On March 26, the Illinois State sport management graduate program took an educational trip to downtown Chicago for an opportunity to meet top sport industry executives and professionals. The trip gave our class an opportunity to spend time together outside of class and get to know one another while also having the chance to speak with top industry professionals.

Everyone met on campus at 7 a.m. so that we could climb into our Illinois State mini buses driven by “chauffeurs” Nels Popp and Chad McEvoy, who spent their spring break taking a driving course and becoming certified in driving the Redbird mini buses. After a few hours, the red buses cruised into downtown Chicago, dropping all of the students in front of the Illinois State Alumni office where our busy agenda would unfold. The day’s itinerary included four panels of speakers and then a social gathering at a local pub with Northwestern University sport management MBA students.

The first panel of the day included Jay Blunk, vice president of business operations of the Chicago Blackhawks; Mike Lucas, assistant general manager of the Windy City Thunderbolts, Dan Migala, publisher of the Migala Report; and Renee Cohen, manager of university development at The Big Ten Network. The second group of panelists included Dan Roan, sports director at WGN television; Tom Sheridan, director of ticket sales and premium seating of the Chicago White Sox; Gail Tucker, manager of corporate partners of the Chicago White Sox; and also Phil Bedella, vice president of advertising with Comcast Sports Net.

Members of the third panel were Becky Coffey, director of client services for the Chicago Bears and Dan Keats, strategic account leader for The Marketing Arm. Our day of speakers concluded with Linda Mastandrea, vice president of sport and accessibility for the Chicago 2016 Olympic Bid Committee.

All of the speakers were top examples of success and intelligence in the industry. It was very motivating to hear sincere words of encouragement from the panelists. Knowing the sports industry is difficult to break into, it was very exciting and refreshing to hear “you can do it!” Also, having these speakers available exclusively to our class, versus the typical mass crowd at a symposium or conference, was a real treat.

Our class enjoyed hearing the anecdotes from each panelist concerning their career path. They each had a story as to how they got to

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This past school year, the Illinois State sport management graduate program welcomed a new faculty member, Nels Popp. He began his first year as a Redbird in the spring of 2008. Popp recently earned his Ph.D. in sport administration from the University of Louisville.

Popp comes to Illinois State with over a decade of sport industry experience. Before coming to Illinois State, Popp spent four years as the sports information director at Bellarmine University, an NCAA Division II school in Louisville, Kentucky, where he oversaw 19 sports, including Division I men’s lacrosse. Before moving to Louisville, Popp was the sports information director and an assistant men’s basketball coach at Viterbo University, a NAIA school located in La Crosse, Wisconsin. While in La Crosse, Popp earned his master’s degree in sport administration from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Popp received his undergraduate degree in English from Saint Mary’s University in Winona, Minnesota, where he was a team captain on the Cardinal basketball team.

Popp also spent several years in Australia, where he worked as the media relations and promotions officer for the Cairns Taipans and Cairns Marlins professional basketball teams in Cairns, Queensland. In addition, Popp has worked for the La Crosse Loggers of the Northwoods College Summer Baseball League, written for Masters Athlete Magazine, worked at the AVP Beach Volleyball tour stop in Louisville, and was an administrator and coach at numerous summer basketball camps. He also led the Cairns Under-18 boys basketball team to a third place finish at the 1999 Queensland State Tournament.

Popp’s research interests include international student-athletes and national sport policy, as well as issues relating to marketing and media relations.

Popp has had worked published in Sports Marketing Quarterly and the International Journal of Sport Management and has presented research at the North America Society of Sports Management, the European Association of Sport Management, and the Drake Group.

Popp and his wife Stephanie had their first child, Gavin, this past April. When he’s not changing diapers, Popp enjoys golfing, basketball, fantasy football, and is a big fan of the Green Bay Packers.

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the current place of their career. These stories demonstrated that there is no proven “how to” manual for working in athletics. Each speaker explained how they have made most of their networking in previous jobs, which proved beneficial because those relationships were key for them later in life. Another benefit of having our lineup of panelists was the variety of backgrounds and niches they represented. Having individuals from The Big Ten Network, Comcast, and The Marketing Arm was interesting because most of the class had limited interaction with professionals in such areas.

