

Campus Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC)

AGENDA

November 11, 2022

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review / Approve September 2022 meeting minutes
3. Old Business
 - a. Ice Arena Referendum
4. New Business
 - a. Club Sports Administration (Dementro)
 - b. Summer Youth Programming (Latashia)
5. Questions, comments, and concerns

CRAC – November 11, 2022 meeting minutes

Attendees:

Marcus Jackson, Diane Dean, Terry Elmore, Jess Gentry, Jeanette Weider, Dementro Powell, Alana Harris, Jennifer Carson, Latashia Keys

Marcus Jackson

The September 2022 minutes, which, hopefully you've all have received, they're attached to the invite for this meeting. And then we have old business an update on the ice arena referendum. For our new business, we have a club sports administration question from Dementro. And then again, summer youth programming from Latashia, then we'll conclude the meeting with questions, comments, and concerns.

Okay, so first, the review of the September 2022 meeting minutes, I will pause to see if folks have any comments or clarifications on the information that was in those. Once again, is connected to the meeting invitation. We talked about a COVID testing vending machine to be placed in the ARC lobby. And the last that I checked with the Associate Vice Chancellor, there was still not any word on when or if that machine would ever make its way to campus. There were a lot of holdups. And I believe that some of that probably had to do with some branding issues. Not sure if there were some other things that were challenges for campus. And I will see at least if Jess has any additional comment on that piece.

Jess Gentry

I haven't heard anything about it since our last meeting. So, I have no updates other than what I spoke to at the end of September.

Marcus Jackson

Some other information that wasn't on the agenda, we know that the student fee advisory committee recommendation has moved forward to the vice chancellor's office from that respective committee. Still early to tell but right now the request for additional fees for Campus Recreation, I'm optimistic about that. As you all may recall, that was for \$2.45 For fiscal year 2024. I know that there were some savings in some other areas that campus has realized in the MTD contract. There's an additional meeting that will be occurring on the 30th of November the next time that SFAC will get together. I will attend that and share some more information related to my attendance at that meeting shortly but that's where SFAC is at the current time. Any other questions on the minutes before we move forward?

Old Business:

Ice Arena Referendum

Marcus Jackson

Okay, so the first matter of our old business, the Ice Arena referendum. The last time that we met, we talked about the process that Campus Recreation was going through in terms of trying to determine the appetite was for either renovating our current Ice Arena or providing a different activity space where that building currently sits. At the point that we spoke, I believe the survey had not gone out. I'm happy to say that after about a month, we have 334 respondents to the survey. The results of the survey are still preliminary. I want to be respectful to that, and to the

folks that are working on it, so I'm not able to share information related to that just yet. But hopefully, we will be able to shortly, and this group will be among the first that will get that information. Hopefully, I'll be able to share some information about other local conversations, as well. I will pause in case there are any questions about the survey or the process that I can answer for this group?

We'll move into our new business. The first topic up was club sports administration. And it was brought up by Dementro. I'd like, if you can Dementro, please share with the group what your question or topic was, and then we can dive in.

New Business:

Club Sports Administration

Dementro Powell

Okay, I'm trying to really figure out how or what can we do in terms of the communication between my people that may be advisors, or even some of their coaches, to increase and strengthen the communication between Campus Rec, and us in these roles. And I say that, because so I've been here for 10 years. And that communication, and the way we do things has not changed whatsoever. But then I look at the RSO office, and even before I was in the RSO office, we were trying to gauge increased communication and doing something a little bit different. And now the university has their stance on certain things in terms of the relationship with these clubs and organizations, but when I'm talking to the different coaches or advisors, just in general not even having to do with clubs or sports, you want to be in a position where you're not only helping the club or the organization itself, but you also want to be in a position to where you are able to kind of clarify things for let's say, in this instance, Campus Rec. And oftentimes, I'm like, "I don't know what to tell you, because I wasn't there, or it wasn't pertinent to the information and I wasn't included." And then there's times where you kind of get the information, and the student is trying to tell you something, but there's holes in the story, not that they're lying, but maybe they forgot, or there has to be more details to determine how Campus Rec came to this decision. I'm just trying to get to a place to where we're just kind of more included in some of these things because we're trying to help these students and these groups, progress, do the right thing, make the right decisions, things of that nature. What have you tried to be aware of what that looks like for you? Why are you in that role? But then at the same time, there's this resistance. It feels like it comes from the Campus Rec area and again I'm aware of the relationships that the university has, with organizations here on campus, but it seems like it takes it to an extreme level. And I've felt like this for a long time, but what can you do? So, I just wanted to kind of bring it to light. And see if there's somewhere down the road where we can kind of meet in the middle, where something can increase those conversations, have them be more involved somehow. This way we can advocate for Campus Rec when we're helping a student when they come in. Like, being able to answer, "why are they (Campus Rec) doing this?" And if I don't know the answer, I can only speculate. Currently it's kind of difficult. Then students look at it as, no matter what you tell them, we're a divided entity. We're not on the same page or we're against one another. It's too much separation, basically. I'm just trying to see if there's something we can do, and to begin to move forward in a slightly new direction, to change those relationships and how that looks.

