



# **WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**

Campus Recreation

## **Campus Recreation Program Review Site Review Team Final Report**

**June 29, 2016**

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## Methodology

On June 2-3, 2016, the site review team convened on the Weber State University campus to study programs, facilities, and services of the Department of Campus Recreation (Campus Rec). The site review is an important step in the program review process within the Division of Student Affairs (SA) wherein each department conducts a program review on a five-year cycle. In conjunction with the 2015-16 Campus Recreation Self Study, the site review team was formed in April 2016 and began reviewing materials provided by the institution (e.g., institutional data web pages, *Student Affairs Program Review Site Review Team Handbook*, reports from the 2010-11 Campus Recreation program review process, Campus Recreation web pages, etc.).

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As detailed in the WSU Student Affairs publication, entitled, *Program Review: Site Review Team Handbook*, revised January 29, 2016, the responsibilities of the site review team were as follows:

- Evaluating the self-study document and additional materials provided by the department;
- Interviewing department members, students, and Student Affairs Division leadership during the site visit;
- Drafting preliminary findings of strengths and areas of improvement for the department and presenting them at the end of the day of interviews; and
- Providing a site visit report within six weeks following the site visit.

On May 3, 2016, the Coordinator of Student Affairs Assessment conducted a conference call with the site review team members to discuss team responsibilities, formulate interview schedules, and prepare a site visit itinerary designed to effectively utilize time spent on campus to meet with stakeholders and to tour

facilities. The team subsequently prepared interview questions to align with team responsibilities and created templates to effectively record responses to interview questions for each interview session.

The site review team finalized site-visit priorities and interview questions prior to the start of interviews on June 2. Though the external reviewer served as moderator for most interviews, the entire team was engaged in asking primarily open-ended questions. The team readily adapted interview questions to seek additional information as needed to adequately inform the review process. Interview notes were taken on laptops and by hand, with consistent recording roles given to each team member. Interview responses were consolidated into a table to track themes related to areas of strength, needs for improvement, and recommended courses of action.

Initial findings and recommendations were presented to the Dean of Students and the Vice President of Student Affairs on the final day of the site visit, June 3. Site review team observations and recommendations then served as the guide for creating this final report.

## **Introduction**

The Campus Recreation program-review process began with an intensive department self study, during which services, activities, facilities, and structures were examined to identify areas of excellence and areas in need of improvement. The Campus Rec self-study report was thorough and concise, and both its content and related feedback from the director regarding desired improvements were consistent with responses obtained during stakeholder interviews, with few surprises.

The site review team, comprised of one external and two internal reviews, was formed to provide objective feedback to augment the Campus Rec self-study document. The reviewers' combined depth and breadth of experience and knowledge in the fields of Health Promotion & Human Performance, Campus Recreation Administration, and Student Union Management provide multiple perspectives from which to assess the department. The team members recognize there are factors that restrict the team's ability to fully understand the unique contributions and limitations of WSU Campus Rec (i.e. there are limits to what information is obtained and how it is analyzed and integrated into this report). These include the short time frame in which to interface with stakeholders and the inability to gather first-hand information through participation as either a staffer or customer.

The recommendations and comments provided herein are based upon industry trends and the team's understanding of the WSU environment, and these are intended to assist our colleagues as they shape the future of the department.

Throughout on-site interviews, it was clearly stated that Campus Recreation delivers essential services for the benefit of students, faculty, and staff. By participating in Campus Recreation activities patrons have the ability to directly contribute to their own physical and mental health while developing social bonds and integrating into the WSU community. Students interviewed by the site review team described what they have learned through their Campus Rec experiences, stating, “The more involved you get the better your experience at WSU is” and that, “The outdoors is a lifelong non-discriminatory place for everyone.” One Club leader went on to state, “I have learned management of personal time as well as team and business management.”

## **Key Findings**

The department is appropriately positioned within the university under the Division of Student Affairs, and there is a clear vision regarding its contribution to the missions of WSU and the division. Though Campus Recreation has written and published vision and goal statements, the department needs to create and disseminate a clear, concise mission statement that is understood and easily remembered by all. Student Affairs student-learning outcomes (SLOs) shape Campus Rec training and activity-planning efforts, with staff focusing on one to three of the seven SLOs annually.

Strong student and administrative support exists for Campus Recreation, and this will allow the department to grow through the challenges of today while building upon past and current successes. Since the Campus Recreation Site Review in 2011, Weber State University has invested significant financial and physical resources in this department. This point is demonstrated by the investment of \$9.5 million for construction of the Wildcat Center expansion of the C. William Stromberg Complex. As a result of the project, Campus Recreation gained dedicated facilities in which to operate on the Ogden Campus. This allowed for growth of formal and informal sports and fitness activities, along with the addition of staff to support new activities and services. Indoor recreation space on the Davis Campus is also of high quality and is sized appropriately for program growth. Now the department is poised to invest in student learning, staff development, outdoor facilities, and delivery of programs and services to attract and retain WSU students.

The Campus Recreation director and coordinators keep abreast of national collegiate recreation practices and strive to evolve with, or ahead of, industry trends. Applying these trends to WSU proves challenging. Unique to WSU, and related to Campus Rec programming efforts, is the student profile. With an average undergraduate age of 23, less than one thousand students living on campus, and family and work obligations serving as the highest student priorities, the student body presents challenges to programming for those staff coming from traditional residential-campus models. Given this, it is essential that use of student demographics, enrollment statistics, recreation user data, and creative outreach

efforts continue to expand. Staff must be proactive, reactive, and creative in their programming efforts in order to effectively reach and engage the WSU student body.

WSU Campus Recreation programs and staff are primary located on the Ogden Campus, while both Campus Rec staff and Davis Campus leadership stated that more diverse programming is needed at Davis. Purposeful programming is taking place, with industry trends driving program-related decisions. WSU Campus Recreation offers major program areas seen at institutions, though the diversity of sports and activities offered within each department sub-unit is limited by availability of space and/or staffing as described in subsequent sections of this report.

