

MOVE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE



REC SPORTS ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



VISION

Lay the foundation for lifelong well-being

MISSION

Rec Sports fuels UWL's commitment to mind & body with student-led experiences that foster growth, self-discovery, community, and holistic well-being in an environment where everyone feels welcomed and encouraged to show up as they are.

CORE VALUES

SAFETY

We prioritize proactive and ongoing risk management through training, policies & procedures, and shared responsibility, so participants can challenge themselves in environments that are as safe as reasonably possible.

STUDENT CENTERED

Students are at the heart of all we do. We design our programs, spaces, and employment experiences around student needs.

GROWTH

We prioritize personal & professional development through learning experiences that build confidence, skills, and leadership through recreation.

STEWARDSHIP

We show pride in UWL Rec Sports by caring for the spaces, resources, and relationships we've been entrusted with.

COMMUNITY

We strengthen connection by working together to create shared purpose and meaningful relationships.

WELCOMING

We provide something for everyone where inclusion, accessibility, and service facilitate belonging

INNOVATION

We stay curious, seek feedback, and anticipate the needs of our community.

INTEGRITY

We entrust everyone to do the right thing even when it's hard or no one is watching.

JOY

We strive to be the best part of everyone's day where having fun is a priority



247

STUDENT
EMPLOYEES

REC SPORTS IMPACT ON STUDENT SUCCESS RIPPLE EFFECT

94%

Survey respondents indicated that Rec Sports is important to their well-being at UWL.



90%

Survey respondents indicated that Rec Sports helped them be **more physically active**.



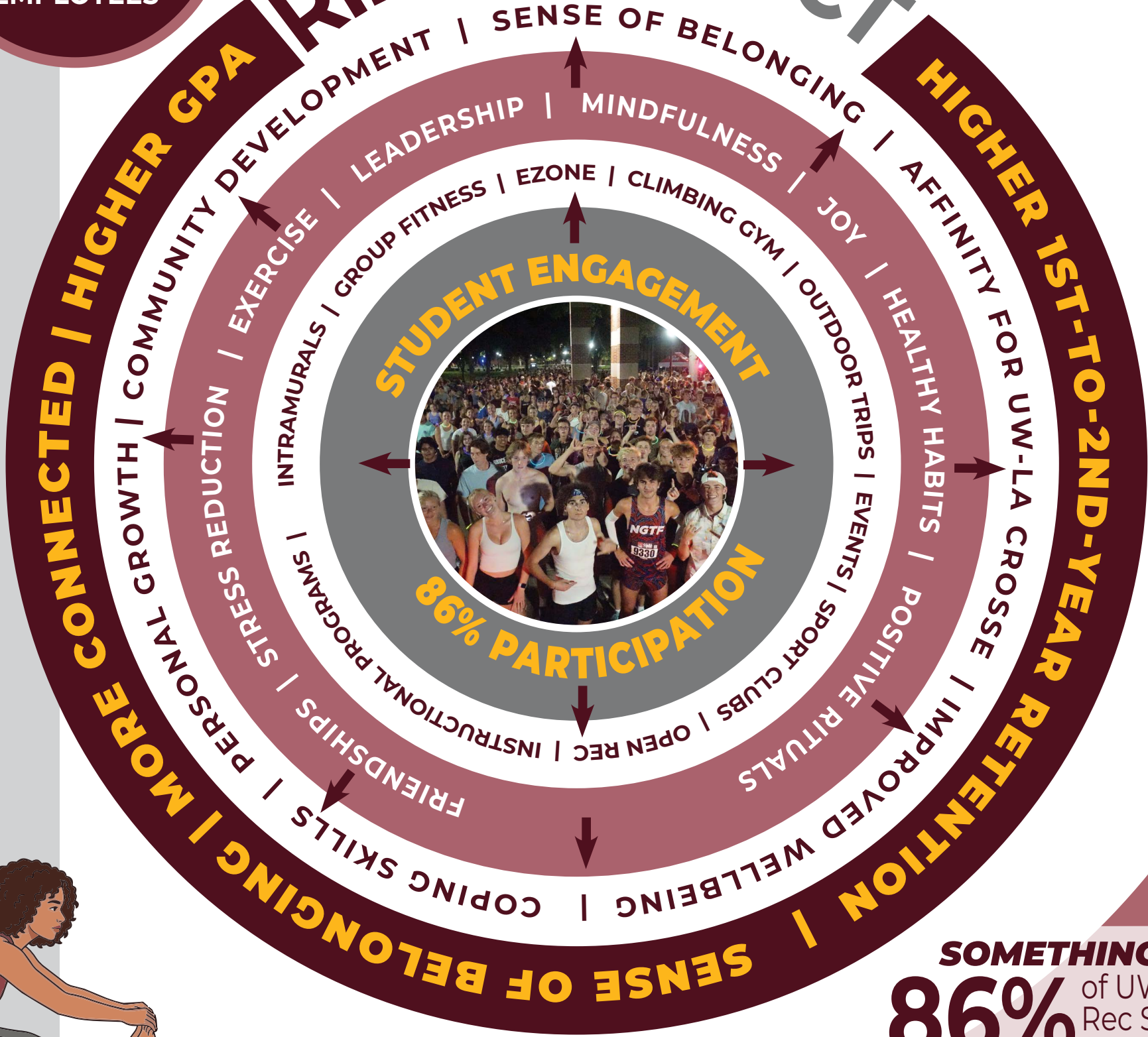
94%

Survey respondents indicated that Rec Sports is important to their **quality of life at UWL**.



93%

Survey respondents indicated that Rec Sports is important for their **mental health**.



3.23
GPA

Average GPA of
Rec Sports
Users &
Participants

Non- Participant
GPA = 2.87



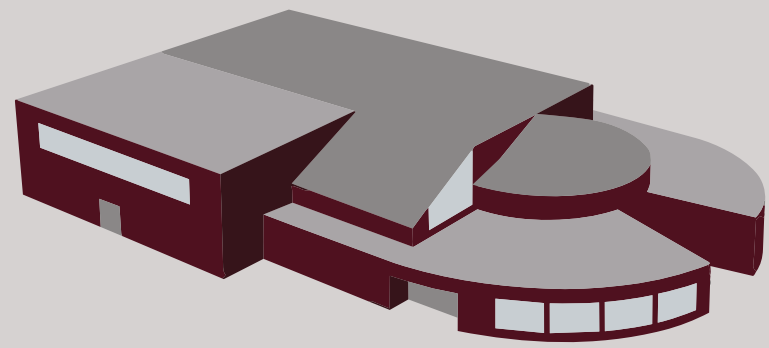
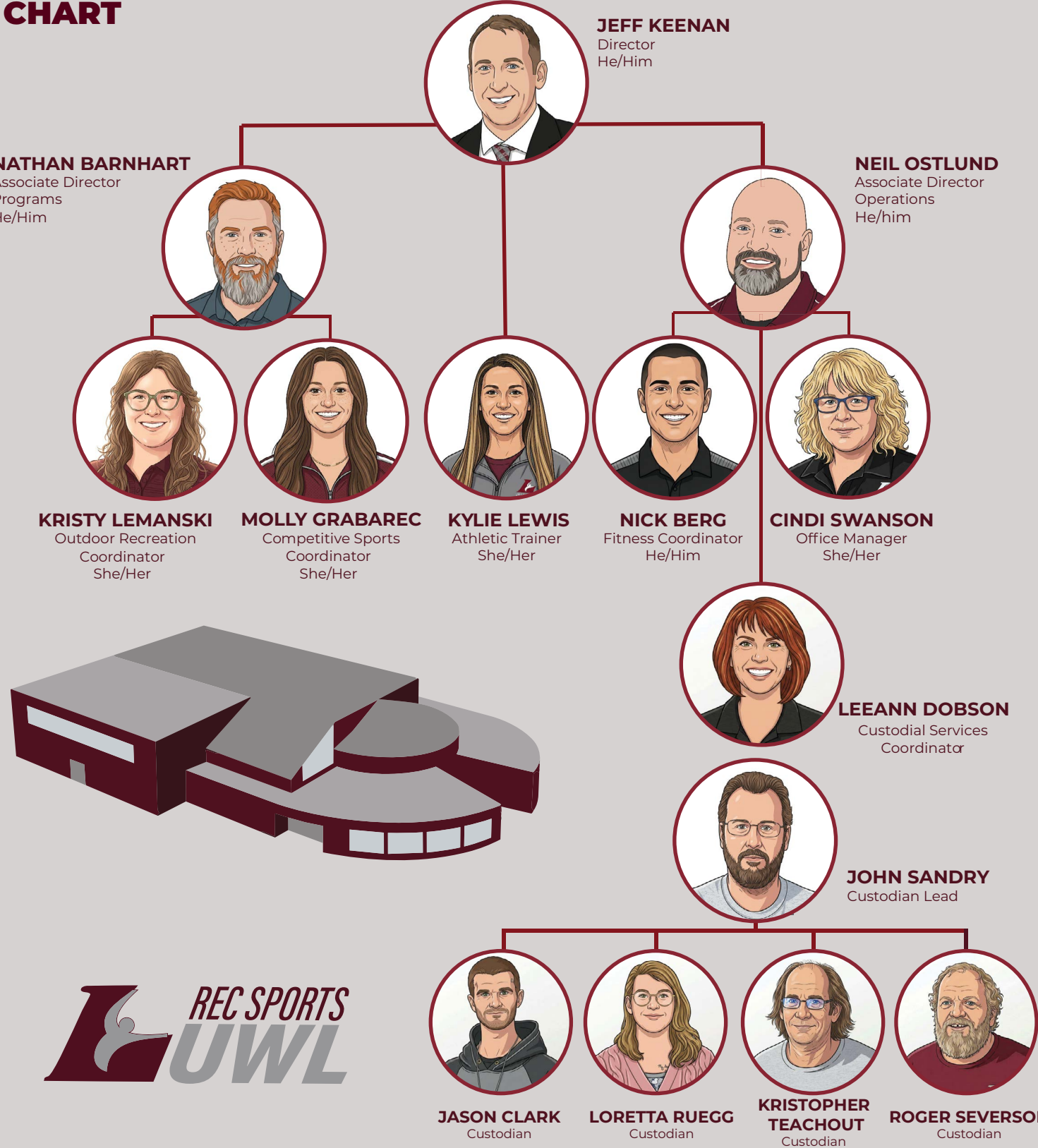
92%

