

Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course
Comprehensive Program Review
April 4-6, 2004

Findings and Recommendations Compiled by the Review Team

Presented to Dr. Helen Mamarchev
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By

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Overview of the Departmental Review Process

During the fall of 2003, the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course at Illinois State University began a comprehensive planning and review process. The review was conducted in a manner consistent with the purpose and format established for non-instructional departments. As such it included an internal self-study and an assessment process conducted by a comprehensive review team. This report reflects the findings and recommendations of that review team.

The review team was composed of nine individuals: Stan Campbell, University of Nebraska, and Becky Benna, City of Miamisburg, Ohio served as the external members of the team. Illinois State University members of the review team included: John Bantham, Desiree Brown, Ann Caldwell, Jerry Carlson, Sarah Genta, Alan Lacy, and Darion Page. The contact information for the review team is provided in Attachment I to this report.

In forming these findings and recommendations, the comprehensive review team was provided a copy of the department's self-study report and corresponding materials that described department programs, facilities, and services. Additionally, the review team participated in a site visit on April 4-6, 2004, during which interviews of the major constituent groups; peer organizations of the department, and staff members of Recreation Services and University Golf Course were conducted. A schedule of the interviews is included as Attachment II to this report.

The review team focused its findings and recommendations in six primary areas. The structure of the report is organized by these areas:

- Mission Statement and Guiding Philosophic Principles
- Human Resources
- Communication and Planning
- Fiscal Resources
- Facility Issues
- Programs and Services

It should be noted that the review team's response to these primary charges is somewhat limited. The specificity of each issue and the concomitant background needed to fully address the charges do not lend themselves well to an in-depth analysis during a three-day site visit. Hence, the conclusions or suggestions provided in this report should be viewed as preliminary responses to the identified issues. Additional review of these specific charges by Recreation Services and University Golf Course personnel, particularly viewed in the larger context of the campus review process, is recommended.

The findings and recommendations provided in this report reflect a consensus opinion of the members of the comprehensive program review team. We suggest that they be viewed not as definitive solutions, but rather as catalysts for further reflection, inquiry and action.

Overall Perception and Reputation of the Department of Recreational Sports

Before moving directly into the body of the report, it is important to note the overall perception of the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course. In short, the department is viewed as an outstanding organization; one that is characterized by a commitment to excellence. The department is well regarded by peer organizations and perceived as an important university asset. While there is room for improvement in any organization, the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course appears to be an organization in “good operating order” that is positioned well for the opportunities that await Illinois State University and the Division of Student Affairs.

Many positive comments were made regarding the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course’s ability to work together for the good of all entities. The willingness of the staff to become involved with various campus and community initiatives has fostered an appreciation of their knowledge and expertise. This involvement has increased the potential for future collaborative efforts.

“Recreation Services is a great way to connect students to campus,” was a statement that we heard from several students, faculty and staff. In addition, the leadership of the department and the positive attitude of the staff were consistently given very high marks. The programs and services provided by Recreation Services and University Golf Course are generally what would expect to be offered at a public institution with an enrollment of approximately 21,000 students. However, many of the recreation facilities at Illinois State University are significantly substandard when compared to similar institutions. Even though space issues are a major concern, the general view across campus is that the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is a productive and cooperative department.

Indications are that student support for the programs and services offered by the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is very good. On March 6, 2002 the ISU students approved (57.3% approval) a referendum to assess themselves not more than \$125 per student per semester to construct a new recreation and wellness center. The voter turnout was reportedly the highest in the history of Illinois State University. In addition, residence hall students raised approximately \$3,000 this past year to reopen the McCormick Gym & Swim Program during the spring semester. This certainly gives a strong indication that Illinois State University students value recreation activities.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) lists the components of the overall recreational sports program to include: informal recreation, intramural sports, sport clubs, instructional programs, special events, outdoor recreation, fitness, aquatic, wellness, extramural sports, family and youth, and programs for people with disabilities. It is the opinion of the review team that the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is adequately meeting all of these standards with the exception of family and youth programs. The limitations of funding and facilities make it difficult to provide sufficient family and youth activities to meet this standard. Given adequate financial resources, the McCormick Hall Swimming Pool appears to be one facility where additional family and youth programs could be held. Plans for the new University Wellness Activity Center should include space that would be conducive to family and youth programs.