Marcus Jackson

So, thanks, first, for bringing this topic up. And I know that some of the information might be common knowledge for you and may not be for others, so, I will apologize that, the response will be, in some ways redundant. I will say, if not almost the entirety of our stance on relationships with our club sport organizations, which are registered student organizations, which you've mentioned, really does come from the student code. And oftentimes in individual situations, with guidance and / or direction from the Vice Chancellor's Office themselves, if not from legal counsel. Our position has been that the organizations are independent and autonomous, and that they are not official agencies of the university. Because of the perceived liability that's connected to that, we've often been directly advised to be careful about what information related to our advising of these clubs consists of, and how extensive...including who else is involved, and that sort of thing. So it is, at times, a challenging relationship that we have because I think that we're all in the same boat when it comes to wanting to provide support for our students, within their organizations or even individually. But it's a standpoint that's been almost drilled into my head, and then subsequently our staff about how far and wide we go with that reach. I will say that there has been a little movement in the sense of our ability to hire a position that is specifically geared towards supporting our club sport organizations and community programs. But within that, we've continually at least in the five years that I've been here, tried to make gradual steps toward being able to do more and more on what I would call the "formal advising" side of things to make sure that these organizations have all the tools and resources that they need at the beginning and throughout the course of the year, but also having a consistent contact person within the department that's primarily dedicated to just that aspect. In the past, that role was split. And most of it consisted of risk management. So that's a bit of a change from what we've had. Again, that's baby steps. There have been times where we've taken two steps forward and three steps back. We've also tried to build some more consistent trainings and other resources of that nature to really assist with that group. I'm also going to turn it to Jess to provide any additional or helpful context related to that, since this is this is in her purview.

Jess Gentry

Thanks, Marcus. I really think you hit everything. The one thing I would add is, as we've worked with different RSOs not even just our club sports, we have hundreds of entities that utilize our spaces in different capacities. So, our work touches a lot of different ways throughout the course of the year. We communicate directly with the executive boards, and then we tell you and we tell them, they're free to share that information with whomever they would like. I know we've had some clubs pass that information along to coaches in the past, and they'll pass it along to other people they feel need to know so we're absolutely aren't prohibiting them for passing any information along. To me, as far as the university stance and Dementro, I think you would feel this a little as well, they see it as very black and white. And it is to a certain extent, but then it's also when you get into working with students, there are all these nuances. You know, there are shades of gray everywhere. So, to the extent to where we try to respect the black and white nature of it, we draw some lines in the sand that we try to operate within that we feel best puts us in a position to stay consistent with what the university wants. And you know, we're not perfect at it. We'll ask for clarity as we need it. Sometimes we make missteps because we thought we understood where we needed to be, and we made a mistake. But it's also not something that every time something comes up, we ask for guidance on it, because then we're taking up other people's times. But, to get back to my point, we're navigating it as best as we can, and we are in consistent communication with student engagement. As Marcus mentioned,

while there's Iowa or Dr. Young, we try and keep our communication directly with the students because they are student-run organizations, and then, we'll tell them feel free to pass this information along to whomever they like. And we've told coaches in the past to just check in with them. We send emails and information to the exec board. So, if there's information you feel like you're not getting, please check in with those individuals. I'll admit it, it's not perfect. We're just trying to manage an imperfect system that we're being asked to exist in, up to this point in my almost nine years here as well.

Dementro Powell

And as you bring up student engagement even then I'm trying to figure them out, because it always it almost seems like a complete opposite in terms of approach and mindset, with that group versus with campus. There's lots of shades of grey, and it gets confusing, because I'm like, "well, over here, it seems like the advisors and things, it's something that they're kind of pushing." And, you know, I'm included in the newsletters, and that never happened before. I can see what's kind of going on. If I reach out and ask a question, they answer me, because they see me on the roster, and I'm part of the advisory group, so the communication seems to be a little bit more... I don't want to say relaxed, but it's more open. And so that's where I'm having a hard time understanding where we are headed. Are we still where it was when I was in that role? I don't know. So that's why I just a little confused about how to react because some of the students are saying the same. And I don't know if there's inconsistency, or there are just a slight hiccups somewhere, and when something comes up, and where you should be on the same page, you really aren't. I don't know. It just seems it's not flowing as well as it could be.

