

Northeastern University Sports Leadership

Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2018

Welcome

The 2017–18 school year is moving right along, as we look forward to spring arriving here in New England.

We are so grateful to all of our alumni for their involvement with the Master of Sports Leadership program. In this newsletter, we highlight the successful Summer and Winter Institutes that we have held in Boston and Charlotte over the past year. The engagement of our alumni is what makes these residencies a worthwhile experience for students and is a differentiator for the program.

We have also been working closely with alumni to participate as sponsors for our Experiential Network (XN). Many of you have taken time to work with our students on meaningful projects that provide solutions for your sport organizations, as well as valuable, real-world experience for the students.

We are excited about the Sports Leadership Specialization that is now being offered in Northeastern's Doctor of Education Organizational Leadership concentration. The first course in the specialization is currently being delivered in the winter quarter.

Finally, we have made a concerted effort to improve our program's social media efforts. We have created a blog (nusportsleadership.blogspot.com) to celebrate the post-degree accomplishments of our alumni and we appreciate all of those who have participated to help us tell your stories.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Master of Sports Leadership Alumni Newsletter and wish you all the best moving ahead in 2018!

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert M. Prior
Associate Teaching Professor
Master of Sports Leadership Program
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2017 Summer Institute Recap

The 2017 Summer Institute welcomed 49 Master of Sports Leadership students to our main Boston campus from July 17–21.

In addition to Professor Peter Roby's Sport in Society and Dr. Robert Prior's Sports Media Relations classes, students were immersed in a week full of experiential, sport-specific networking opportunities.

In class, sports industry guest speakers included **Dave Hoffman** (2009) Boston Celtics, Senior Director, Community Engagement, **Mike Lynch**, Babson College, Senior Director of Athletics, **Mark Majewski**, Boston College Athletic Communications, **Mike Dowling**, Sports Anchor/PR Consultant, **Eli Rafloowitz** (2015), Elevate Communications, and **Rachel Moo** (2014), Assistant Director, Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, Assistant Director.

On Tuesday morning, Professor Roby's Sport in Society class was held in the Champions Club at Fenway Park. Master of Sports Leadership alums **Jon Chin** (2009), Senior Vice President of Sales for Fenway Sports Management, **Julie Hershkowitz** (2014) Director, Client Services & Hospitality—Pawtucket Red Sox and **Amanda Heglin** (2008), Client Services Manager for the Boston Red Sox, each shared stories about their experiences and careers and answered questions from the students.

That night, we held our annual Sports Leadership Networking Panel Event at Northeastern in the Cabral Memorial Center. We would like to thank the following

MSL alums who participated in the panel and engaged with our students:

Mike Booras (2010), Northeastern University, COE Director of Development, **Wole Oke** (2011), Wheelock College, Head Men's and Women's Cross Country Coach/Assistant Athletic Director, **Tony Price** (2014), Randolph Public Schools, Athletic Director, **Jen Miller-McEachern** (2013), NEWMAC, Assistant Commissioner, **Matt Scully** (2012), New England Patriots, Customer Services Coordinator – Ecommerce, **Shanna Kornachuk** (2007), Quinnipiac University, Senior Associate Athletic Director of Compliance & Student Development and **Tracey Hathaway** (2011), UMass-Boston, Assistant Director of Athletics for Compliance.

On Wednesday night, students and faculty had a chance to unwind by enjoying the Boston Red Sox vs. Toronto Blue Jays game at Fenway Park.

On Thursday night, we held our Sports Leadership Alumni Appreciation Reception at LIR on Boylston Street. The highlight of the social event was recognizing three MSL alumni with "Excellence in Sports Leadership" alumni awards. Our 2017 awardees were **Rachel Moo**, **Amanda Heglin** and **Wole Oke**.

Students wrapped up the week with group presentations during their Friday classes, then returned to their home cities with newly formed friendships with their Summer Institute classmates and a lifelong connection to Northeastern University.

Q+A

Summer Institute Video

In July 2017, Northeastern's Master of Sports Leadership program once again hosted its Summer Institute. As alumni of this program, you know firsthand just how unique and special the weeklong event is. This year, we decided to film the Summer Institute in order to show prospective students the fun and benefits of this distinctive program.

