

Summer 5-12-2017

A Review of the Campus Recreation Programming Factors Impacting the Recruitment and Retention of College Students

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**A Review of the Campus Recreation Programming Factors Impacting the
Recruitment and Retention of College Students**

A Synthesis Project

Presented to the

Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education

The College at Brockport

State University of New York

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Education

(Athletic Administration)

By

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May 12th, 2017

THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
BROCKPORT, NEW YORK

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**Title of Synthesis Project: A Review of the Campus Recreation Programming
Factors Impacting the Recruitment and Retention of College Students: A
Synthesis of the Research Literature**

Read and Approved by:

Cathy Houston-Wilson

Date: 4/11/17

**Accepted by the Department of Kinesiology, Sport Studies, and Physical Education,
The College at Brockport, State University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education (Physical Education).**

Date: 4/11/17

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	pg.4
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	pg.5
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	
PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT	
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS	
ASSUMPTIONS	
DELIMITATIONS	
LIMITATIONS	
CHAPTER 2: METHODS	pg.10
CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	pg.13
CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION/RESULTS	pg.23
CHAPTER 5: FUTURE RECOMMEDATIONS	pg.27
REFERENCES	pg.28
APPENDIX A: ARTICLE GRID	pg.30

Abstract

This synthesis will highlight the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students. In order to study this matter to the fullest extent there were ten peer-reviewed articles examined that studied the campus recreation programming factors impacting the recruitment and retention of college students. Several factors that affected the recruitment and retention of college students included: Fitness and Wellness Needs, Campus Recreation Programming, Place Bonding, and Student Involvement and Integration.

The review of literature provides information, data, results, and conclusions that support the notion that the best way to recruit and retain a college student is through campus recreation programming because of benefits that are attained through participation. Higher education administrators need to understand the value of campus recreation programming and the influence that it has on a student's experience while bringing value to an institutions bottom line.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Determining what college to attend can be a stressful time for a prospective student. When a prospective student is looking into where they will be spending the next four years, they are looking into a number of different factors. Education is a top priority, but ultimately the prospective student is looking for something outside of class that will draw them back to campus semester after semester. Campus recreation programming can keep the prospective student engaged on campus with a wide variety of informal and formal recreation activities outside of class. The function of collegiate recreational sports is to supply fun and fitness options for the participant (Mull, Bayless, & Jamieson, 2005). Being able to have a student attend your university is only the beginning of your work as a college administrator. College recruitment is the first step of a continuing process, but is an important piece in the work of college administrators. Private colleges and universities continue to place an emphasis on recruitment for it is the life blood of their existence (DesJardins, 2002). Without students, colleges and universities would not be existence, and for this reason it is important to determine what characteristics define your institution and draw students to it. One characteristic that has been a reoccurring theme in a person's decision to attend a college/university is the quality of a collegiate recreation center. A significant number of students indicated the quality of a college's recreational sports program is an important factor in determining their choice of a college/university. In order for a college/university to sustain growth, it must be able to retain a student during their study. Tinto (1993) has developed a theory finding that a strong predictor of student retention is related to academic and social integration. The shortage of integration into the

social system of a college/university may increase the likelihood that students will leave the college. It has been found that campus recreation facilities and programs have an influence on a student's decision to remain at their university (Kampf, & Teske, 2013).

It is known that many prospective students look into the recreational sports programming that a potential college/university is offering in addition to education offerings when deciding on what college/university to attend. A collegiate recreation center is the nucleus for all recreational sports programming offerings. A significant number of future students considered the presence of a student recreation center as being a crucial factor when deciding where to attend a college/university (Hesel, 2000). With this being said, it is important to find out which factors about recreational sports programming appear to have positive effects on student recruitment and retention. The majority of studies indicate that a recreational sports program has an impact on a student's decision to attend a college/university, and that by developing a sense of belonging towards a place a student will choose to continue their education at a college/university. Before this project began, it was suggested to research the different means of programming in recreational sports. The informal and formal recreational programming opportunities provide students with an outlet outside of class that keeps them engaged and involved on campus. Additionally, these programs provide the college student with outlets for holistic wellness and social interaction with other students, faculty and staff (Belch, Gebel, & Maas, 2001). Background information like this shows that campus recreation programming influences the recruitment and retention of college students.

