

Running head: PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

Pricing and Availability in Campus Recreation

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Recreation and leisure programs offered through Universities and colleges are becoming a major part of the on-campus experience at post-secondary schools. Whether the facilities are old or new, recreation departments must realize that providing quality programs and opportunities to students will benefit not only the students, but the school as well. There are many factors that must be considered while trying to run a successful recreation department. A couple of these factors are pricing and availability. This paper will focus on these two things. Pricing is usually a problem area for most schools, as many would love to offer free or at least cheap recreation programs to its students, but it is not always feasible. It is a challenge to find the best way to offer as many programs as possible while keeping the costs as low as possible. The topic of availability is also one that recreation managers should be concerned with. No matter what kind of facilities a school may offer, if they are unavailable for whatever reason to the people who want to use them, there is a problem. Managing availability requires a great amount of planning and this paper will discuss and give recommendations on how best to do this. Simon Fraser University, University of Manitoba, University of Guelph, Lakehead University, Humber College and Brock University were all looked at during this study to compare and contrast how these schools handle pricing and availability in their recreation departments.

Gessing (2001) discussed the importance of providing students with the opportunity to participate in recreational activities. He also recommended public funding as a key factor in providing students with the opportunity to get involved with the expenses of the activities, in order to reduce the costs of activities which

allow more students to participate (Gessing,2001). Having students participate in raising money for recreational activities on campus is an excellent recommendation. It provides students with the opportunity to learn about the planning and organization of running recreational services and allows more students to become involved and participate. Reed (2007) expressed the concern that women knew less about the availability of recreational facilities on campus than men did. Public funding would allow students to have a sense of control over the pricing and availability of their recreational activities. Gessing (2001) suggested that students tend to work harder at raising money for activities where they know they will be directly benefited. By having students raise money for recreational activities not only benefits the students in a financial way but encourages camaraderie amongst the students. Lakehead University is dependent on the natural environment and maximizes on the use of their outdoor recreation, parks and tourism. Students are encouraged to participate in activities such as camping, canoeing, climbing, hiking, fishing, skiing and many other outdoor recreational resources. Lakehead utilizes their natural resources, which decreases the cost for students when participating in them.

When running recreational facilities it is important to have hours that are accommodating to its members. Guelph University has easily outlined its hours of operation. The hours are very accommodating to all members; the early risers can begin as early as 6:30 am and the night- hawks may stay as late as 12:30am. Students that are members of their fitness centre, dome and athletics centre are also able to take part in recreational hockey and free skating. Guelph University has also

provided reasonable prices for students or even parents to use their daily passes. DiRamio & Payne (2007) emphasized on the importance of the relationship between students who participate in campus activities and their attitudes toward mental health and substance abuse. Providing students with available resources is said to keep them out of trouble in regards to drugs or theft (DiRamio & Payne,2007). Having recreational services that are easily accessible to students, as well as hours that accommodate their schedules will increase the likelihood that they will participate in recreational activities. It is crucial for universities and colleges to motivate their students with available resources and fair prices in order to encourage participation (DiRamio & Payne, 2007). DiRamio & Payne (2007) recommended that in order for students to perform to their full potential in classes they must have positive outlets where they are able to release their energy.

Students have their own interests as to what recreational activities they prefer to participate in. Mahoney, Larson & Eccles (2009) focused on how organized activities are beneficial to one's development. The activities that are available to students must have safety rules, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, positive social norms, opportunity for skill building and integration of family, school and community effort (Mahoney et al., 2009). When considering how recreational activities are crucial to one's development it is important that universities provide numerous programs and activities so each student will be able to find something of interest to them. Mahoney et al., (2009) discussed the importance of physical activity in regards to a student's development. Therefore it is important to help the students that may struggle financially. This may be done by providing them with

free activities or activities with a significantly reduced rate. Simon Fraser University has provided their students, who choose not to get gym memberships with the opportunity to participate in free swims. By providing students with the opportunity to participate in free activities is comforting to students by showing them that they are still included in activities and are not held back due to financial reasons.

