

- 1) **Name:** Paul Smith
- 2) **Graduation Year:** 2001
- 3) **Job Title:** Executive Director of the Stadium Corp. aka. Finley Stadium
- 4) **Briefly Explain what you actually do for your job:** I oversee all aspects of the Private non-profit corporation that operates Finley Stadium. I deal with legal, governmental and tenant issues. I answer to a board of directors and it is my responsibility that we follow all laws and that we operate in a profitable manner. It is important that I keep a competent staff and that I delegate roles to smart, qualified people.
- 5) **What made you choose Sport Management as a degree plan?**
I entered college at age 31 after a 12-year career in an automotive company. I was never passionate about that job. I decided if I was going to make the change, I wanted it to be in an industry that I loved being around.
- 6) **What experiences helped shape you while you were at UTC (personally and professionally)?**
The fantastic instructors made all the difference for me. The head of the Department at the time, Dr. Leroy Fanning taught me the saying "if it is to be it is up to me." He charged us with this during our events helping AAU, The Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament that UTC hosted and the FCS National Championship game at Finley Stadium. It was all the instructors that helped bring the entire curriculum together to provide me with the confidence to follow my passion.
- 7) **What do you wish you had known/done while you were here at UTC to prepare for the profession?**
I wish I had done a better job networking with my peers, not only in Sports management but in other majors on campus. The connections that you make can sometimes be the difference in whether you achieve success or not at times. Having friends and knowing their capabilities can take a proposal, offer or idea and add just a little bit more to help make you more successful. On the other hand, you can sometimes provide a helping hand to others that can make a difference in your reputation. In short, the importance of networking.
- 8) **What kinds of things should someone do if they wanted to get your job (Be honest about where they should invest their time (i.e., networking, volunteering, academic achievement, etc))?**
Gain a reputation as doer. Someone that gets things done. Don't be afraid of hard work. Someone that is willing to compromise or accept a little less on a deal if it means others involved will also succeed. Strive to always be involved with win-win situations.
- 9) **What are the challenges and blessings of being in this profession? What frustrates you and what keeps you there?**
The challenges are what they are in every workplace, morals, staff members relationships with other staff members. Balancing work and a family life is always difficult but especially in Sports. Dealing with multiple tenants, Chattanooga Football Club, UTC and the Chattanooga Market all need to feel that they are the most important partners we have. However, seeing crowds of people show up and the delight of kids experiencing a sporting event, makes it all worthwhile. Not to mention we are hardly ever sitting behind a desk or doing the same task everyday.