Review of Core Categories

Mission Statement and Guiding Philosophic Principles

Review Findings:

- ◆ The mission statement, adopted in 2002, states, “The Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course encourages maximum participation by providing a variety of leisure experiences and recreational opportunities. Delivered under the University philosophy of distinctiveness and excellence, programs and services are designed to promote the lifelong pursuit of active, healthy lifestyles and enhance the leisure habits of the Illinois State University campus and surrounding communities.”
- ◆ The departmental mission statement is consistent with the Illinois State University mission statement. The department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is committed to the Illinois State University action plan, *Educating Illinois*, and its core values.
- ◆ Lack of adequate recreation facilities significantly limits the ability of the department to offer programs and services to the university and surrounding communities.
- ◆ The statement of purpose included in the Comprehensive Program Review document states, “The Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is charged with providing recreational programs, facilities, and services to the Illinois State University campus and surrounding communities.”

Recommendations:

- ◆ Given the limited availability of recreation facilities, assess the financial feasibility of eliminating the Student Recreation Building memberships for those not affiliated with Illinois State University. The income from the sale of community memberships would most likely need to be replaced by agency income. The University Golf Course and the Outdoor Adventure Program appear to be the only programs that can adequately serve the “surrounding communities”, without limiting valuable space to members of the ISU community.
- ◆ Consider incorporating a vision and values statement to replace the statement of purpose. This could help guide strategic planning initiatives and external communication efforts.

Human Resources

Review Findings:

- ◆ The Recreation Services and University Golf Course staff members were consistently viewed by their colleagues as being professional, competent, fair, and willing to assist others.

Human Resources

Review Findings continued:

- ◆ Several staff positions were lost or remain unfilled due to recent budget reductions (i.e., Outdoor Program Director, Assistant Special Programs Director, Assistant Golf Course Director and additional golf course personnel, Local Area Network Support Specialist, graduate assistants).
- ◆ Vacant positions have spread the workload to remaining staff members and, in some cases, have led to increased efficiencies of operation.
- ◆ Despite recent budget reductions and limited recreation facilities, the attitude of staff members remains positive. A positive attitude ripples through the department; however, it is our observation that there is increasing frustration with what the department cannot provide its patrons. Staff members are committed to providing quality programs and to delivering excellent service.
- ◆ The department staff members are viewed as being excellent managers of their resources, i.e., established departmental goals and reallocated resources to achieve these goals.
- ◆ Recreation Services and University Golf Course staff members are given very high marks for their willingness to collaborate with campus and community agencies.
- ◆ The department is characterized as customer service oriented and the student staff members are viewed as being attentive to their job responsibilities. Staff members are passionate about the role they play in providing recreational and leisure activities.
- ◆ Student employment provides social interaction, flexible hours, a relaxed work environment, marketable leadership skills, career-building options, and a sense of belonging to the campus community.
- ◆ Recreation Services was praised for working to support the academic mission of Illinois State University by providing internships and relevant student job experiences.

Recommendations:

- ◆ It is not readily apparent to the review team why the General Fund budget reductions at Illinois State University impacted the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course. The decision to leave positions vacant should be reexamined.
- ◆ Student pay rates should be examined with consideration given to job-related factors (i.e., difficulty of task, potential for conflict, required level of decision making, exposure to weather elements, supervisory responsibilities, physical demands, certification requirements, and market conditions).
- ◆ As funding levels improve, examine the professional travel budget to determine if it is adequate to provide staff members ample opportunities for professional development

experiences. A target for funding of this line item would be to allocate 5% of permanent staff salaries for staff development activities.

