

The Quality and Importance of Recreational Services at OSU: 2002
Measuring Usage, Satisfaction, and Outcomes
Before the Construction of a Major New Facility
Executive Summary

The Quality and Importance of Recreational Services (QIRS) at The Ohio State University is an adaptation of the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association's (NIRSA's) QIRS survey. This report presents findings from the initial survey of a longitudinal study that identifies the role that Recreational Sports facilities and programs play at The Ohio State University before and after the construction of a new recreation and physical activity center (RPAC). The survey will be replicated five years after the new facility has opened. (The entire facility is scheduled to open in Autumn Quarter 2006). The study includes usage, satisfaction, and outcomes related to participation in Recreational Sports as well as various life-style and demographic variables. In addition to presenting the data in aggregate, data are compared based on gender and race.

Administered by telephone, this survey was conducted for the Department of Recreational Sports and the Office of Student Affairs Assessment by the OSU Center for Survey Research. The sample included OSU professional, graduate, and undergraduate students as well as an over-sampling of Asian American, African American, and Hispanic/Latino American students. A total of 605 interviews were completed, for a response rate of 68 percent using the most conservative calculation suggested by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. The cooperation rate for those cases in which interviewers spoke with the eligible respondent was 89 percent, again using a conservative definition.

The data were weighted by race, gender, and student status (professional, graduate, and undergraduate) to reflect the composition of the Columbus campus student population. The results for the weighted sample of OSU students will differ due to sampling error by no more than 4.0 percentage points in either direction from what would have been obtained by interviewing all students enrolled at The Ohio State University during the Spring Quarter, 2002.

In this summary, key findings from the data are highlighted. For further detail, a complete report is available.

Overall Satisfaction and Recruitment and Retention

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their overall experience at OSU and the importance of Recreational Sports facilities and programs on their recruitment and retention.

- There was no difference in students' satisfaction with their academic experiences between students who had used Recreational Sports services or facilities and those who did not.
- Students who used Recreational Sports services or facilities were significantly more satisfied with the non-academic programs and activities at OSU than those who did not use the services or facilities (79.5% users vs. 59.3% non-users).

- When asked how important the availability or the condition and quality of recreational sports facilities and programs were in influencing students' decision to attend OSU, students' responses were split and, on average, students responded neutrally.
- At the same time, over half (53.1%) of the respondents stated that the availability of recreational sports facilities or programs was important in their decision to continue at OSU, suggesting that Recreational Sports was more important in the retention of students than in the recruitment.
- Over 80% (80.6%) of students responded that it was important to them to participate in sports and fitness activities after graduation.
- Although there were no differences between men and women with regard to the importance of recreational sports in their decision to attend OSU, men were significantly more likely to rate the availability of recreational sports facilities and programs important in their decision to continue at OSU than were women.
- There were no significant differences when examining satisfaction as well as recruitment and retention by race/ethnicity.

Recreational Sport Participation

Students were asked about their sport/fitness activity and their use of OSU Recreational Sports facilities and programs.

- Most students (91.9%) participated in sport/fitness activities at least once a week with the largest percent (37.1%) of these students responding that they participated 3 to 4 times per week.
- Men participated in recreational sport/fitness activities more frequently than women. On average, men participated 6.24 times per week compared to 4.93 for women.
- Although the differences were not statistically significant, Hispanic Americans participated in recreational sports/fitness activities more frequently than other groups. They averaged 4.91 times per week compared to 2.69 for African Americans, 3.22 for Caucasians, and 3.51 for Asian Americans. However, all groups averaged between 5.5 and 6.2 hours per week of sport/fitness activity.
- Over 78% (78.5%) of students participated in programs or used services or facilities connected with The Department of Recreational Sports at OSU.
- Approximately 41% (41.2%) of students indicated that they had used OSU's outdoor recreational facilities, and 69.1% used indoor facilities.
- Women and men reported similar overall usage rates of Recreational Sports programs and facilities (77.4% and 79.6% respectively), but men were more likely to use outdoor facilities than were women (53.9% compared to 28.1%).
- Of all respondents in the sample, 88.6% of Asian Americans, 77.8% of African Americans, 79.6% of Hispanic Americans, and 81.2% of Caucasians used the programs and facilities of The Department of Recreational Sports. A greater percentage of Caucasians (56.9%) used the outdoor recreational facilities than students of other race/ethnicities (32.6% of African Americans, 38.2% of Hispanic Americans, and 42.3% of Asian Americans used the outdoor recreational facilities).
- Approximately 82% of undergraduate students, 65% of graduate students, and 75% of professional students reported using the services and facilities of Recreational Sports.

