

**FITNESS & RECREATION**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024-2025**

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# Our Message

Fitness and Recreation is determined to provide a wide array of programs, services, and educational opportunities that enhance the lifelong health and wellness of the university community. Fit+Rec strives to provide a one-of-a-kind health and wellness lifestyle for every student, faculty, and staff member. These efforts uphold the department's mission statement which is guided by three goals:

1. Provide opportunities and support to promote a healthy university community
2. Benefit the university community through health education, and
3. Develop university relations through health and wellness activities.

This annual report showcases ongoing initiatives including the influence of Fitness and Recreation on both the university and the local community. Our dedication lies in enhancing campus activities, fostering belonging, and advancing student achievement through exceptional fitness programs that inspire well-being.



Best,  
Amy M. Davenport, Ph.D.  
Director of Fitness and Recreation

# 2024 – 2025 Campus Recreation and Wellness Benchmark

## Benchmark Overview:

The 2024-25 Campus Recreation and Wellness Benchmark (CRWB) was launched through Anthology, part of an educational platform used for assessment. This year's consortium consisted of four higher education institutions:

### *2024-25 Campus Recreation and Wellness Benchmark Participants*

- The University of Oklahoma - Norman
- University of California - Berkley
- University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- University of Nevada - Reno

The purpose of the survey was to assess satisfaction and program efficiency of OU Fitness and Recreation services, programs, facilities, and equipment. Results inform the Fitness and Recreation department of possible areas of improvement and growth as well as areas of success. The following are some key findings from the survey.



## Benchmark Overview:

The Fitness and Recreation CRWB survey participants included OU students, faculty, staff, community members, and alumni. Of the 2,863 consortium participants, OU represented 433 of the respondents. The primary responders from OU Norman were students (86%), faculty (5%), and staff (7%). The remaining 2% were from community members and alumni.

Although the survey was randomly distributed to students on the OU Norman campus, the respondents overwhelmingly identified (92%) as users of the on-campus recreation facilities, programs, and/or services. In deciding to attend college on the OU Norman campus, 80% indicated that the facilities were important in them deciding to attend this college. The cohort group reported 88% and 83%, respectively, in these areas.

In deciding to continue at the University of Oklahoma, 85% of participants indicated that the facilities were important to their decision. Further, 88% of OU Norman respondents said recreation, sports, and/or fitness activities were important to them prior to enrolling at OU while the consortium participants reported 86%.