Communication and Planning

Review Findings:

- ◆ Strong communication lines have been established with campus entities depended upon for support and collaborative programming.
- ◆ A Departmental Strategic Plan was last updated in 2002 and is appropriately utilized for planning purposes.
- ◆ The department has adhered to the Division of Student Affairs requirement for assessment, i.e., CAS Assessment, November 2001; benchmarking comparisons; facility tours; and the Comprehensive Program Review.
- ◆ The department appears to be well positioned to take advantage of future opportunities.
- ◆ Staff members appear uncertain as to the university priority given to the proposed University Wellness Activity Center.
- ◆ A Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is in place to pay special attention to the safety and security needs of members of the Illinois State University community. The department follows all procedures established by CIRT.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Continue and expand on current assessment efforts. The ability to quantify the department's impact on student learning outcomes could have a significant impact on future funding decisions.
- ◆ Utilize information gained from assessments to update the current departmental strategic plan.
- ◆ For benchmarking purposes, identify an appropriate recreation services peer group and gather relevant information on an annual or biannual basis.
- ◆ Consider administering the Qualitative Importance of Recreational Sports (QIRS) survey on a periodic basis.
- ◆ Actively seek additional mutually beneficial collaborative opportunities with other university entities.

Fiscal Resources

Review Findings:

- ◆ Given the current economic conditions it appears unlikely that significant student fee increases will occur in the next 2-3 years.
- ◆ Recent budget reductions have reduced equipment lines, required a cutback in service delivery (e.g., McCormick Gym & Swim), and have left several positions vacant.
- ◆ The Recreation Services and University Golf Course staff members are given high marks for their financial resource management.
- ◆ The department receives Agency Funds (Student Fees) for the Recreation Services Operating Budget and Athletic/Rec. Facilities (Bond 61A). Agency Fees provide 46.7% of the department's annual total budget of \$2.41 million. In comparison, 71.2% of income for Big XII Conference institutions is provided through student fees.
- ◆ A breakdown of memberships sold to "The Rec" reveals 75% are students, 4% faculty/staff, and 21% community. In comparison, at Big XII Conference institutions an average of 15.4% of members are faculty/staff.
- ◆ User fees are charged for the following programs: golf course, group fitness, leisure university, recreational sports, outdoor adventures, and Student Recreation Building membership fees.
- ◆ It appears as if there is some duplication of services between the Recreation Services and University Golf Course wellness programs and those offered by Human Resources.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Consider collaborating with Human Resources to develop a proposal whereby faculty and staff members participating in wellness activities would receive a reduction in health insurance premiums. We recommend contacting Drake University's Recreational Services Department to obtain information about their successful wellness initiatives.
- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of combining wellness programming efforts into a single administrative unit.
- ◆ Work within the established Fee Review Process to obtain a larger share of agency fees (the department received 3.67% of the agency fees for FY03). Obtaining additional agency fees would reduce the dependence on user fees, and would likely increase the recreation opportunities available to the University community.
- ◆ Evaluate the gender participation for various programs supported by user fees to ensure that men and women are paying equitable fees for activity participation, e.g. fitness classes vs. recreational sports.

Facility Issues

Gregory Street Playing Fields

Review Findings:

- ◆ The number of acres devoted to recreation field space appears adequate to meet the current needs of the ISU community. However, much of the space is unusable for team sport activities due to the undulating terrain.
- ◆ The playing fields do not have lights.
- ◆ Adequate parking for participants is not available in close proximity to the playing fields. This creates a conflict with the nearby neighborhood due to recreation participants parking on the residential streets.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Develop a master plan for this area to maximize recreation use. Appropriate grading of the site might allow for additional recreation fields, a golf practice area, and parking.
- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of installing lights on the fields in order to maximize participation.
- ◆ Ascertain the interest of the local Park District in jointly developing this property for shared use and/or examine opportunities for sharing existing Park District field space.

Horton Field House

Review Findings:

- ◆ This facility is shared with Intercollegiate Athletics and the School of Kinesiology and Recreation.
- ◆ The recently renovated North Gym provides enhanced space for all entities utilizing this facility.
- ◆ The indoor track lanes cross the two outside-most basketball courts.
- ◆ The synthetic surface in the Armory is worn and some of the courts have uneven surfaces that present risk management concerns.
- ◆ The walls at the corners of the end basketball courts in the Armory are not padded and are located very close to the boundary lines.
- ◆ The slope of the ramp leading to the Armory does not meet ADA requirements.

Horton Field House

Recommendations:

- ◆ Do not utilize the courts that have uneven floor surfaces for recreation activity.
- ◆ Consider utilizing the North Gym for additional intramural sport activities.
- ◆ Pad the walls that are less than 3 ft. from the basketball sidelines.

