

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

Recreation Programming Toolkit

Jodi Hutton, Ashna Siddoo, Shawna Oser, Brent Mosher, Max Geise

University of British Columbia

KIN 464

Themes: Community, Wellbeing

April 3, 2018

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Recreation Programming Toolkit

Executive Summary

There is no single cohesive guide to help student run clubs and groups get the information and resources they need with ease and in timely manner when planning their respective events. The creation and implementation of a Recreation Programming Toolkit would provide a comprehensive guideline on how to navigate UBC's supportive services and resources that student groups can use when wanting to organize recreation programming for their constituent. The purpose of the toolkit will be to empower these student groups, improve access to recreation for UBC community members, and to advance wellbeing at UBC. Our specific research goal was to identify barriers that AMS and non-AMS campus groups face when organizing recreation programming, so that our recommendations for the tool kit reflect the needs of both of these groups. We conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with current and past leaders from student-run organizations that have experience running and promoting events on and off campus. After conducting a thematic analysis on the results, we concluded 3 major recommendations that should be considered when creating the toolkit. (1) Implementation and promotion of an interactive database to student clubs, (2) A campus wide directory of all the types of clubs on campus in one central spot that is easy to access by all UBC students, (3) Changing the platform for shared calendars amongst campus groups.

Introduction

UBC is home to over 400 student run clubs and societies on campus (The University of British Columbia, n.d). These groups consist of a variety of culture clubs, recreation clubs, and undergraduate constituencies. These clubs and groups allow like-minded students to pursue their interests in fun ways, such as hosting events for their members throughout the year. These student run groups rely on UBC facilities, resources, equipment, and support to make these events possible and also successful.

Currently at UBC, there are multiple programming options when planning an event. The different programming options that offer different event supports and resources on campus to student run groups include the following; First, groups may book through UBC Events, which offers venues such as general teaching spaces, specific classrooms around campus, or outdoor spaces (The University of British Columbia, n.d). Furthermore, a group may also book an event through the Alma Mater Society (AMS), which would provide access to spaces in the Nest (AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver, n.d). Lastly, campus groups may also reach out to UBC Recreation for support and an event venue, such as the SRC Fitness Studio (UBC Athletics & Recreation Sport Facilities, n.d).

Each of these programming options have different request processes, policies, procedures, fees, resources offered, and a different set of eligibility criteria to access the event supports. It is also important to note that the information for each of these programs is not all in one place, and the respective websites are not easy to navigate when trying to locate the best support for a specific event. Although the AMS has created an AMS Handbook for their clubs, it is only useful for AMS registered clubs, excluding many other groups on campus (AMS Clubs Handbook, n.d). Furthermore, the handbook is not useful for AMS clubs looking for other spaces on campus other than AMS affiliated spaces. This highlights the lack of one comprehensive guide to *all* the available event spaces and resources on campus.

Planning an event can be stressful in itself, and when information is hard to access and find, additional unnecessary stress and confusion can occur. This may have further negative implications, such as a decrease in the number of events put on by a group, decreased overall success and attendance of these events, and potentially a decrease in the number of student run groups and clubs on campus.

To improve the support provided to groups on campus, the creation and implementation of a Recreation Programming Toolkit would act as a comprehensive guideline on how to navigate UBC's supportive services and resources when wanting to organize recreation programming for their constituent. A single, "all in one" encompassing toolkit would fill the gaps and consolidate all important and necessary information in one place. This would immensely simplify the process when organizing an event on campus and help students find and use the information and resources they need with ease and in timely manner. The goal of the toolkit will be to empower these student groups, improve access to recreation for UBC community members, and to advance wellbeing at UBC.

