

**Considering the
Impact of Participation
and Employment of Students
in Campus Activities and
Collegiate Recreation on the
Development of the Skills
Employers Desire Most**



Considering the Impact of Participation and Employment of Students in Campus Activities and Collegiate Recreation on the Development of the Skills Employers Desire Most

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2015 SKILLS PREFERRED BY EMPLOYERS

Ability to work in a
team structure

Ability to make
decisions and solve
problems

Ability to verbally
communicate with persons
inside and outside the
organization

Ability to plan, organize
and prioritize work

Ability to obtain and
process information

Ability to analyze
quantitative data

Technical knowledge
of the job

Proficiency with computer
software programs

Ability to create and/or
edit written reports

Ability to sell or
influence others

Source:
NACE Job Outlook 2015

CHANGES IN THE LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, including rising costs, have led those responsible for cocurricular programs to re-evaluate program offerings, training models, structure, and, most importantly, value to the student experience. It is critical, in the current climate, that institutions provide opportunities for student leaders, employees and participants to gain experiences and competencies that will not only make them more well-rounded citizens, but better prepared to enter the workforce and be successful. For student affairs to be sustainable and thrive, finding ways to teach students to understand and articulate the skills gained from employment and involvement in those cocurricular experiences will be essential.

The Purpose of this Document

In the spring of 2014, the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) and NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, with the support of their respective boards, launched a working group to look at how the skills gained through participation and employment in cocurricular experiences helped to prepare students for their careers. The team was comprised of senior-level staff from both associations, current and former members of their boards of directors and senior scholar/practitioners with a history of involvement in the organizations.

The goal of the project was to identify ways students are gaining skills that make them desirable to employers. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) produces an annual “Job Outlook Survey,” which asks employers to rank the skills they find most desirable when hiring college graduates (NACE, 2014). Sometimes called “soft skills,” these include such areas as working in teams, and verbal and written communication. The top 10 skills are included in the table below.

There is support for the idea that many of the skills identified by NACE are being developed through participation and employment in campus activities and collegiate recreational programs. To many student affairs professionals, this connection is intuitive – but data to support this conclusion are currently limited.

This group worked to narrow the scope of the project to considering how participation and employment in cocurricular contexts might influence the 10 skills identified by NACE as most important to employers. While data are forthcoming through projects such as a national benchmarking study through Campus Labs that is currently underway, the group has sought to develop a comprehensive list of experiences that are common in many programs in Campus Recreation and Campus Activities that could potentially lead to learning and where students could gain these skills.

It is hoped that professionals in Campus Recreation and Campus Activities will utilize this comprehensive list of experiences to:

- Conduct research to see to what extent students in educational programs in campus activities and collegiate recreational programs are achieving these outcomes;
- Conduct program assessment to see in what situations (settings, delivery of information) students in these programs are achieving these outcomes;
- Use assessment to improve student learning with regard to the 10 NACE-identified skills;
- Communicate what is learned from these activities to other institutions and with key stakeholders inside and outside of their institutions as a means of helping professionals in Campus Activities and Campus Recreation demonstrate what students in their areas are learning; and
- Contribute to the conversation about which programs influence this learning the most by using the interactive forum currently hosted on both the NACA and NIRSA websites. Members can add to the list developed by the working group and share their insights about the list that has been developed.


Literature Review

A Gallup survey conducted on behalf of the Lumina Foundation found that only 11% of business leaders and 14% of the general public felt strongly that students graduated from college with the skills and competencies that are needed for success in the workplace (Lumina, 2013). In another study, Hart Research Associates interviewed 318 employers and found that both two- and four-year colleges need to make at least some improvements to prepare students for the global economy (Hart Research Associates, 2013). Clearly, employers and the general public have lost confidence in the ability of colleges and universities to prepare students for the world of work.

There also appears to be a gap between employers' and students' perceptions of how prepared recent graduates are for their careers. A publication prepared by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and released in January 2015 reports on a survey conducted last fall, in which 400 executives and more than 600 college students responded regarding the job skills of those entering the workforce. Skills such as oral and written communication, critical thinking and solving problems were assessed. The results indicate that students frequently thought they were markedly better prepared than employers did. In the vast majority of cases, students' self-evaluations were more than double those of the executives (Jaschik, 2015). This raises very serious questions about how to help students acquire the skills that will be expected of them in their first job and also how students can better demonstrate and communicate these skills to their new employers.