McCormick Hall

Review Findings:

- ◆ The facility was constructed in 1925 and the last major renovation occurred in 1961.
- ◆ The location of this facility is convenient for students living on campus; however, it is an antiquated facility and is in need of significant repair or replacement.
- ◆ The wood floors in the large and small gyms have not been sanded for several years. Apparently, the wood is so thin that it can no longer be sanded.
- ◆ The facility is shared with the Department of Kinesiology and Recreation, as well as the Wellness Program administered through Human Resources.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Add padding at the ends of the basketball lanes in the large gym. Space between the end line and the wall is too short to meet industry standards (3-ft. minimum, 10 ft. preferred) and poses a safety hazard.
- ◆ With the University changing its priorities with regard to capital projects, seek support from Facilities Services to upgrade the interior of the large and small gyms. Walls need to be cleaned and painted, window coverings replaced, etc.
- ◆ Repair or replace windows in the large gym. Repair or replace protective tarps over the windows.
- ◆ Repair or replace the wire mesh protecting the stairwell leading to the small gym.

Student Recreation Building

Review Findings:

- ◆ A focus on customer service exists.
- ◆ The employees take great pride in their work, and exhibit passion and dedication for their jobs.
- ◆ The strength training and cardiovascular equipment is “top-of-the-line.”
- ◆ At 37,000-sq. ft., this facility does not begin to meet the diverse recreation needs of the Illinois State University community.
- ◆ The facility is well maintained and presents a clean environment.
- ◆ The staff intentionally attempts to make the Student Recreation Building a place for socialization as well as exercise.
- ◆ The existing space is well utilized.
- ◆ The cardiovascular equipment is on a three-year replacement schedule.
- ◆ The distance from campus (9/10ths of a mile) is seen by many as a deterrent to greater utilization, especially by students living on campus.
- ◆ Public transportation is provided to the Student Recreation Building from campus; however, it is not widely utilized.
- ◆ The lack of space makes it impossible to offer a wide variety of offerings, i.e., badminton, volleyball, table tennis, pickleball, massage therapy, athletic trainers, childcare, etc.
- ◆ The carpeted basketball courts are soon to be replaced with wood grain synthetic flooring.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Work within the university system to seek approval for the construction of a modern University Wellness Activity Center that can meet the diverse needs of the ISU community. While it is preferable to construct an indoor facility to house both the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course and the Department of Kinesiology and Recreation, the current economic climate warrants discussion regarding separating or phasing these projects.
- ◆ Enhance the market research efforts targeted at patrons and employees.

Student Recreation Building
Recommendations continued:

- ◆ In order to ensure state-of-the art equipment, continue the scheduled equipment replacement program.

Programs and Services

Golf Course Operations

Review Findings:

- ◆ The course is well maintained and has been recognized by *GOLF DIGEST* magazine with a 3-Star rating.
- ◆ The course will host a 2004 NCAA Women's Regional Golf Tournament.
- ◆ The green fees are reasonably priced.
- ◆ The University Golf Course is an amenity that is available to university students, employees, retirees, alumni, and community residents.
- ◆ The staff members have appropriate professional credentials.
- ◆ The course, pro shop and locker rooms have recently undergone significant improvements.
- ◆ The course utilizes the "FORE" software program to track point of sale information, demographics, use patterns, etc.
- ◆ Without a designated driving range area, player development and practice opportunities are limited in "growing the game" at this facility.
- ◆ The lack of kitchen and banquet facilities limits the size and types of outings that can be hosted at this site.
- ◆ Golf cart storage is limited and requires decentralized storage.
- ◆ No capital equipment replacement program exists to insure obsolete equipment is replaced in a timely manner.
- ◆ A limited number of staff members in pro shop are available to handle course customers and instruction.
- ◆ The net profit does not remain within the golf course fund.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Allow the net profit of the golf course operation to remain in its fund balance. This will allow the golf course operation to build a balance that can be utilized for operational and capital needs and to build a reserve fund.

