

A Study on the Organizational Location of the Division of Campus Recreation

By

Douglas S. Franklin, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean for Recreation and Wellness

Introduction

The restructuring of the academic units from the College of Health and Human Services and their relocation to the Academic Health Center, College of Business, College of Education, and College of Fine Arts has created a need for and an opportunity to investigate the relocation of the Division of Campus Recreation into another administrative unit. The following white paper provides background information about the Division, a review of literature regarding organizational location of recreational sports programs, and a recommendation to relocate Campus Recreation to the Division of Student Affairs. This paper attempts to fulfill the directive to vet comments and suggestions regarding restructuring to Ann Fidler, interim associate provost for strategic initiatives and is being distributed to a variety of Campus Recreation stakeholders to facilitate a broader discussion regarding where the unit should be housed.

Ohio University Division of Campus Recreation

The Division of Campus Recreation was developed in 1995 by the merger of the Recreational Sports and Recreational Facilities departments. The Recreational Sports department, consisting of the intramural and club sports program and a modest fitness program, was the organizational entity responsible for the planning of the Charles J. Ping Student Recreation Center. The Recreational Facilities department consisted of the Aquatic Center, Bird Ice Arena and the Golf Course. When I first arrived at Ohio University in August of 1994 I conducted an internal audit and found these facilities were “upside down” and accounted for a budget shortfall of \$250,000.

With the building of the Ping Center, the assessment of a student recreation facilities fee was planned to offset the bond payment and facility’s operations, as well as to provide funding for some programming elements of the existing recreational sport program. User fees for the Aquatic Center and Bird Ice Arena, totaling \$70,000 in revenue, were eliminated and the recreation facilities fee, known to most as the Ping Center fee, was expanded to

include student funding for the aforementioned “up-side-down” operations. Implementation of the recreational facilities fee occurred in the Winter Quarter of FY 1996 and provided students with access to all facilities and programs within the division. This revenue source, coupled with fee for service revenue from memberships, rentals, lessons and services, formed the financial foundation for the Division. The Recreation Facilities Fee was combined with the Student General Fee in 1999.

Campus Recreation later developed a variety of programs on a fee for service basis including Outdoor Pursuits, Challenge Course, Personal Training, Massage Therapy and a variety of “learn to programs” for area youth. Currently, the Division of Campus Recreation is a \$6 million operation with funds generated from the student general fee and fee for service activities. The Division is the primary provider of high quality recreational facilities and activities to Ohio University and to the Athens community, and operates the regions’ only indoor aquatic facility, ice arena, and indoor tennis facility.

Mission

The mission of the Division of Campus Recreation is focused on student development and learning through recreation. Special attention is given to experiential learning opportunities for students working within their majors. This is accomplished through internships, graduate assistantships, field experience and practicum, and student employment. Selected professional staff members teach on-load within the School of Recreation and Sports Sciences. Secondary roles of the division include revenue generation to offset operational expense as well as providing community recreational services, when feasible.

Staffing

Campus recreation operates under the direction of the Assistant Dean for Recreation and Wellness (ADRW) in the College of Health and Human Services. In his role as Executive Director of Campus Recreation, the ADRW oversees 11 recreation professionals operating 6 facilities and 7 program areas. All professional staff members have advanced degrees and are active in their professional associations. Additionally, the division employs directors for its business operation, marketing and technology area, and 3 support personnel to assist with the management of the operation. The Division is the second largest employer of students and provides work for over 500 undergraduate students and 13 graduate student assistants that play an integral part in the operation of the division's facilities and programs.

Organization

The Division has been organizationally housed in the Dean's Office of the College of Health and Human Services since its inception in 1995. The primary purpose for this administrative location was to enhance the experiential and service learning opportunities for students majoring in academic areas relative to Campus Recreation offerings. These majors were located in the School of Recreation and Sport Sciences, and include, but are not limited to, Athletic Training, Exercise Physiology, Recreation Management, Nutrition Science, Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Education, and Sport Management. The academic restructuring plan calls for these majors to be relocated to the Academic Health Center, College of Education, and College of Business. Professional staff members have been teaching one course per year, on-load, as well as supervising internships, field experiences and practicum for students in associated majors. The dissolution of the College and of the School of Recreation and Sport Sciences creates the need for, and an opportunity to relocate Campus Recreation to another Planning Unit to enhance and facilitate a greater impact on student learning.

