

# Recreation & Wellness

## Impact Report 2020 - 2021





# Letter From The Director

As I reflect on this past year and all the challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, I take time to recognize the level of service our department provided to Old Dominion's campus community. Throughout this fiscal year, Recreation & Wellness continued to be a key service provider for ODU students.

The facility opened in July 2020 with equipment spaced apart and signage to remind students and members to remain safe in the Student Recreation Center. As we progress into a different phase of this global pandemic, we will continue to embrace new ways to meet our community's greatest needs both virtually and in-person. Nutrition consultations increased due to the convenience of video meetings to connect with the campus dietician. In addition to offering virtual programs, we also strived to maintain as many in-person programs as possible.

Our staff worked hard and smart to be innovative and nimble as we were keeping up with ever changing guidelines within the Commonwealth and the University. During the 2021 fiscal year, we remained resilient and determined to offer the best possible experiences during a time of uncertainty. I look forward to the future and the challenge to deliver on our promise to offer opportunities for wellness and recreation to our students and campus community.

**Coulson Thomas**

Director, Recreation & Wellness





# Mission

Provide programs, resources, and services that are accountable, well-structured, and ever expanding. While serving the greater community, our focus is student empowerment and development.

# Vision

Through quality innovative programs and services, we provide the foundation for lifelong exploration and development of the mind, body and spirit.







# Strategic Goals

1

Global recognition as the comprehensive source for Live Well, Learn Well initiatives that result in meaningful impact.

2

Deliver quality experiences through intentional and inclusive relationships to engage current and future participants, student organizations, departments and the community.

3

Establish a desirable environment dedicated to developing professional and personal growth within each employee, through a comprehensive learning continuum, from recruitment to departure.

4

Maximize use and efficiency of human, financial and physical resources needed to enhance our participants' experiences of operations, services, and programs.



# Where Are They Now?

Gabrielle Cunningham enrolled as a student at Old Dominion University in 2013 because it was close to home. When she started at ODU, she knew the major she would choose and the friends she would connect with, but little did she know how impactful Recreation & Wellness would be on her college experience.

Cheerleading, flag football, volleyball, and the step team kept Gabrielle active in her youth. Her interest in sports led her to apply to be the Sport Club and Summer Camp Office Assistant with Dr. Jean Holt during her first year at ODU. In this role, Gabrielle became acquainted with many of the Recreation & Wellness professional staff, worked on special projects for the department, and eventually landed a position as a sport club manager.

Gabrielle's experiences with Recreation & Wellness allowed her to apply transferable skills like problem solving, time management, and customer service to her professional career. She also built connections with people she may not have otherwise met, such as Coulson Thomas, who served as her mentor in the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program.

"I'm very thankful for Dr. Holt, Coulson Thomas, and the rest of the Recreation & Wellness team who were pivotal in my growth both personally and professionally. I learned first-hand what it was like to have someone invest in you."

Gabrielle is putting her skills to good use in her professional role as an Email Marketing Specialist at Langley Federal Credit Union. She continues to seek opportunities to grow in her marketing career.

## **Gabrielle Cunningham**

ODU Class of 2017

Email Specialist, Langley Federal Credit Union





# Esports



## Fall 2020 Tryouts

Over 100 students expressed interest in getting involved with ODU Esports and nearly 90 tried out for teams.



## Monarch Esports Arena Grand Opening

The Monarch Esports Arena opened on April 23, 2021. This new facility serves as a point of pride for Esports players and an aspiration to many other institutions.



## National Ranking

In fall 2020, the Valorant team placed 5th nationally in the NACE league. During spring 2021, FIFA Xbox player Danny Leveque placed 2nd nationally in the NACE league and top 10 in the PlayVS league.



# Monarch Esports Arena

ODU Esports was established in Fall 2020 as a new program supported by Recreation & Wellness. Grant Deppen, Assistant Director for Intramurals and Esports, was tasked with leading the charge to create the program and plan a space that would be home to esports competitions and drop-in gaming.

Substantial research was performed to learn how other institutions made their spaces functional and extraordinary. At its barebones, an esports arena is no more than a high-performance computer lab, but much can be done to bring energy to the space. Deppen said the main goal was for ODU's arena to be attractive, unique, and serve as a recruitment tool.

In July 2020 after extensive planning with vital stakeholders and a committee, construction in the Webb Center began. A partnership with 49 Degrees, a design company based in Ohio, was key to creating an ODU-branded space with gaming-inspired aesthetics.