Student Affairs and Campus Recreation leadership conveyed the philosophy of program excellence and quality of the participant experience over program quantity. That said, at first glance WSU program participation rates appear to be significantly lower than the national average. However, once enrollment is adjusted for on-line, dual-enrolled, and part-time students, and when the number of off-campus-based students is factored in, WSU Campus Rec user rates fall closer to the norm.

Solid efforts are underway in all other programmatic aspects of Campus Recreation in order to serve students and staff. All stakeholders interviewed reported that the Outdoor Program is the most outstanding area of excellence. Exceptional staff, leadership development, student learning, and affordable prices are all reasons given for strong, positive sentiments expressed about the Outdoor Program. This area is limited in growth by the size and quality of activity spaces, customer-service areas, and equipment storage available on campus.

Professional staff members within Campus Rec possess the qualifications required for their positions, though job titles differ from the industry standard in some cases. Staff is encouraged and supported to pursue professional development opportunities. Members of the staff interviewed were seen as dedicated to the department and to the community, with many serving on essential WSU and off-campus committees and boards.

It is important to note that the majority of the Campus Rec professional staff is relatively new to WSU, joining the staff within the past 2 years. Staff turnover, the addition of new positions, and multiple vacancies have negatively impacted program consistency, sense of team, staff workload, and the ability to be proactive. Given the vacancies, the director stepped in temporarily to handle day-to-day operations within numerous units of Campus Rec. Staff retention must be addressed. Recommended strategies include: changes to position titles and/or position responsibilities; addition of staff to spread the workload; and creation of opportunities for advancement.

The state-of-the-art Wildcat Center includes: Campus Rec managed fitness rooms; strength and conditioning spaces; locker rooms; service areas; and office space. The

opening of the center has enhanced the WSU user experience over the past 3 years. Opportunities exist to grow participation in indoor activities offered by Intramural Sports, Rec Clubs, Aquatics, and drop-in recreation. However, program expansion opportunities are limited for outdoor-based sports due to the lack of lighted sport fields and the lack of dedicated recreation fields on campus. Existing shared sports fields are in high demand during afternoon hours, with Athletics taking first priority. Development of lighted fields in the short term is needed in order to grow participation. Other areas of facility investment include the Challenge Ropes Course, the Swenson Pool (currently closed due to a major maintenance issue), and the Weber Rocks indoor climbing wall.

The trifurcated model for operating programs within the C. William Stromberg Complex brings with it synergies and challenges. Differing technologies, management staff, and policies exist within the three departments that operate programs within the complex (i.e., Intercollegiate Athletics, Department of Health Promotion & Human Performance, and Campus Recreation, create a confusing customer and staff experience). The Division of Administrative Services is responsible for overall maintenance, custodial services, major building equipment replacement, and long-range development of the Stromberg Complex. Patrons and staff of the various units are often left perplexed by differing rules for access and procedures for dealing with problems that inevitably arise (e.g. repairs needed, reservation requests, customer service, cleaning issues, etc.).

Recently steps have been taken by the Campus Rec director and the department chair of Health Promotion & Human Performance (HPHP) to partner in resolving these issues. In addition to these, the site review team recommends that the Dean of the College of Education, the Dean of Students, and the Vice President of Student Affairs begin a dialogue with the leaders of HPHP and Campus Recreation to address major issues and to create a roadmap for future operations. The collaborative partnerships between HPHP and Campus Rec leadership could then establish clear expectations from which policies, procedures, and communication strategies may be addressed.

## **Mission, Goals, and Outcomes**

Campus Recreation stated values, vision, and goals align with mission of WSU and Student Affairs. The department uses a vision statement instead of a mission statement, and though many interviewed could state parts of the Campus Rec vision and value statements, neither staff nor students could routinely recite either completely. Thus, the site team recommends that the department create a concise, easily remembered, and easily interpreted mission statement. For example Nike, a Fortune 500 company, has the following mission statement, “To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.” As persons within all interviews could easily recall the words “inspire” and “active, healthy lifestyles” from Campus

Rec vision, values, and purpose statements, it is recommended that these words be included in the new mission.

Department goals listed on the website and in the self-study document provide detail regarding the functions of Campus Recreation and these may be more appropriately titled as such. Goals detailed in the *Campus Rec Five-Year Plan* have realistic timelines and are tracked annually.

Student leadership and learning opportunities are bountiful within Campus Rec, with nearly one hundred student employees and thousands of participants each year. Campus Rec staff members understand the crucial role they play in student retention, and point to the fact that healthy, engaged students are more successful. Due to frequent changes in key Campus Rec professional staff positions within the past five years, purposeful programming related to the seven established Student Affairs student-learning outcomes focused on reporting results in only one to three outcomes annually.

Student Affairs leadership recognizes that Campus Rec staff has continued to maintain their philosophy of student learning despite professional staff turnover. Student employees reported mixed results from these efforts in terms of their training and associated knowledge levels attained. Highlights of success in student-learning opportunities include students working in Intramural Sports & Rec Clubs and in the Outdoor Program. Students interviewed from these sub-units readily described knowledge and skills gained through their employment within Campus Rec (e.g., skills in the areas of time management, interpersonal communication, safety, etc.). Athletic Training faculty stated that their students receive invaluable real-world experience through their work within Campus Rec.

The site review team recommends that Student Affairs leadership continue to allow the Campus Rec director time to solidify the new Campus Rec team, and to continue to focus on a limited number of Student Affairs student-learning outcomes for the next year. The site review team recommends that the Campus Rec director host in-service trainings and practical planning sessions for the Campus Rec team, with support from SA Assessment staff, in order to modify and apply SA rubrics specifically to Campus Rec. This will allow those program coordinators not currently doing so to apply SA student-learning outcomes to their specialty areas. Campus Rec staff would then create general mechanisms to demonstrate and document that student learning is taking place. In order to maximize the benefits of this process, the desired outcomes and related tracking methods ought to be shared with students and discussed routinely at staff meetings.



## Core Programs & Services

### Intramural Sports & Rec Clubs

The Intramural Sports (IM) program area is strong in terms of student-employee development; students and CR staff describe the IM employee-training program as thorough. Participants stated that, “IM has good structure and organization, very few problems.” The coordinator demonstrates creativity in terms of efforts to encourage female participation, e.g. IM leagues that are open to all genders are offered in each sport.

