

**GOAL 1D Improve retention in the student pipeline; increase graduation rates
Fitness Center**

Charge: Consider various aspects of the development of a fitness center on campus.

Committee: John R. Jones, III, *Nick Kellum, Michael Moore, Karen Whitney and Steve Wintermeyer.

Current Status

- Space accessible to students for recreation and exercise is “woefully inadequate”;
- Student health services at IUPUI are “marginally available” and hampered by small facilities in a non-central location;
- Good research has demonstrated that recreational sports and wellness opportunities on a college campus are not only an important factor in recruiting new students, but play an integral role in grade point indexes, retention and graduation. A recently completed study at Mississippi State University found that freshman students who even periodically use the wellness center have a significantly higher GPA than non participants and are 15% more likely to persist to graduation.

Recommendations

- Begin preliminary planning for a campus wellness center to incorporate intramural and recreational sports, sports clubs, student health services and counseling and psychological services; and
- Designate on the IUPUI master plan the area immediately south of the Campus Center as the proposed site for a wellness center.

Implementation

- Ask the Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Diversity to complete a funding model for both construction and operational expenses of the center and begin dialogue with students regarding funding; and
- Refine the space requirements for the units within the center.

Cost [To be determined as part of the implementation]

(Revised 7/11/07)

Report from the Action Item Team on the Development of A Fitness Center on Campus

The Fitness Center Action Team consisted of Nick Kellum Chair, John R. Jones, Mike Moore, Karen Whitney and Steve Wintermeyer. The committee was charged with exploring the development of a fitness center on the IUPUI campus as means of improving retention under Campus Goal 1. D. Improve retention in the student pipeline: increase graduation rates.

During initial meetings the committee focused much of the discussion on the relationship between academic performance and student participation in recreational and wellness activities. Good research has demonstrated that recreational sports and wellness opportunities on a college campus are not only an important factor in recruiting new students, but play an integral role in grade point indexes, retention and graduation. A recently completed study at Mississippi State University found that freshman students who even periodically use the wellness center have a significantly higher GPA than non participants and are 15% more likely to persist to graduation.

The committee also looked at existing programs and facilities on campus that support wellness activities. To the casual observer it would appear that as a campus, IUPUI has a wealth of fitness and wellness options. The reality is that only a small portion of the Physical Education/Natatorium Building is dedicated to student recreation and that those facilities are woefully inadequate for a campus of 29,000 students. Students do have the option to buy memberships at the National Institute for Fitness and Sports on campus, but most find that option unaffordable.

The availability of health services and psychological services for IUPUI students is also a concern when assessing wellness options. A recently completed study on IUPUI Student Health describes those services as “marginally available” to students. Besides the lack of adequate funding, services are hampered by small facilities in a non-central location to most of the student population. There is some evidence that students are willing to pay or be taxed for these services.

Early committee deliberations centered on the feasibility of proposing a combined convocation/wellness center as a means of fulfilling two important campus needs. While a convocation center would provide a venue for large campus and athletic events, the proposed building site was probably inadequate. Additionally, intercollegiate athletics needs a facility that they can independently schedule or the campus can re-create some of the scheduling conflicts that currently exist in shared facilities.

IUPUI is well regarded as a health science campus and we should promote health and wellness in all that we do, with particular emphasis on the health and well being of our students. With this as a preamble the Action Team makes the following recommendations:

1. IUPUI begin preliminary planning for a campus wellness center to incorporate intramural and recreational sports, sports clubs, student health services and counseling and psychological services.

2. Designate on the IUPUI master plan the area immediately south of the new campus center as the proposed site for the wellness center.
3. The Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Diversity complete a funding model for both construction and operational expenses of the center and begin dialogue with the students regarding the funding.
4. Further refine the space requirements for the different units included in the center.