

Recreation Therapy/Recreation Sport Management

Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 11:30-1:00pm

Attendees: Alexandria Terrazas, Jennifer Torres, Kevin Hullinger, Melissa Ferruzza, Anni Rasmussen, Heather Specht, Ami Ill, Sue Kempczynski, Jacqueline Canty, Karishu Pride, Dayle Ann Hanty, Alexis Gezik, Dawn Wasowicz, Meghan Fenlon, Ally Rocca, Syd Sklar, Jasmine Morris, Roaa Farroukh, Inita Dixon.

The meeting began by everyone introducing themselves.

To increase enrollment Stacy mentioned how she did a Palos Heights TV Interview in February as a form of outreach for students to enroll in the Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy Program. The program was also highlighted in the Moraine Valley Explore magazine on Page 5. Stacy is doing all she can to find students who would be interested in the program. The program has been using multiple marketing tools to try to get more students enrolled in the program. A committee member advised mentioning that this is an AI resistant career as a selling point, these are jobs that cannot be replaced by robots. It was mentioned that most park district workers were summer camp counselors. Meghan (SSA, 20+ yrs working with Moraine) mentioned that 300–450 of park district staff at SAPRA and mentioned that they do connect with summer camp workers, she also mentioned trying to target more high school students.

It was asked if there are any apprenticeship opportunities for Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy with the DOL. It was mentioned how Junior High school students only see the basketball coaches and the jobs they see within the recreation facility. Stacy mentioned that students do practicums but not apprenticeships. Inita said that she would ask her supervisor to see if they could have some students and incumbent workers.

Academic year Fall 2025/ Spring 2026 Highlights: In Rec 101 students are creating resumes and doing mock interviews. Stacy explains how this semester in REC 101 that each student was able to have 3 interviews and a mock job description because their cover letters needed to match the job description. Students also worked with the REACH Program and did mock interviews, and this was a good experience for the REACH program and for the Recreation Management/ Therapy students

The 42nd Annual Special Olympics MAC Games had 80 athletics and 100+ volunteers. This is the longest running MAC Games, and it is here at Moraine Valley Community

Recreation Therapy/Recreation Sport Management

Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 11:30-1:00pm

College. The MAC Games will be coming up again this year, and this year the program has been getting more people from the college who are wanting to come and volunteer.

An Andrew High School counselor working with the PEOPLE program mentioned that the PEOPLE program works with special needs students. Stacy thinks focusing on a small group of high school students like the PEOPLE programs or similar programs could raise the enrollment rate within the Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy Program. It was mentioned that Moraine Valley Community College is the only community college that has Recreation management and Recreation therapy. Usually 1–2 out of district students enroll in our Recreation management / Recreation Therapy every semester/year. There is no word for a Recreation management / Recreation therapy program starting anywhere else. Other community colleges are getting rid of their Recreation management / Recreation therapy programs.

In February the Public Service department hosted a Public Service showcase, and it was quite successful. The Public Service Showcase helps students connect and network with people in different fields and exposes the students to different career fields within the Public Service Field.

Inita Dixon's courses with her students work in senior buildings and they enjoy seeing the students within the professional issues course. It is learning how to start and follow through with the recreation program they created within the senior buildings.

Darryln & Alexis were highlighted for their good work and were told that they would be hired in a heartbeat by a committee member that worked alongside them. Students going through the practicums now at Homewood Flossmoor Park District were challenged to connect with everyone in each department within the park district and she has been creating programs and following through. Students going through the practicums at Homewood Flossmoor Park District were challenged to connect with everyone in each department within the park district and she has been creating programs and following through. One student mentioned how they have been accepted to the University of Illinois master's program. The students mentioned how the practicums & the Recreation program has opened their eyes and perspectives.

One of the students has now been accepted to the University of Illinois master's program. One of the students also mentioned how the practicums and the Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy program have opened their eyes and perspectives.

