

Warsaw: Center has placed several students in NFL internships

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"seldom have the rigor in their curriculum with regard to qualifications for conducting million-dollar business, which is what sports has become.

"I think [the center] is correctly placed within an academic institution to give students the right kinds of skills that they need to get out there."

Besides the focus on academics, the program's leaders are intent on making sure students are in tune with the real world of sports marketing. Emphasis is put on students working as interns for the leaders in the sports industry, and the center helps to arrange internships for graduate students between their first and second years.

In the summer of 1997, Burton said students interned with companies such as the NFL, Nike and the LPGA.

In addition to the emphasis on internships, the center has become home to frequent presentations by leaders in the industry, who give students a first-hand account of what is going on in the sports business and what it takes to be successful in the field.

"What we really offer is a way to combine academia with the industry, with the cutting edge leaders of the industry," said Ty Stewart, a Graduate Teaching Fellow and second-year M.B.A. student. "Everything that we do is grounded on academics, but really it's learning from what's going on every day, so we're really being prepared not for just what has happened

or is happening, but more importantly for what is going to happen in the future in sports marketing."

The list of leaders in the industry who have spoken to classes or given outside presentations includes: Stu Jackson, president of the Vancouver Grizzlies; Doug Single, CEO of the 1998 Nike World Masters Games; and Howard Handler and Gary Jacobus of NFL Properties.

"That's pretty wild when you think about it," Burton said, "that this is Eugene, and I like to joke that it's a place where some people in the rest of the country might think it doesn't have electricity or running water, yet we've got the National Football League flying out to Eugene to come in to class and give presentations."

Through the center, several students have been placed to work as interns for the NFL, something Burton said is proof of the growing reputation of the program.

"There's really no reason for the people from the University of Oregon, 3,000-plus miles away, to now be working on Park Avenue in New York for the National Football League, America's biggest sports league, unless this program had something going on with it," he said.

The staff and faculty that run the center are a unique blend of people who have a vast knowledge in both the academic field and also experience working in the sports-marketing industry.

The faculty is spearheaded by Burton and Dr. Dennis Howard, who as the for-

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mer director of the graduate program in sports management at Ohio State, was hired by Oregon prior to fall term.

Burton has extensive experience working in the industry. He is the former advertising manager for Miller Lite, heading up the "Tastes Great, Less Filling" adver-

tising campaign, and has also worked as the sports-marketing consultant for NFL Properties, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Gillette and Reebok.

"We have an outstanding combination [of faculty]," Stewart said. "Really, our one-two punch is incomparable. Rick Burton is one of the leaders in sports marketing. He's been quoted in numerous publications all over the country. When people call in for anything on sports marketing, they ask Rick because they know he has the actual industry experience. He's been there. He knows what it takes to succeed."

"You couple that with Dennis Howard ... who was thought to be the head guy academically to run a sports academic program, choosing to want to come here, it's unbelievable. We really have the combination of the industry guy and the academic guy."

Heeke says he thinks the quality of the program and the dedication of its staff are related to the dedication of Warsaw.

"The whole program is just quality people who have the best interests of the student in mind," he said. "I think that all trickles down from Jim Warsaw and his vision for this program. He's a driving force behind this and he's another person who's been involved in the business. He knows what it's all about and he's been very involved, certainly with funding and making the program a reality, but also as an advisor."

Just think, all this started from the Warsaws' ashtrays and bobbing head dolls.

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