It stands to reason that students gain employment skills from their work experiences in college. This claim is well supported by the literature (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Research also suggests that students gain more than just job skills from student employment. For example, Riggert et al. (2006) found that the relationship between student employment and retention was higher than that of a high GPA and retention. As hours worked increased up to 25 hours of employment, so did persistence. Even part-time student employees have higher GPAs than their peers who do not work (Hackett, 2007).

Contribute to the conversation and add to the working group's list by visiting tinyurl.com/o5a6xfq



Students also benefit in ways other than grades. Furr and Elling [2000] explored the relationship between cocurricular experiences and employment and found that employment on campus appears to positively impact involvement with professors and in clubs and organizations. Pike, et al. [2008] found that working on campus 20 hours per week was positively related to all five of the benchmarks in the National Survey of Student Engagement, including academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, faculty interaction and enriching educational experiences.

In particular, working in student affairs settings tends to promote additional benefits. Carr [2005] looked at students employed at a college recreation center and suggested that students see their work experiences as “a viable way to learn skills that are transferable to other settings” [p. 176]. Hall [2011] found evidence to support that employment in campus recreation enhances student employees’ ability to work with diverse people, solve problems, communicate effectively and develop confidence in their leadership skills.

What has been explored less is how frequently or effectively students develop career skills in co-curricular experiences. Furr and Elling [2000] determined that students who worked more hours tended to be less involved in campus activities. These students also became “less connected to the institution as they become more involved in off-campus employment” [p. 464]. It appears working too many hours may be detrimental to a student’s college experience as a whole. While employment may limit involvement, involvement seems to positively impact the development of skills that can lead to employment. Hall, Forrester and Borsz [2008] found that student sport club leaders reported improving their skills in organizing, planning, delegating, balancing academic personal and professional roles, mentoring and motivating others, decision making, working with diverse others, and giving and receiving feedback by being involved in these activities when student affairs professionals supervised the activity. This may be due to the ways in which student affairs practitioners are trained to draw meaning out of learning activities. In a study conducted by Peck [2012], presidents of campus programming boards were more likely to develop desired competencies when they were enhanced by structured reflection activities.

At current, little data exist to explain whether or to what extent participation in co-curricular experiences promote the skills that are most desirable to employers. In April of 2014, Campus Labs released a pilot benchmarking study that asked students about whether or not they believed they were developing the competencies identified by NACE and if they were developing these competencies inside of the classroom, outside of the classroom or both. Nine institutions varying in size and structure and more than 1,300 students participated. While the data from this study are very limited, they offer an initial glimpse at the connection between participation and employment in cocurricular experiences and the development of skills desired by employers. It is hoped that a better understanding of how students develop these skills in cocurricular contexts will create an improved understanding of the purpose and value of participation and employment in campus activities and campus recreation.

The Campus Labs study suggests that students view their cocurricular experiences as instrumental in developing these skills. For half of the skills, the majority of students indicated that they had gained these skills outside of the classroom. This included such skills as “ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work” and “make decisions and solve problems.”

Additionally, for three of the five skills, students indicated they more frequently gained these skills from cocurricular experiences. This included skills such as “working in a team structure,” “verbally communicating” and “selling and influencing others.” Even for skills in which students indicated they were considerably more likely to gain them from their classroom experiences, a surprising number said they were gaining them from experiences outside the classroom. For example, one might expect that you would not be as likely to gain skills in “quantitative reasoning” from experiences outside of the classroom, but nearly 28% indicated that they had.

Gaining NACE-Identified Skills Inside and Outside of the Classroom

N=1,355	In the classroom/ In my classes	In co-curricular/ extra-curricular programs outside of the classroom	Not at all
Ability to work in a team structure	62%	68%	4%
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	71%	62%	4%
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	59%	70%	5%
Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work	72%	61%	5%
Ability to obtain and process information	85%	46%	3%
Ability to analyze quantitative data	83%	28%	8%
Technical knowledge related to the job	63%	44%	14%
Proficiency with computer software programs	66%	33%	18%
Ability to create and/or edit written reports	80%	32%	10%
Ability to sell or influence others	42%	61%	21%