The day concluded at Timothy O’Toole’s and was a relaxing and fun way to end the trip. The social hour with the Northwestern graduate program was interesting because it gave our class the opportunity to speak with other students in similar situations. It was fun to compare the two programs and types of experiences gained from each. After a full day of speakers it was relaxing to sit at the pub and enjoy an informal dinner.

On the way home, I talked with my classmates about what a great opportunity the day provided. Many agreed that the Chicago trip was one of best opportunities we had experienced concerning graduate school because the conversations were practical and applicable, and will continue to be in the future. I look forward to hopefully having the opportunity to take another trip next year, perhaps to another city such as St. Louis or Indianapolis.
Tracking the Redbirds—alumni update

Alumni Spotlight: Lucas Maniezo ’07
Graduation Year: December 2007
Employer: Nike
Position title: Sports Marketing Manager
Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

How would you describe your job in 100 words or less?
In my job I have three main responsibilities:
1. Oversee the contract between Nike and CBF (Brazilian Confederation of Football - or Soccer). The Brazilian Football team is the biggest in the world; therefore it demands a lot. We order and deliver their products throughout the year, develop new products for the team, offer assistance and support in the team trips regarding Nike gear.
2. Analyze players, negotiate and sign individual endorsement contracts. In summary, I have to watch, read and breathe sports (mainly football) all the time, know who the best athletes are and make sure they wear Nike.
3. Provide the best possible service to the Nike athletes. This one takes most of my time. I have to make sure every athlete we have under contract has everything he/she needs to achieve the best performance. I also have to maximize opportunities to have our athletes in the media wearing the right Nike products, especially sports shows, interviews, campaigns and events.

What are some of the unique opportunities you have had with your job?
1. Opportunity to become close friends with some of the best football players in the world;
2. Opportunity to travel the entire world;
3. Opportunity to be present at the biggest sporting events in the world representing a top brand;
4. Never having to buy clothes or another pair of shoes for a lifetime! Ahahahah.

What is the toughest part of your job?
Having to do too many things and handle too many people at the same time. This job is more dynamic than anything I have ever done, and

I spend at least half of my day on the phone. There is no specific time to work; people call me from many places of the world at odd times everyday. Weekends and holidays are gone as well. Last but not least, the responsibility I have in my position today is huge, and the pressure to achieve results is big as well. I am here to deliver a service, so no matter what it takes, JUST DO IT!

What are your favorite memories from Illinois State?
1. My friends are the first thing that comes to mind. I made some really great friends at ISU who will be with me forever.
2. The quad.
3. The tailgating at football games.
4. The friendship and interaction between students and professors.
5. The PUB II.

What advice or recommendations would you give current ISU sport management students who are looking to break into the sports industry?
Work in as many places as you can, travel a lot, learn another language, meet as many people as possible, network! Now that I started traveling the world working for Nike, I realize the sports industry is not so big. The more you experience and the more you “get your face out there”, the bigger the chances of knowing someone who can open a door for you.

I would be glad to help a fellow ISU student if I could. Please feel free to contact if I can be of any help: lucas.maniezo@nike.com

Where are they?
Over the past 12 months, several Illinois State sport management graduates have been hired or have been promoted within the sport industry. Below is a list of a few of these individuals listed by their current positions.

- Mark Baumann ’08—account executive, Human Kinetics
- Alissa Brandt ’09—assistant athletic director/senior women’s administrator, Quincy University
- Bethany (Foss) Bucholtz ’02—assistant athletics director for ticket operations, Illinois State University
- Joe Crane ’09—account executive, Lake Erie Monsters
- Jake Miller ’09—ticket sales staff, University of Washington Athletics
- John Morris ’07—assistant director of athletics, Benedictine University
- Mike Williams ’07—athletics assistant media relations director, Illinois State University

2008–2009 student professional practicums:
- Raphael Hennemann—Rochester Honkers Northwoods League Baseball Team
- Cole Robertson—U.S. Cellular Coliseum/Bloomington Extreme Indoor Football League Team
- Jill Speer—Illinois Special Olympics
- Megan Towner—Bloomington-Normal Area Sports Commission

Calling all alumni

The Chicago trip was funded through a one-time “Illinois State Faculty Initiative Grant” which will not be available to us this upcoming year. To help off-set the cost of such a great educational opportunity, we are calling on our alums to help. Please consider making a donation to the Illinois State Sport Management program to help fund this annual opportunity.

