Symposium for Students Who Can’t Write Good and Who Want to Learn How to Write Other Stuff Good Too: Understanding the Fundamentals of Writing for Different Academic Endeavors

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Teaching/Learning - Professional Development (Other)  
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60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop  
Room: Yale  
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Writing, in any form, comes with a variety of trials and tribulations. Trial and error on the part of the student or student researcher is common in developing writing skills. Within the context of post-secondary education, there is often little formal direction or instruction given when designing a funding application or research manuscript, let alone resumes, CVs, or cover letters for job applications. While successful grant writing is applauded, it is not formally addressed in many doctoral programs (Austin, 2002). Curriculum development is also given little attention and course outlines are often handed down with little education of the processes used to create them. Further, proper and successful writing styles may be understood as trade secrets as opposed to formal practices which are taught. Based upon these issues, the purpose of this symposium is to expose NASSM student members to the various writing styles needed to be successful both in the academy as well as in preparation for post-graduate, non-academic positions. Specifically, we will engage experienced faculty in an open discussion to explore issues related to writing funding applications, academic manuscripts, and documents for job applications.

Sport management is an interdisciplinary field, and as such, expectations regarding academic and professional documents vary diversely within the field. Academic writing, in and of itself, is unique in its stylization, and if researchers hope to publish they must master this formal writing style (Austin, 2002) not only in general but also with an understanding of the expectation within their field or sub-field. However, for a variety of reasons, few graduate programs formally teach students the ways in which to appropriately write using this level of formality, instead assuming students will adopt these practices through constant exposure through their own reading and writing. While this individual responsibility to learn the stylization of their respective field may help to develop skills needed as an independent researcher, it is not conducive to the adaptation of all necessary skills for future employment and success in academic endeavors. Those students who have never been exposed to this specific type of writing sometimes find it difficult to understand the nuances and pick up on the necessary formatting practices utilized in academic papers (Riazi, 1997; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). This has led to a growing problem with students not fully understanding the requirements and stylization of academic writing (Haggis, 2006; Krause, 2001). The same can be said for writing job applications, resumes, cover letters, and vitae. Those hiring for positions rarely share what they are looking for in these professional documents, leaving applicants with very little guidance. Therefore, in this panel discussion, we will facilitate a discussion about writing within the field of sport management. It is our hope that students (and others) will benefit from an exploration of common successes and shortcomings experienced and witnessed by senior members in the field by gaining a better understanding of expectations in regards to writing.

In order to appeal to a large number of NASSM student members as well as current faculty, the symposium will cover the following topics related to writing: 1) grant and proposal writing, 2) manuscripts for publication, and 3) CV’s, resumes, and cover letters. Panel members will include representation from the following groups:

A) Members with successful histories of grant writing will be asked to share their experiences and the ways in which they have tailored their writing to attract funding for their projects.

B) Members with a proven record of publishing will be asked to share their knowledge of how they first learned, adapted to, and apply the formal academic stylization in their work.

C) Members who have been involved in the hiring process of their respective institutions will be asked to share what it is they look for in qualified candidates’ written work.
D) Members representing the diversity of NASSM membership including Canadian and American members, instructors publishing and teaching in their second language, quantitative and qualitative researchers, and faculty from both research-focused and teaching-focused institutions.

Throughout the exploration of these topics, discussions will involve the opportunity for participants to ask questions and bring forth new topics that are pertinent to them. Overall, we hope that this panel will serve as an important professional development activity for students (and other members) by allowing them to gain a better understanding of writing processes and practices within the field of sport management.