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# Reporting Structure and Job Satisfaction of Collegiate Campus Recreation Directors

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# Reporting Structure and Job Satisfaction of Collegiate Campus Recreation Directors

By Dr. Robert C. Schneider, Dr. William F. Stier Jr., Steve Kampf, M.S., Scott Haines, M.S., Dr. Gregory E. Wilding

*The differences in reporting structures among educational institutions, along with how satisfied campus recreation directors were with specific components of their jobs were studied. Directors, on a survey instrument, indicated to whom they reported and their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction pertaining to 16 employment related areas within campus recreation. Overall, directors predominately reported to student affairs (62%), while 24% reported to athletics. Directors indicated highest levels of satisfaction in their organization and with other departments (89%) and expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with outdoor facilities and publicity related matters (56%). In order to attract and retain quality campus recreation directors, upper administration should make efforts to satisfy facility-related needs and publicity related matters of programs.*

The nation's colleges and universities are experiencing prolific growth in the area of sports programming (Lewis, Jones, Lamke & Dunn, 1998). One way of effectively accommodating and sustaining this growth, is to examine reporting structures and job satisfaction levels of campus recreation directors. If determinations can be made as to what employment-related components affect the satisfaction of campus recreation directors with their jobs, upper level administration may be able to better serve the needs of its directors.

Anecdotally, job satisfaction of campus recreation directors at collegiate institutions may be influenced by any number of circumstances including such broad areas as organizational/reporting structures, work environment, facilities, salary, and professional development. Given the

limited amount of research on satisfaction related to the areas of campus recreation directors, a need for this study was supported. Its purpose was to examine reporting structures and determine how satisfied college and university campus recreation directors are with their jobs.

### **Related Literature**

A literature search revealed that job satisfaction relating to the position of campus recreation director has not been addressed as frequently as student participant satisfaction relating to the programs. Literature addressing campus recreation reporting structures, broad definitions of job satisfaction, and areas of campus recreation directors' jobs — with which directors may or may not be satisfied — is presented in the related literature section.

### **Reporting Structures**

Generally, campus recreation departments report to one of three areas in the organizational structures of higher education. The following administrative areas are:

- Academics
- Athletics
- Student affairs

When comparing missions, goals, and objectives of these administrative areas, differences do exist.

**Campus recreation programs** have a mission of providing a variety of programs, open to all students, regardless of the participants' abilities. Primary outcomes of campus recreation programs include enhancing students' learning experiences and improved quality of campus life.

**Intercollegiate athletics** involves competition between schools whereas academics, specifically physical education, has as part of its purpose, a focus on teacher preparation (Welch, 1996). Additionally, physical education provides students with knowledge in fitness and physical activity (Bryant, Anderson & Dunn, 1994). Bryant et al. also found differences existing among student affairs, academics, and athletics, relating to program funding, facilities, and community benefits.

These various differences may affect the job satisfaction of campus recreation directors:

- Campus recreation program funding is based on providing service to the student and campus community
- Physical education's funding is decided by student credit hours
- Athletics' funding is primarily based on the revenues associated with the program

When facilities are shared among these three program areas, campus recreation usually has the lowest priority. According to Bryant et al. (1994), the time left for a campus recreation program does not meet the needs of student demands. Additionally, Reisberg (2001) addressed the practise of investing in recreation centers as a necessary means of attracting and retaining college students. This scenario eliminates or minimizes the use by athletics and/or physical education classes, and shifts priority to campus recreation programming.

**Physical education** programs are academically oriented and tend to focus on training students to be teachers and coaches in the community. **Athletics programs** enhance camaraderie and school pride, but are limited to a small portion of the school's population. **Community benefits** from campus recreation results from programs serving the entire campus and participation is emphasized over winning (Bryant et al., 1994).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction represents a person's evaluation of his or her job and work context (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one's job as fulfilling or allowing fulfillment of one's important job values, provided these values are compatible with one's needs" (p. 1342). Francis and Milbourn (1980) defined job satisfaction as "the result of the individual's perception of what is expected and what is received from different facets of the work situation. The closer the expectation is to what is actually received, the greater the job satisfaction" (p. 70). According to one source (Iiaqua, Schumacher & Li, 1995), it has been suggested that

demographic factors such as age, gender, and degree have little or no significant impact on job satisfaction.

Stiefvater (1994) commented that Directors of NIRSA programs exhibit significantly less stress when compared to mid-level managers in the field of campus recreation. Furthermore, Stiefvater found that these NIRSA members had less stress producers, stress symptoms, and managed stress better than the general population. Job satisfaction tends to increase as a result of high intrinsic values found in the workplace (Iiaqua et al., 1995). Extrinsic rewards tend to affect job satisfaction among workers for whom intrinsic awards are not available (Iiaqua et al.).

Arnett, Laverie, and McLane (2002) pointed out three factors that are influential in creating job satisfaction: role clarity, work environment, and employees' evaluation of managers. The understanding of one's role as an employee tends to increase the probability of enhanced job satisfaction. Employees who perceive their work environment as positive tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, having the employee evaluate their manager increases the likelihood of job satisfaction (Arnett et al.).

Pool (1997) suggested the most significant indicator of job satisfaction is an individual's motivation to work. Individuals with high levels of motivation to work, normally have coinciding high levels of job satisfaction. The ability of leadership to meet the needs of the subordinate (employee) tends to increase the job satisfaction of the employee. Pool continued by indicating that employees were found to have increased levels of job satisfaction when leaders provided immediate feedback on employee job performance and when leaders clearly defined tasks before asking employees to carry out those tasks.

