

Examining the Perspectives of Campus Recreation
Professionals on the Evolution of their Leadership Styles and Strategies

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Abstract

Considering the breadth and complexity of Campus Recreation departments, and the expectation to deliver high quality programs for the campus stakeholders, leadership is an integral part of the department's success. The purpose of this study was to examine Campus Recreation professionals' perspectives on their leadership styles and strategies. Two research questions will guide the study: a) how do Campus Recreation professionals believe their leadership styles and strategies influence employee development and evolution? b) Do Campus Recreation professionals adapt their leadership styles as their employees evolve in their roles? In this Basic Qualitative Study, semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guided composed of 22 question and multiple probing questions. Blanchard's Situational Leadership II model was adopted as the Theoretical Framework and was used as a backdrop for this study. The overarching theme was Leadership, the three main themes were; Campus Recreation – Knowledge and Experience, Leaders and Leadership in Campus Recreation and eleven sub-themes extracted from the data. In the end, the importance of an Onboarding plan and the introduction of a reputable leadership model were two of the biggest takeaways to help Campus Recreation professionals not only help develop the next generation of leaders, but help them succeed in their roles.

Examining the Perspectives of Campus Recreation
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Chapter 1—Introduction

When we think of the student experience, although it is linked to student success, we should not solely base this on academics. The student experience is comprised of many facets of life on campus, one that should not be ignored is student employment. McClellan, Creager & Savoca (2018) aptly describe working in college as a “defining characteristic of today’s student experience” that is surpassed only by attending classes as the most universal college student experience (McClellan, Creager & Savoca, 2018. p. 3). According to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Campus Recreation departments are one of the largest employers on campus, they provide many opportunities to contribute to the overall student development (NASPA, 2019). It is, therefore, important to realize that these departments have a tremendous potential to positively influence the student-staff and contribute to the overall student experience. Many of these benefits stem from the leadership provided by the Campus Recreation professionals who are responsible for leading their large teams of employees on a yearly basis. It is quite a challenge to be able to manage a large team of employees, but it is quite another reality to lead a team. In conducting this study, I was curious as to how the Campus Recreation professionals felt about their onboarding and training when they began in their leadership roles and wondered what leadership styles they were using with their student-staff. I was also curious as to what tools and resources they were given to be able to train their teams to be self-sufficient and autonomous to deliver all their programs with minimal supervision. Being a leader is not easy, and I simply wondered if Campus Recreation

professionals were getting what they needed from their leadership team to be able to be great leaders themselves.

In many cooperative environments, when certain employees are good and very successful in their positions, they get promoted or they are recruited from other organizations for a supervisor role and are expected to successfully lead a team. In these situations, are the leadership teams honestly setting their employees up for success? Successful organizational socialization or onboarding can have a great impact on the employee's and on the organization as this leads to positive work attitudes and helps retain employees, whereas ineffective onboarding tends to lead to ineffective work habits, premature departures from their organization, which in turn will lead to relaunching the recruitment cycle meaning a loss of time and resources for the organization (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011). In addition, the problem encountered is that it takes a different skill set to lead a team of individuals towards a common goal, compared to acquiring the skills to perform a task or a set of tasks very well. Often, these individuals fail or end up being labelled as micromanagers as they expect their employees to complete the work exactly the way they used to do it. On this same line of thought, Yukl and Mahsud (2010), explained that in many transition studies it was quite evident that failure was more probable when an employee was promoted to taking on a new position that requires skills and behaviours that vary from their earlier positions. In turn, individuals who derail or fail are unable to learn new skills and make the appropriate changes in their behaviour to rectify the situation. In addition, the strength of their skills and behaviours acquired through their past positions can turn to weaknesses in their new leadership roles if they do not have the ability to adapt to various conditions and situations (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010). Much of this reality stems from a lack of succession planning from

upper management to ensure the Campus Recreation professionals have the tools and resources at their disposal to be able to perform at their job, learn from them, develop as professionals and as people. Furthermore, the leaders should be providing their followers with the appropriate direction, coaching and support to ensure their development and evolution in their current roles and preparing them for the next step in their careers. This is where we see the importance, the value, and the impact of leadership.

Leadership has been a topic of discussion for many years, dating back to philosophers from Ancient Greece (Gumus et al., 2018). The definition of leadership has been a very popular debate in various fields of study such as, but not limited to sociology, psychology, sport, and business. For hundreds of years, there has been much controversy over the definition of leadership. It is a concept, which has been defined by many authors and researchers (e.g., Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Drath & Palus, 1994; Yukl, 2010). There have been countless attempts to define leadership; however, no single definition has been accepted universally. In 1959, Bennis' observed something which still stands to this day:

Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So, we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it ... and still the concept is not sufficiently defined. (Bennis, 1959, p. 260)

For this study, the following definition by Gary Yukl is retained: "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2010, p. 8)". Although leadership is not easily defined, it is even more difficult to lead a

team successfully without the proper onboarding, training, mentoring and succession planning from the leader. Albeit great to merit a promotion based on a job well done, I would not be easily convinced to really trust that most individuals who are promoted to leadership roles are ready to lead their new teams as of day one.

Regarding the Researcher

As a researcher, the interview process was quite exciting for me based on the experience and knowledge I have in the field of Campus Recreation. As the main researcher completing this study, I am well versed in this field. For over twenty years, I have worked in Campus Recreation and for over eighteen of those years, I held the position of Head of Instructional, Fitness, Recreational and Outdoor programs for the Campus Recreation sector at a tier one university in Canada. In reference to Instructional programs, these consist of managing a wide variety of registration-based courses including but not limited to various disciplines of dance, a variety of martial arts, indoor cycling, Yoga, Pilates, and skating lessons. Fitness includes managing the operation of two on campus fitness centres providing a service for a campus of over 47,000 students and over 10,000 employees, and managing a Personal Training service, including a wide variety of Fitness programs. Recreational activities include all drop-in sports offered in the sports facilities which include, but not limited to badminton, basketball, volleyball, pickleball, soccer (in the gymnasium, on the outdoor fields or in a dome), ice skating and ice hockey. In addition, our team typically offers a wide variety of group exercise classes ranging from over 35 classes per week in the fall and winter to over 24 classes per week during the summer months. I also coordinate all outdoor activities with a service provider (external guide), who leads groups of students on various outdoor adventure trips throughout the fall and winter semesters. In March 2022, I was promoted to the Manager of Campus Recreation which added the responsibility of

the Intramural Leagues and Events portfolio as well as Youth Programs and Camps portfolio to my position. Therefore, considering the entire portfolio of my position, I am responsible for 3 full-time Program Coordinators and a team consisting of over 300 student-employees.

Early on in my career as a Campus Recreation professional, I adopted a leadership philosophy to teach employees how to work independently for them to grow personally and professionally. These strategies would not only help benefit them as they matured and evolved in their current roles but more importantly, help prepare and develop them to be leaders for their future professions. In my experience, the best combination is strong employee onboarding and training to properly prepare them for their roles. The aim is to teach them the institutional policies and procedures, teach them their position-specific tasks, educate them on the importance of their roles and help them understand the impact they will have on our stakeholders as this ties into the mission and vision of not only our department but to the university's. Understanding the big picture of where their roles fit in the university is important to understanding the purpose, value, and impact of the job they are doing.

As the employees mature in their roles, I will often give them less and less direction, to allow them to be creative. By giving them this creative space, a few scenarios can arise. The first potential result could be a complete failure to produce what I was expecting; secondly, could be the exact result I was expecting; or finally, the potential result could be a superior result than I had ever expected. In all three scenarios, you, and your employee win. The first scenario, maybe the direction was not clear enough or there was a communication breakdown, but the employee gets to go back to the drawing board and try again with a little more direction and you both learn from the situation. The second scenario is essentially receiving the result you were initially looking for and the employee understood what you wanted. In the last scenario, the

employee really understood what you wanted but was willing to challenge the status quo and use their own creativity to come up with something even more efficient. In the third scenario, this is when you know employees have reached a great development level in their role and can be ready for even more responsibility.

It is important to note, as a Campus Recreation professional and a leader for these programs, the responsibility of these positions is quite large. Being fiscally responsible for the budget aspect of the position is crucial, the human resource component of the position is immense, and the variety of the program offerings has a big impact on the student engagement, student retention and student experience. The successful delivery of all these programs has a tremendous effect on the overall student experience. I understand the importance of the general mandate to contribute to providing the best student experience on our campus. However, I also understand the reality of this responsibility as it applies to student participants taking part in these activities and the great responsibility for the student-staff as they help deliver and supervise all these programs and facilities.

Context of the Study

As in all organizations, post-secondary institutions have also addressed and managed organizational behaviours to ensure all faculties and services are aligned to follow their set out vision and to fulfill their mission. It takes great leadership from higher administration to ensure this filter's down throughout the entire campus. In the context of Campus Recreation, we must concede that the role of these co-curricular programs is to support the quality of the overall student experience. With the size of the departments and the vast program offerings, Campus Recreation professionals must train, empower, and help their teams of employees evolve and become better and stronger leaders.

Leadership in Campus Recreation is instrumental in the success of delivering quality programs to the stakeholders. As expressed by many researchers (e.g., Forrester 2015, 2018; Dalgarn, 2001; Miller, 2011; Collins et al., 2001), having Campus Recreation programming available on a university campus has many benefits for students such as increased self-esteem, stress management, meeting and networking with peers, higher-grade point averages, not to mention the health benefits. Whether it is activities made available to participants or the employment opportunities available to students, often overlooked are the people behind the scenes leading these large teams of employees to help run all these co-curricular opportunities. Campus Recreation professionals have a tremendous responsibility in offering programming to campus stakeholders to provide an outlet for these individuals to help develop, maintain, and lead a healthy and active lifestyle.

In addition to offering quality programs, which are following the current market trends, Campus Recreation professionals have the responsibility of recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, mentoring, and leading very large teams of employees to be able to offer and successfully deliver these programs (Kaltenbaugh, 2009). A large portion of the employees running the Campus Recreation programs are students of the institution. These casual or part-time work opportunities are a great complement to students' academic responsibilities, however, the structure, the support, and the leadership available to student employees could have a very important influence on their growth and development, not only as students or employees but as people (Dalgarn, 2001). Throughout their academic careers, many students will find opportunities to work or even volunteer for the Campus Recreation departments on their campuses to gain valuable experience in their field as young professionals. Researchers (i.e., Toperzer et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2005; Dalgarn, 2001), found that if student employment

opportunities are well structured, the work experience acquired can play a crucial role in the student's educational experience. Student employees are trusted with much responsibility in the different roles available to them in Campus Recreation. Often, student employees with proven experience and the most seniority have evolved in their roles and will take on more responsibility as they have earned the trust of their leaders. Many institutions have implemented a student leadership model to provide additional leadership opportunities to students. These student leadership models give students a built-in succession plan to strive for additional leadership opportunities as they mature and evolve in their roles. These student leadership roles are extremely valuable for the student leaders, but even more valuable for the Campus Recreation professionals who get the additional support.

Campus Recreation professionals have a vital role to play in the recruitment of vibrant student employees and training these individuals to be effective employees. Turner et al. (2005) expressed that the success of Campus Recreation departments in any given year is influenced by the quality of students available to them and the ability of the Campus Recreation professionals to develop them as productive employees. They expressed due to the continuous turnover in student employees, based on attrition through students graduating, Campus Recreation professionals must continuously do their best to retain their qualified employees (Turner et al., 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Campus Recreation professionals' perspectives on their leadership styles and strategies. Leading large teams of employees takes a lot of commitment, knowledge and resources in order to successfully deliver programs and services to the institutions' communities. Campus Recreation professionals have a tremendous opportunity

to help young adults develop, grow and evolve in their roles as employees and as people. To be an effective leader, it takes an investment in time for your employees for the leaders to get to know them and understand how to provide these individuals with the appropriate support in order to be successful. Two research questions will guide the study: a) how do Campus Recreation professionals believe their leadership styles and strategies influence employee development and evolution? b) Do Campus Recreation professionals adapt their leadership styles as their employees evolve in their roles? In examining these questions, this study will increase Campus Recreation professionals' awareness of how their leadership styles and strategies can be optimized for their professional development and the betterment of their employees' development as well as the overall student experience.

Operational definitions:

Operational definitions	
Leadership	"Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2010, p. 8).
Development	the process of growth or change in order to become more advanced (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
Evolution	a process of continuous change from a lower, simpler, or worse to a higher, more complex, or better state (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
Organizational Socialization (onboarding)	"refers to the process that helps new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they need to succeed in their new organizations" (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011).

Situational Leadership II	an expanded leadership model from the original Situational Leadership model which highlights the importance of the correlation between the leadership style used by leaders with the level of maturity and development of the subordinates or followers (Blanchard, 2001).
Campus Recreation	Consists of all co-curricular physical activity programs and facilities managed by the Campus Recreation departments. This includes but is not limited to aerobics, aquatics, dance, group fitness, fitness, intramurals, martial arts, various recreational drop-in sports, wellness, and outdoor programs (NIRSA, 2008).
Campus Recreation Professionals	Full-time managers and coordinators responsible for the overall coordination of facility bookings, the implementation, and delivery of all Campus Recreation programming.
Student Experience	The overall university experience students have over their entire time spent on campus. This experience is not limited to their time in the classroom but including all the co-curricular and social activities organized by the institution.

Understanding the quality of student experience is quite complex. There are so many moving parts and post-secondary institutions are really doing their best to provide a complete offering of academic programs, and many ancillary services and programs to help provide support to help students lead a balanced, healthy, and active lifestyle. More specifically, Campus Recreation departments are doing their best to provide a wide variety of programming for all students of the institutions to take part in. To successfully deliver these programs, we will examine the importance of leadership in Campus Recreation. As in all departments on Campus, strong leaders and leadership is the foundation of development, growth, and evolution of the followers.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Universities in Ontario, like other universities across North America, face constant challenges from student enrollment, engagement and retention of these students. Forrester et al.,

(2018) point to the decrease in student enrollment specifically in Ontario post-secondary institutions and elaborate on how this diminution in high school students will continue to decrease until 2024. As the number of students made available to post-secondary institutions continue to decrease, institutions are continuously looking for ways to engage their students, not only in the classroom or within the faculties, but outside the classroom with many organized activities offered by the institution. Campus Recreation departments at post-secondary institutions are offering co-curricular programs, which help students get engaged, stay active, maintain or improve their health, and provide a social outlet for these individuals to take advantage of in order to maximize their opportunities and make the best of their university experience.

This literature review will delve into three components of Campus Recreation. First, it will look at the student experience and the benefits Campus Recreation departments offer which contribute to a positive student experience. Second, it will examine Campus Recreation departments and the impact such programs and facilities have on a campus. Lastly, it will examine the particularities of the Campus Recreation professionals and what impact they have on the programming and its stakeholders.

Student Experience

A large part of what Campus Recreation departments do is offer programs for students to complement their academic experience with various learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Participating in these programs can be from a participant lens or through a student-employee lens in various program delivery roles. In discussing the student experience, we must realize that students are on campus in an environment of learning and of knowledge creation. Much of this learning is witnessed in the classroom, however, a considerable amount of this

learning takes place in various other places including the workplace (Tooperzer et al., 2011). For many students a job on campus is the beginning of their working career or a precursor to the full-time workforce. This type of involvement on campus holds benefits exceeding financial ones. Many researchers have studied the influence of Campus Recreation and evaluated student retention rates, student satisfaction rates, student grade point averages, and the students' sense of community or sense of belonging to their institution (e.g., Miller, 2011; Kampf, Haines & Gambino, 2018). It is critical to note, the student experience is not limited to what is taught in academic settings, it is also related to Campus Recreation's co-curricular programming, which students are experiencing outside of their academic settings. According to Zizzi et al., (2004):

By fostering a sense of community with others at the SRC [Student Recreation Center], students can develop group membership benefits that may help ease the transition into young adulthood, including how to deal with life away from home, newly acquired individual autonomy, and support from others like themselves (p. 589).

A large part of the principle of student experience is having the opportunity to be stimulated intellectually and academically to pursue their much-anticipated professional careers once their university career is complete. Much pressure is felt by students to ensure they succeed in the classroom. Nevertheless, the answer is not always related to more studying. Creating a schedule to lead a healthy and balanced lifestyle where the students can be pro-active and take advantage of the time they have on campus to interact with their peers inside and outside of a classroom setting is quite valuable. Campus Recreation centres offer tremendous opportunities for students to meet with their peers and other students and expand their social network while staying physically active. Dalgarn (2001) expands on this: "It is a community facility, a place to

meet friends, hang out, and see and be seen. At many institutions, the recreation center provides the backdrop for campus life and is the center of the campus community” (Dalgarn, 2001, p. 68).

Based on recent research (e.g., Forrester, 2015 & Forrester et al., 2018), participating in Campus Recreation programming within sport facilities plays a valuable role in the student experience and in student development. Astin’s observations on involvement captured this, as he stated participation in Campus Recreation programs contributes and enhances student development and growth, that will ultimately lead to their overall success. His observations also contended, “the more students are involved in both the academic and the social aspects of the collegiate experience, the more they learn” (Franklin & Hardin, 2008, p. 11). As students integrate themselves in the social aspects of student life, and participate in Campus Recreation programs, whether it is as a student-employee or as a student-participant, will enhance their overall student experience. In studying the impact of Campus Recreation Centres on sense of belonging and student retention, Miller (2011) found that when a sense of social belonging to the university is felt by the students, there could be a better chance for them to take part in other university activities and therefore, become more involved with the institution. The results highlighted the correlation between the respondent’s belief that the student recreation center was crucial in creating a social bonding experience and a sense of community to build relationships with other students, increase in commitment and trust with their peers, and improves their leadership abilities.

Neuman (2013) found, “facilities are in demand by students and others as ‘quality of life’ necessities” (Neuman, 2013, p.74). Campus Recreation facilities offer a platform for Campus Recreation professionals to be creative with their programming and entice their stakeholders to lead a healthy lifestyle. By doing so, the students complement their university experience by

taking advantage of such programming offered in their recreation departments. Another advantage to Campus Recreation programming is the scheduling of most programming is very much tailored to be in-line with the students' academic schedules, avoiding any unnecessary barriers to limit the students from taking part. It is up to the students to take advantage of these opportunities and make the best of their university experience.

Campus Recreation

Research in Campus Recreation (e.g., Miller, 2011; Dalgarn, 2001; Toperzer et al., 2011) describes how Campus Recreation facilities, programs and services on a university or college campus have proven to be tremendously valuable, not only to the academic institution but to the stakeholders of the institution (students, faculty/staff, alumni and the external community). More and more research is being conducted to collect information allowing post-secondary institutions to evaluate the correlation between the positive impact of Campus Recreation programming and facilities on various factors from academic success and students' overall satisfaction as well as their retention rates at post-secondary institutions. In 2008, NIRSA and Wilson, discussed the evolution of Campus Recreation and how it plays an important part in the recruitment and retention of students, as well as the value students associate to their participation in these programs in relation to their overall post-secondary satisfaction and success. Based on the history of Campus Recreation and its evolution, they elaborate how these programs and Campus Recreation professionals are truly a cornerstone to students' overall post-secondary education and experience (NIRSA and Wilson, 2008, p. 27).

Research has demonstrated a correlation between students who are involved and their academic differences in terms of retention, increased grade point averages and the powerful

sense of belonging. Miller (2011) elaborated on this in his study as he found when students are on campus, they tend to bond at the recreation centre and get involved in the activities offered through Campus Recreation. From these Campus Recreation activities, students find networking opportunities and become more involved in other activities and events offered by the university. Through Miller's research, it is becoming more apparent how these opportunities correlate to the student retention at the university.

