

# THE DIGEST

*Student newsletter of the Massachusetts Association of Recreational Sports*



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## A Warm Welcome

*By: Delaney Ledoux*

The Massachusetts Association of Recreational Sports' leadership team would like to welcome you to the first monthly issue of The MARS Digest. This newsletter aims to involve students from across the state by strengthening the community within recreation on campuses across Massachusetts. Students and professionals are welcome to submit articles that promote health and wellness whether it be game write ups, new trends in exercise, tips and tricks to build comradery among co-workers or teams, new superfoods or anything else of the sort! We hope to create a fun method of communication throughout the state for general information, updates, news, trends, and words from our leadership team.

# Your State's Leadership

*By: Delaney Ledoux*

The MARS leadership team is made up of a State Director, a Treasurer, a Secretary and a Student Leader. Mike Rodier from Assumption College in Worcester holds the position of State Director. At Assumption College he is the Director of Recreation. Our state Treasurer is Tyler DeLeon from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge. At MIT he is the Assistant Director of Performance and Fitness. Our state Secretary is Shane Conti, the Intramural Program Manager at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Student State Leader is Delaney Ledoux, an intramural supervisor from UMass Boston as well.

## News & Updates

### **Healthier WOO, Workplace Wellness at Worcester State University**

*By: Dean Bowen & Johanie Rodriguez  
Worcester State University*

Beginning in January 2019 creative minds met to develop a grassroots Employee Wellness Program at Worcester State University.

After many brainstorming meetings about what to offer, with the limited resources at hand, we began with a comprehensive survey. The survey was developed with the intention that the faculty and staff that participated would provide us their ideal programs and events that would impact their overall well-being in the workplace. The survey was then administered early February 2019. With a 23% response rate, we were able to take the feedback, comments, and suggestions to implement programming efforts. Things kicked off that spring 2019 with a "Walk Across Worcester" walking program. The initial program reached 35 employees, walking over 5,000 miles in just 5 weeks. Since then, we have offered many collaborative programs with our on-campus constituents (academic programs and services), EAP representatives, as well as, our local CVS location reaching over 260 participations in the first year. The programs offered have been a direct response to the survey. Some of these programs include(d); Maintaining Balance in Life, Flu Shots, Reducing Stress/Anxiety, Fitness: Where to Begin?, Group Exercise Classes (Meditation, Yoga, etc), Arts & Leisure, Balancing Nutrition, Financial Wellness, and Professional Development skill sessions.



Getting started took time, and casting a wide net, with trial and correction in mind. We felt like we were always moving things forward, overcoming the roadblocks that were present. If you are looking to get a start with engaging your faculty and staff on your campus there are a few things to consider;

**Branding/Identity-** How can you become a “thing” on campus?

**Demand Driven-** What are your faculty and staff asking/looking for?

**Collaboration-** Who are the on/off campus partners that can add value (not just financial) to your vision?

**Programming-** What can you first offer that has no cost to engage the faculty and staff population?

**Engagement-** How will you get your programs/information to the faculty and staff?

**Incentives-** Encourage participation with financial partnerships, and giveaways.

**Challenges-** Oh, the fun part... How will you receive funding (if any)? How will you engage with faculty and staff that are already too busy, overworked or understaffed? Will you get the top down administration support to be successful? How will you keep the faculty and staff engaged?

For more information about our efforts at Worcester State University, visit [https://www.wsulancers.com/Wellness/Employee\\_Wellness](https://www.wsulancers.com/Wellness/Employee_Wellness). Feel free to also contact Dean Bowen, Recreation & Wellness (dbowen2@worchester.edu) or Johanie Rodriguez, Human Resources (jrodriguez7@worchester.edu). We are always looking for new ideas, suggestions to continue to offer a robust employee wellness program. If you are looking to begin an employee wellness program, we are happy to assist in any way we can.

### ***Fostering a Feeling of Community and Involvement within Recreation***

*By: Jacob Borges, Rejoice Attor, Alyssa Mesaros, and Metasebia (Marty) Dejene  
WPI Sports & Recreation Center Staff*

The feeling of true involvement and community at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is something like no other. In order to help foster that feeling within the WPI Sports & Recreation Center, current students and student staff of WPI Sports & Recreation Center are working diligently to instill a recreation council; a system that will allow for direct involvement and improvement by patrons of the Sports & Recreation Center.



Currently, any comments or concerns a patron has, are directed to the Student Government Association (SGA). Instead of going to SGA, the WPI community will now be able to voice their concerns and improvements to the council who will then direct those needs to professional staff of the Sports & Recreation Center. The council provides a direct avenue to answer the question, “why”. The majority of the students here at WPI are engineering students, the “why” is most often the question at hand and now there is a perfect opportunity for that “why” to be answered. While the council provides answers, it also offers an opportunity to students and patrons alike to gain leadership experience in an area that the WPI community is passionate about. The council will not only help address short-term improvement opportunities, but will also create a feedback loop between patrons and staff, a cycle they feel would be everlasting. This will allow for continuous positive change and improvement for campus recreation. Transparency is a pivotal value to the WPI recreation staff, in which now can be carried out by the council.

The philosophy of the WPI Sports & Recreation Center student staff has always been built on teamwork, because without it they would never be able to make the dream work. Keep an eye out for more updates regarding our council progress!

### ***New Year, Better Me***

*By: Katie Danieli*

*Assumption College*

“New Year, New Me”, this is the saying that can be heard through the vast majority of gyms at the start of every new year. The rush of new memberships and new gym-goers quickly fills up gyms that may have not been that busy just days before the new year. The pattern that seems to happen with this phrase is that it only lasts for a month and then the new members lose their motivation to get up and go to the gym. Instead of joining a gym in hopes to “lose weight” or “get beach body ready”, individuals should join simply because they want to better themselves and their overall health and wellness. I once thought of going to the gym as a chore, but I realized that there are so many benefits to working out that I may not have originally realized.





Just because others may be doing what appears to be insane lifting or workouts at the gym and I might just be sitting getting my mileage up on the bike, doesn't mean I deserve to be in the gym any less. My advice to the gym goers that have the mindset of "New Year, New Me", is to instead think "New Year, Better Me". Focus on bettering your mind, body, and overall health and well-being. The gym might just be the perfect place to start this train of thinking.

**Sharing knowledge is not about giving people something, or getting something from them. That is only valid for information sharing. Sharing knowledge occurs when people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action; it is about creating learning processes.**

**-Peter Senge**

## **Staying Connected**

You can find us on Instagram and Twitter at @mars\_recreation for updates, highlights, exciting content and more! Please email Delaney Ledoux (dsledoux08@gmail.com) with feedback or to receive article submission details!