Survey respondents indicated their participation increased **Sense Of Belonging**.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE
86% of UWL students utilize Rec Sports programs, services or facilities

2025-26
**ORGANIZATIONAL
 CHART**



247
 STUDENT EMPLOYEES

STAFFING CHANGES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTRIBUTIONS & ACCOLADES

- Molly Grabarec was hired as our new Competitive Sports Coordinator
- Kristy Lemanski was hired as our new Outdoor Recreation Coordinator
- Molly Grabarec attended the NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation Competitive Sports Institute
- Jeff Keenan serves on the Executive Board as Secretary of the Wisconsin Intramural Recreational Sports Association (WIRSA)
- Nick Berg presented at the Wisconsin Intramural Recreational Sports Association (WIRSA) Conference in Oshkosh, WI. Jeff Keenan, Kristy Lemanski, Nathan Barnhart & Neil Ostlund attended.
- Molly Grabarec attended the NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation National Conference
- Kristy Lemanski attended the Association of Outdoor Recreation & Education (AORE) Outdoor Professionals Conference
- Kristy Lemanski completed a Wilderness First Responder certification course
- Kristy Lemanski, Nathan Barnhart & Molly Grabarec became certified American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED instructors
- Kylie Lewis attended the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers' Association Annual Meeting & Symposium in Wheeling, IL
- Neil Ostlund participated in the Universities of Wisconsin Student Affairs Leadership Academy
- Neil Ostlund served as the Chair of the Student Affairs & Access, Belonging & Compliance Recognition Committee
- Nick Berg served as the Co-Chair of the Student Affairs & Access, Belonging & Compliance Staff Well-being Committee
- Jeff Keenan served on the Student Affairs & Access, Belonging & Compliance Golf Outing Committee and the UWL Six Week Engagement Committee
- Jeff Keenan served as a goal co-lead for the new UWL Strategic Plan
- Jeff Keenan coordinated the new "Take a Student to Coffee program" for the Division of Student Affairs
- Nathan Barnhart served as a facilitator for the Student Affairs Artificial Intelligence (AI) Community of Practice, while Jeff Keenan served as the coordinator for the new program.
- Nick Berg was awarded the Outstanding Academic/ Non-Instructional Staff of the Year Award for the Divisions of Student Affairs and Access, Belonging & Compliance
- Cindi Swanson was awarded the Outstanding University Staff of the Year Award for the Divisions of Student Affairs and Access, Belonging & Compliance
- John Sandry, the Lead Custodian for Rec Sports retired on May 15th after 25 years of service to UWL. Allen Schlittler was hired as the new Lead Custodian and started with Rec Sports on May 18th.



2025-2026

Goal 1

By September 2026, Rec Sports, will update our Safety & Risk Management Plan and training, to make it more digestible for student staff to learn and comprehend

Progress Towards Goal

- Analyzed our current Safety & Risk Management Plan and staffing structure to identify the specific training needs of each position
- Updated the Safety & Risk Management Plan to include the new levels of training associated with each position
- Modified New Employee Orientation and the Fall Training curriculum based on the updates
- Created new on demand training modules for student staff
- Updated Red Shirt Review documentation to match the new training structure

Goal 2

By May 2026, Rec Sports, in an effort to meet the ever-changing needs of students and staff, will reevaluate and implement changes to our current mission, vision, and values.

Progress Towards Goal

- Reviewed the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Division of Student Affairs mission, vision and values to ensure alignment
- Identified how the department contributes to fulfilling the university's broader goals
- Analyzed the department's current culture, identity, practices and strengths. Surveyed students, staff alumni, and current student employees
- Benchmarked mission, vision and values statements at peer institutions
- Held a brainstorming session to generate ideas at the winter professional staff retreat
- Based on the insights gathered, drafted mission, vision, and values statements
- Shared the draft mission, vision and values with stakeholders for feedback
- Published the new mission, vision & values in May 2026.

Goal 3

By May 2026, Rec Sports, in an effort to better support the well-being of student participants, student employees and professional staff, will utilize the ideas presented in “The Science and Practice of Well-Being for Student Success Practitioners” workshop to audit our current programs, facilities, services and staff expectations/practices and identify & implement possible changes and opportunities

Progress Towards Goal

- Educated the Rec Sports Staff on the PERMANENT (Present Moment Awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Relationship, Meaning, Achievement, Needed Sleep, Exercise, Nutrition, & Thinking) Model of Well-Being
- Analyzed our current programs, facilities, services and staff expectations/practices
- Identified and evaluated possible changes and opportunities that can be implemented
- Developed a plan to implement changes and opportunities
- Implemented some initiatives immediately, while others will be implemented during the 2026-2027 academic year

KEY PERFORMANCE DATA

- **86%** of UWL students utilize Rec Sports programs, services or facilities

- **43%** of UWL students utilize the REC at least once per week during the academic year

- Visits to the REC increased **11%** over the previous year to an all-time high of 393,691 visits

- Freshmen who participate in Rec Sports during the first six weeks of the semester persist to the 2nd semester at a higher rate than their nonparticipating peers. Intramural sports participants had the largest difference in persistence rate compared to nonparticipants at 2.7%.

- Rec Sports participants earned an average GPA of 3.23, compared to 2.87 for non-participants, a 0.36-point difference that reinforces the connection between campus involvement and student success.

- Rec Sports participants showed stronger first-to-second-year retention, with 89.5% retained compared to 83.1% of non-participants, a 6.4 percentage-point difference that underscores the role of Rec Sports in supporting student persistence, belonging, and continued progress toward graduation.

- 247 students employed. 89% of Rec Sports service staff (student employees) agree that their employment is a “high impact practice”

FALL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Key findings of Rec Sports Fall 2025 Student Survey Respondents

CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENT SUCCESS

- 90% indicate because of Rec Sports, they are more physically active than they would be otherwise

- 92% indicate their experience with Rec Sports helps them feel like they belong at UW-La Crosse

- 86% indicate their experience with Rec Sports helps them feel more connected to their peers

- 75% indicate their experience with Rec Sports programs and facilities improves their academic performance

- 91% indicate that Rec Sports helps them cope with stress

- 90% indicate that the opportunities provided by Rec Sports helps them create balance in their life

- 94% indicate that Rec Sports is important to their quality of life at UWL

- 93% indicate that Rec Sports is important to their mental health at UWL

94% indicate that Rec Sports is important to their well-being at UWL

HIGH SATISFACTION

- 91% indicate they are satisfied with their Rec Sports experience

- 89% indicate that Rec Sports staff provide good customer service

- 67% indicate that Rec Sports provides good value for their student fees

93% indicate that Rec Sports programs and facilities are welcoming and inclusive

IMPACT ON RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- 45% indicate that the opportunities provided by Rec Sports contributed to their decision to attend UW-La Crosse

52% indicate that the opportunities provided by Rec Sports contribute to their decision to remain at UW-La Crosse through graduation

#1 CHALLENGE: OVERCROWDING

- 74% indicate that the REC is overcrowded

- 69% indicate they would use a smaller fitness center in another campus building if it were available

- Of non-users, 43% indicate overcrowding as a reason they don't participate, the #2 response behind “availability/too busy”.

