

# The University of Wisconsin - Whitewater



## Survey of Former Recreation Sports and Facilities Student Employees

Spring 2013

**Department of Recreation Sports and Facilities**

## Recreation Sports Employment Develops Career- and Life-Related Benefits

During the Spring of 2013, the Department of Recreation Sports and Facilities at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater surveyed alumni to understand the career- and life-related benefits that former students gained through their employment in the Department.

Surveys were sent to 252 former employees that held leadership positions over a 26 year period (1986-2012). The response rate was exceptional with 146 former employees completing the survey (58%). Of respondents, there were 59 females and 87 males.

Respondents' demographic information included:

<i><b>Current Status</b></i>	<i><b># of Respondents</b></i>
Employed Full Time	124
Seeking Employment	13
Graduate Study	9

<i><b>Undergraduate Major</b></i>	<i><b># of Respondents</b></i>
Business	44
Physical Education or Related Education	41
Other (Art, Biology, Communications, Math, Psychology, Social Work, etc.)	22
	39

<i><b>Positions Held in Department</b></i>	<i><b># of Respondents</b></i>
Intramural Official	64
Intramural Supervisor	49
Building Supervisor	37
Office Assistant	32
Fitness Supervisor	31
Equipment Room Attendant	20
Set-Up Crew/Grounds Crew	16
Club Sports	14
Fitness/Aquatics Manager	9
Lifeguard	9
Group Fitness Instructor	7
Personal Trainer	4
Wheelchair Athletics Assistant	4

<i><b># of Semesters Employed</b></i>	<i><b># of Respondents</b></i>
2-3 (1 Year +)	16
4-5 (2 Years +)	23
6-7 (3 Years +)	46
8-9 (4 Years +)	35
10-11 (5 Years +)	22
12-14 (6-7 Years)	4

The large majority of former employees (91%) are employed full-time. As would be expected, respondents who are currently in graduate study or seeking employment tend to be recent graduates.

In terms of graduate study, 94 former student employees have attended or are attending 47 different institutions and/or fields of study.

Students from various undergraduate majors seek employment in the Recreation Sports and Facilities Department, and respondents show that 105 former employees (72%) were in undergraduate majors other than physical education or a related field. Moreover, statistics show that a large number of past student employees (55%) remained employed in Recreation Sports and Facilities for 3-4 years during their undergraduate career.

This tendency for students to remain employed in the Recreation Sports and Facilities Department throughout their entire undergraduate career continues today. The Department has a practice of promoting students from entry-level positions (e.g., intramural official, fitness staff, lifeguard, grounds crew, equipment room, etc.) to higher leadership positions (e.g., building supervisor, intramural supervisor, aquatics/fitness manager, etc.) based on job performance, skill set, and abilities.

### Contributions Toward Success

It is said that hindsight is a good teacher and, thus, our survey posed a simple question to alumni:

