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Sabbatical Leave Report 2020

Dr. Michael Mahoney

The overall objective of the sabbatical leave was to enhance my teaching and research in the disciplines of accessibility, security and life safety practices, and operations management within the venue/event management industry. Specifically, the sabbatical leave provided me with the opportunity to complete structured on-site analysis related to my teaching, and to further my research foci.

Planned travel during this leave had to be augmented due to COVID-19 restrictions, closure of public assembly facilities (PAV), and university mandates cutting grant funding (travel). As such originally planned travel and research at various international and domestic locations was curtailed. Subsequent regional travel and research were conducted and expenditures were paid solely by myself.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on events and venues the research foci were augmented to include the following five components: 1) Safety; 2) Path of Travel and On-site Circulation; 3) Risk Analysis; 4) Venue Accessibility; and 5) Security and Life Safety). This research will improve knowledge about the current situation of safety and risk analysis. Additionally, the research hoped to identify and report security and life safety efficiencies, and potential PAV reopening solutions.

The sabbatical leave also benefited our students because my research and industry immersion within accessibility, security and life safety practices, operations and tour management within the venue/event management industry advanced my knowledge in the very disciplines I teach. Consequently, this knowledge and information should enhance student learning as it is incorporated into my undergraduate courses in Recreation Administration.

July (on-site) and August

Objective - On-site risk management, operations management and run-of-show analysis.

Completed in conjunction with: Ceatta Bogataj, Top Rank; Brad Jacobs, Top Rank; William Pegg, MGM Garden Arena; Lee Nakahara, MGM Grand; Randy Fireman, MGM Grand.

Event: MGM / Top Rank Boxing “Bubble”

Venue: The MGM Grand Conference Center

I was authorized by Top Rank Boxing to enter and stay within the MGM / Top Rank Boxing “Bubble” for three nights. This allowed for on-site venue and event operations analysis inclusive of detailed ‘walk-throughs’, live event-day analysis for the purpose of data collection and monitoring and evaluating the operation policies and procedures of the venue and event. According to previous research UEFA and CAFE (2011) these types of audits should be undertaken by an auditor who has experience in auditing PAVs.

As such, I have conducted similar audits in the U.S. (Cowboys Stadium, Yankee Stadium, Citi Field and Staples Center) and have presented findings at international conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals.

This research will improve knowledge about the current situation of conducting safe events during a pandemic while overcoming barriers faced by venue management and event planners. Additionally, the research identified efficiencies, opportunities and successful support structures put in place by venue and event professionals.

Objective - On-site venue management “hardhat” walk through of then yet to be open Allegiant Stadium. Completed in conjunction with: Michael Donato, Allegiant Stadium. Venue: Allegiant Stadium

Utilization of information and photographs to aid in the updating of Sports and Entertainment Facility Management (SEFM) learning modules and lecture presentations. Gained additional industry contacts for potential research collaboration and guest speakers via Zoom with ‘Industry Drop-Ins’ for SEFM courses. Potential site/agency for interns.

August and November

Objective – Industry emersion. Part of the sabbatical proposal was industry emersion with tour management within the venue/event management industry. Due to COVID-19 restrictions PAVs were closed and entertainment tours were either cancelled or rescheduled. As such, in communication with Mr. McGraw regarding this, he will allow for me to conduct research via industry emersion during a future tour (post-COVID).

Pending research funding support and/or grants, I plan additional emersion activities with various PAV management and allied industry professionals.

September and October

Objective – Prepare research manuscript. Developing one first-author peer-reviewed journal article as a direct result of this sabbatical leave. Anticipated date to submit for publication, July 2021.

Objective – Prepare book chapter. Developed book chapter outline related to sport tourism. Anticipated date to submit completed chapter, July 2021.

Objective – Co-investigator for grant proposal. Interdisciplinary grant proposal with Dr. Jamie Levitt, Assistant Professor, Food Science and Nutrition.

Objective – Professional Development. SPORTO 2020 Digital Talk Series - Ricardo Fort (Coca Cola). Webinar pertinent to SEFM courses.

November

Objective – Professional Development. OnePlan - How are major venues and events planning for social distancing? Webinar pertinent to SEFM courses and research foci.

December

Objective – Professional development. Urbanism Next hosted by the University of Oregon, "From Empty to Active Webinar: Reimagining vacant commercial and retail space for housing and social infrastructure". Repurposing space in times of crisis. Crisis often creates new opportunities. Office buildings, strip malls, big box retailers, and restaurants are increasingly empty amid the pandemic – reimagined uses. Pertinent to discussions in general recreational facilities course RA 133.

Objective – Enhance Curriculum. As the Recreation Administration program continues to strive to be responsive to student, and industry needs I developed a new course – *Crowd Safety for Sports and Entertainment*. Initial offering in fall 2021, as a topics course.

Examination of crowd science and risk analysis tools and their applicability for planning events and managing sports and entertainment venues including arenas, stadiums, and other public assembly venues such as those hosting music festivals. Crowd safety, crowd risk analysis, and practical application are also covered.

This course will provide an elective in which RA students, certificate seeking students, and those from other disciplines can gain knowledge relevant to enhanced crowd safety planning for sports and entertainment venues and events.