BELONGING

Our belonging efforts are central to our mission. We strive to challenge and hold our department accountable to be leaders in belonging efforts on campus, accomplished through consistent staff education, collaboration with campus partners, and assessment of departmental programs and policies.

STUDENT INCLUSIVE NETWORKING COMMITTEE (SINC)

The Student Inclusivity Networking Committee (SINC) is comprised of student staff passionate about making Rec Sports a more welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. The committee strives to further the department's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion through staff training and assisting with departmental annual initiatives. SINC welcomes all Rec staff to join and values self-reflection, critical thinking, open discussion and building community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Updated training, practices and language, to be in alignment with institutional and Universities of Wisconsin guidance.
- After the Health at Every Size® principles were revised to be more healthcare-centered, Rec Sports developed an "Every Body" Welcome statement for our website that affirms our commitment to accessible, judgment-free, and less appearance-centered recreation while helping people find joyful movement.
- SINC created and delivered two service area discussions titled "Beyond the Binary" and "Building Racial Literacy". There were positive responses and strong participation from student staff.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Explore a Student Advisory Council (SAC) & Student Inclusive Networking Committee (SINC) collaboration addressing belonging and well-being

"So many friendships were made and developed among those PCs, some of which I see being life-long friends.

Initially, the REC was a place so far outside my comfort zone that I never anticipated it becoming my home away from home. But I realized that being a center for "recreation" doesn't mean it's simply an athletic facility.

The REC is a place where students can embrace dozens of lifestyles and interests within a community. Anyone, regardless of skill level or experience, can find comfort and home within the REC, even people like me."

- Marissa Cialdini, EZONE Participant



BELONGING STATEMENT

Everyone deserves a chance to play and belong. Rec Sports is dedicated to creating a space that celebrates, supports, and affirms, everyone from all backgrounds, abilities, and fitness levels. We are focused on eliminating barriers that prevent full participation, so each person can thrive as their authentic self within our community. We believe in treating everyone with respect and strive to provide recreational facilities, programs and services which are accessible and welcoming.





FACILITIES/INFORMAL RECREATION

The Recreational Eagle Center (REC) is a 133,200 square foot facility that houses a multitude of spaces such as a fitness center, climbing wall, four basketball courts, two multi-purpose courts, two fitness studios and much more. The majority of Recreational Sports programs take place within the REC, including informal recreation. Rec Sports provides students the opportunity to check out equipment for a variety of activities to use outside of structured programming to help relieve the every day stress of the classroom. The REC also hosts several events throughout the year in collaboration with other student groups and departments on campus to keep the facility thriving. In addition to the Recreational Eagle Center, the Rec Sports Department utilizes the Hetzel Fieldhouse and Mitchell Hall for programming such as sport club practices/ events, intramural sports and informal recreation. These facilities are shared with Athletics and Exercise Sports Science (ESS).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

● People counters were added to the facility to track real-time occupancy for the Fitness Center, Track Level, and the REC in general. This data has been added to the website for users to see how busy the facility is.

- Rec Sports partnered with the School District of La Crosse for use of the REC during their reunification exercise on June 2nd.
- Expanded open rec opportunities in the Hetzel Fieldhouse to two days a week

during the fall semester, while open rec pickleball times were set aside in the REC.

- Weekend hours were expanded this past year with an 8:00am opening for Saturday and Sunday to respond to student feedback and help with overcrowding.

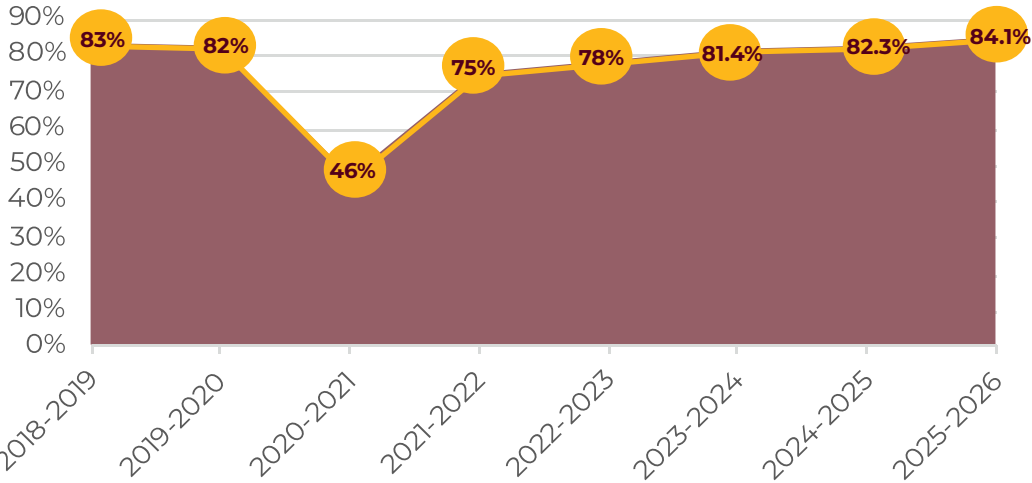
FUN FACT

84%

of UWL Students swipe into the REC at least once during the academic school year.



% OF STUDENTS WHO SWIPE INTO THE REC



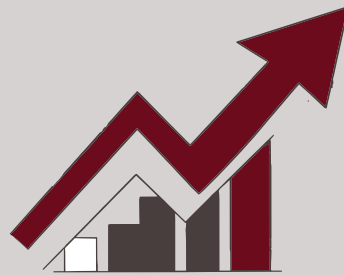
There was a total of 5,768 visits to the REC during the early weekend operating hours.

CHALLENGES

- There continued to be challenges with finding common times to have meetings with all the student staff.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Implement the new FusionGo App experience
- Transition from cable TV to a new streaming service, Atmosphere TV, for all TVs in the Fitness Center and Lobby of the REC.



REC VISITS ARE UP

11%



"I can't fully express how grateful I am for the impact Rec Sports had on my college experience. I can't even list all the ways it has positively affected my life, but the biggest impact has been the incredible community I found through Rec Sports. I met the most amazing colleagues, created such strong friendships, and met so many people I would not have met anywhere else if I did not work and/or utilize the Rec facility...Looking back, I truly don't think I would have formed such meaningful relationships or grown as much as I have if I hadn't given the REC a chance." - Kate Rossner, Building Manager

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Total Visits	262,439	109,463	280,558	322,108	344,571	353,913	393,691	11.2%
Total Student Visits	249,118	108,032	271,825	310,033	335,255	349,646	385,367	10.2%
Unique Users	8,362	4,457	7,677	8,127	8,704	8,983	9,502	5.8%
Unique Student Users	8,035	4,412	7,076	7,328	7,621	7,805	8,037	3%
% of Students that Swipe Into the REC (Academic Year)	82%	46%	75%	78%	81.4%	82.3%	84.1%	2.2%
% of Students Users (Academic Year-All Programs & Swipes)				80%	83.9%	85.7%	85.8%	0.1%



AQUATICS

The Aquatics Program within the Recreational Sports Department provides the UWL campus and the surrounding La Crosse community with the ability to stay active through lap swim opportunities. The program has scheduled lap swim hours daily throughout the academic year and works in collaboration with the Athletics Department and the Exercise and Sport Science Department for shared use with the pool, located in Mitchell Hall. In addition to lap swim hours, the program works with the Special Events Program to offer special events to the students, faculty, and staff at UWL throughout the year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Swipe access was added to the pool during Rec Sports open swim hours allowing for better tracking of participants and verification of pool-use eligibility.
- A multi-visit pool pass was implemented for guests who regularly use the pool, eliminating the need to purchase a daily pass each visit.

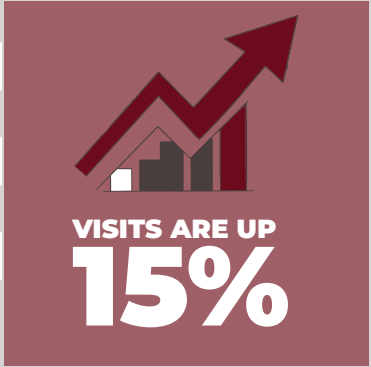
	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Total Visits	1,787	2,237	2,572	2,956	15.0%
Unique Users	441	535	518	634	22.4%
Total Student Visits	1,321	1,761	1,983	2,252	13.5%
Unique Student Users	430	495	456	600	31.6%
Total Faculty/Staff Visits	325	394	429	425	-1%
Unique Faculty/Staff Users	11	40	20	21	5%

CHALLENGES

- There were a few facility scheduling issues due to program times not added to the university calendar, leading to the pool being closed for Rec Sports open swim.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Transition the lifeguard staff to service staff personnel to include them in the Rec Sports all-staff training program that takes place the week before the fall semester.
- Implement joint staff trainings with Lifeguards and Building Managers as part of the all-staff training program.