Many traditional IM teams sports are offered. The IM & Rec Club coordinator strives to create new activities to peak student interest and to remain current with industry standards. The availability of indoor sports activity spaces is reported as adequate to meet current IM program needs and student demand. However, the ability to increase student participation and diversity of outdoor IM offerings is restricted due to the lack of sports fields at desirable times of day.

Rec Clubs have a tradition of providing regional and national competition for students. The institution supports Rec Clubs by providing: practice and competition space; financial assistance; budget tracking and purchasing services; athletic training services; and general club management training for club leaders. Student managers in Rec Clubs report strong mentoring relationships with IM & Rec Clubs coordinator. The limiting factor for this program area is, again, field space. The need for lighted fields on the Ogden campus was highlighted by many interviewed, stating that field lights are needed to grow participation and to cut down on club travel time to off-campus practice facilities.

The site review team recommends adding field lighting to existing sports fields in the near future; lighted fields are needed to add new sports and to expand existing IM and Rec Club activities in the evening; e.g. flag football leagues could be scheduled on weekday nights instead of only on weekends. In the long-term, the addition of dedicated recreational sports fields, for sports such as softball and soccer, is recommended. This will allow Campus Rec to grow participation, increase the diversity of sports offered, and improve the student recreation experience.

Lastly, in order to be consistent with terminology used within the National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association, the site team recommends that Campus Rec consider changing the name of this sub-unit from Rec Clubs to Sport Clubs.

### Aquatics & Safety

This sub-unit has received increased focus in the past year. Improvements have been made to risk management processes and related training materials. The new Aquatics & Safety (A&S) coordinator redeveloped the safety-training curriculum, created a new lifeguard manual, and is currently reviewing safety-skills auditing practices. The coordinator of this unit previously studied new approaches to

auditing rescuer skills and is rolling out these practices within WSU Campus Rec to make skills testing less intimidating and more mentoring in nature.

In terms of programming, drop-in swim appears to be more popular with staff and the community than with students, though data is not available to confirm this. The Aquatics program area has the capacity to reach under-served populations. Family programming is one consideration. The A&S coordinator noted that lap swimming and lessons are the primary activities offered in the six-lane pool, with adult swimming lessons recently added to their line up of popular classes. More variety is needed and the sub-unit is addressing this (e.g., recently an inflatable obstacle course has been added to the mix and the A&S coordinator soon plans to add basketball, volleyball, etc.).

Operation of the Swenson Pool does not reside with Campus Rec, and Campus Rec is not necessarily interested in taking over management of the pool. The Campus Rec A&S coordinator suggests that clear boundaries and responsibilities be established for each department using and operating the pool, and CR staff would like to have a stronger voice in decisions made regarding the Swenson Pool, especially small, day-to-day operating decisions. The site review team concurs, and this is addressed in more detail in the *Campus Relations & Collaborations* section, below.

### **Fitness**

Group Exercise and Strength & Conditioning programs have high-quality equipment, and fitness facilities are appropriately sized to meet the needs of the campus population. A mix of Group Exercise classes are offered throughout the week on the Ogden Campus, and the director continues to fine-tune class diversity and schedules at the Davis Campus fitness facility. Fitness Programs have a great opportunity for expansion with its high quality facilities that are currently under utilized.

Staff turnover in the Fitness coordinator position has been challenging with regard to program delivery and student-employee development. At the time of the site visit an hourly employee managed the Group Exercise program, with non-student instructors, and the Campus Rec director managed the Personal Training program. Both areas have unmet potential as a result. This will require intensive effort from the new coordinator, scheduled to begin in July 2016, in order to be fully realized. In addition, the director plans to create a stronger student-development model for group exercise instructors and personal trainers, potentially in partnership with HPHP. As management of this sub-unit solidifies and program growth is demonstrated over time, additional fitness staff is recommended to enhance student-learning opportunities quality of instruction, and participant satisfaction.

### **Marketing and Operations**

This unit has continually grown and evolved since its inception in 2013. Social media efforts have expanded and now include the use of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Marketing & Operations (MOPs) coordinator produces high-quality print and social media materials, assisting the department and its sub-units to

promote services to the campus community. Popularity of the Campus Rec website was confirmed by the Dean of Students when he shared with the site review team that Campus Rec web pages account for three of the top ten most visited Student Affairs web pages. Web data indicate a 90% increase in hits to the Campus Rec homepage in one year, 2013-2014.

The MOPs coordinator acknowledges that enhancements are needed to better showcase facilities and activities at both campuses. Improvements in way-finding signage, within and outside of buildings, are needed to direct patrons to Campus Rec facilities within larger complexes. The coordinator is incrementally addressing changes in signage and building graphics in order to peak the visual interest of potential users and current participants. These needed improvements are especially true at the Davis campus and acceleration of progress is recommended there.

Facility card swipe data indicate significant growth in user numbers on both campuses from 2013-14 to 2014-15, with total visits increasing from approximately 96,000 to 147,453 and the total number of unique visitors increasing from 6,276 to 8,426. This significant growth is expected to trend further upward with increased marketing efforts.

One major consideration that the site review team and the majority of stakeholders identified is the need for revised and expanded branding efforts for Campus Recreation. This includes an emphasis on the mission, target markets, and major functioning areas within the department. The recommended goal is to build brand recognition for Campus Rec as a whole over the next two years, creating a similar level of awareness and passion for department as is currently demonstrated for the Outdoor Program. It is critical to Campus Rec success that marketing plans are developed to build its brand; the department needs to effectively communicate who they are, what they do, and whom they serve. In addition, the MOPs coordinator also identified lack of direct email access to the student body as an obstacle to engaging students, and the review team recommends that limited promotional access to campus be granted.

This position also coordinates special events and manages the scheduling and supervision of facilities. The challenges of operating Campus Recreation facilities and in providing strong customer service by this unit is discussed in detail in the *Key Findings* and *Campus Relations & Collaboration* sections of this report. The MOPs coordinator has made in-roads with staff from other departments concerning shared facilities, working directly with HPHP and Facility Management staff regarding: building operations; equipment and facility cleaning and repairs; and customer service. The MOPs coordinator works closely with the A&S coordinator to ensure the safety of participants throughout Campus Rec activity areas.