Jess Gentry

We certainly appreciate the feedback. I can't speak for how student engagement manages their operation, and how they define where they say, "Yes, we can do this; no, we can't do this," those kinds of things. So, I mean, Marcus and I can continue conversations on our approach. And we can ask campus for additional clarity, whether it's student engagement as an example, or something else, that has a little bit more interaction. That doesn't seem as at least if I'm understanding you correctly, it doesn't seem as rigid as our approach.

Dementro Powell

I can't put my finger on it, but something has changed.

Jess Gentry

We work with student engagement quite a bit, but there's specific lanes that we do that work. We're not in their space, we're not in their meetings, and there's a lot of conversations, I'm sure that they're having with different entities and areas that that we're not in, because they oversee the 900-plus RSOs. And for the most part the only time you will have meetings with the other RSOs is maybe when they have an event in the facility, but as far as like our direct, recurring relationships, it's just the 40 clubs. So, the size and scope of things are different in that regard. And perhaps there is an opportunity for us to get on the same page. I all I can say is we do our very best to stay where campus wants us to be. But we're also not afraid to ask questions or ask for clarity when we feel like perhaps that's not in line with what it should be. We can kind of dig into that further. And Marcus and I can talk about it more offline. Thank you.

Marcus Jackson

Questions about this topic from other folks or comments? Okay, next agenda item. We have summer youth programming. Latashia, welcome to the group. This was an agenda topic that you had requested. I want to give you an opportunity, if you could, to share your thoughts as to what you were hoping for to get more information about.

New Business:

Summer Youth Programming

Latashia Key

I believe there was a program that was started years ago, exposing youth to the campus but also having different types of like a larger version of a summer camp, but including not just fitness and sports, but also other life skills. So, I wasn't sure exactly if that's something that is an old program or trying to have something that's different going forward.

Marcus Jackson

Thank you, Latashia. I'll rely on some of my staff to help fill in the blanks here. We have a few different things that we engage in during the summer and, one or two things that we're looking toward. I'm not sure in this program that you're talking about, Latashia, do you remember what years or what the name of the program was?

Latashia Key

I don't know the years, but it was before my time here and I'm not sure the name. I just remember talking to some other individuals that lived here. They stated that they were able to bring youth to the campus and that Campus Rec was a big part of instrumentally providing programming and it was just a nice exposure to having youth see what a college campus was like, but they had different types of activities.

Marcus Jackson

That's okay. I wonder if that was C3?

Latashia Key

That sounds about right. It was a simple name I should have remembered.

Marcus Jackson

Jess, I don't know if you want to share any history that you had with it or Terry or any other staff members. I don't know if that was right before me or not.

Jess Gentry

I think it did predate you. Yeah. No, Robyn Deterding our former director was involved.

Terry Elmore

Yeah, we worked with several community groups that worked with the youth in the community. And we brought them to campus, it was a partnership with Housing and they got an opportunity to eat in the dining center. They worked with DRES and the wheelchair basketball team, and then they would come to the ARC and had an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of

different activities that we did with Campus Recreation. So, it was just trying to expose them to several different areas within the university.

Jess Gentry

I bet there were probably at least 15 university departments involved at that time, and I believe it was a four-to-six-week program. It was one day a week. And then the last week, we invited everybody back that had come to the prior weeks for kind of an end-of-year opportunity. I think it ended between the transition to Marcus from Robyn, and that wasn't too long before COVID. It was just one of those things that didn't necessarily intentionally fall by the wayside. But it did. Either we didn't have the ability to do it because of various restrictions in place or we were coming out of COVID. We've been experiencing severe staffing challenges that have limited our bandwidth to so that was a huge point of it as well.

Dementro Powell

Yeah. There was a lot of different funding sources as well, including various community grants.

Marcus Jackson

If it was C3, then the funding was a part of it not continuing. And then there was an individual with the city of Champaign Urbana I want to say Tracy Parsons. And I'm not sure if he's still in that role, or if he's moved on with the community coalition. But I think that those were huge parts of what that program are relied on, you know, for its for its sustainability. There are a couple of other things that happen within the facilities in the summertime. I know we'll have the Upward Bound group. That still that's ongoing. And then there's a program or collaboration, with Kinesiology and Alana.

Alana Harris

For the program that received a grant That was iPulse. And that was the year before the pandemic. they've submitted an NIH grant submission, but it has not been approved. So, it will only run again if it's funded.

Marcus Jackson

Thank you. I'm not putting you on the spot, Latashia, it may have been any one of those programs or any iteration of it that changed over time as well. I'm just trying to pin down which one it was.

