Faculty Highlight: Jon Welty-Peachey

REEEC is pleased to welcome as a faculty affiliate Dr. Jon Welty-Peachey, a new Assistant Professor in the Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism. His research specialization is in sport-for-development and social change, which stemmed from 10 years working as a senior administrator with several international organizations that used sport as a development mechanism. He gained a great appreciation for the power of sport to effect change in various countries and cultures; including Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia. Currently, he is engaged on a longitudinal research project, which has participants from those countries. He will look at the long-term impact of the World-Scholar-Athlete Games on its high school participants, and its ability to stimulate community engagement and activism.

Dr. Welty-Peachey also works with several organizations which use sport to help homeless individuals make positive changes in their lives. There are a number of such organizations in Russia and Eastern Europe that specifically use soccer. Studying and interacting with them would be a natural extension of his work into this area of the world.

In addition, Dr. Welty-Peachey looks forward to continuing to pursue research with Street Soccer USA, an organization which uses soccer to help homeless individuals make positive changes in their lives in 22 U.S. cities. His research is beginning to explore how to most effectively design and structure sport-for-development organizations to have optimal individual, community, and economic impact, and how to leverage these organizations and events for positive social utility. He is also beginning to explore social entrepreneurship in the context of sport-for-development.

Prior to coming to the University of Illinois, Dr. Welty-Peachey was on the sport management faculty at Texas A&M University. It was there that he cultivated his research agenda in sport-for-development and formed the collaborations and partnerships to move that agenda forward. He is very excited to have joined the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism here, as he felt that the vision for the department resonated with his personal vision and research agenda for the social utility of sport. "It is inspiring to be with colleagues who share a similar passion for social change through sport, recreation, and tourism."