In the self-study document, the director reported focused effort by the MOPs coordinator regarding involvement in Student Affairs student-employee trainings

and in creation of student-learning and training modules for Campus Rec employees. The effectiveness of these efforts was confirmed within many positions; however, interview responses indicate a greater degree of consistency in implementation is needed. In addition, the site review team recommends that goals for improvement in this area include creation of a forum for student-employee feedback to address training and policy concerns on a routine basis.

Due to the broad responsibilities within Marketing & Operations, the site review team also recommends that an additional profession position (e.g., assistant coordinator) be added when developing long-range staffing plans.

### **Outdoor Program**

The Outdoor Program (OP) is the most recognized unit within Campus Rec. All groups interviewed raved about this area; the popularity of the Outdoor Program is striking. WSU has invested significant financial resources and staffing (i.e., three professional staff) and this has paid off. The current pricing structure, described as affordable by students and staff, is pointed to as a key component for increasing participant and involvement in the outdoors.

The OP program well organized, marketed, and respected both on and off campus. OP staff point to the WSU and Ogden wellness and outdoor cultures as essential elements to program success. When planning activities, OP focuses upon, “finding the newest adventures and riding the trends to keep students interested.” Another contributing factor is the quality of the experience; OP staff and student-employees are described as “...educators, putting learning first.”

Strategic partnership efforts have produced strong relationships with national associations, campus constituents, and the Ogden outdoor community. Many of these are highlighted in other sections of this report. In addition to maintaining current collaborative partnerships with units on campus (e.g., HPHP and Residence Life), the site review team recommends further exploration of programming for families of WSU community and under-represented groups as these may be an areas of untapped potential.

Infrastructure investment is needed to meet current demand and to build in capacity to further grow OP participation. First and foremost, the home of OP, Annex 9, is a remodeled house on campus that was not designed to accommodate the needs of a vibrant Outdoor Program. As customer demand for rental equipment is not being met, essential concerns to address include the functionality of customer service spaces and the capacity of equipment storage areas. Recommendations are included in the *Facilities, Equipment & Technology* section, below.

### **Campus Relations & Collaboration**

Campus Recreation reports to the Dean of Students under the umbrella of the Division of Student Affairs, and this relationship provides natural opportunities to

collaborate with other SA directors and their staff. The Women's Center is highly interested in growing partnerships with Campus Rec beyond annual support for *Take Back the Night* (e.g., self-care and trauma informed yoga). Housing staff interviewed reported a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of Campus Rec programs, services, and promotions. Campus Rec partners with various SA units for wellness fairs; road races; stress awareness fairs; Residence Life Living and Learning Community events; and a host of campus-wide events. The majority of Student Affairs directors interviewed were eager to collaborate more frequently with Campus Rec staff, and this group pointed to the staff turnover within Campus Rec as a limiting factor in current partnerships.

When interviewed, the Dean of Students and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs stated that Campus Rec has made progress in collaborative efforts at multiple levels, highlighting strong relationships with Residence Life, Student Involvement & Leadership, Student Wellness, and various outdoor recreation organizations. The Campus Rec director is strategic in the development of these partnerships, and all events and activities are designed to engage and retain WSU students.

Most striking to the external reviewer is the current relationship with, and the ability to obtain user-permits from, the U.S. Forest Service. This is often an arduous process that requires careful negotiation, proven stewardship, respect for public lands, and interpersonal skills on the part of the Outdoor Program staff. This is to be commended.

In 2015, Campus Rec partnered with WSU Admissions for the Experience Weber orientation program by providing overnight outdoor recreation activities for forty incoming students. This program is anticipated to expand to one hundred students in 2016. Campus Rec staff stated that they would like to have an increased presence during student orientation (i.e., time at the end of day for activities and/or a content-based session to emphasize the importance of engaging in healthy, active lifestyles while attending WSU). The site team recommends continued pursuit of these opportunities, in collaboration with the Dean of Students, to bring students into Campus Rec facilities on both campuses as part of their early experiences.

Campus Rec shares facilities and collaborates with Student Wellness and Employee Wellness program staff. The three departments are housed in adjacent areas of the Wildcat Center, providing a unique opportunity to connect and partner on a regular basis. At times there is overlap between roles in serving the wellness needs of the campus community and a more coordinated effort in planning and in distinguishing roles between the three units could prove helpful. Additionally, the site team recommends that WSU senior administration consider establishing an institution-wide Wellness Coalition. This group would be comprised of decision makers who are directly involved with campus wellness strategic planning and wellness service delivery (e.g., Dean of Students; leaders of the Health Center, Employee Wellness, HPHP, Counseling & Psychological Services, and Student Wellness; and other relevant academic areas). The purpose of this coalition would be to: shape annual

wellness initiatives; clarify roles and priorities; maximize campus resources; and shape campus policy.

The major impediment to expanding and improving Campus Rec collaborative relationships over the past five years is lack of consistency within Campus Rec staff positions; staff turnover and position vacancies within Campus Rec have stifled partnership development. SA directors and Campus Rec staff affirmed this observation when interviewed. With a full complement of Campus Rec staff beginning this summer and with the passion expressed by the Campus Rec director to build upon intra-campus relationships, improvements in this area are highly anticipated. The site review team recommends that revisions to the Campus Rec five-year strategic plan specifically identify targeted collaborative programming efforts and address areas of investment in building campus relationships.

Since its inception, Campus Recreation has been inextricably linked with academic programs within the College of Education. Until the mid-nineteen eighties, facilities, faculty, and staff of these now distinct units were integrated. Faculty served in dual roles, proving recreation program management and course instruction. Campus Recreation was later repositioned within the university organizational structure under the umbrella of Student Services, and now it is part of the Division of Student Affairs. With this separation, the partnership between HPHP and Campus Rec has had points of tension (e.g., vying for limited available space, differing management philosophies, etc.). Specialized practices and increased demand for facilities in which to run expanded programs contributed to tensions between the departments.