ATHLETIC TRAINING SERVICES

Following collegiate recreation best practices, athletic training services are available to the 600+ athletes that comprise the 20+ sport club team rosters. Services include injury prevention, evaluation and treatment, post-injury rehabilitation, emergency care, concussion evaluation and management, and assistance with referrals to outside care. On-site athletic training coverage is also provided for the vast majority of home sport club competitions and certain departmental events.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted Safety & Risk Reviews for each sport club team that utilizes on-campus facilities for practices and competitions. Reviews consisted of policy and procedure reminders, as well as mock emergency drills and emergency action plan practice for each club's risk management officers.
- Drafted Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Policy for intramural and sport club programs
- Worked with Facility Operations to install new flooring in REC Athletic Training Room, which has enhanced the safety and overall functionality of the space

CHALLENGES

- Difficulty recruiting athletic trainers from the approved pool to assist with event coverage demands. Coverage support was further impacted by compensation rates that are not competitive with local and regional market standards.
- Delays in interdisciplinary collaborative care due to extremely limited physical therapy staffing and subsequent patient waitlist at Student Health Center

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Implement aforementioned safety & risk reviews for sport club teams that utilize off-campus facilities for practices and competitions
- Enact sport club program policy and procedure for medical restriction/ disqualification from participation, which was approved by Cabinet during the 2025-26 academic year
- Serve as preceptor and clinical site for students in the UWL Master of Science in Athletic Training Program

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Athletes Cared For	103	296	267	232	206	-11%
Injuries*	126	157	143	146	114	-15%
Patient Encounters	502	1,007	605	704	650	-8%
AT Coverage Hours	175	174	178	170.5	161.25	-5%
Baseline IMPACT Tests Administered	372	198	493	417	463	5%

*Only new musculoskeletal injuries and concussions were accounted for here. Wounds/blister and "injuries" where no evaluation was performed but taping and/or ice only was provided were not counted in this category. Those cases were included in the number of athletes cared for and patient encounters, however.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS

As one of the most popular activities Rec Sports has to offer, the primary goal of intramural sports is to provide UWL students, faculty, and staff with the opportunity to participate in activities in a structured and enjoyable environment. Intramural sports include individual, dual and team competition in a variety of events across men's, women's, corec (co-ed), and open leagues. Activities are varied, which creates an opportunity for all individuals to participate no matter their skill level or ability. Whether competitive or recreational in nature, the program prides itself in being a great way for students to meet new people, develop and cultivate friendships, to continue to be involved in the sports they have grown to love, try new things, and to make life-long memories.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Intramural forfeit rates decreased by 42% from the previous year, potentially reflecting the positive impact of increased forfeit fees implemented to encourage team accountability and participation.
- The department partnered with the Campus Activities Board (CAB) for the first time to host a pick-up style basketball tournament during a week without intramural programming, providing students with an additional opportunity for recreation and engagement.
- Playoff organization improved through the implementation of automated IMLeagues bracket placement based on regular season record and sportsmanship, reducing confusion caused by teams selecting inaccurate seeds or game times.
- 70% of survey respondents indicated satisfaction with the

current league format, which includes a four-week regular season followed by a single elimination playoff tournament.

CHALLENGES

- A few leagues, including Wallyball and Dodgeball, did not run due to low participation interest, contributing to a 2.1% decrease in participants compared to the previous year and suggesting these activities may be better suited for one-day tournaments.
- Challenges with hiring and retaining officials continued, indicating a need for revisions to onboarding and training processes.
- Sportsmanship concerns within basketball leagues persisted and require continued proactive intervention

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Satisfaction surveys will be distributed consistently to better understand participant interests and identify opportunities to increase participation and improve sport offerings.
- Feedback from current officials will be gathered to identify opportunities for improvement within the hiring, onboarding, and training processes.
- Mandatory pre-season meetings for basketball league participants will be reintroduced to reinforce expectations and sportsmanship standards

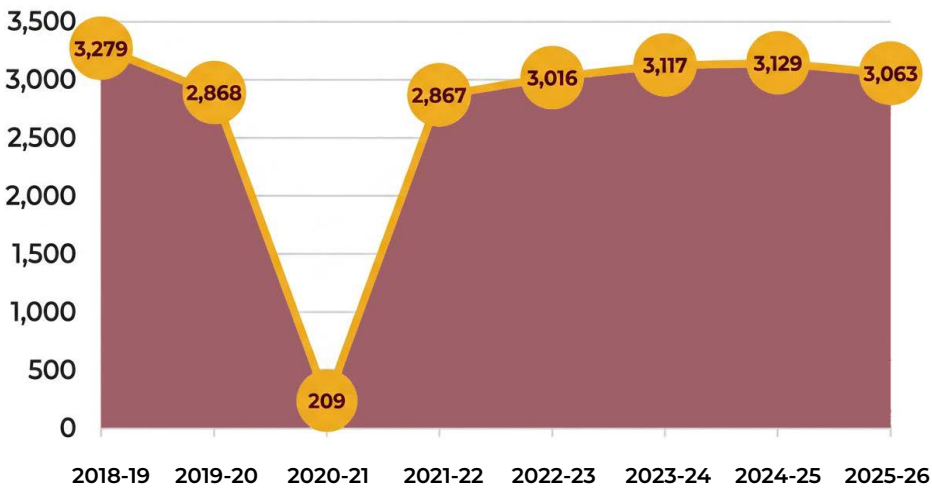


FUN FACT

1,070
TEAMS

Played in 32 different sports leagues throughout the academic year.

INTRAMURAL PARTICIPANT TOTALS



"I have learned a ton of key job skills that I know I'll use in my future. The experience I've gained has helped immensely in the job market post-graduation. Best of all I have gained friendships with other staff that will last a lifetime."

Ethan Campbell, Intramural Sports Student Coordinator

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Unique Participants	2,868	209	2,867	3,016	3,117	3,129	3,063	-2.1%
Participations	28,155	519	28,257	30,819	33,424	32,282	30,300	-6.1%
Games/Contests	3,485	200	2,903	3,202	3,668	3,394	2,948	-13.1%
Average Participations Per Participant	9.82	2.48	9.86	10.22	10.72	9.69	9.89	2.1%
# of Teams	1,240	222	983	1,073	1,191	1,224	1,079	-11.8%



SPORT CLUBS

The UWL Sport Club Program is the largest student-run organization at UWL with over 600 members participating in 24 sport clubs. The Sport Club Program is committed to developing, promoting, and providing leadership to activity and competitive oriented clubs. Most clubs are part of an external governing body that schedules regular and post-season competitions. Students are given hands-on experience with leadership, travel, budgets, marketing, promotions, and fundraising while participating in an activity they love. Club logistics, rosters, waivers, scheduling contests or practices, and representing the club on and off campus are the responsibilities of elected student officers of each club. The Rec Sports Competitive Sports Coordinator advises all sport clubs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

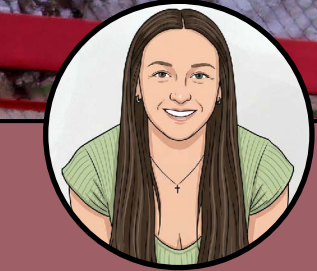
- Waterski and Wakeboard, Triathlon, Men's & Women's Volleyball, and Olympic Weightlifting competed at national events during the academic year.
- Baseball successfully moved up to Division I competition and remained competitive throughout the season, highlighting the program's continued growth and success.
- The Men's Lacrosse completed an undefeated regular season and placed second in the Great Lakes Lacrosse League (GLLL) Championship Tournament.
- Sport clubs raised an all-time high of \$32,039 during "One Day for UWL", \$4,975 more than the year prior.
- Operational improvements included the launch of a visitor guide to streamline home event information for visiting teams and spectators, implementation of an infractions reference table, and updates to the member resource webpage.

CHALLENGES

- Some clubs operated with unique structures, competitive formats, or external affiliations that did not always align seamlessly with standard departmental policies and procedures, creating challenges in maintaining consistency, compliance, and equitable oversight while still supporting individual club needs.
- A recent change to the university's driver authorization policy for sport club travel created confusion among staff and club members. Limited understanding of the new process at times delayed approvals and made it difficult for participants to receive clearance in advance of scheduled travel.
- Missed deadlines for travel and eligibility forms negatively affected some clubs' standing and participation.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- More individualized support strategies will be developed to better accommodate unique club structures while maintaining consistency and compliance across the sport club program.
- Clearer guidance and more proactive communication regarding the driver authorization process will be provided through simplified resources and earlier timelines to support timely approvals.
- Communication of deadlines and key information will be improved through the implementation of a centralized sport club calendar, providing clubs with a clear and accessible way to stay on track.