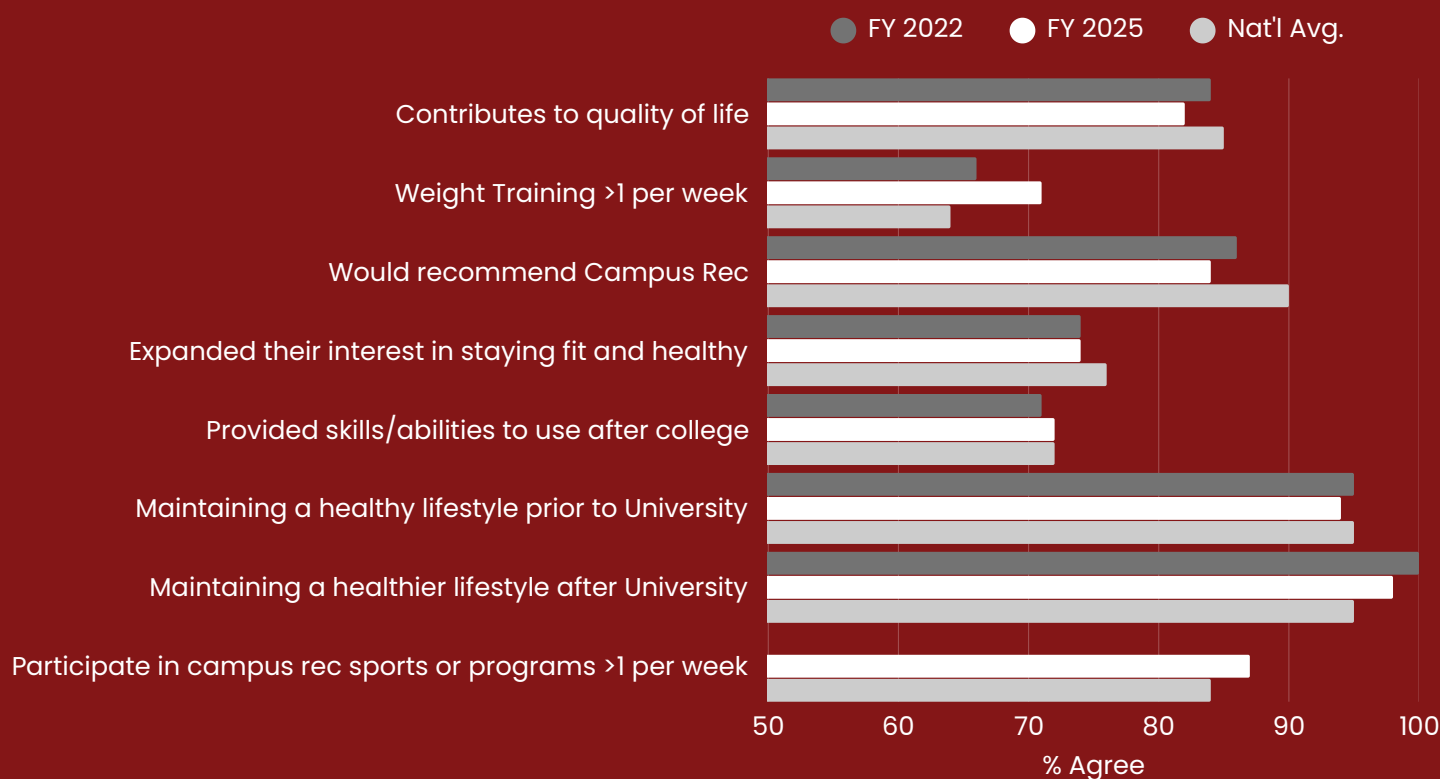


## Fit+Rec Participation Outcomes: Motivations

Motivations are actions or perceptions that the student foresees as helping them to live or promote a healthy lifestyle. Understanding the motivations of students helps with understanding how programs can better support their physical wellness and well being.

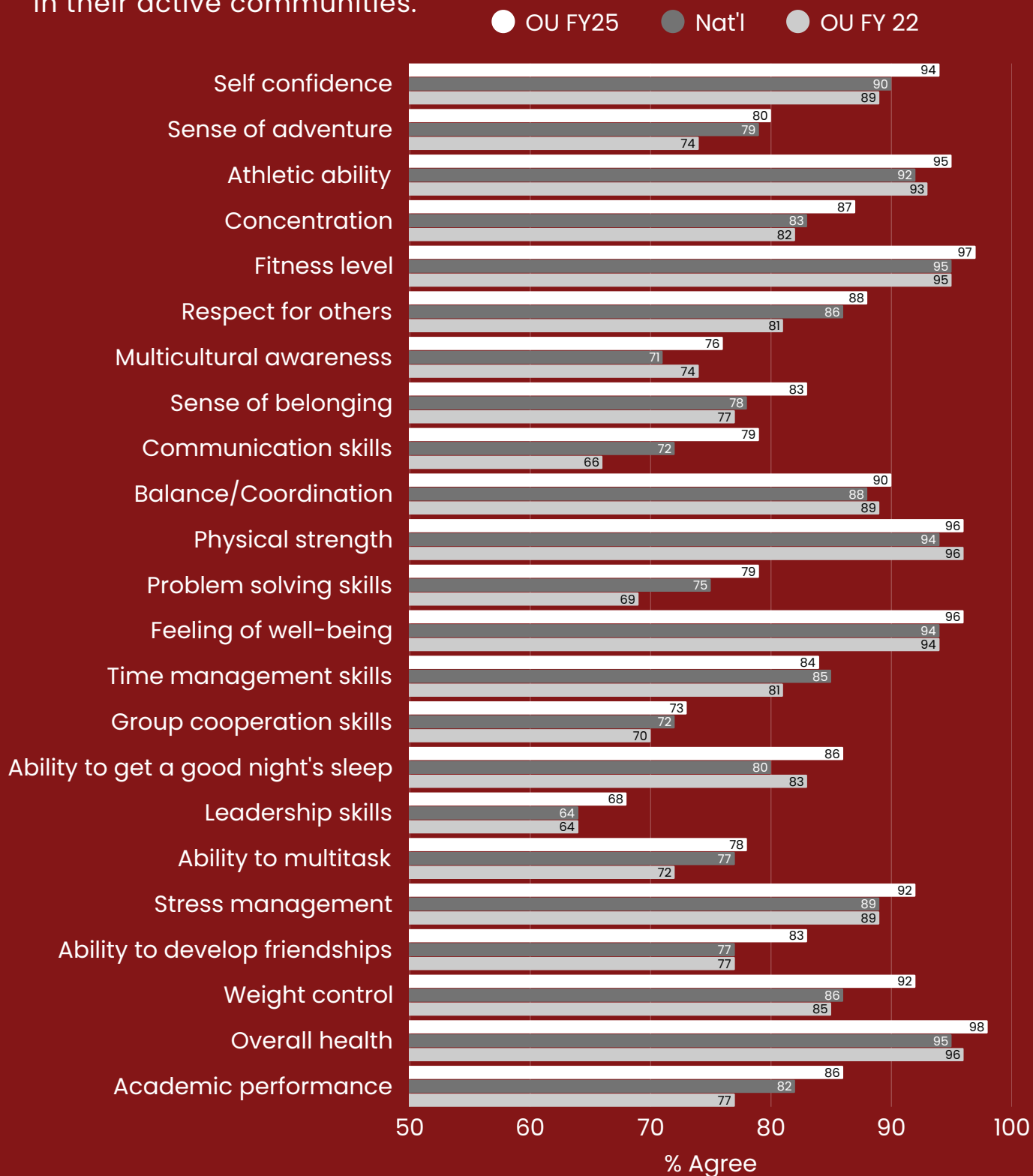
In the 2024-25 survey, respondents indicated a higher level of participation in campus recreation sports and programs at least once weekly(84%), and in weight training at least once weekly(71%). Fit+Rec is recognized as providing students with skills and abilities to use after college. This recognition has increased from the last survey and aligns at 72% with the consortium.