Throughout this multi-decade period of change, numerous efforts to collaborate were initiated:

- Campus Rec staff continued to teach or lecture in academic courses;
- The departments created a shared position to staff a Weber Rocks climbing wall in Swenson Arena;
- Athletic Training and Campus Rec partnered to create a part-time athletic trainer for Rec Clubs.

However, points of contention and the corresponding need for improvements in the Campus Rec-HPHP relationship were identified during the 2011 Campus Rec program-review process. Again, steps were taken within both units to alleviate tensions, yet areas of conflict intensified during the Wildcat Center project as space available for classes and activities was limited during construction.

The HPHP department chair and the Campus Recreation director have recently renewed their commitment to resolve matters immediately and to build trust between department faculty and staff. This philosophical shift in leadership of the units, along with newly filled HPHP facility manager position, is anticipated to have significant impact upon their future partnership. Though some hiccups have occurred recently, HPHP faculty reported that Campus Rec staff members have been good partners (e.g., willing to work together for use of the pool, kayak storage, etc.).

HHP and Athletic Training & Nutrition faculty stated they really enjoy working with the Campus Rec director.

Campus Rec and HHP leaders are currently creating clear methods for resolving facility and equipment issues that arise. Untapped potential lies in their ability to fully maximize customer service and learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff. As stated in the *Key Findings* section, above, clear direction and dialogue at the vice president and dean level is recommended to support HHP and Campus Rec in creating the road map to success.

Lastly, a point of pride in campus relations for this department is the composition of the Campus Rec Advisory Board; the make up of the board is extraordinary (i.e., rarely has the external reviewer seen regular participation by Vice Presidents and a department chair on a Campus Rec board). The commitment of campus leadership on the board allows for diverse perspectives to be heard, builds consensus among the leadership team at multiple levels, and enables decision-making efficiencies. The recent addition of the HHP department chair to the Campus Rec Advisory Board is anticipated to result in greater transparency and increased levels of trust between these units. Furthermore, connections with WSU Student Involvement & Leadership are stronger because Campus Rec has had two senators actively engaged with the board.

## **Department Leadership & Staffing**

Stakeholders interviewed portrayed the director as a high-energy, positive, and engaging leader. The current professional staff was described as highly engaged, with strong work ethics, and modeling active lifestyles. Student employees and campus colleagues stated that Campus Rec leaders live the vision and mission. Professional staffers hold essential degrees, experience, and certifications related to their positions per industry standards. Campus Rec staff report that they are given freedom to customization programs and flexibility for use of their professional development dollars. The director supports Campus Rec staff in developing credentials and obtaining certifications that directly benefit WSU and the employee.

Divisional investment in Campus Recreation since the last program review, coupled with creative allocation of staff funding by the director, resulted in creation of new positions and changes within existing positions. Campus Recreation staffing increased from five full-time positions in 2010-11 to the current nine, comprised of eight professional staff and one classified employee. In addition, approximately 95 student and hourly employees assist in the delivery of Campus Rec programs and services. Highlights of these changes include creation of the Marketing & Operations coordinator, which has taken pressure off other department coordinators to market activities thus permitting them to focus on other essential functions of their positions. Other highlights include promotion of an OP coordinator to assistant director, now supervising two coordinators, which has led to dynamic growth

within that unit. The creation of a full-time Aquatics and Safety coordinator strengthened department risk management efforts.

The staffing level for IM & Rec Clubs seems light, with one coordinator and no support staff, considering the number of high-risk sports within Rec Clubs and the myriad of responsibilities that fall upon this position. However, Student Manager positions are in place to assist with daily and weekly contact with clubs, and training of students in these positions is reported by all parties to be thorough. The site review team recommends that, during long-range staff planning, the Campus Rec director adopt a staffing model which includes either a senior coordinator or assistant director of Competitive Sports, under which there would be a coordinator or assistant coordinator to assist with Clubs and IM.

Campus Rec hourly and student employees are given opportunities to obtain credentials that will assist them in their future career pursuits. Student Affairs learning outcomes shape student employee training and development efforts. SA directors interviewed reported having good experiences with Campus Rec student workers, and stated that student employees are highly visible within the facilities. They further specified that student learning, leadership, and training within Campus Rec is well developed.

Student employees described themselves as generally hard-working and a tight-knit group. Additionally, they spoke with passion about being part of Campus Rec. They pointed to the active work environment as a major allure to their positions. As anticipated there were differing opinions regarding wages amongst student employees, with some students expressing pay equity concerns (i.e. responsibility, skills, and wages did not align for some employees) while others expressed satisfaction with pay rates.

Students also reported a wide range of employee orientation and training experiences; some students reported receiving limited training and having to figure things out as they went along whereas others reported high quality training leading to advancement and certifications. Further investigation into this issue by the site review team revealed the need for Campus Rec to establish and deliver consistent employee orientation processes throughout all hiring periods and within all program areas. As the WSU 50:50 student employee-training program has proven to be a valuable tool that is mandatory for 50:50 program employees and optional for other student employees, the site review team recommends making this program mandatory for all student hired. Reinstating the use of Canvas courses for employee orientation, in addition to the current use of Canvas for risk management training, is also recommended. It is essential that the student employee-training curriculum be consistently implemented across all Campus Rec units.

In order to improve transparency, understanding, and buy-in related to policies and hot topics, the site review team suggests building two-way communication methods for discussing issues with student employees on a regular basis. Methods for



student employee feedback and opportunities for discussion between student employees and professional staff include hosting employee focus groups, drop-in *Chat & Chews* with the director, monthly student employee leader meetings, etc.