"Sport Clubs gave me a purpose beyond just academics while in college which helped me maintain a balance in my life."

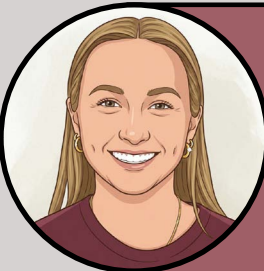
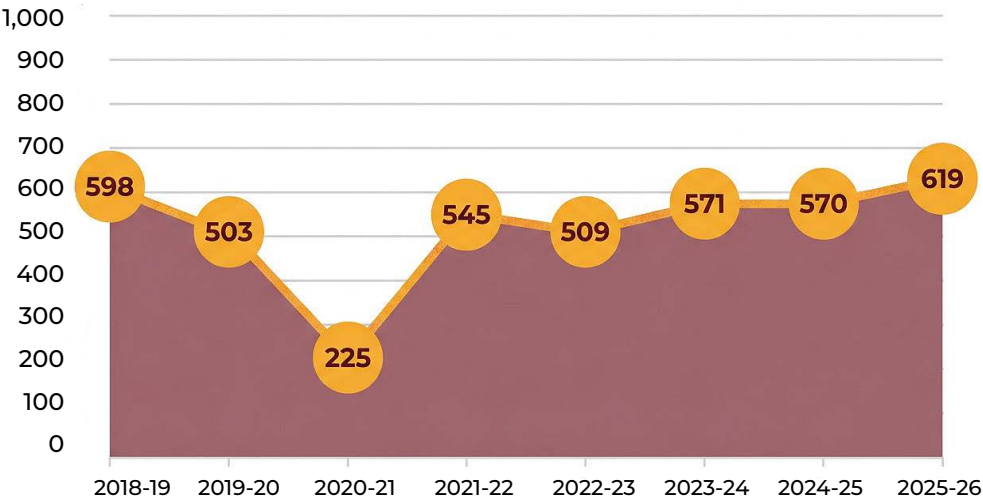
Samantha Schultz,
Olympic Weightlifting member

FUN FACT

43,000
MILES

The distance that clubs drove to attend away games and tournaments this past academic year.

OF CLUB SPORTS MEMBERS



"Rec Sports has had a profound impact on my college experience, shaping who I am both personally and professionally. While it has been a place to stay active, its impact on my life goes far beyond that."

Lily Flaherty, Student Coordinator of Safety & Risk



	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
# of Clubs	24	20	22	23	23	24	24	24	0.0%
Club Members	598	503	225	545	509	571	570	619	8.6%
Home Events	50	40	0	36	37	55	51	60	17.6%
Away Competitions	109	92	0	99	121	124	122	117	-4.1%
Miles Traveled	49,826	46,269	0	36,916	44,520	53,133	54,229	43,260	-20.2%
One Day for UWL Donations						\$26,647	\$27,064	\$32,039	18.4%
SUFAC Budget			\$30,855		\$30,855		\$43,000	\$43,000	0.0%



FITNESS CENTER

The Fitness Center is a 15,000 square foot facility that supports UWL by providing enjoyable opportunities to move one's body and build community in an environment in which everyone can pursue their unique goals. Within the space there are seven different zones totaling over 145 pieces of cardio and strength equipment.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• The Fitness Center recorded 310,625 total visits during the 2025-2026 academic year, a 6.2% increase from the previous year. Average weekday occupancy also had a 19% increase over the previous year. This growth highlights students' continued

demand for accessible fitness opportunities

• The 2025-2026 academic year experienced the largest equipment update for The Fitness Center and 2nd floor to date. Student feedback gathered in spring 2025 guided strategic updates for high demand

equipment and improved layouts to meet the growing demand and overcrowding. In total, 23 pieces were added to the Fitness Center and 16 to the 2nd floor.



"Being a Rec Sports Pilates Instructor has been one of the best things I have participated in through college. The difference in my mental health from fall semester of '25 to spring semester of '26 are day and night....While this class is known for being challenging, I now had something else that give me purpose and so much fulfillment. Pilates was my thing that I got to look forward to, create bonds with girls, and share my passion for exercise experiences, etc.... Whether good or bad experiences, I enjoyed that I became someone that the girls saw as a person to share details of their life with."
- **Eva Hetland, Group Fitness Instructor**

CHALLENGES

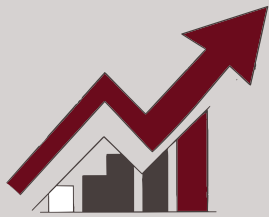
- Member adherence to policies requiring closed beverage containers and proper footwear remained an ongoing challenge. These expectations are essential to maintaining a clean and safe environment for all participants. Unclear staff expectations regarding when and how to address these behaviors contributed to inconsistent enforcement, allowing member habits to develop that became increasingly difficult to correct over time.
- Maintaining REC fitness equipment to a high standard has become increasingly challenging as both equipment inventory and facility usage continue to grow. Responding promptly to repair needs, preventative maintenance, and routine cleaning remains essential to providing a safe,

reliable, and positive experience for members. Supporting these behind-the-scenes operational needs will require continued attention and additional resources to ensure equipment quality and facility standards are maintained as demand increases.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

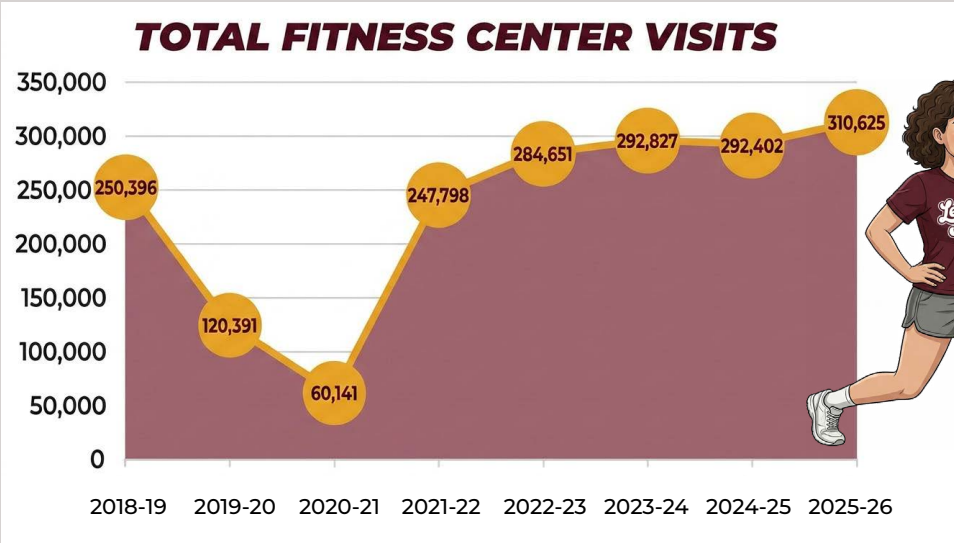
- To support improved adherence to policy, revised training, communication strategies, and member awareness initiatives will be implemented in the fall to strengthen understanding of facility policies and promote a shared responsibility for maintaining a safe and respectful Fitness Center experience.
- In the fall, the Equipment Specialist team will expand from two to three student staff members to better support the increasing demands associated

with a growing inventory of equipment and higher facility usage. This position is responsible for routine cleaning, preventative maintenance, lubrication, and addressing minor repairs to ensure equipment remains safe, functional, and available for members.



VISITS ARE UP

6.2%



"Rec Sports has had a very positive impact on my wellbeing. Staying active plays a large role in increasing my mood and decreasing stress. Rec Sports allows me to work out daily, whenever I need to, which has been essential to keeping me grounded during stressful times. Rec Sports also allows a place to get away from academics and distract your mind and body for however long you need."

