

Abstract: Examining Participation and Retention in Recreational Sports Ramsey Fitness Classes Using and Interpersonal Self-Regulation Framework

Dr. Michelle vanDellen (Psychology); LeeAnn Beam (Psychology); Dr. Ellen Evans (Kinesiology)

College students in the United States (frequently between the ages of 18 and 22) are particularly high risk for developing patterns of poor physical-health attitudes and behaviors, despite the prevalence of new and accessible student fitness amenities. Reviews of the effectiveness of university fitness programs do not base their analyses on social-psychological theory, which may be key to uncovering central determinants behind low attendance and retention rates of universities' fitness offerings, including group fitness classes.

The research proposed here is a collaborative effort between the University of Georgia's (UGA) Psychology Department and Recreational Sports department. This research includes a longitudinal study that will take place from July 2017 to June 2018 to pursue three specific aims: (1) to assess the current social exercise attitudes and behaviors of the students who participate in fitness classes at the Ramsey Student Center (Ramsey); (2) to evaluate the relationship between social exercise attitudes and behaviors and retention in and satisfaction with fitness classes via user-centered sports; and (3) to evaluate the characteristics associated with positive social influence on exercise behaviors.

The proposed research will examine how interpersonal influence affects exercise attitudes and behaviors of UGA's students who attend Ramsey's fitness classes and will provide the opportunity for program adjustment to increase fitness classes' retention rates and improve student health.