Professional staff turnover and position vacancies since the previous site review have consistently and negatively impacted the quality of services, the image of department, and the staff's ability to dedicate appropriate time and focus to assigned areas. Student and non-student employees, as well as the director, have been pressed into service to fill the void left by these vacancies. The director acknowledges that there is some staff burnout. As these are serious concerns, the Dean of Students conducted some exit interviews of departing Campus Rec staff and found that nothing really stood out in terms of department leadership. Other Student Affairs stakeholders interviewed reported that these issues are not unique to Campus Recreation. When Campus Rec staff and stakeholders were queried regarding possible reasons for staff turnover, several themes emerged. These were also identified as areas of concern by the site review team and include the following:

- There appear to be two distinct ends of the spectrum when it comes to perceptions of the WSU and Ogden social and work environments. Many stated that they find the environment challenging, especially for those joining the staff from more traditional campuses and/or those seeking a more vibrant social scene. However, others pointed to the great outdoors as an attractive recruitment tool and stated that WSU provides the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and learn multiple program areas within their professions.
- Lack of opportunities for advancement at WSU and legitimate job offers elsewhere;
- The organizational structure is flat, and within Campus Rec only one mid-level management position exists;
- Also within Campus Rec, existing titles for some coordinator-level positions are inconsistent with those used for similar duties and responsibilities at other NIRSA institutions and/or workload and scope of duties are challenging for one person to effectively fulfill the role (e.g. coordinators of Intramural Sports & Rec Clubs and Fitness); and
- Rates of pay are too low to effectively recruit and/or retain staff.

Staff recruitment efforts may need to target candidates from small to mid-sized schools. Though the total enrollment of WSU is greater than twenty-five thousand, WSU Campus Rec staffing levels more closely approximate that of campuses with enrollments of 10,000-18,000 students. Also, when recruiting staff, the director should continue to emphasize factors that led current Campus Rec staff to join the WSU team (e.g., I came here to “get the mentorship from experts in the field,” and the environment “lends itself to collaboration and the opportunity to get experience in different areas”). In addition to these strategies, the site team recommends that the Campus Rec director use NIRSA position information and salary surveys for comparison and planning purposes.

At the division level, efforts are currently under way to create position ladders to provide a path for staff promotions. Development of incentive models is needed to attract and retain qualified staff. Though the site review team recognizes that consistency in position titles and associated pay rates across the division is essential in terms of both WSU requirements and staff moral, the team encourages the Campus Rec director to continue conversations with Student Affairs leadership regarding this topic. Perhaps full-time staff equivalents of part-time employees supervised along with scope of authority, breadth of programs managed, and budgetary responsibilities could be used when comparing coordinator positions within Campus Rec to those within other SA units. Consider utilizing new position titles such as senior coordinator when the scope of work and responsibility is greater.

In conjunction with this dialogue, the Campus Rec team needs the following: continued mentoring at all levels; group training and one-on-one coaching for junior staff; and time to simply work together in order to develop as a cohesive unit. With a full compliment of devoted, high-energy staff scheduled to be in place as of July 2016, the director is positioned to devote more time to strategic initiatives, mentoring staff, building campus relations, and assessing program effectiveness. As part of strategic planning efforts, it is recommended that the director create and propose a five-year staffing plan along with a long-range staffing model for Campus Rec that will best position the department to effectively serve students while recruiting and retaining quality staff.

## **Department Financial Resources & Budget**

Financial support from senior administration is in place to help Campus Rec reach its goals. The director reports that the \$1.3 million annual operating budget, primarily student-fee funded, meets current program needs. There is a clear process for seeking and obtaining funding, and there is a history of Campus Rec funding requests being approved. Campus Rec may propose additional funding for strategic initiatives once needs are identified and refined during summer and fall 2016 planning exercises.

The Campus Rec director and staff report have a solid understanding of both the WSU budgeting processes and the current fiscal state of the department. All appear to employ fiscally conservative practices in containing costs to the department and maintaining affordable programs for participants. As examples, IM Sports team registration fees are some of the lowest in the country and Outdoor Program equipment rental prices are set as low as possible without undercutting prices of their community associates. New 50-50 positions, within IM & Rec Clubs and other sub-units, have been created in order to stretch fiscal resources. The site review team recommends that the department pursue additional cost savings via employment of additional work-study students.

With regard to revenue generation, the Outdoor Program brings in the bulk of revenue within Campus Rec, and this allows for additional equipment purchases and, recently, carry-over monies (roughly \$10,000 this year) are being set aside in an R&R account to address capital improvement needs. Group exercise pass sales, daily pass sales, and IM sports registration fees bring in revenue to help defray costs. External pressure from SA leadership for Campus Rec to generate revenue is low. However, interviews conducted by the site review team identified a gap in perception regarding the availability of financial resources for Campus Rec (i.e., Campus Rec staff did not report experiencing undue pressure to significantly cut expenses or raise revenue, yet some SA directors interviewed stated having the opposite impression). This is a topic that the site review team recommends the director explore and respond to via positive and clear messaging from Campus Rec staff to colleagues.

In terms of long-range fiscal planning, no formal capital repair and replacement plan exists, nor does a furniture, fixture & equipment replacement plan exist for the Campus Rec and HPHP areas of the Stromberg Complex. Facility Management administers funds and processes for capital improvements and for major equipment repair and replacement. Individual operating units contribute funds as available to support needed purchases. This process is working well now; however, it may need to be formalized when changes in staff at the Vice Chancellor-level are anticipated.

It is important to note that accurate data regarding use of recreation facilities and program participation is needed in order to make sound financial decisions. This topic is addressed thoroughly in the Campus Rec self study document, and it is highlighted in the next section of this report.

## **Facilities, Equipment, & Technology**

The majority of those interviewed, from senior leadership to students, spoke with pride regarding facilities on both campuses. The Dean of Students and the Vice President of Student Affairs support the need for, and future development of, high-quality recreation facilities at WSU. The Vice President of Administrative Services is engaged with Campus Rec and looks for opportunities to develop Campus Rec facilities in response to demonstrated needs. The support of these high-ranking leaders was validated by construction of the recreation-operated expansion of the Wildcat Center for Health, Education, and Wellness in 2013. This project created programming, service, and office space for Campus Rec and provided the first space on campus where WSU recreation participants were given top priority in scheduling.