Statement of the Problem

It is evident that the more individuals participate in something, the more they become attached and in turn develop a strong interest in continuing their affiliation. Some individuals develop a sense of belonging, identity, dependence, and even possessiveness toward places such that these places become “their place” or “the only place” for recreational pursuits (Korpels, Hartig, Kaiser, & Fuhrer, 2001). By developing a sense of belonging, the administrators of college/university are doing their job of creating a positive social system for the students. The social system of the college/university focuses on the daily life of students; it consists of the reoccurring interactions among students that take place primarily outside the formal academic areas of the college/university (Henchy, 2011). Recreational sports programming provide opportunities for students to be involved while at the college/university. It is known that a recreational sports program can contribute to the recruitment of a student, and impacts their social identity which in turn enhances the possibility of retaining the college student; however, there appears to be several programming factors that are responsible for the recruitment and retention of a prospective student.

Purpose of the Synthesis

The purpose of this synthesis is to review the literature on the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students.

Operational Definitions

The following presents the operational definitions used in this synthesis:

Recruiting. In context of this synthesis, this refers to finding and attracting prospective college students (Lindsey, & Sessoms, 2006).

Retention. In context of this synthesis, this refers to maintaining current college students until they graduate (Kampf, & Teske, 2013).

Campus Recreation. In context of this synthesis, this refers to programs, activities and facilities provided to prospective and current college students (Hall, 2006).

Recreation Center. In context of this synthesis, this refers to a building that is open to the public where meetings are held, sports are played, and there are activities for young and old people (Miller, 2011).

Assumptions

The assumptions used in this synthesis are as follows:

1. The literature search was exhaustive.
2. The literature represents a broad perspective on what attracts and maintains college students at a particular university.
3. Participants truthfully answered any questions asked regarding the impact campus recreation programming had on their experience at college.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this synthesis are as follows:

1. Literature search was delimited to studies that examined the effect a campus recreation program had on the recruitment and retention of perspective and currently attending college students at colleges and universities.
2. Literature represents literature published from 2001 to present.
3. Literature was delimited to the National Intramural Recreation Sports Associations (NIRSA) recreational sports journal and the Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA) journal.

Limitations

The limitations of this synthesis are as follows:

1. Available research on the use of campus recreation programs for recruitment and retention of college students.
2. Universities who have recreational programming and facilities.
3. Students with involvement in recreational programming.

Chapter 2

METHODS

The purpose of this synthesis is to review the literature on the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students. The studies collected for this synthesis were located using the online database from The College at Brockport Drake Memorial Library. Criteria for selection included scholarly and peer reviewed journals, and full text access. Other articles or sources selected as part of this literature review provided context about the topic, background information and supplemental information to complete the review. A total of 10 articles met the criteria to support the purpose of this study. All sources are cited in the reference section of this paper.

Articles and research studies were found using keywords related to the statement problem such as campus recreation, recreation programming, student recreation center, recruitment, retention, enrollment, relationship between, impact of, and participation. All of the keywords that were included in this search for literature led to a wealth of relevant sources. There was an abundance of information on campus recreation, which had to be arranged in a combination with “recruitment” and “retention”. There were specific criteria an article needed to meet in order to be included in the literature review. Most importantly, articles needed to be from peer-reviewed publications and scholarly materials. Additionally, the research articles had to have been current, from 2001 to present.

There were 438 articles that came from this specific search, but the most relevant articles were used as they pertained directly to the review. If a research article wasn't from a peer-reviewed and scholarly research journal, it was not used. If an article did not include relevant information towards the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students, then it was not used. All of the information that was obtained is applicable in determining the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students. From these searches a total of 10 articles met the criteria and were synthesized for the study. A total of nine articles came from the National Intramural Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) Recreational Sports Journal, and one from the Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, (NASPA). Two of the 10 research articles were quantitative based while one was qualitative, one a review of literature, and six implemented a mixed method triangulation.

The center of this project revolves around college students and therefore all studies reviewed are students attending a college/university. Additionally, all subjects participate in a recreational program and are attending a college/university. The critical mass for this synthesis was 16, 687 subjects. Subjects had to meet the criteria of being either undergraduate or graduate students, and male and females between the age of 17-25. Division of Student Affairs provided participation data for a variety of programs. Information pertaining to the number of student recreation center entry counts was obtained via electronic card swipes. The National Intramural Recreational Sports Association/Student Voice Campus Recreation Impact Student survey was used as instrumentation for attaining data. The survey includes questions that address areas such

as recruitment, retention, satisfaction, involvement, and benefits students have received from participating in campus recreation facilities and programs (Henchy, 2011). The survey includes both multiple choice and open-ended questions. This allows students the opportunity to provide written feedback about campus recreation programming.

