Using the Civic Wealth Framework to Develop a Comprehensive Diversity Plan for Sport Management Programs

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Diversity in higher education has received heightened scrutiny over the last decade (Aurangzeb, 2019), particularly of late prompted by social unrest over the treatment of marginalized groups (e.g. #BlackLivesMatter movement, rights for LGBTQIA citizens). Cunningham (2019) defines diversity as “the presence of socially meaningful differences among members of a dyad or group (p. 21)”. Academic institutions have lagged in serving faculty and students of diverse backgrounds (Schwartz, 2019; St. Amour, 2020), yet institutional diversity language is common in mission statements, assessment plans, and administrative rhetoric. University administrations have pushed for the recruitment and retention of faculty and students from historically underrepresented groups, and often the pressure to succeed in these efforts fall to the program or departmental level. While institutional efforts in diversity may be grounded in a genuine desire to reap the benefits that a diverse population brings to the richness of an organization, to be effective, complete buy in from all stakeholders is necessary for sustainability.

According to the US Census Bureau (2020), 18.5% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, 13.4% is Black or African American, and 50.5% are female, yet sport leadership has historically been dominated by White males (Fink et al., 2001).” Sport management programs are tasked with recruiting and retaining diverse candidate pools for admissions, yet the student makeup does not mirror that of the general population. Thus, classes that are White male focused perpetuate the lack of diversity seen in leadership positions in sport.

The purpose of this symposium is to share effective ways to create a diversity plan for sport management programs using a civic wealth framework (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). The civic wealth framework focuses on societal change through the engagement of three key stakeholders: communities, regimes of support, and the enterprise or organization (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Based on stakeholder theory, "civic wealth is created when a group of stakeholders voluntarily commits to making positive societal change through purposeful efforts (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019, p. 387).” While the theory was devised for business enterprises, the theory has applicability to higher education.

Using this theory, the community, or where the change takes place, are the sport management programs, which includes faculty, staff, students, and other internal constituents. Regimes of support are those that provide the resources necessary to achieve goals, such as alumni and friends of the program, as well as university and college leadership. Finally, enterprise or organization denotes the admission function, more specifically, the recruitment and retention component. The overall organization is stronger when all three components are aligned. Using this framework, the presenters will share how all three entities of this framework were used to develop a comprehensive diversity plan that had ownership from all key stakeholders. Specifics, including how a mission statement was developed and how SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals were created in various categories such as faculty, curriculum, events, alumni and friends, and recruitment and retention will be shared.