Research on campus recreational service quality identifies multiple factors a university recreation program should consider when planning for the success of student-run campus recreation. These factors included people interaction, facility design, sociability, physical change, equipment, ambience and program range (Mokoena & Dhurup, 2017). Furthermore, when considering potential barriers student leaders may face, it is important to consider barriers that may arise while balancing their academic, personal, and professional lives. These may include delegating, organization and planning, motivating others; dealing with conflict, tense, or ethical situations; or learning to delegate or give and receive feedback (Borsz, Hall & Scott, 2008). Being aware that there are wide range of potential barriers student leaders may face when organizing an event helped guide our interview processes and the creation of the toolkit guidelines.

To provide relevant guidelines that will benefit UBC student groups, and therefore members of the student groups, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with various group leaders on campus. A large factor that drastically changes the event planning process, spaces, and available resources for clubs, is whether or not a club is registered through the AMS. We believe these two types of groups go through different processes, face different challenges and use different resources to plan and execute their events. Thus, to create a comprehensive toolkit that is inclusive and helpful to all groups and constituencies on campus, both of these groups should be further studied to aid in the creation of a collaborative Recreation Tool Kit. Our specific research goal was to identify barriers that AMS and non-AMS campus groups face when organizing recreation programming, so that our recommendations reflect the needs of both of these groups. The AMS groups we chose to interview included The Kinesiology Undergraduate Society and Sisu Girls of UBC. Non-AMS groups interviewed included the Party Calendar, Dive Into UBC, and Generocksity Vancouver.

Methods and Rationale

We conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with current and past leaders from student-run organizations that have experience running and promoting events on and off campus. These groups include Sisu Girls of UBC, the Kinesiology Undergraduate Society (KUS), Generocksity Vancouver, Dive Into UBC, and The UBC Party Calendar. Sisu Girls of UBC is an outdoor adventure and sport club, while the KUS holds various events catered to improving the social life of Kinesiology students. Generocksity Vancouver throws events where all ticket proceeds go towards local charities and non-profit organizations. Lastly, the UBC Party Calendar facilitates parties catered to all UBC students, and Dive Into UBC is a subsidiary of the UBC Party Calendar which focuses on providing events focused on arts and culture at UBC. We attempted to discover these challenges, inefficiencies, support systems, and available resources for groups and clubs by crafting directed interview questions for our study participants. The goal of these questions was to guide the conversation towards information that we deemed necessary to fully assess which resources are currently lacking for AMS affiliated clubs and other UBC campus groups. However, it should be noted that the interviews conducted were semi-structured in nature and as a result may have provided useful information that did not come as a direct response to specific questions. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A of this report.

It is important that the results of these interviews be analyzed consistently in order to best provide an unbiased report. As such, interviews have been analyzed for common themes amongst participant's responses. A thematic analysis facilitates flexibility in the interpretation of qualitative data, and is also a simple and quick method to apply (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We summarized the key findings from each of our interviews and compared them to the others, highlighting the similarities and differences between club groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Considering this method is recommended for participatory or community based research, where participants are actively involved in the research taking place, the analysis accurately aligns with our goal of creating guidelines for the implementation of a Recreation Tool Kit based on student feedback (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When considering this study, we have selected to assess both AMS-affiliated clubs as well as non-AMS clubs in order to best understand the discrepancies between the two. The rationale for this is sourced in the AMS club policy. Clubs registered within the AMS always have priority over any other club or student group when trying to book an event, and go through a much simpler process in doing so (AMS Student Society of UBC Vancouver, n.d). These groups pay a non-refundable membership fee each year to remain part of the AMS (AMS Clubs Handbook, n.d). This registration provides groups with resources and access to complete banking services, billing services, and backup bookkeeping free of charge, office or locker space in the Nest each year dependent upon demand, free room bookings in AMS-owned buildings and with UBC and potentially Funding and grants provided by the Finance Commission, and lastly expertise or assistance in Club negotiations (AMS Clubs Handbook, n.d). AMS clubs must book ahead of time to reserve a space to hold their event and these clubs are given priority status during term 1 and 2 (AMS Clubs Handbook, n.d).