Golf Course Operations

Recommendation continued:

- ◆ Establish a golf course equipment replacement schedule to insure the maintenance of quality course conditions and clubhouse services.
- ◆ If one does not already exist, establish an equipment maintenance tracking program to document repair and labor costs for each piece of capital equipment. This may assist in evaluating whether or not repairs to existing equipment are more cost effective than purchasing or leasing new or used equipment.
- ◆ Develop a marketing plan for golf course operations. Evaluate marketing tools currently being utilized. Include tracking mechanisms in promotional material to determine success of market penetration.
- ◆ Complete a utilization chart to determine peak and low times of play throughout the day and week. Develop a pricing plan to attract golfers during low play times.
- ◆ Review revenues per round for each fee level. To insure the pricing structure is adequate, compare revenue per round to cost per round.
- ◆ Determine the feasibility of developing a designated area for practice and instructional space to attract and develop new golfers.
- ◆ Evaluate the feasibility of contracting golf instructor(s) for player development programs and focusing pro shop staff on daily operations, event/outing management and marketing.
- ◆ Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of providing kitchen and banquet facilities.

Group Fitness Program

Review Findings:

- ◆ Offers an impressive variety of activities and services given significant facility restraints.
- ◆ At one time there was a high of 70 Group Fitness classes offered per week. Currently there are about 50 classes offered per week. Offering 70 classes proved too difficult to administer effectively. The number is now lower due to training time, the quality of the program, and reduced budget. The lower number of classes has provided improved instruction and the retention of instructors have also improved.
- ◆ Moved classes in McCormick Hall from the dance studio to the small gym (despite poor aesthetics) to accommodate larger classes.
- ◆ Utilizes appropriate risk management procedures.

- ◆ Markets the classes in a variety of ways.

Group Fitness Program

Review Findings continued:

- ◆ Uses multiple assessment tools to evaluate participant satisfaction.
- ◆ Is responsive to the needs of the students.
- ◆ The Group Fitness Program staff members are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, proactive in professional development, and seek to keep up with current fitness trends.
- ◆ The current facilities are inadequate to meet the demand and serve the needs of the ISU student population. Given current trends of sedentary lifestyles and obesity in the United States, this program plays a critical role in establishing positive lifetime activity habits for the University community.
- ◆ Aerobic instructors start out as assistant instructors for approximately a semester before being assigned their own classes.
- ◆ Fees for Group Fitness at McCormick Hall are part of the same fee structure for the Student Recreation Building.
- ◆ Group Fitness would like to offer Mind and Body, as well as Pilates classes in order to meet customer demand.
- ◆ Discussion centered on having an advanced aerobics class for Mind and Body or offer a Pilates Class. In order to offer either of these classes, Recreation Services may need to consider hiring extra part-time instructors. In addition it was mentioned that maybe the Assistant Director would be interested in teaching a class for the School of Kinesiology and Recreation. This way she could get the students with Recreation Majors involved with teaching for Recreation Services.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Make a financial commitment to McCormick Hall programs in order to provide consistent staffing.
- ◆ Schedule classes in the McCormick Hall studio that do not require equipment.
- ◆ Reorient the instructor's platform and cycles to accommodate more participants in the cycling room at the Student Recreation Building.
- ◆ Improve the lighting and add a projection screen to improve the atmosphere of the cycling room.

- ◆ Continue to investigate strategies to motivate students to maintain their exercise programs throughout the semester.

Group Fitness Program

Recommendations continued:

- ◆ Continue to build mutually beneficial relations with the School of Kinesiology and Recreation (e.g., recruit personal training instructors, place KNR students in practica in this program, conduct fitness assessments, possibly share graduate assistants, possibly offer personal training course in KNR, share equipment).
- ◆ Assess the demand for and feasibility of offering Pilates, and advanced Mind and Body classes.
- ◆ Consider purchasing a portable riser for use by the instructors as a stage. The riser needs to be adjustable for height and must fold and roll.
- ◆ Construct durable, lockable, semi-permanent storage cabinets in the small gym in order to store weight bar, steps, sound equipment, etc. for the aerobic classes.
- ◆ Study egress issues associated with the stairwell to the small gym. If the storage units are constructed, this may become less of an issue.
- ◆ Assess the feasibility for assuming management of the fitness facilities and equipment in the Residence Halls.
- ◆ Consider developing a fitness instructor preparation course, taught by the Assistant Director for Fitness, through the School of Kinesiology and Recreation. This could benefit both departments and provide improved training for instructors.
- ◆ Consider providing staff development funds for the Assistant Director to gain certification as a Pilates instructor and/or instructor trainer.

