

EXHIBIT D – Athletic Task Force

Draft of Regents' Docket Materials

RECREATIONAL SPORTS AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A Report to

The Board of Regents

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(Final Draft)
Recreational Sports and the Student Experience

Preface

The University of Minnesota at Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Twin Cities has extensive recreational sports programs on their respective campuses that provide facilities, services and programs to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and their broader communities. Each campus is distinct and unique in how their recreational sports programs are administratively organized and serve their campuses. In addition, the size, location, enrollment, setting, and culture of the campuses including information and data gathering are so different, it is not feasible to provide consistent or comparable data among them.

However, there is a large body of knowledge about student development, physical activity, health, wellness, and recreational sports that provides the theoretical bases and research-based information supporting the ongoing institutional investments that have been made for almost a hundred years in campus recreation. A brief review of the research with appropriate institutional data that is currently available which applies across all recreational sports programs in the system is presented in this report. In addition, the campuses have outlined some major issues, trends, and recommendations related to our campuses and the field. Most of these do not rise to the level of Regents' policy decisions, but are, nevertheless, important to highlight.

Introduction

Recreational sports programs have been an integral part of the out-of-classroom experiences of students in colleges and universities in the United States for over a century. Until the 1970s virtually all campus recreation programs received nominal funding and did not manage sports facilities. Over the last 25 years, campus recreation programs have evolved into independent administrative units and departments, constructed student recreation facilities, enjoyed unprecedented growth, and taken on the management of these facilities. This evolution has enhanced the role campus recreation plays in supporting the learning environment and students' college experiences.

Student Development and Educational Outcomes

There is a plethora of research, particularly on undergraduates in higher education, on out-of-classroom experiences based on Alexander Astin's (1984) simple but powerful principle of involvement that the more time and energy students expend in educationally purposeful activities the more they benefit. The research indicates that extra-curricular and recreational activities contribute positively to a number of educational priorities including increasing student recruitment and retention, enhancing the student experience, and contributing to the overall development of students. Preliminary analyses of data collected on freshmen at the University's Twin Cities campus support these findings. Levels of involvement in Recreational Sports, as measured by the Ucard swipe systems at the entrances to the University Recreation Center and St. Paul Gymnasium, correlate

positively with both retention and grade point average. Furthermore, these relationships hold regardless of entrance exam scores or high school class standing. Other benefits to students outlined in local and national research includes:

- Improves overall well-being
- Reduces stress
- Improves overall happiness
- Improves self-confidence
- Helps build character
- Helps build community
- Enhances diversity
- Improves social life at college
- Teaches important team-building skills
- Enhances students' learning experience
- Improves time management skills
- Improves leadership abilities

(2002 Kerr & Downs Research Report commissioned by the NIRSA Board of Directors)

The results from Table I show that students on the Twin Cities campus rated their satisfaction with their recreational sports' experience as high as their academic and overall university experience.

Table I. Satisfaction with Selected Components of University of Minnesota Experience Mean Scores (Scale of 1 very satisfied to 6 very dissatisfied)*

Academic experience	2.39
Recreational sports	2.40
Overall U experience	2.41
Student organizations and activities	2.68
Student health service (programs)	2.94
Student health service (services)	2.98
Student union	3.27

*Data from the Twin Cities campus 2001 Student Interest Survey

Student Involvement in Recreational Sports System-wide

The full-time, student total enrollment for fall 2004 for all campuses is 65,247. By campus the enrollment is: Crookston (2,088), Duluth (10,366), Morris (1,839), and the Twin Cities (50,954). Although the percentages of students involved in recreational sports is determined differently at each campus, the percentages of student involvement reported by the campuses range from 66 percent on the Twin Cities to 91 percent on the Duluth campus with the other two campuses falling in-between that range. Based on national data that suggest student involvement rates range from 60-85 percent depending on the setting (urban, suburban or rural), quality and quantity of facilities, and availability of facilities, then, for the sake of argument, a conservative estimate of a student involvement rate of 70 percent would mean that about 45,500 students are involved at some level in recreational sports system-wide.

Recreational Sports Involvement and Residence Life

The data in Table II show that students who live in residence halls are more involved in recreational sports and participate more frequently than those students not living in residence halls. These data are supported by previous campus and national research indicating that distance students live from campus is a significant factor in their recreational sports involvement.

Table II. Comparison of Rates of Involvement in Recreational Sports by Residence*

<u>Frequency of Use</u>	<u>Students Living in Residence Halls</u>	<u>Students Not Living in Residence Halls</u>
Several times per year	80%	52%
Several times per month	59%	35%
Several times per week	42%	22%

*Data from Twin Cities campus 2001 Student Interest Survey

Gender Differences

There is a lot of research indicating that gender differences relative to involvement in sport and physical activity exist with respect to motivational orientation, perceived purposes of sport, behavioral involvement, skill development, exercise adherence and more. As a result of these gender differences and the influence of Title IX legislation, recreation program offerings have expanded and building designs have evolved to be attractive to both males and females. This is also reflective in the participation percentages of the gender populations at each campus.

