
New program brings sports into the classroom

by Bonnie Hsueh
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While most people agree that sports are a major part of American life, Seattle University now offers its students opportunities to study sports as an academic subject.

This January, Seattle University's College of Arts and Sciences started a new master's program in Sport Administration and Leadership (MSAL). It is led by Dr. Dan Tripps, a nationally renowned expert in sport psychology, sport science and leadership.

Tripps, along with being the editor of 10 books, has been the coach for world-class swimmers and tri-athletes. He was also president and director of the Olympic Scientific Congress for the 1984 Olympic Games.

The MSAL is a two-year, 45-credit graduate program taught during weeknights and weekends. It is for individuals who wish to become administrators and serve in a leadership capacity in the sport industry.

Some future careers for those in the program could include athletic directors, event managers and operations directors for high school clubs, city recreation departments as well as college and professional sports teams.

Currently, the MSAL has 15 students and 10 prospective students who have applied for fall quarter. Both a director and instructor of the MSAL, Tripps is the single full-time faculty member in the program.

Other faculty members include some adjunct professors and three SU professors: Dr. Yvonne Harrison in the Nonprofit Leadership Program, Dr. Daniel Dombrowski in the Philosophy Department and Dr. Robert Keppel in the Criminal Justice Department.

Shannon Forslund, the women's soccer assistant coach at Seattle University, is enrolled in the MSAL program. She feels that the master's degree will be an advantage as jobs become more competitive.

The degree will also provide her with leadership skills, knowledge in sports and a better understanding of people and programs in the field.

My hope is that I take the things that I learn from this program and help make our soccer program, athletics department and university even better than they already are, said Forslund.

While many other sport administration programs at other universities can be found in the school of business, SU's MSAL is located in the College of Arts and Sciences. They not only have a sport curriculum, but also learn about sport sociology, sport psychology, sport philosophy and sport ethics.

According to Tripps, this helps students get a different perspective of how sports should function in society and in ideal situations.

The program also gives its students a more hands-on approach.

Everything is done by portfolio project-based demonstration, said Tripps. For example, the course in marketing is conducting a real marketing survey for a real sports event and having to develop a marketing plan and present that plan to the organization.

Besides learning theories, students are forced to actually engage in what they read from textbooks.

The Sports Operations and Event Management [class] is going to be developing a plan for a whole new event that will come to the city of Seattle and present it to the Seattle sports commission, said Tripps. So this program is very real.

Students in the program will also have significant internship experience. They learn to work in the field as observers at first, and then as collaborators; eventually they will take on responsibilities in sport enterprises. This gives them the real world experience and develops their personal network for future careers.

Dr. Wallace Loh, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, thinks the study of sports makes the mission of Seattle University more holistic” including the mind, the spirit, the social service and now, the body.

Is life only about winning? Or is it about how you play the game? You should play it with ethics, play it fairly and play it to do your best, said Loh. Not necessarily the goal is to win at all costs. And sports is one way of teaching these values.

The program is currently accepting applications. For more information about the program visit www.seattleu.edu/artsc/msal or call Dr. Dan Tripps at (206) 296-6387.

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