While the overall participation in campus rec programs and weight training are above the consortium and prior survey results, participants' responses show OU Fit+Rec is falling behind in the motivational impact on students particularly in contributing to their overall quality of life and expanding their interest in staying fit and healthy.



## Fit+Rec Participation Outcomes: Skills and Abilities

Skills and Abilities in this report are part of the individual's willingness or ease of developing community around them through leadership, belonging, sense of adventure, self-confidence, and physical attributes like fitness-level that help students come together in their active communities.





## Fit+Rec Participation Outcomes

In the 2025 benchmark, campus recreation was shown to have a stronger positive impact on students' sense of belonging, respect for others, ability to form friendships, and group cooperation compared to previous surveys. Further, these areas were higher than the cohort group for 2024-25. This increase aligns with the goals of the University's Lead On efforts of Pillar 4, becoming a place of belonging.

Skills most often sought by employers as identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) were, also, identified as positively influenced by campus recreation, increasing since 2021-22 and above the consortium levels. These skills include time management, communication, teamwork (group cooperation), leadership, and problem-solving. These areas align with Pillar 2 of OU's Lead On plan, preparing students for a life of success.



## Room For Growth

The current survey indicates 84% would recommend campus recreation facilities, programs, and services to others. The consortium response to this assessment was 88%. Fit+Rec has more gains to make to better serve the OU community. Barriers of using campus recreation facilities and programs were noted as being time, space, hours of operation, and parking. Student surveys conducted this year gave insight to space needs and equipment updates.

A survey of facility student employees conducted before the Fall 2024 semester provided insight on what facility space was needed. A majority of responses requested more room for free weights or weight + mobility exercises. About 50% of responses were to rearrange for more dumbbell weight training space or to have open space for movement. The responses given by student staff align with the information that was gathered in the CRWB survey. Respondents mentioned hours of operation on weekends, additional space for calisthenic exercises, and equipment updates as possible future improvements.