When the university administration is developing their financial models and preparing their plans for infrastructure, they cannot neglect nor underestimate the value and the long-term return on investment when considering Campus Recreation facilities. Miller (2011) expands on this point as he states: "it would be beneficial for university administration to notice the importance of recreational sports because these programs are enhancing the institutional goals of development and retention" (Miller, 2011, p. 126). As more research is conducted, there could be more evidence as to what students are looking for when choosing their post-secondary institution. It is becoming more common for the university administration to comprehend the benefits of Campus Recreation and the value of the return on investment for both the students and the university. Dalgarn's (2001) study found the new state of the art facility provided comprehensive recreational programs for the stakeholders. She found the Campus Recreation Centre helped in the education and development of the whole person by providing opportunities to get active, relax, and reduce stress. In addition to these benefits as a participant, students also benefit from Campus Recreation Centres as they also serve as a place of employment for these individuals to work for the department as fitness supervisors, lifeguards, client service attendants, sports officials, aerobics instructors and more (Dalgarn, 2001). The recreational centre is providing students with many opportunities to develop positive self-esteem, enhance

their social networks and relationships and lastly enhance their communication, problem solving skills and leadership.

In addition to the academic component to what students are looking for in their post-secondary institutions, we begin to understand and to identify what other factors are important to incoming students and to the retention of the institution's current students. In their assessment of the impact of new Campus Recreation Centres, Zizzi et al. (2004) expressed that for colleges and universities to answer to greater student expectations and to continue to be competitive in recruiting students, institutions have begun to address this by developing new facilities which help promote a wide range of co-curricular opportunities to complement the traditional intramural leagues and other activities the institutions have to offer.

In order to live up to these increased student expectations, it is vital to consider the impact this has on the Campus Recreation professionals and how they are able to continue to deliver great quality programs as leaders in the industry. One way to continue to deliver such high-quality programs is to ensure the right leadership is in place to ensure the young professionals working in Campus Recreation are empowered and able to work to their full potential. As we will see in the section below, this is not an easy feat.

Particularities of the Campus Recreation Professionals

Leadership commands much attention and is amongst the most researched and talked about topics in the field of Organizational Behaviour (McShane & Steen, 2012). As seen in many businesses, organizational behaviours are essential in ensuring all departments are working together to ensure they remain focused on the company's objectives or shared sense of purpose (McShane & Steen, 2012). It is the same for academic institutions, as every faculty and service

on these campuses are working to serve their stakeholders in order to provide them with a great experience. The same goes for Campus Recreation departments which are quite elaborate and have a wide variety of programming offered to their stakeholders. Campus Recreation professionals have to be well versed in all aspects of their department but more importantly, they have to be competent in leading and inspiring large teams of employees in order to successfully deliver these programs. According to Zhang et al. (2004), Campus Recreation professionals are continuously challenged to increase participation in all of their programs. Moreover, they are also responsible for generating additional external revenue and to implement additional Campus Recreation programs by being as creative as possible in keeping up with programming trends. Understanding the expectations and demands, which are placed on the individuals who are to train and mentor these young professionals, is quite important. Based on Nunes and Baker (2002), when it comes to leadership, many recreational sport leaders turn to literature in sport, education, and business however, a considerable amount of this information fails to provide effective guidelines for these such leaders. Although they did not provide a description of leadership, they suggest these leaders look at their own leadership techniques to further enhance and develop their personal skills and abilities.

In addition, the Campus Recreation professionals must continue to offer a wide variety of co-curricular opportunities to the university stakeholders to continually enhance the overall university experience and still be fiscally responsible. Research by Kaltenbaugh (2009) regarding job satisfaction amongst Campus Recreation professionals suggested “that supervision and nature of work were the two highest ranking measures of job satisfaction among campus recreation administrators at 4-year institutions” (p. 89). It is evident that these Campus Recreation professionals are passionate about why they do their jobs and for whom they do it.

When it comes to organizational socialization or onboarding, Bauer, and Erdogan (2011) explained, “an orientation program can help new employees feel welcome and provide them with information for being successful in their new jobs” (p. 55). Based on Fisher’s (2005) work, she expressed that approximately 35% of managers who begin in a new position fail in the new position and leave their job or they are terminated from their position within the first eighteen months. From that 35%, sixty percent of the managers have difficulty creating meaningful relationships with co-workers and this is a key factor for their failure in those roles. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) found generally people have a consensus that employees, who are engaged at work, will generally stay in their positions longer. Moreover, they found that employees leave their managers, not their jobs or companies. Many companies have paid out so much money in trying to keep good employees in terms of pay increases, additional job perks, additional training, however, employees tend to leave based on issues with their managers.

Recently, Canada has been an adopted region of the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA). However, many of the Canadian universities have very different Athletic and Campus Recreation organizational structures compared to our American counterparts. Nonetheless, the leadership provided to student-employees remains. Toperzer, et al., (2011) stated this well as they mentioned “student employees play a vital role in the leadership and delivery of campus recreation programs. Therefore, campus recreation professionals have a unique opportunity to contribute to their development” (p. 145). As student-employees evolve in their roles as well as mature and develop into adulthood, they gain experience. With this experience, there is an opportunity to empower these individuals, as they could take more initiative and expand their roles. Leadership should be a big focus on the

development of the student-employees as these young professionals will be the next generation of leaders. Ball et al. (2008) explained,

“in spite of the uniqueness of campus recreation, there has been only limited research to identify the leadership competencies specifically associated with those responsible for campus recreation facilities and programs” (Ball et al., 2008, p. 3).

Leadership Theories and Models

There are many different leadership theories and models used by many leaders across all fields. Yukl (2010), discussed many Leadership theories and highlighted how influence is the fundamental nature of leadership and those in positions of power can grossly affect the lives of their followers and even more so, the success of an organization. We have studied various leadership theories and models and have elaborated on some of the strengths and limitations from theories such as Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership II, as described below.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a philosophy originated by Greenleaf in his essay titled *The Servant as Leader*, in 1970. The priority for Greenleaf was to place serving the needs of others as the main goal of leadership (Spears, L. 1996). Servant leaders aim to serve their followers and put their needs before their own. Servant leaders work to help develop their followers “grow healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants” (Greenleaf, 1977, p.13-14). Although Greenleaf originated this said philosophy, this concept has been around for over 2000 years. According to Sendjaya and Sarros (2002), it was Jesus Christ who first demonstrated the concept of Servant Leadership.

This leadership theory does have its strengths and has its limitations. From a positive perspective, the leader's priority is set around serving the followers and to ensure they get the support they need to feel nurtured, defended, and empowered (Greenleaf, 1977). By supporting the followers in this way, Yukl (2010) explains how they will be more apt to accepting their responsibilities. Hoch et al., (2016), stated that servant leadership assumes that nurturing the development and well-being of the followers, they will achieve the long-term organizational goals.

In addition, there are certain limitations to this theory. One of the more important limitations is the fact that servant leadership could favour the followers to a point where it could have a negative financial impact on the organization. Servant for the benefit of your followers is important, but to what extent? Based on research from Farling et al., (1999), while Servant Leadership has gained much popularity as a theory, "little empirical research exists to support the theory or the anecdotal evidence used in the popular press material" (Farling et al., 1999, p. 49).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership was originated by MacGregor Burns (1978) and later Bass (1985). Over the years, many researchers and practitioners have used this theory and applied it in various organizational settings (Stone et al., 2004, p. 349). Although transformational leadership has similarities to servant leadership, both theories focus on the well-being of the followers, yet the main difference between the two theories tends to be the focus of the leader. Based on the research of Stone et al., (2004), in both theories the leaders do have great concern for their followers, however in transformational leadership, the leaders' biggest preoccupation is to ensure

the “followers engage in and support organizational objectives” (Stone et al., 2004, p. 354).

Based on Bass’ work (1985), transformational leaders work to transform the follower’s personal values to help support the vision and goals of the organization by creating an environment in which relationships are built and by encouraging a climate of trust where visions can be shared (Bass, 1985). In addition, there are 4 specific elements in Transformational Leadership which the leaders typically focus on. They work to develop a strategic vision for their organization that can really inspire and motivate their employees, they establish a priority for communicating that vision to their employees, they go above and beyond to model the vision to the employees to keep themselves accountable and lastly, they work with their teams to build commitment toward the vision and turn their vision into reality (McShane and Steen, 2012, p. 341-343).

There are, however, some challenges with Transformational Leadership. Although the followers’ well-being is important, so to are the organizational objectives. According to Andersen (2013), they argue that:

“The theory has some grave problems: there are conceptual limitations; the conflation of managerial and political leadership; the theory is presented both as a universal and as a contingency theory; the claim that transformational leaders are more effective than transactional ones is not empirically supported; and the use of the term “followers” rather than “subordinates” creates confusion in the study of formal organizations” (Anderson, 2013, p. 765).

In Transformational Leadership, the influence process is often held with the leader of the organization yet there is much to learn about the mutual influence that can take place between the followers themselves (Yukl, 2010, p. 287). According to McShane and Steen (2012),

Transformational Leadership could be used more situationally based on times of change or uncertainty versus a stable environment (McShane and Steen, 2012).

Situational Leadership Model

Many researchers (i.e., Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004; Vecchio, 1987; Yukl, 2006), recognized that the Situational Leadership (SL) model is one of the most known and used leadership models. Hersey and Blanchard first introduced the SL model in 1969 as the Life Cycle of Theory of Leadership. In 1972, Hersey and Blanchard first used the term Situational Leadership for their work on their leadership approach (Blanchard et al., 1993). In 1985, Kenneth Blanchard and colleagues introduced a revised version of the leadership model named Situational Leadership II. This revised model was introduced in their book “Leadership and the one-minute manager” (Blanchard et al., 1993). This revision by Blanchard in developing the Situational Learning II model, helps leaders identify which style of leadership would be most appropriate for each subordinate depending on the task and on their capacity to perform a task (Case & Branch, 2001). Whenever we do research, we are hoping to have variance in our data, the Situational Leadership II model provides us with enough information to be able to identify some of the variance of leadership and provides a solid framework to help leaders go back and review their own leadership to help them provide direction. According to Hersey et al., 2001, the Situational Leadership model has been an important influence in training and development programs for more than 400 of the Fortune 500 companies. The Situational Leadership model is a leadership model where the leaders adapt their leadership style based on the situation and development level of their subordinate. Leaders work to adapt their leadership style and provide the appropriate amount of direction and support for the given tasks and / or goal set out for their

subordinates. In this model, there are four styles of leadership identified which are, Directive, Coaching, Supporting and Delegating. These four styles are also accompanied by supportive and directive behaviours used by the leader. There are four development levels of the subordinates which range from, Low competence / High commitment to High competence / High commitment. The goal of the model is to ensure that the organization is creating a culture where there is an increased communication regarding performance and development, clear alignment with their objectives and as a collective, they can reach the organization goals sooner (Blanchard, 2001).

There are 3 main leadership skills involved in the model, goal setting, diagnosing and matching. Goal setting ensures the leader, and the subordinate are prioritizing what has to get completed and for what timeline. Diagnosing consists of discussing with the subordinate to evaluate what their competence and commitment levels are for the task at hand. Lastly, matching is mastering the use of the four leadership styles to give the subordinates the appropriate support and direction when they need it (Blanchard, 2017).

In a study conducted by Silverthorne (2000), on the Situational Leadership model, he found that leaders' adaptability led to reduced absenteeism within their team, a lower turnover rate, and an increase in productivity which led to higher profits. Lastly, he found that the more adaptable the leader, the more the quality of work improved (Silverthorne, 2000). Although the Situational Leadership Theory and Situational Leadership Theory II have been used in practice by many companies around the world, many researchers state that there has not been enough empirical research done on this model. According to Yukl (2010), "the model lacks clear

explanation of the process by which leader behavior influences subordinate performance (Yukl, 2010, p. 235).

In this Chapter, we presented student experience at post-secondary schools and how these institutions are offering a wide variety of opportunities for students to take part in to make the best of their student experience. We have elaborated on Campus Recreation and the positive impact these departments have on the students' academic success, students' overall satisfaction with the institution as well as overall retention rates. We have introduced leadership in Campus Recreation and the importance of the role of Campus Recreation professionals and their impact on student-staff. Lastly, we have looked at various Leadership Theories and models, focussing on 3 different theories / models which were Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership II.

From these leadership theories/models, and for the purpose of this study, we have chosen to use Situational Leadership II model as our theoretical framework. We will use the Situational Leadership II model as our theoretical framework to help inspire us and to reflect how, in academic institutions, Campus Recreational Professionals are focused on an educational approach and really look to use a situational approach with student-staff and work to have an influence on ways for them to be independent, encourage their development, growth and evolution as student-staff and as people.

Chapter 3—Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Methods

In Campus Recreation, the leaders are dealing with very large teams of subordinates and therefore, dealing with many situations involving individuals with varying levels of development for the various tasks assigned. As a leader, having the ability to know what support your subordinates need based on certain situations and based on their experience in their current role, is a constant challenge.

In the late 1960s, Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard developed a leadership theory while working at Ohio University. Their work gained much popularity in 1969 when they released their book “Management of Organizational Behaviour”, which is now in its tenth edition. In their book, they named their theory “Life cycle theory of leadership” (Blanchard et al., 1993). In 1972, Hersey and Blanchard suggested a contingency theory named the Situational Leadership Theory, which specified an appropriate type of leadership behaviour to use for various levels of maturity within the subordinates (Yukl, 2010). In the original theory, Hersey and Blanchard named their leadership styles S1-Telling, S2-Selling, S3-Participating and S4-Delegating. They would then identify what leadership style to use based on the subordinate’s capacity to perform a task based on what they called a maturity level from M1 to M4. This theory has been a work in progress ever since. Blanchard continued to work on developing this leadership model and in 1985, he introduced the Situational Leadership II model. In this revised model, Blanchard referred to Situational Leadership II as “not something you do to people; it’s something you do with them” (Blanchard, 2001, p. 3).

This leadership model focuses on the development of people through effective leadership over time, for them to evolve and to reach their optimal potential. The important relationship is

between the subordinate's development level (competence and commitment) based on a goal or task and the style of leadership used by the leader (directive and supportive behaviour) provided by the leader (Blanchard, 2001). Blanchard renamed the leadership styles to S1-Directing (high directive and low supportive behaviour), S2-Coaching (high directive and highly supportive behaviour), S3-Supporting (low directive and highly supportive behaviour) and S4-Delegating (low directive and low supportive behaviour). As for the subordinate's capacity to perform a task, he refers to them as Development levels D1 to D4. Therefore, the leaders choose the leadership style to match the development level of their subordinate for them to have the most success at completing the task. As leadership is the central construct for this thesis and as this research is focused on leaders in campus recreation, the theoretical framework used for this research is the Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership II model. As an example, their model has been used by Ghazzawi et al., (2017), as they conducted a study on Situational Leadership and its effectiveness in rising employee productivity in hospital workers and they found that the Hersey and Blanchard model increased employees' task productivity and if leaders increased their relationship behaviour in getting to know their employees, which would help increase their employees' productivity (pp. 108-109).

Throughout the research, I had the opportunity to interview Campus Recreation professionals as I aimed to examine their perspectives on their leadership styles and strategies, and how these styles and strategies may or may not change throughout the development and evolution of their subordinates. For the purpose of this study, the Situational Leadership II model was the theoretical framework, however, it was not introduced to the participants, it was used a backdrop in an attempt to help frame the participant data. In campus recreation, like in

many other businesses, it is quite important to be flexible and adapt one's style of leadership to the situation and the development level of the subordinate responsible for completing a task.

Methodology

In terms of philosophical perspective, I used a constructivist paradigm as I was not looking to find knowledge but rather co-construct it with the participants. Constructivism's methodology is dialectic and through interviews, I aimed to explore how various individuals interpreted and perceived their lived experiences. In relation to ontology, I aimed to interpret their social reality and the experiences they shared regarding their leadership in Campus Recreation, throughout the conduct and analysis of the interviews. In relation to epistemology, I aimed to interpret the lived experience of my participants by listening to them subjectively and aimed to co-construct knowledge through this qualitative study. "Qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 23). Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) elaborated on this topic "in our experience, in applied fields of practice such as education, administration, health, social work, counseling, business, and so on, the most common 'type' of qualitative research is a basic interpretive study" (p.23). For years, there has been a struggle with labelling common qualitative research by using terms such as basic, interpretive, and generic. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that they prefer labelling these common interpretive studies as basic qualitative studies. Therefore, based on the work of Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this current research is considered a basic qualitative study.

The main objective of this study is to examine Campus Recreation professionals' point of view on their leadership styles and strategies in leading their employees as they develop in their

respective roles. This study aims to understand why Campus Recreation professionals use their leadership styles and strategies throughout their employees' development/evolution and what outcomes they look to reach for their employees' benefit. Lastly, I looked to interpret the characteristics Campus Recreation professionals identified and what makes them successful as leaders in their current roles.

For the purpose of this study, I refer to the interviewees as Campus Recreation professionals as most post-secondary institutions' organizational structures differ from one to another. Therefore, "senior Campus Recreation professionals", "mid-level administrators", "Campus Recreation program coordinators", are referred to as Campus Recreation professionals. For the most part, Campus Recreation professionals have large portfolios; however, the disciplines within the portfolios vary quite a bit from institution to institution. The people in these positions are responsible for creating, coordinating, and implementing programs in areas including but not limited to aerobics, aquatics, dance, fitness, personal training, martial arts, intramural leagues, youth programs and summer camps, recreational drop-in sports, skating, wellness, rock climbing, outdoor adventures, certification courses and even client services.

In this research, I had the chance to interview Campus Recreation professionals, read and interpret their interview transcripts, and find some common themes, which arose throughout the analytical process. My aim was to understand what Campus Recreation professionals recognized as being most significant to them in terms of what they believe makes them successful in their leadership roles.

Methods

Positionality

It is important to note my positionality in this study, as I do have intersecting identities. I am a white able-bodied man with an undergraduate degree in Human Kinetics and am pursuing a master's degree of Arts in Human Kinetics. In addition, I have over twenty (20) years of experience working as a Campus Recreation professional. Therefore, I am cognizant that my angle of vision comes with many forms of privileges that continuously influence how I see the world. Keeping in mind my intersecting identities, as a researcher and as an experienced Campus Recreation professional, these two identities helped shape the conduct of my research. I was very comfortable starting the interviews with a little small talk, asking them how they were doing, as we were at the beginning of the Covid-19 global pandemic. I felt like I put them at ease with the small talk and let them know that they could stop to take a break or to completely stop the interview at any time. Being a subject matter expert in Campus Recreation helped me create the Interview Guide and eased my comfort in asking the questions. In addition, it helped me ask a few probing questions based on my background and understanding of where the Campus Recreation professionals were coming from. I could really appreciate the richness of the answers obtained from my participants. I began asking them questions by following my Interview Guide, which started with some easy background questions such as: Tell me about yourself (where did you grow up, what are your interests, what activities or sports did you take part in as a child, adolescent, and now as an adult)? And What is your academic background? I continued to follow the interview guide and used my experience to probe with further questions where I felt it was appropriate. In addition, I felt very comfortable in the analysis phase of my research as I was at

ease with the subject matter and understood the context of what the participants were referring to. I believe this was a benefit to my research and helped me analyze and interpret all the data.

Participants

Based on the provincial government funding model in Ontario, Canada, I focused on recruiting Campus Recreation professionals from the ten (10) very large universities in Ontario. In North America, universities are typically recognized as very large institutions if their student population is over 20,000 students (Brown & Haines, 2009).

Once the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa granted ethical approval for my research, I reached out to the Research Ethics Boards of the nine other institutions from which I recruited participants, to ensure approval was granted for me to interview one of their employees. All institutions did have their own requirements and I was able to complete each requirement, including a Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE) certification. Once I completed all the necessary requirements from each of the ten institutions, approval was granted from each of these institutions. At this point, I reached out to the higher administration of each of the Athletic and Recreation departments and asked them to circulate my research topic to their teams. The Campus Recreation professionals who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact me on a first come, first serve basis. Within two weeks, I had ten Campus Recreation professionals reach out to me, willing to participate in the study.

