Sport Management Practicum Course
CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS/CEDAR RAPIDS KERNELS
Summer 2021

University of Iowa students can take a three-credit summer course that includes two weeks in Chicago completing sport business projects for the Chicago Blackhawks!

Check out the details below:

- The class will begin meeting during the week of June 21 in Iowa City and conclude on or around July 25 in Chicago. (Exact dates still being determined based on COVID-19.)

- During the first half, students will be in Iowa City working on a sport marketing project for the Cedar Rapids Kernels minor league baseball team. All transportation to and from Cedar Rapids (two trips) will be provided by the University of Iowa. *In past years the Kernels have used the best student marketing recommendations!*

- Students will report to Chicago on or around July 11 and be broken into project teams to receive business challenges from Blackhawks executives in marketing, digital content, sales, community relations and several other areas of organizational need. Each project team will work together to perform research and develop recommendations to achieve the Blackhawks’ business objectives. Each team will make a final presentation of recommendations to Blackhawks executives. *In past years the Blackhawks have used the best student recommendations!*

- Students will have additional professional development opportunities with the Blackhawks depending on the organization’s schedule during our time there. In past years, activities have included helping prepare for and successfully run the Blackhawks Convention (event management) and doing social media, photography and feature stories on Blackhawks.com during the Blackhawks player development camp. (All activities will depend on how the Blackhawks schedule is impacted by COVID-19.)
• Graphic Design students will have an opportunity to work with all student project teams to develop high-quality visual materials for submission to the Blackhawks.

• Students will participate in a networking function with sport business professionals, including several Iowa alumni.

• The group will attend a sporting event while in Chicago (depends on COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time).

• In Chicago all students will stay in college dormitories. We have always stayed at Roosevelt University with dining hall service. Roosevelt University is in a secure high rise in the heart of Chicago overlooking Lake Michigan and Buckingham Fountain. (All housing arrangements in Chicago will depend on COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time.) In Iowa City students will need to provide their own housing.

• Class size is limited! Due to high demand, students will be required to apply for acceptance, just like an internship or job. In order to be considered, submit a professional cover letter and résumé to Dan Matheson via email (daniel-matheson@uiowa.edu). The deadline to submit your application is February 14, 2021. Your letter should:
  o Explain why you wish to take the course.
  o Explain what you can offer in terms of previous experience, expertise, relevant course work, work ethic and/or any other qualities that you believe will contribute to success in the course. Desirable qualities include strong communication skills (public speaking/presentation and writing/editing), tireless work ethic, unyielding attention to detail, ability to work effectively with teammates, event management experience, dependability, maturity, creativity and an interest in performing market research in order to develop the best possible recommendations for the Blackhawks and Kernels.
GPA and coursework will be reviewed and taken into consideration, and finalists may be asked to interview for a spot in the course. There are typically 60-70 applicants for 25-30 available spots in the course.
Some of the many highlights from previous summers include:

- Students appeared in the *Sports Business Journal*.

- One student was hired by the Blackhawks as an intern in Photography and New Media, one student was hired as a full-time Graphic Designer, and one student was hired as a full-time Account Executive.

- Several student recommendations have been implemented by the Blackhawks, and some students have been invited to participate in organizational meetings with Blackhawks executives after the course ended because their recommendations were considered for implementation.

- Students have helped generate written and photographic content for the Blackhawks’ website and social media platforms.

- Students have had their pictures taken with the Stanley Cup and other trophies, skated at the Blackhawks practice facility and toured United Center and the practice facility.
The Blackhawks have accepted student input following the convention and implemented student ideas for improving the convention experience.

Iowa students unanimously praise the Chicago practicum as one of the top experiences of their college careers. Below are excerpts from student reflection papers and correspondence following the course:

- “The experience was one of the best of my life on a number of levels.”

- “The skills I learned during my time in the practicum guide my work and attitude every day, I am so incredibly grateful for the opportunities and experience the practicum brought me. I am beyond grateful for your wisdom and guidance over the summer, your kindness and expertise are something I strive to achieve in this lifetime.”

- “I made so many connections not only with sports business professionals, but also with my fellow students. We created a bond that is going to last a lifetime and you can’t put a price on that.”

- “You can’t match this experience in a classroom or online. The level of professionalism we have to maintain during the practicum brings everyone’s work level up a notch.”

- “The most beneficial experience for me in Chicago was working the Fan Convention. Not only did it give me the opportunity to show Blackhawks staff my work ethic, it also allowed me to get real event management and customer service training.”

- “I never knew I could do so much in two weeks and I’m really proud of what I accomplished because I really believe that working with the Blackhawks forced me to put my best work forward.”