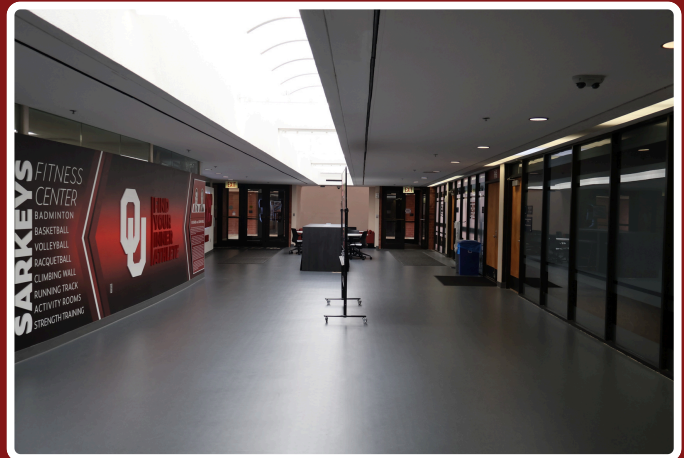


	Nat'l 2024-25	OU 2024-25
No Time	45%	31%
Facilities are Too Crowded	39%	31%
Parking	28%	29%

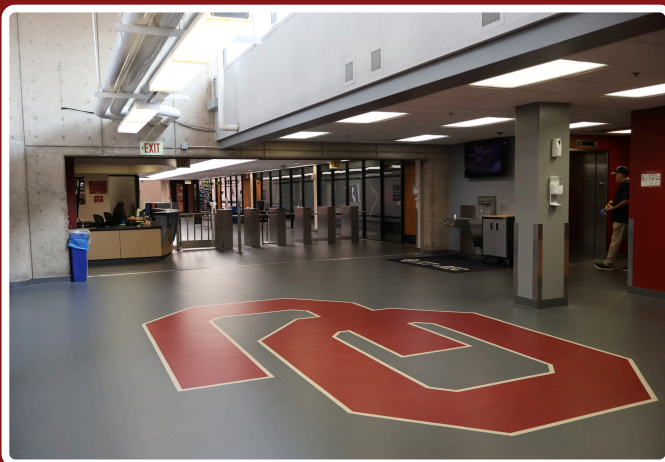


# Under Renovation

Sarkeys Fitness Center saw multiple renovations this year including the complete renovation of facility restrooms, new flooring and furniture in the main lobby area, and additional signage.



Flooring in the entryway was replaced to create a cohesive and updated environment for students and guests to utilize with the additional space created by the removal of the old Freshens food counter.







Facility restrooms were updated to better accommodate tour groups entering the upper level of the building and camps that are active on the south basketball courts.

Updated signage was installed in the entryway to maintain a cohesive feel with the OU Norman campus and to allow photo opportunities for visitors.



# Student Employee Learning Outcomes

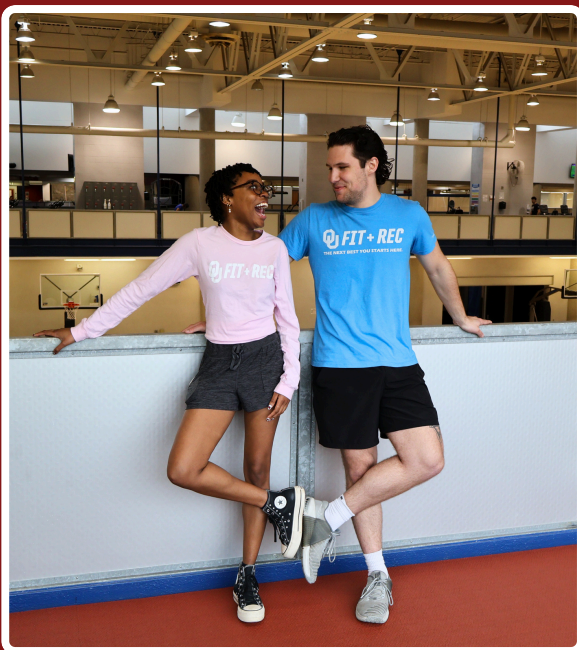
This year, Fitness and Recreation honed learning outcomes to better reflect the skills that the National Associate of Colleges and Employers (NACE) seeks in recently graduated employees. These include:

- Career Management
- Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Digital Technology
- Emergency Management
- Professionalism and Work Ethic
- Influencing Skills
- Leadership
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Verbal Communication
- Workflow Planning
- Written Communication

