

BENEFITS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome, RFP Update, EAP's Relationship to a Wellness Program, Overview of Department of Recreational Sports Programs, Facilities and Services]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Fred Morrison, Chair, Linda Aaker, David Johnson, Gavin Watt, Pam Wilson, Jody Ebert, Michelle Lamere, Nancy Wilson, Joseph Jameson, Carla Volkman-Lien, Wendy Williamson, Carol Carrier, George Green, Gailon Roen, Amos Deinard, Richard McGehee, Larry Thompson, Theodor Litman, Keith Dunder

REGRETS: Marjorie Cowmeadow, Peh Ng, Chris Hulla

ABSENT: Don Cavalier, Frank Cerra, Susan Brorson, Rachel Estroff, Steve Burrows, Dann Chapman, Barry Melcher

OTHER(S): Betty Gilchrist

GUEST(S): James Turman, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Director, Department of Recreational Sports, and Dr. Tony Brown, Assistant Department Director for Programs

I). Professor Morrison called the meeting to order and welcomed all present.

II). RFP Update: The RFPs were sent out approximately one week late due to a computer glitch. As a result, the decision making process has been pushed back by one week.

The RFP Selection Committee has been approved by the administration and will meet March 26-28, 2002. Materials will be ready for Benefits Advisory Committee members to review the week of April 1st, prior to the April 4, 2002 full Committee meeting.

III). David Johnson, Director of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), addressed the Committee and provided information on EAP's relationship to wellness programming.

Mr. Johnson polled his colleagues across the country to determine what kind of wellness programs, if any, other institutions were offering. While other colleges and universities do offer some wellness activities, most, however, do not have a full-scale wellness program in place.

The Employee Assistance Program is a work-based program. Intervention happens at the workplace when personal or job-related issues impact an employee's performance. Most common problems that EAP staff address include, but are not limited to:

- Job concerns including stress in the workplace etc.
- Family relationship issues
- Emotional issues including depression and anxiety

Ten years ago approximately 10% of the EAP caseload was attributed to job concerns i.e. conflicts with a coworker, feelings of being overstressed or overworked etc.; now this figure represents 28% of EAP's caseload. Mr. Johnson believes that department reorganizations and downsizing are having a profound emotional impact on employees. In an effort to assist employees, support mechanisms, including a wellness program, should be instituted to offset some of the stress that employees are faced with on a daily basis.

Key aspects about the Employee Assistance Program include:

- A private and confidential program where employees can discuss personal or job related issues.
- A voluntary program
- Supervisor referrals – Supervisors need to be aware of EAP and how to effectively use EAP in order to facilitate intervention on an employee's declining performance and at the same time protect the employee's rights.
- Crisis intervention

EAP does quite a bit of cross referral between other University offices and programs. Below is a sample:

- EEO/AA
- Grievance Office
- Office Of Human Resources
- Boynton Health Services
- Work/Life Initiatives
- Wellness Initiatives

To conclude, while cross referrals play an important role for EAP, Mr. Johnson believes that the establishment of a wellness program separate from EAP would be the ideal situation with each specializing in their own areas of expertise. There are reasons why EAP should not be too administratively connected to a wellness program i.e. privacy issues etc.

A question and answer exchange followed Mr. Johnson's presentation addressing specific questions concerning how EAP would deal with certain situations as well as the structure of the Employee Assistance Program.

IV). Next, the Committee heard a presentation by James Turman, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Director of Recreational Sports, and Dr. Tony Brown, Assistant Department Director for Programs, titled “A Summary of Programs, Facilities, & Services of the Department of Recreational Sports and the Benefits of an Active Lifestyle.” The PowerPoint presentation included an overview of programs and facilities within Recreational Sports as well as summary research on physical fitness and the benefits of an active lifestyle. Presentation highlights included:

