

2013 Linkage Program Report

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This first trip to South Africa (I am hoping to return many times in the future) was a very important experience in my both my academic and personal life. Being a faculty who teaches and does research within the field of sport management, it is often the case that we lose perspective on the greater world. Sometimes those of us who work in the field are so focused on minute details of sport organizations and management that we lose focus on the greater picture of what sport can mean for others. In this, the trip to visit with Dr. Marion Keim and Ilhaam Groenwald at the University of Western Cape became an eye opening experience for all of us involved in the initial project. Our initial research focus was to conduct interviews with individuals and to try and understand the role (or lack thereof) that the 2010 FIFA World Cup played in their lives. Though some work was completed on this project while we were there, the sheer amount of additional ideas and issues in sport lead to the natural genesis of several new long term projects. These projects could be programs that would have important impacts on community development in both South Africa and the United States, and is something that would hopefully be more sustainable. In this linkage report I will discuss these new future projects that have been brought up, what is currently being done about them, as well as the status of initial and future research projects.

There is several potential future projects which I believe can exist between multiple departments at the University of Missouri and University of Western Cape through the framework of sport. While visiting the University of Western Cape, I was given the fortune, along with other MU professors, to be able to visit a number of townships and school/community sport projects in and around Cape Town. In visiting these locations, it was very evident of the wide array of social problems which exist. However, we were able to witness the University of Western Cape's (Interdisciplinary Sport Program) and their outreach to schools and communities to try and improve the lives and education of individuals through sport. These programs were very inspiring and uplifting, and display how sport can be used in community development in a positive way. I personally believe that there is much which the University of Missouri could help to contribute to these programs in the future, as well as learn for our use in sport and community development within the United States. Furthermore, from this there is the potential to conduct collaborative actional research focused on how sport programs can help improve community bonding and educational programs across the globe. In this, the research projects would be able to examine these and other critical issues, while also making a positive impact on local communities. I believe that the building and continuing of such a program would be of great benefit to both institutions, and would be able to further strengthen and enhance the ties which already exist as part of the exchange and research programs between the University of Missouri and the University of the Western Cape.

In a fortunate turn of events, we have already been able to schedule a research meeting with Ilhaam Groenwald, as she has booked a flight and received a visa to visit the U.S. on a field observation trip with other athletic administrators from South Africa. I am delighted that we have continued to foster these projects, and will have the opportunity to return the hospitality that

we were given by all of the faculty and staff at the University of Western Cape. Additionally, I feel that these meetings will be important to try and strengthen the ties and sport focused relationships between the two institutions. I believe that we are on the cusp of something special in regards to being able to make important ties in regards to research, practice, and theory in sport. This trip has been a wonderful eye opener for me, and I am hoping that we can continue to have individuals moving between the University of Missouri and the University of Western Cape to help build these programs. Between the growth in sport programs at Mizzou, and the great research and work being done in sport at the UWC campus, there should be the potential for many great future projects, that can help both schools become world leaders in this academic area.

My next step will be to continue moving all of the research and actional projects forward. To do this will require continued communication with all parties. I plan to prepare abstracts and manuscripts for submission to several international conferences in sport academics which will present some of the pilot work from the experience in South Africa. This submission process will begin here in the Fall of 2013, and with some fortune, we will be presenting some of the research from this linkage program in the Spring of 2014, and on into the future.

I am greatly indebted to this program and the opportunities it has given me in my academic career. I can only hope to repay with continued focus on fostering relations, programs, and research between the two institutions.

Sincerely,

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