To do so, simply visit www.IllinoisState.edu/giving or fill out the form below (checks payable to Illinois State University Foundation) and mail it to: Illinois State University Foundation, Campus Box 800, Normal, IL 61790-8000. Thank you for helping us grow our sport management program.

Name: _______________________________ Graduation year: __________________________
Mailing Address: ___________________________ __________________________
City: ___________________ State: __________ Zip: ___________________ Phone: (________)
E-mail: ___________________________
This past spring, Chad McEvoy was named co-editor of The Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics. The online publication (http://csri-jilia.org) is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal specializing in research on college athletics. McEvoy takes over the editor duties from the new director of Illinois State's Department of Kinesiology and Recreation, Kevin Burke. Keith Harrison from Central Florida was named the other co-editor of the journal.

In May, Chad McEvoy and Nels Popp presented research findings at the North American Society for Sport Management conference held in Columbia, South Carolina. While there, they met with Illinois State sport management alumni Alan Morse and Clint Warren. After earning his masters at Illinois State in 2004, Morse went on to earn his Ph.D. in sport management at Northern Colorado and is now a faculty member at Mississippi State University. Warren is pursuing his doctorate in sport management at the University of Minnesota, after completing his Illinois State degree with an internship with the Minnesota Timberwolves. He will start his second year at the University of Minnesota this fall.

Last spring, several Illinois State sport management students assisted the Bloomington PrairieThunder hockey team by collecting market research by surveying fans at a home game (see photo above). First year student Elizabeth Holcomb then compiled all the data and presented her findings and recommendations to members of the PrairieThunder front office this summer.

Dr. Brent Beggs co-authored his second text book, which was released this spring. The book, entitled Recreation Facility Management, is published by Human Kinetics. The 312-page text is available on Human Kinetics Web site for $59.

Last fall, as part of the Advanced Sport Marketing Class, sport management students developed and implemented a promotional plan to draw fans to a Redbird women's basketball game. The class ultimately chose to conduct a Super Fan promotion. The contest had Illinois State students vying for the title "Illinois State Super Fan" by producing video clips, e-mail campaigns, and posters. The contestant who collected the most votes at the Illinois State vs. Eastern Michigan game back on December 6 earned the title of Super Fan. The winner was Collin Custis, a junior, who was happy to collect his prize during the game.

Both Chad McEvoy and Brent Beggs were promoted to associate professors this past school year, earning tenure at Illinois State. Both professors will be going on sabbatical this upcoming school year, as Beggs will be spending the fall semester away from campus, while McEvoy will be gone in the spring. During the fall, Beggs will be conducting a study on the impact of the new recreation center going up on campus, as well as writing chapters for several books. He will also be serving on the Illinois State Athletic Council and will be working on a research project examining the impact of fantasy sport participation. McEvoy is writing a sport finance textbook and working on several research projects.

The Illinois State Department of Kinesiology and Recreation will be bringing in a new full time director this school year. The search committee has hired Kevin Burke to replace interim director David Thomas. Burke comes to Illinois State from East Tennessee State and has considerable background in both sport psychology and sport management. A former college student-athlete, coach, and official, Burke has also authored several books, including Sport Psychology Library Series: Basketball, which he coauthored with former Louisiana State basketball coach Dale Brown. He is also a former editor of the Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics and has his own sport psychology practice.

Illinois State sport management updates

From left to right: Nels Popp, Alan Morse, Clint Warren, and Chad McEvoy
Believin’ in Cleveland:
A student’s perspective of the Mount Union Sports Sales Workshop

By Michael Schulte, first year masters student

Throughout the year, Chad McEvoy sent many e-mails regarding job openings and professional training seminars. When I opened the e-mail regarding the 2009 Mount Union Sports Sales Workshop, I initially thought it was going to be just another sales seminar hundreds of miles away that would quickly end up in my “trash” folder. After looking at the list of trainers and testimonials from previous seminars, I realized I was wrong. McEvoy was informing me about one of the premier training opportunities for aspiring sports executives.

