APSM Overview

Welcome to the APSM major yearly newsletter written by the four program representatives: Kavita Liyanage, applied physiology and health management, Megan Grotto, sport management, Daniel Connolly and Celine Horner, sports performance leadership. In this newsletter, we are highlighting:

APHM: A spotlight on Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine Conference
SM: Internship opportunities in SMU’s Athletic Department
SPL: A feature on SPL’s evolving curriculum
APHM: A spotlight on Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine Conference

Sydney Lyng and Emma-Kate Brown proudly represented SMU’s Applied Physiology and Health Management major at the Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (TACSM) annual conference. The two-day conference on February 28 and March 1 consisted of poster presentations, lectures by renowned clinicians and researchers in the field, and social and networking sessions.

Both Sydney and Emma-Kate were recognized for their amazing exercise physiology work that they’ve been conducting in Dr. Sushmita Purkayastha’s research study. Sydney and Emma-Kate presented their research titled “Persistent Neurovascular Coupling Dysregulation During Subacute Recovery Phase Following Concussion” to various experts in the exercise physiology field. After competing against undergraduate students from other Texas universities, Emma-Kate was awarded second place for her research poster. And due to Sydney’s work in the lab and co-authorship in an article published in the Journal of Neurotrauma, she was awarded the Undergraduate Scholar of the Year Award.

Sydney and Emma-Kate work in the Cerebrovascular Research Laboratory under Dr. Purkayastha and have assisted in completing research about cerebral blood flow in concussed athletes. Dr. Purkayastha allows students to join her research studies in hopes to ignite their passion for the field. She believes the investigation and discovery of the exercise physiology field builds a strong foundation for students’ development, as it exposes them to “the entire spectrum of scientific research.”

Sydney credits all of her professors for providing pathways, allowing her to grow and push the boundaries in the health field. In particular, she mentioned that Dr. Purkayastha’s guidance greatly enhanced her chances for success. “Dr. Purkayastha helped cultivate my professional evolution and shared lessons, connections and opportunities.” Both Sydney and Emma-Kate have greatly utilized the skills gained from the APHM program and have successfully applied them to real-life experiences.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the 2020 TACSM Conference that will be held at SMU with Dr. Scott Davis residing as President.
SM: Internship opportunities within SMU’s Athletic Department

Home to the 5th largest sports market; Dallas has become an attractive destination for undergraduates interested in pursuing a sport management related career path. As part of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, academic coursework and experiential learning opportunities are essential towards preparing students for a variety of careers including: sports marketing, management, representation, public relations, and facility and event management.

Internships are a major component towards gaining experiential learning, and serve as a foundational platform towards career paths students are interested in pursuing. A majority of students intern with sport-related agencies and facilities as well as major league teams based in Dallas-Fort Worth. However, many students overlook internship opportunities within SMU’s own Athletic Department.

Internships within an Athletic Department are a tremendous opportunity for any student eager to pursue a career in the sports realm regardless of the career they are hopeful to pursue. Such opportunities can be found within a variety of departments such as marketing, compliance, development and external affairs, equipment etc. The benefits of working in this type of environment are endless, “You have the opportunity to meet a lot of people and make a lot of important connections through players, coaches, and alumni...working here, you are involved with every department in the athletic facility which enables you to see the entirety of the operation”, Hiro Kaida, an assistant equipment manager at SMU, said.

Most student managers working in an athletic department gain experiential knowledge and see, “all aspects of what goes into putting on events, games, as well as, practices where we are responsible for the hidden work that no one realizes,” Jason Jones, head football equipment manager at SMU, said.

Unlike other departments, within the equipment department specifically, “You learn how to adapt and improvise under pressure to find creative solutions,” Kaida said. Working within departments such as marketing or equipment gives the student versatile experience, as everyday entails varied objectives in relation to events and sports for the current season.

“You need to build a foundation for your experience, if not you will be overwhelmed. Working within an Athletic Department is a great platform to build supportive networks and gain experiential outlets. It is also an automatic community you are able to be apart of,” Jones said.
SPL: A feature on SPL’s evolving curriculum

The Sport Performance Leadership major is a specific concentration within the Applied Physiology and Sport Management department. SPL classes provide students with academic and experiential training pertinent to the leadership and instruction of sport. This program, created in 2014, is intended for undergraduate students interested in developing the academic and practical skills necessary for the leadership and instruction of sport through all levels, ranging from youth coaching to private-practice coaching.

Since the induction of the major the SPL faculty has worked to create a curriculum that is engaging and applicable outside of the classroom. Through collaboration with program representatives and interests expressed by students, the SPL faculty has added four new courses to the curriculum that they consider most fitting for students to acquire the skills necessary to be successful coaches and leaders. These new classes, which will be offered in the fall of 2019, include Coaching Seminar Special Topics, Rules and Regulations in Sport, Advanced Coaching and Leadership, and Diversity and Inclusion in Sport.

The Coaching Seminar: Special Topics course examines contemporary issues, emerging research, and key standards in sport coaching. This course is intended to give future coaches and leaders a knowledge and understanding about the current and relevant aspects of sport. Furthermore, the course gives insight into new means of information through innovative resources while also highlighting the essential attributes identifiable in successful coaches and leaders. Topics discussed in this class may include long-term athlete development, coach as an administrator, ethics, and youth sport participation.

Rules and Regulations in Sport is intended to give students a background of the rules, interpretations, mechanics, and philosophies of officiating certain sports at a basic level. This class will prepare students for a unique leadership role in officiating that could be a good foundation for a future career in coaching. Having an understanding of the rules and regulations along with the appropriate etiquette that apply to sport will give students the knowledge needed to be a successful coach.

The Diversity and Inclusion in Sport course focuses on the historical and contemporary practices in society that have shaped the opportunities and experiences of different cultures in sport. This class will explore the importance of taking race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, religion, and ability/disability into account in the sport environment and teaches the importance of understanding the different cultural backgrounds in a leadership position. Although these topics are rarely discussed, this class highlights how relevant and important they are to the growth of sport across all demographics of people. This class emphasizes the fact that in order to be a good leader and coach, it is important to be able to include people, regardless of their differences, and form a cohesive unit that strives to reach a common goal.

Advanced Coaching and Leadership builds off the foundation established in the prerequisite, Coaching and Leadership for Performance. The course helps students establish their coaching philosophy and takes on a holistic approach to coaching and leading others. With the specific emphasis placed on the importance of self-knowledge, mindfulness, and creating positive team environments, the experiential learning approach of this course allows students to receive a more hands on experience in which they are able to apply the knowledge they have learned in previous SPL courses to then discover the type of leader they seek to be. Unlike most courses, this class offers a unique health, fitness, and wilderness experiential component that allows for real life application of learned skills.

These new courses hope to enhance the learning experience for aspiring coaches and leaders at SMU. Through the recognition of the importance of leadership skills, SPL continues to strive to create the coaches and leaders of tomorrow.