# Student Employee Learning Outcomes

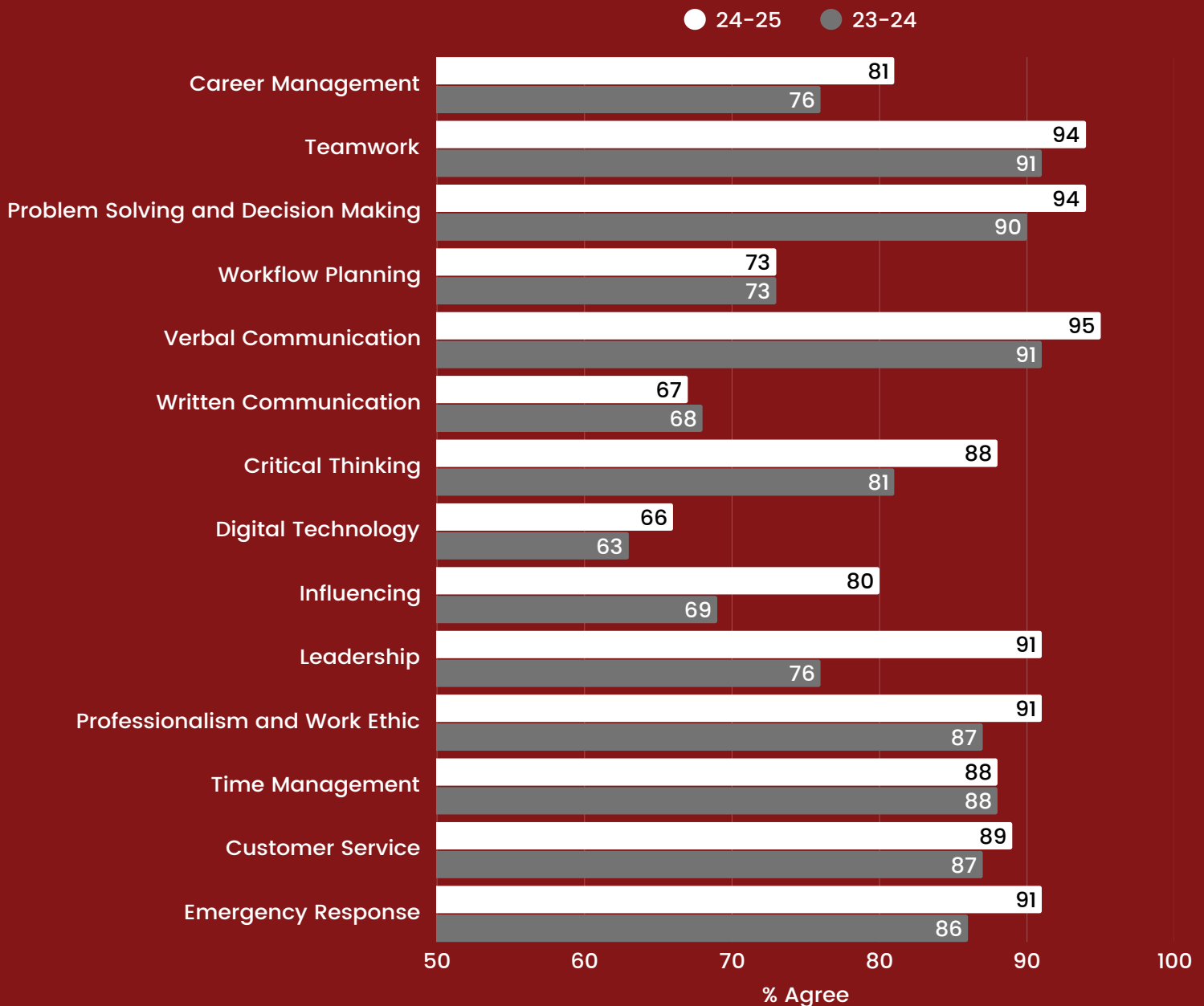
These goals can all be grouped into the Student Affairs Learning Goals of Personal Development, Well-Being, and Community Impact. Further, the Learning Outcomes established for Fit+Rec student employees aligns with the “Lead On, University” plan in that through employment with the department, training includes leadership, teamwork, career management skills, workflow planning, communication, and emergency response, all through which transferable skills are developed.

Strategies used include providing the NACE transferable skills in student job postings so that from the beginning, student employees have an expectation about what they will receive from employment with the department in addition to a paycheck. Further, the skills were directly incorporated into job interviews, Canvas trainings, and student employee evaluations.