- “It was awesome hearing all the minor details and seemingly insignificant things that are actually extremely important to the contracts the Blackhawks have with their sponsors. After taking Recreation and Sports Promotion last semester, the meeting served as a perfect example of how sponsorship activation plays a role in the sports industry.”

- “These 3 weeks have been an experience that I will never forget. It has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of what it is like to work in the sports industry. You have showed me the dedication it takes to make it in the sports industry. You have helped show me that something I once thought was impossible, like working in cooperation with the Blackhawks, is possible. With hard work, dedication, and motivation anything is possible. Thank you for opening my eyes and allowing me to realize that I am capable of more than I had thought. It was an honor to be a part of this experience!”
“My experience in your Chicago Blackhawks Sports Practicum in the Summer of 2016 continues to give me a competitive edge and pave the way for me. Not only did talking about you, my summer in Chicago, and where the Official Blackhawks Bar program is today instantly make me more comfortable during job interviews, but it is what I believe was the deciding factor in Volkswagen extending me an offer. The Chicago Blackhawks Sports Practicum is how I was able to find my passion for marketing, which was something I had never done before. As I reflect on the opportunities I have had in the two years since then, I am still unbelievably thankful for your willingness to take a chance on me. Dan, your dedication to the professional development and growth of your students, as well as your ability to create rewarding work and lifelong memories is something that I will always cherish. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

**FINAL DETAILS:**

- During the summer of 2020, this practicum proved that it could provide a first-class professional development experience in an online format when COVID-19 restrictions prevented travel to Cedar Rapids and Chicago. We will pivot to an online format once again if that becomes necessary in 2021. To learn how effective the online format was, check out the links below for stories on the practicum and a video compilation of the group’s experiences, and read the student comments from reflections and follow-up correspondence. The Kernels are even starting a podcast based on the name, logo and format design recommended by one of the project teams from summer 2020!
  - Practicum video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXng1yxrmgo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXng1yxrmgo)
  - Student statements from the summer 2020 practicum that had to work online:
    - “The skills I learned during my time in the practicum guide my work and attitude every day, I am so incredibly grateful for the opportunities and experience the practicum brought me. Although I am not working in the sports industry, I believe the sports management practicum played a large part in my hiring and ability to jump right into creating solutions for my employer. I am beyond grateful for your wisdom and guidance over the summer, your kindness and expertise are something I strive to achieve in this lifetime.”
    - “What I really enjoyed about this practicum was the ability to interact with our assigned Blackhawks staff. It was a lot of fun and beneficial being able to interact with them so much as well as learning more about their jobs. This felt like we were beginning to develop a connection with them rather than a one-time client. They gave so much guidance and advice that I’ll be able to use in other jobs, internships or practicums.”
    - “The Blackhawks project was very rewarding because for one of the first times in my life I finally felt challenged when working on a project. Working with the Blackhawks challenged my abilities to think more analytically than just relying on my creativity to develop research ideas that I believed in.”
    - “Looking back at this course, the most beneficial experiences for me were definitely the days we presented to the Blackhawks and Kernels. It taught me both how to present professionally, along with what these professionals are looking for when presenting to them. These are once in a lifetime presentations, so the preparation and teamwork it took to get to that final goal took a ton of planning and practice that I will be proud of for the rest of my life.”
• Students selected for the course will register and pay for three summer credit hours. Registration in the course will also require a course fee of approximately $1,500. **A LIMITED NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE and will be advertised during spring semester!** The course fee pays for housing costs in Chicago, public transportation costs in Chicago, breakfast and lunch dining hall service at the dorm in Chicago, networking dinner in Chicago, pizza dinner in Iowa City during the spring semester, a class outing to a sporting event in Chicago, and transportation in Iowa for the project during the first two weeks. Students can arrange their own transportation to/from Chicago or travel with the instructor on a bus. Students should plan to bring additional spending money for any meals outside the dorm, personal entertainment and souvenirs (if desired).

• Students from all majors are encouraged to apply. There is a specific need for Journalism students who can work on projects for the Blackhawks Digital Content department and Graphic Design students to help produce reports and other materials for submission to the Blackhawks and take on other design projects that may come up.

• Follow this link to read an article about one student’s experience in the practicum: https://hawkeyesports.com/news/2016/08/11/general-from-hawkeye-to-blackhawk/  

• Dan Matheson, Director of the University of Iowa Sport and Recreation Management program, will lead the course. Prior to joining the Iowa faculty, Dan’s career included 15 years working in the sport industry with the New York Yankees and NCAA. Follow this link to learn more about Dan at his website: http://danmatheson.wixsite.com/sportbusiness  

• Contact Dan Matheson (daniel-matheson@uiowa.edu) with questions. **Remember the deadline to submit an application is February 14, 2021!**

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact Dan Matheson in advance at 319-335-9485.

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