Ideally, the interviews would have taken place in person; however, due to the geographical distances of most of the very large university campuses in Ontario, and based on the Covid-19 global pandemic, all ten interviews were completed via various video conferencing

applications. The individuals were recruited based on purposive sampling, as I was looking for Campus Recreation professionals with a minimum of five years of professional experience. According to Palys (2008), “Purposive sampling signifies that one sees sampling as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one’s research” (Palys, 2008, p. 697). The participants were all full-time Campus Recreation professionals at a very large university in Ontario, Canada.

I pursued Campus Recreation professionals with a minimum of five years of professional experience in Campus Recreation, managing a team of employees. I strategically chose a minimum of five years of experience in management to ensure the Campus Recreation professionals selected had, at a minimum, been through an entire cycle of a typical four-year university degree. This way, the Campus Recreation professionals had experience with at least one full cycle or cohort of students as well as having dealt with the departure of employees namely through attrition. In addition, these participants would have had dealt with managing the recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, scheduling, supervising, and remunerating of student employees. Once all participants were chosen, I began reaching out to these individuals to plan the interviews and began data collection.

Data Collection

I conducted ten semi-structured interviews, one interview per participant, to help guide the conversations with the participants. An interview guide (Appendix A) was used with open-ended questions to lead an extensive conversation about what different leadership styles and strategies these Campus Recreation professionals retained for their teams habitually. The interview guide consisted of a variety of questions which aimed to gather as much information as

possible regarding views on leadership styles and strategies employed by Campus Recreation professionals based on the development and evolution of their employees.

The interviews were semi-structured, and I used the interview guide to lead a conversation to help me conduct the interviews but not limit myself to the guide based on the direction of the conversations. Here are a few sample questions which were posed to the interviewees: How do you feel your previous and/or current supervisors contributed to your development and evolution of your professional career in Campus Recreation? Can you describe for me how you approach leadership in your current role? What do you feel a leader in Campus Recreation should do to facilitate a positive work experience for their employees? What leadership challenges do you feel Campus Recreation professionals will face in the future? What are your biggest rewards in leading your team of student-staff? Please refer to the Interview Guide used for the interviews (Appendix A). Throughout the interviews and when appropriate, I added additional probing questions and aimed to understand and relate to the experiences the participants were discussing.

Data Analysis

The data collected from each of the ten interviews were transcribed verbatim, as a first step in the data analysis process. The transcripts were then analyzed by using the Thematic Analysis approach. Thematic Analysis was used in this study as it offered an analysis of the interviewees' experiences in relation to them leading their employees, or the factors and processes that underlie and influence, in this case, their leadership styles and strategies as their employees evolve over time. Thematic Analysis is an analytical approach and "the key thing to remember is that Thematic Analysis is about identifying patterns across a dataset" (Braun et al.,

2016, p. 195). Braun et al., (2016) describe Thematic Analysis as a six-phase model. In the first and second phases, I was deeply immersed in the data to get familiar with the information and to complete the coding process. I was immersed as once I had completed an interview; I would spend that evening and even the next day or two transcribing each interview verbatim. This was a great way for me to initiate the coding phase and really work at interpreting what the interviewees were expressing. Immersed in the data, I would extract many quotes and categorize them in an Excel file using different tabs for different themes which were starting to become apparent. In phases three, four and five, I placed the focus on theme development, theme refinement, and theme naming. As I was listening to the interviews and transcribing them, I was identifying quotes that I found powerful and used these to help me with the theme development, refinement, and naming. For example, in some of the interviews I was finding the interviewees were a little negative towards the leadership they had at certain moments in their careers and one of my subthemes under leadership was going to be named “Poor Leadership”, then I realized that although it was poor leadership, it was simply a misalignment between the leaders’ style of leadership and the followers’ development level. Therefore, I after much thought and many variations, I changed the subtheme to “Leadership Styles”, which encompassed some of the challenges these individuals faced. Throughout these three phases, I embarked on an in-depth coding process where I organized quotes and refined common statements and topics into themes and subthemes. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), they recommended a maximum of three levels of themes, which consists of an overarching theme, your main themes and your subthemes.

The last phase of the Thematic Analysis is the write-up. This phase was crucial to enable me to collate and make sense of all the various components of the Thematic Analysis. In this phase, I was able to put all the analytical work together to compile, develop and edit the work and produce an overall report, which, in essence brings us to the next Chapter.

Chapter 4 – Presentation of results

Overarching Theme: Leadership

For this study, we inspired ourselves from the Situational Leadership II model as the theoretical framework. This evolutionary leadership model helped extract the themes and subthemes from the data. As stated at the beginning of this thesis and for the purpose of this study, Gary Yukl's definition of Leadership is retained: "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2010, p. 8)". By this definition, there is a role for leaders to play in ensuring the followers are onboard with the leaders' vision, provided with adequate tools and resources to complete their roles properly to positively contribute to the organization's overall objectives. In the interviews with the Campus Recreation professionals, most of their energy was spent on the development, and evolution of their employees. In this chapter, we will explore the results of my research.

After analysing all my data, and completing the Thematic Analysis, I have confirmed three levels of themes for my results. The first level theme was the overarching theme of Leadership. This entire thesis was based on Leadership in the context of Campus Recreation, and Leadership was indeed the overarching theme. For the second level of theme for the analysis, I

narrowed it down to 3 Themes: 1. Campus Recreation – Knowledge and Experience; 2. Leaders; 3. Leadership in Campus Recreation. Lastly, for the third level, were the Subthemes which are presented in model below.

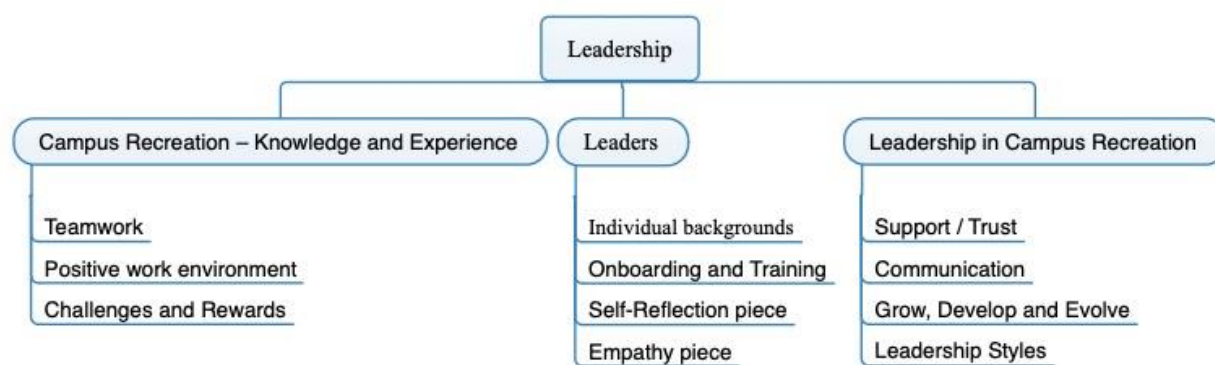


Figure 1: Overarching theme, Themes and Subthemes

Theme: Campus Recreation – Knowledge and Experience

With their extensive backgrounds in sport and recreation, sharing their passion for Campus Recreation with others is a big part of why they do what they do. They can really influence the students on our campuses through their student-employees. It is understanding that Campus Recreation is much more than simply programming, it is teaching students how to lead an active lifestyle and to take time to invest in themselves. These are lifestyle habits that can be formed and maintained for the rest of their lives.

Campus Recreation experiences and knowledge help play a role in understanding the bigger impact Campus Recreation has on the student body. Running programs is much more than

the actual programs, it is part of the opportunities offered to students for them to make the best of their university experience, and this is what Campus Recreation professionals must understand.

The impact of their jobs is far more than simply offering a program.

If you're just assuming that your swimming lessons, your lane swimmers and the pool party rentals on the weekends is your end all be all and what you have in your little rectangular pool or whatever shape it is, that's what everyone else is thinking as well, then you haven't really taken that larger view of what all the aquatic department needs to look like and even more so, what the rest of recreation looks like (Bob).

Understanding the importance of the bigger picture and having a vision is essential in a leadership role. This vision is the information leaders are trying to pass on to their employees, to get them excited about that direction and positively influence them on how they can help the group achieve the vision. In addition, these Campus Recreation professionals must have the appropriate leadership doing the same for them to support them and give them the opportunity to think strategically on how to continue to grow and strive for the bigger vision of the institution.

You could be a programmer or supervisor or whatever the title is, you could be the person who does the ever day stuff but if your aspirations are to move up the ladder, you need more than just theoretical information, you need someone to really help you conceptualize and understand what it means to think globally about a topic (Bob).

As mentioned in the literature review, with the volume of programs and the knowledge needed to be able to run such programming, it is very important to be well versed. However, Campus Recreation professionals do not have to know everything, but a great base of knowledge

in the field is extremely beneficial to be able to step in wherever needed to lend a hand and provide support.

Understanding that you could still be a Campus Rec Professional and all that you have learned translates to helping run so many other things in Campus Rec, and you don't have to be a Martial Arts expert, to run Martial Arts (Christine).

Having interviewed these Campus Recreation professionals with so much experience, they really understood the importance of offering a service and an experience to the students. They all understood that it was far more than the programs themselves. Darren summed it up quite well in his take on it:

It's not about what we are programming or the programs that we have it's the impact that we can have on the Campus environment. We are a service for students and how all the research that shows that it can have such a positive influence on academic performance and things like that (Darren).

The support and direction from upper management is also quite important in the work Campus Recreation professionals do. Campus Recreation is a service offered to students and it is about the experience. It is important to know what is being done but more importantly why it is being done. Campus Recreation is aiming to provide students a tremendous experience while helping set them up for proper life balance and success in their future careers.

Subtheme: Teamwork

With large teams of employees, all ten of the Campus Recreation professionals talked about the importance of the strength of the team and working hard to have all employees striving

for the departments shared objectives. These Campus Recreation professionals must be creative and ensure that all team members are on the same page and all working towards the common goal of their sector. The entire team working together and constantly sharing information has a major impact on outcomes and deliverables.

For five of the Campus Recreation professionals, teamwork encompassed more than just their department, but the institution. Although it can be a huge endeavor, educating the various faculties and departments on campus on how Campus Recreation can collaborate with them to help provide various services (i.e., offering First Aid and CPR certifications courses, offering an outdoor activity, offering memberships to staff, hosting events for faculties, etc...). Engaging staff members and empowering them by giving them a voice is extremely important. Their opinion is valuable and should be made known. There is a lot to be said for the trust they put in their employees but even more to be said about the trust their employees put in the Campus Recreation professionals. All ten Campus Recreation professionals talked about how they let their staff members know that “they have their back” in terms of letting them know they are there for them and will do whatever they can to support them.

Based on the Situational Leadership II model, once the employees develop and their leaders change their leadership styles there is a trust that is built when the leaders get to the “support” style, and they put more trust in their employees to be more independent and make calculated decisions based on their experience. Having a leader who puts their trust in you shows that they are not micromanaging and they are trusting and supporting their employees.

Getting to know your student-staff is very important. All of the Campus Recreation professionals discussed the importance of this as well as the importance of understanding what

drives and motivates these young and eager students. The employment experience is valuable but even more valuable if you understand what it is they are seeking from the employment experience as well as ensuring they know the reason their job is so important.

In leading a team of student-staff, team building is an aspect that cannot be ignored. There are endless possibilities of activities and exercises that can be done to achieve this goal. Getting your team members to trust each other and be willing to help and support each other are extremely valuable skills to teach. Really taking the time to ensure your team members are all on the same page and ensuring they are all onboard with achieving the department's goals cannot be overlooked.

As leaders, it is sometimes easy to say the right things to align your team and help influence them to reaching a common departmental or even institutional goals, however, it is more powerful to ensure these leaders follow through and do what they have set out to do. This was emphasized with a short but powerful statement: "You build credibility and build rapport by doing what you say you are going to do (Greg)." Once you get to know your team members well, it is quite easy for leaders to identify the commitment level and investment the student-staff members have.

Subtheme: Positive work environment

For students to make the best of their student experience, acquiring an on-campus student employment opportunity is important; however, finding a position that offers a positive work environment for student-staff is paramount. Working in Campus Recreation, these Campus Recreation professionals are dealing with a tremendous volume of student-staff. If one would go

through the entire roster of each one of their team members, they would see that every individual on those lists is different and so are the individual struggles each one of them face daily.

Therefore, as leaders, these professionals must have respect for their staff members and have empathy for them when working with them. Taking the time to get to know your employees and understanding their backgrounds is quite valuable. This builds trust and helps create a rapport to facilitate communications with your employees. It is much easier to relate to your employees and helps these leaders empathize with their employees and enable them to provide the appropriate support when needed. All these factors contribute to building and enhancing a positive work experience. In speaking about a positive work experience, many discussed their own personal experiences as a student-staff member and the impact Campus Recreation had on them not only as a student but also as a Campus Recreation professional:

So, really the department really saved my undergrad, by being there and making those contacts and seeing the impact it could have on the students and the friends I made and having fun participating, like I would say that was the reason why I stayed in university and the reason why I graduated and the reason why I had the opportunity to have some of the professional jobs that I have had (Darren).

Most student-staff roles in Campus Recreation are very similar to other student employment opportunities on campuses when it comes to remuneration, with this in mind, Darren spoke to the importance of focusing on the other benefits leaders must pay attention to, to ensure that staff retention is always top of mind:

It's not a job that is hugely based on financial compensation, so then it's up to us to foster an environment that is what they were hoping to get themselves into, one that's fun, offers

development for them, positive social experience with the hundreds of other Campus Recreation student employees we have, to foster those friendships and relationships (Darren).

When new students-staff are hired, they have much to learn about the institution, the Campus Recreation sector as well as the job specific duties. It can be very overwhelming for them. However, many of the Campus Recreation professionals referred to encouraging their employees to provide their own feedback and ideas to challenge the status quo of how things are done and not be afraid to voice their opinion. Creating that safe environment and letting their student-staff know that their opinion matters, and changes can be made. Taking their feedback and using it to make a situation better is quite empowering for the staff members. Based on the Situational Leadership II model, having the leaders adapt their style and allowing their employees to develop in their role is very empowering. This allows them to have the time and space to try different things and go back to the leader with questions and insecurities, knowing they will get the support they need to successfully complete their job. Getting to know your team members and investing some time in understanding what they are going through was mentioned by many of the Campus Recreation professionals. Erin delves into this a little as she highlights the importance of a leader's support is to their team members: "so that, ya is again taking that interest in what is happening to them and supporting them personally, professionally, and academically (Erin)." As many of the leaders have expressed, if they can create a welcoming, inclusive, and positive work environment, their student-employment position in Campus Recreation doesn't really even feel like a job. Erin describes it as more of a healthy distraction from the constant stressors the students are facing:

It is just a place for them where they're like I love working here because it doesn't feel like a job or it's a chance for me to forget about the school stress and take a break from studying... there's not too much stress with it so it's creating a positive environment that's family, it's fun and they look forward to coming into work, where we know we're going to see them for a few years. And I think, probably very rarely do we lose staff who are still going to be on campus, unless they are switching programs and it's going to be more demanding or whatever, but it's a job that people want to come to (Erin).

Creating a positive work environment doesn't just happen. Leaders must ensure they have processes in place to ensure their student-staff understand their role and the impact they can have in their jobs when they understand the bigger picture. Fred explains what it takes to help foster the positive work environment for student-staff:

Make sure it is meaningful and that people understand their impact, is the primary one. It can't be just sports are just your job, our staff need to know, and I know as a staff member so that what we are doing makes a difference. And it is not just muscles and that, but it is a sense of belonging and to feel good in their body regardless of what their body is capable of, that is the most important. And then respect. They must feel respected and valued for their unique perspective (Fred).

Some of the Campus Recreation professionals touched on the impact of giving their full-time team members the flexibility to work on their own schedules yet understand the importance of the results and respecting deadlines. Giving employees the freedom to work on their own priorities and managing their student-staff teams with the same flexibility, where possible, really does have a positive impact on their work environment:

And just give them the benefit of the doubt, like I am going to assume that people won't abuse it if you set it up and do it right. Where there could be another approach where you must clock in at 8am every morning, well, you are going to get a team that is going to watch the clock and check out at 4:30pm and oh and by the way they will never get a chance to experience their programs or their participants because the programs take place at 7:30pm at night. So, I think just building in a lot of flexibility and giving people the benefit of the doubt to work within that, ends up creating a lot of positivity (Greg).

The importance of understanding that the people you hire, whether it be student-staff or full-time staff, is that they are people. Investing in them by taking some time to talk them through means of impromptu conversations, is a very powerful way to communicate with your team members but also get to know them as people.

We sometimes have new student staff who will sort of, humbly admit that they don't have a sport background and they are like ah, am I going to get in trouble for this, and I will often make a point of stopping them and saying I am excited to have the sport people here, but we need you even more. Being humble can be quite effective and have a great impact on student-staff. Understanding that regardless of the experience you have and having the maturity to realize that others also have a great deal of different experience can be quite empowering for your team members (Fred).

Another contributing factor to a positive work environment is to ensure the work that is asked of the staff is appropriate for them and is achievable. The employees may want to take on bigger tasks or projects, but as a leader, understanding their level of maturity and capability will help make those decisions. Campus Recreation professionals must ensure the work they are

expecting from their team members is appropriate for their staff to set them up for success.

Harold summed this quite nicely as he stated:

Be inspiring, create the opportunity for your employees, and I think we have talked about this a fair bit, an opportunity to grow and to prove themselves, give them the resources for them to do that. Know that they have your support that you are there to help them at any time, but also give them room for self-directed leadership but to check in with them at all times to, just don't let them flow forever. Every week have a meeting discuss challenges and initiatives, things that are going on, successes, failures, not failures but challenges, successes and challenges is a better way to put it. And be there to support them, is key to that, support their growth and to help them evolve (Harold).

Subtheme: Challenges and Rewards

Like in any field or discipline, there are many challenges and many rewards. Bob touched on how resources are extremely important but was quick to touch on the importance of what Campus Recreation offers to students for their success in post-secondary education. As a Campus Recreation professional, these individuals are leaders for their large teams of student-staff and in some cases for full-time professional staff as well. Therefore, realizing that one of the responsibilities they have as a supervisor is to not only train their staff for the position they are in but to help prepare them for the next progression in their careers, whether it is within your department, outside your department or even outside of the institution.

As a leader in Campus Recreation, enabling your staff to grow, develop and evolve is such a satisfying feeling, as there is a sense of accomplishment for not only the direct supervisors

but for the department. Based on the Situation Leadership II model, giving your employees the liberty to make decisions and attempt to complete their tasks with a little more independence with help them develop and succeed. It was often discussed how much pride they feel when their direct reports or even their indirect reports succeed in contributing to the growth, development, and evolution of their employees:

It is important for me that they succeed at what they are doing and that they grow and develop. So, when they are able to come back, I just feel proud. I may not have had a personal hand in it, but I still feel proud as our team helped them grow and helped them develop. And it is pride. I am proud of them, I am proud of what the department has shown them, it wells me up with joy (Bob).

It was quite interesting in the interviews, all of the Campus Recreation professionals tend to deflect the praise to those who deserved it most and celebrating the successes.

I was thinking of this the other day “take the blame but deflect the credit” is something I was thinking the other day. Is, the buck stops at you, but if all the accolades come in, you deflect it to others because the people who really need to know that you did a good job, will know. But it’s a...you deflect the credit to the people who you work for, who work for you and give them the credit that they deserve because it is a team effort and you are really just facilitating the group (Harold).

John had a similar response:

That’s not why I work, I motivate myself, but I have people who work for me who are motivated internally and some that need that pat on the back right? So, I push all of that

thank you to the team person who gets it done. I really don't ask for any of that myself. I know my supervisors know that I was part of it, but I don't need it and I want them to be the ones that get it" (John).