McCormick Gym and Swim

Review Findings:

- ◆ Staff members were very enthusiastic and enjoyed working for Recreation Services. They were excited that the McCormick Gym and Swim Program was reinstated.
- ◆ Lifeguards are trained via the program provided by Jeff Ellis and Associates.
- ◆ Lifeguards are used as gymnasium supervisors as well as lifeguards. This allows lifeguards to perform multiple tasks and they are better trained in pool and non-pool related emergencies. This also provides for greater flexibility with staff scheduling.

- ◆ Staff and students commented that they were extremely happy that the McCormick Gym and Swim program was available again.

McCormick Gym and Swim

Recommendations:

- ◆ There appears to be enough demand to support keeping McCormick Gym and Swim open longer during the semester. Seek funding that would allow the program to operate during the entire academic year.
- ◆ Investigate the demand for offering enhanced programming for non-traditional students.
- ◆ Investigate the demand for offering weekend family gym and swim activities.
- ◆ If market research indicates a demand for additional programming, seek increased funding to offer additional activities at McCormick Hall.
- ◆ Enlist the services of student leaders to lobby for the construction of a new facility. It is likely that a new University Wellness Activity Center will not be built for 10-15 years unless the university seeks a higher priority for a new facility.

Outdoor Adventure Programs and Leisure University

Review Findings:

- ◆ The reduced budget is currently impacting the ability to provide the extensive services desired by outdoor adventure staff members.
- ◆ The Outdoor Adventure and Leisure University Programs represent the concept that recreation is more than participation in a traditional sport offering or the pursuit of fitness activities. It is evidence of how all types of recreational activities are intended to enhance the life of the individual. Incorporating a wellness approach into leisure pursuits is the currently accepted philosophy for recreation. The Outdoor Adventure Programs and Leisure University contribute to a comprehensive philosophy of recreation for Illinois State University.
- ◆ Outdoor Adventure Programs are enjoyed by a core group of individuals.
- ◆ Store hours have been reduced from 7 days per week, 12 Noon-7:00 PM, due to budget restrictions. Despite reduced hours no business appears to have been lost.
- ◆ The graduate assistant position was eliminated due to budget restrictions. This position was in charge of the Leisure University programs, consents for the trips, and advertising for both Outdoor Adventure Programming and the Leisure University. It is felt that this has negatively affected the quality and number of programs that can be offered.

- ◆ Outdoor Adventure Programs has a good location for the Bloomington/Normal community, but according to statistics it is not highly utilized by the community.

Outdoor Adventure Programs and Leisure University

Review Findings continued:

- ◆ The Outdoor Store is the only store in the Bloomington/Normal area that offers extensive equipment rentals.
- ◆ Students are not readily aware of the Outdoor Store's existence.
- ◆ The trip program operates under the common adventure model.
- ◆ Outdoor Adventure offers programs and activities to provide participants with opportunities to enjoy natural environments and experience new challenges.
- ◆ As expected by the specialized nature of the activities, the number of participants in the Outdoor Adventure Program is lower than other programs offered by the department.

Recommendations:

- ◆ More clearly define the target market for these programs. Design a marketing program to reach the target market.
- ◆ Provide a better presence and more visibility for the building, i.e., improved signage and curb appeal.
- ◆ An improved presence on the departmental Web site would provide greater visibility to both students and community.
- ◆ No competition exists in the Bloomington/Normal community for the rental of equipment for outdoor activities. One local business, Wild Country, provides equipment rental; however, the equipment that this business rents is not as extensive as Outdoor Adventure Programs. With this in mind, a genuine opportunity to enhance the business aspect of the Outdoor Adventure Programs exists with respect to both students and community.
- ◆ Investigate the feasibility of providing indoor or covered storage for canoes and kayaks to prevent deterioration and promote a longer usage life.
- ◆ Long-range plans should include the Outdoor Adventure Programs as part of the new University Wellness Activity Center.
- ◆ More operational space is needed for Outdoor Adventure Programs. If the current physical location is not retained, consideration should be given to developing space within an existing or new facility that is adequate for the long-term success of the program.