- Undergraduate students who participated in Recreational Sports programs and or services tended to have a higher GPA than what was found in the population; 57.6% had a 3.0 or better compared to 44.7% in the population. However, the difference in the average GPA for users and non-users of Recreational Sports was not significant.
- Of the students reporting that they had not participated in any programs or used any facilities connected with The Department of Recreational Sports, the most frequent reason given was a lack of time (52.6%). Another 21.6% stated that it was inconvenient for them to participate in campus recreational sports.
- Similarly, for students who indicated that they used OSU Recreational Sports but not as much as they would have liked (57.7%), the majority (68.6%) indicated that time constraints limited their involvement. (Women were more likely to report that they did not use Recreational Sports as much as they would have liked than were men – a difference of approximately 8%.)

User Satisfaction

Students who reported that they used OSU Recreational Sports facilities and programs were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of the program.

- Over 75% (75.3%) of students who used Recreational Sports were satisfied with the University's recreational facilities and programs; 84.5% were satisfied with the outdoor recreational facilities and 72.8% with the indoor facilities.
- Overall, students were satisfied with specific aspects of recreational sports including the recreational sports staff (81.3%), hours of operation (83.7%) and availability of facilities for free play (78.2%).
- There were no significant differences when comparing satisfaction levels based on race or gender.
- When asked what outdoor recreation facilities they would like to see added, students responded that they would like to see expanded facilities for basketball and tennis as well as additional tracks and trails. Others wanted additional outdoor volleyball courts, an outdoor pool, and additional sports fields.

Student Outcomes: Benefits from Involvement

Students who participated in activities sponsored by the Department of Recreational Sports were asked to rate how beneficial their involvement was in a number of areas. (The scale for these questions was as follows: 1=greatly, 2=somewhat, 3=a little, 4=not at all.)

- The majority of students (53.9%) responded that they had benefited “greatly” in experiencing fun and enjoyment, with an average score of 1.64.
- In addition, students reported relatively high benefits in reducing their stress level (average score of 1.84), in developing a feeling of physical well-being (average score of 1.86), and in maintaining a level of fitness (average score of 1.86).
- However, less than 10% of students responded that participating in activities sponsored by the Department of Recreational Sports benefited them “greatly” in learning to work as a team, in improving leadership skills or in improving their academic performance.

- Men were significantly more likely to report that they benefited from participating in recreational sports than women were in the following areas: improved sports skills, maintaining a level of fitness, learning to work as a team, improved leadership skills, ability to interact with diverse populations, conflict resolution skills, and reduced stress level.
- In addition, men and women rated the benefits derived from participating in Recreation Sports most similarly in the areas of developing self-confidence and feeling a sense of accomplishment.

Lifestyle

In addition to questions directly pertaining to the recreational activity, students were also asked a series of questions to assess other lifestyle issues.

- Almost 61% (60.7%) of students were employed, and of those, 60.0% worked off campus.
- Most students (91.0%) responded that their general health was “very good” or “good.”
- Almost 73% (72.9%) of students responded that they drink alcohol.
- Statistically significant differences were found in the percentage of Caucasians who responded that they drink alcohol when compared to Asian Americans and African Americans. Almost 79% (78.8%) of Caucasians responded that they drink alcohol while only 45.2% of African Americans and 56.6% of Asian Americans responded this way (71.3% of Hispanic Americans reported drinking, but this percentage did not constitute a significant difference).
- While approximately the same percentage of women and men reported that they drank alcohol, men drank on average 7.64 days in the past month compared to 4.81 days for women. This difference is significant.
- Almost 87% (86.7%) of students responded that they do not use tobacco products.
- African Americans were notably less likely to use tobacco products when compared to the other groups; 6.5% of African Americans reported using some form of tobacco product while 11.5% of Asian Americans, 11.7% of Hispanic Americans, and 15.3% of Caucasians responded affirmatively to tobacco use.

**A complete report is available at: <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/assessment/reports.asp>*