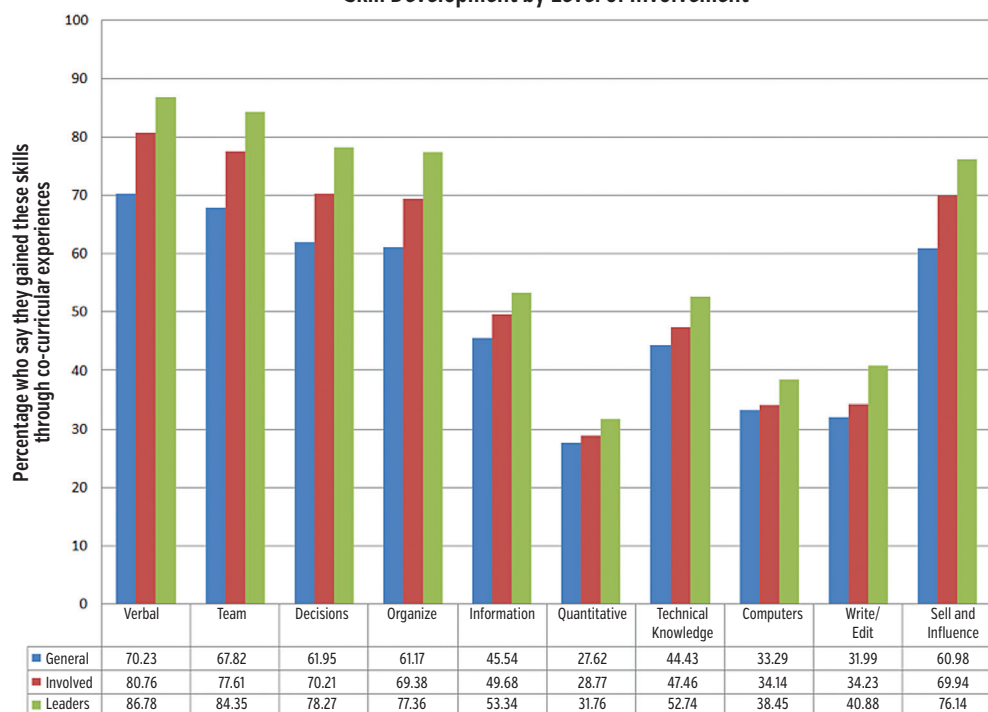
Note: Percentages indicate the total number of responses and therefore do not total 100%.

Finally, it is striking how few indicated that they did not feel that they were gaining these skills at all, either inside or outside of the classroom. This offers some refutation of the beliefs of the majority of employers and the general public polled by Gallup who indicated that higher education is not equipping students with the skills that are valued most in recent college graduates. What is most relevant to student affairs practitioners is that the Campus Labs benchmarking study revealed that students who indicated that they participated in student organizations or were leaders of student organizations were considerably less likely to indicate that they were not gaining these skills in college. In fact, this was true for every skill with the exception of “proficiency with computer programs” in which involvement did not seem to impact the perception that one was not gaining this skill, but for which leadership did seem to make a difference. Again, the numbers are too low to make broad predictions about the entire population, but they do offer an intriguing topic for follow-up.



The Campus Labs benchmarking study also uncovered additional findings with some interesting implications. The more involved students were in cocurricular experiences, the more likely they were to say they were acquiring the skills employers want. As noted in the table below, students who were “involved” in a cocurricular experience were more likely than students in general to say they were gaining these skills. Students who were “leaders” were more likely than involved students to say they were gaining these skills. While these results do not offer definitive proof that these students are gaining more from their experiences, they do suggest that the learning is more salient to them. This can be useful to campus activities and campus recreation professionals who seek ways to improve students’ awareness of what they are learning and their ability to articulate and demonstrate what they are learning to others.

Skill Development by Level of Involvement



Skill Development Inventory

In advancing future scholarship on this important topic, it was important to identify ways to locate the kinds of learning that should be measured. To this end, the working group began to assemble an inventory of opportunities in campus activities and collegiate recreation that might be leading to the kinds of skills employers want. The compiled list included in this publication reflects outcomes that are specific, concrete, realistic and measurable. It is hoped that this listing of outcomes will provide campus activities and collegiate recreation professionals with the information they need to articulate to various stakeholders the benefits of student participation in various campus activities and recreation programs and to stress the importance of helping students draw connections between their experiences inside and outside the classroom. Clearly, it would be impossible to capture all the ways that students are learning in every single program. It is hoped that this list will spark conversation, inspiration and, perhaps, even debate.