- ◆ According to the CAS Standards, instructional programs are a core component of a campus recreational sports program and should exist to provide learning opportunities, knowledge, and skills through lessons, clinics, and workshops. Components of Leisure University may fit with the Saturday Night programming that exists through the Bone Student Center. Appropriate collaborative efforts should be investigated.

Recreational Sports

Review Findings:

- ◆ A form of “instant scheduling” is utilized for the team league sports.
- ◆ Decisions regarding activities appear to be based on available facilities and the cost of personnel.
- ◆ Due to limited facilities, there is unmet demand in some team sports.
- ◆ The number of teams is somewhat lower than what would be expected of a university with a relatively large on-campus student population and an enrollment of 21,000 students.
- ◆ It appears as if sports do not overlap due primarily to personnel considerations.
- ◆ Participation in appropriate extramural sport competitions exists.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Consider revising the schedule to reduce the conflict with indoor activity space, e.g., move men and women’s volleyball to the fall semester and co-rec volleyball to later in the spring semester to avoid conflicts with 5-on-5 basketball.
- ◆ Consider offering additional activities that do not require traditional activity space, e.g., sports trivia contest, sports pick’em contests, fantasy professional sport leagues, putt-putt golf, tug-of-war, horseshoes, mud volleyball, etc.
- ◆ Consider expanding the RecSports Cup to include the residence hall system.
- ◆ Consider co-sponsorship of ACU-I events, as well as the possibility of incorporating these into the recreational sports schedule.

Sport Clubs

Review Findings:

- ◆ Sport Clubs were administratively moved to Recreation Services and University Golf Course for 2003-04.

- ◆ The same staff members that administer the Recreational Sports program administer the Sport Clubs program.

Sport Clubs

Review Findings continued:

- ◆ The men's lacrosse club reported satisfaction with the new reporting structure and appreciated the support provided by the Sport Club staff members.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Consider requiring affiliation with a National Governing Body (NGB) for all sport clubs. Many NGB's provide insurance coverage and publish national standards.
- ◆ Work within the existing fee allocation system to secure additional funding for this program.

The Best People Program

Review Findings:

- ◆ The staff of the Department of Recreations Services and University Golf Course is professional and competent. Their positive attitude and resulting behaviors ripple through an organization that takes pride in the role they play in providing recreational and leisure activities. These positive attributes are reflected in the department's Best People Program.
- ◆ The Best People Program is a highly structured program that covers the following aspects of student employment for the department: recruitment; application, interviewing, hiring, orientation, feedback/appraisal, leadership opportunities, and staff celebrations.
- ◆ The program emphasizes the educational component of the overall employment process. It provides student workers' experiences that will facilitate success in their future careers.
- ◆ The program yields very good results; the department is staffed with outstanding student workers.
- ◆ Attempts to provide professional development activities for the student workers have been met with little enthusiasm.
- ◆ Since August 2001, graduate students, under the direction of the Associate Director – Recreation Services, have been responsible for managing the program. They have done a good job of maintaining the program, but the ability to improve the program and move it forward has been diluted by the lack of continuity and accountability that would be afforded by full-time professional leadership.

Recommendations:

- ◆ Continue the program. This is a wonderful program; it should serve as a model for student employment across the ISU campus.

The Best People Program

Recommendations continued:

- ◆ Involve student workers in identifying professional development interests and needs. Perhaps focus groups could be used in identifying topics for which student workers would be interested in receiving additional information.
- ◆ Evaluate the potential benefits of re-creating the position of Assistant Director for The Best People Program. This evaluation should lead to the appropriate prioritization of filling this position versus other positions after the University hiring freeze is lifted.

Summary

As stated earlier the Department of Recreation Services and University Golf Course appears to be an organization in “good operating order.” We found the staff members to be enthusiastic, passionate about their work, and committed to providing excellent programs and services. Jeff Lopez, director, was given high marks for his leadership, creativity and fiscal responsibility. The camaraderie within the department appears to be excellent.

