Faculty Diversity, Accreditation, and Sport Management

B. Nalani Butler  
*Kennesaw State University*, Nalani.Butler@kennesaw.edu

Thomas Aicher  
taicher@uccs.edu

Ryan Turcott  
turcott@gonzaga.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cosma](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cosma)  
Part of the *Sports Management Commons*, and the *Sports Studies Commons*

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

**Recommended Citation**  
Butler, B., Aicher, T., & Turcott, R. (2024). Faculty Diversity, Accreditation, and Sport Management. *The COSMA Journal*. Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cosma/vol1/iss1/3](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cosma/vol1/iss1/3)  

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). This Original Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The COSMA Journal by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
The lack of racial and gender diversity of faculty within sport management programs has been an area of concern for years. This is an exploratory longitudinal study that compared sport management faculty diversity over the course of five-years to investigate and understand how racial and gender diversity within Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) accredited sport management programs has evolved over the years. A content analysis based on the Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) created by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) was used to determine faculty diversity amongst COSMA accredited sport management programs. Results indicated the sport management discipline still needs to be proactive in recruiting and retaining women faculty members, as well as expanding to make programs more racially diverse when it comes to Black and Latino/a/x faculty. The implications of this study highlight how accrediting bodies such as COSMA, have the potential to play a key role in keeping sport management programs accountable for diversity initiatives through the self-study process.

Keywords: COSMA, faculty diversity, sport management, diversity and inclusion

Over the past 20 years, the sport industry in higher education, White faculty members have held more power than minorities on a college campus due to the number of White faculty members who hold tenure track positions and high-ranking administrative roles compared to minority faculty scholars (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). To add on, women have less job security, make less money, and do not hold as many tenure track faculty positions as their male counterparts (Flaherty, 2020). The National Center for Education Statistics (2024) reported 72% of full-time faculty in 2022 were White males (37%) and females (35%), while Black faculty members comprised 7% of full-time faculty (4% being Black females and 3% being Black males). Asian/Pacific Islander full-time faculty made up 13% of full-time faculty (4% being females and 9% being males).

Cultural diversity is the representation of people with distinctly different group affiliations within one social system (Mazur, 2010), and in colleges and universities, cultural diversity is critical for how acceptance and respect are cultivated within the classroom (Clark, 2011). According to Zajac (2011), a diverse environment helps in the growth of individual awareness, therefore leading to a growing conscientiousness of diversity among the general population. A strong argument can be made that greater structural diversity among professors leads to an increased use of effective educational practices, since more diversity at an institution of higher learning brings in a variety of different cultural backgrounds (Umbach & Kuh, 2006). There is also a connection between student intellectual growth, social integration and diplomacy, associated with having a diverse student and faculty body (Hurtado, 2007).

Previous researchers observed the benefits of diversity in university settings and argued the full representation and participation of racial and ethnic minority faculty in the academy are essential for creating diverse institutions of higher learning (Blackwell et al., 2009). Faculty diversity has been shown to contribute to positive educational experiences and students do take notice of faculty diversity, as well as the commitment faculty show towards initiatives that revolve around diversity and inclusivity (Lee, 2010). Therefore, it is important to aim to increase faculty diversity in the classroom and university environment.

Moreover, there is a need for more diversity among university faculty due to the increased rates of minority high school graduates enrolling in institutions of higher learning (Abdul-Raheem, 2016) leading to greater racial diversity among the student
body (Carey et al., 2023). Yet, faculty diversity in the classroom is not evolving at the same rate (Flaherty, 2022). According to Nam (2023), around 40% of undergraduate students identified as non-White, with Black students making up about 11% of undergraduate enrollment and Latino/a/x students making up 17.5 percent. For students who identify as Black, attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), and not a Predominately White Institution (PWI), would increase their chances of having classes with a Black professor who mirrors how they may identify racially (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). As of 2019, Williams O’Leary (2021) reported that less than five percent of tenured professors in higher education were Black, and this small percentage is stretched between HBCUs and PWIs.