Excitedly, I checked my calendar to see if I was free. I penciled a circle around February 5-7 to make sure I kept the dates available. Next, I priced hotels and compared the price of a plane ticket with the cost of driving. I decided I would drive to Cleveland and was all set to go. I quit fantasizing when another e-mail arrived in my inbox. My online bank statement had confirmed what I already knew. I was not going to afford a trip to Cleveland for a sales conference.

Shortly thereafter, Nels Popp and McEvoy announced that they would like to take a group of grad students to Cleveland for this sales conference, arguably the best of its kind in the country. Much of the cost would be covered by an ISU development and travel grant. Overjoyed, I quickly signed up to attend. There were six of us making the 450 mile trek to Cleveland including Popp and McEvoy, as well as students Joe Crane, Megan Towner, Margot Frederick, Joe and Margot, both from Ohio, were excited because the trip gave them an opportunity to return home. Megan and Joe took advantage of interview opportunities through the workshop’s job fair. Margot and I, though, were more interested in attending because of the materials from the sales workshop.

Everyone was very excited when we arrived at Quicken Loans Arena. Although we didn’t meet LeBron James, we did hear from several accomplished sports executives. The day began with keynote speaker Chris Granger, senior vice president of team marketing and business operations with the NBA, sharing his advice for selling in today’s economy and answering questions from the audience. Buffy Fillippell, founder of TeamWork Online, and Scott Mayo, recruiter for the NBA, were around throughout the day to review resumes for candidates. Breakout sessions featured sales and ticket account executives from professional sports teams, as well as representatives and administrators from several minor league franchises and top college programs. The all-star line-up taught sales techniques such as getting past the gate keeper and finalizing the sale. Later, we moved across the street to Progressive Field, home of the Cleveland Indians. There, Vic Gregovits, senior vice president of sales and marketing for the Indians, shared many experiences he has endured during his career.

The event was capped off with a trip back to Quicken Loans Arena to see the Lake Erie Monsters take on the Syracuse Crunch. We were able to see the home team escape with a come-from-behind 3–2 victory. The venue was phenomenal. “The Q” features a state-of-the-art video system including a 28-foot scoreboard and five accompanying ribbon boards. Concessions featured dollar hotdogs night at “the Q” and of course, delicious nachos. The entire experience was a major success. I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet with so many experts gathered in one location. If the opportunity arises to go to another workshop, I would not hesitate to attend.

McEvoy appears before Knight Commission

In June of 2008, Chad McEvoy was invited to appear as a panelist before the prestigious Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics hearings in Washington, D.C. The Knight Commission is comprised of university presidents, industry leaders, elite former athletes, and national media personalities, and meets twice yearly to examine and provide solutions for the foremost issues facing college sports.

Some of the most significant reforms in intercollegiate athletics over the past two decades, such as strengthening academic requirements for student-athletes and increasing oversight of athletics by university presidents, have been greatly influenced by Knight Commission recommendations.

One of the topics addressed by the Commission in 2008 was the impact of NCAA penalties in preventing cheating and rules violations in college athletics. McEvoy recently conducted research on this topic, finding statistical evidence to show that NCAA penalties have been largely ineffective in imposing hardship on penalized schools and in subsequently deterring others from violating rules. The other three invited panelists included two members of the NCAA Committee on Infractions and an Indianapolis-based attorney who represents many of the accused rules violators before this NCAA committee. On this panel, McEvoy was the lone panelist pointing towards a need for stricter penalties and enforcement.

Following the hearings, McEvoy was widely interviewed about his testimony and had his research featured in dozens of newspapers and Internet news sources nationally and internationally, including Sports Illustrated, ESPN, and The Chronicle of Higher Education. The NCAA has begun exploring the need for tougher penalties for schools committing major rules infractions since the Knight Commission hearings last June.