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5-16-2014

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Recommended Citation

Henderson, Trennis and Ouachita News Bureau, "Ouachita to introduce new sport management emphasis this fall" (2014). *Press Releases*. 936.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases/936

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Ouachita to introduce new sport management emphasis this fall



By Trennis Henderson, OBU vice president for communications

May 16, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- For students interested in pursuing careers in the business side of the sports industry, Ouachita Baptist University is launching a new sport management emphasis this fall.

The 12-hour emphasis is a collaborative effort between the university's Hickingbotham School of Business and the Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies. Participating students will graduate with a major in either accounting or business administration with the option of adding a second major in kinesiology and leisure studies or another field.

"The business side of sports is running the team as an effective team – locating teams, selecting coaches and sometimes players, marketing the team to fans, managing fans' in-game experience, social media," noted Dr. Kent Faught, professor of management and holder of the Jay and Lynn Heflin Chair of Business.

"Sport management has become a very popular program in the last decade," he added. "Our goal is to provide students with some of the knowledge and skills needed to succeed, help place them in a successful career path and then expect them to work toward achieving their goals.

"Our active encouragement of multiple majors or emphases is a strength because students are able to pursue multiple career paths because they are competent in multiple areas," Faught explained. "I would anticipate most sport management emphasis graduates to have the additional skills of other majors or emphases to bring to their future employers."

The sport management emphasis will include five course options, including Big Data/Data Mining; Sport Law; Program Design & Management; Organization and Administration of Health, Physical Education & Recreation; and Sport Management Internship.

In addition to courses taught by Faught and Dr. Mike Reynolds, professor and chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, Faught said the Sport Law course will be taught by Hot Springs attorney Chris Turnage, a licensed NFL sports agent.

Faught added that he and Bryan McKinney, dean of the Hickingbotham School of Business, also have had discussions with a Ouachita alumnus who is a sport management executive with a Major League Baseball team. They anticipate that he and other sports professionals “will help us with developing a strong network for internships and job placements in the future.”

According to Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs, “The sport management emphasis in business is a great example of the kind of strategic approach to academic offerings we’ve been working toward over the last few years.

“By collaborating across departments and schools, our faculty in business and kinesiology have crafted a program that will take advantage of our existing strengths to create a new opportunity that will be highly appealing to many prospective students,” he added.

“The Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies is excited to be a part of the new sport management emphasis housed in the School of Business,” Reynolds said. “An attraction of the sport management offering at OBU is our interdisciplinary approach.

“Courses offered in the Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies will approach sport management from the lens of the athletes, athletic administrators and coaches,” he explained. “This will add a unique flavor to the sport management emphasis.”

For more information about Ouachita’s sport management emphasis, contact Bryan McKinney, dean of the Hickingbotham School of Business, at 870-245-5513 or mckinneyb@obu.edu.