The Monarch Esports Arena (MEA) grand opening was held on April 23, 2021 after a campus-wide effort to complete the space. The MEA features over 50 gaming stations, a broadcast and streaming suite, a console room, custom lighting, and other features that make it exceptional. Deppen is satisfied with the results and said, "There's a palpable energy even when it's quiet. The lighting and wall graphics let you know that you're not in a typical university space."

Students appreciate the space, too. Jack McGrath, a player on the Blue Rocket League team, is thrilled to have a dedicated space where people with similar interests to him can gather. "Watching ODU invest in this new competitive space makes me understand that the school is not limiting its view to former ideas of what a sport can be."

The Monarch Esports Arena has already proven its worth in a short amount of time: Over 30 student employment positions have been created, varsity teams have made the space their home, and students regularly bring friends to enjoy the thrills of gaming in a social setting. The future is looking bright for ODU Esports.







# Facilities

## Reopening After Lockdown

The Student Recreation Center was one of the first facilities in the state to open during the COVID-19 pandemic. Operations staff effectively communicated and enforced new policies involving masks, cleaning, distancing, and other ways to ensure a healthy environment.

## 40 New Staff Members

After many vacancies from the previous semester, 40 new facility technicians were hired. The new staff members proved to be valuable team players despite non-traditional onboarding, including online training. Several students were promoted to Facility Manager within one semester based on their hard work and dedication.

# Aquatics

## Lap Swim Reservations

Open lap swimming returned with the SRC's July 2020 reopening. Online reservations were successfully implemented to manage capacities and ensure patron safety.

## 16 Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Courses

Despite the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, 16 CPRO courses were offered with limited capacity, a mask requirement, and physical distancing.





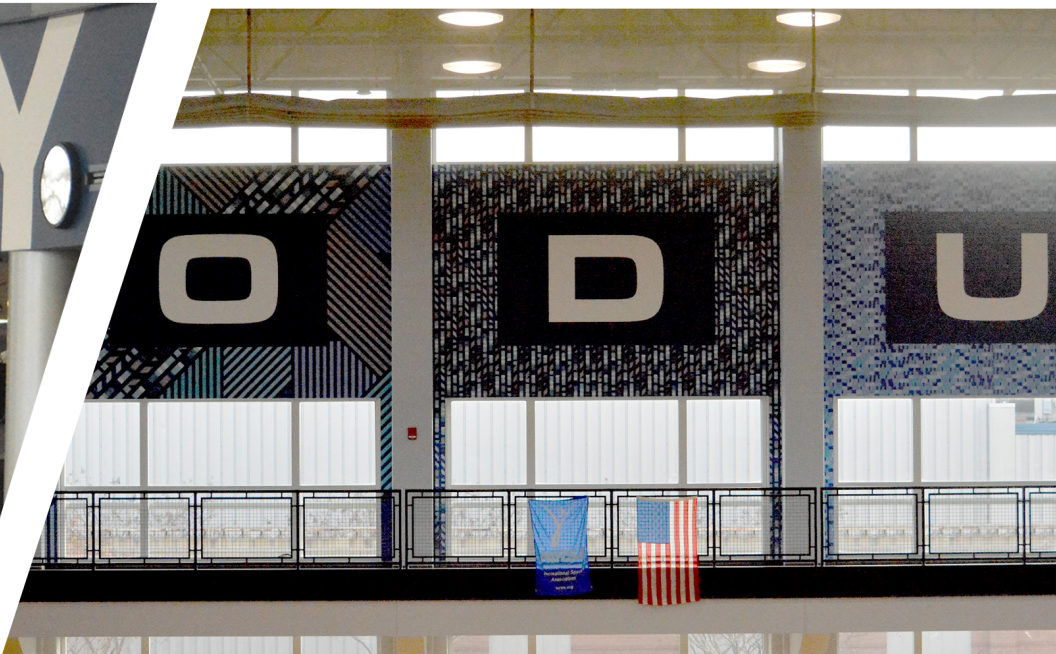
# Marketing

## Facility Branding

In partnership with 49 Degrees design company, the Student Recreation Center received a facelift in summer 2021. ODU-branded designs were installed in the front lobby and above the indoor track to bring liveliness and school spirit into the facility.

## 1,212 New Instagram Followers since June 2019

As a result of the stay-at-home order in spring 2020, students and members turned to social media to connect with our department. Wellness, fitness, nutrition, and motivational content was shared from the @odurecwell Instagram account, which nearly duplicated in followers in just over a year.





