Over the last ten years, colleges have been increasingly placing an emphasis on recreational programs due to the effect on student enrollment and retention rates. Numerous surveys regarding retention rates of college students indicate that increased participation in campus recreation activities and events correlates with increased student retention. At Florida Gulf Coast University, surveys conducted by Campus Recreation indicated that students who participate in recreational activities develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills, as well as a sense of belonging and higher self-esteem. By developing these skills in our students, we hope to contribute to the increase in student retention rates at FGCU.

There have also been numerous studies regarding campus recreation and new student enrollment. In a study conducted by the Art and Science Group (2000), it was found that 54% of high school seniors felt the intramural sports program was an important determinant in their college choice. In a similar study, Portland State University discovered that over 78% of all colleges studied used their recreation programs as an extra incentive in order to attract students to their campuses.

In terms of student retention and enrollment, another important factor involved the student recreation center. In a study by Stephan Kampf (2010), it was found that a new recreation center provided a “selling point” for the university and led to higher enrollment rates as well as an increased rate of student retention.

Based on these and other studies, campus recreation not only contributes to students’ development and enrichment of their educational experiences, but also contributes to the university’s retention and enrollment efforts.
