

**MCCORMACK DEPARTMENT OF SPORT MANAGEMENT AND J.LEAGUE
FORM MULTI-YEAR EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMHERST, MA – February 1, 2016 ... The Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management and the J.League, Asia's premier professional soccer league, will collaborate to offer an innovative on-line sport management education program.

The McCormack Department of Sport Management, housed in the nationally-ranked Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, will provide on-line courses each semester to students enrolled in the J.League Human Capital Project, an initiative designed to recruit and train top talent for management positions within the J.League.

The initial term of the agreement is for two years, and will include content that provides important trends and best practices in topics including sport marketing and sport finance. Course work provided by the McCormack Department of Sport Management will supplement a certificate degree program provided by Kyoto-based Ritsumeiken University.

"When we launched the McCormack International Partnerships program, this is the kind of partnership we envisioned as a means of furthering the global legacy of Mark McCormack and sharing our cutting-edge research and teaching," said Dr. Janet Fink, Department Chair.

"I am excited about this partnership, and looking forward to this alliance not to be limited to JHC, but also to expand into a bigger relationship that would be beneficial for both sides down the road," said Mitsuru Murai, Chairman of the J.League.

Added Steve McKelvey, Associate Chair for External Relations, "We look forward to the opportunity to share the best in sport management practices from the United States industry with the future leaders of the J.League, and to build a long-term educational partnership." The partnership was brokered by UMass sport management alumnus Takehiko Nakamura, owner of New York City-based sport management consulting firm Blue United.

The relationship commenced with two days of lectures given by McKelvey in Tokyo in mid-January. "The Special Lecture course conducted by UMASS received great praise, and was an important first step," said Tadashi Nakamura, Chief Officer of JHC Project. "From a practical standpoint,

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I appreciate the significance of UMASS' knowledge being shared with JHC and the Japanese sports management field."

About McCormack Department of Sport Management: Created in 1972, the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is the second oldest degree program of its kind in the world, and the largest and most academically diverse sport management department in the nation. Widely respected for the breadth and quality of its curriculum and research, the department has been hailed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Sports Business Journal*, CNBC.com, ESPN.com, Forbes.com and other media outlets as a leader in its field.

About J.League (Japan Professional Football League): Headquartered in Tokyo, J.League features 53 clubs among 3 divisions (J1, J2, and J3) throughout Japan. The 2015 season featured Sanfrecce Hiroshima, the Champion of J.League, who also won third place in FIFA Club World-Cup 2015. The total attendance of 2015 recorded was 10 million, which exceeded the attendance of the previous year by nearly 500,000. For more information about J.League, visit <http://www.jleague.jp/en/>.

About J.League Human Capital: Launched in 2015, an initiative designed to recruit and train top talent for future manager-to-be candidates who will make contributions to the professional sports industry in Japan. The course is comprised of three stages: business school, sports management courses conducted by industry executives in the first year, and in the second year, trainees will go through practical training. Successful candidates will then be offered short-term contracts to work at J-League or in professional sports in Japan. <http://www.jhc-ritsumei.jp/>

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