# Fitness & Wellness

## Virtual Fitness Programs

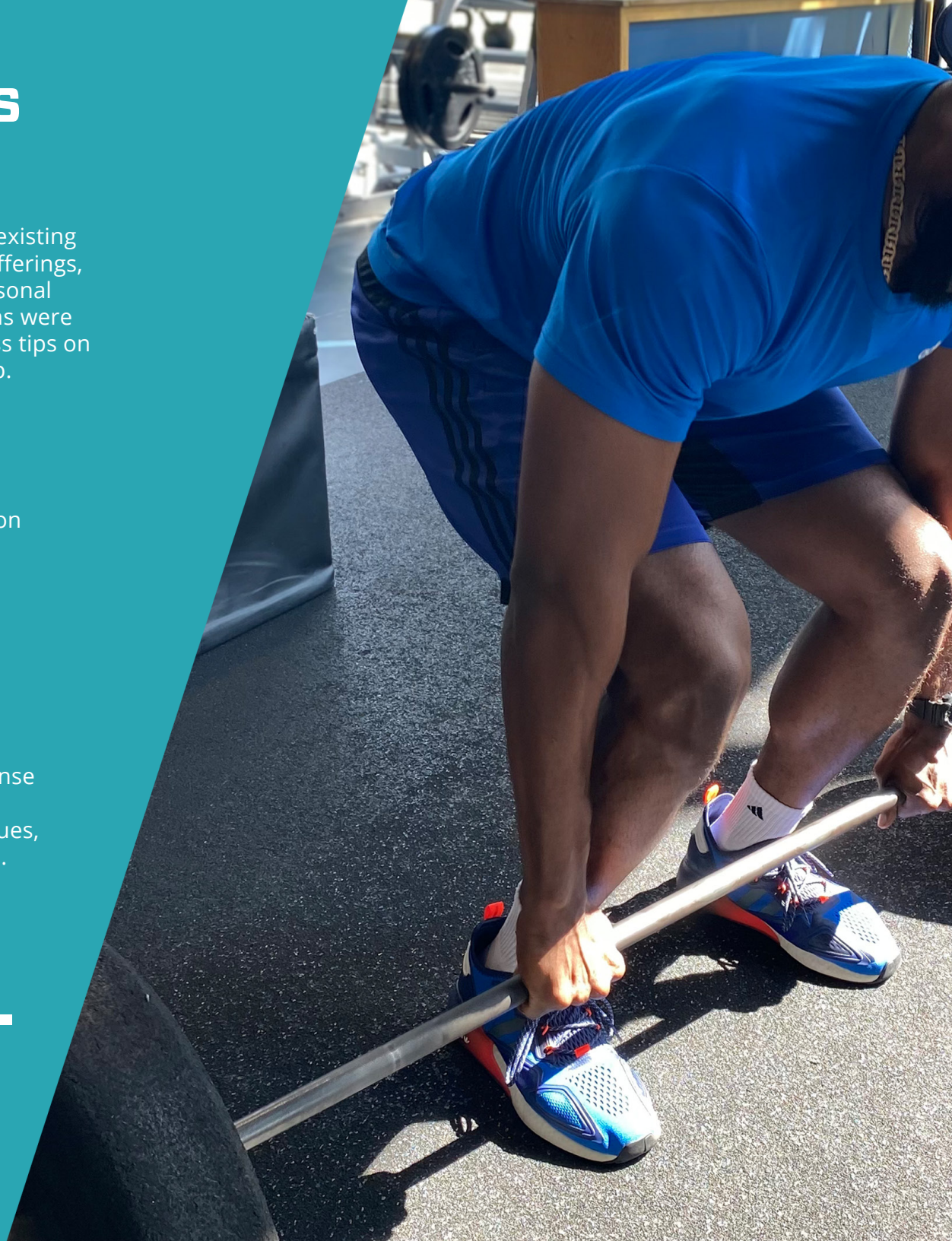
In response to the challenges presented by COVID-19, existing fitness and wellness programs transitioned to virtual offerings, such as group exercise classes on YouTube, virtual personal training, and online preparation courses. New programs were also offered, including at-home daily workouts, wellness tips on social media, and running challenges via the Strava app.

## DeStress Week

The Fitness & Wellness team partnered with Health Promotion on this popular week of events in preparation for exams. The partnership maximized the number of students reached through creative and interactive programming while allowing the Wellness Specialist team to branch outside of their comfort zone.