Assessment and Review

Over the past two years Campus Recreation has focused on assessment and reflective evaluation. Establishing a vision grounded in theory and standards require an intensive effort to review and reflect on our operation. The Division created a positioning matrix, which aligned the organization with Vision Ohio and the missions of the College of Health and Human Services and the Division of Student Affairs. Campus Recreation was one of the first units to undergo review as part of the Academic Support Unit Program Review (ASUPR) process. ASUPR, a Vision Ohio initiative, is grounded in the quality management process espoused by Deming (1982) and refined for higher education by Rubin's Excellence in Higher Education (EHE) (2004). The basic concept of quality management is the implementation of a plan-do-study-act cycle. The Division conducted a self assessment using the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education-Recreational Sports Standards as framework in which to align the unit with the institution and the profession. CAS standards reflect best practice for student affairs based units and are grounded in the common belief that the student is the center of our practice.

The Division's self assessment included the collection and analysis of quantitative data using a self assessment tool (SAT) developed from the CAS Self Assessment Guide (SAG). Student learning outcomes for employees were assessed using the newly developed Measuring Outcomes from Recreational Experiences (MORE), developed in conjunction with the National Research Institute for College Recreational Sports and Wellness

(NRICRSW). Qualitative reviews were conducted by two senior staff members, and student reflective papers were analyzed for themes relative to student employment in Campus Recreation. Reviewers from Bowling Green State University and The Ohio State University conducted an external assessment of the Division during the spring quarter of 2009. Finally, the Division underwent an audit from the University's Office of Internal Audit. In all cases the unit aligned well with professional standards and in compliance with institutional policies.

Campus Recreation assessment reports are available on the Division's website under the assessment page located at: <http://www.ohio.edu/recreation/resources/Assessment.htm>.

Organizational Models

Student development and learning in campus recreation: Assessing recreational sports directors' awareness, perceived importance, application of and satisfaction with CAS standards (Franklin, 2007) indicates that the four most common locations for collegiate campus recreation programs are student affairs (72%), intercollegiate athletics (16%), academics (3%), and business (3%). Steir, Schneider, Kampf, Haines, and Wilding conducted studies that produced similar results (2005; 2006). In a 1995 Athletic Business article, *Separate but Equal*, Cohen reviewed campus recreation programs and their relationships to various organizational units and found that the three most common organizational homes for collegiate recreational sports programs were Student Affairs, Intercollegiate Athletics or an academic department, usually Physical Education. Cohen pointed out that in the mid-90s the predominant model, approximately 65% for large colleges (10,000-54,000), located an autonomous recreational sports department within the office of Student Affairs. Cohen suggested this placement is due largely to the role campus recreation programs play in providing student and student directed recreational activities. The movement towards Student Affairs has caused a dwindling number of programs being operated within academic units and athletic departments. Over the last 20 years academic related programs have dropped by 25%. The following table reveals the change in organizational location for college recreational sports programs:

Table: Recreational Sports Programs Organizational Location

Year	Academics	Athletics	Student Affairs	Source
1985	28%	19%	42%	Cohen, 1995*
1990	20%	15%	58%	Cohen, 1995*
1994	16%	18%	61%	Bryant et al., 1994
1995	12%	14%	65%	Cohen, 1995*
2006	3%	16%	72%	Franklin, 2007

*Source: Separate but Equal(1995)

The majority of Mid American schools (58%) have located collegiate recreational sports programs within student affairs. These institutions include Akron University, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, Northern Illinois University, University of Toledo, and Western Michigan University. Other notable student affairs based recreational sports programs include Ohio University's aspiration peers, the University of Tennessee, Auburn University, Clemson University, and the University of Missouri, as well as the flagship institution for the State, The Ohio State University,

The second most common organizational location of a recreational sports program is within Intercollegiate Athletics (16%). The rationale for this location is to facilitate shared facilities for intercollegiate and club sport athletes. This is a popular model in small liberal arts schools competing in NCAA Division III or NAIA. The lone MAC school that remains in an intercollegiate department is the University of Buffalo.

Academic location for recreational sports programs tend to be based on the old physical education model. Ohio University is one of the 3% of programs located in an academic unit. These programs are usually aligned with an academic unit that has a major focus on Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER). No Mid American Conference (MAC) school, other than Ohio University, has a recreation program associated with an academic unit. Notable collegiate recreational sports programs aligned with an academic unit include the University of Arkansas (College of Education and Health Professions) and Indiana University (School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation).

The final organizational location for recreation programs is business affairs. The rationale for this location is the focus on revenue generation, addressing a large auxiliary enterprise, or is caused by the lack of other options.