Chapter 3

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on the impact of campus recreation programming on the recruitment and retention of college students. This chapter provides the reader with material relating to recreation programming. More specifically, it is devoted to the major themes used to explain the impact campus recreation programming has on an institutions bottom line. Specific topics discussed include: Recruitment, Fitness and Wellness Needs, Campus Recreation Programming, Place Bonding, Student Involvement and Integration, and Retention.

Recruitment

It is evident that in higher education there is a stress on recruiting prospective students. Enrollment numbers have a huge impact on the bottom line of an institution and many universities around the country are putting an added emphasis on the recruitment process of a student. Many universities will need to determine what sets their institution apart from others, and what the strengths of their university are. One characteristic that has been a source of uniqueness is the recreation facilities and programs. The quality of recreation facilities and programs can be a deciding factor in whether or not a student decides to attend a university.

There have been several studies done to assess the impact of campus recreational sports facilities and programs on student recruitment and retention. Lindsey and Sessoms (2006) investigated the impact of campus recreational sports facilities and programs on certain demographic categories of student recruitment and retention. During the study

participants were given a survey modified from the version of the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association's Quality and Importance of Recreational Services Survey. This survey is used by institutions interested in assessing the impact of recreational sports activity on student recruitment, retention, satisfactions, educational development, and involvement. The survey consisted of 50 questions all related to the importance and quality of recreational sports facilities and programs. It was reported that, 31% of the students reported that the availability of recreational sports was important/very important in deciding to attend the college. This research indicates that the presence of recreational sports program can have an impact on the recruitment of a student. Additionally, 94% of respondents indicated that they would like to participate in recreational sports each week. These results highlight a relationship between recreational sports and student recruitment.

Supporting this research is another study by Haines (2001) that assessed undergraduate student benefits from university recreation. Haines investigated the importance of university recreation at a large Midwestern university using the Quality and Importance of Recreational Sports (QIRS) survey. The findings from this study reported that 75% of men considered the availability of recreational facilities and programs to be somewhat to very important in deciding to attend college. Given the findings this data indicates that campus recreation facilities and programs influenced some student's decision to attend a university. Prospective students are searching for universities that offer inclusive recreation opportunities. Recreation programs are now at the top of many prospective students list of needs when deciding to attend a university.

Fitness and Wellness Needs

Over the past decade there has been an increase in the need for wellness activities. America has battled with childhood and adolescent obesity for many years and it was time for someone to take action. In 2010, Michelle Obama launched her fitness campaign, “Let’s Move”. This was the first time America’s health issues were brought to attention by presidential administration as a priority. Her efforts sparked an initiative across the country. Low physical activity levels result in childhood and adolescent obesity. A recreational sports facility has become the place on a college campus that enables students to improve upon their mental and physical well-being (Kampf, 2010). Similar to Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” campaign, an initiative sponsored by the American College Health Association Task Force stressed the importance of campus recreation programming for the Healthy Campus 2010 initiative. It is apparent that campuses across the United States offer an array of opportunities for students to participate in wellness activities that influence the health of students.

In 2009, the National Survey on Student Engagement showed that 60% of students responded that they exercise or participate in physical activities often or very often while attending college (Kampf, 2010). Furthermore, student recreation centers can impact the physical well being of students because of the motivation to participate that is integrated into the climate of a student recreation center. Watson, Ayers, Zizzi, and Naoi (2006) conducted a study to examine the psychosocial variable differences between users and non-users of Student Recreation Centers. A sample of 561 undergraduate and 104 graduate students at a large mid-Atlantic university were surveyed to determine usage patterns and beliefs about the climate of a newly constructed student recreation center.

Two forms of the survey were developed. The first was for student recreation center users (i.e., those who had used the SRC more than three times) and contained 61 items related to usage patterns, satisfaction, climate, exercise knowledge, and health behaviors. The second form was for non-users (i.e., those who had used the student recreation center three or fewer times) and contained 52 items.

In an attempt to better understand the achievement orientation of the student recreation center users, questions were asked about specific motivators for exercise (Watson, Ayers, Zizzi, & Naoi, 2006). It is argued that an individual's motivation to participate is affected by the surrounding environment. This argument makes the design of this study very important because by creating a participatory environment students are improving their well-being. The findings reported that 77% of student recreation center users reported frequently or always trying to improve their conditioning or personal bests. These motivational patterns of users show that those who use the student recreation center are very likely to push themselves to improve their fitness wellness. Additionally, a majority of the students who use the student recreation center reported that the facility's environment allowed 67% of less fit individuals to feel comfortable exercising next to more fit individuals (Watson, Ayers, Zizzi, & Naoi, 2006). It is clear from the findings, that the students who use the student recreation center create a climate that stresses improving physical condition. A majority of less fit students felt comfortable exercising next to fit individuals which positively impacts the well-being of students across the country using student recreation centers.

