

Campus Recreation

Assessment of: peer organizations and programming

ABSTRACT

Campus Recreation staff visited businesses and other universities to learn about the recreation and fitness programs they offer and the systems they use. We came away with some new ideas, concerning class offerings, intramural scheduling, and teaching methods, which have already helped us improve our recreation and fitness programs.

BACKGROUND

The mission of Campus Recreation is to “provide an active environment for social interaction.” Campus Recreation provides facilities and programs for recreation, personal fitness, personal edification, and education. It also offers opportunities for students to improve their social and leadership skills through employment. The Fitness Recreation Center (FRC) offers full-service recreational facilities, a diverse array of fitness classes, consultations, fitness assessments, equipment orientations, and free fitness and health related lectures and seminars. The goal of the FRC is to provide excellent fitness facilities, services, and programs to the University community.

The purpose of this year’s assessment was to assess our programs, facilities, management and practices in comparison with other organizations. Staff members visited and toured the businesses and other universities and sent their notes and observations to facility management. We researched outdoor programs, fitness programs and intramural sports, and came away with new ideas about rental systems, current trends in programming, and flag football.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Campus Recreation staff members who participated in this assessment are listed below, followed by the programs and organizations they visited:

Natalie Hiller, Intramural Manager: BYU Idaho, Idaho State University, Boise State, Washington State University, Washington University, Western Washington University

Elizabeth Fricke, Outdoor Program Manager: BYU Idaho, Idaho State University, Boise State, Washington State University, Washington University, Western Washington University, National Outdoor Leadership School

Sonja Tysk, Fitness Manager: BYU Idaho, Idaho State University, Boise State, Women’s Club (Missoula), Rancho La Puerta (fitness resort in Mexico)

Dudley Improta, Assistant Director: BYU Idaho, Idaho State University, Boise State University, Mesa State University

Each staff member met with their counterpart at the organization; for example, Elizabeth Fricke met with the Outdoor Program Managers at every organization she visited. We gathered information through clinical observation and interview, using the following procedure:

1. We scheduled a meeting with a director or manager at each organization and toured the facility with a representative from the organization.

2. During meetings with directors and/or managers, we asked specific questions about numbers of participants, computer software, rules, intramural sports, why certain procedures are or are not used, etc.
3. During tours, we asked general questions about facility management, staffing, hours of operation, policies, computer systems and programming.
4. We took notes and wrote an overall assessment based on information collected.
5. Full-time Campus Recreation staff met to discuss findings and recommendations.

After each staff member reported their findings, we compiled the assessments into a comprehensive report.

FINDINGS

Fitness Programs

The Women's Club in Missoula offers eight different types of fitness classes (not including yoga and Pilates). Campus Recreation currently offers a more diverse array of fitness classes and has a more diverse group of potential participants than the Women's Club. Yoga is the most popular fitness class at both the Women's Club and Campus Recreation. Both organizations offer mat and reformer Pilates, but the Women's Club offers more Pilates classes, including a Pilates circuit class, which Campus Recreation might consider. Our staff discovered new Pilates teaching methods by observing other instructors and discovered Gyrotonics, exercise movements derived from a combination of yoga, dance, swimming and gymnastics. Gyrotonics might be worth offering, if it becomes more popular, but a special apparatus would be required, which would be a significant investment.

Outdoor Programs

Washington State University's outdoor program, which is located in the field house rather than in the fitness center, offers a good mix of classes and trips and has a great resource center, with maps and books available for reference and check-out.

The software used to rent outdoor equipment varied from place to place. Western Washington uses a Microsoft Access program developed by one of their students. Every rental shop we visited uses computers instead of handwritten documents, which provides for a "cleaner" rental sheet, but there was no evidence that these systems made it easier to take inventory or make reservations. One main drawback of computer reservations: they are not "in your face." Big charts, used by Campus Recreation to rent rafts, allow the employee to see availability at a glance.

Some outdoor programs pass out information sheets for rentals, which list all the parts the renter is responsible for returning. Idaho State University uses large bags to protect rafts during transport.

Idaho State University's (ISU) Outdoor Program is separate from their rental program. The ISU Outdoor Program has an excellent resource center and is very involved in the Outdoor Education minor and major offers through the Health and Physical Education Department.

Intramurals

Intramurals at BYU-Idaho and Western Washington University provide internship and management positions for student employees, while intramurals at BYU-Idaho and Washington State University use slogans to create excitement and motivate staff.

Lights at the BYU intramural fields allow for later games and extended seasons. This was an important observation: four o'clock games are not popular among UM students. Campus Recreation has had to wrestle

with the semester system in the past, changing spring break dates to allow a reasonable length of time for intramural league play.

We learned about a new way of scheduling that allows competitive games to be played at all skill levels and reduces the number of forfeits, and we gleaned important tips about flag football rules, policies, training, and equipment that will help us institute a league here at UM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our research, the following changes have been made or are underway:

1. Pilates instructors began using new teaching methods in spring 2006.
2. Student intramural officials were allowed to start leading training sessions for other staff in spring 2006.
3. We are developing a resource area with couches, books, maps, and magazines in the Outdoor Program area. This should be finished by fall 2006.

We have made the following plans for future action items:

1. The Women's Club recommends that participants pay for private sessions before joining group classes, so we decided to offer private sessions at the FRC in fall 2006. This will diversify our offerings without requiring us to purchase more equipment.
2. We will discuss the possibility of purchasing lights for the River Bowl intramural field. (Intramural participation justifies the cost.)
3. We will implement competitive scheduling again, but for one intramural league only. (We tried this in fall 2005, but it was time-consuming and unnecessary for all but the no-champs league.)
4. We will institute a flag football league in fall 2006.
5. Natalie Hiller and her staff have created a slogan for intramurals which she will use to help convey the spirit in which the games should be played:
 - a. Play Loud
 - On time
 - b. Play Loud
 - Assertively
 - c. Play Loud
 - Professionally
 - d. Play Loud
 - To keep it safe
 - e. Play Loud
 - While supporting each other
6. We will make wallet-sized cards with intramural event timelines for fall 2006.