- **Alayna Fern, Fitness Center user**

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Total Visits	120,391	60,141	247,798	284,651	292,827	292,402	310,625	6.2%
Average User Counts (Monday-Friday)			56	61	60	63	75	19%
Peak Average (Monday-Thursday)			86	97	100	105	90	-14.3%
Average User Counts (Friday-Sunday)			35	41	41	39	43	10.3%
Highest Count	155	55	130	160	144	135	163	20.7%

FUN FACT

310,625
TOTAL VISITS

Number of users who used the Fitness Center

FITNESS PROGRAMS

Fitness programs play a critical role in the department’s overall effort to provide opportunities for everyone to play and belong in a community that embraces active and healthy lives. Both group fitness and personal training aim to serve UWL with highly skilled, certified, and passionate student staff. Group fitness boasts a high value service that utilizes an unlimited membership for a flat fee where members can enjoy a wide variety of inclusive and motivating classes at convenient times. Personal training services provide a unique and specialized experience that helps members build the confidence and experience they desire in a private hands-on setting. Whether members want the customized experience of private training or energetic community that group fitness offers, members will always receive support, encouragement, education, and instruction for effective exercise.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Group Fitness program saw continued growth this year, with new program records set in total participations at 16,688, a 38.2% increase, as well as 1,212 unique members, a 28% increase. This highlights the program’s ability to not only engage existing participants more frequently but also attract new students seeking affordable, inclusive, and community-centered fitness.
- The Group Fitness program had a successful year, adding 13 new instructors in high demand formats such as Yoga, Pilates, and Cycle. All four Rec Sports instructor certification offerings achieved strong participation, and six instructors graduated after serving on staff for three or more years. These outcomes

reflect the program’s intentional focus on marketing, recruitment, development, and retention practices, which have been prioritized over time and continue to support a popular service that positively impacts student health, well-being, and belonging on campus.

CHALLENGES

- The Personal Training program experienced a third consecutive year of declining participation since its post-pandemic peak in 2022-23. These continued trends are present through the region in higher education and indicate changing student interests, economic factors, and increased availability of fitness information and programming through alternative sources.

- Due to the continued popularity of Group Fitness on campus, requests from student organizations and Residence Life to host one-time fitness classes and wellness events increased significantly this year. Meeting this demand has provided a valuable opportunity to expand the program’s reach and serve additional student populations outside of regularly scheduled classes. While accommodating these requests has been achievable, the increase in demand has highlighted the need for updated request procedures to ensure adequate planning time, facility reservations, and instructor availability are considered. Establishing clearer timelines and expectations will help ensure these experiences remain high quality while balancing the needs of existing program operations.



“Something very important to me is being able to move my body in a way that makes me feel good both mentally and physically. I am a type of person who loves to hike, loves the team aspect of sports, and enjoys casual working out over hardcore weightlifting.

At Rec Sports I found the Group Fitness classes to be amazing! Sometimes as a busy college student I have felt that all I have time for is my studies. When that happens I feel exhausted, down, and extremely stressed.

The community at Rec Sports has helped me be a better student and human by encouraging me to move my body in ways that feel good. I leave every Zumba class feeling more energized and happy when 45 minutes before I was debating on if I should even go. I leave every yoga class feeling more centered, calm, and ready to handle the rest of my day’s to-do list.”

- Megan McMunn, Group Fitness Participant

FUTURE INITIATIVES

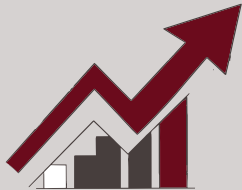
- The Personal Training program will shift to a person-first consultation that emphasizes health, wellbeing, and confidence as the foundation of service. Students will have greater access to connect with a trainer in person or virtually to explore goals and navigate the services and support that best align with their

needs. By positioning trainers as guides, the consultation process creates a welcoming entry point and potential toward coaching and wellness-focused conversations down the road with credentials.

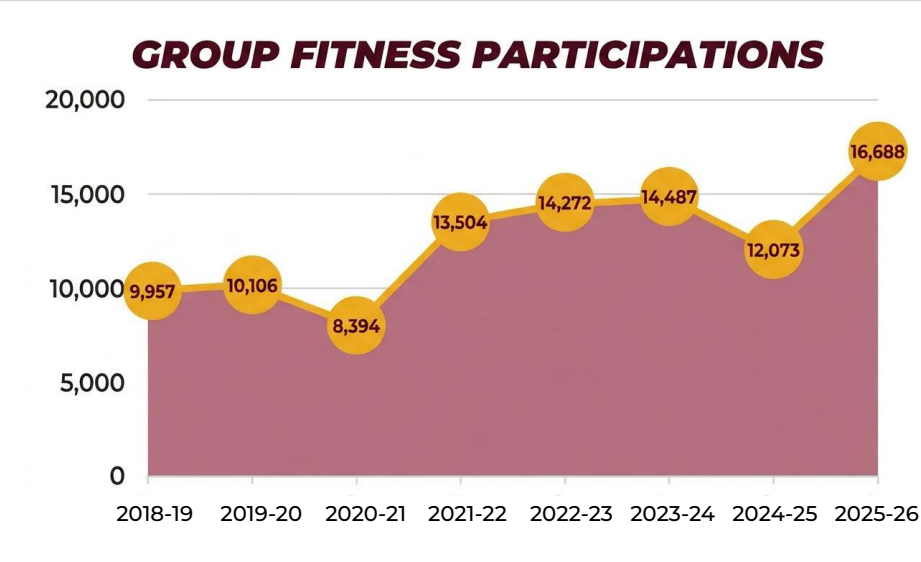
- Personal Training will include small group training programs throughout the year to bridge a

gap between group fitness and traditional personal training. This service could vary in its goals and format while providing a fun, high value option for all levels of experience.

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% CHANGE
Memberships Sold	1,106	716	1,019	956	1,131	1,239	1,246	0.6%
Revenue	\$41,828	\$22,781	\$34,220	\$40,145	\$55,585	\$62,785	\$64,740	3.1%
Total Participation	10,106	8,394	13,504	14,272	14,487	12,703	16,688	38.2%
Unique Users				1,617	1,262	1,197	1,226	2.4%
Unique Members					1,060	945	1,212	28.3%



PARTICIPATION IS UP
38%



FUN FACT

1,246

A NEW RECORD

The number of Group Fitness Memberships sold.



OUTDOOR CONNECTION

Outdoor Connection provides quality outdoor gear rental, resource information, trips, and an on-campus residence community for the UW-La Crosse Community. Outdoor Connection is where UWL students come to “unplug”. The outdoors and especially our extended break trips provide a unique setting for positive transformation. Whether it’s from our participants building new relationships or our staff developing their leadership skills, the outdoor experience can have a profound impact on all involved.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The hiring and training process for Outdoor Connection Representatives to become Trip Leaders was reformatted, and the initial version was implemented, leading to better preparedness, risk management skills, training, and confidence in the Trip Leaders.
- Improved efficiency and communication of the Green Bike process for students to request, be matched with a suitable Green Bike, and receive

their bike. This also included implementing the rental of U-locks with each bike and educating students on how to properly lock up their bikes to help curb bike theft on campus.

- Implementing a clearer focus with the trips schedule and decreasing the overall number of trips led to an increase in staff morale, a decrease in staff burnout, and an overall 12.8% decrease in the percentage of trips cancelled from FY25, all while still seeing 6,119 hours of engagement with participants.

- The rental center saw many organizational improvements for better storage, visibility for customers, and streamlined staff rental processes.

CHALLENGES

- The age of many rental equipment items, such as bikes, are beginning to show their age, requiring more and more frequent and occasionally costly repairs and leading to some customer dissatisfaction.
- On average, there were slightly fewer trip registrations per trip and

significantly less trip registrations overall.

- Sharing the full scope of the trip experience through marketing has been a challenge with a limited number of shared social media slots available. Additionally, the rental program can be challenging to share information out both on campus and in the community.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Outdoor Connection is looking to utilize its own social media page to increase awareness and impact of the adventure trips program. With the implementation of its own page, it will also broaden its reach beyond UWL into the La Crosse community, to showcase the rental

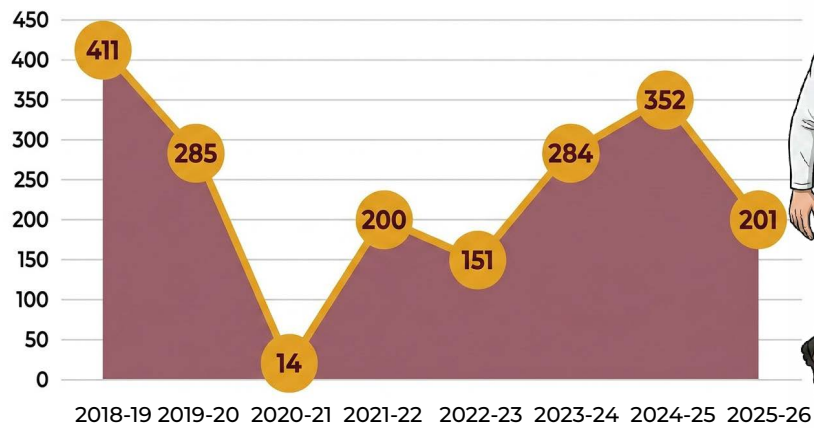
equipment available and increase revenue

- Build relationships with campus partners to increase awareness of offerings and seek out opportunities for collaborative programming.
- Continued development and organization of the training structure, resources, and ongoing learning opportunities for staff is a priority.
- Finalizing an equipment replacement plan for longevity, fiscal responsibility, and ensuring high-quality rental equipment leading to higher utilization and customer satisfaction.



