

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

### **Transferrable Skills Assessment of Experienced Recreation Services Student Employees**

#### **Introduction**

##### **Assessment Project Description**

Our goal is to provide at least one quality recreational facility, program or service that will appeal to all KU students, faculty, and staff. Once you find one place which fulfills your needs, we hope you take the opportunity to experience all we have to offer!

The student employees that are a part of this assessment are our most experienced and are involved with every aspect of our operations. Most of these students are in our upper level student positions like Supervisors and Program Managers and have been identified as leaders in their areas by their professional staff supervisors.

##### **Service/Program Student Learning Outcome(s)**

Students participating in the Transferrable Skills Assessment will be able to...

- Demonstrate increased knowledge and skills that will allow them to be more prepared for future careers and education.

##### **Population/Sample:**

On average more than 200 students are employed with Recreation Services. The students surveyed were:

- 26 experienced student employees. (Note: The assessment plan stated 25 students participated in the pre-assessment; however, after re-counting the students, there were 26.)
- “Experienced” students was defined as a student who had a least 1 year of experience working for Recreation Services, was a Program Manager, or was selected based on their supervisor’s discretion.

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- 17 male students (65.4%) and 9 female students.
- Pursuing a variety of majors.
- 25 were obtaining a bachelor degree and 1 was pursuing a PhD.
- All 9 areas of Recreation Services was represented: Facilities, intramurals, KU Fit, CRT, Personal Training, Marketing, Sport Clubs, and Outdoor Pursuits. Their positions included Facility Supervisor, Intramural Supervisor, KU Fit Instructor, CRT Specialist, Personal Trainer, Marketing Assistant, and Program Manager of a specific area.
- 11 students (42.3%) were a Program Manager (PM) working in one of the areas listed above.
- 11 students were employed in more than one position for Recreation Services such as facility attendant and facility supervisor, CRT and personal training, KU Fit and facilities.

### **Assessment Method(s):**

The assessment included a pre- and post-test, with educational “intervention”:

- Supervisors were told to assign experienced Recreation Services student staff to attend a 30-minute presentation about transferable skills. (The other students were assigned to a different presentation unrelated to this assessment.)
- When students arrived to the transferable skills presentation on August 27, 2019, they voluntarily completed a paper-pencil pre-test assessment. Immediately after the assessment was completed Jason Krone and Miranda Kolenda, 2 professional staff members of Recreation Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the students about how their employment with Recreation Services could enhance their transferrable skills. At the conclusion of the presentation, the students were encouraged to improve their transferable skills and were informed that there would be a post-assessment.
- Students received an ongoing educational email on September 19, 2020 that included the following:

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- article from Athletic Business titled *How Campus Rec Prepares Students for Careers*
  - an outline of examples from Recreation Services' Fitness/Wellness Coordinator search about how not to assume that those screening your resume know your experience details.
- At the end of November 2019, students were voluntarily asked to complete the post-test assessment, which was emailed as an Excel attachment. An email was sent to remind the students to take the post-assessment.
  - Students were paid their hourly rate to complete the pre- and post-test assessment. The assessment took most student about 10-15 minutes to complete.

### Assessment Tool

- The pre- and post-test assessments were identical.
- Miranda Kolenda found the assessment online, and it was used and adapted with permission from the Career Center at Pennsylvania State University. The assessment tool was simply modified to brand the assessment tool to the University of Kansas and lines were added for students to write their first and last name and KU identification number.
- No demographic information was obtained. (The demographic information listed under the Population/Sample section is based on personal knowledge.)
- The assessment tool had 10 transferable skill topics such as verbal communication skills, problem solving/critical thinking skills, and interpersonal/customer relations skills (see attachment). Each topic had 7-11 specific examples. For instance, verbal communication skills listed 9 attributes including “present ideas effectively in speeches or lectures”, “speak well in public appearances”, and “participate in group discussions and teams”. Students rated their perceived level of competence for 89

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

specific examples on a Likert scale ranging from 1 “not skilled” to 4 “high skilled”.

### Assessment Methods

- Each student had a “pre-test” tab in an Excel document. Those who completed the post-test, had a “post-test” tab. A Recreation Services’ student entered the students’ pre- and post-test Likert scores on an Excel tab. Then Likert scores for each topic were averaged.
- The pre- and post-test data was emailed to Dr. Kevin Joseph, so he could statistically analyze the data comparing average scores of students who completed the pre- and post-test. Dr. Joseph provided the table below indicating significant statistical data with an asterisk.

### Summary of Key Findings/Results

#### Demographics

- 8 of the 26 (30.7%) experienced Recreation Services’ students completed the pre- and post-test.
- 7 students who took the pre-test were no longer employed with us at the time of the post-test for various reasons including finding a different job, obtaining an internship, being let go by supervisor, and quitting on their own terms.
- 4 male students and 4 female.
- Pursing a variety of majors.
- 7 were obtaining a bachelor degree and 1 was pursuing a PhD.
- 7 of 9 Recreation Services areas were represented: Facilities, intramurals, KU Fit, CRT, Personal Training, and Sport Clubs. Their positions included Facility Supervisor, Intramural Program Manager, KU Fit Instructor, CRT Specialist, Personal Trainer, and Program Manager of a specific area.
- 4 students were a Program Manager (PM) working in one of the areas listed above.

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

- 3 (37.5%) students were employed in more than one position for Recreation Services such as facility attendant and facility supervisor, CRT and personal training, KU Fit and facilities.