The proffered excuse of not having enough qualified applicants is not a viable explanation for the lack of faculty diversity in U.S. universities. For instance, the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring has created a pipeline for Ph.D. scholars to be hired in academia. Programs including the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program (MPHD) funds scholarships for ethnic minority Ph.D. candidates in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, and has successfully graduated over 2,000 doctoral students since 1995. In addition, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Harriett-Jenkins Pre-doctoral Fellowship Project (NASA–JPFP) has increased the number of doctoral degrees for underrepresented persons (women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities). Lastly, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) State Doctoral Scholars Program was specifically created to address the shortage of minority Ph.D. students in faculty positions and has graduated thousands of minority doctoral students who are qualified to teach in academia (Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, 2023). There are many programs designed to mentor young scholars of color in completing their doctoral degrees and many of these discipline specific programs have mentored and produced dynamic scholars who are leaders in their discipline and more than qualified to serve in academia.

The lack of gender and racial diversity within sport management faculty in academia has consistently been an area of concern (DeSensi, 1995; Brooks & Althouse, 2007; Jones et al., 2008; Vianden & Gregg, 2017). Sport conferences such as the North American Society of Sport Management (NASSM), North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), and the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) have had conference themes, research, or discussions centered around the lack of faculty diversity in sport management and how to increase visibility of historically marginalized groups. Within the sport management discipline, COSMA provides a potential avenue for increasing the level of diversity within sport management programs through their accreditation and self-study report, by keeping programs accountable on their efforts related to diversity and inclusion. This research highlights how accreditation might assist sport management programs in making concerted efforts towards diversity and inclusion at the faculty level. This study was designed as a longitudinal exploratory investigation to determine the race and gender composition among faculty members at COSMA accredited sport management programs.

Faculty Diversity within COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs

The purpose of COSMA is to recognize and promote excellence in sport management curriculum worldwide. COSMA was created in 2008 to oversee and create an outcomes-based accreditation for the sport management discipline through self-study and evaluation (Zieff et al., 2009). Within the accreditation process, COSMA developed principles for sport management programs to follow. The principles allow programs to benchmark goals on an annual basis and to determine if a respective program is reaching its goals and staying true to its mission statement. COSMA’s inclusive, flexible, and innovative approach has created a way for universities, colleges, and departments to be held accountable for the curriculum and experiences they create for their sport management students.
Within the COSMA accreditation framework, there are opportunities for sport management programs to grow and develop their diversity and inclusion initiatives. Some initiatives include curriculum covered in classes (principle 3.5), relationships with international universities and/or experiential learning opportunities for students in a different country (principle 7.5) and fostering a diverse environment within a program (principle 7.6). This latter principle is especially worthy of further evaluation as COSMA does not define diversity within the self-study, but rather, gives autonomy to the individual sport management program by allowing the department to define diversity and discuss how to implement inclusive practices within the programs self-study. Through the accreditation process, sport management programs are provided suggestions on how to address topics such as diversity, equity, and inclusion. More recently, COSMA requires institutions to benchmark diversity metrics for faculty and students through the annual reporting process.

**Diversity in Sport Management**

Scholars who study racial and gender diversity within sport, predominately focus on fans, players, coaches, teams, and leagues. Sport organizations such as the NBA and WNBA profile their diversity primarily in terms of coaches and athletes, compared to other sport organizations (Lapchick et al., 2023). The Olympics are another example of profiling diversity in sports, when athletes from all over the globe come together in the spirit of competition. Further, these globally broadcasted competitions enable viewers to see athletes of all different skin tones and genders compete on a world-wide stage.

