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Recreation Centers around the Midwest, David Ambler Student

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Possible Sources to ask further questions:

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Exploring Campus Recreation: Insights and Trends from Midwest Universities

Fitness and wellness are essential elements of a healthy lifestyle, especially for college students who juggle studies, projects, and various activities. Many Midwest universities, including the University of Kansas (KU), University of Missouri (Mizzou), University of Minnesota (U of M), and University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), offer state-of-the-art recreation centers. Diving deeper into the insights and data provided by these institutions will help to understand the evolving trends in campus recreation.

Jill Urkoski, the senior associate director of programs at KU's David Ambler Student Recreation Fitness Center, shared insights about the facility's remarkable growth. Utilizing Fusion software for annual reports (a common software used by many recreation centers around the country), KU witnessed a significant 28% increase in attendance, with over 340,000 people using the center during the 2022-2023 school year. "I have absolutely loved my time here. Since the beginnings at the Robinson Center to what we have now, it has been a pleasure to see the growth and be a huge part of it!" said Urkoski. The school has been trying to get back to pre-COVID numbers since the 2020-2021 school year, but it has seen steady growth. Most schools in the country are also experiencing this steady growth back to normal numbers.

Urkoski also highlighted KU's diverse programs, including intramural sports, fitness classes, personal training, special events, sports clubs and outdoor pursuits.

Sheena Rice, external relations coordinator for MizzouRec, highlighted the excellence of their recreation facility. With a 15% increase in facility utilization, MizzouRec accommodated over 270,000 individuals each semester. "I mean, what's not to love about our facility? Our

aquatics center is top-notch, and the recreation facility itself is everything you need and much much more. All I hear from students when I ask them about the facility is good things," said Rice.

Mizzou's offerings include aquatics, video gaming, intramural sports, club sports, personal training, fitness classes and private classes. The center employs over 300 student staff members annually.

Hannah Nitz, former Jayhawk and current facility coordinator for events and operations at U of M's recreation center, shared remarkable statistics. Generating over \$450,000 annually from events and programs alone, U of M's facility caters to around 5,000 people daily, totaling approximately 900,000 participants yearly. "I really enjoyed my time at KU, and working here in Minnesota has been nothing short of awesome! Comparing RecWell (U of M's recreation center) to Ambler, our facility here is a fair amount larger, but it does have some strengths and weaknesses," said Nitz.

The extensive programs at U of M include massage therapy, group fitness, personal training, intramural sports, sports clubs, aquatics and outdoor trips.

Sandy Wilson, associate director of business development at UW-Madison's recreation center, provided impressive figures due to the university's multiple recreation facilities. With an average of over 1,480,000 participants per school year, UW-Madison generates \$1.3 million from membership sales, \$104,000 from personal training and \$205,000 from group fitness. "I firmly believe that we have the best staff and facilities in the entire country. I could not be happier anywhere else but here," said Wilson.

Offering a plethora of programs, including intramural sports, group fitness classes, lessons, personal training, certification courses, massage therapy and nutrition education, UW-Madison stands out.

Comparing these insights, each university showcases unique strengths and areas for improvement. KU highlights consistent growth, Mizzou emphasizes a diverse range of offerings, U of M impresses with financial success from events, and UW-Madison stands out with an extensive list of programs. Understanding these variations allows universities to learn from one another and enhance their own campus recreation strategies.

When examining these diverse approaches to campus wellness, a collaborative effort emerges. The universities, through sharing best practices, can collectively contribute to the improvement of facilities and experiences for students. The journey to fostering healthier and more active campus communities continues, fueled by the valuable comparisons and lessons learned from each university.

In the vibrant landscape of Midwest university recreation, the data and insights from KU, Mizzou, U of M, and UW-Madison have shed light on the diverse approaches to campus wellness. This collaborative exploration serves as a beacon for universities seeking to enhance their own recreation strategies. As these institutions navigate the challenges and successes of their respective recreation centers, a shared commitment to continuous improvement ensures that fostering healthier and more active campus communities remains dynamic and impactful.