The USC Marshall Sports Business Institute (SBI), in partnership with Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC), seeks three analysts for the Fall 2006 semester who will be charged with assisting the SOSC in its search for a new location for its base of operations and/or athletic competitions.

I. Project Overview

At its core, this project has been designed to assist SOSC in its search for a new location for its base of operations by:

1. Developing an Economic Impact Statement that reflects the economic, cultural, and social benefits of the presence of SOSC’s operations in a particular city or region; and

2. Authoring a Request for Proposal (RFP) from interested cities. The scope of activities to be covered in the RFP will likely include, but not be limited to:
   a. Minimum:
      i. SOSC Chapter headquarters office and related facilities
      ii. Conference and meeting facilities for classroom-style training and/or conferences
   b. Additional:
      i. Chapter, Regional and/or Local Area Program sport competition facilities
      ii. Chapter, Regional and/or Local Area Program sport training facilities
      iii. Lodging for major multi-day competitions and/or conferences
      iv. Sources of potential volunteers for SOSC events

II. Project Deliverables

Prior to undertaking the aforementioned project elements, the consulting team will first have to review available information on SOSC, including annual reports, financial statements, Board of Directors meeting packages and minutes, strategic plan information, area reports, regional reports, SOI general rules, sports information, etc., to develop an overall understanding of the organization. Further, the team will meet with key SOSC staff and key Board officers to discuss SOSC goals, operations, and issues prior to the start of the project in order to gain in-person understanding of their goals.

Once these initial steps are completed, and in order to successfully complete this project, the consulting team will be asked to do the following:

- Determine SOSC requirements for such logistical issues as facilities, storage, lodging, volunteers, etc.;
- Identify data requirements for estimating economic impacts and sources for data;
• Prepare and forecast a comprehensive list of economic, cultural and social impacts;
• Develop, refine, and present RFP requirements;
• Author the draft RFP;
• Prepare draft Economic Impact Statement;
• Revise draft documents to reflect SOSC input from reviews;
• Analyze and develop a pre-qualified list of cities recommended to receive RFP’s based on general understanding and review of generally available information; and
• Present all relevant findings and observations to SOSC.

III. Educational Objectives

This partnership between the SBI and SOSC provides students the opportunity to apply a wide range of their Marshall coursework to assist an important strategic partner of the Marshall School. Specifically, the student team will be called upon to apply the business acumen they have acquired in the areas of finance, marketing, strategy, real estate, and public policy, among others.

The consulting team will have significant interaction with SOSC senior management and board of directors while playing an instrumental role in addressing and resolving a contemporary, real-time management challenge.

IV. Project Format and Schedule

This assignment, which must begin prior to the start of the Fall semester, must be completed no later than December 1, 2006. Interested students must be prepared to meet with the supervising faculty and begin discussing the scope of the project no later than June 15th.

The project will require between 5-10 hours per week of each member. If the students are interested in receiving course credit for this project, they can apply for up to three units in the form of Directed Research (GSBA 590).

At the conclusion of this project the student team will present its findings, both orally and in writing, to both SOSC and the SBI.

Project Contacts

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V. Additional Information

About Special Olympics Southern California

The mission of Special Olympics Southern California is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities (mental retardation), giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. SOSC currently provides services to more than 10,000 athletes with the assistance of approximately 12,000 volunteers throughout the eleven counties of southern California.

Since its inception in 1968, sports have been the core of the Special Olympics program. It is through sports that people with intellectual disabilities can, with proper training and encouragement, learn and benefit from participation in individual and group competitions. By instilling lifelong habits of physical fitness and influencing each athlete’s willingness to accept new challenges and learn new skills, Special Olympics also provides its athletes with “training for life.” A research study conducted at Yale University indicates that individuals who participate in Special Olympics programs perform better at school, at work and at home the longer they participate in the program. They develop better adaptive skills and have more positive self-perceptions. Special Olympics facilitates social competence, self-esteem and self-sufficiency, and is an extremely effective intervention for people with intellectual disabilities.

The grassroots structure of SOSC encourages the involvement of local community volunteer and staff support by providing services to the athletes through 31 local Area Programs. Each local Area Program trains athletes and manages its own sports competitions and fundraising events under the guidelines and direction of the Chapter Office (the Chapter). Professional Regional staff members have responsibility for managing and coordinating the Area Programs within their regions and helping them with resource development, community outreach and Regional competitions.

Through Local Area and Regional competitions, athletes qualify to compete in the Chapter championships. The Chapter events serve as qualifying events to the National and World Games, which are held every four years. The World Summer Games and the World Winter Games are similar to the Olympic Games by alternating every two years. The 2005 World Winter Games were held in Nagano, Japan. The 2007 World Summer Games will be held in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China. The first ever USA National Games will be held in July, 2006 in Ames, Iowa.

About the Sports Business Institute

The University of Southern California and the Marshall School of Business announced the formation of the Sports Business Institute in October, 2005. Led by Executive Director David M. Carter, the Institute boasts an impressive array of advisory board members who will continue to guide the Institute and its offerings.

The Sports Business Institute is dedicated to understanding and furthering the rapidly growing sports business industry on a global basis, and does so by leveraging extraordinary academic and professional experiences. The Institute’s mission is to serve as both a source and resource for industry participants and stakeholders and, in the process, enable them to address and resolve industry challenges.