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston is an example of a program that was placed in business because of the lack of related academic units, no intercollegiate athletic program, and no functioning student affairs office. While only 3% of programs have moved to the business office, three schools or 25% of the MAC have selected this organizational structure. These schools include Miami University, Ball State University and Central Michigan University.

Rationale

In October 1994, Bryant, Anderson and Dunn co-authored the *Rationale for independent administration of collegiate recreational sports programs: A position paper*. The National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), the professional association of collegiate recreational sports professionals, sponsored this white paper which provided a rationale to separate campus recreation programs from academic and intercollegiate athletic units. A 1992 survey revealing 61% of collegiate recreational sports programs were located in student affairs, 18% in athletics and 16% in academics was cited (Bryant et al. , 1994). The primary reason for this change was the evolution of missions of academic, athletic and recreational sports programs (Bryant et al, 1994). Early in the 20th century, these programs had similar missions of providing activities to enhance the physical fitness of students. Intramural sports, the predecessor to recreational sports, were developed to utilize sport as a method of physical activity as part of a physical education program. As the popularity of sport increased, intramural sports (within the walls), gave way to, and in most cases, took a back seat to intercollegiate athletics.

The rise of recreational sports, the reduction in mandatory physical education programs, and the increase in women on campuses created a new demand for fitness programs. These forces fundamentally changed program focus from support for academic and athletic units, to independent service provider. New expansive facilities, similar to the Ping Center, necessary to remain competitive in recruiting, were dedicated to student recreation and created opportunities for new programs. .

In many cases the drive for independence from academic and athletic organizations appears to have come from frustrations related to shared facilities and inadequate budgets. Edward Londono, Director of Campus Recreation at Florida International University and interviewed for "*Separate But Equal*", spoke of the relationship between athletics and recreation, stating that in an athletic department "athletics always comes first...and recreation is looked upon as the ugly stepchild" (p. 32). This attitude is pervasive among many recreational professionals. Programs within academic units have a similar parochial attitude. Academic faculty are focused on their teaching

and research facility needs. They have little or no use for, and do not value recreation programs that take away from facility availability (Cohen, 1995). Grover Center's priority structure of academics, athletics, and then recreation was the driving force for the creation of the all-student Ping Center. The construction of the Ping Center and the assessment of the recreation facilities fee provided the necessary space for structured and unstructured programs and the funding that permitted the division to operate autonomously on a sound fiscal basis.

A New Rationale for Relocating Campus Recreation to Student Affairs

One of the most fascinating aspects missing from the Athletic Business article was a lack of focus on the experiential and student learning opportunities available in recreation programs. Cohen and the directors interviewed for the *Separate but Equal* appeared to be consumed with recreation's role of student service and "independence" from athletics and academics and completely omitted an essential functions of the program; learning and development. Since *Separate but Equal*, there has been a sea-change in the field of collegiate recreational sports. The new focus is on establishing, implementing, and assessing learning outcomes for student participants and employees. The National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) has been actively engaged in implementing Learning Reconsidered and Learning Reconsidered II. (Ohio University's Outdoor Pursuits program was a NIRSA case study on the Learning Reconsidered II website). In 2006-07 professional standards for recreational sports were rewritten and aligned with the general standards for the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). NIRSA's membership on the CAS Board of Directors and the newly adopted standards enhance their participation in the community of practice of student affairs.

Londono said in *Separate but Equal*; "Recreation should fall under student affairs because its programming is directly related to student interests in general (Cohen, 1995, p. 32). Organizational structures work best when the elements within the organization have similar missions and goals. The focus of Ohio University's Division of Campus Recreation is to enhance student development and learning, and to aid in their transition from childhood to adulthood through participation and employment opportunities. The primary focus of Campus Recreation is similar to that of the Division of Student Affairs; provide holistic co-curricular learning opportunities to facilitate the development of students at Ohio University. Our belief is that, while we have different means of accomplishing that goal, the end results are the same. Campus Recreation understands and accepts the Student Affairs organizational core values of commitment, character, community, citizenship, and civility. These are similar to, and are not at odds

with, the Campus Recreation core values of “guided by a consistent principle centered approach, programmatic change is accomplished through innovation and collaboration.” Campus Recreation’s experience with planning, business operations, and assessment can be a major asset to Student Affairs and we would look forward to working together in developing an enriched holistic learning centered environment in which students thrive.

Research

An interesting finding in my research was that the location of a campus recreation program in student affairs mattered. Student affairs based recreational sports directors were significantly more aware of ($p \leq .000$), applied ($p \leq .000$), and found importance ($p \leq .001$) in the Recreational Sports standards from the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) than did academic, athletic and business based directors. No other variable revealed statistical significance in all three areas.