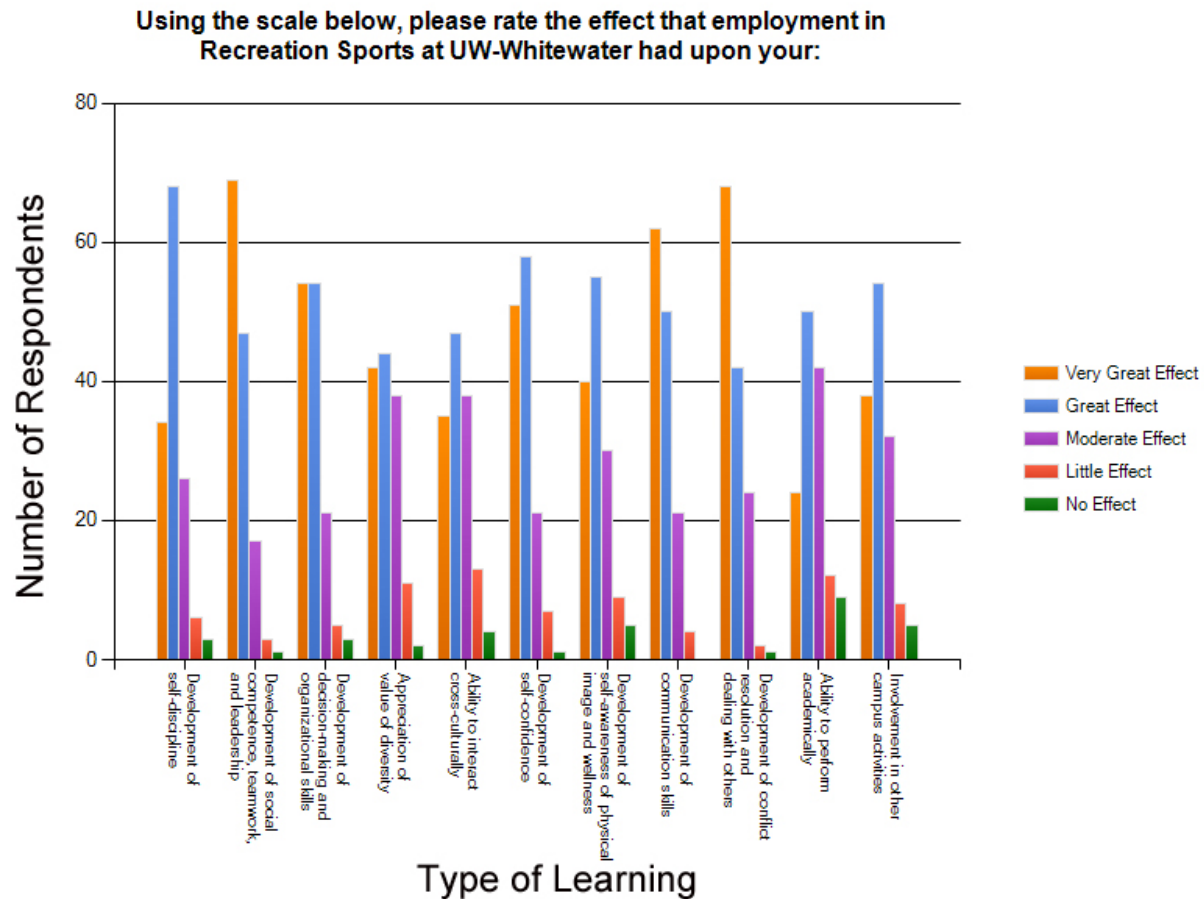
“Reflecting upon your employment in Recreation Sports at UW-Whitewater, what lessons did you learn that contributed to your success in life after college?”

The chart on the following page summarizes survey respondents' ratings on how their employment experiences contributed to their learning.

Various themes arose from alumni responses. While personal growth occurred in many areas, three areas were identified as affected most: (1) development of social competence, teamwork, and leadership; (2) development of conflict resolution and dealing with others; and (3) development of self-discipline.

Development of social competence, teamwork, and leadership were gained through interactions with co-workers, recreation participants, supervisors, and staff. The organizational environment in Recreation Sports and Facilities is designed for student employees to be a part of a group that emphasizes teamwork, conflict resolution, communication, and relationship building skills.

The importance of effectively interacting with various audiences is paramount, and thus, guidance and training to work with individuals from various races, ethnicities, abilities, and identities are provided.



Alumni comments that underscore diversity learning and teamwork include:

*“My involvement with Rec Sports at UWW had a profound impact on my feelings of inclusion. I felt involved as an integral part of the campus community.”* (Alum employed at Champeau Sourcing Solutions).

*“Working for Rec. Sports allows you to be a part of a team . . . a team that works to service the community and the campus.”* (Alum employed in Shawano School District).

*“Working in Rec. Sports was not only fun, but it also taught me to stay organized, work with a variety of*

*people, and juggle all of the things that college life has to offer.”* (Alum employed by UW-Extension).

*“Not only did I gain valuable work experience, but I gained lifelong friends because of it.”* (Alum employed in Elkhorn Area School District).

Former student employees identified growth in conflict resolution and interactions with others. Given the nature of intramural competition, club sports, and service-oriented programs, conflicts are inevitable.

Moreover, from a peer-to-peer perspective, the ability to handle conflicts with peers becomes a transferable skill to organizational life after college. Respondents stated:

*“Working with a wide variety of people and personalities, while dealing with conflicts that arose, have helped me tremendously in my classroom today.”* (Alum employed in Waterford School District).

*“As an official and supervisor, I had to deal with conflict between students and how to come to a resolution quickly . . . before things could get out of hand. It helped me to adapt when things didn’t go as planned. There is always a solution if you keep your mind clear and focus on a positive solution.”* (Alum employed in DeForest Area School District).

*“Officiating helped me to develop a tolerance for those who disagreed with me and to not take it personally.”* (Alum employed at BMO Harris Bank.).

*“[Both as] an intramural supervisor and building supervisor . . . I had to address conflicts when they came up.”* (Alum employed at Johnson Controls, Inc.).

*“Assuming responsibility over the building and providing a positive venue for all events and recreation empowered me to take action when there were conflicts and concerns. This allowed me to become more of an active rather than passive individual, and helped me immensely post graduation as I started a career.”* (Alum employed at Springs Window Fashions).