Campus Recreation Programming

Campus recreation programs provide students with an opportunity to participate in activities geared towards sport and wellness. A college curriculum can be very demanding on a student. Successful institutions are able to serve their students with a quality academic and social system. The social system of the college focuses on the daily life of students; it consists of the recurring interactions among students that take place primarily outside the formal academic areas of the college (Henchy, 2011). Even though a college curriculum can be tough, most students will be given a lot of free time within their schedules. What they do with their free time is entirely up to them. Most students will find an extracurricular activity to participate in or find a part-time job. Campus recreation programs provide students with a number of extracurricular activities to participate in outside of the classroom setting. Most campuses provide a wide variety of programs and activities through such things as intramural sports, informal sports, club sports, and fitness programs (Young, Ross, & Barcelone, 2003). These programs provide students with an outlet from their studies while increasing their overall satisfaction with their experience on campus.

Intramural sports provide a student with the opportunity to compete in officiated games with other students of the same institution. Most campuses will offer intramural leagues which traditionally last 4-5 weeks, and one night tournaments. These offerings reach a wide demographic of students, because they are able to choose a league that is more suitable for their schedule. If a league is too demanding, then they are able to compete in a single day tournament. Club sports on the other hand, provide a student with more structure. Club sports will generally hold 3-4 practices a week, and also travel to

play against other institutions. Club sport teams will have coaches, scheduled practices/games, and also be required to operate within a budget. Informal recreation provides a student with an opportunity to participate in an activity with the most freedom. Most campus recreation programs will have informal recreation hours where students are able to come and participate in a wide variety of activities. These activities range from playing a game of basketball to walking the track with a friend. In recent years there has been a growth in fitness programs. Fitness programs allow students to register for exercise classes that are taught by certified instructors. Popular classes include: Zumba, Yoga, Body Pump, and Spin classes.

Place Bonding

At one point or another in our lives we've come across a person, place, or thing that we've felt a physical tie too. According to Sime (1995), place bonding entails "a strong emotional tie, temporary or long lasting, between a person and a particular physical location" (p.26). However, it should be noted that there is a difference between a place attachment and personal attachment. It is argued that people form emotional attachments to meaningful places in their lives. These places can be a variety of things. It can be their home, work place, school, or even places in which they go to play. As individuals become more attached, they tend to have a stronger interest in continuing their association (Miller, 2011).

Place bonding is especially relevant in the world of recreation. Miller (2011) examined the influence of a student recreation center regarding the social belonging and persistence of students at the university. A 20-item questionnaire made up of two demographic and 18 likert-scale was distributed to undergraduate students at a large

university in the southwestern part of the United States. From this sample, 453 fully completed the questionnaire. 228 of respondents were male and 172 were females. Results of this study revealed that students were in agreement that the student recreation center provided strong emotional ties for them at the university. Additionally, an analyses of student responses verified that the student recreation center was important in creating a social bonding experience. This shows that a student recreation center provides students with a place to establish relationships with other students, faculty, and staff. By establishing a sense of community through the student recreation center, a student is developing an affective relationship on campus.

Student Involvement and Integration

The connection between student involvement and student persistence is one that can be linked to campus recreation programming. Recreational activities like intramurals club sports, and other fitness programs offer a way for students to become involved and interact with one another. Tinto's (1993) theory of integration identifies the importance of not only the academic and social aspects of university life, but also how that creates a sense of belonging or a commitment to the institution. An increase in the rates of student's involvement on campus will improve a student's desire to return to campus the following school year. Recreational programming provides a student with a magnitude of opportunity to become involved on campus while providing a social atmosphere.

Henchy (2011) examined the ways in which participation in campus recreation positively influenced student's lives. A sample of 237 students at a southeastern university was randomly selected to complete the campus recreation survey. The campus recreation survey was based upon the National Intramural Recreational Sports

Association/ Student Voice Campus Recreation Impact Study survey. The survey included questions addressing a variety of areas such as recruitment, retention, satisfaction, involvement, and benefits students have received from participating in campus recreation facilities and programs. Results indicated that students felt their sense of belonging/association strongly or moderately improved from participating in campus recreation activities. This information supports the theory that campus recreation programming can provide students with a sense of contribution. By participating in sports programs and fitness programs students are bonding with other students on campus and establishing friendships. This results in a boost within the social dynamics of an institution.