The recent improvements at the University Golf Course appear to have been well received. In addition, excitement exists for the new Team Challenge Course. This Challenge Course has the potential to significantly improve the communication and teamwork of student organizations, residence hall students, Greek chapters, university departments, and community entities.

The lack of adequate indoor recreation facilities is a glaring deficiency. The Student Recreation Building is well maintained and the equipment is of excellent quality; however, at 37,000 sq. ft. the facility is simply too small to meet the needs of the Illinois State University community. The quality of recreation facilities in McCormick Hall and Horton Field House, with the exception of the North Gym, is well below that of comparable institutions. The landmass at the Gregory Street Fields is impressive; however, without significant grading and the addition of lights this facility also falls well short of meeting student needs. In order for this department to achieve its potential the proposed University Wellness Activity Center must become a reality.

The current program and service offerings are appropriate. The unmet demand is primarily due to the lack of facility space and the lack of adequate financial resources. The percentage of income being provided from agency funds is lower than expected. To assist with the ongoing planning efforts we recommend the department identify a peer group of institutions for benchmarking purposes. We suggest the department consider including Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Northern Illinois University, and several of the Mid-American Conference institutions among the peer group.

The review team did hear some concerns expressed by participants in the review process that the Recreation Services and University Golf Course staff members might be spread too thin. Given the recent position vacancies, this concern appears to have some validity. We do not recommend that any programs be dropped, rather we suggest getting back to a fully staffed condition as quickly as possible. However, if funding continues to be reduced the department may be forced to reduce or eliminate additional programs. The programs and services currently being offered are all within the CAS guidelines. For efficiency purposes, consideration should be given to combining the wellness service offerings of Recreation Services and University Golf Course with those of Human Resources. In planning for the University Wellness Activity Center additional programs and services should be considered, i.e., massage therapy, athletic training services, childcare, climbing wall, youth recreation day camps, etc.

Anecdotal Information Gathered during Interviews

The Comprehensive Program Review Team gathered the following selected quotations from a variety of individuals participating in the interviews. These are intended to communicate a representative sampling of the opinions and sentiments expressed during the interviews. To ensure anonymity, care has been taken to list the remarks in random order (not reflective of the order of interviews conducted) and without attribution. This form of qualitative data is not intended as statistically valid; rather, it is intended only to provide a flavor of the diverse perspectives that contributed, in part, to the findings and recommendations of the Review Team.

“The Rec. Services staff is great to work with.”

“The Rec. Services staff are dedicated and care about students.”

“Flatten the organizational chart but retain accountability.”

“The emphasis of Recreation Services and University Golf Course is on student development.”

“Students are our first and foremost priority.”

“We have good programs and services but a lack of facilities limits participation.”

“We have the potential to be the hot spot on campus.”

“Vacant positions have spread the workload and spread us thin.”

“I came to Rec. Services because of the positive reputation of the program.”

“The review process has helped the Rec. Services staff see the big picture.”

“The staff members are warm, friendly, good people.”

“I was attracted to Recreation Services by the opportunity to grow professionally.”

“I like working at Rec. Services because I get to meet a lot of cool people.”

“I came to ISU because of the reputation of the Outdoor Adventure Program.”

“We’re recess to our participants and add enrichment to people’s lives.”

“A quality Recreation Services program is needed in order to recruit students.”

“I decided to take a position at Rec. Services because of the passion exhibited by the staff.”

“I enjoy the people I work with. It’s fun to come to work.”

“We would like to see upper level university administrators come to our facilities or attend events occasionally.”

“The ISU philosophy is to do more with less.”

“We will take advantage of the Team Challenge Course.”

“The new building must focus on the benefits to faculty, staff, and the community if it is to move up the priority list.”

“There is a lack of understanding that Outdoor Adventures is part of Recreation Services.”

“Students of color may not prioritize Rec. Services when developing their budgets; thus there may be a perception that Rec. Services is for white students.”

“Many of our students had better recreation/athletic facilities at their high schools than what they have here.”

“We really appreciate being able to play our lacrosse matches at the football stadium.”

“Given their dwindling resources, maybe the Rec. Services staff are trying to do too much?”

“I know several students who have joined local health clubs because our facilities are too crowded.”