What spectators see in competitions, whether on the field, court, track, swimming pool, and other venues, the people in the front offices and/or leadership positions are not always a reflection of the athletes who compete in the sport, especially for sports such as basketball and football. Germane to the current context, in all of college sports, Black coaches held only 9% of head coaching positions at the Division I level in 2022 (Reed, 2022). In regard to Division I basketball, 24.3% of all head coaches were Black with 52.4% of the basketball players being Black (Lapchick, 2023). In Division I women’s basketball, Black athletes made up 39.9% of the roster, but only 18.5% of the head coaches identified as Black with 5.2% of the coaches being men (Lapchick, 2023). As for women coaching women’s Division I women’s teams, women held only 42% of head coaching positions. This draws similarities to what we see in academia, as student diversity increases, faculty diversity has remained stagnant in growth (Carey et al., 2023).

In addition to racial disparities in leadership positions within sport organizations, women are underrepresented as well. Scholars have given much attention to women in coaching positions within women’s professional sport organizations and women’s collegiate sports in the United States (Aicher & Sagas, 2010), and their roles in sport national governing bodies (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Stangl and Kane (1991) argued the financial viability of women’s teams, increased salaries of coaches and the deconstructing of women’s sport governing bodies led to the increase in men perceiving women’s sports as an alternative option for their coaching careers (see also Aicher & Wells, 2013). Alternatively, with a few exceptions, women have not been afforded the same leadership opportunities in men’s sports at both the college and professional levels, in comparison to men having leadership positions in women’s sports (Aicher & Samariniotis, 2012; Walker & Bopp, 2011). Women lack opportunities in front office positions within college athletics and professional sports and are often absent in C-suite level positions. In 2022, women held only 17 percent of the athletic director positions at NCAA Division I institutions. Even in women’s leagues, like the WNBA, women general managers held 33 percent of the roles. Women rarely make it to a senior executive leadership position, so when it does happen, it makes national headlines (Korn Ferry, 2024).

While sport participation and competitions reflect diversity, the people with decision making power in the front office of the organization may not reflect the same level of diversity that we see with the athletes. Moreover, the voluminous research on racial and gender diversity within sport organizations has
largely ignored the dynamics of diversity regarding sport management, as a declared major, within higher education. Therefore, little is known about the composition of sport management faculty compared to the student populations they serve, and subsequently, the impact the lack of diversity among faculty may have on the field itself (DeSensi, 1995; Brooks & Althouse, 2007; Jones et al., 2008; Vianden & Gregg, 2017). Scholars have called out the lack of diversity within sport management into question at various sport conference organizations (Dittmore et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2008; Parks & Bartley, 2006), yet scant research has been conducted to clearly articulate the lack of diversity among sport management faculty within sport management programs.

Methods

A content analysis methodology was employed to determine the faculty composition of COSMA accredited sport management programs over the course of five-years. According to Holsti (1969), content analysis is “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (p. 14). Content analysis is a research method that is used both qualitatively and quantitatively within academic research (White & Marsh, 2006) where analytical techniques are used to decipher data and generate findings (Merriam & Grenier, 2009) by reducing a phenomenon into categories to understand and interpret the data (Harwood & Garry, 2003). This analysis was implemented because it gave the researcher an opportunity to sift through a variety of image and text data, systematically.

Within this research study, visual, and text data were collected and analyzed to better understand the racial and gender makeup of COSMA accredited sport management programs. Investigators used available data on COSMA accredited sport management websites to objectively determine sport management faculty members’ race and gender and systemically evaluate each programs dedication to racial and gender faculty diversity using the TIDES RGRC.