The Wildcat Center expansion and the Davis Campus fitness center appear to be clean and well maintained, and both facilities have a like-new feel to visitors and daily users. In terms of equipment, the amount of fitness equipment is said to meet demand of patrons on both campuses, and stakeholders interviewed affirmed this. Several users and student staff reported the desire for heavier weight-training

equipment in the Wildcat and Davis fitness centers. Fitness equipment in the Wildcat Center appears to be in excellent condition and is under warranty, and at the Davis Campus fitness equipment looks well maintained. Convenient parking and lower head counts make the Davis Campus Rec facilities ripe for expansion.

Senior campus administrators interviewed would like to see focused strategies on the part of Campus Rec staff to the maximize use and promotion of space at the Davis Campus, utilizing Davis student surveys to shape programs and delivery methods. The site review team concurs and suggests that clear expectations from SA leadership are given regarding desired outcomes. In addition, perspective from SA leadership regarding the appropriate allocation of staff and financial resources dedicated toward these outcomes should be part of the narrative.

Shared use of indoor activity space, managed by HPHP, includes the following: Stromberg Arena with 3 basketball courts, running track, rock climbing wall, and strength and conditioning equipment; the Swenson Pool, closed at the time with repair plans in the works; and the Swenson Gym. As stated in the *Key Findings* and *Campus Relations & Collaborations* sections, above, a theme with those interviewed, including HPHP & Athletic Training faculty members, was that clarity regarding which department has responsibility of the pool and climbing wall is greatly needed.

In the past, the HPHP facility manager and Campus Rec coordinators would meet weekly to discuss upcoming events and facility concerns. These meetings have been sporadic over the past year due to staff changes in HPHP. Return to this practice is anticipated immediately as a newly hired facility manager is now in place. Joint efforts are under discussion regarding pool operations and maintenance, Stromberg Complex access and control, and general risk management. The renewed spirit of cooperation was observed during the site visit as Campus Rec leaders and the HPHP facility manager brainstormed solutions to many of the management issues detailed in this report.

Scheduled time dedicated to recreation users of the Stromberg Complex indoor spaces is reported to meet demand, though the limited number of lanes in the Swenson Pool makes it difficult to mix uses during allotted times. The size of the Swenson Pool, along with the availability and efficiency of support spaces, should be addressed when master planning this space. The Arena is open and inviting, and only appears to require new and/or repaired gym equipment in order to be back to top condition (e.g., new court dividers, repairs to operable basketball backboards, and new volleyball standards).

Restrooms and locker rooms at the Wildcat Center were neat and clean during this summer site visit. Campus Rec staff and patrons identified additional cleaning needs during fall and spring semesters, with custodial schedules and cross training identified as areas that need to be addressed with Facility Management. The external reviewer observed that additional custodial equipment is needed to improve the quality and efficiency of cleanings (e.g. a riding floor scrubber for the

arena). It is understood that the Vice President of Administrative Services assigns the top custodial team to the Stromberg Complex and he is prepared and available to address issues as they arise.

The Outdoor Program operates out of retrofitted house, Annex 9, and by all accounts the service and equipment storage spaces are fully utilized, in high demand, and are bursting at seams. Tight quarters exist, with lines for equipment checkout stretching into the parking lot at peak times. Demand for additional customer service stations is high; however, additional employees cannot be scheduled as there is no space for them to work. Outdoor storage and equipment drying areas lack necessary security as evidenced by reported thefts and by observations of the external reviewer. Recent improvements to the Annex 9 drive and parking lot have enhanced the customer and staff experience.

The nearby Challenge Ropes Course contains low elements only and represents an area for investment and growth over time. Indoor recreational climbing occurs at the Weber Rocks climbing wall within the Arena. The climbing wall meets only entry-level instructional requirements. The design of the wall is static in nature; it challenging to change routes and levels of difficulty to maintain the interest of sport climbers. Also of concern is that part of the Arena running track must be closed down during operation of the climbing wall. Since recreational climbing is not the first priority within the Arena, recreational climbing times are limited due to indoor track practices and other track uses.

As the Outdoor Program is one of the most recognized programs on campus, has strong user numbers, and has been an area of investment in terms of assigned staff, the site review team recommends study and planning for a new Outdoor Center begin in the near future. A minimum expansion to at least double the current square footage of Annex 9 is advised. New facilities recommended include classroom space for programming, customer-service spaces, equipment-storage spaces, a climbing wall. In addition, the redevelopment of the Challenge Course to include high elements and shade structures is recommended. The current Annex 9 location is ideal as it is on the Ogden campus and it is easily accessible on foot or by vehicle from the heart of campus. These factors should inform the planning efforts for a new Outdoor Center.

Sports fields and tennis courts on the Ogden Campus appear to be excellent condition given the high usage they receive. Campus Rec programs are not the first priority on these field spaces and this limits participation and the diversity of sports offered. It also results in a compact schedule in which to hold IM leagues and Rec Clubs practice and games. As stated in the *Core Programs* section, above, some traditional IM activities are not offered and many clubs travel to off-campus fields for practices and competitions. One recommendation to alleviate these issues is to add lighting to two fields, one synthetic and one turf field, in order to meet sport-specific programming needs. Additionally, it is recommended that campus master

planning efforts address the need for one to two, dedicated, Campus Recreation fields.

Indoor facilities within Residence Life buildings provide convenient fitness resources for nearly one thousand students living on campus. These spaces are in need of renovation and/or newer equipment in order to match the quality of other Campus Rec managed fitness centers.

Campus Rec programs also receive a total of six hours per week in the Athletic Fieldhouse, which used for Rec Club practices. The Intramural Sports program is granted use of some varsity spaces for championship games on an occasional basis. This relationship appears to be fairly consistent across the industry.

A unique facility in which Campus Rec has allotted time is the Weber County Ice Sheet, where the WSU hockey club holds practices and games. The IM & Rec Clubs coordinator is working with Ice Sheet managers to create expanded student recreation opportunities, and it is recommended that this venue also be considered for WSU family programming.

For comparison and master-planning purposes, the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association established standards for campus recreation facilities in 2009. The standard for indoor recreation space is 10-12 square feet per student enrolled, plus 1-1.5 square feet per faculty/staff employed by the institution. For outdoor recreational field space, the standard is a minimum of one acre per one thousand students enrolled. Given the unique nature of WSU student enrolment, coupled with the use of shared versus stand-alone recreation facilities, the site review team recommends that WSU conduct a more in-depth study of recreation facility needs.