### Comparing Pre- and Post-Test Assessment Results

- The results indicated that 9 of the 10 transferable skills assessed had a slightly greater post-test score than the pre-test data except the team and collaboration skill post-data. Arguably, the pre-post data for the team and collaboration skill was statically the same number meaning no change was made.
- The most significant results indicated that of the 10 transferable skills that were assessed, only 2 skills, analytical/research skills and planning and organization skills, significantly improved from the pre- to the post-test. See table provided by Dr. Joseph:

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
<b>(n =9)</b>		
Verbal Communication Skills	3.16	3.40
Written Communication Skills	3.13	3.14
Problem Solving/Critical Thinking Skills	3.13	3.37
Analytical/Research Skills	2.86	3.21*
Planning and Organizational Skills	3.28	3.65*
Interpersonal/Customer Relations Skills	3.40	3.55
Leadership Skills	3.23	3.40
Qualitative/Technology Skills	2.31	2.51
Creativity and Innovation Skills	3.03	3.14
Team and Collaboration Skills	3.64	3.60

\* - significant at  $p < 0.05$

- The analytical/research skills that the students rated on a Likert scale were:
  - Compare and evaluate information
  - Investigate data or behavior for meaning
  - Analyze quantitative, physical and/or scientific data
  - Formulate insightful and relevant questions
  - Organize information and results

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- Gather information from a variety of sources
  - Identify appropriate information sources
  - Compile numerical and statistical data
  - Interview primary sources of data
  - Classify and sort information into categories
- The planning and organizational skills that the students rated on the Likert scale were:
  - Identify and organize tasks or information
  - Set up and keep time schedules
  - Develop realistic goals and actions to attain them
  - Anticipate problems and respond with solutions
  - Create efficient organizational systems and procedures
  - Coordinate people, activities and details
  - Create guidelines for implementing an action
  - Follow through, insure completion of a task
- When aggregating students' Likert scores "skilled" (3) and "highly skilled" (4) for each transferable skill, the team and collaboration was the only skill that each student rated themselves on the pre- and post-test as a 3 or a 4. All other transferable skills had at least one score with a rating of "low skilled" (2) or "not skilled" (1).
- Conversely, when aggregating students' Likert scores "low skilled" (2) or "not skilled" (1) for each transferable skill, quantitative/technology was the only skill where all but one student rated themselves on the pre- and post-test as "low skilled" or "not skilled". All other transferable skills had more "skilled" and "highly skilled" ratings.
- Strengths of Assessment
  - Variety of majors and areas of employment.
  - An equal number of male and female students completed the pre- and post-test assessment and a variety of areas of Recreation Services was represented.

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- Limitations of Assessment
  - Pre-test was administered on August 24, 2019 and the post-test was administered in late November 2019. There may not have been enough time between the pre- and post-assessment for individuals to make significant improvement. All students were “experienced”; therefore, they may make less progress in a shorter period of time than someone who is recently employed with Recreation Services.
  - 26 students completed the pre-test and 8 completed the post-test thus the data is not generalizable to all students working in campus recreation universities across the nation, to other areas of student employment on a university campus, or to public, private, and community fitness/recreational centers.
  - Students were not randomly selected to take the assessments. The assessments were administered to a select group of students who were described by their supervisor as “experienced”.
  - Students were told during the presentation, there would be a post-test; therefore, students may have been more motivated to improve transferable skills.
  - It is uncertain if the education provided to the population directly impacted the students’ post-assessment scores and if employment with Recreation Services directly improved students’ analytical and research skills and planning and organizational skills. For example, it is unknown if students read the emails or applied the content during their job. Furthermore, it was impossible to control the students from applying information learned elsewhere or from someone else such as from academic classes; advice/policy changes given by the students’ supervisor or their peers; or advice from a family member, friend, podcast, etc.; or learned from a different experience.
  - Results may be limited because:
    - Some of the examples of transferable skills may not be representative of the students’ position at Recreation Services. For instance, these tasks listed under quantitative/technology skills are not part of a CRT Specialists’ job responsibilities: “keep accurate financial records” and “calculate and perform mathematical computations”.
    - Similarly, budgetary skills like “forecast, estimate expenses and income” and “create and justify organization's budget to others” are not included in any of the students’ job descriptions.

# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- Moreover, some positions may apply some transferable skills more than others. For instance facility supervisors are more likely to use the skills described under quantitative/technology than a KU Fit Instructor.
- Finally, students may not have understood how aspects of their job fit into an example of a transferable skill. For instance, a Program Manager may not realize that by entering participation data on an Excel sheet and then adding or averaging the data is a task that describes “calculate and perform mathematical computations” “work precisely with numerical data”, and “use computer software for records and analysis”. If they told their supervisor that participation has increased then they have “compiled data and applied statistical analysis”.

### Conclusions

#### Impact of Assessment

- Results will be shared with student and professional Recreational Services staff and included in Student Affairs annual report.
- Results indicated that students employed with Recreation Services significantly improved analytical/research skills and planning and organizational skills. Even though it is uncertain how much employment with Recreation Services and the intervention affected the results, we hope we contributed to the results.

#### Lessons Learned

- Futures assessment projects should be planned in advance of administering pre-assessment. We shaped the assessment plan around what was already accomplished.
- We were unable to confirm if the education truly affected the results; therefore, assessment methods should be implemented for any interventions to understand if the interventions influenced the results.
- The assessment must be appropriate for the timeframe that Dr. Joseph provides, especially when doing a pre- and post-assessment.





# 2019-2020 Assessment Final Report

## RECREATION SERVICES

---

- Administering the pre-test to a random sample of hired students and then post-test a year later (and/or upon leaving campus recreation) would be a better.
- Future discussion and/or trainings about transferable skills should educate students about how their job duties relate to transferable skills. In addition, it is imperative that the students' supervisors assist with educating their students.