“I think that the highest impact skills I have developed are adaptability and leadership. I improved these traits through the nature of working as a bike mechanic. Many of the problems I am given are ambiguous in nature, and require me to often try multiple different solutions to one problem. Additionally, learning to lead new mechanics and teach them the ropes has been a significant achievement in my mind. I look forward to continuing to teach, and also bring on someone in the spring who can learn to execute my role.” - **Jaiden Warner, Bike Mechanic**

TRIP PARTICIPATION



“The trip leaders were amazing!! They really made this trip so memorable and an incredible experience!!”
- **Desert and Canyons Spring Break Trip Participant**

	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Outing Participations	411	285	14	200	151	284	352	201	-42.9%
Unique Participants						154	163	105	-35.6%
Outing Returner Percentage						54.23%	46.31%		12.8%
Outings Ran	81	59	3	48	42	37	40	29	-27.5%
Planned Outings						63	62	40	-35.5%
Cancelled Outing Percentage						41.27%	35.48%	27.50%	-22.5%
Trip Hours of Engagement								6,119	
Unique Renters								270	
Rental Revenue	\$20,643	\$15,565	\$11,012	\$17,106	\$13,125	\$8,646	\$10,543	\$7,726	-26.7%



"My time at Rec Sports has strengthened skills that will transfer directly into my career, including customer service, communication, organization, and professionalism. Coordinating with groups through phone calls and emails helped me become more confident communicating with a wide range of people. I already see these skills helping me succeed in my supply chain internship, where I regularly communicate with suppliers and manage large-scale projects."

- **Karley King, Climbing Gym Student Coordinator**

CLIMBING GYM

The Climbing Gym is a destination for adventure, challenge, and community! Our state-of-the-art facility aims to introduce and share the sport of climbing with individuals of all backgrounds, skill levels & abilities. Whether it's your first time climbing, or you're a seasoned pro, our goal is to foster a welcoming, inclusive space where participants can explore their potential, build community, and challenge themselves. Our staff are committed to supporting both recreational climbers and those seeking to refine their skills in a collaborative, safe, and engaging environment.



"The Climbing Gym is my favorite way to exercise and lets me put worries aside for a little bit. The combination of physical effort and mental stimulation from figuring out our routes keeps me very engaged, so I'm not overthinking about other things." - **Climbing Gym Participant**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The overall visits, unique users, and revenue significantly increased from the previous academic year to an all-time high.
- Partnered with the Outdoor Recreation Alliance (ORA) to program a Kid's Climbing Club in both the fall and spring, which helped establish a foundational relationship with the community.
- A consistent schedule and clear expectations for staff for route setting was established. This consistency indicates higher satisfaction of climbers

of all levels returning to the climbing gym on a frequent basis to continue growing skills.

- A consistent schedule for instructional programs was established, leading to an 83.66% increase in registrations and a decrease in class cancellations.

CHALLENGES

- There were minor facility challenges we continued to work through with a new climbing facility such as a few electrical challenges on the Kilter Board and shrinking floor mats during the cold, dry months.

- There were several unexpected staff departures from the spring to the fall, leading to the climbing gym being understaffed. This affected staff morale and the climbing gym's ability to accept more external group reservations. This was remedied during the hiring process, and the Climbing Gym is in a better position for staffing for the following year.

- As the numbers indicate, the Climbing Gym significantly increased its visits this year. However, this did lead to overcrowding during many peak weeks in the climbing gym where climbers had to be turned away until it was at less than capacity.

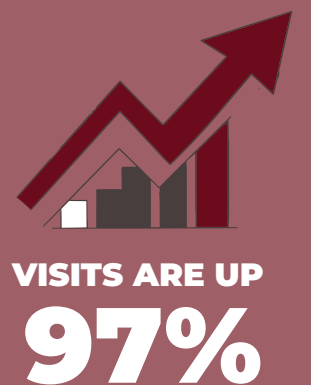
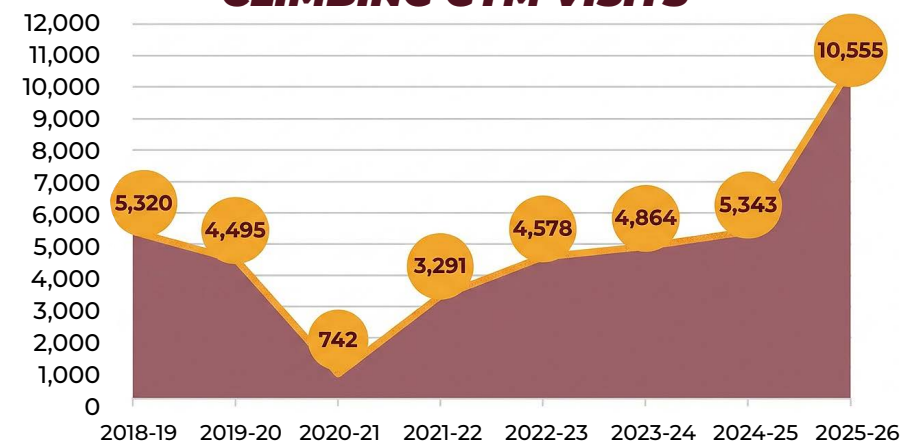
- Roped climbing is very underutilized in the Climbing Gym. Therefore, less roped routes are set in the gym and staff feel less confident in their rope skills due to infrequent use.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Continued development and organization of the training structure, resources and ongoing learning opportunities through biweekly staff meetings is a priority.
- The Climbing Gym saw a strong cohort of students graduate this year, leaving the remaining staff with varying levels of route setting skills. Therefore, we will seek to provide more opportunities through training to allow current and incoming staff to build route setting skills to continue the Climbing Gym's reputation for high quality climbing opportunities.
- Develop outreach strategies and seek to build more relationships with the community to increase awareness and utilization of group reservation offerings.



CLIMBING GYM VISITS



	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Visits	5,320	4,495	742	3,291	4,578	4,864	5,343	10,555	97.55%
Unique Users	837	816	264	710	809	850	954	1,740	82.39%
Revenue	\$6,056	\$2,841	\$4.74			\$8,745	\$11,487	\$17,841	55.31%
Group Reservations								21	
External Group Participants								260	
Instructional Classes Ran							12	22	83%



“Working at the REC has provided me with so many interpersonal experiences that I’ve been able to use in job interviews. Even though my work area doesn’t necessarily pertain to my field (EZONE to business analyst), the STAR formatted experiences I’ve had with coworkers and customers while working here were a key component of me getting my first internship this summer!”
- **Marissa Cialdini, Esports Representative**

EZONE

The EZONE is a welcoming community space for gamers of all abilities who like to participate in recreational and competitive gaming. The space includes 24 high-end gaming PCs, console gaming, virtual reality devices, a streaming room and a viewing area. The space is available for drop-in use and offers leagues and tournaments.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- An increased social media presence led to a 3.9% increase in total visits and an 11.9% increase in unique users. Tournaments & events also saw increased participation and new energy thanks to cash prizes being offered thanks to an anonymous donor.
- The UWL Esports & Gaming Club showed renewed interest during the spring semester. With continued organization and outreach, the club is positioned to attract new members for the fall semester.

- Completed Phase 1 of the computer replacement plan with the purchase of 12 new high-end gaming PCs. Facility updates and equipment purchases were also completed to accommodate two new Nintendo Switch stations.

CHALLENGES

- After four years of operation, computer peripherals such as headsets and mice are beginning to show wear and will need replacement. Purchases will be made over the summer to prepare for the next academic year. This was also the first year the full supplies budget was utilized.

- EZONE use by the public remains low. Memberships and day passes have garnered just \$695 in revenue, down from the previous year.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- The second and final phase of the computer replacement schedule will be completed over the summer with the purchase of 25 new PCs.
- The two new Nintendo Switch stations will be ready by fall semester 2026.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Total Visits	3,454	8,197	8,557	6,771	7,034	3.9%
Unique Users	685	1,005	923	873	977	11.9%
Day Pass Revenue	0	\$528	\$768	\$520	\$480	-7.7%
Membership Revenue	0	\$25	\$395	\$245	\$205	-16.3%
Reservation Revenue	0	\$676	\$1,714	\$1,719	\$1,770	3.0%

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Rec Sports offers annual instructional programs to campus and the surrounding community. Programs offered through the department are American Red Cross certification classes for Adult/Pediatric First Aid, CPR & AED, Self-Defense classes offered through a partnership with the UWL Police Department and Into to Mindfulness Course offered in partnership with Counseling & Testing and Wellness & Health Advocacy.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Three Rec Sports staff members completed the American Red Cross Instructor Certification course, giving the program seven instructors. Additional CPR class offerings have the potential to increase due to instructor availability.
- Lifeguard certification and re-certification courses were offered for the first time.

