

National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (2004). *The value of recreational sports in higher education: Impact on student enrollment, success, and buying power*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. (224 pages., \$25.00) ISBN: 0-7360-5503-7.

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There is an on-going struggle on American college campuses for adequate funding. It is a challenge which will likely never be resolved as institutions continue to struggle with how best to manage their resources. The problem has only been exacerbated at public institutions in recent years, where universities and colleges are asked to operate with less and less state appropriated support. One way institutions are filling the budget gap is through increasing student tuition. As a result of raising student tuition, students have become competitive shoppers in the higher education marketplace. This new consumerism on the part of students has major implications in higher education. Students have gained an important voice on how they want their dollars spent. *The Value of Recreational Sports in Higher Education* explores the role of recreational sports programs and facilities on students' selection and satisfaction with college campuses.

The Value of Recreational Sports in Higher Education is a complete summary of the Kerr & Downs Research Report of 2002 commissioned by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA). Over 2600 students from 16 college campuses participated in this landmark study. The results of this study will be used frequently as a reference in future research endeavors. The Introductions to Sections I and II identify the purposes of the research and the methodology used. Following the Introduction is an Executive Summary in each section that details the major findings. The reader will welcome these summaries because of their clear and concise reporting of the results.

The role of recreational sports in institutions of higher education and the value that college students place on recreational sports programs was the first objective of the study. The analysis of this objective is performed in Section I of the book. A narrative is provided, but the tables and graphs help to make the data more user-friendly. These graphs provide visual evidence of the importance that students place on recreational sports, as well as the value placed on other factors at the institution (e.g. course content, professors, social activities, meeting new people, etc.). Overall student values are explained collectively as a group in a number of graphs. These explanations are followed by additional graphs further delineating values placed on recreational sports programs based upon level of use (heavy users, light users, nonusers) and also by demographics (gender, race, etc.). Among the highlights from the first section are the graphs that tabulate where students rank recreational sports on their overall satisfaction with the institution. The results support the importance of recreational sports on student satisfaction.

Section II of the book examines the economic impact of NIRSA member institutions on higher education. This will be helpful to higher education's recreational sports programmers because of the number of comparisons that can be drawn from the findings. The section begins with graphical displays of the number of existing and planned recreational sports facilities. Lengthy breakdowns of specific types of indoor and outdoor facilities that are in existence or planned (e.g. basketball courts, bleacher/stands, multipurpose rooms, etc.) are provided. In addition to this information, there are graphs that depict the level of experience of recreational directors and the size of the student populations at the institutions included in the study. The third and smallest section of the book investigates the buying power of recreational sports participants. Since recreational sport participants spend more overall than non-users, student life personnel can gain insight on where best to allocate their dollars. Like Section I of the text, Sections II and III also use a number of tables and graphs to report the findings.

The Value of Recreational Sports in Higher Education is an excellent resource that can be used in a variety of courses, and a number of disciplines could benefit from using this book as a supplementary text. The text is easy to read and the graphs visually substantiate claims regarding the benefit of recreational sport to higher education. Not only could the book be used by instructors in the leisure and recreational fields, but there would also be a benefit to such disciplines as sport management, higher education administration, college student personnel, and other related areas. Student groups attempting to garner support for recreational sport programs on campus can also benefit from the text. Another group that will benefit tremendously from the text is those individuals working in student life. Student life personnel will have an easy reference guide for supporting claims to the overall impact of recreational sports on student satisfaction. Lastly, recreational sport equipment providers can use the text as support material for selling their products. The book is an excellent addition to the body of work in recreation that will benefit student, academician, and practitioner audiences.