Gender and Racial Identity through Images and Text

This analysis was based on visible perception as it relates to visual cues (Caffrey, 2021; DeMartini & Butler, 2022). Visual portrayal and social composition of each picture accompanied by texts, informed how each person was classified (Ferree et al., 1990). Participants’ race and gender were based on perception and not on how a person self-identified, which may vary person to person (Brown et al., 1998). The importance in how a program’s faculty diversity is viewed by outside constituents (Settles, 2019) given the benefits to student recruitment and sense of belonging. Researchers in this study sought to collect available data of visible representations of faculty members at various institutions through images and texts. Social interactions, spaces, and institutions have been constructed to highlight gender differences and in western culture, gender has historically been categorized under the binary of male or female based on performative characteristics that showcase masculine or feminine traits (Brickell, 2003). Researchers coded gender based on visual images and texts, then triangulated perceptions if the individual fit ideologies in western society that aligned with masculine or feminine characteristics. Racial categories have developed due to specific historical circumstances (Lopez, 1996) and grouping individuals together based on identifiable physical characteristics of skin color are due to the how a culture or society attributes meaning to that specific person’s skin tone (Cobb, 2016). Skin tone as a visual characteristic was used as a marker to shape the perceptions of the researchers. Then, each person was assigned a racial category (Cobb et al., 2016; Roth, 2016) based on the United States census, which assisted in determining the racial categories used in this study. While the researchers understood the importance of self-identification when it came to race and gender, this study took a unique approach because the study was based on perception by using observable phenotype data gathered from pictures on appearance, which determined the perceived race and gender of each individual.
Data Collection

Data collection occurred in January 2019 (the first year) and in May 2024 (the fifth year). In 2019, there were a total of 55 COSMA accredited programs, and in 2024, there were a total of 50 COSMA accredited programs. Please note, there are over 300 sport management programs in the U.S. (NASSM, 2023), so the data collected represents a percentage of the various programs in the United States. Collected data on race and gender were based on names, pronouns, and images from the university department website and in some cases, social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter/X, and Facebook were used to further identify the race or gender of a faculty member. This was all based-on images, self-identifying pronouns, and knowledge based on personal interactions with a colleague were also used to guide racial and gender identification in this study.

All investigators reviewed each COSMA accredited sport management program’s website and noted faculty members’ gender, race, and faculty rank. Once this process was completed, the investigators reconvened to review each individual faculty member and share personal perceptions, based on what was visible about the individual person. Researchers agreed on the racial and gender backgrounds of most of the selected participants, however, in some cases when there was a difference in perception, researchers referred to personal knowledge of that individual, social media posts, and any other identifiable information that could be found online to make an ultimate decision about their race and gender.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES)

TIDES, “serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate and professional sports and the media” (TIDES Sport, 2023, p. 1). On top of tracking important statistics including graduation rates, gambling, performance-enhancing drugs and violence in sport, TIDES assigns overall grades to gender and racial hiring across multiple sports and media organizations through its Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) (Lapchick et al., 2023). The Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) is an instrument created by TIDES and has been used to determine the hiring practices of women and people of color in sports organizations in the United States. The RGRC considers the composition – assessed by racial and gender makeup – of players, coaches and front office/athletic department employees (Lapchick et al., 2013).

Utilizing TIDES

The RGRC methods and grading scales were utilized as a guide to determine faculty diversity and hiring practices within higher education sport management programs. By using TIDES RGRC, researchers were able to determine the number of women and racial minorities who made up the composition of faculty within COSMA accredited sport management programs. Table 1 illustrates the grading scale set forth by TIDES, in which race and gender were graded. For an organization to receive an A+ in race and gender, then the organization had to have a percentage of at least 30 racially diverse employees (i.e., non-White) and at least 45% of the employees in total needed to be women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>&gt;45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>28.6-30</td>
<td>44.1-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>24.6-28.5</td>
<td>41.6-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>19.6-24.5</td>
<td>39-41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>17.19.5</td>
<td>37.6-38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>16.16.9</td>
<td>34.6-37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>15.15.9</td>
<td>32-34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>14.14.9</td>
<td>30.6-31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>13.13.9</td>
<td>27.6-30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adapting this scale was a starting point to examine the racial and gender diversity within sport management and created a benchmark for faculty diversity in the sport management discipline. Researchers in this study originally created three categories for faculty members: Full Professor (senior-level), Associate Professor (mid-level), and Assistant Professor (entry-level). Once data were gathered, one more category which was Lecturer. This was based on how faculty positions were categorized on each COSMA accredited program website. Once each faculty member was categorized by rank, researchers determined the race and gender of that person, based on perception, and then were able to calculate a percentage. Within social science research, race and gender classifications are generally a reflection of the categorization systems long determined by the dominant social group (Roth, 2016; White et al., 2020).