Collaboration

The division regularly demonstrates a willingness to engage and collaborate with Student Affairs entities. Past partnerships include engagement with Leadershape and Leadership Programs, Assessment Committee, Judiciaries, Health Education and Wellness, Residential Housing, Power, and Greek Organizations. This collaboration would be enhanced working within the community of practice in student affairs.

A key focus of the First Year Experience (FYE) at Ohio University is the collaboration between University College and the Division of Student Affairs to develop a holistic learning environment. This model, the Academic – Student Affairs Collaboration Model, is cited in *One Size Does Not Fit All* as a promising practice (Manning, Kinzie, and Schuh, 2006). Rather than focusing on a small group of majors from a single academic unit, Campus Recreation is well suited to provide academic support for all students, particularly, those making their initial transition to college. Existing programs focused on first year students include planet ping, intramural sports, club sports, group fitness, and new adventures. On-campus student employment, found to be a factor in engagement, is another opportunity in which campus recreation can support FYE initiatives.

Issues to Be Addressed

Moving to student affairs is both needed and welcome, but is not without issue. Several concerns must be addressed in the implementation phase. These include:

- Resolving Campus Recreation staff issues and teaching responsibilities. There is a growing concern that Campus Recreation is understaffed. A review of NIRSA surveys and peer comparison suggest that the Division is 5 professional staff short of parity. The problem is exacerbated by the academic teaching requirement for professional staff. A brief informal survey of peers suggests collegiate recreational sports professionals at other institutions are compensated for their work as contingent faculty. Academic responsibilities for contingent faculty (CR professional staff) should be off-load, similar to other recreational sports and student affairs professionals. This action should not result in a reduction in the base salary of these individuals;
- Grover coordination. Grover gym is currently managed by Campus Recreation but extensively used by the School of Recreation and Sport Science. Campus Recreation was assigned the responsibility in an effort to gain greater access to the facility for the University community. It is assumed that the Department of Recreation and Sport Pedagogy will continue to be the primary user of the facility.
- Graduate Assistantships for Campus Recreation. Currently the 13 Campus Recreation GAs' are provided by CHHS. GAs' serve as middle management or specialized service (athletic training and coaching) roles for the Division. They are provided with academic related learning opportunities are essential to our operation. Obviously, Campus Recreation would like to maintain this relationship;
- Academic, administrative, and technology support by the Assistant Dean for Recreation and Wellness (ADRW) for CHHS, Grover Center and WellWorks. The ADRW position has changed since its inception in 1994. The position's original purpose was to manage the recreation and wellness programs offered by the College and to advise institutional leadership regarding collegiate recreational sports. The position evolved into an operations consultant for the Ping Center and Grover Center construction projects, an operations manager for Grover Center, a technology manager for the College, the oversight manager for WellWorks and Campus Recreation, and contingent faculty for the Recreation Studies academic program. The retirement of the Executive Director for Campus Recreation in December 2006 required the ADRW to focus more time on the direct management of Campus Recreation. ADRW compensation is currently allocated to Campus Recreation (80%), CHHS Technology Fees (12.5%) and WellWorks (7.5%). Funding for the ADRW position originated from a portion of the original general fund allocation for the

Recreational Sports Department prior to its dissolution. Those funds were absorbed into the CHHS budget in 2007 and CR was assessed 80% of the ADRW compensation.

Conclusion

In a 1999 review of student affairs at Ohio University Dr. Margaret Barr, then Vice President for Student Affairs at Northwestern, and co-author of *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration* (2000) suggested that Campus Recreation should be relocated to student affairs and stated that this was the most common organizational model within institutions of higher education. Research supports Barr's position. The Division currently conducts student affairs type engagement and assessment, and works well with Ohio University's Division of Student Affairs. Campus Recreation applies student affairs based standards, actively employing the CAS standards for recreational sports. The Division's staff overwhelmingly supports the move to student affairs and does not desire to remain in an academic unit or move to intercollegiate athletics or business. While the Division's business model is strong, our focus on student development and learning grounds our practice and should not be subjugated by the need to generate revenue, as is the case in many business models.

It is important to note that Ohio University's Division of Campus Recreation is successful because of our focus on establishing quality relationships with students, faculty, administrative staff and the community. We will continue to partner with Intercollegiate Athletics and academic units to provide quality learning experiences for students at Ohio University. This is and has been our focus and it will not change, no matter where we are housed.

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