

# Strategic Framework 2024-2027

## Our Mission

NIRSA is a leader in higher education and the advocate for the advancement of recreation, sport, and wellbeing.

## Our Vision

NIRSA is a premier association of leaders in higher education, inspiring healthy people and healthy communities worldwide.

## Our Strategic Values

-  Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
-  Leadership
-  Global Perspective
-  Service
-  Health & Wellbeing
-  Sustainable Communities

## Scope

This three-year strategic framework will focus on recreation and wellbeing within higher education in the United States and Canada.

## Our Value Proposition

NIRSA provides the **best resources for learning, networking and advocacy** so that campus recreation professionals can inspire healthy people and healthy communities worldwide

### Professional Pipeline:

Individuals in campus recreation are supported and motivated to succeed in our evolving industry

### Advocacy:

Stakeholders understand the impact of campus recreation

### Wellbeing:

Wellbeing — a multifaceted, complex system — is central to our work

## Our Foundational Pillars

Member Value

Shared Expectations for Belonging

Stewardship

# The Environment Facing Campus Recreation Professionals

**P**ARTICIPANTS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSED KEY THEMES they believed would have the most substantial impact on campus recreation professionals. The following summarizes the most important aspects of this environment that were considered when developing the strategic framework.

## *Workforce*

Participant and employee engagement in campus recreation is changing. This impacts who is entering the workforce, their motivations for choosing this career path, and how long they stay in the industry. Professionals need to be valued for their work. There are generational gaps that need to be addressed because current and future staff members will set new boundaries, challenge conventional staffing models and pay structures, and push for change. The workforce is no longer solely comprised of individuals with recreation related master's degrees and graduate assistantships, who may need help reskilling to be successful.

## *Wellbeing*

Wellbeing is a multifaceted, complex system that impacts campus recreation professionals, college students, and the broader campus communities. Incorporating justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect are core to advancing wellbeing. The student body is changing in terms of mental health needs and competing priorities; the profession needs to adapt to those changes. Additionally, professionals need their own wellbeing attended to if they are to effectively serve campus communities.

## *Impact of the Profession*

There is a widening gap between institutions with stable or increasing enrollment and funding and those experiencing decreased enrollment and funding, which impacts how programs and services are delivered. Campus leadership is changing more frequently and public perception of the value of higher education is declining. As the operating environment has changed, what students need to thrive has also changed. Campus recreation excels at providing experiential, and often transformational, learning opportunities that support the academic mission of our institutions. However, the field needs to evolve the data and storytelling that shares this impact. The workforce and wellbeing environmental factors are also affecting the impact of campus recreation.

**N**IRSA IS COMPRISED OF CAMPUS RECREATION PROFESSIONALS and students who are motivated, passionate, lifelong learners compelled to create and advance opportunities for wellbeing through higher education.

The impetus for our founding in 1950 was Dr. William Wasson's recognition of the need for knowledge and shared community within this profession. Though each strategic plan is responsive to the specific times and concerns in which it was created, that initial impetus always remains central. It is now understood as our enduring core value proposition: to provide the best resources for learning, networking, and advocacy so that campus recreation professionals can inspire healthy people and healthy communities worldwide.

NIRSA professional and student members are working on over 700 campuses throughout the United States and Canada. As a membership association, we are always focused on providing value to members, centering inclusion and belonging, and responsibly stewarding association resources. These foundational pillars are part of our past and will ensure our future. We actively use our core values of leadership, health & wellbeing, sustainability, global perspectives, equity, diversity & inclusion, and service to guide the work that advances the mission and vision of NIRSA.

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**Member Value • Shared Expectations for Belonging • Stewardship**

## Strategic Values

- Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
- Global Perspective
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## Foundational Pillars

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Members feel that NIRSA represents their professional home where meaningful connections are made and intentional development is obtained. NIRSA responsibly stewards its resources.

### Member Value Strategies

- Promote the value of NIRSA and its overall benefits portfolio to encourage member engagement and assist with recruitment and retention efforts.
- Provide welcoming and collaborative environments to share emerging and best practices.
- Provide a positive and developmental volunteer experience.

### Shared Expectations for Belonging Strategies

- Build NIRSA programs and services on the foundation of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and respect.
- Foster an environment of belonging for all staff, members, and stakeholders.
- Honor shared and individual experiences, values, beliefs, and identities through meaningful representation.
- Celebrate and acknowledge the diversity of the NIRSA community and encourage others to do the same.
- Create a culture and environment where people feel valued and celebrated as their whole selves.

### Stewardship Strategies

- Ensure long-term financial viability of NIRSA to meet member needs.
- Conduct ongoing cost/benefit analysis of NIRSA's operations, programs, services, and initiatives to identify areas for adjustment based on agreed upon success metrics, industry benchmarks, and available resources.
- Evaluate current and new programs for the feasibility of untapped revenue generation.

## 2024-2027 Goals and Strategies

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### → Goal: A Robust Pipeline of Supported and Motivated Professionals

Campus recreation is an impactful career path in which professionals and students acquire the skills necessary for growth and success in our evolving industry.

#### Strategies

- Implement changes to current programming by career stage and monitor to ensure it continually meets the workforce education needs of stakeholders.
- Create and maintain inclusive educational materials for a variety of new pathways for campus recreation positions.
- Establish best practices for recruiting diverse talent and explore relationships with industry partners for workforce recruitment efforts.
- Convene members around workplace structure and policies to better meet the needs of today's employees.
- Update NIRSA's core competencies to ensure the education portfolio is always relevant.

### → Goal: Advocacy

Campus leaders, students, and stakeholders understand the impact of campus recreation professionals, programs, and facilities.

#### Strategies

- Provide resources to equip professionals to effectively communicate the impact of, and advocate for, campus recreation.
- Curate relevant research that demonstrates the impact of campus recreation.
- Cultivate partnerships and position members to advance the field.

### → Goal: Wellbeing

Wellbeing is recognized as a multifaceted, complex system; the wellbeing of campus recreation professionals is supported, and student wellbeing is the center of their work.

#### Strategies

- Incorporate systems change, equitable wellbeing, and impactful storytelling into current wellbeing literacy and education materials.
- Promote NIRSA and member activities that support wellbeing.
- Provide resources and pathways that help leverage member expertise and support the advancement of wellbeing on campus.
- Commit to being proactive innovators and relentless collaborators who are constantly seeking to foster relationships and partnerships to advance wellbeing.