## **Methods**

A survey instrument was developed based on existing current literature relative to areas of job satisfaction of campus Recreation Directors, as well as satisfaction components of organizations in general. The survey was field-tested and feedback was provided from a panel of five expert campus Recreation Directors with at least 10 years of directing experience. After making the recommended modifications, the instrument was

forwarded to the researchers' internal review board where clearance to mail the survey was granted. Surveys were mailed to all NIRSA campus Recreation Directors.

The sample was delimited to NIRSA campus recreation directors at all institutional NIRSA member colleges and universities in North America. Because NIRSA is recognized as the leading resource for professional and student development, education, and research in college and recreational sports, a list of the members was obtained from the NIRSA office located in Corvallis, Oregon. All 682 subjects were forwarded a survey in the spring of 2003 for completion. Of the 682 that were mailed surveys, 269 completed and returned the surveys for a 39% return rate. Of the returned surveys, the rates received and analyzed by region were as follows:

- Region I: 23%
- Region II: 23%
- Region III: 14%
- Region IV: 14%
- Region V: 7%
- Region VI: 16%

## Results

This study examined the reporting structure and job satisfaction of campus Recreation Directors, with institutional NIRSA memberships at colleges and universities. It was not only a goal of this study to learn the satisfaction of the Directors with their job overall, but also to find out their satisfaction with selected areas of their job. Satisfaction was measured in the following general areas:

- Facilities
- Financial support including salary
- Institutional expectations
- Position
- Professional development
- Publicity
- The organization
- Work environment
- Working relationships

	Reporting Body	
	Student Affairs	Athletics
Region I	42%	46%
Region II	79%	14%
Region III	59%	12%
Region IV	70%	18%
Region V	67%	22%
Region VI	61%	21%
Overall	62%	24%

### ***Reporting Structure***

The differences in reporting structure can be seen when examining regional data as displayed in **Table 1**. Region II indicated the highest percentage of campus Recreation Directors (79%) reporting to Student Affairs. Directors of Region IV (70%) and Region V (67%) reported to Student Affairs at the second and third highest rates respectively. Reporting to Student Affairs at lower rates were institutions in Region I (42%) and Region III (59%). Reporting to Athletics at the highest rate was Region I, at 46%. On the other hand, reporting to Athletics at lower rates were the campus Recreation Directors in Region III (12%), Region II (14%), and Region IV (18%).

The rate of campus Recreation Directors reporting to Academics was included across regions, and, it was found that only 6% of campus Recreation Directors across all regions report to Academics.

The reporting structures of campus Recreation Directors of public schools and private schools were also examined. The results of the public school campus Recreation Director responses show that 67% of public school Directors report to Student Affairs, whereas only 18% report to Athletics. Private school Directors report to Student Affairs at a rate of 51% and report to Athletics at a rate of 38%.

A comparison to a 1992 study that acquired similar information conducted by Bryant et al. (1994) reveals little has changed in reporting structure over the past 10 years (**see Table 2**). The most significant change seen is that now fewer Directors report to Academics — only 6% in 2003 as compared to 16% in 1992. The majority of campus Recreation Directors

<b>Reporting Body</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>1992</b>
Student Affairs	62	61
Athletics	24	18
Academics	6	16
Other	7	4
Business	1	

<b>Category</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
Overall in organization	89	10
Working relationships with other departments	89	4
Overall in position	88	7
Work environment for Director	86	12
Institutional expectation of Director	85	9
Professional Development for self	81	13
Professional Staffing	71	21
Financial support	66	31
Professional Development for Staff	66	20
Support Staffing	64	29
Salary for self	64	30
Indoor facilities	58	39
Salary for Staff	54	34
Outdoor facilities	41	56
Publicity	33	56
Availability of free ads in campus paper	25	63

surveyed in the current study (62%) indicates that the Directors reported to someone in Student Affairs. Rounding out the reporting structure bodies to which directors report were Athletics (24%), Academics (6%), Business (1%), and Other (7%).

### ***Job Satisfaction***

**Table 3** displays the satisfaction and dissatisfaction rates of campus recreation directors for 16 selected areas. The top two areas with which Directors expressed satisfaction were in their organization (89%) and in working relationships with other departments, also at 89%. Overall, 88% of campus recreation directors were satisfied with their position. The Directors were satisfied with the following three additional areas at a rate of 81% or above:



- Work environment for the Director (86%)
- The expectations of the institution toward the campus Recreation Director (85%)
- Professional development for self (81%)

These figures show a considerable difference from the much lower 66% satisfaction rate expressed for professional development of their staff.

The Directors were most dissatisfied with three areas:

- The availability of free ads in their campus paper (63%)
- Publicity (56%)
- Their outdoor facilities (56%)

It is noteworthy to mention that the fourth area with which the directors were most dissatisfied was indoor facilities (39%).

## **Conclusions**

Conclusions were drawn relative to reporting structures and job satisfaction of campus Recreation Directors. Overall, job satisfaction of campus Recreation Directors was high. Areas of dissatisfaction were facilities and marketing opportunities. Despite the fact that reporting structures were different throughout the country (as revealed in this study), campus Recreation Directors seem to be satisfied with their positions.

Given the high satisfaction rates of the directors surveyed, one might conclude that their institutions of higher education are successfully meeting the component of professional involvement that was revealed in a study by Mortensen (1995) to be related to an increase in job satisfaction.

Furthermore, campus Recreation Directors according to Gunter and Furnham (1996), appear to be successfully managing the following aspects that lead to job satisfaction:

- Identification of job definition/clarity
- Organizational performance
- Management involving staff
- Getting along with people

- Influence over job as factors that lead to job satisfaction
- Training adequacy

Finally, it might be said that most of the campus Recreation Directors surveyed in this study are intrinsically motivated. This is consistent with findings by Iiaqua, et al. (1995) who found, after examining factors related to job satisfaction, that intrinsic motivation is best related to job satisfaction.

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