

3-15-2022

## Adding Value to the Applied Sport Management Association

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### Recommended Citation

Martinez, Mike (2022) "Adding Value to the Applied Sport Management Association," *Journal of Applied Sport Management*. Vol. 14 : Iss. 1.

<https://doi.org/10.7290/jasm14V8Mw>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jasm/vol14/iss1/2>

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## Adding Value to the Applied Sport Management Association

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Thank you everyone for the warm reception. I'd like to start by thanking Dr. Mar Magnusen and members of the Applied Sport Management Association (ASMA) Executive Board for honoring me with this award. Additionally, I'd like to thank Ball State University and conference director Dr. Khirey Walker for such an outstanding conference during these past few days. Having previously directed this conference for several years, I certainly know how difficult and time consuming it is. Congratulations on a job well done.

Upon hearing I was nominated and then named the inaugural recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, I was extremely humbled. It's not often that you get recognized for the work you do, but I am certainly appreciative of this honor. I've constantly striven to be someone who adds value to every organization and every person for which I've either worked or with. To be honest, you're never truly sure about the impact that you're making on the field of sport management or with those you connect with through the work that we do. This makes receiving this award that much more special to me.

Regarding service and mentorship, I'm a firm believer in treating people right and finding ways to add value in whatever it is that they are doing. However, I wasn't always like that. In my previous career, I worked in the sport industry as both a sportswriter for a local newspaper and an assistant director of media relations for the University of Southern Mississippi. Early on, my view on service was very myopic, and I only focused on making sure that both my direct boss, and in turn their bosses, were happy. I wasn't one to need a pat on the back or a thank you, so long as those above me thought I was doing a good job. However, there were a few experiences that made me realize that there is more to the work we do outside of just having those above you think you're doing well. When it comes to service, the experience and learning opportunities matter. Further, you're never sure where those examples will come from and what you can learn from them.

One such small instance occurred during an August football camp at the University of Southern Mississippi many years ago. In my professional role, my responsibilities included coordinating interviews and assisting with the coaches' press conferences on media day. My boss at the time was Mike Montoro. Mike, who is presently an Assistant AD at West Virginia, told me just prior to the start of the press conference, that our head coach at the time asked him where the ice was for our water. Had our coach asked me, I probably would have said "I don't know" or something similar that indicated it wasn't my job to keep up with where the water was. However, without missing a beat, Mr. Montoro simply said "I'll go get some." I recognize this story probably does not evoke much notice from most of you all and likely my former boss himself may not remember, but to me, it spoke to a higher level

of service that one may unexpectedly offer or engage in as part of various roles in sports we may serve. In this instance, I learned the value of helping where I can and when the inconvenience is not substantial. Simple things like this help build rapport and facilitate positive relationships. That's just one example from my working career, but it's an approach I try to emulate when I in my service roles.

As I mentioned before, I believe it is through service that you can add value to not only the organization you represent, but also to those who you meet. The same can be said when it comes to mentorship. I've had the privilege to mentor students in classes – both undergraduate and graduate, doctoral students entering the field, and junior faculty that I've connected with at various conferences and meetings over the years. As it's been with service, I've learned from others how important it is to be a good mentor and take time to discuss and share any thoughts I may have that would be beneficial. This could come in the form of answering phone calls from other scholars seeking guidance on possible research ideas or career moves, as well as talking with graduates and alumni about their post-education plans and career goals or transition opportunities. This is cyclical in nature, as I've also had the privilege to be mentored by more seasoned faculty that have made a lasting impact on my career and life.

As I was preparing my remarks for this talk, I debated on what the focus should be. While this award is meant to honor service and mentorship, I also think it's important to talk about how this applies to the ASMA conference. For those of you who may be new to the conference or have only been to the last few annual meetings, the position the conference is in today would not have been realized without the hard work of so many. I'm glad to say that I've play a role in that. I previously served as the director of this conference, dating back to 2010 when it was the Southern Sport Management Conference and was involved in many ways through its transition to the Applied Sport Management conference.

When the conference first started under the direction of Dr. Fred Green and colleagues at Troy University (Green, n.d.), it was meant as a way to provide opportunities for the students at Troy and connect them with practitioners in the sport industry. It wasn't until Dr. Damon Andrew who became the Dean at Troy the year before I joined the faculty that the conference started to include more academically focused research. When I began at Troy in 2009, I did what I've learned to do – asked how I could be of service. I started by volunteering to manage the academic program for that conference, and then stepped into a co-Director role the next year.

For me, the purpose of the conference was to serve two populations – those who want to eventually work in the sport industry and early career scholars. Over this time, we realized that as a conference we would have to grow smartly and find ways to add value to others in the field. It was then that we started the graduate student research competition and developed a partnership with the *Journal of Sport Administration and Supervision*, a journal with which I was involved in helping launch along with my advisor Dr. Colby Jubenville and colleagues (Jubenville, 2009). Eventually, we at ASMA started to form a more balanced executive committee to direct the conference, which included Dr. Bill Sutton, a former Scholar Award recipient and our first association president. Additionally, that year we made the decision to move the conference away from Troy, Alabama, to Nashville. While that conference wasn't the most successful from a monetary perspective, in hindsight, it was a necessary move or investment to elevate the status of who we were as a conference and further find a way to add value.

In 2014, I started my role at Louisiana State University as a tenure-track Assistant Professor, and that move coincided with the conference relocating to Baton Rouge, largely spearheaded by Dr. Andrew, who became dean there a year prior. During this same time period, the journal was rebranded as the *Journal of Applied Sport Management* (Andrew, 2013), and similarly the 2016 conference was rebranded as the Applied Sport Management Association conference. Our LSU faculty led by Dr. Chad Seifried, further envisioned how the conference could become more conversational and grow (Seifried et al., 2020). It was then that ASMA started including a case study competition, works in progress sessions, and industry panel/teaching workshops. I call for more continuation of these activities in future conferences to facilitate the goals of ASMA to be conversational and instructive; to be student-friendly and industry-focused. As part of ASMA, we took another step in our legitimization by having outside programs bid on hosting the conference; the first of which was awarded to Baylor University and has continued since through schools such as Belmont University, Schreiner University, and now Ball State University.

While my affiliation with the conference planning technically ended when other institutions started to host, there continues to be a sense of pride to see it continue to grow into what it's become today. That could not have been possible without the many people who have decided to take on a more active role in serving both the conference and growing association. But I would be remiss if I didn't advocate for further growth of this conference, both in terms of future programs stepping up to host and in members of our academic field becoming more active in service to ASMA. This involvement will be important if we want to continue to grow and flourish. Involvement, from my opinion should include serving as abstract reviewers, case study team leaders and judges, developmental paper coordinators and mentors, and session attendees.

In closing, thank you to the members of the ASMA Executive Committee for this honor. As I mentioned, it is truly humbling to be chosen as the inaugural recipient. I hope that I can continue to add value both to this conference, and to those of you in our field. Thank you.

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