Campus Recreation technology enhancements are recommended in order to achieve a seamless customer experience. The most glaring issue is the lack of integrated technology for building access by patrons and staff. Different points of entry to indoor facilities within the Stromberg Complex, managed by different departments, have different requirements for patrons to enter. This is confusing to patrons and staff. Once inside either the Swenson Arena or Wildcat Center, patrons and staff pass easily from one area to the next. As a result tracking activity area usage by membership type is nearly impossible. Lack of consistent usage data from building access points and from within each activity area restricts Campus Rec staff's ability to create demand-based programs or to support requests addition dollars, staff and facilities.

In tandem with development of new operating policies and procedures by HPHP and Campus Rec, the purchase or expanded use of comprehensive management software is recommended. On a campus-wide front, requirements for use of the WSU identification card by all enrolled students may have to be addressed before consistency in meeting customer expectations within HPHP and Campus Rec facilities is achieved. Also, current usage of facility-scheduling software by Campus

Rec and Shepherd Union staff could be expanded to other WSU units to improve communication and operating efficiency within Stromberg. Lastly, adding on-line Outdoor Program equipment reservations and payments is recommended as a convenience to customers.

## Ethical & Legal Responsibilities

WSU Campus Recreation strives to abide by all national, state, and campus regulations and operating procedures and looks to the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association professional ethics and standards to guide Campus Rec operations. Staff reported risk-management and safety-training plans are in place and are consistent with national standards for Campus Recreation. All employees are required to have American Red Cross certification in CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer and Basic First Aid. The Aquatics & Safety Coordinator tracks these certifications. Additional safety certifications are required within specialized program areas (e.g. lifeguards, instructors, trip leaders, etc.).

Campus Rec utilizes Canvas courses to assist in staff safety training. Twice yearly all-staff trainings occur with the focus on risk management and emergency response (e.g., active shooter training). Written safety information is in place and audits of safety skills in key areas take place routinely.

The Aquatics & Safety coordinator recently created a new lifeguard manual and training materials; redeveloped emergency response training information; and revised safety skills testing procedures. As stated under *Core Programs*, above, a new model for auditing emergency response and safety skills is being developed. The A&S coordinator plans to continue doing research on student-employee confidence as it relates to emergency response skills by working to make safety skill auditing less threatening and more of a learning experience.

A gap in providing consistent student-employee orientations and general training across all units was identified and this needs to be addressed immediately. Stakeholders reported that this is of particular concern for mid-semester hires.

Campus Rec business operations follow WSU policies and procedures regarding cash handling and PCI compliance. Fiscal rules govern Rec Clubs, and all clubs are reported to have on-campus accounts only, with solid training for club leaders regarding fiscal practices in place. General training of Rec Club leadership occurs monthly with requirements that at least one club leader attend. It is recommended that a Canvas course is created for all club participants to learn the basic guidelines and expectations for club management and participation. The external reviewer recommends the inclusion of an anti-hazing statement in this course and in the club handbook. Athletic-training services provided to club participants is an invaluable

enhancement to the club experience, and having a quality athletic-training room and faculty support for this endeavour are significant achievements.

## Assessment & Evaluation

Stakeholders interviewed acknowledged that the listing of peer institutions for WSU, created by the Utah System of Higher Education, may not be applicable for Campus Rec comparison purposes. The SA leadership and the site review team recommend that Campus Rec staff devote significant effort to identify and select a group of peer institutions with which WSU may benchmark its operations. It is recommended that Campus Rec continue to look nationally for other regional commuter schools with which to compare the following: program mix, target markets, pricing, staffing, participation rates, facilities, partnerships, and hours of operation. Once a peer institutions list is established, conducting an annual review of these points of comparison is recommended in order to adjust strategies in relation to these benchmarks.

Campus Rec leadership acknowledged the need to more fully understand the specific interests and profile of the WSU student population. In partnership with the Student Affairs Assessment coordinator, user data and various cohort comparisons inform the Campus Rec director's decision-making processes, and data is utilized primarily for reporting purposes. The Marketing & Ops coordinator effectively uses social media to determine the ideal mix of different methods of reaching students. Recommendations in this category include involving the SA Assessment coordinator in annual and semester review of significant cohort data with the entire Campus Rec team.

The accuracy and consistency of data collected at various facility entry points and within specific recreational activity areas needs to be addressed through new technology and operating procedures as addressed in the previous sections of this document. These measures are needed in order to better understand user patterns and, ultimately, make more informed programmatic decisions.

Stakeholders and the site review team also recommend that Campus Rec increase involvement by Student Government leaders in surveying student interests and in developing additional feedback and response processes for the campus community. Data obtained could be used to change or solidify the program mix, hours of operation, timing of programs, and outreach efforts.

Following receipt of the *Site Review Team Final Report*, Campus Rec will develop a list of action items as the last step in the program review process. The site review team recommends that action items be integrated into the *Campus Recreation Five-Year Plan*. Progress toward action item completion should be formally tracked, shared with stakeholders, and become a routine topic within Campus Rec staff meeting and coaching session agendas.



## **Conclusion**

Opening up WSU Campus Recreation to review by those outside of the department is an essential, yet formidable, undertaking. The site review team acknowledges the dedication to this process by Campus Recreation staff, Student Affairs staff, senior campus leadership, Health Promotion & Human Performance faculty, Athletic Training & Nutrition faculty, student employees, and patrons. Throughout the program review process, Campus Recreation staff, stakeholders, and senior administrators offered a candid look into their internal operations and identified courses of action needed to bring the department to the next level.

Campus Recreation has all the pieces in place and is primed for action moving into the future. The ability to reach thousands of students creates powerful opportunities to contribute to WSU recruitment and retention goals. Campus Rec is positioned for growth, with strong support demonstrated by students, campus administrators, and faculty. Past WSU investment in facilities, programs, and services has laid a strong foundation upon which the future of the Campus Recreation will stand. This report serves as one resource to Student Affairs and department leaders as they develop strategic plans to guide Campus Recreation over next five years.