Ability to work within a team structure

Students establish goals.	Students participating or employed in campus activities set goals for attendance, recruitment, training, quantity and quality of events and for reaching previously underserved audiences. Student organization presidents set goals for fulfilling the missions of their various organizations.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs set goals for skill development, staff development, recruitment, participation, competition and for outreach to all students.
Students evaluate strengths and weaknesses and determine appropriate roles for others based on interests, personalities and competencies.	Students participating or employed in campus activities assign roles for events based on the strengths of members; they identify leaders who are well suited for various roles in the organization.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs, such as intramural sports and sport clubs, have to evaluate the skill level of other students to determine who participates in the team and what position is best suited for their abilities. Those facilitating fitness and wellness programs learn to determine the skill level of participants and how they can assist them in achieving the next level of competency. Those facilitating outdoor and adventure programs learn to balance an ethic of “challenge by choice” with encouraging others to exceed their expectations.
Students learn teambuilding.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often hold retreats and trainings to facilitate bonding and shared goal setting.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to facilitate teambuilding activities for their groups and for outside groups. Sport clubs and intramurals establish team camaraderie based on common goals and expectations during practices, competitions and other team activities.
Students learn to pursue and secure leadership positions.	Students participating or employed in campus activities may pursue election or selection for formal leadership positions (including campus-wide elections) or may vie for informal or temporary leadership, such as the coordination of major events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may interview for employment and advancement, or seek formal and informal leadership positions within the collegiate recreation programs.
Students work to improve the overall performance of the team.	Students participating or employed in campus activities facilitate event evaluation, assessment and informal discussion about how individual events and initiatives can improve as well as seek ways to improve the overall functioning of the group. Organizations may engage in formal evaluation of leaders, as well.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs such as intramurals and club teams work on skills to assist the team in improving. Supervising students may conduct formal and informal feedback, coaching, mentoring and evaluations of student leaders to help the team improve.

Students learn problem-solving skills and to work together in a crisis.	Students participating or employed in campus activities are often called upon to determine solutions to issues that arise during events and to respond to situations that become unsafe, such as weather-related emergencies.
	Students employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to facilitate teambuilding exercises and other initiatives that stress problem solving, such as high- and low-ropes elements and team games. Students employed in collegiate recreation programs have to respond quickly and effectively to crisis, to injury or medical distress in both training and real life situations. Many are trained to manage emergencies and receive trainings in first aid, lifeguarding, CPR, and automated external defibrillators.
Students gain an appreciation for diversity and learn to collaborate with diverse members.	Students participating or employed in campus activities gain appreciation for cultural diversity, as well as the variety of viewpoints of those participating in their organizations. Through programming, they seek to create an appreciation for diversity in others.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to recognize the uniqueness of those with whom they work, customizing training to meet the needs of a diverse group.
Students learn to unite distinct visions, work toward a common purpose and to develop a mission that is compatible with the mission of their institution.	Students participating or employed in campus activities develop goals that align with their institution's values and make adjustments when programs are out of alignment.
	Students employed in collegiate recreation programs develop goals that align with their department's and institution's values and make adjustments when programs are out of alignment.
Students learn to manage conflict.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to manage incompatible goals, work style conflicts and personality conflicts between members of the group.
	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to manage incompatible goals, work style conflicts and personality conflicts between members of the group.
Students learn to select members who help fulfill the diverse needs of the team.	Students participating or employed in campus activities conduct interviews and screen applicants for general membership and leadership positions. Student Government members ask pertinent questions of potential appointees and make proponent and opponent speeches about candidates for various positions.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs seek participants to fill needs and gaps in the team. They recruit participants in a wide variety of programs.
Students learn to recognize the contributions of team members.	Students participating or employed in campus activities develop incentives for participation and programs to recognize the contributions of members. Students nominate others for campus awards and honors, including writing letters of nomination/recommendation.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs design awards ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of teams and develop programs to incentivize and recognize participation.