The video was filmed at a series of classes and events throughout the week and captures the excitement and significance of the event. Additionally, many current students graciously took time to talk about why they chose the program and what they hope to accomplish when they graduate. The result is a comprehensive look at what makes this program so special. You can watch the video here:

www.northeastern.edu/summerinstitute

Current Master of Sports Leadership student **Dylan Hornblum** traveled from Northeastern to Fenway and places in-between to capture the best moments of the week. He currently works full-time as the Assistant Director of Video Production for Northeastern Athletics. In this role, Dylan helps lead a team of students and broadcasters with the production of live game broadcasts, which have been simulcast on professional media outlets, including NESN, American Sports Network and ESPN3. Dylan joined the Master of Sports Leadership program in the spring of 2017 and expects to graduate in the spring of 2019.

We caught up with Dylan to talk about the making of the video and why it was important to him.

Q: What interested you most about putting together this video?

A: As a storyteller, I wanted to get the chance to tell the story of the Summer Institute in a way that had not been done before. I was excited to capture the essence of the week and then relay that feeling to future students so they could have a better idea of what to expect when they are in Boston. I was also eager to speak to my classmates and find out why they felt like the Summer Institute was such an integral part of their overall experience, and I was excited to tell the story in a way that could also get other people excited about the program.

Q: What were your favorite parts about filming?

A: As a student who is also going through this process, I found it comforting to hear the stories of the successes and triumphs of my classmates. I also thoroughly enjoyed filming the students interacting with the amazing guest speakers. Even from behind the camera, I felt like I learned quite a bit about what it takes to thrive in the sports industry.

Q: What challenges did you encounter during the week?

A: The biggest challenge was trying to be everywhere and capture all of the different elements of the Summer Institute so I could tell a well-rounded story. I wanted this video to capture everyone's point of view, from guest speakers to students to professors, but with so much happening both in and out of the classroom, it was tough to feel like I could encapsulate it all through just one lens.



Master of Sports Leadership student Dylan Hornblum

Q: As a current student in the Master of Sports Leadership program, what would you say are its best features?

A: I think the strongest parts of the program are the real-world experience and real-world connections that accompany the curriculum. The professors don't just teach out of a textbook and call it a day. They are constantly working on behalf of their students to build the alumni network and connect people with opportunities that expand their horizons. Getting a chance to make actual contributions to the sports industry, even before graduating, sets the program apart and gives me confidence that my investment in this degree will yield big results.

Q: Anything else to add?

A: I would just like to thank the students, speakers and professors involved with the Summer Institute for allowing me to have inside access to all facets of the week.

Get To Know... Guntas Romana

Marketing Coordinator with the Seattle Sports Commission (SSC)

Guntas Romana has worked as the Marketing Coordinator with the Seattle Sports Commission (SSC) for less than a year, but he's already confident that he's landed in the right place.

His passion for sports came to life in elementary school through bonding with his father as they watched basketball together. "Watching games developed our relationship and made me want to play and join a team," he says. He asked his parents if he could join the local Boys and Girls club—and fell in love with sports.

In high school, Romana was fortunate to have a sports writer at a local paper act as his mentor for a school project. This opened his eyes to the possibility of parlaying his passion for sports into a career. "The downfall was that you have people telling you it's a cool job—but the pay isn't good, and people can discourage you," he says. So when he went to the University of Washington, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do, and none of the classes he took appealed as much as sports did. So he took a year off and worked doing data entry.

It didn't take Romana long to realize that data entry wasn't his path, and he decided to pursue something he was passionate about. This brought him to the online Northeastern Sports Leadership program. "It's one of the best decisions I've made," he says.

He credits the program with helping him choose a career path. "Going into the program, I wasn't sure what avenue of sports I wanted to pursue," he says. He'd had a previous internship with The Seattle Reign, a professional women's soccer team that gave him the chance to handle daily social media communications as well as team logistics,

like scheduling referees and transportation for games, and game day bookkeeping.

Through the Sports Leadership program, he landed a strictly Marketing-focused internship with University Prep, a prep school where he was in charge of social media platforms for middle and high school athletics. "I really enjoyed promoting sporting events for the school because I could see the community come together and see people get excited about coming out to games," says Romana.

