

WJEC SPORTS JOURNALISM SYNDICATE REPORT

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SUMMARY

Participants reported a significant increase in interest in sports journalism in their countries. As a result, sport journalism and programs are growing as colleges and universities seek to capitalize on sports' global popularity. More coursework and larger enrollments have not translated into more respect; participants reported the "struggle for legitimacy" in academy is more pronounced for sports journalism than for journalism in general. Key to legitimacy is creation of curriculum that adheres to highest ethical standards and emphasizes the cultural, economic, scientific and political impact of sports on society. The increased interest in sports journalism as a field of study has been accompanied by an increased interest in sports journalism research and interest groups but more collaboration on research and curriculum development is needed. A marked difference was noted in the gender of students attracted to sports journalism in America versus Europe, Australia and Africa. The U.S. participants reported most of their students were women while participants from Europe, Africa and Australia reported most of their students were male. Based on these observations, the group arrived at the following principles to guide the development of sports journalism as a field of study and research:

1. Encourage and support creation of sports journalism curriculum and research that promote high ethical standards and transparency.
2. Encourage gender diversity in students studying sports journalism.
3. Encourage inclusion of sports science in the study of sports journalism.

BEST PRACTICES

Macromedia School for Media and Communication in Hamburg, Germany offers a sports journalism curriculum that incorporates skills training with a solid grounding the regulatory and socioeconomic foundations of sports as well as sports science. The program's success coincides with an explosion of job opportunities for graduates in micro-blogging on regional sports.

RESOURCES

Syndicate participants identified the following resources for educators interested in teaching and conducting research on sports journalism:

1. **THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL SPORT MEDIA**

<http://internationalsportsmedia.org/>

A network of universities from around the world that offer courses and conduct research on sports media, the center's mission is to "encourage the development of quality education and research in the field of sports media" and to support "efforts to improve the professional and ethical standards of all sports media." Housed at the School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State University, the center's web site was designed to be a clearing house for sports journalism educators by providing a space for them to share information about programs, research and course syllabi. Center director, Wayne Wanta (wayne.wanta@okstate.edu), encourages educators to submit links to their coursework, syllabi and research to the site.

2. The Sports Communication Interest Group, or **SPORTS**, is a newly formed group of the U.S.-based Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The group met for the first time at AEJMC's annual convention in August and is "designed to support AEJMC members who are scholars and teachers of sports-related courses, including those in the areas of journalism, broadcasting, advertising/marketing and sports information/public relations." The group chair is Scott Reinardy, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Kansas (reinardy@ku.edu)

3. **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH** <http://iamcr.org/>

The largest interest group in the IAMCR is the Sport and Media Section, which "seeks to promote a range of scholarly perspectives on the study of media and sport, especially in the area of the relations between the media, sport and concepts of nationhood as well as identity, politics and the development of the sports industry."

4. **PLAYTHEGAME.ORG**

<http://www.playthegame.org/>

Funded by the Danish government and located at the Danish School of Media and Journalism in Aarhus, Denmark, this independent non-profit aims to strengthen the basic ethical values of sport and encourage democracy, transparency and freedom of expression in world sport. Its web site features articles on sports and sports coverage written by media professionals and leading experts from around the world as well as news and conference information.