## Monarch Fit Team

The inaugural Monarch Fit Team welcomed over 35 students to meet likeminded individuals and build a sense of community through weekly challenges that expose students to campus resources, stress-relieving techniques, healthy eating tips and recipes, exercise tips, and more.







# Health Promotion

## Be Smart: Don't Party Video Series

Four of Health Promotion's student staff participated in the 'Be Smart: Don't Party' video series to encourage students to find new and physically distanced ways to socialize without large gatherings.

## Virtual Nutrition Offerings

Tracy Conder, the campus dietitian, served a growing body of students by adapting to virtual one-on-one meetings and workshops.

## COVID-19 Education & Prevention

The Health Promotion team worked closely with Student Health Services to educate the ODU community on the COVID-19 vaccine and promote vaccinations.

  
**OLD DOMINION**  
UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH PROMOTION



A person with long brown hair, wearing a camouflage tank top and blue patterned shorts, is climbing a rock wall. They are using colorful climbing holds. The background is a dark blue gradient.

# Sport Clubs

## Modified Practices

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, clubs held practices that consisted of individual conditioning and non-contact skill drills.



# Outdoor Adventure Program

## 10 Park & Play Trips

To encourage physical distancing "Park & Play" trips were created. Students provided their own transportation to the trip destination and met the trip leaders, who arrived with all necessary equipment and gear.





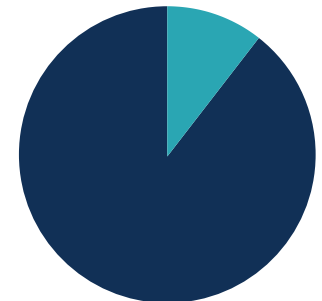
# Crunching The Numbers

**6,503** students participated in Recreation & Wellness programming



**20%** first-generation college students

**90.5%** Recreation & Wellness student employees were retained from Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 compared to 74.7% non-Recreation & Wellness student employees



**21%** affiliated with the military





# Partnerships

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## Friends of ODU

Eastern Virginia Medical School  
Elizabeth River Trail Foundation  
Higher Education Centers  
RaceRoster  
Youth Triathlon Camp

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## On-Campus Partnerships

Academic Affairs	Military Connection Center
Admissions	Student Conduct & Academic Integrity
Athletics	Parking & Transportation
Career Development Services	Physical Therapy
College of Arts & Letters	Resiliency Team
Counseling Center	Risk Management
Dean of Students Office	ROTC
Department of Biological Sciences	Strategic Communication & Marketing
Department of Human Movement Sciences	Student Engagement & Enrollment Services
Dining Services	Student Health Services
Disorders & Special Education	Student Transition & Family Programs
Fellowship of Women in Science	University Advancement
Housing & Residence Life	Webb Center
Leadership & Student Involvement	Women & Gender Equity Center



# Recreation & Wellness Professional Staff

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## Professional Staff

**Bridget Weikel**

*Associate Dean of Students*

**Coulson Thomas**

*Director*

**Adriane Lott**

*Financial Budget Manager*

**Connie Thomas**

*Office Manager*

**Jesse Braxton**

*Office Assistant*

**Ryan Jumper**

*Interim Assistant Director of Facility &  
Event Operations*

**Craig Stengel**

*Equipment Services Technician*

**Brittanie Naff**

*Assistant Director of Marketing  
& Memberships*

**Chantal Matthews**

*Assistant Director of Health Promotion*

**Shanice Alexander**

*Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs  
Health Educator*

**Meshon Davis**

*Monarch Wellness Coordinator*

**Tracy Conder**

*Dietitian*

**Mike Willett**

*Assistant Director of Outdoor  
Adventure Programs*

**Erik Edwards**

*Coordinator of Outdoor Adventure Programs*

**Grant Deppen**

*Assistant Director of Intramurals & Esports*

**Jean Holt**

*Assistant Director of Sport Clubs &  
Summer Camps*

**Mary Healey**

*Assistant Director of Fitness & Wellness*

## Graduate Assistants

**Halie Maass**

*Group Exercise*

**Kameron Simms**

*Intramurals*

**Logan Dzatko**

*Facilities*

**Madison Cutten**

*Fitness & Wellness*

**SheAyre Bowles**

*Sport Clubs*

**Nia Cowart**

*Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs*

**Patrick Wilson**

*Outdoor Adventure Programs*





**OLD DOMINION**  
UNIVERSITY

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