Finding that he had a talent for social media promotion made it clearer that he'd found the route he wanted to take after graduation. "I like to think outside the box, and to me, Marketing is about making something unique and different and presenting it creatively so people are drawn to the product," he says.

After finishing the program, Romana took a Marketing position with the SSC, which he hopes will turn into a full-time position. So far, it's been an ideal fit, as he gets to flex his creative muscles to further SSC's mission of fostering a strong sports culture by promoting events. His team recently finished a major project, the annual Sports Star of the Year award show—a high-profile event that has celebrated the achievements of Washington sports for nine decades. "My role is promoting the event through email marketing and to create social media campaigns around the event so more people are drawn to it," he says.

Romana has found that certain graduate skills have come in especially handy in his current role; namely, leadership and communication. "Being able to effectively communicate and lead with coworkers is essential," he says. For example, the Sports Star of the Year award



show event features a pre-show reception and silent auction where guests mingle and bid with the Seattle sports community. The event brings together a mix of athletes, coaches, executives and philanthropists, "so being on the same page and learning how people work well together is key. Taking leadership classes at Northeastern really opened my eyes to different types of work environments and how to effectively lead by example."

There's no doubt that Romana's persistence and determination have paid off. "Northeastern connected me with people within the sports industry and has given me a solid foundation for my career," he says. He plans to draw on these connections in the future. That may mean landing a marketing position for a professional team. "My dream job would be with the Seattle Sonics when they come back... fingers crossed! And I hope to just continue to learn and grow so that I can continue to put myself in position to succeed."



The 2018 Master of Sports Leadership Winter Institute

From January 8-12, 2018, Northeastern's Charlotte campus hosted 13 Master of Sports Leadership students for the third annual Master of Sports Leadership Winter Institute. The students came from all over the nation to take the two required courses, Sport in Society, taught by Dr. Pamela Wojnar, and Sports Media Relations, taught by Dr. Robert Prior.

During the week, the students discussed and researched current topics impacting sport in today's society. **Sue Doran**, the county athletic director for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, shared some of the challenges faced in high school athletics in Charlotte with the class.

In the afternoon, the students learned what it takes to work in sports Media Relations. From writing news releases to using social media to promote their student-athletes, team, institution and/or brand, the students were tasked with working under similar time constraints as sports media professionals. **Latwoia Belk**, Career and Academic Coach at Northeastern's Charlotte Campus, talked to the class about the many different ways she, and the rest of the career and academic coaching staff can help students both while they're in the program, and

once they graduate.

In addition to the in-class sessions, the students were able to get immersed in Charlotte's sports scene through trips to local sports teams and venues. The class visited the NASCAR Hall of Fame and the facilities of the Charlotte Knights, Charlotte Checkers and Charlotte Hornets. They learned about the history of NASCAR, tried their hands at being part of a pit crew and got behind the wheel of an actual NASCAR racecar.

The class toured the Checkers' and Knights' facilities and learned about the history of these franchises, the work involved in building relationships with the surrounding communities and the local media, as well as many of the day-to-day activities of the staff on both game- and non-game days. As one student put it, "To hear **Mark Smith**, Vice President of Marketing, and **Dan Rajkowski**, Executive Vice-President/Chief Operating Officer, from the Charlotte Knights, speak, was like having the books come to life and speak."

From the Checkers, **Shawn Lynch**, Senior Vice President and **Tera Black**, Chief Operating Officer, who have been with the organization

since 2004 and 2006, respectively, shared their experiences working in sports while giving the class a tour of Bojangles' Coliseum.

Once again several alumni came out to the class to share their experiences both in the program, and since graduating, with the students. **Ashleigh Gunning-Alcorn** (2012), Director of Major Gifts for the Chanticleer Athletic Department, Coastal Carolina University, **Jenika Kelley** (2015), Assistant Athletic Director for Game Management, Pfeiffer University, **Chris Clouden** (2015), Executive Director, 7th Street Public Market, **Dwayne Dunham** (2014), Premier Support Specialist, Asurion, **Jenna Mayo** (2014), Producer for College FB/BB & Professor at Johnson & Wales, ESPN, **Sam Perley** (2015), Interactive Media Coordinator, Charlotte Hornets, **Lindsey Mehring** (2017) - Minnesota Wild - Fan Development Representative, and **Casey Gibson** (2017), Development Assistant, Major Gifts at Wake Forest University.