Students of Color

Table III shows the percentages of overall student involvement in recreation programs on the Twin Cities campus. In addition to the differences of student involvement related to age, gender, and place of residence, it is interesting to note that students of color (SOC) are involved in recreational sports at higher rates than students of other categories (2001 Student Interest Survey). This is consistent with other national data and may be reflective of involvement rates at the coordinate campuses as well.

Table III. Percent of Student Involvement in Recreational Sports

Overall	66%		
Females	61	Males	73
Undergrads	72	Grad	56
White	65	S.O.C.	76
< mile	87	> mile	58
Non-comm	81	Commuters	53
< age 21	79	≥ age 21	61

2001 National Research on College-Bound High School Seniors

In a national survey called the “Student Poll,” the results suggest that “intramural and recreational sports have a much greater influence on college choice than intercollegiate athletics.” Other findings in the Student Poll suggest:

- Of the students who attached some level of importance to intramural sports—that is, if they actually planned to play in college—a surprising 69 percent reported that they intended to participate.
- When students were asked about the importance of the quality of a school’s recreational sports activities—those not considered intramural or intercollegiate sports—in college choice, half those surveyed reported that it was somewhat or very important.
- In addition, 56 percent of males and 45 percent of females reported that the presence of recreational sports in college was an important factor in their college decision.

Recreation Facility Trends

Over the past decade, colleges across the country have invested billions of dollars constructing recreation facilities to maintain their competitiveness in the higher education marketplace without a clear understanding of the impact these new and renovated facilities have had on the campus environment. In fact, the 2002 Kerr Downs Research Report found that NIRSA institutional members invested \$11.69 billion from 1995 to 2000 and \$7.12 billion since 2000 in new and renovated recreation facilities across the country in higher education. This represents 91 million square feet of indoor space. To grasp this number, there is 20 million square feet of office space in downtown Minneapolis. Another \$7.5 billion is projected to be invested in similar capital projects between 2004 and 2010 (The Value of Recreational Sports in Higher Education, 2004).

Planning Principles

Because of the rapid growth of the development of recreation facilities across the country, the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association developed a set of principles to help guide master planning for recreational sports departments and their respective institutions. The title of this 2004 publication is *Planning Principles for College and University Recreation Facilities*. The publication was recently endorsed by the Society of College and University Planning. The six planning principles are:

1. Establish recreation as one of the pillars of comprehensive campus planning;
2. Create and maintain a vision for the physical development of recreation facilities, a vision that supports the mission and master plan of the institution;
3. Develop a process for designing sustainability into the planning of new, remodeled or renovated facilities;
4. Instill a genuine sense of community and enrich the experience of all who come to the campus;

5. Foster a safe, secure, and accessible environment; and
6. Ensure an inclusive and accountable implementation process.

These principles should be incorporated into overall master planning for new or renovated recreation facilities at the respective campuses.

Exercise, Physical Activity, Health and Wellness

Over the last several decades, there have been volumes of research regarding the health, wellness, and fitness of the American population. The results are not good and the news is not getting better for most people of all ages. Two thirds (65 percent) of the adult population are considered overweight or obese and the percent of children with weight problems is growing each year. The current data from the 2004 Student Health Assessment Survey conducted by Boynton Health Service show that 23.8 percent of male students and 20.9 percent of female students are considered overweight based on a Body Mass Index of 25 or greater.

The consensus of research knowledge published in the 1996 Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the 2002 report by the American Heart Association on the “Benefits of Physical Activity” is summarized in the bullets below:

- Reduces risk of heart disease
- Keeps weight under control
- Improves cholesterol levels
- Prevents and manages high blood pressure
- Prevents bone loss
- Boosts energy level
- Helps manage stress
- Releases tension
- Improves ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- Improves self-image
- Counters anxiety and depression and increases enthusiasm and optimism
- Increases muscular strength
- Increases ability to perform daily lifestyle activities
- Delays or prevents chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and prolongs quality of life and independence

Summary

The research on the student experience show that recreational sports plays an important role in enhancing the quality of student and campus life, improving academic performance, and providing a living laboratory for developing and maintaining healthy, active lifestyles among members of the campus community. More specifically, the national data indicate that students who are involved in recreational sports have higher GPAs, higher recruitment, retention, and graduation rates, are more socially integrated into the campus community, have a greater sense of affiliation with the institution, and feel better about their overall University experience than those students who are not

involved. The good news is that the local campus data show high rates of student involvement and satisfaction levels with recreational sports.

