductions
- II. Purpose of this Committee
- III. Quick fall update on enrollment:
 - A. CSP University
 - B. BA Program (traditional and online)

- C. MA Program
- D. 3+2
- IV. Advisory Committee Ideas Discussion
- V. Marketing and Promotion of the program (if time permits)
- VI. Other items
- VII. Adjournment

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APA MLA Chicago

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



Nicole Thompson has been a student at Concordia University in St. Paul (CSP) since the fall of 2013. She is majoring in Sport Management and will graduate in May of 2017 with her BA. During her four years at CSP, Nicole has played on the women's softball team for the Golden Bears and worked as a sport facility assistant on-campus. Nicole plans to stay at Concordia University to earn her MA in Sport Management.



Dr. Huberty joined the faculty at Concordia University, St. Paul summer of 2013, bringing with her a wealth of industry practice in both private and public sport and recreation settings. Dr. Huberty's expertise in health and wellness include 25 years of group and individualized fitness training for which she holds numerous professional certifications including NETA, LMI, PHI, MOSSA, and YogaFit. Research interests and publications focus on sport marketing and sponsorship, gender diversity within sport management, and sport leadership.