Recreation Therapy/Recreation Sport Management

Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 11:30-1:00pm

Enrollment issues were discussed; the program is basically trying to reinvent the wheel to gain higher enrollment rates. Stacy is encouraging her students to go to St. Francis since most of her students do not want to go too far. Also, the college is working on building a dual enrollment program with St. Francis and Moraine Valley Community College. The Admissions office at St. Francis is very enthusiastic about the partnership with Moraine's Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy Program(s) for dual enrollment. A question was asked to everyone from Stacy: "Any other ideas to help improve enrollment, students entertaining?" The question was asked if Chicago State still had a program, and the response was that they were supposed to be reccredited but ended up withdrawing their application and are no longer accredited at a national level at this moment. But it was stated that Chicago state might have a master's program for recreation management/ recreation therapy, but there have not been many updates regarding a master's degree. St. Francis and Illinois State are accredited at the bachelor's level. There are three REC therapy programs in the state of Illinois: St. Francis, Illinois State, and Aurora University (Wisconsin) at the bachelor's level.

Time and resources are low and that factors into obtaining and maintaining engagement. The times are changing, 20 years ago in the Recreation field, it was hard to get a job because everyone was going into that field. Now there is a major decline, positions are being posted but only a few apply to the role. It was mentioned that Physical education, recreation management / recreation therapy has been trying to work with student athletics and coaches and have been trying to target movement specialists. It was asked if we could recruit high school athletics to movement majors so when people in the recreation roles now retire, someone will be there to take over the good jobs offered in the field. An idea was provided to help increase enrollment in park districts, recruit moms from moms & tots groups because a lot of moms are looking to do one class a week, and they can take courses here. This will allow the moms to get out of the house. It was also mentioned to recruit Lincoln Way Central High School students, since we work with St. Francis, it is within district, students could fill out paperwork and pay in-district tuition since the college within district does not have the program. That could be used as a selling point.

Many 18-year-olds have a negative connotation when it comes to junior colleges. The recreation program might have better chances of recruiting students from out of district since we are the only Recreation Management/Recreation Therapy program in Illinois at the community college level. It was mentioned that we should have marketing materials

Recreation Therapy/Recreation Sport Management

Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 11:30-1:00pm

that say “Start at Moraine Valley Community College and finish at St. Francis.” That would be another angle we could come from to gain enrollment, also do not forget to mention that students do not have to be in district to apply nor will they have to pay out of district fees due to Moraine being a community college and the fact that other colleges do not offer this program.

Students working at the front desk at FitRec might know about some of these Recreation courses and we could recruit the students working in FitRec. Some of the FitRec employees are students who are an alumnus who graduated from the physical education/ fitness trainer program or the Recreation Management/ Recreation therapy.

Also, Stacy is working with the director of the FitRec Center Alex Rich to create a practicum for her students. It was mentioned that within the substance abuse and mental health field there is a need for recreational therapists, and it was explained that recreational therapists need a 4-year degree, courses, national certification, 14-week internship, and there is also a non-academic path as another option. MVCC offers 200 hours of internship; it is a part-time practicum. Students graduating from the Recreation program still need a bachelor's degree to take the CTRS exam to become licensed. It is nationally recognized. It was asked if the Recreation program has a dual enrollment option for high school students.

The PEOPLE program was highlighted, and it was expressed that they are amazing. A student who was in the PEOPLE program at Andrew High School for a few years said this program helped her identify what she wanted to do, and she received high school credits for that. Shepard Power PE is how some students are interested in Recreation and special education. Someone mentioned speaking to individual institutions to talk about the Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy program so people can be introduced to the field. Add it in surveys/evaluations if people are interested in Recreation Management/ Recreation Therapy to see the data of people who are interested.

It was also mentioned that they were trying to do off-site cohorts with different park districts to increase awareness and potentially increase enrollment.

Working with high school students who are in PEOPLE programs could expand their horizons within the Recreation program. How can we offer dual credit with high schools for PEOPLE program students to train their sophomore and/or junior year, and then senior year they work the programs.

Recreation Therapy/Recreation Sport Management

Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 11:30-1:00pm

Study abroad options for Recreation management/ Recreation Therapy during the summer semesters were discussed, and Stacy mentioned that she will speak to her connection in Ireland, which will create more exposure, possibly through Special Olympics. Stacy thanked everyone for attending and highlighted networking and how important it is.

Then the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted By, Teja Brown