On the contrary, clubs not registered under the AMS must pay to use any of the spaces and resources if wanting to run an event, and therefore have to compete with AMS clubs who get priority over these spaces (AMS Clubs Handbook, n.d). Not being an AMS registered club could potentially be a large barrier when deciding on event locations and resources. Due to these differences, clearly these two groups go through different processes, and face different challenges and may use different resources to plan and execute their events. Thus, to create a comprehensive toolkit that is inclusive and helpful to all groups and constituencies on campus, both of these groups should be further studied to aid in the creation of a collaborative Recreation Tool Kit.

Results

Comparisons were made between the two AMS and three non-AMS groups interviewed (Appendix A). Questions regarding the most popular and easiest event locations, event planning process, experiences with booking spaces, event resources, budgeting, advertising, and barriers faced were posted.

Event Location

All groups uniformly agreed that in relation to familiarity and convenience for their members and attendees, on-campus events were the best option for these clubs. With the success of each event being based off of attendance, likelihood of yearly repetition, and overall

enjoyment, all groups concluded that attendees were more satisfied and willing to come if it was close to them. Interestingly, outlined in Megan's (Generocksity Vancouver) interview, the decision of an event's location was based on the scale of the event. With their most popular and large-scale events being held off campus, the small-scaled events, such as workshops and comedy nights, were held on campus. When expecting a smaller audience for certain events, Generocksity strategically places them on campus to maximize potential attendance and eliminate travel barriers.

The Kinesiology Undergraduate Society, Party Calendar, and Generocksity also stated that it is easier for their groups to book certain spaces on or off campus as a result of their reputation and relationships with those in charge of bookings. Whether it be through the AMS or another location on campus, such as Koerner's Pub, the club's reputation and credibility influences the likelihood and ease of booking a space.

Event Planning Process and Requesting Resources

The process involved when organizing an event was explored by identifying the steps each group takes when booking spaces, accessing resources needed, creating a budget, and advertising. To book a space, all groups begin the process by requesting access of rooms or venues through email. Campus Vibe, an AMS portal system designed to regulate the booking of spaces in the nest, is a common resource that was identified by several groups. However, while this system may be easy to use, it requires tedious work to request for room rental as repetitive information is to be inputted and specific details of each event are required (Nancy, 2018). As a result, several groups disregard this tool and opt for requesting a space through emailing instead.

Booking a Space

If conducting the event off campus, the Calendar explained how they would have to approach their request to the desired stakeholder with a vision of what the event would be like and explain how the venue would profit. When trying to "sell an event" to a potential booking space stakeholder, the group states that booking off campus requires much more consideration as visions and expenses need to be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, when booking with the AMS, lack of responses and delays in responses to event requests make it difficult to plan and groups find this system unreliable. As Juancho from the KUS explained, the delayed response by the AMS for room requests, affects the speed of the entire event planning process. If emailed directly by a student, the replies are quite slow; however, if the KUS chooses to book a space through the School of Kinesiology to for the same event, the "reply [is] much faster!" (Juancho, 2018).

Event Resources

Common resources that were indicated by at least two of the five groups interviewed were a space or venue; food or catering; additional furniture, such as chairs and tables; and technical equipment, such as power cables, sound systems, and lighting.

Event Budgets

One of the greatest benefits of being a part of an AMS club was the substantial decrease in cost with booking an event. Each club stated that a budget is predetermined for each event. The AMS clubs collect money to create their overall budget through membership or student fees, ranging from 10-30 dollars per student (Nancy, 2018; Juancho, 2018). While this may only total

a small budget, the benefits of being an AMS in comparison to a non-AMS club were evident through the discount on location fees. With the freedom to “use [the] AMS facilities for free,” club representatives expressed why this is another factor that adds to the benefits of hosting on campus and within the AMS (Juancho, 2018). On the other hand, the non AMS groups all concluded that they were non-profit groups, which means their budget relies on funds from their events or sponsorships (Megan, 2018; Emma, 2018).

