

Building Leaders

Increasing the Number of Women in the Sports Industry

I have tears in my eyes knowing that today is the last official day that I will be a Women's Sports Foundation. This is a fantastic organization, and I am so grateful for having the opportunity to work hands on with this grassroots initiative, GoGirlGo!, which has touched so many areas of my life. To name a few: I will make sure that my daughter and son are active in sports and activity; I have learned people skills that I never knew existed; being exposed to self-confident and self-sufficient women — I have set goals for myself to be better personally and professionally. I learned this all in a six-month period; who knew six months could change two generations! As I say good-bye, I would like to thank you again, wish you well and encourage everyone to find a way to stay involved with the Women's Sports Foundation and the GoGirlGo! movement.

— Elizabeth L. Serrano-Garcia

Educational Program

Each year the Women's Sports Foundation provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to fulfill the requirements of their degrees or develop professional skills through an internship at the Women's Sports Foundation. The senior staff of the Foundation are individually committed to advancing women currently in the sports industry, mentoring no less than 20 individuals a year and advancing the candidacy of such women for new employment opportunities and promotion.

The Foundation has a high success rate for placement in the sports industry for those interns seeking employment (as opposed to returning to college). Over the past 27 years of the internship program, more than 500 students from 300-plus universities have been afforded the internship experience and gone on to sports industry positions. Former interns are making contributions at the WNBA, NFL, NHL, NCAA, ESPN, colleges and universities, in fields from education and law to marketing and public relations.



Women's Sports Foundation interns come from all over the world to gain skills and experience to succeed in the sports industry. Interns have gone on to work in all levels of sports and business.

Objectives

The Foundation's internship program has multiple objectives:

1. To provide passionate students with a broad exposure to the sports industry in general and, more specifically, to issues, opportunities and programming related to women's sports and physical activity;
2. To provide a professional work experience to college students interested in pursuing sport-related careers;
3. To provide interns with access to valuable future employer contacts and assistance in determining personal career goals; and
4. To provide the Foundation, an internationally recognized 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization, with talented, ambitious and knowledgeable individuals to assist in the implementation of our advocacy, communications, development, education and grant programs.

The Challenges Being Addressed

Women and especially women of color are significantly underrepresented in the sports industry. The higher the status and salary of the positions, the less likely it is that women are fairly represented.

Requirements

Interns apply and are judged on their academic credentials and previous work experience, must commit to the Foundation for a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year, and are expected to work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Internships are available in two sessions (January–June and June–December).

Responsibilities

Half of the intern's day is spent in the Foundation's Information Referral Service answering the toll-free infoline, responding to information requests and referring people to other sources for information. The purpose of this experience is to expose each intern to the breadth of the sports industry and the cross-disciplinary nature of sports. The other half of the intern's day is spent working in a sport career area of the student's choice, which corresponds to the Foundation's program areas: advocacy, athlete marketing and promotions, communications, development, education, events, marketing, online media and program management.

Demonstrated Success

Over the past 27 years of the internship program, more than 500 students from 300-plus universities have been afforded the internship experience and gone on to sports industry positions. The Foundation has often served as a training ground for its own staff as more than 30 of our staff throughout the years started as Women's Sports Foundation interns.

Donor/Sponsor Benefits

Named internships recognize the name of the donor and/or an honored champion female athlete. We currently have the James Atkin Advocacy Internship and the David Foster Marketing Internship. Internship availability is advertised through the distribution of the Foundation's grant info sheet and on the Foundation's Web site.

Process

The Foundation works with the donor to identify prospective athletes who might be honored and their particular areas of interest and handles all communications with the athlete to gain approval of the named fund.

Annual operating costs for the internship program are \$170,000, which includes average stipends of \$1,000/month, professional development and recruitment. A minimum contribution of \$10,000 per year for three years is required to establish a named program for a three-year term or a one-time minimum endowment contribution of \$50,000 is required to establish a named internship in perpetuity.

The Facts

COLLEGE*	Female
Athletic Directors	21.3%
Head Coaches – Women's Teams	42.8%
Head Coaches – Men's Teams	2.0-3.0%
Full-Time Athletic Trainers	27.3%
Sports Information Directors	11.3%

COMMERCIAL SPORTS INDUSTRY**	Female
"Big 4" leagues	10.8%
Other leagues/teams	17.1%
Sports marketing agencies	28.3%
Broadcast/media	8.3%
Stadium/arena/track	17.5%
Corporations/manufacturers	21.7%

SPORTS INDUSTRY**	Persons of Color
"Big 4" leagues	7.6%
Other leagues/teams	6.6%
Sports marketing agencies	6.6%
Broadcast/media	4.2%
College	9.3%
Stadium/arena/track	5.3%
Corporations/manufacturers	17.4%

* Acosta and Carpenter, 2008

**Sports Business Journal, 2002