



Saskatchewan
Parks and Recreation
Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2018

RECREATION SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL TO STUDENT WELLNESS

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) is disappointed with the May 31, 2018 decision to discontinue Recreation Services at three (3) of the four (4) Saskatchewan Polytechnic Campuses.

We are the recognized leader in the province for the wellbeing of people and communities through recreation. We are a nonprofit, member organization, whose Vision is to ensure that all citizens have equitable access to recreation experiences across the province. The decision by Saskatchewan Polytechnic to eliminate recreation services on three (3) of four (4) campuses, reduces our capacity to achieve this Vision. This action is also contrary to the [Framework for Recreation in Canada \(2015\)](#), which identifies post-secondary institutions and educators as 'important partners in recreation, developing leaders through advanced recreation studies, providing spaces and programs in the community, teaching students about recreation, and developing and sharing knowledge (9)'.

In a 2016 survey issued by SPRA, [Recreation and the Quality of Life in Saskatchewan](#), 86% of Saskatchewan residents reported that recreation programs, indoor facilities and green spaces are the highest factors contributing to their quality of life. Recreation improves academic outcomes, increases physical and mental wellbeing and is a key contributor towards building a sense of community among the student body. 98% of students claim maintaining a healthy lifestyle will be important to them after graduating from a post-secondary institution, and 64% of students who participate in campus recreation agree these services provide them with skills and abilities they will use after graduation (*The Benefits of Campus Recreation*, 2014). These outcomes and benefits are lost when students do not have access to campus recreation services.

Recreation is an integral service. However, the message being sent by Saskatchewan Polytechnic to current students, alumni and professionals working in the recreation sector devalues their work and commitment to enhancing quality of life across the province. The cuts to recreation services and staff have created significant concern within the recreation sector. Many active recreation professionals and practitioners in the province are graduates of the Recreation and Community Development and Therapeutic Recreation Programs offered by Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Ultimately, these cuts compromise the success of students enrolled in recreation programs, and reduces confidence that Saskatchewan Polytechnic is serving in their best interests.

We have submitted a request to Saskatchewan Polytechnic that recreation services be reinstated immediately, staff positions related to recreation services be restored, and that these three (3)

campuses continue to provide service and programming while the new Wellness Strategy is in development. Restoring access to recreation services and fitness facilities on campus is the first step to rebuilding confidence in the recreation sector and reinforcing your commitment to student wellbeing. Finally, we have encouraged Saskatchewan Polytechnic to consider recreation services and programming as a core component of the new Wellness Strategy, because there cannot be wellbeing on campus without recreation.

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For more information, contact:

Christian Bates-Hardy

Communications Consultant

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

306-780-9268

cbates-hardy@spra.sk.ca

100-1445 Park Street, Regina, SK S4N 4C5 • Phone: 306.780.9231 • Toll Free: 1.800.563.2555 • Fax: 306.780.9257 • spra.sk.ca

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