Ability to make decisions and solve problems

Students must forecast, develop, and strategize current and long-term financial needs.	Students participating or employed in campus activities make budgets for events and track unanticipated costs. Students make requests of funding sources based on these forecasts.
	Students participating in or employed by collegiate recreation programs decide how to allocate available funds.
Student must anticipate and mitigate risk.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to anticipate and mitigate risk in events of all sizes, but particularly large events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to anticipate and mitigate risks in programs such as aquatics, outdoor adventure programs, intramurals, fitness programs, and sport clubs.
Students learn to make effective decisions in pressure situations.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often have to problem-solve and adapt during the course of an event.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs such as sport clubs determine elements of competition for fellow students, which include playing time, game strategy and rules interpretation. Students also need to make split-second decisions while participating in games or dealing with a crisis situation in a variety of contexts. Officials, through rules knowledge, must apply, interpret and enforce rules in a high-pressure situation.
Students modify previous plans in light of new developments.	Students participating or employed in campus activities respond to unexpected developments that occur during events and other programs.
	Students employed in collegiate recreation programs develop plans based on the ability level of the group and the environment and make modifications to program plans.
Students learn to engage in strategic planning.	Students participating or employed in campus activities plan retreats and trainings to establish goals, to overcome previous limitations and to anticipate and respond to problems.
	Students, such as employees or advisory board members in collegiate recreation programs, seek to understand the needs of the students they serve and to provide the resources desired by stakeholders.
Students respond to constructive feedback to improve programs.	Students participating or employed in campus activities receive assessment or feedback (positive or negative) and act accordingly to improve the experiences of participants.
	Students employed in collegiate recreation programs receive assessment or feedback (positive or negative) and act accordingly to improve the experiences of participants.

Students make decisions about appropriate disciplinary actions.	Students participating or employed in campus activities seeks ethical ways of holding other students accountable for failure to meet established standards.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may participate in making decisions about disciplinary actions for teams or individuals. Officials must apply, interpret and enforce rules.
Students interpret rules and guidelines and make decisions that comply with policies.	Students participating or employed in campus activities ensure that programs and services are fully compliant with the institution's policies, as well as the governing documents of the organization.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may contribute to discussions about developing and enforcing procedures related to facilities and programs. Students leading intramurals handle formal protests and disputes.
Students learn to weigh the interests of various groups in making a fair decision.	Students participating or employed in campus activities have to make choices between potential artists, events or marketing strategies. Student governments often have to make choices regarding the distribution of funds to various student groups.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may make choices for the greater good of their teams; students may participate in making funding decisions regarding various initiatives, such as distribution of funds for sport clubs. Student staff members use tournament or league scheduling skills to schedule fair and balanced leagues.

Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization

Proposes and defends budget requests.	Students participating or employed in campus activities may speak persuasively to funding boards to receive money for their program and may need to appeal to internal processes for the funding of events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may frequently defend budget requests for individual sport clubs and other initiatives.
Defends and advocates for decisions regarding rule enforcement.	Students participating or employed in campus activities may need to hold other students accountable for violations of organization rules or for the failure to meet expectations of a leadership position.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may enforce rules as an official or advocate for their team's point of view as a team captain. They also enforce the rules of their facilities. These may occur during high stress and conflict situations.
Recruits new participants at involvement fairs and other recruitment events.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often participate in events to recruit new members. They must be prepared to quickly and succinctly explain the purpose of the group and encourage participation.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs often participate in events to recruit new members. They must be prepared to quickly and succinctly explain the purpose of the group and encourage participation.
Participants propose new initiatives and events.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often propose events to members of the organization. They must persuade a group to adopt their idea. Student Government Association members present proponent and opponent speeches, present legislation and ask pertinent questions.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs often must propose new sport clubs, intramural offerings, exercise classes, etc.
Communicate with key stakeholders about important organizational initiatives.	Students participating or employed in campus activities coordinate events. This requires clear, concise and correct communication with associates (agents), university personnel, student volunteers, and talent.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs communicate with other university programs, alumni, national governing bodies, league officials, university business affairs and many other stakeholders.
Members may present trainings or presentations at local, regional or national conferences.	Students participating or employed in campus activities may have the opportunity to present educational sessions at local, regional or national conventions, as well as leadership conferences on their campuses.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may have the opportunity to present educational sessions at local, regional or national conferences, as well as leadership conferences on their campuses. They conduct ongoing training, in-services and continuing education workshops, including a variety of national certifications.