# Student Employee Learning Outcomes

To highlight learning outcomes and strategies, for the NACE skills, Fit+Rec set 90% of all respondents to the student employee survey as the benchmark. The results are as follows:





# Student Employee Experiences



**Delaney Gondo**

**Ballet Performance and Creative Media Production  
Senior**

"Working at Fit+Rec means having the opportunity to serve my community. It means getting to work with some of the best people and mentors. I'm so excited to spend my third Summer with the program!"

**Alexxia Mercer**

**Petroleum Engineering  
Senior**

"Working for Fit+Rec at the University of Oklahoma has meant so much to me—not only because of the friendships I've made, but also because of how I've grown as a leader in my role. It's helped me become a stronger student and a more confident leader, and that growth is something I truly value."



**Chase Dooling**

**Chemical Biosciences  
Senior**

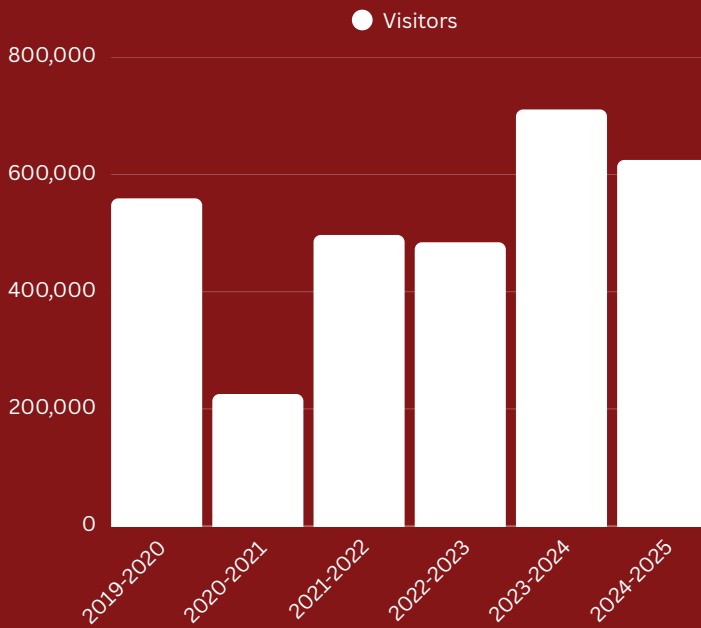
"Working at the Fit and Rec Center has been quite the benefit to me. I do not think I have had better bosses in all of the jobs I've had. They are always willing to help me out whenever I have had a problem. I have also learned great team bonding skills and I have had the advantage of being able to work with some great people while working here. Fit and Rec is a great place to work and I'd recommend it to anybody. "



# Highlights

## Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) include Facilities Visitors, Intramural Sports Games, Fitness classes, and Life-Saving Classes.



# Highlights

Intramural Sports provide opportunities to build community through sport and participate in exciting events and tournaments. During FY 2025, Fit+Rec had 976 teams participate in Intramural Sports, 3,330 fall unique participants and 3,670 spring unique participants for a total of 27,858 participations.

Intramural Sports provide opportunities to build community with other students. Through sport, students come together for a common cause, to have fun and, hopefully, win the game. Through a survey conducted in April 2025 regarding Intramural Sports, 91.4% of respondents reported that Intramural Sports contributed to their sense of community and belonging. Further, 90.5% of respondents indicated they made at least one new connection while participating and 88.8% indicated the program contributed to a greater sense of teamwork.





# Highlights

During FY 2025, the fitness program continued to offer fun and challenging classes to the OU community. FIT classes such as Yoga, Zumba®, Pilates, and Kickboxing, various aqua fitness classes, and F45 classes have allowed the OU community to explore forms of fitness while building community. Across F45, FIT, and Aqua classes, 3,326 fitness classes were offered to members with a FIT or F45 class pass. These class offerings reached over 1,700 unique participants and had 18,476 total participations.



Fitness classes provide a time to see other students with similar interests beyond academics. This year, nearly 47% of survey respondents indicated that the fitness classes promote community through a sense of belonging/association. While this number may seem low, it is not. This means that nearly half of group fitness participants engaged in community even though the classes are designed as individual events and not team events.