Additionally, Moffitt (2010) studied the relationship between participation in intramural sports and student satisfaction with the collegiate experience. The design of this study measured the relationship of 34 subjects. The correlation between participation in intramural sports and student satisfaction among undergraduate users and nonusers at a New England University was studied. Results showed that students who participate in the Intramural Sports program are more likely to be engaged in academic life and more likely to participate in campus life at the university. These findings solidify that participation in recreation activities like intramural sports is important to contributing to student involvement across campus. In summary, campus recreation facilities and programs help students integrate with the social dynamics of campus life. Universities and administrators should consider increasing the overall awareness among both students and administrators of the relationship between social integration and student involvement.

Retention

Having the ability to recruit a student to your university is only the first step of an ongoing process as a university administrator. Similar to recruitment, the ability to retain a student at your university until graduation is a key attribute in sustaining growth for a university. It is argued that student participation in recreational programs and fitness activities positively contributes to the retention of college students. There are many different characteristics of recreation programming that affect the quality of student life outside of class. One factor in particular that impacts student retention is the presence of a recreation center. The impact of university recreation center on student retention was studied. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of a student recreation center regarding the social belonging and persistence of students at the university. A sample of 534 undergraduate students was given a 20-item questionnaire consisting of two demographic and 18 Likert-scale items. To ensure that the survey questionnaire was a reliable instrument a pilot study was conducted using undergraduate students enrolled in sports management classes. From this sample, 453 fully completed the questionnaire. 228 of respondents were male and 172 were females. A Pearson's correlation indicated several potential reasons that the student recreation center was very important in producing a social bonding experience including perceived belonging to the university, a sense of community to establish relationships with other students, creating their network of friends, and increase in commitment and trust in peers (Miller, 2011). The findings from this study helped identify that a student recreation center produces a social bond on campus, which results in students remaining at the university. It appears that a student

recreation center is important and that a student recreation center improves a student's sense of belonging on campus.

In addition, Kampf and Teske (2013) investigated the first year retention rates of students who participate in a college recreation program. In the study they evaluated first-time full-time students at a large, four year, residential college. The division of student affairs provided participation data for a variety of programs. Data were obtained for club sport enrollment, campus recreation student employment status, and student recreation center entry counts. A sample of 3,809 students consisted of 41.5% men and 58.5% women. The study reported that students who used the recreation facility were more likely to be retained. Each one-unit increase in student recreation center entry counts increased the odds of enrolling the following year by 1.44 times (Kampf, & Teske, 2013). This finding shows that the most significant factor on retention is related to a student's entry counts at a campus recreation center. The more a student used the recreation center, the more likely they were to contribute to a university's retention rates. This statistic is very important to recreational professionals because they are able to present high administrators at a university with data contributing to the retention of students. Students will put an emphasis on academics, but a campus recreation center provides students with a positive outlet from class. This is especially true when a student is contributing to their overall health and well-being. As universities begin to study the elements related to retention they would find that recreational programs provide universities with a positive retention rate and also contribute to a positive campus experience among students.

Chapter 4

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

This synthesis examined ten articles in order to provide an understanding about the campus recreation programming factors that impact the recruitment and retention of college students. A number of different factors play into the recruitment and retention of college students. Specific factors discussed include: fitness and wellness needs, sport and fitness activities, place bonding, and student integration. The different studies aimed to measure the benefits that are associated with campus recreation programming and how they play a role in the total student experience. Recreational sports, at the collegiate level, appear to have positive effects on student retention, satisfaction, and recruitment (Downs, 2003; Haines, 2001; Lindsay & Sessoms, 2006; Henchy, 2011). With recruitment and retention being key influences in sustaining growth for a university it is important to identify what about your university is appealing to a prospective student. It is important to be mindful that one factor of campus recreation does not overpower another because every student is different and has different interests. However, through the ten articles examined it is evident that campus recreation programming as a whole can play a huge role in a student choosing to study at a university and remaining until graduation.

An important factor of campus recreation programming that contributed to the recruitment and retention of a college student was the presence of campus recreation center. According to one research finding, students who used the recreation facility were more likely to be retained. Each one-unit increase in student recreation center entry counts increased the odds of enrolling the following year by 1.44 times (Kampf, & Teske, 2013). This measure provides valuable data connecting social integration and retention

among students. This figure provides administrators with substantial proof revealing the impact on retention related to a student's use of a campus recreation center. The more a student uses the recreation center, the greater chance a university has of retaining that student.