Where students live is an important factor in student involvement in recreational sports. The location of recreation facilities in relation to residence halls appears to be an important planning criteria. This becomes increasingly important as the students are more serious about their academic experience and choosing to live closer to our campuses. The research on high school seniors' college choice also indicates that intramural and recreational sports are important criteria for them in selecting a college.

The results on gender differences support the need to offer a variety of programming opportunities that are of interest to both men and women. Over the last two decades or so, the recreation program offerings have expanded to be attractive to both genders and this is reflected in the participation percentages of the gender population at each campus. The expansion of these programs is directly related to the development of new and upgraded facilities on our campuses and Title IX legislation.

The national research on recreation facility construction shows a building boom in the billions of dollars since 1995. The financial investment by higher education institutions in recreation facilities is projected to continue into the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, during the 1990s when many of these recreation facilities were being built, there was little or no benchmark data about student interest and involvement in recreation programs to help determine the size of the building programs for these centers. As a result, many recreation facilities have been under built. All four of the campuses reported that their major issue is not enough facilities to adequately serve the programmatic demand for their students and the campus community.

The voluminous research on health and wellness of the broader society as well as our respective campus communities indicate that physical activity, good nutrition, and weight control are the cornerstones of being fit and healthy. Recreational sports are a significant part of the delivery system on our campuses for having a healthier community and helping to prevent and mitigate a myriad of health risk factors among our students, faculty, and staff. The future planning for all recreation programs, facilities, and services should include collaboration and partnerships with all those individuals and units on campus that provide health and wellness programming for the University.

Finally, if Astin's theory of involvement and the research based on this theory is valid, then the goal of sustaining or increasing student involvement should influence those policies and practices that provide the framework for determining curriculum, programs, services, and facilities offered within the institution.

Issues and Trends

The respective campuses have identified issues and trends in recreation:

Crookston:

- Students are increasingly expecting more high quality recreation facilities;
- Students are overwhelmingly concerned with health, wellness, and fitness and participating in quality recreation programs;
- Campus administration is working hard to find funding to correct structural damage to the floor in the upper level fitness center in Knutson Hall (circa 1920) which has a severe impact on current and prospective students, faculty, and staff program involvement; and
- Development of a state-of-the-art recreation center is a campus goal to improve and maintain the highest quality recreation programming to meet students' needs and be competitive with other benchmark institutions in the state and region.
- A new recreation facility would begin to address the programmatic needs for students, faculty, and staff and build programmatic bridges with academic disciplines such as sports and recreation management.

Duluth:

- Students are more concerned about their fitness and wellness;
- Students are participating more frequently and for longer periods of time;
- Outdoor and adventure sports (X-treme sports) are becoming more popular (ice-climbing, kite boarding, surfing, etc.);
- Quality recreation facilities and programming are becoming an expectation for current and prospective students; and
- Institutions will need to provide sufficient resources to campus recreation to remain competitive in the recruitment and retention of students and maintaining the quality of campus life.

Morris:

- More incoming students have varsity experience from high school and are interested in participating in competitive, non-varsity programs;
- Involvement in campus recreation programming will continue to expand on our campuses. Adjustments will need to be made regarding facilities us and space in order to accommodate growing need;
- More staff and improved training to keep programs safe and the quality of participant experience high will be necessary to meet growing programmatic expectations; and
- Greater opportunities are arising through building programmatic bridges with academic disciplines such as sports management.

Twin Cities:

- Construction of more recreation centers and expansion of existing ones to meet demand will continue at record levels across the country;

- Recreation centers of the future will have more space dedicated to student, faculty, and staff health and wellness education and programming;
- Recreation centers are evolving into “student centers” or hubs of student life;
- Recreational programs, services, and facilities will be an increasingly important criteria to high school seniors (and parents) in their college choice;
- Intercollegiate club sport (non-varsity) competition (soccer, rugby, lacrosse, volleyball, hockey, and rowing) will continue to expand across the country and will need to be managed at the campus and national level more effectively; and
- Under building of recreation facilities is an issue at all our campuses.

Recommendations

- *Planning Principles for College and University Recreation Facilities* should be incorporated into sports district and campus master planning to guide future development;
- Comprehensive and consistent assessment of need for recreational facilities, services, and programs and measurement of student, faculty, and staff involvement should be consistent and coordinated system-wide (the UPlan survey of faculty and staff’s health, wellness, and active lifestyle needs will be important for future planning);
- Recreational sports should be (is) a major part of the “delivery system” for health and wellness on our campuses;
- Incentive programs to encourage University employees to start and sustain a physically active lifestyle (see Morris’ plan)

Note: For the full system-wide report, respective coordinate campus reports, and the *Planning Principles for College and University Recreation Facilities* (2004) go to: [URL goes here!](#)