Students are responsible for running efficient and effective meetings.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often hold weekly organizational meetings and run frequent meetings with officers, advisors and other key stakeholders.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs frequently hold regular meetings to plan initiatives and track progress.
Students speak at events.	Students participating or employed in campus activities may be called upon to introduce special guest, introduce artists or serve as a master/mistress of ceremonies.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs are required to speak at trainings, in services and continuing education workshops.
Students motivate others.	Students participating or employed in campus activities frequently promote events in public spaces and use various appeals to encourage others to support their events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs need to use language to motivate others. For example, fitness instructors need to encourage participants to do their best, and outdoor and adventure programs leaders need to encourage participants to exceed their expectations and overcome their limitations.
Students explain complex or technical information.	Students participating or employed in campus activities need to be able to break down complex events into their component parts and explain each volunteer's role in carrying out the event.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs need to explain complex or technical information. Aquatics instructors need to be able to explain the mechanics of swimming to a wide variety of audiences, fitness instructors needs to explain how to derive maximum benefit from a fitness activity and intramural student staff may need to explain and interpret complex rules or articulate risk management strategies.
Students provide customer service.	Students participating or employed in campus activities need to be able to deal with customer concerns and articulate policies clearly to patrons.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs need to be able to address customer concerns and articulate and enforce policies clearly to patrons.

Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work

Students learn time management skills.	Students participating or employed in campus activities make detailed plans for the timing of events. Students must create a program implementation calendar that includes promotion and volunteer recruitment and selection, reservation of facilities, contract processing and day-of-event timeline.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs make plans for multiple events, activities, and staff schedules and implement systems to ensure smooth operations.
Students learn to balance competing demands for their time.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to balance the demands of their cocurricular activities with social, academic, work, wellness and family demands.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs balance the demands of their positions with social, academic, work, wellness and family demands.
Students learn to plan events and programs that require managing the efforts of a large team over an extended period of time.	Students participating or employed in campus activities often manage large budgets and are required to plan programs one semester in advance. They make detailed plans for events that include budgets, set-up schedules, shopping lists, staffing lists, schedules of deliveries, marketing plans and other considerations.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs make detailed plans for events that include budgets, set-up schedules, shopping lists, staffing lists, schedules of deliveries, marketing plans and other considerations.
Students schedule others to ensure proper levels of staffing.	Students participating or employed in campus activities consider staffing needs and manage schedules of multiple participants to ensure that responsibilities are carried out.
	Students employed in collegiate recreation programs make schedules for other student employees and programs to ensure proper coverage.
Students manage registration processes.	Students participating or employed in campus activities manage registration processes for a variety of events, considering what information will be needed to plan for the events or programs for which students are registering.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs create and manage registration processes for classes, trips, teams and programs and multiple points-of-service operational components involving money.
Students proactively plan to ensure that the needs of others are met.	Students participating or employed in campus activities plan retreats, which require that they anticipate food, lodging and personal comfort of other students, as well as collect emergency contact information.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs proactively plan activities, such as, for example: outdoor/adventure programs – develop trip planning checklists of weather plans, food needs, transportation, safety protocols, emergency contact info, and accommodations and maintain all necessary participant information.

Students make lesson plans for trainings and classes.	Students participating or employed in campus activities plan and facilitate workshops, trainings and retreats.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs develop course and lesson plans and learning outcomes. Facilitators plan individualized workshops to accomplish goals of the group.
Students make plans to assess the effectiveness of their programs and participants.	Students participating or employed in campus activities write learning outcomes for programs and events, as well as collect data to ensure the effectiveness and learning outcomes of programs.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs write learning outcomes for programs and events, as well as collect data to ensure the effectiveness and learning outcomes of programs and services.
Students plan to anticipate and mitigate risk.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to anticipate and mitigate risk in events of all sizes, but particularly large events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to anticipate and mitigate risk in events of all sizes, but particularly large events and are taught to prioritize and triage tasks by identified level of importance and/or emergency. They use risk management checklists to assess and address hazards.
Students design checklists and protocols that can guide future student leaders in managing programs.	Students participating or employed in campus activities make procedural checklists for managing the timing and ensuring the completion of routine tasks related to planning events, which include promotion, volunteer recruitment and selection, contract processing, reservation of facilities and day-of-event timeline.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs use and design procedural checklists for multiple program areas including, but not limited to, important legal documentation such as incident and accident reports.
Students make agendas to ensure productive meetings.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to run effective meetings by making meeting agendas in consultation with the group's advisor, sequencing agenda items appropriately and anticipating topics for discussion.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to run effective meetings by making meeting agendas in consultation with professional staff or the group's advisor, sequencing agenda items appropriately, and anticipating topics for discussion.