College students are at risk for a variety of risky health behaviours and are in a position to begin to learn how to control their lifestyle (Reed, 2007). Campus recreation programs are the means to which students can start to develop healthy behaviours that can last a lifetime. Post-secondary schools should be focused on providing the best opportunities for students possible. An interesting point to examine is not only the availability of recreational facilities or programs on campus, but how much the students know about their school's facilities. A study done by Reed (2007) showed that significant percentages of male and female undergraduate university students were not aware of a variety of recreational facilities on their campus. This is not what a recreation department wants. Seeing results like this shows that a school must work as hard at advertising its recreational facilities availability as it does at making sure they are available. This could be done by making presentations in front of classes, or posting flyers with information on them around the school, not just in the recreation departments. To reach an even broader amount of students, sending emails to student accounts with new updates in the recreation department would be a great way to keep students informed. Not only

would it do that, but students who don't know where to look for that kind of information would have it easily assessable right on their computers.

Pricing memberships for facility use at universities and colleges is a problematic area for many recreation departments. Schools want to offer the best and newest facilities and technology available but this can be pricy. Campus recreation buildings can be very expensive to build and maintain and to outfit with complex equipment (Taylor, Canning, Brailsford, & Rokosz, 2003). With these high costs, it is difficult to keep membership fees low. This area must be closely considered because if fees are too high than students or other users might not be inclined to use the facilities at all. At the University of Manitoba, the recreation department offers 1 month, 4 month, 8 month and 12-month memberships to use all of their facilities. Students, staff or outside users can purchase these memberships. Day passes are also available. Although this strategy might bring in more money to the recreation program, it may not be the best way to get full usage out of the facilities. Brock University charges a recreation fee, which is including in the tuition payment but allows students to have free access to almost every facility available. The fitness centre (the Zone) is the only facility that requires a membership fee to use. This strategy at Brock allows students to participate in things that they might not otherwise do if they had to pay an outside fee. Simon Fraser University uses a similar method that offers students an included membership to most facilities in the tuition costs.

As stated earlier there are many health benefits for students who participate in physical education by using the facilities that are offered on campus. But in spite of these benefits, several national studies have found that college students did not regularly

participate in exercise and physical activity (Yoh, 2009). This could be due to the high cost of membership fees or the lack of availability of the facilities. Schools should focus on what motivates students to become active and in turn use the campus recreation facilities. If recreation departments understand what students know about the programs offered at the school they would be able to know what is and what is not working. Creating surveys for students to fill out would be a great way to get an understanding of what the students think about the facility, the pricing, and the availability of the programs.

In conclusion, the pricing and availability of campus recreation programs and facilities is a tricky yet vital part to running a successful recreation department. In the end it is all about accommodating the students and the users. If a program can do this and stay sustainable at the same time, then it should be deemed a success. Hopefully the recommendations made in this paper will be helpful to recreation professionals who are looking to get as much out of their campus recreation programs as possible.

Running head: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

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## Literature Review

**Leslie, E., Sparling, P., & Owen, N. (2001). University campus settings and the promotion of physical activity in young adults. *Health Psychology and Exercise Science, 101* (3) 116-125.**

This article discusses how educational campuses are settings where there exist important opportunities to influence the physical activity habits of young adults. Research has been done in Australia and the USA to evaluate how campuses go about promoting opportunities of physical activity. This was done by reviewing the population and campus survey findings on the physical activity habits of young adults. The research is mainly focused on young adults and provides different opportunities for young adults to get involved. Gaps that occurred within this research are the lack of acknowledgment for individuals who have a disability. It is important for these individuals to be accepted and included, as well as have an opportunity to participate in physical activities. This source will be influential towards our topic because it addresses how university campuses should go about promoting their activities and how to get individuals involved in physical activity.