Advertisements

Advertising for an event is a crucial step into making an event successful. Questions regarding the platforms and formats of advertising were posed to each group. All groups concluded that social media, specifically Facebook, was their strongest platform to release event pages and spread awareness. Additionally, bulletin boards and bothing in the nest were also common strategies as that space is found to attract a lot of students.

Barriers

The overall barriers and experience of creating an event on campus was examined in the interviews. Common barriers to hosting events included time and competition of spaces on campus. There are a lot of groups that are competing for certain spaces, which are believed to be distributed unjustly and unequally. Some smaller and newer club are not able to use the spaces they desire, as groups such as the KUS consider the event booking spaces and resources are distributed on a “who you know” basis. As stated above, the AMS is poor on responding to event bookings requests, and decisions and feedback seem to incur some bias which determines whether a response is given and the timing of that response.

The non-AMS affiliated clubs stated that their biggest barrier was they they were not AMS clubs, suggesting that the fees these groups face when booking spaces that AMS groups can obtain free of charge, is one barrier that they face when hosting on campus and providing the students with their programs (Megan, 2018; Emma, 2018).

Overcoming Barriers

Additionally, questions were posed to understand how some groups have been able to overcome these barriers and expand their clubs or groups. Regarding the biased approach experienced when booking rooms, the AMS affiliated KUS has chosen to book rooms through the School of Kinesiology, a group that holds a higher reputation and therefore will likely receive a higher priority to booking rooms (Juancho, 2018). The tedious system of Campus Vibe to book rooms has rather resulted in groups resorting to emailing those in charge of booking spaces (Nancy, 2018). The non-AMS groups have found ways to work around room fees by creating collaboration with other AMS affiliated clubs and groups (Megan, 2018; Emma, 2018).

Discussion

On-campus spaces for event hosting is an essential component for allowing student groups to create experiences and meaningful interactions between like-minded UBC students. As discussed above, the convenience and need for spaces on campus is in high demand from all types of clubs and groups. With the high demand and lack of efficiency in the booking and event creation system on campus, we can conclude that there is a need to make a system for on campus

bookings and event creation guidelines. It would be helpful to ensure that clubs are able to get the resources and spaces they need, to increase student involvement on campus and creation of opportunities for student participation. With the absence of cost for booking spaces, all interviewees stated that this factor was a benefit to using spaces on campus and creating events. This lack of rental cost allows for more events to be held and a redistribution of funds towards food and engaging experiences for students. Nancy from SISU explained how she was able to book speakers or trained instructors for their events with their limited funds rather than paying for a space. While all these benefits, the lack of cost, convenience, and ease, were apparent in all interviews, the system of booking spaces and rentals suggested an unfair and unequal distribution of these resources amongst clubs.

Overall, despite all the steps taken to create an engaging and profitable event for students, there are several factors and logistics that can act as barriers to clubs as they create these opportunities. This campus offers a wide diversity of spaces; however, competition to book these spaces is high between groups and clubs since a small select of the available spaces is open to book. Additionally, all groups only discussed their experiences with the AMS system of booking. As mentioned above, there are two more systems on campus, UBC Events and UBC Recreation, that support bookings and event creation. This may be a result of the higher demand of spaces in the Nest or a lack of awareness of these other options. Suggestions were made to increase the awareness of possibilities of spaces in order to decrease competition and allow for more student opportunities. This current system requires the student groups to seek out new spaces in preference of engaging in competition for the high demand spots. As a result, a handbook that encapsulated all three booking systems and specified which areas are available could decrease the competition and increase student engagement. In addition, creating a system that does not prefer certain requests over others is essential to allowing equal opportunity between all clubs and groups. To allow every club to utilize the spaces offered, requests should be attended to in a timely and chronological order. Overall, UBC offers a diverse campus that supports the creation of events and promotes student engagement; however, a toolkit to organize the potential resources and offer an equal opportunity for all groups on campus could benefit all students.