Furthermore, a connection between campus recreation and recruitment also exists. According to a research study, 47% of students reported that the availability of recreational sports was important/very important in deciding to attend the college. In terms of gender, 60% of male students reported the availability of recreational sports to be important/very important in deciding to attend the college (Lindsey, Sessoms, & Willis, 2009). The presence of a recreational sports program can be a deciding factor amongst students when deciding which university to attend. As an administrator you want to ensure that your institution has the advantage over other institutions that a student is looking to attend. Additionally, 73% of all students responded that sports and fitness activities would be important to them after graduation ((Lindsey, & Sessoms, 2006). These results are consistent with results of other studies and report the significance of a recreation facility and programming. The availability of a recreational sports facility or programs was important to a significant number of students when deciding to attend the college. Furthermore, their participation in recreational programming influenced them to continue with fitness after graduation. This statistic shows that a recreational program has the ability to influence a student's overall health awareness. Not only does a recreational facility and program influence a student's decision to attend a university, but also it has the ability to develop a student with healthy habits even after graduation.

A connection also exists between social belonging and student retention. For many years it has been argued by recreation professionals that student participation in recreational programming positively contributes to the social identity and retention of college students. It is important to study why the presence of a recreation program is important to student life as a whole and what benefits students receive from participating in the program. It has been found that a campus recreation facility that houses recreational programming can function as a place of community to “meet friends, hang out, and see and be seen” (Dalgarn, 2001, p.68). This indicates that a number of college students perceive a connection to their on-campus facility because it provides a place for them to interact and establish relationships. A research study was performed to examine the influence of a student recreation center regarding the social belonging and persistence of students at a university. The results indicated that students were in agreement that the student recreation center provided strong emotional ties for them at the university. Additionally, the respondents indicated that the student recreation center created a social bonding by establishing relationships with other students (Miller, 2011). The most crucial results in that the student recreation center allowed for students to feel connected to the university. By revealing a sense of belonging to the university was created through participation at the student recreation center it appears apparent that retention to the university is then created.

In addition to sense of belonging, the need for students to be involved in wellness activities has an impact on the recruitment and retention of college students. The campus recreation center has become the nucleus of a college campus that enables students to participate in activities geared towards improving their physical and mental well-being.

This resource will improve the overall health of a campus. For this reason, students are looking for a college campus that offers an inclusive recreation program when deciding to attend a college. In a research study geared towards examining which ways participation in campus recreation positively influenced student's lives, it was found that a number of fitness and wellness influences existed. When dealing with either recruitment or retention, it was found that 28% of all survey participants responded that the recreation facilities and programs had a strong or moderate influence on their decision. When deciding to continue at the university, 31% of all survey participants responded that the recreation facilities and programs had a strong or moderate influence on their decision (Henchy, 2011). This shows that the fitness and wellness trend amongst today's student's shows that they are looking for programming and the relevance of a quality program will impact a student's decision to attend a university, or continue their education at the school. Furthermore, from this study it was found that 57% of students felt their overall health had strongly or moderately improved from their participation in campus recreation activities (Henchy, 2011). These results support previous research that indicates students are looking for a campus recreation program that will contribute to their overall health and wellness. To summarize, there are a number of campus recreation factors that contribute to the recruitment and retention of college students. The most important elements found through this synthesis are the presence of a campus recreation center, recreation programming, fitness and wellness needs, and the social bond that a student establishes through participation.

Chapter 5

Recommendations for Future Research

A campus recreation center and recreation programming can have a huge impact on the recruitment and retention of college students. It is known that a recreational sports program can contribute to the recruitment of a student, and impacts their social identity, which in turn enhances the possibility of retaining the college student. Even though a significant amount of research has been done to support the impact campus recreation programming has on the recruitment and retention of a college student there is more research that can be conducted.

An area that could be included in future research is to better identify student participation in specific programs at the student recreation center, such as intramurals, club sports, group exercise classes, and outdoor recreation programs, as potential reasons for student recruitment and retention. It is important to note the different campus recreation programming and how participation within those specific programs specifically relates to student recruitment and retention. Student's participation patterns in programs can be further examined instead of the overall generalizability of programming. By examining the current research and future research topics campus recreation professionals will have data supporting the significance of campus recreation as it relates to the benefits students obtain through use and participation in recreation programming.

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