**Results**

In 2019, there were 145 listed instructors who worked for a COSMA accredited sport management program. The academic ranks or titles of the faculty positions were: Full Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Lecturer. In total, there were 58 instructors who were women and 87 who were men. Table 2 provides an analysis of the faculty members based on academic rank and gender, as well as rank and race. Please note, two of the faculty included in this study did not have an image connected with their name, therefore, the name was used as a gender identifier, but in the absence of having an image to examine, the race of the person was not included and was listed as no image.

In 2023, there were a total of 157 sport management instructors for the 50 different COSMA accredited programs with women representing 38% of sport management faculty and men representing 62% of sport management faculty positions. Table 3 provides information on the demographic breakdown of both the race and gender of COSMA accredited sport management programs in 2023.

**Gender Grades for COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs**

In 2019, professors who were identified as men comprised 60% of all full-time sport management faculty instructor positions. Men represented more than half the sample in all titles: full professors (54%), associate professors (66%), assistant professors (54%), and lecturers (67%). Evaluating the composition of women instructors, the majority were at the associate professor rank (37% of all women), closely followed by assistant professors (36% of all women), then came full professors (20% of all women). Lecturers were the least represented position for both the men and women.

For 2019, COSMA accredited sport management programs received a B+ for gender hiring practices represented by the 40% for women faculty members. Table 4 reports the overall grade for COSMA accredited sport management programs in 2019, and the breakdown by rank. COSMA programs earned an A+ at the full professor level, C+ at the associate professor level, A+ at the assistant professor level, and C+ for lecturers.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Management Faculty Academic Rank</th>
<th>Gender Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full professor</td>
<td>A+ (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>C+ (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>A+ (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>C+ (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>B+ (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Women were less likely than men to be promoted to the Associate professor level (Winkler, 2000).*
### Table 2
*Instructors’ Academic Rank, Gender, and Race (2019)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Latina/o/x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3
*Instructors’ Academic Rank, Gender, and Race (2024)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Latina/o/x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Professor</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published by ScholarWorks@BGSU, 2024
In 2024, men represented 62% of COSMA accredited sport management faculty, with women representing 38%. This is comparable to five years prior with men gaining a two percent employment advantage to women over a five-year span. Although there was a slight decrease in overall employment of women, women at the full (36%), associate (42%), assistant (29%), and lecturer (62%) positions had either A or A+ when it came to receiving a grade for representation in faculty positions, in comparison to 2019 when women had a C+ for associate professor, C+ for lecturer, and a B+ for total employment (there was a slight decline in grades for full and assistant professor roles, with women receiving an A in 2024 versus an A+ in 2019). This is an overall improvement over a five-year period and shows that women are being hired and promoted to the next level within COSMA sport management programs. Table 5 reflects the changes over the past five years.

Table 5
Gender Grades for COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs (2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Management Faculty Academic Rank</th>
<th>Gender Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full professor</td>
<td>A (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>A (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>A (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>A+ (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>A+ (38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial Grades for COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs

Reviewing racial representation of sport management faculty in 2019, results showed 80% of COSMA accredited sport management faculty were White. As for minority faculty in sport management, Asian faculty comprised the largest minority group (9%), followed by Black (8%), and then Latina/o/x (2%). Based on the findings, the representation of Latina/o/x and Black racial minority faculty members working for COSMA accredited sport management programs did not reflect the U.S. national average, since 8.5% of the U.S. population is Latina/o/x and 13.4% is Black (U.S. Census, 2020). However, Asian faculty members at COSMA accredited programs were overrepresented in comparison to the national average of 5.9% of people in the U.S. identifying as Asian in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2020).

The results further highlight the lack of diversity composition among faculty within academic ranks. First, Black faculty are predominately at the assistant professor ranks (50%) or associate professor rank (42%) with only one (4%) Black faculty member at the full professor rank. Asian faculty members were different in composition as the majority were at the associate professor rank (54%) followed by assistant (31%), and full (15%). Finally, both of the faculty members who were identified as Latina/o/x were at the associate professor rank.