The interesting common thread to all these leaders, was the fact that they were all very quick to state how it was nice to celebrate the successes and give praise to all those deserving it, however, they were all so very quick to move on to the next project or file.

I think it is important to take the moments to realize what it is you have accomplished, enjoy the successes and celebrate the successes but then also realize there is still more work to be done. You just can't settle on your laurels, there is always more, so it's great that we "hey we did it, fantastic", put that in your bucket list, put it in your portfolio because maybe you will need that in 5 or 10 years, when you want to apply for another job but you know, now we are on to the next one (Bob).

The success of the deliverable was nice, but they were all so quick to be ready to move on to the next feat.

One important part of being a leader is knowing you have the support of a leader as well. Campus Recreation professionals can be leaders with their large teams of student-staff, but it is also very important that they also have the support of their leader. Many of the Campus Recreation professionals elaborated on this point in talking about dealing with challenges, the importance of having that support and navigating through difficult situations. Darren spoke to the support he has from his leader:

He makes us feel valued as part of the Leadership team, he is always open and available at anytime no matter how big or small it is, if I have something I need to talk about, he gives me his ear and his time, and provides insight (Darren).

Christine also touched on how her leader supports her in her role:

So I think, some of those challenges was having those people who believed in you and let you go through those challenges and had your back as you fell through some of those challenges, I think really helped (Christine).

When talking about the rewards of working in Campus Recreation, the process of evolution with their student-staff was at the forefront of all their minds. The personal satisfaction of witnessing and contributing to the process of development and evolution of the student-staff is such a powerful thing. This was talked about at length and this being the main reason for them remaining in their roles as a Campus Recreation professional: “I mean they give me a lot of personal satisfaction; the student staff is everything. I think that is what has kept me in the industry for so long (Christine).”

When Campus Recreation professionals understand the big picture of the development, and evolution, as all these professionals did, it is quite compelling to see their passion as to why they continue to do what they do daily. Christine talked to this in greater detail, letting us in on how she views this process of evolution in these young adults:

I think they are just the best! When they are teenagers they want to rebel, when they come to university they realize oh crap, I need some guidance and they look to you and they're sponges and they want to learn and they are around new people and they come

from the middle of nowhere and they come to this big institution and you see them growing and evolving and using less you know “homophobic” language or racial slurs because they evolve so much in university. I love it! I love the evolution of a university student (Christine).

These Campus Recreation professionals work hard to cater to their large teams of employees to ensure they have the tools and resources at their fingertips. When they see their team members succeed, it drives them even harder to want to do even more for them and to continue to grow as a leader themselves to be able to offer them even more: “It makes me proud and passionate to do more and be better for them (Christine).”

The Campus Recreation professionals identified many rewards from working with students and for most of them it was the development, and the evolution of the student-staff that were the most common answers. This was summed up nicely as Fred spoke to the importance of getting the students to see their own potential and understand how this will benefit them in the future: “To achieve their potential but the other is to realize it, to see it and understand how it will translate and transfer beyond their current role (Fred).” So many students are hired to work in Campus Recreation, and many apply for these roles not really knowing what the job entails or what impact these positions can have on their personal and professional development. Each Campus Recreation professional touched on how the growth of their employees impacted them, and Fred clearly explained how this has an impact on the student-staff, but also the impact it has on him:

I have had many many iterations to have those students and watch them go from that student who came into something just because they liked it and had fun with it, to then be

able to be critical of it and make it better. Then realize that they can make a difference in this world, that's a tremendous reward (Fred).

Recognition and praise for a job well done is always great to receive. One common thread amongst the Campus Recreation professionals was the ability to give credit where credit is due. They are willing to deal with and manage the constructive feedback from participants but were so very quick to say that they always deflect the praise to their deserving student-staff members. Many of the Campus Recreation professionals mentioned how powerful of a reward it was to see their student-staff move on after graduation and know that they played a little part in the student-staffs' life journey through their experiences gained working for them in Campus Recreation.

Recruiting student-staff is a constant in Campus Recreation, as there are many reasons for positions becoming vacant. Although the Campus Recreation professionals continuously do their best to hire and retain great student-staff and foster a positive work environment, the reality is that there are simply many contributing factors that are out of their control to retain each member of the large teams they manage. The academic demands can simply be too much to manage with part-time employment, through attrition when students-employees graduate from the academic programs and move on to find full-time employment, some find other employment opportunities in their field of study and in some cases the student-employees cannot meet the work demands and their employment may be terminated based on performance or other reasons.

I think it is a little harder recruiting student leaders than it use to be, and it's also harder promoting programs than it use to be because of that idea that, I don't have time, I am here to study, I have to succeed you know, the amount of money this costs me the

pressure that I am getting from my family that might be on the other side of the world. I don't have time, I don't have time. I think it is the biggest challenge, not only as a leader but also as a programmer is relating to the current and evolving student body (Darren).

Regardless of the reasons, there is simply a high volume of positions and with this cyclical turnover; recruitment is simply a constant ongoing challenge.

In Campus Recreation, health, and safety has always been top of mind. In recent years, there have been many additional factors that have come into play relating to client and staff safety. According to NIRSA (2008), "in today's litigious society, sport and recreation administrators must manage risk in the same way they manage other functions within their departments" (p. 240). These professionals must think of all the liability concerns. From developing waiver forms for their participants to ensure their student-staff have all the required mandatory training from the government and from their institutions, all while making sure everyone is having a positive and enriching university experience. After working with the student-staff for years, the reward is having witnessed and being a part of the personal growth and development of these individuals. Knowing you have contributed to helping them gain such valuable experience complementing their academic workload, and knowing they are prepared for the next step in their lives is a very powerful thing. For all of these Campus Recreation professionals, that is a big part of the inspiration that keeps them coming back to their work.

When it comes to challenges, many touched on the volume of work. With facilities running over 16 hours a day, these professionals must rely on student-staff a lot. It can be quite overwhelming and many times the workload as all the projects take away from the time these professionals would like to be out in the facilities interacting with the student-staff and the

student participants. One of the challenges which was clearly identified in the Literature review, was the fact that Campus Recreation professionals manage large teams of student-staff. Some of these professionals had thirty to forty (30-40) student-staff and others had teams of over eight hundred (800). Now, granted every organizational structure was a little be different and some of the Campus Recreation professionals were in more senior roles, therefore, they were responsible for a team of managers who overlooked the large teams of student-staff, but nonetheless, the size of teams was all quite large and that is simply a common thread in Campus Recreation. Most, if not all, had similar views and were very quick to reply to my question on the challenges within Campus Recreation: “The magnitude! I mean, there is a lot. It is very hard for me to be that present leader when so many of them are working odd hours or there are so many of them (Christine).” It really takes much planning to be able have the appropriate human resources to deliver these programs ensure the student-staff are well prepared and armed with the resources and tool to complete their jobs at the level which is expected of them.

Theme: Leaders

Leadership is very critical in organizations, however, in order to have leadership it takes courageous people to lead and the maturity to be led. The Campus Recreation professional whom I interviewed were all established leaders, who have been in Recreation for many years. The passion they displayed when speaking about their work and their teams was truly admirable. Nine out of ten of these Campus Recreation professionals chose a career in this field to help influence and inspire the next generation of leaders. Whether it was working with their student-staff or for some their full-time staff, their willingness to help develop their employees was truly inspiring.

Subtheme: Individual backgrounds

In spending time interviewing the 10 Campus Recreation professionals, it became very clear to me that these individuals have all chosen a career in this field based on their personal positive experiences and passion for recreation, physical activity, and sport. Each one of the Campus Recreation professionals had a background in competitive and/or recreational sports. These individuals were all involved in sports at a young age and are still involved in some sort of physical activity or recreation activity. The lessons learned through physical activity, recreation and competitive sport have all contributed to the positive experiences these individuals have lived. The passion they have for these healthy lifestyle choices were very strong and these leadership roles are a very powerful way for them to share it with all their student-staff and be facilitators in sharing this through their work as Campus Recreation professionals.

It is interesting to note the values that were instilled in these individuals based on active living, recreation, and sport as children, which remain extremely important to them not only in their work but in their everyday lives. There is such a passion for active living amongst this group and it interesting to see that this is also translating to their young families. Fred spoke very highly of his love of sport and how he absolutely loved to involve his friends and roommates to take part and experience the joy of recreational sport. He did realize however, that it was a very comfortable space for him but some of his friends were not as comfortable. Everything in sport doesn't necessarily come easy for everyone, and not everyone had a great experience in recreation in sport in their past. These are very powerful realities to consider in the field of Campus Recreation.

It was quite interesting to get some insight from a few of them who, through personal experience, learned that many people are not as fortunate, and it is not everyone who grew up enjoying sports or even allowed to play sports at their own leisure. Regardless of their personal experiences, the Campus Recreation professionals still understood that many of the people on their campuses didn't have a great history of positive experiences in recreation and sport. It was great to see they were able to understand this reality and see it through that lens. By being aware of these known reservations, interviewed Campus Recreation professionals can better program and plan activities and events which cater to everyone. "A positive experience and a desire to share the realization that not everyone had had that" (Fred).

Fred even talked about the importance or the effect of simply wearing his branded attire from the Athletic and Recreation department on Campus. Many people, from university students to full-time employees around campus, may not have had the best experience in sports and recreation. These individuals may be intimidated by the logo, as they associate it with varsity sports from their high school experience. It really ties into the impact sports and recreation has had on people and how important this is to consider as a Campus Recreation Professional as we look to recruit, hire, and train employees. Campus Recreation professionals must be sensitive to this type of information and use this knowledge when leading out teams of student-staff, because most student-employees coming to Campus Recreation will have had a very positive experience in sports and recreation but must be made aware that not everyone was so fortunate.

I started to understand why you are hesitating because... and I started to learn, well in high school people who wore this kind of stuff were not the safe space for you and were not the nicest people for you and so on and so on. So, those people really gave me the

tools to lead in a different way because they were generous with their learnings, their lived experience, and their mentorship of me. So that was a major change for me, in terms of how I approach my work and the sense of community I had by virtue of having a community and feeling led by something (Fred).

Equity, diversity, and Inclusion are so important in the work Campus Recreation professionals do, and more importantly is how we can influence change and make a difference. The Campus Recreation programs and facilities should be a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for everyone, and this can only happen if this is an intentional institutional decision and extremely important for leaders to disseminate this information to their teams of employees from their first day. Fred talked about a very impactful presentation he witnessed, and it really helped him shape his vision and how to influence change within not only his team but his whole department. Even more so, to use these learnings opportunities and not only influence but affect change to help justify the importance and the existence of Campus Recreation on Campuses.

He really shaped my thinking as a leader being someone who could affect change, and that sport itself was not anything in terms of homophobia, transphobia, inclusion, exclusion, it was just the people in it and they can do something. So that was a very pivotal professional development piece (Fred).

There have been many changes in Campus Recreation over the years when it comes to equity, diversity, and inclusivity and yes, we still have ways to go, but it is in part due to these professionals who have learned through their own experience that they can influence change and make a difference.

I think the equity angle and the physical activity as a learning strategy and making the case to the community both the faculty as well as the students, just having it understood as this is not the fun thing, or the get sexy thing, this changes how you think and feel. So, I see those 2 things as emerging and both of them are tied to the theme of justifying our existence (Fred).

It takes courage to make and / or affect change and these changes begin with these leaders taking the time to train and positively influence their teams of employees to adopt these changes and start to make a difference not only in Campus Recreation but on our Campuses in general.

Subtheme: Onboarding and Training

The onboarding and training for a position in Campus Recreation or in any business, is the foundation on which you build a career within an organization. Meeting the team, learning all about the workplace, learning your current role and understanding where it fits in the department and how it contributes to not only the department's mission but to the entire campus' mission. Unfortunately, it was not surprising to hear many of the responses coming from the Campus Recreation professionals when it came to the topic of onboarding and training. In most cases, the lack of onboarding was an area of the department, which was quite neglected, and the experience the Campus Recreation professionals lived was motivation to make the change themselves. Bob explains how he is working on revitalizing the onboarding plan for not only his full-time staff but also his large team of part-time student-staff:

So, our onboarding system, was something of a hey welcome here's your regular ham sandwich stuff that you've got and here is your buddy who will take you out for lunch

once and pat you on the back and say how are you doing. And that has actually stuck with me because now that they have a designated HR business partner right in our department, and I will tell you that story later I am sure, we are developing that plan on what that is going to look like for all of our new full-time staff when they onboard and we will try to create a similar plan for all of our part-time staff, so that there is a better plan than just training (Bob).

Many institutions seem to take it for granted that if the incumbent already worked for the department, even in a part-time role, it was assumed that they didn't need any onboarding and very minimal training to get them up and running in their new leadership roles. It seemed to be expected because they were part-time employees in the department, the transition would be easy, and they could be leaders for their large teams right away. "I don't remember much onboarding, I met with my director there was maybe a day's worth, and then it was go. But I had worked in the department" (Christine).

In Campus Recreation, there are many training modules for the student-staff to complete before they begin their employment. Many training modules are made mandatory by the Ontario Government, many are mandated by the institutions and then of course there are the job specific trainings mandated by the department to successfully commence employment. With student-staff and student participant safety always top of mind, the volume of these trainings seems to be increasing, which is creating additional work and stress on the leaders.

It's just going to keep going and we are going to keep adding more and more and more things to make sure that the safety and wellness and wellbeing of our participants and our staff is all being looked after and it's going to be a lot (Darren).

The lack of onboarding in some institutions is quite disappointing, as some full-time colleagues are stuck providing quick onboarding with the new full-time incumbents in areas apart from their own. Erin elaborates on this point:

That has been my biggest thing even to now, when we watch the new staff come on, there is absolutely zero onboarding. And it's terrible because that is your first impression of the organization and you know, a lot of us now will just kind of jump in and offer to spend a day with them and share what we know about their area even if we don't over see it or haven't been in the job (Erin).

These Campus Recreation professionals have had very different experiences from one institution to the other. For those who have moved around, they were able to witness and experience what various institutions are doing and how they are implementing and coordinating their staff onboarding. Fred talks to the piece as he compares his first employer to his current employer:

Fairly strong lack of an onboarding. And then my most recent role, much more thoughtful. There is a process, there is documentation as to how you get led through it. It was both needed to get through it, and it was just more robust at the institution that I had just moved to (Fred).

Many times, as Campus Recreation professionals leave their roles, based on the nature of the university setting, some of the positions are not filled immediately. Working with the Human Resource department could take weeks or months to post the position, run the competition and work to fill the role. Keep in mind, this could be extended even further if the higher administration attempt to restructure certain roles and responsibilities. There is a lot of work to that goes into filling a position and Greg speaks to his experience in filling positions:

I would say I never had a smooth onboarding process because I find there is usually not enough dedication and resources to that, and while there is not a lot of turnover or transition in our field, it's when there is, you are filling an empty seat. So, the person that was there before you is usually gone (Greg).

When it comes to hiring casual or part-time employees, these leaders are trying to do their best by being pro-active and hiring in preparation for their next sessions and planning out how their recruiting, onboarding, and training will unfold building up to their next fiscal year. Harold was very passionate about the student-staff he hired. He has been in the industry for a long time, and he talks to his experience on how he narrows down his candidates:

I had a passion and I guess I demonstrated my initiative and my interest in customer service and the best interest in the people coming into your facility, so I think that's what I often do when I am hiring, you hire for personality and train for skill (Harold).

With amount of onboarding and training required for student-staff, some Campus Recreation professionals seemed to get overwhelmed by it, however, it is important to use the resources at your disposal. Sometimes we take on too much and forget to look around and see what is right in front of us. There are many colleagues on campus who could collaborate with you for multiple parties to benefit. Harold talked to this and the benefits of using other expertise from those who surround you: "Make use of your colleagues and your partners and the organizations you are involved with to provide the training for yourself and your students and your colleagues (Harold)."

Subtheme: Self-Reflection

A topic which came up quite often in most interviews was how much these leaders' identified self-reflection as an important part of leadership. This seemed to be very common practice within the group of Campus Recreation professionals, for them to revisit some of the situations they were dealing with and always looking at how they could use this time of self-reflection to improve their various approaches to keep learning, developing, and evolving as leaders themselves. These times of self-reflection can be brought on by situations they experienced at work, and they would simply take some time to evaluate how they felt they managed certain situations and thought of various ways they could have done things differently or not. Erin elaborated on this point:

I think it truly takes a leader to sit back and evaluate themselves and evaluate the situations and say here is what I did and how did it go? It was a terrible mess, ok well how can I do it different or it wasn't as bad as I expected, what can I try next time to get a little closer to that goal (Erin).

We all receive feedback differently, and as a leader, it is important to understand how to give feedback, but learning to receive feedback is just as important. As a leader, understanding how to process this information and reflect on it is a skill within itself. Self-reflection is simply brought on by feedback received from a supervisor, colleague, team member or even a participant. Ivy says:

If someone were to give me some feedback, I really can accept it, I can look at it, it doesn't you know get me down, it doesn't mean I don't...I spend a lot of time thinking

about it, but I really crave a lot of that constructive or even sometimes negative feedback.

What I really hate is not getting anything, and so I think that is part of it, someone just tell me something, just give me some type of feedback, I need something (Ivy).

As a leader, you are always striving to improve, and self-reflection is a powerful way to revisit certain interactions and decisions that were made. By doing this, the leaders can evaluate the impact of these elements, take note of what was successful, and what could be done differently. In addition, leaders can even take the next step and teach their followers to adopt this same type of process, as to understanding self-reflection to help them try to understand or view these issues or conflicts through a different lens. Christine captured this as she states:

If you are not reflecting daily, I think you are losing a big part of every interaction you have. You've got to be reflective on, and this is just my belief is that every time I have an interaction that is maybe not positive, what could I bring or what could I have done better in that situation and forcing them to have that kind of reflective nature, so that when they come to me with a conflict, one of the things we do first is reflect on that. What is your point of view, what could have been that student's point of view, right? So, a lot of self-assessment and a lot of self-reflection (Christine).

With the volume of work and so much going on as a constant, many Campus Recreation professionals are constantly navigating through their work and sometimes they must figure things out on the fly. Taking the time to think and reflect on how certain situations were managed is crucial to the success of the leader. It is extremely valuable to make space for the self-reflection to learn from the experiences and help with future situations of similar nature. Erin talks to this piece:

I feel like to me, that goes back to that educator and learning and figuring it out now, and then reflecting back so that you don't make that mistake again. So, I would say ya, that's definitely the leadership style I have taken, in that...sorry, I know I haven't really answered your question about above and beyond, but I think it's kind of been the real life situations that often is where the learning comes from. What works and what doesn't work and connecting with the staff I have learned and finding out their personality styles and their working styles is what's going to be successful (Erin).

As these leaders grow and evolve over time, they all tend to use some type of self-reflection in order continue to learn about themselves and strive to improve their leadership capacities. Erin opened about how she likes to communicate with her student leaders and attempt to plan what their leadership will look like for her team for the upcoming year:

I also find each year I kind of grow and reflect on the past year and have internal feedback of that worked and that didn't. So, sitting down with the new incoming student coordinator and determining how are we going to work like as a team and what is that going to look like and from there my leadership with them determines what our leadership will look like with our team (Erin).

The interesting part of the self-reflection piece is that each one of the Campus Recreation professionals did this extra work on their own, to continue to grow and evolve to make themselves better leaders. This is a self-driven and self-motivated exercise, which they all did on their own to simply be stronger leaders for their teams: "Just listening to the students and that internal dialogue of how I can grow and develop to make me a stronger leader (Erin)." Erin

realized this as she matured in her leadership role, to simply allow herself to let go and trust her student-staff with more responsibility:

When I do a lot of reflection, it is growing myself over the past 8 years. I look at who I was as a Manager coming in 12 years ago and I look at where I am now, and I feel that my personal growth has kind of allowed me to let go a little more and let the students take some more projects or leadership of projects in the department. Because I came in, and I am still in a capacity this way that my name is on the department, so something doesn't go well, it is coming back to me (Erin).

