

Non-Traditional Aquatic Programming at U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine prevalence and types of non-traditional aquatic programming at U.S. institutions of higher education. Non-traditional aquatic programs were defined as any program not included in the four traditional types (lap swimming/open recreation, swim lessons, water exercise, and competitive programs). The researcher was to determine if there was a significant difference in non-traditional aquatic programming at U.S. institutions of higher education when examining the following variables: (a) institution type, (b) NIRSA region, (c) student enrollment, (d) campus recreation funding model, (e) majority of users, (f) number of aquatic facilities and (g) aquatic facility characteristics. The study was conducted at U.S. institutions of higher education using current National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) members self-identified as working in the area of aquatics. A total of 271 NIRSA aquatic members were contacted via e-mail by NIRSA's Manager of Strategic Partnerships to participate in the study and 109 members completed the survey with a 40% response rate.

The findings indicated that there was not a significant difference in non-traditional aquatic programming at U.S. institutions of higher education when comparing the variables above. Respondents identified a total of 150 non-traditional aquatic programs. These non-traditional programs were categorized into one of five different categories: (a) competition and challenges; (b) education; (c) health and fitness; (d) instructional programs, and (e) special events. Competition and challenge type programs included Battleship, inner tube water polo, kayak polo, and lifeguard competitions. Educational programs involved scuba and safety course certifications. Health and fitness type programs included aqua zumba and aquatic therapy for athletes.

Instructional programs included kayak clinics, stand up paddling, and log rolling. Lastly, special event programs comprised of dive-in movies, birthday parties, and holiday themes.