

Promoting Student Wellness Through Recreational Programming Encouraging Balance in The College Experience

Janeishelly Morales
Healthcare Studies

INTRODUCTION

- The Gasset Fitness Center plays an important role in supporting student health and wellness at Salem State University.
- As part of Campus Life and Recreation the fitness center provides students with access to a variety of resources including group exercise classes, intramural sports, and recreational programming designed to promote both physical and mental well-being.
- Students often experience high levels of stress from academics, work, and personal responsibilities, spaces like the Gasset Fitness Center offer an opportunity for students to stay active, reduce stress, and feel more connected to campus.



Salem State University. (n.d.). *Campus life and recreation*. <https://www.salemstate.edu/campusrec>

RELATED LITERATURE

- “The National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) and the Okanagan Charter provide guidance for institutions to improve student health and wellbeing... encourages colleges and universities to intertwine health into all aspects of campus life and to lead health promotion initiatives at both local and global levels. Incorporating these frameworks creates a foundation for sustainable, evidence-based approaches that can be practically applied to increase PA, support student well-being, and reduce the prevalence of chronic disease on college campuses.” (Scroggs et al., 2025, p.1-2)
- “The stronger the health awareness of university students, the more likely they are to engage in positive health behaviors.” (Zhang et al., 2024, p.7)
- “It is well established that regular participation in exercise decreases perceived stress in college students.” (Bramwell et al., 2023, p.1014)

OBJECTIVES

- The objective of this project was to measure student engagement in Gasset Fitness Center activities, including patterns of participation, perceived impact of students overall wellness, and identify strategies to increase student engagement

MATERIALS & METHODS

Some of the ways this will be measured:

- Attendance at events
- Increased awareness of wellness resources on campus
- Growth in participation in programs like yoga, pickleball, and other recreational sports

Materials used:

- Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook)
- Campus partnerships and resources (Center for Liberation and Justice, Campus Clubs, Off campus establishments such as Bit Bar and Top Golf)
- Data collection tools (check in sheets, digital logs, etc.)

Methods for this project include:

- Planned and organized recreational wellness events
- Created new music playlists for gym areas
- Promoted events through social media and campus outreach
- Collaborated with campus organizations and or outside organizations to increase outreach
- Assisted with activities such as intramural sports, fitness challenges, and tabling with the campus dietician
- Observed participation levels at events and program areas
- Data collection took place between January and March 2026

Some examples of event promotions shared on the Campus Life and Recreation Instagram:



More examples of promotions can be found on the Salem State University Campus Life and Recreation TikTok account:

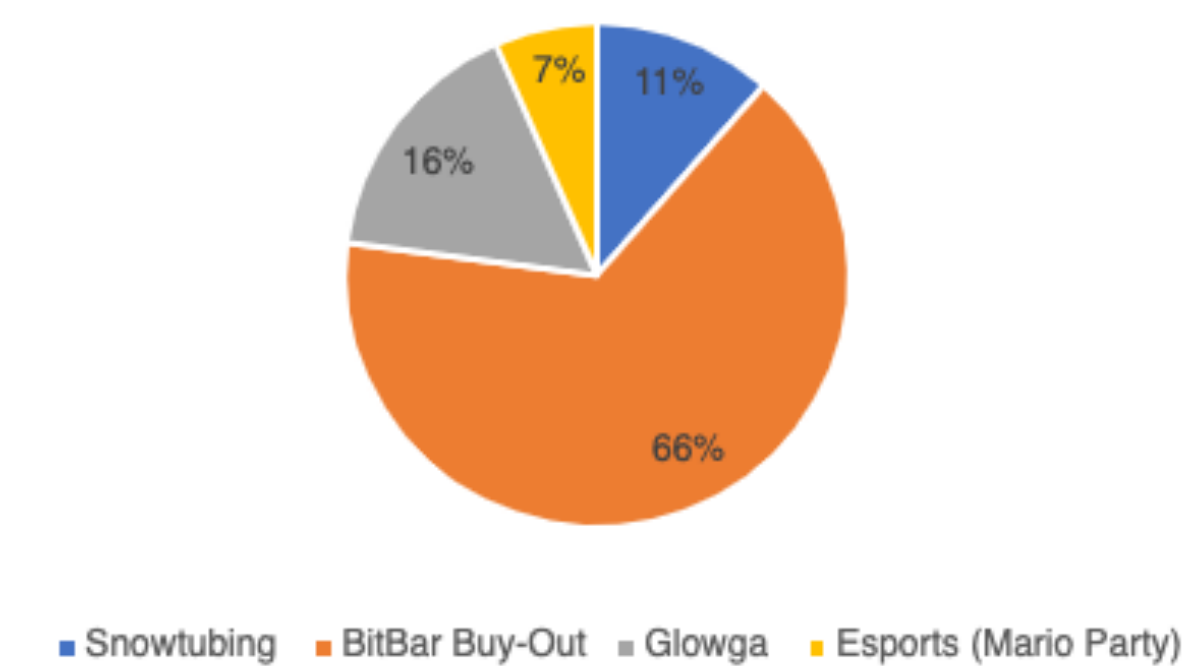
<https://www.tiktok.com/@ssucampuslifeandrec>

RESULTS

Department Statistics:

- Fitness Center usage/visits:
 - Month of March, 2026 - 5,700 (About average per month)
 - Academic year to date - 41,000 (2025-2026)
- Group Exercise Participants
 - Month of March, 2026 - 280 (About average per month)
 - Academic year to date - 1,500 participants
- Off Campus Events
 - Snow Tubing - 35 participants
 - BitBar Buy-Out - 200 participants
- On Campus Events
 - Glowga - 50 participants
 - Esports Mario Party - 20 participants

Event Participation Breakdown



This pie chart shows the breakdown of participation across different Campus Recreation events. It highlights that the BitBar Buy-Out had the highest turnout by a large margin, while Glowga, Snowtubing and the Esports (Mario Party) event had smaller participation levels.

CONCLUSIONS

- Increased promotion is linked to higher student participation in wellness activities at the Gasset Fitness Center
- Events like the BitBar Buy-Out and Glowga had strong turnout, showing student interest
- Overall usage numbers reflect consistent engagement across the academic year
- Recreational programming helps students stay active, reduce stress, and feel more connected to campus

Throughout this experience, I was able to take on a variety of roles. I gained experience in event planning, promotion through social media, and working directly with students in both event settings and program areas. Working with different campus organizations and stepping into different roles when needed gave me a better understanding of how campus recreation operates as a whole. I can use these experiences and skills to continue building my career in healthcare and wellness while understanding the importance of promoting both physical and mental health in a community setting.

REFERENCES

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