

NFL and NBA leaders join Tulane's new Summer Sports Institute to train students for careers in sports

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Gabe Feldman, director of Tulane's Sports Law Program, also serves as co-director of the new Tulane Summer Sports Institute. The institute will give undergraduates a behind-the-scenes look at how pro sports organizations are run — bringing industry leaders to campus for an intensive, two-week course on building teams, growing brands and making high-stakes front-office decisions. (Photo by Rusty Costanza)

Many college students dream of playing professional sports, but most careers in the industry happen off the field. And running a team or league involves decisions about venues, media, marketing, budgets and leadership, specific to professional sports, that students rarely obtain in a college classroom.

To bridge this gap, Tulane University has created a game-changing program — featuring sports industry leaders and Tulane faculty — that will immerse students in the day-to-day realities of running a professional sports organization.

The [**Tulane Summer Sports Institute**](#) will launch in the spring, running from May 11-22 with its inaugural course, “Running a Professional Sports Team.” The program is a two-week, three-credit-hour intensive course designed to immerse students in the fast-paced, high-stakes world of professional sports leadership. The session is open to undergraduates nationwide who have completed at least one year at a university. [Applications are open online](#) until April 30.

Students will learn how teams are constructed, stadiums are built and multi-billion-dollar brands are grown. From media deals and analytics to sports law and leadership, the Tulane Summer Sports Institute will give an inside track to a career in professional sports.

“The Tulane Summer Sports Institute reflects what Tulane does best — bringing together industry leaders, ideas and real-world experience to prepare students for meaningful leadership roles in the sports industry,” said institute organizer Gabe Feldman, co-director of the Tulane Summer Sports Institute and the Tulane Center for Sport, as well as director of Tulane’s Sports Law Program. “This program invites students to see themselves not just as fans of sports, but as future leaders, decision-makers and problem-solvers shaping one of the most influential industries in the world. By learning from and working with front office executives and other sports industry professionals, students gain confidence, perspective and an unmatched insight into the world of professional sports.”

Feldman, the Sher Garner Professor of Sports Law and the Paul and Abram B. Barron Professor of Law, is a longtime leader in the university’s sports compliance and education efforts and one of the leading voices in the country in the field of sports law. He is regularly quoted in *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and other media outlets nationwide, and has made numerous appearances on national television, radio and podcasts. Feldman's extensive experience in sports

law includes representing a variety of sports entities while he was in private practice, and he continues to act as a consultant for a number of clients in the sports industry.

Classes in the program combine expert-led workshops with simulations based on sports executive decision-making. The course is divided into five modules that cover the significant aspects of running a professional franchise, including stadium development; sports law; sports marketing and business strategy; sports analytics; and executive leadership.

This cutting-edge initiative will help students understand how sports organizations operate and build skills that translate directly into careers across the industry. The program is a collaboration between the Tulane Center for Sport, Newcomb-Tulane College, Tulane Law School and the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

“This Institute opens the door for undergraduates to explore how law, leadership and sports intersect in powerful and practical ways,” said law Dean Marcilynn Burke.

The 2026 lineup of instructors includes:

- Jeff Dorso, senior vice president and general counsel for the Sacramento Kings, and Dan Werly, senior vice president and chief operating officer for the Tennessee Titans, who will open the course with a three-day, 360-degree exploration of how major stadiums are planned, financed and built.
- Sam Bruchhaus, a senior data scientist at SumerSports, who will lead the Analytics module, teaching students how teams use information to evaluate performance and support decision-making, and what “analytics” really means in a front office.
- Brandon James, senior vice president of strategic growth and deputy general counsel for the San Antonio Spurs, and Matt Sharpe, vice president and associate general counsel for the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans who will lead the next module on business strategy and marketing operations within professional franchises, discussing the basis and role of brands and how pro franchises seek to capitalize on them locally, nationally and globally.
- Chelsey Antony (L '19), senior business counsel for the NFL Players Association, and Betsy Philpott, chief legal officer for the Washington Nationals, who will lead the sports law intellectual property (IP) module, exploring how and why IP is so valuable

for pro franchises, its business purposes and legal steps to protecting it.

"Some of the most consequential work in sports happens behind the scenes through strategy, negotiation and policy. Hands-on, real-world experience is essential to understanding how those decisions are made," Antony said. "I'm deeply grateful to Tulane Law for the foundation it gave me, and I'm excited for this opportunity to pour back into the next generation through a classroom experience that creates space for curiosity, critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving."

Feldman and Eric Blevins, the Sports Law program manager at the Tulane Center for Sport and an adjunct lecturer at the Freeman School of Business, will also serve as faculty for the program and will lead a module on sports leadership and organizational principles and governance of sports leagues. They will also bring in high-level guest speakers, including Mike Tannenbaum (L '95), ESPN NFL front office insider, former New York Jets general manager and former Miami Dolphins executive vice president of football operations. Tannenbaum and other industry leaders will share their experience and guidance on effective and practical sports decision-making.

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