### **Keys to Personal Growth: Responsibility and Accountability**

Former student employees used two words to describe important elements of their work experiences: **responsibility** and **accountability**. Survey respondents identified *self-discipline* and *enhanced sense of self* as fruits that these elements produced:

*“Having the responsibility of making decisions and being able to make them . . . accountability for what I did.”*(Alum employed at the U. of Illinois at Chicago).

*“Building Supervisor; a lot of responsibility rested on my shoulders to make sure program policies were in place.”*(Alum employed at Northwestern State U.).

*“There were times that our supervisor was unavailable, and it became our responsibility (college students) to maintain the effectiveness of the Intramural Program.”*(Alum employed in Watertown Unified Schools).

*“Having authority to officiate games was really overwhelming. As I grew in confidence, it became easier to handle, but the responsibility was something I really was thankful for.”* (Alum employed at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee).

*“[As] student coordinator of rules and officials . . . gave me the opportunity to grow and prepare for the real world. I would have the responsibility to teach peers, to conduct trainings and to have real input into rules and conduct.”* (Alum employed at CDW).

*“I felt that as a leader, I needed to consistently set a good tone and to be a good role model for officials and other supervisors. That responsibility kept me on my toes and well-rounded. It allowed me to grow at my own pace while maintaining a professional profile.”* (Alum employed at Florida State U.).

### **Final Analysis**

Within Recreation Sports and Facilities, we knew anecdotally that we were having an impact in students’ lives. The final selected excerpts from our survey provide evidence of this:

*“I spent two years as an official in the intramural sports program and three years as an intramural sports official supervisor. I have to say that the experience was one of the highlights of my college career. I made many friends and learned a lot about myself, my abilities and what I was capable of doing.”* (Alum employed at Oconomowoc Area School District).

*“My employment experience helped me to define my beliefs and the importance of remaining true to who you are while also finding commonality among peoples.”* (Alum employed at UW-Whitewater).

*“My experience as a Rec Sports employee was very memorable and enjoyable. It was there that I developed a lot of the traits that I still use in my career today. So much so, that I have recommended to several students that have attended UW-W after me that they get involved either working at recreation sports or the programs they provide.”* (Alum employed at Johnson Controls, Inc.).

*“One of the best work environments and staffs that I’ve been associated with in my life.”* (Alum employed at Bobcat of Janesville).

*“My entire experience working at Rec Sports is a highlight of my college career and when I think of UW-Whitewater, my first thoughts are of my work/friends/staff at Rec Sports. It made a lasting impression on me as a student and person.”* (Alum employed at Mad Dash Fabrics, LLC).

*“Working in Recreation Sports gave me real world responsibilities and opportunities that I could not receive in the classroom. I consider these experiences to be just as or more valuable to my current and future careers than my actual degree.”* (Alum employed at Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee).

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## Alumni Employment Fields/Employers & Status

### Education

Appleton Area School District - WI  
Beloit College - WI  
Brown Deer School District - WI  
Cedar Grove Belgium School District - WI  
Columbus School District - WI  
Concordia University Wisconsin - WI  
Cornell University - Ithaca, NY  
DeForest Area School District - WI  
Dodgeand School District - WI  
East Troy High School - WI  
Edgar School District - WI  
Elkhorn Area School District - WI  
Florida State Campus Recreation - Tallahassee, FL  
GET School District - WI  
Glenview Park District Tennis Club - WI  
Green Bay Area Public Schools - WI  
Highland Park High School - IL  
Houston Independent School District - TX  
Jefferson School District - WI  
Lake Country Academy - WI  
Muskego Norway School District - WI  
Northwestern State University - LA  
Oak Creek-Franklin Jt School District - WI  
Oconomowoc Area School District - WI  
Old Dominion University - VA  
Potosi School District - WI  
Edgerton Middle School - WI  
Richfield Joint School District - WI  
Ripon Area School District - WI  
River Valley School District - WI  
Roseville School District - MN  
Richfield Area Schools - MN  
School District of Hartford Jt. #1 - WI  
School District of Phillips - WI  
Shawano School District - WI  
Slinger High School - WI  
St. Mary's School - IL  
Sun Prairie Area School District - WI  
The Ohio State University - OH  
University Of Illinois at Chicago - IL  
University of Nebraska - NE  
University of Notre Dame - IN  
University of Richmond - VA  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee - WI  
UW-Extension - WI  
UW-Whitewater - WI  
Walworth Grade School - WI  
Waterford Graded School District - WI  
Watertown Unified Schools - WI  
Waunakee School District - WI  
Westosha Central High School - WI  
Whitewater Unified School District - WI