The 2019 COSMA accredited sport management programs received an overall B+ grade for the racial makeup of faculty members working for COSMA accredited sport management departments. Evaluating the ranks (see Table 6), COSMA accredited sport management programs earned an A at the full professor level, a B+ at the associate and assistant professor levels.

Table 6
Racial Grades for COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Management Faculty Academic Rank</th>
<th>Racial Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full professor</td>
<td>A (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>B+ (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>B+ (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>F (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>B+ (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for racial representation in 2024 show that 82% of COSMA accredited programs have a majority White faculty presence, which is a two
This study sought to determine the racial and gender composition of sport management programs that hold COSMA accreditation over a five-year period. In doing so, this study is the attempted to evaluate the race and gender composition of faculty within COSMA accredited sport management programs in 2019 and then again in 2024. While there have been discussions about faculty diversity at major annual conferences (e.g., NASSM and NASSS), many of these discussions center around opinion and conjecture. This exploratory longitudinal investigation provides a baseline of comparison for sport management programs as diversity, equity, and inclusion move to the forefront of concerns for many higher education institutions. In addition, this study adds to peer reviewed research about minority faculty within the discipline of sport management.

Following similar protocols to Lapchick et al. (2023), results suggest COSMA accredited sport management programs are currently underrepresented in when it comes to and Black and Latino/a/x faculty. The grading structure of the report card suggests sport management programs need to be intentional about recruiting Black and Latino/a/x faculty members, as there has been a decline of these populations in the past five years. As for gender, women have seen an increase in both associate and assistant level positions, so it is important to be mindful and learn more about changes that are being made to support women as they move up along the ranks in academia. Overall, composition of sport management faculty at COSMA accredited institutions earned a grade of B+ for both racial and gender composition of the faculty in 2019. In 2024, an A+ was earned for gender and a B+ was earned for race. This indicates that there is still room for improvement to achieve an A+ for hiring minority faculty members.

By evaluating the data, we can see that there is a disconnect with minority faculty advancing from the assistant professor level to the associate professor level. This aligns with research on the attrition of minority faculty to reach the ranks from assistant to associate professor level in academia and how faculty of color lack the institutional support and resources to get to a position in which they are secure, and in a
place where they have more autonomy and power with their teaching, scholarship, and service (Domingo et al., 2022; Meschitti & Marini, 2023; Ortega-Liston & Rodriguez, 2014).

Minority faculty members working in sport management are not a reflection of the growing minority populations in the U.S (see Table 8). While minorities comprise approximately 38% of the U.S. population, minorities as sport management faculty members at COSMA accredited sport management programs make up only 19% of faculty. While Black minorities comprise 13.4% of the U.S. population, Black faculty members in this study only constituted 8% in 2019 and 5% in 2024. Asian faculty members represented 9% in 2019 and 12% in 2024 of the faculty in this research study, but only 5.9% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2020). Therefore, Asian faculty members were overrepresented in sport management and Black faculty members were underrepresented. Lastly, the Latino/a/x population is the most rapidly growing minority population in the U.S.; however, this group is barely represented (2% in 2019 and 1% in 2024) within sport management faculty of COSMA accredited programs.

Table 8
Comparison of Demographics from U.S. Census vs. Racial Representation for COSMA Accredited Sport Management Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics from the U.S. Census (as of July 2019)</th>
<th>Racial Representation for COSMA accredited sport management programs</th>
<th>Disparity comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White: 60.1%</td>
<td>White: 81%</td>
<td>+20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black: 13.4%</td>
<td>Black: 8%</td>
<td>-5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian: 5.9%</td>
<td>Asian: 9%</td>
<td>+3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina/o/x: 18.5%</td>
<td>Latina/o/x: 2%</td>
<td>-16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important finding in the research highlighted the gender disparity in the transition from assistant professor to the associate professor level in 2019, but that improved in 2024 with more women reaching the ranks of associate professor. This shows that as time moves forward, we may start to see a consistent pattern of more women reaching associate and full professor status. Potentially, the increase of women entering the field could balance out overtime as far as gender is concerned. Additional research is needed to determine the challenges women face and what support they may need, to earn promotion and tenure in higher education more broadly, and how and why that is increasing in sport management (Durodoye et al., 2020).