In addition to doing self-reflection for his own development and evolution, Fred elaborates on this piece and explains the importance of being a strong leader and what it provides for your followers:

I think again in the context of Campus Rec churn that we are just always pumping out the next operation, this reflective opportunity is very important. So, I just think that leadership is a reflective process or a process that requires reflection to be at its best and it's impressed upon me again through this that that opportunity is an important one and as a leader I can help set that opportunity up for people (Fred).

It is important as a leader to understand that you do not know everything. Self-reflection really permits the leaders to get to know themselves and the more they mature in their leadership role, the more they can learn and understand what areas of their own development can use some assistance from colleagues or other professionals in the field. Greg elaborates on this point:

Through really listening and lots of active listening and trying to understand where I have got some skills where they could be put to good use and where I have some major gaps and deficiencies and I think we have to have a lot of humility around these leadership roles. And then kind of thinking through where there are some gaps and deficiencies and finding people to help me out (Greg).

As leaders grow develop and evolve, they get to know themselves and they understand what they need to be stronger leaders. This takes time and takes commitment to invest in themselves and allow for this space to self-reflect. Greg speaks to what he needs in his role: “I need my own time to think through things, to digest, to... like I am not a scripted person, but I need to go through the mental process before I can be up front and centre with other people (Greg).” Understanding what it takes to be a leader is not always easy, as leaders are continuously learning and adapting to new situations and new followers. Harold speaks to his development as a leader and what has influenced his growth as a leader:

There is always room for analysis to keep continually growing and that goes with all aspects of recreation, I think is the key to leadership. But be a mentor, be an inspirer, but also make sure they know who is calling the shots, but not in a dictatorial way you know, it's a subtle leader...I think that is how I grew as a Leader (Harold).

With the constant hustle and bustle of Campus Recreation, there is always so much going on; it is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day operations. Leaders must take a step back and look at the bigger picture to understand how everything they are responsible for fit together. Harold emphasized this point:

Sometimes you have to step back and evaluate what your area is and what are the definitions of it, as opposed to just the evolution of a whole lot of pieces and little things that kind of grew and evolved but how does it all fit into the overall picture of your area (Harold).

Subtheme: Empathy piece

It is one thing for a leader to let their team know that their door is always open, but it is even more powerful for leaders to create connections and relationships with their team members. It is important for them to get invested in what their employees are working on and what they are striving for at work and beyond. This way, it makes it much clearer as to what you can do as a leader to be a facilitator in their journey and play a big part in helping them achieve these goals. Erin supports this in the following quote:

If you are aware of what they are working towards, and can support them, I find it makes a big difference, especially at this time because they haven't always had a mentor or a leader who takes ownership of what they are working towards and is going to encourage them and motivate them and also take the time to help them achieve that goal (Erin).

Many things can happen in one's life, some out of our control and other well within. As a leader, it is important to understand who is on their team and have a vested interest in them. By doing this, they will be privileged to have a little more insight on their lives and what they are going through. They will trust the leader and share information that can help them understand some of the struggles their staff may be dealing with, and this could help them successfully manage certain situations with more of a human approach. Having empathy and the ability to put

themselves in their team members shoes is a great way to demonstrate their understanding of what they are going through and ease their decision making as a facilitator as they help them through these difficult situations. Erin elaborates on this point:

You can't control when somebody breaks up with you or you can't control if something happens within your family, like that is life and understanding that those things come up and their personal health is more important than their work. Like I always say, academic is number one that's why you are here, and work is number 2, but if something pops up and needs to be number one or two then we will adjust and I think that's something as a good leader is. Adaptability is realizing that work is not the be all and end all that your team, if they have what they need, are going to be able to get the work done (Erin).

Being humble and empathetic are very strong characteristics of a strong leader. Harold talks to the point of understanding what your student-staff are going through and what you can do to encourage and / or facilitate their development and evolution:

I think the key areas that are my strengths is empathy to and knowing what they are going through and try to be very clear as to what is required and what they need to accomplish but some room for their own evolution of that because a lot of these students are smarter than I will ever be (Harold).

Theme: Leadership in Campus Recreation

The crucial role of a leader is to have the ability to positively influence and lead employees, provide them with the appropriate tools and resources available to enable these individuals to be able to complete their jobs efficiently and effectively. The ability to manage

situations appropriately and ensure they are all identified as learning experiences to help these student-employees grow, develop, and evolve, not only as Campus Recreation employees, but also as human beings. Campus Recreation professionals have an opportunity to help their student-employees develop problem solving skills, work on their independence, empower them, give them more responsibility as they mature in their roles and hold them accountable for the work for which they are responsible.

Subtheme: Support / Trust

Strong leaders are willing to take some calculated risks for the greater good of their departments. It is important to be confident and be a brave leader. Be willing to make change, be transparent, be vulnerable and be able to show fears. Encouraging your followers to take some risks, showing them, they have your trust and support. Being available when they need help, is extremely important for their growth and development. Christine touches on this point with one of her early leaders:

She would just say here is a learning opportunity I will connect you with this and then she just gave me the autonomy to just explore and bring in any program that I wanted and encourage me to take risks and was really trusting. And gave me a ton of autonomy and was just there when I fell (Christine).

As students leave home and venture on to post-secondary education, they can sometimes find themselves feeling quite lonely on campus. When they get a job on campus, they are looking to their supervisors for more than a position; they are really looking for support and guidance. Christine elaborates on this point: “Their looking for more guidance from me than they ever

have, I feel like... so being able to be a trusted adult has also been very important. Somebody that they can trust (Christine).” Having trust and support from your leader is quite empowering and inspiring. Enabling employees to do their work by providing them time, advice, and insight on the bigger picture of the department goes a long way. Darren touched on this piece as he referred to his own supervisor:

They never at any time make us feel like our opinion on anything is less valuable than one of the Associate Directors, like they are 100%, we are a team, and they will share information with us about things that are sensitive topics that you know are going to go out to the general staff population later on, even if it has nothing to do with us. They make us feel valued as part of the Leadership team, they are always open and available at any time no matter how big or small it is, if I have something I need to talk about, they give me their ear and their time, and provide insight (Darren).

With all the programming in Campus Recreation and dealing with so many student participants, it is vital that the student-staff understand the support they have from their leaders. There will be complaints, as we can’t always make everybody happy, but it is how those complaints are handled that is important. Getting as much information about the situation as possible and hearing both sides of the story are crucial, but your student-staff knowing they have your full support is key. Mistakes will be made but if the leaders clearly understand their roles, they will use these moments as teachable moments and ensure the student-staff learn from them. The leader’s support is crucial and if done properly, the trust built between the student-staff and the leader will be reinforced. Darren touches on this piece:

If you are just inspiring and giving resources to your staff and then being a mentor to them and know you've got their back and I am going to have all of your resources and I am not going to "throw you off the lifeboat if something happens", that's when they will really step up and that's when they will go the extra mile and they're going to go over and above what they have to do (Harold).

These Campus Recreation professionals are very invested in their work and are constantly working at being better leaders. They all work so hard to enhance not only the positions the student-staff hold but also the experience they are living with their student-employment. Getting the student-staff engaged and contributing to the delivery of programs and services by using their ideas and trying to do things differently is not only a benefit to the Campus Recreation departments, but also a benefit to their overall student-employment experience. Darren explains how there is so much more to these student positions, as these individuals are given opportunities to change the way things are done and enhance them for student participants, for the department and for themselves:

I am going to go to bat for you and I feel my position is to enhance their positions not to speak down to them or to plan for them or to impose a plan on them. It's we are all a team, we are all working together, in the end if we try something and in the end, it doesn't work, I will take the fall for it and I am going to do whatever I can to find ways, if I am able to, to find ways for their own professional development (Darren).

Leadership also consists of having the courage to have constructive conversations with your followers or even participants. These are necessary and cannot be avoided or ignored. The key to the success of these situations is communication. The other key is to ensure these

conversations are happening and the situations are dealt with as early as possible to avoid as much negative impact on the student experience as possible. The longer these are put off, the bigger the issues become. It is very important for the supervisors to address these and not avoid them. Fred elaborates on how he is willing to support and coach the managers he supervises to help them succeed with these conversations; however, it is crucial that these do happen:

Courage around difficult conversations, both with participant, members that kind of group, as well as with our staff when they are not performing to our expectations and that kind of thing, those are important pieces that have grown, they have always been important, but have grown more important over time and then I hold other supervisors to that standard to say you have to have those difficult conversations to, I will coach you through it, but we are not going to sit by and watch us miss targets or impacts and that kind of thing because that person is, for whatever reason, not able to meet that (Fred).

A big piece of leadership is understanding that leaders also need to be lead. It is a quest of lifelong learning, development, and evolution. Leaders at all levels are facilitators who provide influence, who inspire and empower their followers. Fred speaks to what he looks for in his supervisors:

I think I need a supervisor who needs to engage with me around my development, that isn't happy to have me stay forever and talks in terms of let's do good work while we are here but like that, we know someone else is going to come (Fred).

When leaders trust their followers, they give them permission to be creative and try to do things differently. Of course, it is important for the followers to do their research, understand what the best practices are and try to maximize efficiencies within their work for the benefit of

their department and their institution. To have them continuously doing things the way that they have always been done is not always the best course of action. Challenging the status quo is a great way to help employees develop and evolve in their roles. Greg explains how he received this opportunity early in his career:

I had a really great supervisor who wasn't really from a recreation background or field at all, recognized that I had some energy and enthusiasm to do some things differently and really just gave me a runway and approach to like go out and learn, you know, learn best practices and learn what other areas are doing and doing well and then thinking about how we can kind of make modifications, so don't just carry on the same cycle, because as Recreation leaders, we can get into a very repetitive cycle (Greg).

A strong attribute of a good leader is to coach and support their followers but even more so is to develop other leaders. A great way for leaders to develop leaders is to provide their followers with various leadership opportunities for them to develop their skillset, grow as professionals and evolve in their roles. These opportunities help prepare these young professionals for their next professional roles whether it be in Campus Recreation or other, as these leadership skills are completely transferable. Greg expands this notion:

Whether they stay in the profession or not is inconsequential to me. So ya, serve and support and then just develop people and develop other leaders and whether it is formal leadership roles or leadership opportunities, I think that is my fundamental philosophy or approach to it (Greg).

As a new leader, it is very common for these individuals to try to be the nice supervisor or the friend supervisor; however, this is a very slippery slope. These young leaders can be taken

advantage of and sometime as far as manipulated by their employees. It is very important for these young leaders to learn how to earn the respect of their team, instead of trying to get their team members to like them. Erin was taught this lesson from one of her leaders when she was starting out: “He was like if they respect you, they are going to show up 5 minutes early or 15 minutes early, if they like you, they are going to show up on time or 2 minutes late (Erin).”

As a leader, your presence with your team is extremely valuable. This tends to display a sense of appreciation and of understanding of the work your team does. To be present and provide them with the tools and resources for them to be able to complete their roles successfully displays a tremendous sense of ownership, value, and appreciation for the work your team is doing daily. Being there to listen to them, provide some guidance when required and mentor them, is extremely important in their personal development. This is a level of support that is essential for the trust and respect their team needs to continue to develop in a positive work environment. Greg speaks to this point: “Having an appreciation and an understanding of the work that they are doing, I think as a leadership trait that I think they value (Greg).”

As employees grow and evolve in their roles, leaders can encourage initiative and even some small risk taking on various projects. When this occurs, the employees know they have the trust and support of their supervisors, which in turn will usually result in empowering the employees in their attempts to find different ways of doing things their way and taking ownership of it. Greg talks to inspiring his staff to do just that:

I like to inspire the risk taking now, instead of being the risk taker, but I think people would like to still, in a leadership role, see me as being a little more vocal about risk

taking, and so I will acknowledge that and ... we have got to break out of our molds and routines a lot and I try to encourage that a lot, but I have to model that as well (Greg).

As a leader, getting to know your employees individually is important. If leaders truly want to help their employees grow and evolve, it is imperative that they get to understand what their employees' motivations and needs are. Sometimes leaders must realize maybe their employees require something more than they can give, and they have to refer them to other resources.

Understand and know what makes those individuals tick and what those individuals' needs are at that time and then try to make sure they understand where I can help them and where I maybe need to help them find some other resources that are going to be better supports for them on other projects or priorities or whatever (Greg).

In speaking with these Campus Recreation professionals, they touched on many powerful points and one point that stuck out was the fact that student-employees are not only seeking guidance, but they are seeking a supportive relationship with their supervisor. It is quite important for Campus Recreation professionals to understand that these young adults are looking up to them for guidance and mentorship. In reality, it is more about their development and experience than the actual work. If supervisors could understand this, they would realize the impact they could have on their team of employees and in turn, the impact these employees will have on the programming. This is not always an easy feat, but Greg speaks to this point:

They all really like when they can have a really good meaningful relationship with their supervisor and a supportive relationship with their supervisor. In order to do that though, you have got to be able to make a case for your supervisor to have that as a significant part of their role in their job (Greg).

At a point, it is important for leaders to get to the point of delegating tasks and getting out of the way and to let the followers take charge of a project and give them the freedom to try things their way, all within reason of course. With the right development, training and supervision, the employees will know their limits and know that their leader is always there to support them. Harold speaks to this powerful piece: “I give them a lot of room to create their own initiative and to grow the program themselves, with guidance and they know they have my support and that I have their back (Harold).”

Subtheme: Communication

All Campus Recreation professionals interviewed were very supportive of their teams, all looking out for the best interests of their employees and making them feel safe at work. Clear expectations regarding communication are extremely important and this is made clear in training with their teams. With the large teams of employees, these Campus Recreation professionals can't guess what is going on in their student-employees' lives, these individuals must communicate with their supervisors on a regular basis to maximize the support they receive. Many of the Campus Recreation professionals spoke about building trust and having an open-door policy to ensure their teams felt comfortable approaching them to discuss not only work topics but personal matters as well. André expanded on this point:

I think that is one of the most important things you can do as a supervisor and as a leader is you must have that open door policy. It's for them to feel comfortable that they can come to you whenever they need to and be able to talk to you not just about work stuff but the personal stuff, the school stuff, and asking you for advice and for guidance. For

me that is what I would describe and how I approach it. It's not just work; it is much more than that (Andre).

Another very common practice within this group, was listening. Most mentioned the importance of listening to your employees and this is a challenging undertaking. Many of the professionals are very solution oriented therefore, the discipline it takes to simply listen to their employees and reflect on what they are saying was an important task.

I think the way you do that and develop the leadership in the people who report to you and up to you and that is just by being a good listener and being very transparent, being consistent and being you know a very reliable, dependable person that works with a lot of integrity and that they build the rapport and the buy-in, that they know you are there for them and for the program's best interest (Greg).

Creating time and space for team members is critical for the development these young employees, making that a priority is not always easy, but necessary. Being a leader is not telling people what to do. Active listening is extremely important, understanding what the team members need from you is what is important. Sometimes the student-staff are trying to tell the leader something, but if they are not listening, there can be a misalignment or miscommunication, since the leader is simply not listening. Erin elaborates on this point and how she learned from it:

What do you need from a leader and what are you seeking in your role? And sometimes it was don't be a leader and just provide me with that support and let me know in a nice way, what you need more from me or how I can do better on the team or how I could go above and beyond. So listening to the students in what they need instead of assuming, has

been a big AHA moment for me and sitting down at the beginning of training week like, what or how do you want me to interact with you guys or if something is not going right, how are we going to address this...And they don't take it as negative if they were the ones who came up with the idea, right? (Erin).

The "cliché" of everyone rowing in the right direction or everyone being on the same page, is so true when it comes to leadership. This all stems from strong communication. Leaders must be vocal about what the team's purpose is and ensure that all team members understand the value of that and buy-in to that "raison d'être". Fred hit the nail on the head with his statement:

Having a higher purpose and a call to action for people, is a critical piece. I would say that for my team, it is very clear that they are being pulled in a direction like they know we are going somewhere, we are trying to do something (Fred).

Subtheme: Development and Evolution

All participants stated wanting their employees to develop and evolve in their roles while learning to be independent. Another great characteristic of a great leader is for them to always have a willingness to learn, especially from their own followers. This point was made clear by most but very evident in Bob's following statement:

A leader to me is someone who supports their team to be better. I don't pretend to be the smartest when it comes to fitness equipment or HR or finances or whatever it is that answers into my area, I want to make sure I have people who are good in those areas so a) I can learn from them and b) I can also provide them with some of the tools and supports that they need to grow (Bob).

Many of them spoke to having their employees' backs, referring to if they make mistakes, they would be there for them and protect them, help correct the mistake and ensure the employee learns from such experiences. Bob elaborated on this piece:

I want my staff to be rewarded for when they do good and when they shine, but at the same time, they have to be ready for any feedback or criticism possibly if things don't go there...but understand that I am going to be there to help them out. That I am going to be there to hold my hand up and it's ok to make mistakes, as long as we learn from our mistakes (Bob).

With the large volume of student-employees in Campus Recreation, there are many lessons learned and discipline is a part of supervision and of the development of the employees. Fred discussed an interesting concept on how he deals with certain disciplinary situations:

I talk about attitude and effort versus knowledge and experience and try to separate out those issues and say is this an attitude and effort issue or is this a knowledge and experience issue and you know, maybe you get a re-direction around attitude and effort but there is also some basic things where it's like no, anyone should know that that attitude is not acceptable so you are going to learn a lesson in a hard way here, and you are going to be better somewhere else, but if it is knowledge and experience then let's look at ourselves as supervisors first to say what do we do to build you up to give you the success you need (Fred).

In most of the institutions' Campus Recreation departments, many of these Campus Recreational professionals are expected to be contributing to the overarching strategic plans and developing programming for the future. Based on their organizational structures, one of the

challenges that arise stems from the fact that these individuals are simply caught up in the day-to-day operations of their portfolios, some do not even have the opportunity to really put in the extra time to dedicate to that bigger picture thinking. This is something that must be addressed with upper management to have an organizational structure that can support these individuals to be a little more removed from the day-to-day operations, in order for them to contribute to the strategic development of their portfolios as well as the department as a whole. This can range from helping realize strategic objectives for their department, planning to host major events at their institution or even helping with infrastructure development plan for future growth. All of this takes times and must be supported and made possible from upper management. Bob spoke to this point:

When those Managers or Directors or Commissioners or whatever they are called, if they expect their front-line Managerial staff to think globally, they need to enable them to be global thinkers. If they never do that, then they can't get those results, and so that where in Collegiate Recreation, I have seen that happen (Bob).

Encouraging and empowering your followers to believe in themselves and to trust what they are doing is very powerful. Helping build your followers' confidence and enabling them to push the status quo and try something new, goes a long way in supporting them. Being their cheerleader and validating the work they are doing is such a reward for them not only professionally but also as people. This is a tremendous confidence booster, and this continues to feed the passion for what they do. Christine confirms this with her statement:

In terms of a manager, he lifted me up a lot with my ideas that I came to him with, right.

He gave me a lot of confidence that what I was thinking and what I was feeling was right.

In university you don't know what you are thinking. He always acknowledged it, he always pushed me to go further, pushed me to try a little bit of something new. He was always kind of quick to praise in the right way. Not overly but was quick to point out when I was doing something good. And made me realize that maybe what the recreation industry was is something that I could do, because I was passionate about it (Christine).