Ability to obtain and process information

<p>Students learn best practices from participation in regional and national organizations.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities learn approaches to dealing with common problems from reading relevant literature, such as articles from <i>Campus Activities Programming</i>® and educational presentations at regional and national conferences. They learn to apply the practices they find to issues on their own campuses.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn approaches to dealing with common problems from reading relevant literature, such as articles from professional publications and educational presentations at regional and national conferences. They learn to apply the practices they find to address issues on their own campuses.</p>
<p>Students research issues and propose solutions.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities, such as student government, research and propose legislation by gathering supporting data, conducting public opinion research and interviewing individuals with knowledge of the subject. Students involved in community service programs conduct research to determine how to address issues. Students participating in campus publications conduct research for the purpose of writing compelling and accurate articles. Students conduct assessment of programs to determine their effectiveness, making improvements using the data they collect.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs may conduct research on the environmental impact of various decisions and conduct assessment of programs to determine their effectiveness, making improvements using the data they collect.</p>

Ability to analyze quantitative data

Students learn to conduct valid assessment of their programs.	Students participating or employed in campus activities conduct assessment of programs to determine their effectiveness, making improvements using the data they collect.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs conduct assessment of programs and services to determine their effectiveness, making or suggesting improvements using the data they collect.
Students maintain control of program and event budgets.	Students participating or employed in campus activities make budgets for their organizations as well as individual events, including tracking revenue and expenses on an ongoing basis.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs prepare budgets for their program areas and clubs, as well as individual events, which include tracking revenue and expenses on an ongoing basis.
Students monitor participation in programs.	Students participating or employed in campus activities keep track of attendance at various programs and events, looking for themes that inform future programmatic offerings.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs track attendance at various programs and events, looking for themes that inform future programmatic offerings. They track facility usage, demographics and other factors that can direct facility and programmatic scheduling.

Technical knowledge related to the job

Students participating or employed in campus activities programs gain skills that prepare them for a wide variety of careers. Some of the most common are:

- Accounting
- Event Planning
- Facilities Management
- Human Resources
- Marketing
- Primary/Secondary/Higher Education
- Public Relations
- Volunteer/Non-Profit Management
- Hospitality Administration
- Light, Sound and Audio-visual Engineering
- Entertainment Marketing/Management
- Convention and Tourism
- Graphic Design
- Web Design
- Non-profit Management

Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs gain skills that prepare them for a wide variety of careers. Some of the most common are:

- Accounting
- Aquatics
- Event Planning
- Facilities Management & Scheduling
- Fitness & Wellness
- Athletic Administration
- Parks & Recreation
- Human Resources
- Marketing Services & Graphic Design
- Primary/Secondary/Higher Education
- Public Relations
- Recreation Management
- Sports Marketing
- Volunteer/Non-Profit Management
- Risk Management
- Staff Development & Training
- Hospitality Administration
- Fiscal Management & Revenue Generation
- Facilitation & Group Management



Proficiency with computer software

<p>Students learn to use spreadsheets, such as Excel and others.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities frequently use spreadsheets to track attendance, monitor budgets or maintain volunteer hours.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs frequently use spreadsheets to track attendance, monitor budgets or maintain volunteer hours.</p>
<p>Students learn to use design software such as Photoshop®, InDesign, Illustrator and others.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities make posters, flyers and handbills for events. They maintain websites and social media presence. Students participating in campus publications design and lay out various publications.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs create collateral material and direct and design video productions and events. They maintain and interact with websites and social media. They also produce written publication pieces for a variety of media.</p>
<p>Students learn to use word processing software such as Word, WordPerfect and others.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities use word processing programs to keep meeting minutes and develop and edit constitutions and bylaws. Students participating in campus publications draft and refine articles for publication. Students participating in student government associations draft and refine legislation.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs make team schedules, draft and refine league rules and rosters, develop multiple operational forms and write end-of-semester reports and assessments.</p>
<p>Students learn to use presentation software such as PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi and others.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities use presentation software to make presentations for classes on campus, presentations at regional and national conferences and for presentations within their organizations. They may also use PowerPoint to make slides for display at events or on monitors on campus.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs use presentation software to make presentations for stakeholders and classes on campus, presentations at regional and national conferences, and for presentations within their program areas.</p>
<p>Students gain transferable skills from profession-specific software.</p>	<p>Students participating or employed in campus activities use a variety of computer applications specific to their programs, gaining skills they can apply to similar applications in the future.</p>
	<p>Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs use a variety of computer applications specific to their programs, gaining skills they can apply to similar applications in the future.</p>

