The 2017-2018 academic year was the Amherst College Sports Business and Analytics Group’s (SBAG) first year. Jasmine Horan and I are both Statistics majors who are particularly interested in sports analytics, and we thought there were many more students on campus who shared a similar passion, so we were very excited to start the SBAG. The SBAG had a great first year, in which we laid the foundations for the group to play an active role on campus. Students learned how to leverage R to store, analyze and effectively communicate sports-related data, and learned from professionals in the sports industry, including Jeff Greenholtz ’91, the Director of Editorial Research at the NFL. Also, with Coach Justin Serpone’s guidance, the SBAG was able to develop strong connections with the Athletic Department and students are currently doing analytics work for the Track and Field, Cross Country and Baseball teams. Next year, Jasmine and I plan to work with Coach Serpone to find more ways that the SBAG can get involved with teams on campus.

The highlight of the year for the SBAG was attending the 2018 MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference in Boston. The SBAG was able to take 16 students to the conference, where we heard from a wide range of speakers and panels, learned from countless presentations and were able to network and meet with sports industry professionals. Although the conference was full of interesting panels and presentations, the highlight, without a doubt, was President Barack Obama’s *in person* panel where he discussed analytics in sports and his presidency. President Obama was an incredibly captivating and interesting speaker, but unfortunately conference attendees are not allowed to discuss what he talked about (if you are a current underclass student, let this be incentive to go to the conference next year!). In addition to President Obama, students were able to hear from the commissioners of several major sports leagues, including Rob Manfred (MLB) and Gary Bettman (NHL), general managers and other prominent front office personnel from sports teams, including Daryl Morey (General Manager, Houston Rockets), Austin Ainge (Director of Player Personnel, Boston Celtics) and Nick Caserio (Director of Player Personnel, New England Patriots), and ex-professional players including Shane Battier (2 time NBA Champion) and Steve Nash (2 time NBA MVP and future Hall-Of-Famer).

All in all, this was a great year for the SBAG. We are really excited for next year and cannot wait to further strengthen the SBAG’s relationship with the Athletics Department, get more students involved with analytics for Amherst’s sports teams, and potentially even a host a small-scale sports conference right here on campus!