It was interesting to hear many of the Campus Recreation professionals talk about how it takes a certain kind of person to work in Campus Recreation. The leadership positions we hold are positions the constantly deal with students and due to the nature of working in an academic institution, there is constant turnover year after year. The amount of mentorship, guidance, nurturing, and care provided to these individuals throughout their academic careers is immense. We witness the student-staff grow, develop, and evolve in their roles but more importantly as people. As time passes, the student-staff move on and in come the next cohort year after year, who are all looking for the same leadership, mentorship, guidance, and support as those who came before them. The characteristics of being charismatic, empathetic, nurturing and caring are of utmost importance to continuously support, positively influence, and guide your team of student-staff. Christine speaks to the reality of this:

Understand the landscape and understand the transient nature of student staff. I think Campus Recreation is run and should be run by student staff. We serve student staff first, I think we should employ them, empower them, and engage them as much as possible and I think to be a leader you need to understand what that means. It means there is a lot of guidance and a lot of mentorships that needs to go into the staff, there's a lot of time

and effort that you need to put into those staff, and we need to be hiring full-time people that want to work with student-staff (Christine).

Great leaders know they always must learn and grow for them to continue to develop as leaders and as people. Being in a leadership position doesn't mean you know it all or you are the best at everything. We all learn from each other, and leaders also need their own leaders to continue to help drive them and challenge them to be better, to think differently and to constantly push the envelope of their own potential. Christine elaborates on this point as she refers to her own leadership needs:

I need somebody to guide me, to coach me, to challenge me, right? So I think in order for me to be better and grow I need that challenger, I need somebody to challenge me, I need somebody to give me that feedback, I would have done that different or did you think about this, did you think about the legal aspect, did you think about the risk management aspect, did you financially do all, just be that check point for me so that I could grow through those learnings (Christine).

Although working as a Campus Recreation Professional can be overwhelming with the volume of student-staff we have to manage, there is always a fun part of what we do. In the interviews, many of them spoke about how fun it was working in Campus Recreation but also how fun it is to watch and witness their teams of student-staff develop and grow under their leadership. Erin speaks to this important piece:

That is a big thing that has kept me here, is definitely the fun capacity of it, the team building capacity and the ability to watch the students have those AHA moments while they are learning and growing under our leadership (Erin).

To facilitate the development and evolution for the student-staff, there has to be learning moments. These moments are especially important when providing feedback, as it does have to be specific, whether it is positive or constructive. Fred supports this thought with his statement: “I make sure they get specific feedback on the things they have done well and why it mattered, and specific feedback around areas where I think they can improve (Fred).”

These Campus Recreation professionals brought up so many powerful statements and explained how they all contributed to the development, and evolution of their student-staff. Selecting your team of student-staff is an important process and once the team is made, it is time to play on everyone’s strengths and provide the mentorship and leadership you believe they need to help them evolve as employees and as people. Greg speaks to this powerful point:

You have to surround yourself with some really capable, talented and good people and just embrace them for where they are at and what their talents are and do the best you can to enable those skills and those leaderships to grow out of that (Greg).

As time passes, Campus Recreation professionals are always trying to stay at the leading edge of what is happening in all aspects of our industry. There is constant change, evolution, and creativity in all we do our hope is to stay abreast of what the new trends are and of course stay relevant to what our teams need. Greg sums it up quite well with his statement: “I just want to be able to be really competent and a good relevant leader where I am at (Greg).”

As leaders, we all must continue to develop and evolve as professionals and as people. It is important that we all continue to be lifelong learners and lead by example.

In speaking about professional development and conferences, Darren spoke to how much he appreciates any chance he gets to take part in panel discussions or round tables with his colleagues across the province. The similarities of what Campus Recreation professionals deal with on an annual basis is quite interesting. The fact that these colleagues all face the same challenges and embrace similar rewards are great but even more powerful is the aspect of all these Campus Recreation professionals are so passionate about what they do and who they serve:

I find it way more valuable to sit at a table with kind of our colleagues across Ontario and to talk about things, and it really puts things in perspective how all of the things that we are facing, the priorities that we all have, are all the same. And it is kind of a nice group to be a part of where maybe there is 100 of us across Ontario, it's a pretty small group of people that all face the same challenges each day. And are motivated by the same things and are in this business for the right reasons and I love having those conversations. It is a community that we have built amongst ourselves I think with a lot of mutual respect, and it has really helped me develop all the way through, not just in Leadership in talking to the other Managers and Directors across Ontario but talking to the other Coordinators (Darren).

Ongoing continuous development is a key component to leadership. To show your team of student-staff the importance of constantly pushing to know more and to know yourself more is so valuable in your development, but this never ends. These Campus Recreation professionals are all great leaders, and they all know themselves so well. They also know the learning is never over.

The evolution of student-staff is a fascinating and rewarding process to witness. Campus Recreation professionals continuously strive to provide numerous opportunities to their student-staff for them to challenge the status quo and make the programs their own. These professionals are there to provide direction, coaching, support and eventually are simply able to delegate tasks and projects to these competent student-staff when they have matured enough in their roles.

Darren speaks to this powerful piece:

I want them to evolve, you will never stay motivated if you do the exact same thing over and over and over for four months, you want to look at the position and how you can grow it, and how you can put your own personal stamp on it (Darren).

Throughout the interview process, it was remarkable for me to witness some of the self-reflection that was happening. You can really feel how passionate these professionals are about what they do and the impact they have on their teams of student-staff. Thinking back over the years and talking about her lived experience, it was interesting to listen to Erin speak to her own evolution as a leader, building confidence and how at the end of the day, her basic instinct of building relationships with her new team members is still the first step when meeting and dealing with them. She speaks to this point when comparing the returning staff to the new staff:

I would say as my growth has developed or as my confidence has developed, I've been able to approach the returning staff and the senior staff a bit easier, but my approach with our new staff has always somewhat stayed the same and because I feel that it is important to develop that relationship first (Erin).

One of the most empowering aspects for student-staff is to have the trust of your leader. If the student-staff are well trained and have matured in their roles, the leaders are able to

provide more and more opportunities for these student-staff to take on more responsibility and deliver at a higher level. Leaders who are well trained, well versed, and experienced can use various leadership styles to help in the development of their student-staff by providing just the right amount guidance needed for their employees based on their level of maturity. One thing is for sure, if this is done correctly, these student-staff can really impress us. Fred touches on this topic as he speaks to the evolution of student-staff: “One of the things that evolved over time is a growing belief in the capacity of student-staff to achieve great things (Fred).”

As a leader, setting expectations for your team is very important. Helping them understand the role they play will expand as they grow and evolve in their roles. In fact, being clear with them inform them that soon, we will be turning to them for their opinions and critical thoughts about how things are done and how these things can be improved to make it more beneficial for not only student-staff but for the student-participants as well. Fred expands on this point:

I expect you, once you are in your second term or second year with us that you are not just delivering our product, but you are thinking about how it is delivered and how it can be delivered more effectively, when I say product, I think both on the participant and on the staff side, both pieces being key pieces of the product (Fred).

One element that is sometimes overlooked is the perspective some of the newer or younger student-staff may have. They too have learnings or perspectives from their own experience, which can be extremely valuable for the leader and the programs. Greg captured this thought very well as he explains this same notion:

There are a lot of young people coming into the profession that have, just coming into the field but boy do they have some really cool experiences and perspectives that if I'm not tapping into those perspectives as being a like a "vet" in the field, if you will, I've still got to have that learning cap on at all times (Greg).

Referring to associations like the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), Greg talks to the importance of networking with those in your field and professional development. It is one thing to talk about the importance of it but making it a priority for the leader and the team and making the time for it is critical: "Trying to take advantage of the professional association that is there and then the people that are in it and trying to make space for it (Greg)." It is important to take time and make it a priority to talk to the right people about their perspectives as everyone has different experiences. Sometimes leaders will find lots of information at various professional development opportunities but sometimes, it is just as valuable to reach out to some colleagues across the province or even the country to ask for advice. As we mature as professionals and as people we develop, grow, and evolve and we find comfort in certain leadership styles. Harold discussed how he continues to learn and evolve his own leadership styles based on various factors which he highlights:

I was an avid student of it and through my career and my life, I have tried to evolve my own style of leadership based on my personality, my skill and my role models and I can't really say it is perfect, but it has been effective (Harold).

Taking advantage of networking with professionals in your field is a way to continuously learn from others and continue to develop and evolve as a professional in your current role and beyond. Harold explains this and touches on the importance of lifelong learning: "I think those

opportunities to engage with other professionals and people in your field is really important for career growth, leadership development, seeing what others are doing and learning from that (Harold).” As a leader, deflecting credit and recognizing the hard work of your followers or subordinates is incredibly valuable. Sometimes it is as simple as getting out of your own way. With many years of experience, Harold sums it up short and sweet: “You have to be able to be dynamic enough to evolve and to grow (Harold).”

As Campus Recreation professionals evolve, there are advancement opportunities that arise to either expand their current role or for them to apply on different positions within their department, within their institution or even externally. Christine talked to her experience in a new leadership role and what she did to help herself understand the intricacies of the new sector she was leading:

One of the things that I did that really helped in my leadership position was when I first started there, I took a shift in every single student position that we have. So, I shadowed every student position that we have because I thought I am going to be a better leader if I understand what we do (Christine).

Subtheme: Leadership Styles

We would love to say that we have all had amazing supervisors and leaders throughout our careers but that is not always the case. Some of the comments coming from the Campus Recreation professionals were simply that what they learned the most from some of their previous leaders, was what not to do. Most Campus Recreation professionals really didn't like being micromanaged and this is a clear sign, based on the Situational Leadership II model, the

leadership style being used was simply a misalignment with the development level of the incumbent. Although they witnessed some poor leadership, their experiences were quite rich in allowing them the opportunity to learn how to develop, grow and evolve their own leadership and avoid some of these flaws to increase their leadership capabilities. Darren discussed how one of his first leaders wanted to make sure he was not creating more work for his supervisor: “He was very much like, ok don’t make problems for me, go do your thing and like don’t make a scene and you will be fine (Darren).”

Often when there is a lack of leadership supporting the followers, this leads to a lack of confidence for the incumbent who is looking to continue to climb the corporate ladder and take on more responsibility. To be a leader, we must be led ourselves by our own leaders. Erin speaks to this exact point:

So, if someone was to look at my resume, what would they feel I am missing and can I work on that over the next few years to get ready, but I think ya, the biggest one for me if I am like what am I missing would be someone supporting and encouraging me in that (Erin).

Leaders with experience understand their role and what they are attempting to do with their team. Providing the team with a vision, with expectations of the task at hand, giving the team members a voice and some independence to take charge and know that they are trusted by their leader as they strive to achieve the common goal. Christine expands very nicely on this point:

I am not micromanaging them, right, I am giving them a vision, I am giving them the support and I am giving them the autonomy and the trust so that my job at the end of the day is that they are feeling that trust and that they are working towards that same vision

and goal so it's my job to set those goals and those visions for them and it's my goal that they are on the path but it is not my job to micro-manage their day to day (Christine).

Micromanagement can be quite detrimental to your team. This was made quite evident by each Campus Recreation Professional I met. However, being there to coach and support their student-staff is essential. Ivy explains this point very well in her statement: "To have a positive effect on people but not necessarily by speaking or by showing them exactly how it is done but really by helping them figure it out on their own (Ivy)." As you mature, you really need to know yourself as a person and as a professional to know what you want in life and for your career. Fred explains his experience in dealing with one of his first leaders and how that affected him and his experience:

One of my first supervisors in a professional role was very hands off, but supportive. But didn't offer much input, guidance, feedback, and that was both an opportunity and a real challenge. An opportunity in that I had to understand the value and the reasoning behind my decision making because it wasn't going to be driven by someone else. A challenge at times I wanted more engagement and support and I thought I could be led more effectively (Fred).

It is quite easy to get caught up in the work and have things done "our" way, what we think as the "right" way. Often, it is because leaders were very good at the jobs they use to do and therefore received promotions based on those results. It is important to realize it is not because you were a great employee that you are a great leader or supervisor. With the lack of leadership and supervisory training, these individuals can be set up for failure. If the leader has an expectation of things constantly done their way, they are completely missing the mark on

what it is to be a leader and to empower their followers. By continuously directing their followers to perform tasks the same way, they may be stripping away all experiential learning opportunities, growth opportunities, creative opportunities, all chances for empowerment, trust, and influence for their team members. Fred touches on this piece as he refers to a term that sums this up perfectly:

Equifinality, I don't know where I was that I heard that word used and learned about it but it was like, that was something that gave me great permission to get out of the way, and trust in people (Fred).

It is quite interesting to note that many of the Campus Recreation professionals spoke very negatively about being micromanaged by one of their supervisors at some point throughout their career. For the most part, these experiences tended to be in the earlier stages of their careers, and it really made them aware of how they did not want to manage people as they became supervisors and climbed the corporate ladder. When we look at the Situational Leadership II model, micromanagement appears when there is a misalignment between the leaders style and the maturity level of the follower.

Empowering student-staff is a great way for them to be engaged and really embrace their role. If the leader continuously tells them what to do and how to do it, there is really no benefit for the student employee. Yes, when they first begin employment or even a new task, direction is key. However, as they mature in the role, it is crucial that leader learn to adapt their leadership style to suit the development level of their followers. The Campus Recreation professionals I interviewed were all great proponents of inspiring their teams of employees and positively influencing them as they grow, develop, and evolve. With experience, the leaders also develop

and evolve, and they begin to understand that as their student-staff gain more maturity they also begin to evolve in their roles. With years of experience and within these leadership roles, these Campus Recreation professionals have realized that they can use different leadership styles based on what maturity level each student-staff is at in their roles. Many leaders didn't realize this early on as they were starting out as leaders in Campus Recreation, as they were quite overwhelmed by the volume of work they were dealing with. As they grew, developed, and evolve, they realize they could be assigning additional initiatives and bigger projects to their more senior staff members and understand that when the student-staff take on these new tasks they will have to be managed by using various leadership styles throughout the process. Darren explains the importance of giving space to your staff with his following statement:

“I think that is the biggest thing for me is, especially with students, is to make them feel like what they are doing isn't a job for them to get paid, they are going to have the opportunity to make decisions and when it is their idea, they are more likely to put the focus, attention and effort, into making it the best possible program it is or whatever the task they're doing, far more than if I tell them to do something (Darren).”

In discussing what leadership styles, he applied the most, Bob was quick to mention the 2 styles that he tended to use the most, and again really focused on not micromanaging:

Mentor, Coach. Those would be the 2 big ones. Again, I stay away from my micro-management. I generally don't employ that at all. And I don't encourage my team to employ that at all as well unless they really have to (Bob).

As the student-staff gain more experience in their roles, giving them space to think and contribute to projects goes a long way in their evolution. Having them take part in contribute to

the plans that are developed and executed are monumental for their confidence in the role and their personal and professional growth. Darren explains this in his own words:

Sometime there is ways to lead them in a direction where it is like ok, here are some of the things we want to get done, what do you think we can do to make it happen. And talking about it until we get to the point where we are like ok, we have plan and they feel that they have contributed just as much to the plan as I have, as opposed to me making a plan and telling them to go do it (Darren).

Without even knowing the model I selected for my theoretical framework, and with the abundance of experience this group of Campus Recreation professionals completely understood the evolution of their student-staffs' development. Therefore, it is not simply about their development, it is about the engagement and contribution to the bigger picture of what Campus Recreation is all about that makes the development, and evolution so valuable. Christine sums it up perfectly in her statement:

1st year, you have to guide and reassure a lot and 3rd and 4th years, you've got to give them the autonomy and the projects to keep them engaged. I would think is probably the biggest difference those, you can't have a 4th year employee still working the same job and not give them something a little bit extra, to do to keep them engaged (Christine).

Again, with the vast experience of this group of leaders, they really understood that the development and evolution was different for everyone. The timing is not a cookie cutter formula that depicts the timeline for one's development. Everyone has a very distinct and diverse background experience, and everyone also learns differently. Christine explains that within her group, she will set expectations per employee based on their experience, the work they produce

and the volume as well as their personalities. Once a task or project is delivered and there is a noticeable increase in maturity, it is important to acknowledge and ensure that more space is given for the next task or project requested of that individual. Christine talks to her expectations in this situation and how her leadership style will change:

I think if they are 3rd or 4th year and they have shown me a maturity or a personality, and then I give them a new task, I am not setting them at ground 0 again, I am expecting that maturity and that knowledge to translate well into that next task and I am not going to “baby” them as much (Christine).

As a newer student-staff begins their journey in Campus Recreation, their initial focus is on getting integrated with the team, onboarding, and learning their role. Once they are in the role, the focus changes. Darren speaks to this point and how this impacts the rest of the team:

At the beginning, their focus is on training and development and a lot of support from their peers and from myself and as they move along, it is less focussed on that and more focussed on developing them as leaders and not just as fitness instructors but they could move into that role where they become more of an extension of my vision and they can help promote that vision to those first year kids (Darren).

As the student-staff maturity increases, these Campus Recreation professionals like to give them a lot of space to try different things and put their own spin on the programming. Being there as a support system is crucial but giving them the time and space to do it their way is so powerful.

Greg elaborates on this point and how he manages this:

Then just being ok to let them run with it and be a sounding board, like you don't have to run everything by me as a check point, but I am here and available for you as a sounding board, but I really want you to be able to run with this stuff and go with it, and then just support or be a supportive source along the way and continue to interject the things that are important like did you make sure you sought this perspective on that, add in the little checks and balances along the way you know (Greg).

The maturity of these leaders was quite evident in the composure they had in talking to certain points. They all understood that you get to a point where you want to delegate projects to the student-staff, who are ready for those challenges. However, it is very important to let those employees know that you are around to support them when needed but also understand that things don't always work out as we expect. These are important learning and teachable moments which contribute enormously to their growth and development as leaders themselves. In speaking with John, he was forthright, he makes sure his student-staff and even his full-time staff earned his trust with successfully completing smaller tasks and projects appropriate for them. Once they mature in their roles, build that rapport and he trusts them, they know they have his full support moving forward. Greg discussed this with the following statement:

No that's your portfolio I want you to run with that, I want you to lead that but that being really available and readily available for you know, for what it takes to kind of get there and stuff, and then being ok with it not working out all of the time and you know doing the lessons learned kind of stuff and going from there (Greg).

In the Situational Leadership II model, the followers or in this case the student-staff will, in time, evolve from Development level 1 to Development level 4. It is extremely important for

the leaders to adapt their leadership style to be able to align with the student-staff's development level Greg spoke to this process in his own words:

You have to carve out the time and space to like bring them along a little differently to inspire some of that risk taking but measured risk taking and maybe paint the box a little bit more but I think with some more experience you can loosen up on some of those things a little bit more (Greg).

As younger leaders take charge and start leading their teams, the tendency seems to be focussed on the results of the programming they are delivering. What is interesting, is that as the leaders evolve and mature themselves, they start to realize that the focus should not simply be on the results and success of the programs, it is much more valuable to focus on the development and evolution of the student-staff. When this happens, the programming results will come. Greg elaborates on this point:

You know they're new, they have enthusiasm, they've got ideas so you want to let them run loose a little bit and then reel them in a little maybe afterwards, but it's hard to do right, and the confidence is not always there either so I try to think through what are the things I want to do to build their confidence and I focus a little bit more on the development of the individual, whereas after they have been in a little bit longer, you never want to not focus on the development of the individual because I think that is where we are all guilty of maybe, we've done some development for them and know it is just about getting a results (Greg).

Although leaders start to delegate more and more to student-leaders, they still must be present to ensure the student-leaders still have the coaching and support from the leader to ensure

they are also using an appropriate leadership style. Harold explained what he must do to ensure his leaders are using the appropriate leadership style with the younger student-staff:

I know a lot of my student leaders or coordinators sometimes are very directive with the students or aren't flexible enough and get wound up, and I always tell them, don't worry about it they will be fine right (Harold).