**DiRamio, D., & Payne, R. (2007). Assessing the relationship between campus programs, student self-efficacy, stress and substance abuse. *College Student Journals, 53*(5), 190-205.**

This source emphasized the relationship between student's who participate in campus activities and their self efficacy and attitude towards mental health and substance abuse. Using the results of this study, universities and colleges have stressed the importance of

encouraging their student's to participate in the recreational activities that have been provided to them. This resource is useful for our topic because it discussed the underlying factors that should motivate colleges and universities to provide their student's with recreational activities. Future research on this topic indicated that student affairs and professionals should remain creative and continue to provide numerous opportunities for recreation for all their student's.

**Mahoney, J., Larson, R., & Eccles, J. (2009). Organized activities as contexts of development: Extra-curricular activities, after-school and community programs. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.**

This article focuses on how organized activities are beneficial to one's development. The activities that are available to students must have certain safety rules, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, positive social norms, opportunity for skill building and integration of family, school and community effort. This will be implemented into our topic by viewing how the recreational resources available to students are beneficial to their own development. The article also discussed the importance of making sure resources were available for all students at a reasonable price.

**Gessing, P. (2001). Public funding of sports stadiums and other recreational activities. *National Taxpayers Union Foundation*, 2 (8), 89-100.**

This article discussed the different ways that organizations are able to raise money for recreational activities. A main focus throughout the article was the importance of recreational activities for student's and providing them with opportunities to participate in activities that they enjoy. Public funding was a key factor in providing student's with

the opportunity to get involved with the expenses of these activities but to also reduce the cost, allowing more students to participate. This will be beneficial to our research because it provides methods for organizations to raise money and get their students involved.

**Kulinna, P., Warfield, W., Jonaitis, S., Dean, M., & Corbin, C. (2009). The progression and characteristics of conceptually based fitness/wellness courses at American universities and colleges. *Journal of American College Health*, 58(2), 127-131.**

This article examines how fitness and wellness programs have evolved in schools since the early 1960's. The study surveyed faculty members about the availability and characteristics of the courses offered at their institutions. Out of the 161 respondents, 90 percent of them offered courses. This shows that fitness and wellness courses have become a high priority for schools. This study looks at how the implementation of these programs progressed and for our use it will help us get an idea of what schools must go through in order to incorporate these courses.

**Reed, J. (2007). Perceptions of the availability of recreational physical activity facilities on a university campus. *Journal of American College Health*, 55(41), 189-194.**

This article focuses on how students perceive the availability of physical activities on campus. The study showed that women knew less about the availability of facilities than

males did. The article states that this point in a student's life is when they develop healthy living habits for the rest of their lives. Schools may be committed to providing facilities for students to use, but if the students are unaware of the availability of them, then it will not work. This will help our research determine the kind of exposure that campus facilities are getting to their students.

**Taylor, H., Canning, W., Brailsford, P., & Rokosz, F. (2003). Financial issues in campus recreation. *New Directions for Student Services*, (103), 73.**

This article discusses different financial issues in all aspects of a schools recreation programs. The cost of upkeep and maintenance, repair and renovations are all accounted for. The cost of running intramural sports is also covered. Schools have realized that campus facilities and recreational programs have become a very large part of student recruitment and retention in recent decades. This article will benefit us because it can give us a better idea of why and how schools budget for their recreation programs. Which in turn will help us understand the pricing of these programs for students.

**Yoh, T. (2009). Motivational attitudes toward participating in physical activity among international students attending colleges in the united states. *College Student Journal*, 43 (3), 931-936.**

This article examines the attitudes that international students have towards participating in physical activity. Keeping good health, getting regular exercise and developing proper physical functioning were listed as the top attitudes. I believe that this article is relevant

to our research because we should take a look at how the international students are viewing physical activity as well as the non-international students. By examining what they want and how they feel about the provided facilities, schools should be able to get a better understanding of what is working for their programs and what is not. By providing availability of campus recreation to all students the school will increase its overall appeal.