Program Overview

The sports industry in the United States is a multi-billion dollar industry and may soon exceed a trillion dollars at the global level. There will be an increasing number of employment opportunities in the industry for well-prepared graduates who understand the legal and business factors involved in solving problems arising in the sports industry. This program melds sports, law and business into Master of Sports Law and Business (MSLB) degree, a unique one-year graduate degree from a university that is top-ranked in law, business, and athletics. Students in the JD, LLM, and MLS programs at the ASU Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law may also emphasize sports law and business as a part of the Sports Law and Business Program.

The Phoenix metropolitan area is an ideal location for a sports law and business program, with its four major professional clubs – the Arizona Cardinals (NFL), the Arizona Coyotes (NHL), the Arizona Diamondbacks (MLB), and the Phoenix Suns (NBA). As a haven for sports enthusiasts located in the sunny Southwest, Phoenix also hosts major events including the Super Bowl, the College Football National Championship, and the Final Four. The area is also known for its PGA and NASCAR events. Many other teams and events make the area a wonderful learning laboratory for our hardworking students.

ASU Law has partnered with the W. P. Carey School of Business and the Arizona State University Department of Athletics to offer a Master of Sports Law & Business (MSLB) degree. This is the only graduate program in the United States that intentionally combines sports law, business, and athletics in an effort to prepare a generation of problem-solvers to work in the industry. This intensive 36-credit hour degree can be completed by a full-time student in 12 months. Students working in the area may also participate in a two-year, part-time program.

The MSLB program is not currently offered online, although online students may take courses in the sports and business areas, creating an emphasis. This innovative program is for industrious students interested in working in the sports, entertainment, and related industries. Graduates are equipped to understand the regulatory, revenue, and branding forces at work in the sports industry, nationally and globally, and are prepared to solve problems arising in the industry. Students may start the program in the Fall or Spring term.

Unique Partnerships

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Current Faculty

Michael Mokwa, Professor of Marketing, W.P. Carey School of Business
Rodney K. Smith, Professor/Director of the Sports Law and Business Program, Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law
Sam Renaut, Professor of Practice and sports agent with PlayersRep Sports Management
Glenn Wong, Professor of Practice and former President of the Sports Lawyers Association
Daniel McIntosh, Professor of Practice in the Sports Business area
Steven A. Adelman, Professor of Practice, Venue Management and Sports and Entertainment Lawyer
Ray Anderson, Professor of Practice and Athletics Director at Arizona State University
Don Gibson, Professor of Practice and former Vice President and General Counsel of MLB Properties
Rocky Harris, Professor of Practice and Chief of Staff at Arizona State University Athletics
Caleb E. Jay, Professor of Practice and Senior Director of Legal Affairs for the Arizona Diamondbacks
Travis J. Leach, Professor of Practice and co-leader of Ballard Spahr’s sports industry practice
Steve Webb, Professor of Practice and Executive Director of Athletics Compliance at Arizona State University

World Class Faculty

Nationally and Internationally Respected Faculty Experts

Full-time faculty members at ASU Law and the W.P. Carey School of Business, together with professors of practice drawn from leaders in the sports industry, offer a robust curriculum and challenging learning experiences for students in the Sports Law and Business program.

Faculty members have decades of experience in the sports industry, at the amateur and professional levels. They are also recognized scholars in the field, who have authored leading texts in the sports law and business and career areas.

This strong faculty, coupled with individuals working in the industry who oversee internships and specialized projects, offer students an educational experience that melds the best of theory and practice, in preparing students to enter the sports profession.
Course Offerings

Courses for the Sports Law and Business program are offered in the Phoenix area in the fall and spring. Required courses for the MSLB include:

- Sports Law & Business
- Amateur Sports Law & Business
- Professional Sports Law & Business
- Sports Analytics
- Sports Business Strategy and Industry Dynamics
- Sports Marketing
- Strategic Career Planning in the Sports Industry
- Negotiating and Drafting Contracts in the Sports Industry

Courses that are often offered as electives in the program include: International Sports Law and Business; Revenue Generation in Intercollegiate Athletics; Infractions and Compliance in Intercollegiate Athletics; and Risk Management in Venues. Students also regularly do independent study projects in areas of interest to them, under the tutelage of respected members of the sports profession. Students are required to complete a major internship or special project in an area that will assist them in their efforts to secure an appropriate position in the industry. Some students will also occasionally take other courses within the law school that are consistent with their career objectives.

Learning Experiences

Nationally and internationally speakers regularly make presentations on campus and students are encouraged to attend those lectures. Students are also able to take advantage of major conferences involving leaders in the industry, as offered by the MSLB program and other programs on campus on an annual basis. Given the number of major sports-related events occurring in the Phoenix area, students are often able to work on projects directly related to those events. MSLB students also are able to participate in annual events with Arizona State Athletics, the Arizona Diamondbacks, the Phoenix Suns, and others, where they are able to interact directly with leaders working in the industry.

Sports Law & Business Emphasis

Emphases in sports law and business are also offered, through the Sports Law and Business Program, to MLS, JD, and LLM students. Students seeking the emphasis are not required or able to take all of the required courses in the MSLB curriculum; but they are permitted to select from a broad array of courses. They may also participate in an appropriate externship or special project, but they are not required to do so. JD and LLM students may also have the opportunity to work on the Sports Law and Entertainment Law Journal. Many students publish work done as a part of their sports law and business graduate experience.

Annual Sports Law & Business Conference

ASU Law, the W.P. Carey School of Business, and the Department of Athletics hold regular conferences. These conferences provide an opportunity for students to organize, meet and interact with leaders in the sports industry and faculty experts to discuss key topics, trends and insights regarding the future of professional, amateur, and intercollegiate sports in America, and globally.

The 2015 conference examined Regulatory (legal), Revenue (business), and Reputational (concern for brand) pressing issues in the industry. Bringing experts together from law, business, and athletics in a single conference to discuss the future of professional, intercollegiate, and amateur sports in the coming decade provided students and participants with a better understanding of how best to solve significant issues arising in each of those areas.

Speakers included executives and scholars from ASU Athletics, ASU Law, W.P. Carey School of Business, Arizona Coyotes, NCAA, USA Football, Arizona Diamondbacks, Phoenix Suns, and many more!