After years of being a leader, Harold explained that over time he has learned to understand his role and how to get the best out of his student leaders, "I have learned that, as to be more of a facilitating as opposed to directing things and I think that is something I had to grow and evolve with over time, as I grew as a leader" (Harold). Again, in most of the interviews I conducted, it was quite evident how much experience these Campus Recreation professionals really had. Listening to them talk about how they lead their teams, and the understanding of each team member was quite remarkable. Harold spoke about leading his student leaders and really getting them to understand how to lead their peers as they grow, develop, and evolve:

You are kind of feeling them out a little bit in their first time working with you, getting an understanding of their dedication, their commitment, their ability to work on their own. You are kind of analysing, and you are going to be a little more directive and a little more structured with them (Harold).

It is very important to realize that the reflections and perspectives that others have are quite valuable. Giving people that time and space can be very inspirational and can really work at strengthening your team. Ivy speaks to this point:

I think leadership, in many instances, is being the person who isn't speaking and allowing the strengths and experiences and knowledge to come out in the room and that is really where true and influential leadership comes from is just bringing out the strengths of other people and making them work together (Ivy).

Throughout their careers, most of these Campus Recreation professionals have changed jobs, sectors, departments or even institutions. What is important to recognize is that not every team can be managed the same, as every single student-staff has their own pace of growth, development, and evolution therefore, it is still important that the leaders recognize what maturity level their subordinates are to use the appropriate leadership style with them. When changing teams, there are many adjustments to be made but getting to know your team is the most important. Ivy spoke about her experience leaving a strong leadership team and having to start from the ground up with her new team:

I really had to rethink my idea of leadership and the way that I lead folks and a second reason for that is not just the processes and the work I was doing operationally, but also the team I was working with, the majority them really only thrived when I gave the explicit instructions and tell them exactly how to do things. And for a while I wasn't doing that, because I wasn't used to micromanaging and doing a lot of that detailed here's how to do it, but I found over time that they needed that and wanted that from me, so I had to really shift the way I was thinking (Ivy).

When Campus Recreation professionals are strong leaders, they are most times left alone to make decisions and figure things out on their own. It is nice to have that trust, however, leaders also need mentors and leaders to drive and support them.

In the Situational Leadership II model, it is quite clear that it takes an alignment of maturity level of the follower with the leadership style of the leader to optimize the leader/follower relationship and ensuring the growth and development happens. Tailoring the leadership style to match the maturity level of the incumbent will help the leaders resonate with the follower and ensure they are leading most effectively. Ivy describes this very well in her statement:

The key is to try and tailor your leadership style, which is what I have learned more so in the past. I mean I have always had it a little in my teaching as you always have to help everyone in a slightly different way or at least you have to have several tools in your tool box as separate resources, if you don't have different teaching styles or different leadership styles, then you are really going to limit yourself and you are only going help or grow and develop a few people and those are kind of the people you are going to resonate with and the others you are going to lose (Ivy).

It is quite common for leaders to have their preferred leadership styles, but it is quite crucial for them to be aware of how to use the other leadership styles to ensure they are leading as effective as possible to help their subordinates develop and mature. It may sometimes be uncomfortable but that is simply how leaders continue to learn, develop, and evolve. In Campus Recreation, we deal with many employees at many different stages of maturity. To be an effective leader, one must learn to adapt and be able to use different leadership styles in working with different team members. Ivy talks to this point as she refers to her various team members:

I have had to change my leadership style for some of those people and regularly, so I have to switch back and forth with those different hats depending on who I am working with (Ivy).

Sometimes there is a harsh reality of being a leader, is the fact that some team members have different views on leadership and how they would like to be led. Ivy makes a powerful statement about this piece: “I think that is part of being a leader, or being a manager or director, you have to accept that not everyone wants to be lead and not everyone wants to be led by you (Ivy).”

Knowing about the various leadership styles is one thing but being able to master them is another. One thing for sure is that Campus Recreation professionals must know when to use what styles and who to use them with. This is the importance of getting to know your team. John speaks to this point and was clear in his response: “And I think a good leader is able to really pivot when you need to pivot and work with different people in different ways. If your leadership styles is one way, you are toast (John).” Again, understanding the value of the various leadership styles is quite important and knowing when and how to use them is even more valuable. Ivy makes an interesting comment: “A good leader is able to have many leadership styles and I would hate to think I am a one style leadership leader, because if I am, then I am not who I thought I am (Ivy).”

Chapter 5 – Interpretation of results, Conclusion and Recommendations

Interpretation of the results

The Leaders

All ten of the Campus Recreation professionals interviewed grew up involved in recreational sports or competitive sports and this has been a passion for them their entire lives. The fact that they are so passionate about recreation and sports, motivates them to share that passion with their employees. This passion helps keep them engaged at work and as noted by Buckingham and Coffman (1999), they found generally people have a consensus that employees, who are engaged at work, will generally stay in their positions longer.

The onboarding and training were very lax or even non-existent for each and every one of the interviewees' in their leadership roles. Erin spoke to this point:

That has been my biggest thing even to now, when we watch the new staff come on, there is absolutely zero onboarding. And it's terrible because that is your first impression of the organization and you know, a lot of us now will just kind of jump in and offer to spend a day with them and share what we know about their area even if we don't over see it or haven't been in the job (Erin).

With no onboarding plan, nor introduction to the concept of a reputable leadership model, these Campus Recreation professionals were left to navigate their positions on their own. It is only with time, trial and error, in which they were able to learn what worked best for them and their teams. Although they had not been introduced to a reputable leadership model like Situational Leadership II, they still, with time, found their way to adapt their leadership styles

and help their employees evolve within their roles. Since they had worked in the field, there was an expectation to succeed. As noted by Nunes and Baker (2002), many recreational sport leaders turn to literature in sport, education, and business for leadership advice, however this information fails to provide effective guidelines for these such leaders. They suggest these leaders look at their own leadership techniques to further enhance and develop their personal skills and abilities. Practicing self-reflection was such a powerful piece, and again, this was not something these Campus Recreation professionals were taught, it was really something they had to figure out and realize that to be better leaders, they must self-reflect to grow, develop, and evolve as leaders and as people themselves.

The Leadership style and employee development

Through my observation, all the Campus Recreation professionals I interviewed do adapt their leadership styles to match the development level (competence and commitment) of their student-employees to help them progress and evolve in their roles. Again, this was all done with much practice over the years and learning and developing from their own mistakes. André spoke to this point:

With our staff what I try to focus on is accountability. And that its ok to make mistakes, that's part of life and this is how you grow. But when you do make a mistake, own up to your mistake...I think that for me is what's changed, when I make a mistake, I am not afraid to admit that I make mistakes anymore, I think that help me kind of evolve as a leader (André).

This is a great way for their employees to learn and grow as they mature through this critical development time in their lives. This is crucial to help set them up for success in the

future. All the Campus Recreation professionals interviewed were extremely well experienced and well versed in their positions within their respective departments. It was quite clear they all have their own personality traits to complement their leadership styles and navigate their way through their work by providing the best leadership qualities for their respective teams to achieve their departmental and institutional goals. Toperzer, et al., (2011) stated this well as they mentioned “student employees play a vital role in the leadership and delivery of campus recreation programs. Therefore, campus recreation professionals have a unique opportunity to contribute to their development” (p. 145). After years of trial and error, these Campus Recreation professionals all worked very hard to practice empathy, building professional relationships with their employees, and they each spent lots of time self-reflecting on how they handled various situations and how to improve for future situations. Investing time in these three components were great ways for these leaders to understand where their employees were coming from, what stressors their student-staff are dealing with outside of work and doing their best to relate to them. In the Situational Leadership II model, in order to best understand the competence and the commitment levels of your employees, is to get to know them and understand what their needs are for the tasks at hand, and what is the best leadership style to support them to them develop, grow and evolve.

Eight of the Campus Recreation professionals interviewed were promoted and have moved up through the ranks because they were great at their jobs, and they were called upon to take the next step in leadership and lead larger teams at the same institution. Two had even changed organizations/institutions to get to that next opportunity to challenge the next level of leadership. These leaders had to learn how to manage and lead a large team with little to no help,

minimal onboarding, and no training in leadership. There was very little to no onboarding in their new roles, let alone any fundamental training opportunities to set these leaders up for success at the early stages of their careers in management and leadership. Based on Fisher's (2005) work, she expressed that approximately 35% of managers who begin in a new position fail in the new position and leave their job or they are terminated from their position within the first eighteen months. From that 35%, sixty percent of the managers have difficulty creating meaningful relationships with co-workers and this is a key factor for their failure in those roles.

These Campus Recreation professionals all work very hard to get to know their staff, understand what drives them, and do their best to set their student-staff up for success. Most of this took years to learn and optimize their own ways of leading their teams, through trial and error and many hours of self-reflection. It is not because you are good at your current job, that you are ready to be a good leader, it simply means you are good at your current job. Earning a promotion to be a leader is a great accomplishment, and a validation of the hard work and dedication one has towards their career and personal development. Toperzer, et al., (2011), stated "student employees play a vital role in the leadership and delivery of campus recreation programs. Therefore, campus recreation professionals have a unique opportunity to contribute to their development" (p. 145). To help maximize the efficiencies of these leaders, it is important for Campus Recreation departments to create appropriate onboarding plans, and succession plans for professional and personal development opportunities for their employees. In addition, it would be quite valuable to implement or even develop a strategic leadership training to offer all leaders to maximize their leadership capacities and complement their roles not simply let them learn through trial and error. Introducing a tested leadership model like Hersey and Blanchard's

Situational Leadership II model or other tested models, could go a long way in fast tracking new leaders' understanding of leadership development and how it is a never-ending learning process for both leaders and followers, and how there are steps for this to be done effectively. Ensuring they are following these steps and continuously communicating with their followers/employees to make sure they can keep track of their progress, work on deficiencies through development and continue to challenge their employees to develop and evolve in their current roles and beyond. Greg summed this up well in his statement:

You know they're new, they have enthusiasm, they've got ideas so you want to let them run loose a little bit and then reel them in a little maybe afterwards, but it's hard to do right, and the confidence is not always there either so I try to think through what are the things I want to do to build their confidence and I focus a little bit more on the development of the individual, whereas after they have been in a little bit longer, you never want to not focus on the development of the individual because I think that is where we are all guilty of maybe, we've done some development for them and know it is just about getting a results (Greg).

Communication is another key to success as a leader. Ensuring your employees know what the expectations are is critical. Fred elaborated on his expectations of his student-staff:

I expect you, once you are in your second term or second year with us that you are not just delivering our product, but you are thinking about how it is delivered and how it can be delivered more effectively, when I say product, I think both on the participant and on the staff side, both pieces being key pieces of the product (Fred).

Strong communication and setting appropriate expectations for the student-staff are important to pushing them slightly out of their comfort zone, to allow for the development and evolution to happen.

Campus Recreation professionals' leadership styles and employee evolution

As the Campus Recreation professionals developed in their leadership roles, the more comfortable they were dealing with new staff and even their returning staff. It is quite simple to onboard a new employee with the appropriate training and resources necessary, however, returning employees have to be challenged to ensure they are kept engaged at work. The Situational Leadership II model is an evolutionary model. As the employees increase their competence level, the leaders should continue to challenge their employees and encourage this development. This is where the importance of knowing the employees comes into play, as the leaders can work with them and challenge them at their appropriate level. Darren elaborated on this:

I want them to evolve, you will never stay motivated if you do the exact same thing over and over and over for four months, you want to look at the position and how you can grow it, and how you can put your own personal stamp on it (Darren).

In some cases, it can be quite the opposite. Ivy referred to a team she led, and although the employees had been working there for a long time, they were still driven by a very directive style of leadership:

I really had to rethink my idea of leadership and the way that I lead folks and a second reason for that is not just the processes and the work I was doing operationally, but also

the team I was working with, the majority of them really only thrived when I gave the explicit instructions and tell them exactly how to do things. And for a while I wasn't doing that, because I wasn't used to micromanaging and doing a lot of that detailed here's how to do it, but I found over time that they needed that and wanted that from me, so I had to really shift the way I was thinking (Ivy).

The important part is the leaders have to get to know their employees in order to be able to best assess their employee's development levels and see what style would fit them based on their experience in the role and their current development level. If done effectively, the employees will develop and evolve in their roles as well as build the relationship and trust with their leader. In addition, if the use of the leadership model is done effectively it could lead to increase productivity. Ghazzawi et al., (2017), conducted a study on Situational Leadership and its effectiveness in rising employee productivity in hospital workers and they found that the Hersey and Blanchard model increased employees' task productivity and if leaders increased their relationship behaviour in getting to know their employees, which would help increase their employees' productivity (pp. 108-109).

The Campus Recreation Leader: A generic profile

After completing the interviews and the analysis of the interviews, it was refreshing to see how much these Campus Recreation professionals cared about the development and evolution of their staff. These individuals are so engaged and work so hard to provide a safe and friendly place to work. They all realize the important their role is in terms of providing that structure and support for their employees to ensure they succeed. With their years of experience, they are able to practice empathy, put themselves in the shoes of their employees realizing that

they to have been there once and understand their employees must learn sometimes from their mistakes and sometimes from others' mistakes. A big piece with self-reflection is they to realize they can learn and continue to develop. Even though they have been doing this for a long time, they still constantly strive to be better as leaders and to continuously develop the next generation of leaders. These individuals take the time to get to know their employees, understanding that work is not always the student-employee's priority, therefore, taking the time to get to know them and understanding their personal struggles is extremely important. Showing your employees that you care can go along way in building trust and keeping them engaged to be willing to do good work when at work. They have learned over time that they do have to change their style of leadership depending on the situation and depending on the development level of the employee with whom they are working. Most times this is done without even understanding or knowing the concept of situational leadership, these individuals did not refer to a model or a theory they were basing everything on their experience. These individuals are doing such a great job and I feel that this could have been fast tracked if they would have been introduced to a structured onboarding plan and a leadership model earlier on in their careers.

Study quality

It was important to note my positionality in this study, as I do have intersecting identities. I am a white able-bodied man with an undergraduate degree in Human Kinetics and am pursuing a master's degree of Arts in Human Kinetics. In addition, I have over twenty (20) years of experience working as a Campus Recreation professional. Therefore, I am cognizant that my angle of vision comes with many forms of privileges that continuously influence how I see the

world. I truly feel that my experience in the field helped me with the interviews and with the interpretation of the data, as I have been living a parallel experience for throughout my professional career in Campus Recreation.

I consciously followed certain steps to ensure study quality for my research. To begin, I really wanted to focus on the “very large” institutions in Ontario, each institution consisting of over 20,000 students. I personally had to obtain ethical approval from all 10 institutions, and I personally contacted each of the Athletics and Recreation Directors asking them to forward my request to their Campus Recreation professionals. I was looking to recruit participants who had a minimum of 5 years of experience and all the participants I selected easily surpassed the minimum requirement. In conducting this basic qualitative research, I attempted to establish some, as Guba and Lincoln, 2005 stated “trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, 196). I created the interview guide myself, in collaboration with my supervisor, using our experience and asking questions I felt were pertinent in the context of this study, having been in the field for so long. I felt this catalyst for action began after one of my interviews, as one of my participants asked if he could use my interview guide to ask these questions to his leadership team and get them to start thinking about leadership and start reflecting about how they lead their teams of employees. I immersed myself in the data, from the interviews to the transcription which I had completed verbatim, and I used the Thematic Analysis as my analytic approach to identify my themes and sub-themes using the Braun, Clarke and Weate’s six-phase model (Braun, et al., 2016). I spent countless hours immersed in and analyzing the data, from transcribing the data verbatim, to coding and extracting as much rich data from my participants as possible. Therefore, I have gone through extensive processes in an

attempt to ensure the quality of this study. The results of my thesis may be a great resource for them to evaluate how they have been operating or even better yet, provide them with some insight to evolve and develop as professionals, as leaders and as people.

Limitations

I am a novice researcher; therefore, many aspects of the research stages were new learning experiences. The volume of the transcripts can be overwhelming in the data collection and data analysis phases of the research process. By approaching all these interviews in a very professional manner, it was in the best interest of the Campus Recreation professionals to be honest and genuine. All interviews were completed virtually over the internet. Although the interviews went very well and there were minimal technical difficulties, with some lagging in speech or some choppiness in slightly bad connections. Interviewing in person would have been preferred. However, I realize this is common and as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain: “There can be problems with audio recording equipment, as voices sometimes break up on cell phones or over Skype or other computer mediated venues, which can cause frustration for both the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 117). I felt the human aspect was taken away and I could not really get a full appreciation from their body language to the passion in their voice for what they were referring to. I felt the computers created a barrier and do feel that more probing questions could have been posed if we were in person, as the computer technology seemed to make it a little less personal.

This research was limited to the 10 very large universities in Ontario, Canada, therefore, this was a relatively small sample size of participants. With the many post-secondary institution

in Canada and all over the world, much more data could be collected to enhance the sample size of the study participants. In addition, this research focused solely on the 10 leaders, and not the employees who worked for them or who currently work for them.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it is not solely about using the Situational Leadership II model. It is important that the leaders be introduced to or chose a reputable leadership model that fits their needs and their own philosophy. If they could at least be introduced to the idea of a leadership model and find a theory or a model that is in line with their personal philosophy, this could be used to help guide them as they navigate through leading their large teams of employees. The ability to understand and follow a leadership model to help guide these leaders would help structure and instill some employee development plans for their teams. Introducing a structured onboarding plan for leaders to encourage them to meet and create relationships with their colleagues and employees, would go a long way in helping with the retention of these leaders. What is remarkable is that all the Campus Recreation professional whom I interviewed, all developed and evolved throughout their careers and as John stated, “there were some scraped knees and toes along the way”, referring to the learning curve in leadership and going through many trial and error periods, when much of this could have been avoided. If only an onboarding plan and a leadership model or theory would have been introduced for these individuals to use as a guide when they started out, how much better would their experience and the student-employees’ experiences have been if there were a little more structure instilled?

Again, the Situational Leadership II model, is an evolutionary model which can help leaders identify which style of leadership they should use based on the individuals they are

working with. It is not always intuitive for newer leaders to know this information. Each one of the Campus Recreation professionals were simply thrown into their roles with very little guidance or support and were simply expected to succeed. As discussed throughout Chapter 4, the misalignment of leadership styles may lead to these leaders micromanaging their teams if they are expected to get their teams to do their job, the only way they know how. The resounding consensus amongst the Campus Recreation professionals was that they all despised micromanagement. This misalignment of leadership style and employee development level was something each of them witnessed firsthand in their past employment experiences and knew it was not a style of leadership they would ever adopt as a leader. Through these interviews I heard the Campus Recreation professionals talk about giving their staff the time and space to be creative and make the programs their own, rewarding their employees by deflecting any praise to them, this is the importance of knowing your team members and understanding what drives them, how to lead them, how to empower them and how to provide them with the support they need to develop in their positions and as people. It was great to hear that they eventually got to this point, as this is very much in line with the Situational Leadership II model.

The resiliency and perseverance of these Campus Recreation professionals is quite remarkable, and they all succeed based on their determination and absolute care for what they believe in within Campus Recreation. These are very special people who have committed whole heartedly to their professions, and to their teams of employees. Knowing how to do a job is one thing but leading a large team to complete their jobs and ensure they are achieving a common goal, is entirely different. We cannot undervalue the art of leadership, a successful onboarding plan and what it takes to be a successful and strong leader. We cannot expect our student-

employees to be well guided, mentored and supported if our leaders are not given the tools and resources to facilitate this entire process. Provide the appropriate training, guidance, professional development, and framework for these leaders to prosper and succeed in their roles, and in turn, let them become the best leaders possible for them to create the next generation of leaders.

Recommendations

Theoretical: Using the Situational Leadership II model as my theoretical framework was a great model to use as a back drop for this study. It helped as a guide and helped make sense the importance of having a reputable leadership model to use as a reference in learning about yourself as a leader and in educating leaders on how to develop employees to be leaders themselves. It is not about using the SLII model, it is simply about finding a reputable and tested leadership model that can help guide leaders as they continue to develop as leaders and as people.