CHALLENGES

- The self-defense class was only offered during the fall semester due to programmatic changes within the UWL Police Department as they have started to offer these services to the campus and community on their own. Self-defense classes that were offered in collaboration with the UWL Police Department will no longer be offered by Rec Sports.

- Due to an increase in certification costs charged by the American Red Cross in the spring, the cost for CPR classes offered will be under review with a likely increase.



“This class teaches you great skills that may or may not come in handy someday. It’s always important to know how to stay aware and safe. I feel that this class equipped me with some great knowledge on how to stay aware of my surroundings, and how to stay safe in sketchy or harmful situations”. - **Self Defense Class Participant**

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
SELF DEFENSE TACTICS								
Participants	17	0	43	50	21	40	20	-50%
Revenue	\$204	0	\$519	\$600	\$252	\$480	\$240	-50%
RED CROSS CERTIFICATIONS								
Participants	70	70	77	195	153	180	195	8.3%
Revenue	\$4,020	\$4,225	\$4,452	\$9,716	\$8,204	\$11,870	\$12,164	2.5%
LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION - FULL								
Participants							9	n/a
Revenue							\$2,275	n/a
LIFEGUARD CERTIFICATION - RECERTIFICATION								
Participants							4	n/a
Revenue							\$360	n/a
MINDFULNESS								
						36	19	-47%





MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT


1.7
MILLION

FUN FACT
A new record! Total Social media Impressions across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

The Marketing and Events team serves as the creative engine behind Rec Sports' outreach, visibility, and engagement efforts. This team amplifies awareness of Rec Sports programs through strategic marketing, engaging content, and inclusive event planning. Our goal is to celebrate our community, drive participation, and create a strong sense of belonging through memorable experiences and intentional storytelling.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• Achieved an all-time high of 1.6 million Instagram impressions, a 158% year-over-year increase, driven by an 18% rise in posts and 92% more video content. Additionally, TikTok reach surged by nearly 565%, fueled by increasing post frequency from 8 to 51 annually.

• Turkey Trot attendance grew by 17% (1,372 participants, up from 1,171 in 2024), marking four consecutive years of 23%+ growth and highlighting the event's enduring appeal and promotional effectiveness.

• Participation in key welcome week events, including the Moonlight Mile and Rec Fest, rose by 26%, growing from 1,817 in Fall 2024 to 2,290 in Fall 2025.

• In alignment with university-wide initiatives, our team supported the effort to bring our digital materials into compliance with

federal standards by auditing and editing over 60 PDF documents, along with updating our web pages to ensure full accessibility for all students.

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Moonlight Mile	149	0	400	500	525	588	795	39%
REC Fest	1,224	32	1,300	1,790	1,519	1,229	1,494	17%
Turkey Trot	866	0	569	741	888	1,171	1,372	17%
Other Events	399	389	406	234	489	507	937	88%
Total Participation	3,067	618	3,138	3,718	3,675	3,700	4,598	26%

CHALLENGES

- While we hit a record 1.6 million Instagram views, our engagement dipped slightly to 3.7%. This remains well above the industry average, but we want to be more effective at reaching our students. We are working to make our social media space more meaningful, ensuring the content we share offers genuine value to every student, no matter their interests.
- Because we are focusing much more on video now, our staff needs to learn new skills and get access to easier, more user-friendly

editing tools. The team really prefers using CapCut to get the job done, but since it isn't approved for use on University computers we will need to explore other options, like Adobe Premiere, to see if we can find a solution that works for everyone.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- We are replacing our current UWLREC app with the Fusion Go app to provide a more user-friendly and intuitive experience for our students.

• To better capture the student experience, we are introducing hands-on training and simple "how-to" resources, making it easier for program staff to share high-quality content with our marketing team.

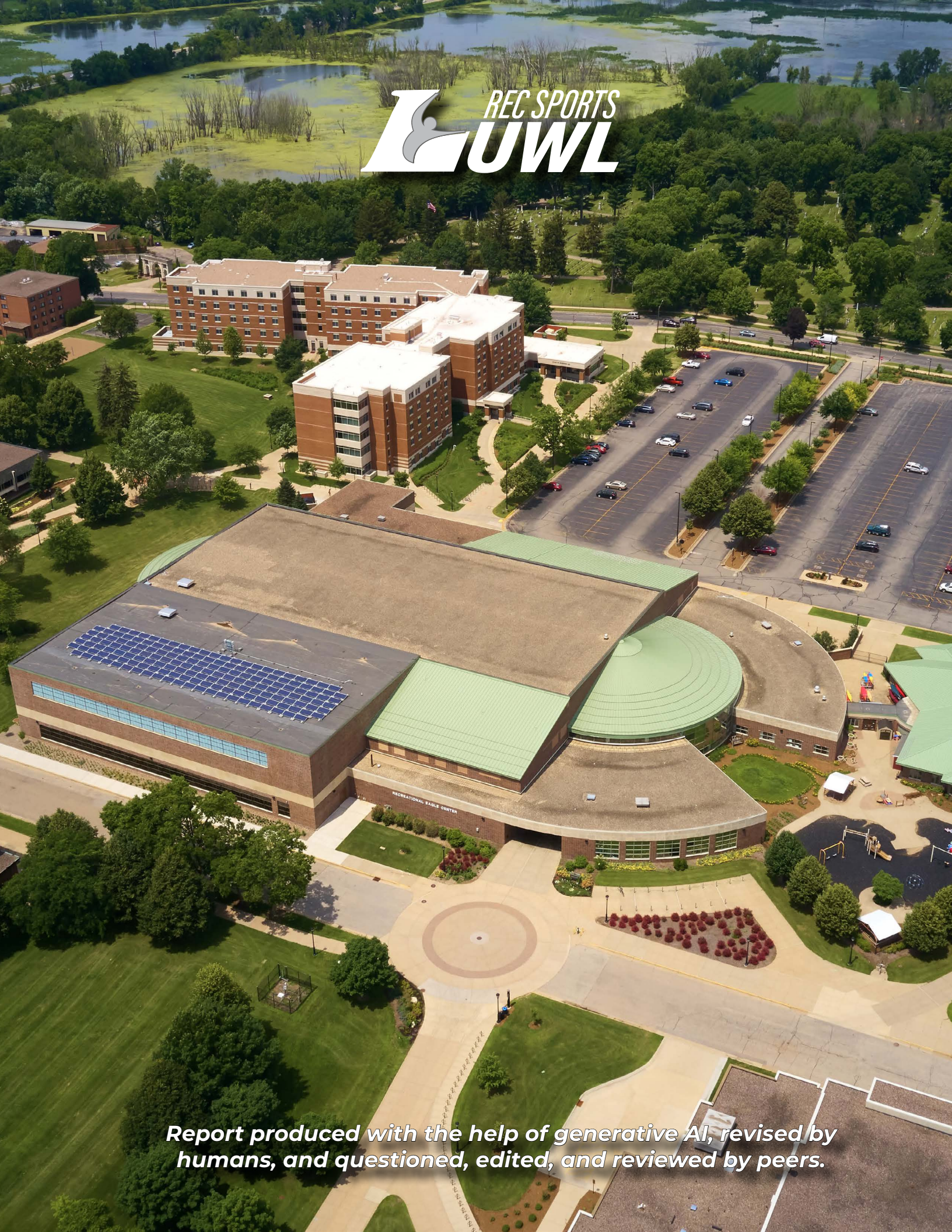
• We are reestablishing a dedicated social media presence for our Outdoor Recreation program, allowing us to speak directly to the students and community members exploring our region's trails, waterways, and gear.



"Everything that I am currently doing I will use in my future job. For example, while I probably won't be planning Turkey Trot events in the future, I may need to plan for a big company event. I will use the logistics and planning I learned to manage big events. I will also use the problem-solving I have learned and various other marketing strategies. I learn something new everyday at this job and that is something that is unique to any other on campus job."
- Alex Kubly, Marketing & Events Student Coordinator

	23-24	24-25	25-26	% Change
Facebook Posts	64	174	148	-15%
Facebook Reach	18,825	35,966	30,031	-17%
Instagram Posts	95	184	233	21.04%
Instagram Impressions	272,956	704,988	1,615,155	129%
Instagram Reach	248,005	641,072	765,502	19.4%
Instagram Engagement Rate (%)	5.7	4.5	3.7%	-8%
TikTok Posts		8	51	537%
TikTok Reach		13,877	92,239	564.7%
TikTok Views		16,726	109,768	564.7%





Report produced with the help of generative AI, revised by humans, and questioned, edited, and reviewed by peers.