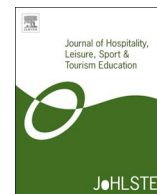


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## Predicting student success in an undergraduate Sport Management program from performance in general education courses

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### ABSTRACT

This research was a case study of the relationship between student performance in general education courses and required lower division courses and student performance in Sport Management courses at Kennesaw State University (KSU). Regression results indicated that student performance in three general education courses, World Literature, Introduction to Statistics, and American Government, and two lower division courses, Introduction to Sport Management and Introduction to Financial Accounting, are significantly related to student performance in Sport Management courses. The identification of these courses correlated with student success may be useful to other Sport Management programs considering transitioning to a gated admissions process.

### 1. Introduction

The current study was a case study of the relationship between student performance in general education courses and other required lower division courses and student performance in the undergraduate Sport Management program at Kennesaw State University (KSU) – a large public institution with two campuses located near Atlanta. Academic performance or success, in this study, was measured by the letter grade each student received in a given course. Thus, a better letter grade corresponds to better academic performance and a higher level of academic success.

The necessity of this study came about as the Sport Management faculty at KSU discussed the possibility of transitioning to a gated program design in which students would need to earn a certain grade point average (GPA) in a subset of their general education courses to gain admission to the undergraduate Sport Management program. The current design of the Sport Management program at KSU is shown in [Table 1](#). The current general education requirements at KSU are shown in [Table 2](#). To be clear, the goal of our study was not to identify all of the factors correlated with student success in Sport Management. Thus, we did not consider factors such as race and gender that may or may not be correlated with student success. Similarly, we did not include controls for high school GPA or ACT and SAT scores since these students have already gained admission to the university and these variables would not be considered for admission into the Sport Management program.

In design and scope, the current study is similar to previous studies conducted by [Wolkowitz and Kelley \(2010\)](#) and [Herrera and Blair \(2015\)](#) who attempted to predict student success in nursing programs. The current study is also similar to a previous study by [Anderton, Evans, and Chivers \(2016\)](#) who investigated student performance in a first year undergraduate Anatomy and Physiology course as well as a previous study by [Lester \(2016\)](#) who analyzed the performance of students in an undergraduate Statistical Methods course designed for Psychology majors. While many previous studies have examined the development and design of

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**Table 1**

Kennesaw State University Undergraduate Sport Management Program.

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<u>Lower Division Major Requirements (18 Credit Hours)</u>
SM 2100 – Introduction to Sport Management
SM 2200 – History and Contemporary Aspects of Sport
SM 2300 – Legal Aspects of Sports
SM 2400 – Sports Information and Media
ACCT 2100 – Introduction to Financial Accounting
ECON 2100 – Principles of Microeconomics
<u>Upper Division Major Requirements (36 Credit Hours)</u>
SM 3100 – Sports Sociology and Psychology
SM 3200 – Leadership and Management of Sport Organizations
SM 3300 – Sport Event Management
SM 3400 – Sport Facility Design and Management
SM 3500 – Sponsorship and Fundraising in Sport
SM 4700 – Sports Economics
SM 4800 – Sports Finance
SM 4900 – Senior Seminar in Sport Management
SM 4950 – Senior Internship in Sport Management
<u>Sport Management Electives (18 Credit Hours)</u>
At least 9 h must be from courses at the 3000 level or above

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curriculum in Sport Management programs (for example, see Brassie, 1989; Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008; Petersen & Pierce, 2009; Won & Bravo, 2009), we are only aware of one previous study that has attempted to predict the academic success of students in a Sport Management program. Brown (1990) attempted to identify important factors in explaining academic success in a graduate Sport Management program at an undisclosed university. The sample consisted of 161 students who earned their Masters of Science degree in Sport Management between the years 1977 and 1987. Estimating an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, the author found a positive relationship between undergraduate GPA and graduate GPA. Similarly, involvement in extracurricular activities as an undergraduate student was shown to have a positive relationship with graduate GPA. There was also some evidence that students whose undergraduate major was in a business related discipline tended to earn higher GPAs in the Sport Management graduate program, other things equal.

Using data provided by the university's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and employing an empirical methodology similar to Brown (1990), we were able to identify five courses for which students' grades in those courses appear to be significantly correlated with academic success in the Sport Management program even after controlling for student performance in a number of other courses. Three of these courses are part of the general education curriculum at KSU – World Literature, Introduction to Statistics, and American Government. The other two courses are part of the lower division major requirements for Sport Management students at KSU – Introduction to Sport Management and Introduction to Financial Accounting. These findings, which certainly may be different for different programs, are at least a starting point for programs considering transitioning to a gated admissions process.

**Table 2**

Kennesaw State University General Education Requirements.

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<u>Area A1 (6 Credit Hours)</u>	<u>Area D2 7–8 Credit Hours)</u>
ENGL 1101 – Composition I	Students must choose 2 connected Science courses in Environmental Science, Geography, Chemistry, Physics, or Biology
ENGL 1102 – Composition II	<u>Area E1 (3 Credit Hours)</u>
<u>Area A2 3–4 Credit Hours)</u>	POLS 1101 – American Government
MATH 1101 – Introduction to Mathematical Modeling	<u>Area E2 (3 Credit Hours)</u>
MATH 1111 – College Algebra	HIST 2111 – United States History to 1877
MATH 1112 – College Trigonometry	HIST 2112 – United States History Since 1877
MATH 1113 – Precalculus	<u>Area E3 (3 Credit Hours)</u>
MATH 1190 – Calculus I	HIST 1100 – Introduction to World History
<u>Area B1 (2 Credit Hours)</u>	HIST 1111 – Pre-Modern World History
ECON 1000 – Contemporary Economic Issues	HIST 1112 – Modern World History
<u>Area B2 (3 Credit Hours)</u>	<u>Area E4 (3 Credit Hours)</u>
Students must choose 1 of 11 Cultural Perspectives courses	Students must choose 1 of 7 Social Science courses
<u>Area C1 (3 Credit Hours)</u>	<u>First-Year Seminar</u>
Students must choose 1 of 10 World Literature courses	Students must choose 1 of 4 Freshmen Seminar courses
<u>Area C2 (3 Credit Hours)</u>	
Students must choose 1 of 4 Fine Arts Courses	
<u>Area D1 3–4 Credit Hours)</u>	
MATH 1107 – Introduction to Statistics	<u>Wellness</u>
MATH 1160 – Elementary Applied Calculus	WELL 1000 – Foundations for Healthy Living
MATH 1190 – Calculus I	
MATH 2202 – Calculus II	

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