Research: Throughout my research, I only examined the leadership styles and strategies from Campus Recreation professionals within very large universities in Ontario, Canada. For future studies, I would recommend comparing the leadership styles and strategies used by Campus Recreational professionals in various sized institutions across the country, across North America or even around the world. It would be interesting to see if Campus Recreation departments are using a proven Leadership Model to help train and prepare their Campus Recreation professionals for the leadership roles, they are in. The more leaders out there that are properly trained, can really have a positive impact on the student experience and in developing the next generation of leaders.

Another angle which could be explored would be interviewing some of the student-employees who have worked for these leaders in the past, and even some current student-employees of theirs to get their various perspectives on the leadership styles their supervisors/leaders had. Understanding the correlations or differences in perspectives between the leaders and subordinates could be another aspect to analyze in order to provide more pertinent feedback to the leaders to enhance their development and growth as leaders.

Professional: Using an established and recognized leadership model can go a long way in helping leaders continue to develop and focus on helping their employees develop and evolve. Through this research, I found it interesting that many of the leaders have gotten to a point in their careers that they have figured out what worked for them over time, but this could have been fast tracked if they would have been introduced to a leadership model and a structured onboarding plan earlier on in their career to help align them and provide them with a guide on how to address certain situations and what best practice to use with various development levels of employees. Lastly, I found it very interesting to see how much of an impact the lack of onboarding had on these Campus Recreation Professionals. They felt unsupported and left to figure their role out on their own. Ensuring a proper and complete onboarding plan is established for new employees, both full-time and part-time, would go a long way in contributing to all employees' success at all levels, engagement in their workplace and in the end a greater student experience.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Note to the interviewer:

The present study will provide insight on leadership styles and strategies adopted by Campus Recreation Professionals in the performance of their duties. More specifically, this research will inform on strategies used by leaders to focus on the development of their student-staff.

1. How do campus recreation professionals believe their leadership styles and strategies influence employee development and evolution?
2. Do campus recreation professionals adapt their leadership styles as their student-employees evolve in their roles?

Introduction: tell me about yourself.

1. Tell me about yourself (where did you grow up, what are your interests, what activities or sports did you take part in as a child, adolescent, and now as an adult).
2. What is your academic background?
3. How did you get started as a professional in Campus Recreation?

Your work in Campus Recreation: tell me about your work in Campus Recreation

4. What were your biggest influences in helping you chose to pursue your professional career in Campus Recreation?
5. Who were your biggest influences in helping you chose to pursue your professional career in Campus Recreation?
6. How do you feel your previous and/or current supervisors contributed to your development and evolution of your professional career in Campus Recreation?
7. Can you describe your onboarding process when you first started as a full-time professional in Campus Recreation?
8. What do you feel helped you develop in your leadership role?
 - a. Did your leadership development involve any specific training or education on the topic of 'leadership'?

Your Leadership: tell me about yourself as a leader:

9. What is your definition of leadership?
10. Can you describe for me how you approach leadership in your current role?
11. What formal professional development opportunities, if any, have you had which have helped you develop as a leader in Campus Recreation?

12. In terms of leadership skills, what do you feel you require in terms of resources, to achieve your own future career aspirations?

- a. What are your long-term career aspirations?

Development and Evolution: tell me about your work in developing future leaders:

13. What characteristics do you feel make you a leader for your team?

- a. Over the years as you evolve as a leader in Campus Recreation, how have these characteristics changed for you in order to help the development of your student-employees?

14. What leadership style or styles do you feel you employ to bring out the best out in your employees?

- a. Can you explain any practical or real life examples of those strategies helping your employees develop in their work environment?
- b. Could you explain whether you adjust your leadership style when dealing with a first year employee versus a 3rd or 4th year employee?
 - a) If so, what might influence your decision to adapt your leadership style when working with different employees? (probing question)

15. What do you feel a leader in Campus Recreation should do to facilitate a positive work experience for their employees?

16. How do you feel the leaders in Campus Recreation at your institution are trained to facilitate and provide a positive work experience in order for the student-employees to develop and evolve in their positions?

Leadership Challenges: tell me about the challenges you face as a leader

17. What leadership challenges do you face as a leader that you feel hinder your ability to support the development of your student-staff?

18. What leadership challenges do you feel you have overcome throughout your evolution as a Campus Recreation professional?

- a. In your opinion, what changed in order for you to successfully overcome such challenges? (probing question)

19. What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?

- a. Which strategies worked best with new employees, more experienced employees? (probing question)

20. What leadership challenges do you feel future Campus Recreation Professionals will face in the future?

Leadership Rewards: tell me about the rewards as a leader

21. What are your biggest rewards in leading your team of student-staff?

- a. Can you tell me about your personal satisfaction in leading your student-staff? (probing question)
- b. How do you feel when you help your student-staff succeed? (probing question)

- c. Can you tell me how you feel when you accomplish goals with your team? (probing question)
- d. How do you feel when you hear positive feedback from the student population regarding your programming and /or your student-staff? (probing question)

Conclusion: any closing remarks...

22. Is there anything else you would like to add or elaborate on as a conclusion to this interview?

Appendix B

Ethics documentation

07/04/2020

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number

H-03-20-5455

Titre du projet / Project Title

Examining the Perspectives of
Campus Recreation
Professionals' on the Evolution of
their Leadership Styles and
Strategies

Type de projet / Project Type

Thèse de maîtrise / Master's
thesis

Statut du projet / Project Status

Approuvé / Approved

Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

07/04/2020

Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

06/04/2021

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

**Chercheur /
Researcher**

Affiliation

Role

Lenny SABOURIN

École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human
Kinetics

Chercheur Principal / Principal
Investigator

François GRAVELLE

École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human
Kinetics

Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'Université d'Ottawa, opérant conformément à l'*Énoncé de politique des Trois conseils* (2014) et toutes autres lois et tous règlements applicables, a examiné et approuvé la demande d'éthique du projet de recherche ci-nommé.

L'approbation est valide pour la durée indiquée plus haut et est sujette aux conditions énumérées dans la section intitulée "Conditions Spéciales ou Commentaires". Le formulaire « Renouvellement ou Fermeture de Projet » doit être complété quatre semaines avant la date d'échéance indiquée ci-haut afin de demander un renouvellement de cette approbation éthique ou afin de fermer le dossier.

Toutes modifications apportées au projet doivent être approuvées par le CÉR avant leur mise en place, sauf si le participant doit être retiré en raison d'un danger immédiat ou s'il s'agit d'un changement ayant trait à des éléments administratifs ou logistiques du projet. Les chercheurs doivent aviser le CÉR dans les plus brefs délais de tout changement pouvant augmenter le niveau de risque aux participants ou pouvant affecter considérablement le déroulement du projet, rapporter tout événement imprévu ou indésirable et soumettre toute nouvelle information pouvant nuire à la conduite du projet ou à la sécurité des participants.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, which operates in accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2014) and other applicable laws and regulations, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above-named research project.

Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and is subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions or Comments". The "Renewal/Project Closure" form must be completed four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval or closure of the file.

Any changes made to the project must be approved by the REB before being implemented, except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) only pertain to administrative or logistical components of the project. Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes that increase the risk to participant(s), any changes that considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project or the safety of the participant(s).

Kim THOMPSON

Responsable d'éthique en recherche / Protocol Officer

Pour/For **Daniel LAGAREC** Président(e) du/ Chair of the **Comité d'éthique de la recherche en sciences de la santé et sciences / Health Sciences and Sciences Research Ethics Board**

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS

Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE



Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Lenny Sabourin

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: 21 May, 2020

Appendix C

Recruitment Documents

Permission and Recommendation letter (higher administration)



Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences
de la santé

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health
Sciences

March 29th, 2020

Dear ...,

I am a researcher at the University of Ottawa conducting a study in the context of leadership in Campus Recreation, in collaboration with my thesis supervisor Dr. Francois Gravelle, Ph.D., from the School of Human Kinetics. I would like to interview a member of your institution to participate in a research project titled "Examining the perspectives of Campus Recreation Professionals' on the evolution of their leadership styles and strategies".

The purpose of this study is to examine campus recreation professionals' perspectives on their leadership styles and strategies. This study aims at increasing campus recreation professionals' awareness of how campus recreation professionals' leadership styles and strategies can be optimized for their professional development and the betterment of their employees' development as well as the overall student experience.

To participate in this study, I am seeking campus recreation professionals with a minimum of five years of professional experience in campus recreation managing a team of employees. I strategically chose a minimum of five years of experience in management to ensure the campus recreation professionals selected have at a minimum, been through an entire cycle of a typical four year university degree. This way, campus recreation professionals would have experienced the duration of at least one full cycle or cohort of students and having dealt with the departure of employees through namely attrition as well as dealt with managing the recruiting, hiring, on boarding, training, scheduling, supervising and remuneration of new student-employees.

Participating in this study will consist of taking part in one semi-structured interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded, and scheduled at a time and location that is most convenient for the participant or through telephone/Skype/Facetime. Participating in this study is voluntary and participants meeting the aforementioned criteria will be chosen on a first come, first served basis.

☎ 613-562-5432
📠 613-562-5437

451 Smyth (3028)
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www.uOttawa.ca



uOttawa

Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences
de la santé

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health
Sciences

I would like to ask your permission to interview a Campus Recreation Professional on your team as well as receive a recommendation from you as to who would be the Campus Recreation Professional who would best meet our aforementioned criteria.

Thank you for your consideration in providing me with the permission and your recommendation for a potential participant for this study.

Lenny Sabourin MA (c), Human Kinetics

☎ 613-562-5432
📠 613-562-5437

451 Smyth (3028)
Ottawa ON K1H 8M5 Canada
www.uOttawa.ca

Lettre de permission et de recommandation (haute administration)

Le 29 mars, 2020



uOttawa

Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences
de la santé

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health
Sciences

Chère ...,

Je suis un chercheur à l'Université d'Ottawa menant une recherche en collaboration avec Dr. François Gravelle, dans le contexte du leadership dans les secteurs récréatifs. Je désire passer un de vos gestionnaires en entrevue pour mon projet de recherche. Le projet s'intitule examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership.

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership. L'étude vise à aider les professionnels des secteurs récréatifs à reconnaître que les styles et stratégies de leadership peuvent être optimisés pour leur développement professionnel, le développement de leurs employés et aussi leurs expériences étudiantes.

Pour participer dans cette étude, je cherche des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs qui ont un minimum de 5 ans d'expérience de travail dans les secteurs récréatifs en gérant une équipe d'employés. J'ai choisi un minimum de cinq ans d'expérience en gestion pour assurer que les professionnels des secteurs récréatifs ont eu la chance de passer au moins un cycle complet de quatre ans. De cette façon, ces professionnels auront l'expérience avec la graduation des employés et le recrutement de nouveaux employés y compris la période d'embauche, la formations, la création des horaires, la supervision, la rémunération des nouveaux employés.

La participation à l'étude consistera de participer à une entrevue avec le chercheur primaire. La durée de l'entrevue sera entre 60 à 90 minutes. L'entrevue sera enregistrée et cédulé pour un temps qui convient aux participants en personne, par téléphone/Skype/Facetime.

La participation dans cette étude est complètement volontaire et les participants seront choisi sur le principe du premier arrivé, premier servi.

☎ 613-562-5432
📠 613-562-5437

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de la santé

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Faculty of Health
Sciences

Je demande pour votre permission pour passer un de vos professionnels des secteurs récréatifs et aussi pour votre recommandation afin de choisir une personne dans votre équipe qui rencontre tous les critères mentionnés ci-dessus.

Merci pour votre considération en participant à cette étude.

Lenny Sabourin MAHK (c)

☎ 613-562-5432
📠 613-562-5437

451 Smyth (3028)
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Participant recruitment letter

March 29th, 2020



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Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences
de la santé

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Health
Sciences

Dear ...,

I am a researcher at the University of Ottawa conducting a study in the context of leadership in Campus Recreation, in collaboration with my thesis supervisor Dr. Francois Gravelle, Ph.D., from the School of Human Kinetics. I would like to interview a member of your institution to participate in a research project titled "Examining the perspectives of Campus Recreation Professionals' on the evolution of their leadership styles and strategies".

The purpose of this study is to examine campus recreation professionals' perspectives on their leadership styles and strategies. This study aims at increasing campus recreation professionals' awareness of how campus recreation professionals' leadership styles and strategies can be optimized for their professional development and the betterment of their employees' development as well as the overall student experience.

To participate in this study, I am seeking campus recreation professionals with a minimum of five years of professional experience in campus recreation managing a team of employees. I strategically chose a minimum of five years of experience in management to ensure the campus recreation professionals selected have at a minimum, been through an entire cycle of a typical four year university degree. This way, campus recreation professionals would have experienced the duration of at least one full cycle or cohort of students and having dealt with the departure of employees through namely attrition as well as dealt with managing the recruiting, hiring, on boarding, training, scheduling, supervising and remuneration of new student-employees.

Participating in this study will consist of taking part in one semi-structured interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview will be audio recorded, and scheduled at a time and location that is most convenient for the participant or through telephone/Skype/Facetime. Participating in this study is voluntary and participants meeting the aforementioned criteria will be chosen on a first come, first served basis.

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Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study.

Lenny Sabourin MA (c), Human Kinetics

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Lettre de recrutement



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Le 29 mars, 2020

Chère ...,

Je suis un chercheur à l'Université d'Ottawa menant une recherche en collaboration avec Dr. François Gravelle, dans le contexte du leadership dans les secteurs récréatifs. Je désire passer un professionnel des secteurs récréatifs en entrevue pour mon projet de recherche. Le projet s'intitule examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership.

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership. L'étude vise à aider les professionnels des secteurs récréatifs à reconnaître que les styles et stratégies de leadership peuvent être optimisés pour leur développement professionnel, le développement de leurs employés et aussi leurs expériences étudiantes.

Pour participer dans cette étude, je cherche des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs qui ont un minimum de 5 ans d'expérience de travail dans les secteurs récréatifs en gérant une équipe d'employés. J'ai choisi un minimum de cinq ans d'expérience en gestion pour assurer que les professionnels des secteurs récréatifs ont eu la chance de passer au moins un cycle complet de quatre ans. De cette façon, ces professionnels auront l'expérience avec la graduation des employés et le recrutement de nouveaux employés y compris la période d'embauche, la formations, la création des horaires, la supervision, la rémunération des nouveaux employés.

La participation à l'étude consistera de participer à une entrevue avec le chercheur primaire. La durée de l'entrevue sera entre 60 à 90 minutes. L'entrevue sera enregistrée et cédulé pour un temps qui convient aux participants en personne, par téléphone/Skype/Facetime.

La participation dans cette étude est complètement volontaire et les participants seront choisi sur le principe du premier arrivé, premier servi.

Merci pour votre considération en participant à cette étude.

Lenny Sabourin MAHK (c)

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Consent Form



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Consent Form

Title of the study: Examining the Perspectives of Campus Recreation Professionals' on the Evolution of their Leadership Styles and Strategies

Primary Researcher:

Lenny Sabourin, MHK. Candidate
~~School~~ of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
~~Faculty~~ of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

Research Supervisor:

François Gravelle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor / Professeur agrégé
~~School~~ of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
~~Faculty~~ of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Lenny Sabourin and Dr. François Gravelle as part of Mr. Sabourin's Master's Thesis.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to examine the perspectives of Campus Recreation Professionals' on the evolution of their leadership styles and strategies.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of participating in an interview with the primary researcher. The duration of the interview should range between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview will be conducted by phone or virtually (Skype) or equivalent.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer my personal experience as a leader in campus recreation. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to ensure my identity and my institution remain anonymous. As a participant and based on this study, I will be invited to discuss my leadership style. If I have any concerns I can inform the researcher. I do understand I can withdraw from the research at any time or refuse to answer any question that would make me feel uncomfortable.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help campus recreation professionals better understand the impact of their work on their teams of employees.

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Confidentiality: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for data analysis and for the researcher's interpretation of my experience. My identity will be protected in the following manner, as confidentiality will be protected by using pseudonyms to ensure none of the participants' actual names are used in the thesis document. The name of the participant's institution and other contextual information will be masked to ensure that participants are de-identified.

Recording of interviews: In order to appropriately analyze the data, I understand the researcher will be recording the audio and video of our interview.

I authorize the researcher to record the video of the interview YES ☐ NO ☐

I authorize the researcher to record the audio of the interview YES ☐ NO ☐

Conservation of data: The data collected both hard copy and electronic data (recordings of interviews, transcripts, etc.) will be kept in a secure manner by being saved and securely password protected on an encrypted USB drive or encrypted external hard drive. All electronic versions of the transcripts will be saved and securely password protected on the primary researcher's laptop and all hard copies of transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the primary researcher's office for 10 years following the submission of the thesis document.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be disposed of appropriately (deleted if electronic and all hard copies will be shredded).

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Lenny Sabourin of the School of Human Kinetics, in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa, which research is under the supervision of Dr. François Gravelle.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

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Lettre de consentement

Titre d'étude: Examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership.

Chercheur primaire:

Lenny Sabourin, MHK. (c)
School of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
Faculty of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

Superviseur:

François Gravelle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor / Professeur agrégé
School of Human Kinetics / École des sciences de l'activité physique
Faculty of Health Sciences / Faculté des sciences de la santé
University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

Invitation à participer: Je suis invité à participer dans l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus mené par Lenny Sabourin and Dr. François Gravelle. Le projet de recherche est pour la thèse de maîtrise à M. Sabourin.

But de l'étude: Le but de l'étude est d'examiner les perspectives des professionnels des secteurs récréatifs sur l'évolution de leurs styles et stratégies de leadership.

Participation: Ma participation consistera de participer à une entrevue avec le chercheur primaire. La durée de l'entrevue sera entre 60 à 90 minutes. L'entrevue sera complétée par téléphone ou virtuelle par Skype ou autre logiciel semblable.

Risques: Ma participation dans l'étude consiste de parler de mes expériences comme leader dans les secteurs récréatifs. Le chercheur m'a assuré qu'il gardera mon identité et l'institution pour laquelle je travaille, anonyme.

Avantages: Ma participation dans cette étude aidera les professionnels dans les secteurs récréatifs pour mieux comprendre l'impact de leur travail sur leurs employés.



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Confidentialité: Le chercheur m'a assuré que l'information dont je partage demeure confidentielle. Je comprends que ces informations seront utilisées pour l'analyse de data et pour l'interprétation du chercheur sur mes expériences.

Anonymat: Je comprends que le contenu ne sera utilisé que dans le cadre de ce projet de recherche et que ma confidentialité sera protégée en utilisant un pseudonyme, et en gardant toute information d'identification de l'étude afin de protéger mon identité et mon anonymat. **De plus, le nom de l'université auquel je travail ou autres informations contextuelles ne seront pas identifiées pour assurer mon anonymat.**

Conservation des données: Les données recueillies (sur papier et sur support électronique) seront conservées dans un endroit sécuritaire. Toutes les données physiques et électroniques seront conservées par le chercheur dans un cabinet verrouillé dans son bureau sur le campus pendant dix ans suivant la cueillette des données de l'étude.

Participation volontaire: Je n'ai aucune obligation de participer et si je choisis de participer, je peux me retirer de l'étude à tout moment et/ou je peux refuser de répondre à toute question. Si je choisis de me retirer de cette étude, toutes les données recueillies jusqu'à l'heure du retrait seront détruites et non utilisées à des fins de recherche.

Acceptation: Je _____, accepte de participer à l'étude de recherche ci-dessus menée par Lenny Sabourin de l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa. Je comprends qu'en acceptant de participer, je ne renonce nullement à mon droit de me retirer de l'étude.

Si j'ai des préoccupations d'éthiques concernant ma participation à cette étude, je peux communiquer avec le responsable de l'éthique en recherche de l'Université d'Ottawa, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, (613) 562-5387 ou ethique@uottawa.ca.

Il y a deux copies du formulaire de consentement, dont l'une est à moi.

Signature du participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature du chercheur: _____ Date: _____