The 2018 Master of Sports Leadership Winter Institute class at the NASCAR Hall of Fame



MSL Alum **Mark EIBach '17** was recognized as "Employee of the Season" for Client Services by the Boston Red Sox in 2017.



Northeastern University's Master of Sports Leadership program presented its Excellence in Sports Leadership Alumni Awards last month during the annual Summer Institute residency at Northeastern's Boston campus: Professor **Peter Roby**, 2017 Excellence in Sports Leadership Education Award recipient; alumni award recipients **Rachel Moo (2014)** of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association; **Amanda Heglin (2008)** of the Boston Red Sox and **Wole Oke (2011)** of Wheelock College; program director **Robert Prior**; and Professor **Pamela Wojnar**.



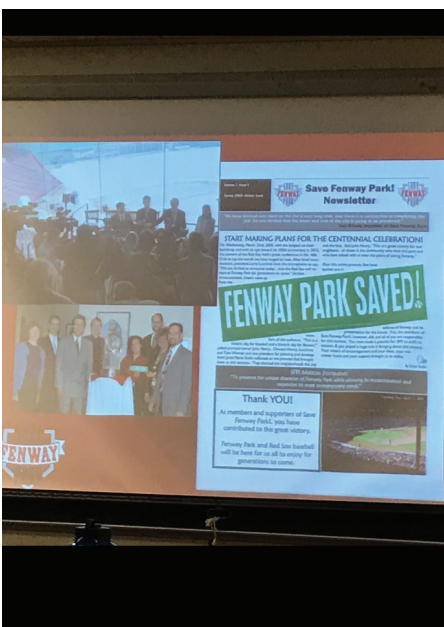
Northeastern University's Master of Sports Leadership program presented its Excellence in Sports Leadership Alumni Awards on January 11 during the annual Winter Institute residency at Northeastern's Charlotte campus. From L-R: Professor **Pamela Wojnar**; award recipient **Ashleigh Gunning-Alcorn (2012)** Coastal Carolina University; and Professor **Robert Prior**.



Northeastern University's Master of Sports Leadership program presented its Excellence in Sports Leadership Alumni Awards on January 11, during the annual Winter Institute residency at Northeastern's Charlotte campus. From L-R: Professor **Pamela Wojnar**, award recipient **Jenika Kelley (2015)**-Pfeiffer University and Professor **Robert Prior**.



Alexa Dolan & Lauren Ferris, Talent Acquisition Representatives from Madison Square Garden discuss opportunities for students; **Pete Powell**, Talent Acquisition Manager for Comcast Spectacor shares the breadth of the hospitality industry and what Comcast looks for in prospective talent; **Patrick Summers**, New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference Commissioner shared his experiences as commissioner and one of the founders of Presto Sports; **Cheryl Aaron**, Wentworth Athletic Director discussed gender and diversity issues in college athletics; **Scott Dietz**, Babson College Associate Athletic Director for Strategic Communications discussed various marketing strategies and the impact of social media; Alumni **Mark Bates**, Northeastern Athletic Facilities Coordinator, **Jen Miller-McEachern**, Executive Director for National Collegiate Gymnastics Association, and **Matt Northrup**, Director of Corporate Partnerships Boston Cannons all worked with students on XN projects for their respective organizations; **Erika Tarlin** and **Steve Wojnar**, Save Fenway Park Board Members shared how their grass roots marketing efforts saved Fenway Park from the wrecking ball; and **Drs. Prior's** and **Wojnar's** students took in a Boston Celtics game and learned how various media outlets view and report on the game.



The foundation of the Master of Sports Leadership program has always been to bridge the gap between the classroom and the sports profession. To that end, guest speakers, including some of the over 400 alums now working in sports, are invited to share their experiences with the students. Some of the recent experiential learning include, clockwise from upper left:



The Sports Leadership Alumni Newsletter is published twice a year.

Content is written and edited by Dr. Robert Prior, Dr. Pamela Wojnar, Jason Lieberman, and Erin Graham.

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2018 Spring MSL Alumni Newsletter Updates

Brittany Adell '16 was hired as Head Women's Rowing Coach at Colgate University.