Recommendations for Client

A common theme discussed by most of our interviewees was the idea of a mixer or gathering of all the clubs at the start of the year, a potential by-monthly occurrence, in order to get to know one another and foster relationships. We have taken this idea into consideration and proposed the following recommendations for a campus wide recreational toolkit in order to assist students, clubs, and groups by providing them with the necessary tools and knowledge to kick off a seamless and stress-free event!

1. An interactive database aimed at providing students with the locational options available around UBC. Through our research it was evident that a common issue is the lack of awareness by students of the various types and locations available for use. This would be an online site that will be known to all UBC students where they can put in as little or as much information as they like in order to find a location best suited for their event. The site will start with a simple question, "What type of group are you?". Below this question

will be numerous options such as sport, academic, “party”, and hobby type clubs, instructing the user to pick the one that is most accurate. Once chosen, the site will lead them to a second question: What is your budget? Which again will provide a list of price ranges. Once selected, up pops another question and the process continues until the site is able to provide you with a list of rooms and locations that would be best suited for your desired event. The final step will also leave the inquiring groups with any contact information of the individual(s) most suitable to be contacted in order to book the desired location or for any further questions.

- a. Types of questions could include:
 - i. What type of license/approvals will your event require? (select all that apply) with the option of “N/A”. This page would then lead students to an information page that will help inform them of where they could obtain things like special events permits and liquor licenses.
 - ii. What type of space are you interested in? Options will start with indoor or outdoor. If indoor is selected, the follow up question would inquire as to the type of room needed in terms of size and technology.
 - iii. What types of resources are needed? A “select all that apply” set up will be given including furniture, chairs, sound system, etc.
2. A campus wide directory of all the types of various clubs on campus in one central spot that is easy to access by all UBC students and makes the toolkit cohesive and inclusive to all group types. This directory would allow for any group or club to click on the link that most accurately matches their specific type of club and will take them to a page that lists all other clubs and groups on campus that are similar to theirs. This page would include any necessary contact information and help clubs with similar interests get in touch and collaborate/share any potential resources. This directory will help to reduce the stress and frustration of not knowing the best person to get in contact with in regard to questions and bookings and potentially help reduce incurred costs if clubs are able to work together and share costs and resources.
3. Changing the platform for shared calendars amongst campus groups as our findings have shown that the current platforms put in place are not being properly utilized, either because individuals are not fully aware of their presence or because of the frustration of using a non-user friendly third-party website. However, we do feel this is a beneficial tool of keeping all clubs and groups in the loop of when locations and times are full for event bookings.

An additional benefit of this would be eliminating the “who you know” factor amongst the various types of campus groups to create more equality for obtaining the desired space and time for the intended event. This calendar can be made more user friendly by adding an additional tab to the UBC student service center site, eliminating the frustrations of students needing to learn about and become more familiar with another platform. As the mouse is placed over the tab, a drop-down window appears giving groups the option of selecting the type of space they are interested in; this would be either

UBC affiliated spaces, such as classroom and the nest, or non UBC affiliated spaces (i.e. Koerner's Pub).

Appendices**a. Interview Questions**

1. Where are the most popular events you host?
2. Where is the easiest location for you to hold an event? Why is it easier?
3. Are you able to host them on campus? Pros and cons of hosting them on or off campus?
4. Is it difficult to expand off campus? Why?
5. What barriers have you faced when trying to book an event through UBC? / What is the biggest barrier?
6. Have any barriers been eliminated since the club has been founded?
7. What is the process involved when you want to book a space for an event/ current strategy?
8. What are the most important resources that are required for each event?
9. Does your club have any funds to cover any costs associated with booking spaces or equipment for events?
10. How do you advertise for your events? Do you utilize any space at UBC (classrooms, bulletin boards, Nest space, etc.)?
11. Do you utilize any other AMS resources for clubs and student organizations?

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