Ability to create and edit written reports

Students develop and write press releases and other news content.	Students participating or employed in campus activities develop and write press releases for events and programs and write scripts for on-air mentions and public service announcements.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs develop and write press releases for events and programs and write scripts for on-air mentions and public service announcements.
Students learn to edit their own work and the work of others.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to take feedback from previous submissions and use them to refine them and eliminate these mistakes in the future. Students participating in student publications are responsible for editing the final product and ensuring compliance with laws against libel or copyright infringement.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs edit content produced by students and staff.
Students learn to write marketing materials.	Students participating or employed in campus activities write marketing materials for programs and events, such as posters, handbills, websites and social media.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs write marketing materials for programs and events, such as collateral material, press releases, and website and social media content. They also conduct marketing analysis and write reports.
Students learn to write technical reports.	Students participating or employed in campus activities write technical reports, such as proposals, program evaluations, funding requests, day-of-event timelines and assessment reports.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs write technical reports, such as incident reports, accident reports, end-of-shift reports, program evaluations, funding requests, and assessment reports. Students produce and review training materials and risk management audits.
Students develop and write policies and procedures.	Students participating or employed in campus activities write policies and procedures for their organizations such as governing documents, constitutions and bylaws. Students participating in student government write binding legislation and resolutions regarding important campus issues.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs write policies and procedures regarding participation in intramurals and sport clubs, as well as policies and procedures governing participation in programs and usage of facilities.

Ability to sell or influence others

Students promote their organizations and programs to other students.	Students participating or employed in campus activities seek to influence other students to join their organizations or participate in their programs, to establish partnerships with other student organizations or to persuade other students to attend or support their events and programs.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs seek to recruit other students to join their clubs or participate in their programs, to establish partnerships with other student organizations or to persuade other students to attend or support their events and programs.
Students sell sponsorships and advertising to businesses.	Students participating or employed in campus activities such as campus programming boards, student organizations and student publications and media sell advertising and sponsorships to support their programs. This involves maintaining relationships with current advertisers and developing new advertisers through “cold calling” and “canvassing” for sales.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs sell advertising and sponsorships to support their programs. This involves maintaining relationships with current advertisers and developing new advertisers through “cold calling” and “canvassing” for sales, sponsorships and donations.
Students appeal to funding sources for new and continuing funding.	Students participating or employed in campus activities make and defend budgetary requests. Students participating in campus programming boards often appeal to the organization for funding for individual events.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs make and defend budgetary requests. Students write budget requests and proposals for new funding.
Students learn to “sell themselves” and practice personal brand management when running for a leadership position.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to “sell themselves” and practice personal brand management when pursuing a leadership position.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs learn to “sell themselves” and practice personal brand management when pursuing a leadership position.
Students speak persuasively and influence others.	Students participating or employed in campus activities learn to persuade others about issues important to the goals of their group. Students participating in student government speak on behalf of legislation they propose and give proponent and opponent speeches regarding pending legislation. Students participating in student publications and media develop opinion pieces intended to persuade others.
	Students participating or employed in collegiate recreation programs advocate on behalf of, and persuade others about, important issues of their program areas and campus recreation to key stakeholders.

Next Steps

A consistent feature of working within the field of student affairs is that it can be difficult to explain to those outside of the profession the purpose of our work. In addition to the broad missions of these areas that encourage students to be active learners inside and outside of the classroom, the skills that students gain from their involvement and leadership in these areas is well-documented and robust in scope. All cocurricular experiences must add measurable value to a student's educational experience, which includes the development of skills requested by future employers.

The authors of this whitepaper hope it serves as a challenge to student affairs professionals to look at these particular dimensions as they consider the many ways students are positively impacted by our programs. Student affairs professionals should plan and assess outcomes and student learning of our cocurricular programs. By doing so, we believe we can change the narrative and drive the conversation with our college and university presidents, as well as other stakeholders, clearly demonstrating the value of our programs as part of the educational experience.

Jointly, both the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) and the NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation would like to encourage scholar practitioners in both fields to conduct research on this topic. Additionally, working groups will continue to promote and disseminate research on this topic. It is our plan to produce additional publications and communication vehicles that assist professionals in both fields to better articulate how students are educated by our experiences and to develop methods for teaching students to recognize and articulate these benefits to others, including future employers.

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