Latashia Key

Well, it sounds like it was probably the C3 and, a lot has changed with the pandemic and how business programming is done. Is there a thought of trying to do something on a smaller scale but still reaching out to the community, still allowing some type of use of the facility or just something to have that community bond with the campus and the community together, but also fostering youth being healthy, physically active? Just kind of looking at what our mission is, but also having an opportunity for kids that may not be able to afford to go to a full financial burden type of a camp, that would be still beneficial to them.

Marcus Jackson

Well, we do have one thing, I think that we're looking at, that might meet some of those criteria. And, again, it'll be dependent on resources and availability. And I will say that one of the things that we must keep in mind during the summer is what revenue generating opportunities that we do have, and make sure that we have enough room for those things to happen. But I'll let Jess just talk a little bit about something that's in the works.

Jess Gentry

So just to backtrack a little bit to speak to our structure, we have an assistant director of competitive sports and community programs, that reports to me and then that individual has a coordinator of competitive sports and committee programs that reports to him. So, our goal of that position, which came out of some of the reorganization that Marcus alluded to earlier, as far as our clubs, sports and risk being coupled together, we move the club sports out of that, and I understand this isn't tied to the community programs piece, just giving a little bit of the background to it. So, we do have a staff member and we recognize the need to have someone with some capacity to reach out to the community to work with them within the scope of what we're able to do as a department. We do view that as a necessary part of us being on campus. And we have a position dedicated to that. The caveat is our prior person left in October of 2020. And the individual that's in it now just started this past July. So, he's been here about three and a half months. So obviously, there's only so much traction we've been able to gain after not having someone in the position for almost two years. I know that we've already done some events. We were able to have Upward Bound back this summer after not being able to have it for the last couple summers due to the pandemic. I believe we've also done some small things with the Boys and Girls Clubs. So, we're starting to get back into that. We are working on creating somewhat of a model and like a WebTools form that people can fill out that will help guide the discussions about what these groups are looking for. A lot of times we'll get contacted, and they'll say, "we want to come and have the room and do some things." But groups don't really have a good sense of what they want to do beyond that. We're trying to come up with some different packages and price them in a way that makes them accessible. Being student fee funded, we still must cover a certain amount of costs on our end. We do have some of those things in the works. We are also currently planning on offering a summer camp for eight weeks. We have previously never done this, the kinesiology department had, again, that is a revenue generating idea. I'll admit right now, it's not incredibly accessible to every single individual in the community. But we're trying to kind of balance the different opportunities that we can offer, recognizing that, we can't do everything that to bring individuals to campus, but we're always more than happy to try and work with other entities and other departments on campus to coordinate and collaborate on these types of programs, because we do see the value in them. And we know they are important. I know the sponsorship position is still vacant and hasn't been filled. But that might be an opportunity if, within that role, they can make some connections with businesses that could sponsor some of these summer programs to help increase accessibility for those who may not be able to normally participate. That might be something to consider and I don't know if it would be within the scope of those responsibilities that that would be okay to incorporate.

Marcus Jackson

I looked up what I could find around C3 and a big part of it, which I think was already mentioned, was a funding commitment that would happen from the Mental Health Board and from some select offices that were on campus, it looks like in my email that I don't know if some of those

could meet that commitment in later years. The last year that I have is 2017, I think which was right when I arrived. So, I don't know if this was done for 2018. But it doesn't look like that came to fruition. I think folks have talked about this with the community engagement piece, that I know is a big part of the university's strategic plan and direction, but also some opportunities potentially within the department to be able to reach out to different groups and see if that would be able to be revived, if you will. And then just finding out the folks that are in the Champaign Park District and whether they're still able to be involved and then determining space that's available. And, again, of course, funding, those will be critical pieces of that. I'd like to say campus will be supportive, if those things work out, that's always kind of a loaded response, right.

Latashia Key

Well, I appreciate having a talk about it and learning that it's in the forefront, because I think it's important to connect with those individuals. So, I appreciate that, hopefully we can continue the conversation and have some traction and maybe even a slight timeline of, "yes, this could happen at X time." Whether that's, you know, 3 to 6 months or a year from now, that way it's not lost. So, thank you.

Marcus Jackson

Sure. And glad to talk. I know you've sent me a couple of emails about it. Glad to talk with you more. Other comments, questions? Anything related to Campus Recreation, we're doing flu shots now. Feel free to come by!

Marcus Jackson

Well, folks, there's no questions or comments or concerns. I'll give you back some of your time. We'll be putting out requests for agenda items for our next meeting, and would like to get together again, if we can before the end of the semester. So please feel free to shoot any agenda items my way also, with these business items, conversations about clubs, sport administration, again, Dementro, we can talk more about what that looks like right now with student engagement and then we can determine where that split. It is for the sake of, you know, the students that I think for better working relationships with our organizations, we're on board with that. So, and I think you owe me a lunch anyway, so but we can talk about that some other time. All right, folks. Thanks for coming today.