- There are significant differences between ‘fitness’ and leading an active, healthy lifestyle. According to Mr. Turman the general public as well as the University community are unaware of these differences. The ultimate goal is to have people enjoy life.
- The University’s Department of Recreational Sports offers:
 1. A variety of opportunities for participation in active recreation, sport and exercise.
 2. State of the art facilities that, to a degree, are conveniently located.
 3. A wide range of program offerings from self-directed to highly structured.
 4. Trainers, instructors and other knowledgeable and certified staff.
- The seven major structured program areas include:
 1. Fitness i.e. aerobics, group indoor cycling, Yoga, weight management, personal training, fitness assessments, etc.
 2. Aquatics i.e. swimming lessons, water aerobics, kayaking, canoeing etc.
 3. Intramural Sports that offers a variety of opportunities for healthy competition.
 4. Sports Clubs currently has 26 offerings including: soccer, fencing, volleyball, men’s rowing club, Ballroom dance.
 5. Court Sports i.e. handball, squash, racquetball, tennis, Wally ball, golf, etc.
 6. Climbing & Adventure includes rock and ice climbing, outdoor sports schools, clinics and other events.
 7. Youth & Community provide recreational sports activities for children, faculty and staff i.e. Gopher Adventures, Minnesota Sports Schools, Kids’ University etc.
- Student Involvement and Satisfaction
 1. Overall 66% of students are regular participants in recreational sports.
 2. 72% of undergraduate students participate in recreational sports.
 3. 76% of students of color participate in recreational sports.
 4. 61% of female students participate in recreational sports.
 5. 73% of male students participate in recreational sports
 6. 87% of students living less than one mile from campus participate in recreational sports.
- The Minneapolis and St. Paul recreation centers are overcrowded and are presently running at maximum capacity. Overcrowding is a barrier to access.
- Approximately 10% of faculty, staff and their dependents have recreational sports memberships (estimate acquired from payroll deduction figures).

- Currently faculty and staff memberships cost \$240 per year and there is a \$115 per year charge for a locker. Semester rates are slightly higher.
- Providers of health-related programs, services or information at the University are:
 1. Recreational Sports
 2. Boynton Health Services
 3. Academic Health Center
 4. Employee Benefits
 5. School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies
 6. School of Public Health
 7. Aurora Center
 8. Health and Wellness Resource Center – Wilson Library
 9. Department of Food, Science and Nutrition
 10. University Counseling and Consulting
 11. Extension Service
- Other universities that are establishing wellness programs include University of Miami, Ohio State University, University of Texas-Austin, University of Illinois.

To summarize, there are significant benefits to a moderate amount of regular physical activity and there is a direct link between physical activity and overall health. For example, physical activity reduces the risk of premature mortality in general, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes mellitus, in particular. Physical activity also improves mental health and is important for the health of muscles, bones and joints.

The Department of Recreational Sports recommends that promotion of physical activity should be cornerstone to any wellness program established at the University of Minnesota. For every dollar invested in health and wellness there is a positive return on the investment. Recognizing that Recreational Sports is currently under-built and not able to serve the needs of the University community, the department invites direction from the administration as well as Employee Benefits on its plans for establishing a wellness program and what services will be offered. Implementation of a wellness program will directly impact the University's service delivery systems and that includes Recreational Sports. Finally, a final observation, if a wellness program is to be successful it will require a cultural and organizational shift on the part of the University and change needs to start at the top!

A brief question and answer exchange followed. Topics for discussion included:

- Recreational Sports annual operating budget.
- Because the University is self-insured there is clear motivation to control health insurance costs.
- The University currently has 12,500 square feet of fitness space and the reality is that 40,000 square feet is needed.
- The need to think of wellness in terms of being system-wide. Consideration needs to be given to the coordinate campuses.

- Consideration needs to be given to the fact that there are 40,000 health plan participants enrolled in the University's health insurance offerings of which 15,000 are employees on the Twin Cities campus and the remaining 25,000 are either dependants or coordinate campus employees and their dependants. Attention needs to be given to location of plan participants as it relates to accessing fitness facilities. The University campus may not necessarily be the most convenient location for certain constituencies.
- Creative programming would allow and encourage employees to use the University's fitness facilities at non-peak times.
- Rebate and incentive programs.

V). With no further business, Professor Morrison adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate