NIRSA Broadens Horizons of Recreation
March 11, 2013
By Ross Bentley

NIRSA, the National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association, is an organization that helps to regulate, promote, and encourage recreational sports at colleges and universities across North America. According to their official website, “NIRSA believes that collegiate recreation is a significant and powerful key to inspiring wellness in local, regional, and global communities.” NIRSA is the governing body for intramural sports and major recreation across the nation.

Founded in 1950 by Dr. William Wasson, the NIRSA community now encompasses nearly 4,000 members made up of professionals, students, and business, and they serve over seven million students. Along with serving to better educate today’s students about professional skills such as leadership, fitness, and teamwork through recreation, NIRSA also offers various tournaments in different recreational sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, and flag football.

This week, NIRSA held their annual conference and exposition in Las Vegas from March 4th-7th. SUNY Oswego professional staff, Sandra Jeffers the Director of Campus Recreation, Bill Ling the Coordinator of Campus Recreation, and Scott Harrison the Assistant Director of Campus Recreation were all in attendance for the event. The conference offered such activities as a Career Opportunities Fair, a Recreational Sports Exposition, Networking Opportunities, Educational Sessions, and Keynote and Invited Speakers. "These conferences are designed to get professionals to work with one another and learn from one another," said Ling. "Whether you're learning from someone who's from a different campus from you but has an idea that you can adapt to your program, or people from similar campuses that you can talk to about different things that you're both going through."

The conference provided several ways for schools, including SUNY Oswego to improve their intramural sports program, witness the latest breaks in program and facility technology, access the newest college recreation products, and converse with other professionals.

With more regional conferences coming up this year, along with their yearly national conference, NIRSA continues to provide a format for those involved in college recreation throughout the country and beyond, to meet in a professional setting to learn from one another and continue to improve the quality of recreation provided for college students. "Something that is cool about NIRSA when compared to collegiate athletics such as the NCAA is that the NCAA is very competitive and everyone is trying to get ahead of one another, but collegiate recreation and NIRSA is very collaborative and we all work together," said Ling, a member himself of the NIRSA sustainability committee.
"Basically we will open up our playbook to other schools if they want it because we just wanna strive to make our programs better for the benefit of participants involved."

As a member of the sustainability committee for NIRSA, Ling is responsible for overseeing economic, official, and environmental sustainability throughout college campuses. With Campus Recreation at Oswego continuing to grow, Ling believes that increasing the participation in NIRSA is the next logical step in improving the program. "That's something that Oswego is getting involved with directly so that people see that we are big players in the network of Campus Recreation."

Source: NIRSA.com