

## **Korea New Sports Association's Acceptance of Invitation to participate in ISCO-OP Internship Program**

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### **Background of the ISCO-OP program**

In June 2008 the ISCO-OP team from the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya (NIFS) comprised of Professor Masashi Kawanishi and three others visited the Korea New Sports Association to explain the background, significance and benefits of hosting the internship program and provided us with relevant documents and information.

In describing the evolution of the ISCO-OP internship program Professor Kawanishi stated in 2007 that “fostering comprehensive management skills in a practical environment to enable borderless, diversified and sophisticated interaction between different sectors of the modern sporting industry is an issue of critical importance from the perspective of career development” and that ISCO-OP is “a program capable of meeting specialized needs and instruction programs for physical education and sports in a ever-changing society.” We also view the decision to participate in the ISCO-OP internship program as a matter of course.

The Korea New Sports Association regards “the development of highly-productive ‘creators’ and business ‘producers’” as an urgent issue and sees internships as an effective tool in fostering and utilizing human resources to that end. The Association has therefore approved all aspects of the **ISCO-OP** plan as an innovative human resource development system based on collaboration between industry and academia and was happy to approve Ms. Ju-Wol Bang’s application to participate as an intern.

### **Founding and activities of the Association**

The Korea New Sports Association (herein “the Association”) is a nonprofit corporation founded on January 26, 2006 under the auspices of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (the equivalent of Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) in order to contribute to healthy national education and societal development through new sports, thereby spreading and promoting physical education at schools and to develop and popularize new sports for all citizens from the young to the elderly in order to spread and promote lifestyle-focused physical education

and contribute to the healthy development of the nation's citizens and international goodwill.

The Association's main activities include instructor training (new sports instructors, "silver sports" instructors, faculty training), events (National New Sports Competition), social activities (new sports instruction for small children, youth, the elderly and the disabled), international exchange (exchanges with new sports-related organizations in other countries such as the United States, Japan and China), research (research related to new sports and development of new sports programs and equipment) and publishing (new sports instructional books, video productions). We will introduce the details of these activities in greater detail on the day of the presentation.

### **Benefits of the ISCO-OP program**

As reported by NIFS teacher Yumiko Hagi in 2008, the anticipated benefits of participating in an internship program include "the opportunity to determine one's suitability as an instructor, usefulness in selecting a future career and the opportunity to recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses", thus providing interns with a substantive way of preparing for entry into society. Meanwhile, Ms Hagi lists the potential benefits to the host organization as "the chance to determine the current standing of university students, the ability to revitalize their own work environment and the opportunity to acquire future human resources as well as collaborating with universities and exchanging a diverse range of information".

The intern Ms. Ju-Wol Bang was able to exercise the full potential of her skills through participation in a truly diverse program including Korea-Japan academic seminars, workshops on physical education for children, new sports workshops for teachers, an event to experience new sports and a sports camp for children.

While the duration of the program was short at just one month, Ms. Ju-Wol Bang participated in the majority of events hosted by the Association and surpassed all of our expectations with her hard work. Undoubtedly this program provided Ms. Ju-Wol Bang with the experience to make the most of her time in Japan. We consider that it served as an opportunity to exhibit all of the qualities (leadership, hospitality, facility management, administrative and management skills) required in leveraging her sporting expertise.

While the internship experience may not prove useful straight away, if the interns can use it as a chance to review their academic plans towards their future career development and as a way to familiarize themselves with the right professional awareness then these are also beneficial traits of the program.

## **Future challenges**

The month-long internship also proved to be a genuinely profitable experience for the Association. First, the events were made all the more fulfilling by Ms. Ju-Wol Bang's participation. We were also able to engage in a natural collaboration with a Japanese national university and interact with affiliated university personnel. Furthermore, we could identify future challenges for the Association including the need to understand the specific requirements of the university placing the interns prior to commencement of the program and the need to achieve a level of readiness so that the intern can start working from the moment the program begins.

We learned that there is a need to closely investigate the state of program development to date and the associated challenges as well as devising ways to coordinate this information with actual conditions in Korea.

We consider that in order for these challenges to be addressed by Korea's sporting organizations and the sports industry, we need to think of various ways as an organization promoting the internship system to introduce successful cases involving interns while also understanding the actual conditions in Korea.

## **Potential for development of ISCO-OP programs in Korea**

The benefits of internship programs are worthy of considerable recognition. Although there is a myriad of internships conducted in Korea, there are currently very few programs which relate to physical education and sports. One of these would be the educational internships for developing teachers offered at so-called "normal universities." However, when one considers how the current sports industry is creating more and more sports-related careers, the number of internship opportunities providing practical industry experience is still limited.

A survey on employment in sporting and sports promotion organizations in 2006 revealed that graduating from a physical education university, participating in high school or university sporting clubs, competitive experience at said clubs, majoring in sports management either in undergraduate, postgraduate or technical colleges, internship experience in the industry and language competence were all considered to be important points when employing new recruits.

Among this array of factors, internship experience is the only one which cannot be acquired solely by the individual. In order for an internship program to be realized it requires both the school sending the interns and the company receiving them to take the initiative in adopting systems, i.e. joint coordination between academia and industry. We

therefore believe that interns should be sent to the many people who are in desperate need of well-trained instructors by better leveraging the benefits of ISCO-OP internship programs which lead to the development of both the intern and the host organization.

## **Conclusion**

Honestly speaking, we found Yumiko Hagi's publication "CO-OP International Research Forum 2007 on the Development of Career Training Program for Sporting Professions" to be a major eye-opener and now feel a great deal of pressure to urgently address this considerable challenge.

The ISCO-OP internship program is one which also needs to be expanded in Korea and one which we attend to adopt more positively in the future. We also hope to introduce the program to all of those parties involved in the Korean sports industry seeking similar outcomes.

Our Association, which owes its existence to sports, is seriously committed to finding ways in which we can be of service to all people who enjoy sports and who seek to experience the joys which they can offer.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere thanks to Professor Masashi Kawanishi of the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya and all of those involved in the program.