# Highlights

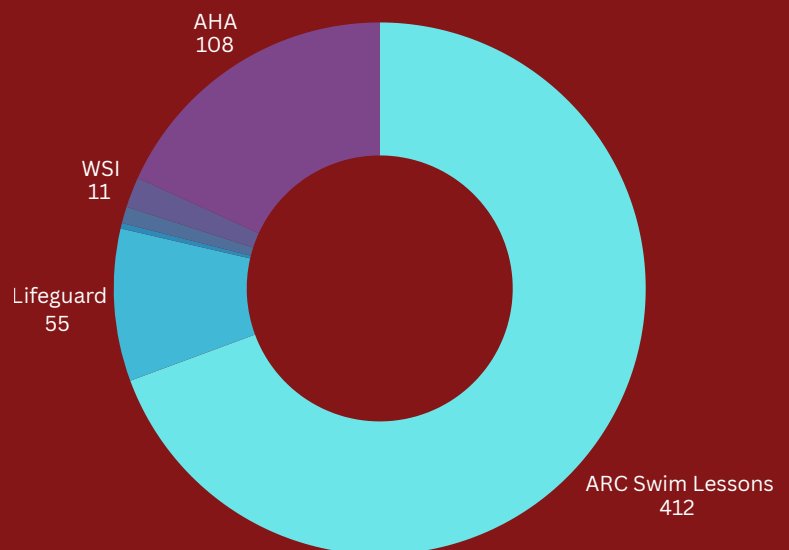
Fit+Rec offered a number of life safety classes throughout the year including CPR and AED, First Aid, Water Safety, Lifeguard certifications, and Swim Lessons. Classes were attended by participants both from the university and the surrounding community.



Emergency preparedness matters. From weather to emergency health interventions, Fit+Rec employees are prepared to act providing an added comfort for members and guests. Further, preparing for emergencies assists student employees for emergency response while on the job and as community members.

Lifesaving drills serve as examples as to how student employees stay prepared. Drills test response times, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills while using trainings affiliated with the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. Fit+Rec is a provider for both entities.

You, too, can be prepared. Lifesaving classes are provided through Fit+Rec. Visit [ou.edu/far](https://ou.edu/far) for current schedules.



# Garry Armstrong, Essential Hero

Associate Director, Garry Armstrong, was recognized with the Essential Hero Award from Special Olympics Oklahoma in January. Garry has shown dedication to supporting Special Olympic programs and athletes by helping them navigate the challenges of returning to in-person activities post COVID-19 pandemic. His passion for students and athletes shine through his work with Special Olympics of Oklahoma, OU Fitness and Recreation, and his community.

Special Olympics of Oklahoma serve athletes within the state who have intellectual disabilities. Sports training and competition are offered year around including the winter games which include sports such as volleyball which is held in the Sarkeys Fitness Center. The Essential Hero Award honors individuals who played key roles in keeping athletes engaged virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic and maintaining the engagement as Special Olympics worked to transition back to in-person.



# Holidays Without Hunger

OU Fit+Rec hosted and coordinated with Meals of Hope and the OU Food Pantry for the second year of Holidays Without Hunger held in October of 2024. Fit+Rec hosted 456 volunteers and packed over 101,000 meals to benefit OU Food Pantry and the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. These meals included vegetables, carbohydrates, and lean proteins, providing the necessary nutrients for a healthy lifestyle.





# Challenges

## Pool Closures

Mechanical issues impacted the early spring season for the Murray Case Sells Swim Complex. These malfunctions resulted in nearly 2 months of closure for the pool. All programming and memberships came to a halt during this period and members were provided resources to fill the gap through other community pools.



## Staffing Shortages

Various professional staff positions held vacancies during the 2024-2025 year. Fit+Rec hired a membership coordinator, maintenance staff, admin support coordinator, and an assistant aquatics coordinator. These challenges with staffing required other professional staff members to adapt and take on additional duties until new staff were hired. Fit+Rec is happy to welcome these new members to the team.

# In Memory of Robert Steffens

Robert Steffens III was a devoted member of the OU Fitness and Recreation family, serving as a maintenance attendant in the Sarkeys Fitness Center for over 20 years. Robert was beloved by everyone he worked with and left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing him. In late October 2024, Robert passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. To honor his memory, a bench dedicated to Robert was installed outside the Sarkeys Fitness Center. The Fit+Rec staff gathered to share, Robert's favorite, a Coke Zero in heartfelt remembrance of their friend and colleague as the bench was unveiled.

