

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the GSB Curriculum Committee

From: Mark Conrad, John Fortunato and Francis Petit

Re: Creation of Sports Business Specialization

Date: September 5, 2012

This proposal for a Sports Business Specialization evolved from queries from alumni and interest from students, based on enrollments in classes offered at Gabelli that involve involving sports and the sports industry. This committee, composed of three full-time faculty members who teach the respective classes, was charged with the creation of the specialization. If approved by this committee and Joint Council, the specialization would launch in the spring of 2013.

The specialization is intended to give students grounding in subjects pertinent to the organization, scope and legal issues involving professional and amateur sports. As presently envisioned, the specialization would be a 10 credit program, consisting of three Gabelli classes -- Sports Marketing (MKBU 4454), Business of Sports Media (CMBU 4488), and Sports and the Law (BLBU 3450) -- plus a one-credit independent study component which could be utilized by a conference presentation, internship or travel. In the future, we may add more classes to the specialization but at this time, we are proposing inclusion of the above courses, currently in the GSB catalogue and taught by full-time Fordham faculty and/or administrators. Each course is three credits.

Advantages

Unlike undergraduate sports management programs – which are offered as majors in a number of institutions in the New York area and around the United States – this specialization will give Gabelli students exposure and knowledge in salient subjects in the sports business world, while retaining the business core. This combination – a high-standard business program with specialized sports business courses – will make our students competitive in the job market without limiting their job choices. Additionally, if a student wishes to pursue a graduate sports management degree from schools like Columbia or NYU, completion of this specialization, as part of business program, would aid in consideration of the student for admission to a top-flight graduate program.

A short description of the required courses follows:

MKBU 4454 - Sports Marketing

This class focuses on the viability of sports and the “association of sport” in today’s economy and applies the principles of sports marketing to a selected organization and industry. Topics include the business of sports, sports related products/services, utilizing the “association of sport” to market non-sports related products/services, promotion, pricing, sponsorships and careers in sports marketing. Two papers are assigned for the class.

Enrollments: Fall 2012 - 39 students

Spring 2012 – 41 students

Spring 2011 - 36 Students

CMBU 4488 -- Business of Sports Media

Business of Sports Media examines the mass media industry in relation to the sports field and the unique characteristics that are a part of this industry. The course focuses on the economic relationship of the media, advertisers, and sports industries. Topics studied that greatly impact all sports include broadcast, advertising, sponsorship, and public relations. Students will learn the day-to-functions of the people who work in the sports industry. The course looks at various sports as well as various forms of media and various public relations and advertising strategies. Students will get an understanding of the industry today, as well as learn about the history of the sports media and the pivotal people who helped shape the field.

Class enrollments for the last 3 years for the Business of Sports Media

Fall 2009 - 26 Enrolled

Fall 2010 - 25 Enrolled

Fall 2011 - 31 Enrolled

BLBU 3450 —Sports Law

This class discusses and analyses the applicable law, business models and rules governing the sports industry and the legal controversies and policy considerations surrounding those rules. It focuses on amateur sports and their governance; the structure and powers of professional sports leagues; the elements of a sports contract and examples of coaches, athletes and endorsement/sponsorship contracts; the confluence of antitrust and labor law issues on leagues, individual sports and athletes; personal injury and risk management; international sports, such as the Olympics; and intellectual property and media issues. An in-class midterm and a take home final are required, along with a number of case studies and oral arguments.

This class has been taught by Professor Conrad. When last offered, there were 18 students enrolled.

Additional One-Credit Requirement

The committee concluded that in addition to three Gabelli classes, there should be an additional one-credit requirement for completion of the specialization. A student would choose one option from a series listed below. Some of the options involve presentations at professional conferences; others involve travel and others involve internship or other work in the industry.

The options are as follows:

A. Conference Presentations

The following academic organizations post annual conferences, where scholars make presentations based on refereed abstracts. All of them permit student presentations (often in conjunction with a faculty member). For a student interested in applying to a graduate program or in academic sports administration, these conferences are an excellent way to meet others as well as present novel scholarly research.

They include the following:

1. Sports and Recreation Law Association (SRLA) – covers topic involving legal issues in professional, amateur and recreational sports. Website: Srlaweb.org
2. Collegiate Sports Research Institute
3. NASSM (North American Society for Sports Management)
4. Sport Entertainment & Venues Tomorrow Conference
5. International Association for Communication & Sport Conference

Student could propose to present at a related conference, upon approval of a program advisor.

B. Internship

Students may also intern for a semester, for a stipulated number of hours per week, internally at the Fordham Athletic Department or externally at a professional league, team, individual sports organization, recreational league, or a firm which is involved in sports marketing, sports communications or sports law. We could develop a database of possibilities, but students also should show initiative and look independently. The internship must be approved by one of the program advisors. Students would be required to write a paper about their experience.

C. Travel

Students may also opt to travel during summer or winter break to see an international perspective on the sports business. Sports Travel Academy, <http://sportstravelacademy.com>, a private venture, specializes in 2-3 week faculty-led study abroad programs catering to Sport Management, Sport Business, Sport Medicine & Athletic Training majors. Locations have included Ireland, the UK, Netherlands, Germany and Australia. Students would be required to write a paper about their experience.

Capstone Summery

Upon completion of the one-credit requirement, students would be required to write a paper summarizing their experiences, what they learned and whether the experience met their learning objectives. Participants who completed the requirement would meet with a faculty advisor near the end of the academic year to summarize and discuss their experiences.