### Business

Andover Management - KY  
Bmo Harris Bank N.A. - WI  
Bobcat of Janesville - WI  
Bon-Ton, Inc. - WI  
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee - WI  
Carmichael Training Systems - CO  
CDW - WI  
Champeau Sourcing Solutions - WI  
Colony Brands - WI  
Country Flowers & Gifts - WI  
Daiwa Corporation - CA

Direct Supply - WI  
Environmental Management Consultant, Inc. - WI  
Franklin Energy - IA  
Glass Insurance - WI  
Golfsmith International - WI  
Hawthornes Backyard - WI  
Hoppmann Group - WI  
Humana Insurance Company - WI  
Johnson Controls, Inc. - WI  
Kohler Company - WI  
Kohl's Department Stores - WI  
Lake Geneva Cruise Lines - WI  
Lakeside International Trucks - WI  
Linn Joint - WI  
Mahoney's "All American Grill" - WI  
Mad Dash Fabrics - WI  
Pentair Residential Filtration - WI  
Progressive Insurance - WI  
Rosemount - MN  
SC Johnson - WI  
Schreiber Foods Inc. - WI  
Schulz Transport Markesan - WI  
Fine Line Designs Art Gallery - WI  
Springs Window Fashions - WI  
Spuncoat, Inc. - WI  
Standard Process - WI  
State Farm Insurance - WI  
Stoughton Trailers - WI  
Target - MN  
Tempur-Pedic - KY  
Texas Roadhouse - WI  
The Great Dane - WI  
U.S. Bank - WI  
UCAN - IL  
University Avenue Discovery Center - WI  
WE Energies - WI  
Westconsin Credit Union - WI  
Zimmerman Ventures, LLC - WI

### Health, Fitness, and Recreation

Anytime Fitness - WI  
Aurora Health Care - WI  
Equinox Fitness - IL  
Fort Healthcare - WI  
GE Healthcare - WI  
REPS Fitness and Performance - WI  
St. Camillus/RehabCare - WI  
Wisconsin Early Autism Project - WI  
Village of Slinger - Parks, Recreation & Forestry - WI  
Washington County Aging and Disability Resource - WI  
CenterKansas City Sports Commission - MO

### Service

Community Church - WI  
Habitat for Humanity - Rock & Jefferson Counties - WI  
Milwaukee Police Department - WI  
City of Oshkosh - WI  
Town of Mukwonago - WI  
Village of Brown Deer Police Dept. - WI  
Wisconsin State Assembly - WI

### Other

Homemaker  
Nanny  
Self-Employed  
Unemployed

## Graduate/Professional School Attendance

University	Field of Study	# of Individuals
A.T. Still University	Human Movement	1
Aurora University	Teaching	2
Aurora University	Recreation Administration	1
Capella University	Education	1
Cardinal Stritch University	Education	2
Central Michigan University	Exercise Science	1
Chicago State University	Counseling	1
Concordia Wisconsin	Education	2
Florida State University	Sports Management	1
Georgia Southern University	Recreation Administration	1
Illinois State University	Kinesiology	1
Keller Graduate School of Management	Business	1
LaVerne University	Technology in Education	1
Marquette University	Education	1
Mississippi State University	Sociology	1
National-Louis University	Education	3
Northern Illinois University	Sports Management	1
Old Dominion University	Sports Management	2
Portland State University	Environmental Management	1
Texas A&M-Commerce	Education	1
University of Kansas	Special Education	1
University of Nebraska Lincoln	Education	1
Wharton School of Business	Business	1
University of Texas of San Antonio	Kinesiology	1
University of West Florida	Education	1
UW Stout	Business	1
UW-Milwaukee	Social Work	1
UW-Milwaukee	Psychology	1
UW-Oshkosh	MBA	1
UW-Oshkosh	Education	1
UW-Whitewater	Communications	4
UW-Whitewater	Psychology	2
UW-Whitewater	Sociology	2
UW-Whitewater	PPA	1
UW-Whitewater	Business	14
UW-Whitewater	Health&Human Performance	3
UW-Whitewater	Safety	2
UW-Whitewater	Education	17
UW-Whitewater	Operations Management	1
UW-Whitewater	C & I	3
UW-Whitewater	PE-NON-Licensure	1
UW-Whitewater	Social Work	1
UW-Whitewater	Art	2
UW-Whitewater	Women Studies	1
Viterbo University	Education	2
Western Illinois University	Fitness Management	1
Western Michigan University	Exercise Physiology	1