Ashleigh Alcorn (Gunning) '12 recently accepted the position of Director of Major Gifts for the Chanticleer Athletic Department at Coastal Carolina University. Ashleigh and Jeremy Alcorn were married on May 6, 2017. Jeremy is also the Men's Golf Coach at Coastal Carolina.

Kristaps Aldins '11 and Shannon Jean Hearon were married on December 29, 2017. He is the Head Baseball Coach at Stevens Institute of Technology.

Michael Balter '17 has been hired as Head Hockey Coach and PE teacher at the Saint David's School in New York City.

Katie Benoit (Congdon) '11 and Matt Benoit were married in June 2017. She is the Associate Athletic Director of Development at Western State Colorado University.

Rachael Bragg '17 was hired as Head Women's Lacrosse Coach at Bridgewater College.

Lindsay Bohlen '09 is the Director of Operations for the Florida Panthers, overseeing both business and hockey operations for the NHL club.

Alton Buzzell Jr. '16 is the Deputy Director for the Kunlun Red Star Women's Ice Hockey team.

Amanda Ciavarella (Rogers) '13 has been hired as a Digital Strategist by Rowan University.

Amber Cornell '12 has been hired by Fanatics Inc. as a Merchandise Planner, overseeing its merchandise line for the NBA.

Shawn Cote '16 has accepted a position as Leadership Gifts Officer at Bentley University. He previously worked in athletic fundraising at Northeastern.

Will Driscoll '17 was recently named Director of Sales for the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame.

Aaron DuCharme '16 became engaged to Shyanne Fontaine on December 16, 2017. He works as an Attractions and Events Manager at the Legoland Discovery Center in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

Ameena Dye '17 has been promoted to Sponsorships Coordinator for Fenway Sports Management. In her role, she oversees athletic sponsorships for Boston College.

Mark El Bach '17 was hired by Boston Children's Hospital as Events Manager, overseeing its Corporate Cup and Champions for Children events.

Lindsey Garvey '16 was named Head Women's Soccer Coach at Newbury College.

Carl Geneus '11 is a Physical Education Teacher and Summer Camp Director at the Belmont Day School.

Casey Gibson '17 has been hired as a Development Assistant at Wake Forrest University.

Kimberly Jurgensen '17 is an Inside Sales Representative in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at the University of Washington.

Shanna Kornachuk '07 is now the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Compliance and Student Development at Quinnipiac University. She previously served as Assistant Director of Athletics-Compliance at Harvard University.

Cynthia Lally '16 is working for Securitas Security Services USA as an HR Administrative Assistant in Louisville, Kentucky.

Paige Lemieux '16 has been hired as Athletic Coordinator at Charlestown High School in Massachusetts. She previously worked for Boston Scholar Athletes.

Evan Levine '10 has been hired as Business Manager and Travel Coordinator for Athletics at Columbia University. He previously worked in a similar role for Northeastern Athletics.

Kris Magargal '16 is a Program Coordinator for Boston Scholar Athletes.

Kelly McManus '15 and Andrew Scichilone were married in May 2017. She is the Assistant Field Hockey Coach at Bowdoin College.

Dane Morris '13 has been hired as Assistant Men's Basketball Coach at Mount Royal University.

Mia Muzio '14 was hired by the Triton Regional School District as JV Field Hockey Coach.

JJ Niamkey '15 was named Director of Athletics and Student Wellness at North Quincy High School.

Greg Osborne '10 has been named Assistant Director of Admissions at St. John's Preparatory School. He previously served as the Assistant Director of Admission at the Pomfret School.

Guntas Romana '17 has been hired by the Seattle Sports Commission as a Marketing Coordinator.

Jay Schotter '16 was hired as Head Swimming and Diving Coach/Aquatic Director at Norwich University last September.

Matt Scully '12 was promoted to Marketing Operations Manager by the New England Patriots.

Amanda Siddons (Shank) '11 has been named Director of Strategic Partnerships for Ripken Baseball. She previously worked for the NFL Players Association.

MaryLynn Skarzenski '16 was named Assistant Director of Athletics and Head Women's Basketball Coach at Nichols College.

Courtney Vardi '14 was promoted to Assistant Manager of Ticket Sales by the Rockland Boulders professional baseball club.

Brennan Wingert '16 has been hired as an Event Operations Supervisor by Sporting Kansas City of Major League Soccer.