Similar to women faculty members, findings from this study indicated Black faculty are less likely to be at the associate professor level in comparison to White and Asian faculty. Asian faculty are more likely to be promoted to associate professor compared to their Black counterparts. Lastly, White professors are more likely to be promoted and tenured (Modica & Mamiseishvili, 2010). More research is needed to understand the promotion and tenure process and how it differs between racial groups. Lastly, compared with the general U.S. population, Latino/a/x faculty members were underrepresented at all levels. Given the changing demographics of the U.S., it is important for the sport management discipline to train, recruit, and retain Latino/a/x faculty. This is not unique to sport management, as the lack of Latino/a/x faculty is an issue throughout higher education (De Luca & Escoto, 2012). More research is needed on the Latino/a/x population within the ranks of academia and how the increase population is the U.S. is reflected in academic (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020).

The importance of increasing minority faculty representation at the associate professor rank lies in its impact on scholarly research, student recruitment, and retention. Associate professors enjoy greater academic freedom in teaching and research, which ultimately enhances student learning (Tiede, 2018). Tenured faculty members are better positioned to advocate for a more culturally inclusive institution and have more opportunities to mentor students, without fear, due to rank (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). Fewer minority faculty at the Associate professor
rank may indicate a glass ceiling of sorts, that prevents the growth of a critical mass of faculty of color with the power to make sustainable changes within the discipline and to enhance possibilities for the recruitment and retention of both students and faculty of color.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As with any study, this study is not without limitations. While the researchers were able to identify most faculty members’ race and gender either through the photo or knowledge of the individuals, this method is based solely on appearance and content rather than self-identification. Future research should include self-identification of these attributes, as well as other important social identities of underrepresented groups. Self-identification will also allow for gender identification outside of the gender binary of men and women. Additionally, race was exclusive to one racial category per person, when a person could potentially self-identify as having multiple racial identities. To add on, data is predicated on how often the university updates the sport management program website, therefore, this study is not a based on self-reported data, but on what is presented on the program web page in addition to what can be found on the worldwide web in general.

Future research could also evaluate the university student body demographics of undergraduate and graduate sport management programs in order to demonstrate the need for professors from a diversity of backgrounds. Future research may also want to review how geographical location plays a role in faculty diversity and recruiting minority applicants. In addition, more research is needed on the level of support that women and minority sport management faculty receive as they negotiate the tenure and promotion process. Lastly, it is important for accreditation bodies such as COSMA, to continue to promote a more inclusive and diverse sport management curricula in addition to continuing to advocate for increasing diversity of faculty within sport management programs. Accountability is the key to equity and equality within the discipline of sport management.

**Conclusion**

This study represents one of the first instances of categorizing the racial and gender diversity of higher education faculty within the field of sport management. Lapchick et al., (2023) has notably highlighted the racial and gender imbalances in college athletics and professional sports. This study emphasizes that it is equally important to track, analyze, and discuss the racial and gender makeup of full-time faculty members in sport management programs within institutions of higher education. In this study, the TIDES grading scales were utilized from the Race and Gender Report Card for both race and gender for COSMA accredited sport management programs.

This study was designed to help sport management scholars to better understand the landscape of faculty diversity within higher education sport management programs. Understanding and respecting the importance of diversity in the classroom is central to the role of administrators and faculty within higher education. Moreover, advocating for diversity will necessitate continuing research efforts to inform university administrators and faculty about recruiting for equity in race and gender and sustaining support systems that nurture welcoming and growth-enhancing campus environments for students and faculty.

**References**


