

## Executive Summary-Recreation Services and University Golf Course

The Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is a vibrant well-administered university department at Illinois State University. The programs and services of the department offer comprehensive recreational opportunities to the university community. The varieties of offerings from fitness to wellness programs to outdoor and environmental discoveries, coupled with golf course management are samples of the breath and depth of the department.

There are two outstanding areas that are to be commended. The Best People Program is a model program within the area of recruitment, hiring, and training of staff. Of particular note is the use of peer personnel in all areas of this program. This is an excellent example of student development and learning opportunities within the department.

The strategic plan, which entails the department's goals and expected outcomes, is also to be commended. Not only does it provide depth in quantifiable outcomes, it allows for measurable staff responsibilities and expectations. The job expectations and performance review documentation are excellent.

Interviews revealed departmental personnel intent on providing a quality program and excited about the future possibilities provided by a potential new wellness center. While planning for the future is critical to the growth of the department, the CAS external review has identified some current issues that threaten to keep the department from reaching its fullest potential.

Of the thirteen CAS Standards, the Department failed to be consistent with four-Part 2: Programming; Part 6: Financial Resources; Part 7: Facilities, Technology, and Equipment; and Part 9: Equal Opportunity, Access, and Affirmative Action.

The programming issue of not being consistent with CAS Standards is due to the off campus location of the Student Recreation Building (SRB) coupled with the additional membership fee to join the SRC. This limits the availability of the SRB to all students; thus is not reflective of the demographic profiles of students served.

A review of the department reveals a dynamic program with no place to grow. The facility limitations, both indoors and outdoors, stagnate an otherwise

vibrant program. Further constraining factors are the inaccessibility of the current facilities and the limited availability and unsafe conditions of the outdoor facilities. Complicating matters more is the inadequate financial support of the department.

Documentation shows that the department receives only 3.8 % of the entire student fee collected per student. The student fee money can only be used to support the recreational opportunities in McCormick Gym. Due to shared usage of this space, Recreation Services has very limited use of this facility, especially during prime time. The SRB is self-supported through membership fees; yet, due to space limitations, only 3000 memberships can be sold.

A review of the standard criteria and the ranking of each will provide an overview of the department's strengths and areas in which improvements are needed.

### Conclusion

The consulting firm of Brailsford and Dunleavy (B&D) has completed a preliminary assessment and analysis of a potential center for the University. Their Executive Summary supports many of the issues raised in this external CAS Review:

- Inadequate space
- Decentralized facilities
- Inaccessibility of current space
- Socio-economical gaps created between fee based and membership based facilities
- Inadequate funding

As stated in the University's mission statement, the first goal of the university is to "provide the premier undergraduate education in Illinois". Another goal is to "provide co-curricular activities, programs and services that augments the formal education...". To move toward excellence in all areas of the University, the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course needs a modern centralized recreation facility to house all its programs and provide comprehensive fitness and wellness opportunities for all students and other university members. B&D has proposed building a new comprehensive

wellness center centrally located on campus. The findings of the CAS external review support the need for such a facility.

If such a facility is not in the future of ISU, or it is a long-range projection, the following recommendations are made"

- 1) Current facilities should be ADA accessible.
- 2) Examine membership policy at the SRB which allows community members to purchase memberships over student use.
- 3) Increase the percentage of student fee allocation to the department.
- 4) Improve the outdoor field space by leveling and lighting playing fields.
- 5) Improve the infrastructure and HVAC systems of the SRB.
- 6) Consider changing the membership in the SRB to include all areas and programs offered in that building. Students not wishing to purchase a membership can use the McCormick Gym at no additional fee.

What is offered in this document is an interpretation of criteria by one professional with significant years of administrative experience in recreational sports. It is not my intention to pass judgment on the department but rather for the staff to take that which is of value from this report and leave that which is not. The recommendations submitted are meant to build on and improve an already well-established and administered Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course at Illinois State University.