

California State University Northridge Aquatic Center  
A Center of the Recreation and Tourism Management Department

Strategic Plan for 2011-2014

Adopted March 2011 (edited Jan 2012)

The aquatic center has as its mission to teach and promote boating and water safety education through credit, non-credit, and community service programs. The center is also a learning laboratory for RTM Students. CSUN students develop professional skills in teaching, programming, and leadership while working with youth, adults, and special populations. Programs include sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, water skiing, wakeboarding, wakeskating, personal watercraft, boating safety education, water safety education, outdoor education, environmental education, and leadership training.

The aquatic center provides services to over 10,000 students and community members each year through a variety of programs.

John Van Arsdale has served as the director of the aquatic center since it began and anticipates retirement from his current position in the summer of 2011. The shift in the staffing pattern of the center is one of the motivating factors for drafting a strategic plan to guide the transition and the intermediate future. The RTM departments overall strategic planning as part of program review and COARPT accreditations preparation also makes it a good time to look again at the future of the CSUN Aquatic Center.

### **I. Keep Doing What is Working**

1. Remain a chartered center of the Recreation and Tourism Management Department providing curricular and co-curricular services to CSUN students and to the larger community.
  - 1.1 Rationale includes clear alignment with academic mission of CSUN as well as financial advantages related to equipment and existing contracts that could not be achieved if it were not a center of an academic department.
2. Continue the existing partnerships with the LA County Park service and California Boating and Waterways Department.
  - 2.1 Extend the existing contract with the county that will come up in 2012.
  - 2.2 Continue requests for Boating and Waterway grants to fund boating and water safety education through the boating and instruction safety center.
3. Continue the active pursuit of re-current grants and contracts to provide the range of community services.

3.1 Maintain the commitment to serve disadvantaged and/or minority youth populations to provide unique opportunities for growth and development.

4. Continue to offer credit classes and other informal learning opportunities for RTM majors through internship and student work opportunities.

4.1 Traditional aquatic center classes: RTM 151D Canoeing; RTM 265 Waterski/Wakeboard; RTM 267 & 267L Sailing; RTM 494 and other experiential learning classes.

## II. Plans for the Future

### A. Maintain and expand Program Services and Research Initiative of the Aquatic Center

#### *1. Maintain and Expand involvement with Associated Students and University Student Union*

1.1 The Aquatic Center director will work with the new AS Outdoor Adventures director to develop open enrollment co-curricular aquatic programs for CSUN students at Castaic Lake. (The assumption is that AS Outdoors is doing program development beyond aquatics at Castaic – e.g. hiking, backpacking).

The programs would be fee based for students and that fee would be partially subsidized by the AS budget (based on AS philosophy of high level of subsidy between value/cost and fee). The Aquatic Center would work cooperatively with AS Rec to identify what portion of that fee which would flow to the Aquatic Center budget (directly or indirectly) to cover expenses of equipment, staff, and overhead.

The style of programs may vary from introductory splash and play programs to more rigorous non-credit classes in boating safety and skills or other outdoor recreation skill classes.

All programs would be consistent with safety management protocols of the Aquatic Center (including appropriate staff certifications/ life guard supervision/ etc. as needed)

The opportunity for relevant open enrollment programs that can **simultaneously** serve the local community will be offered as parallel offerings. For example, a **non-credit** instructional class in 'sailing' would be one of many courses in a fall, spring, or summer calendar of events. Priority registration would be given to CSUN students. Open slots would be provided for community members and relevant fees for community members would flow to the aquatic center.

Example aquatic programs include but are not limited to: canoeing, kayaking, paddle boards, wake board, water skiing, sailing, ocean kayaking, surfing, bass fishing, pwc, power boat driving, etc.

1.2 The AS Outdoors program manager and Aquatic Center director's staff would also seek to engage 'university club' and Greek participation through group contracting with fees comparable to non-credit open enrollment classes. An MOU charge back would be created based on costs to the Aquatic Center.

The Aquatic Center would continue to facilitate the sponsorship of relevant aquatic clubs that operate within the AS club system (e.g. Sailing Club or Waterski/Wakeboard Club).

The AS Outdoors program manager would work collaboratively with other program managers in USU/AS and with the Aquatic Center director in terms of coordination of schedules, marketing, and training.

The funding commitment from AS will be negotiated as part of this program development

1.3 The Aquatic Center director would work with the USU to provide relevant aquatic programs that would serve the USU Sunny Day Camp summer program. Traditional contract system based on scope of services would be used.

1.4 The RTM graduate marketing class in Spring semester 2011 will conduct research studies to provide information resources for aquatic center program development to CSUN students and the local community. Studies will focus on the marketing mix including program benefit/price/place/promotion.

1.5 Future discussions will continue about transportation services provided to CSUN students that would enhance CSUN main campus participation at the aquatic center.

1.6 Participation in the new online registration system implemented with the new Student Recreation Center has been requested. For a small processing fee this would allow registration management of the open enrollment style programs at the Aquatic Center directed at both the student and community markets.

## *2. Community Boating Safety Classes*

As mentioned in Strategic aim 1.1, providing open enrollment classes that can be offered to the local community at the same time as students from the CSUN campus will enhance the revenue stream and participation in boating safety programs.

*3. Expand Contract Programs with Community Agencies* consistent with program and research priorities of the center. General priority of programs: CSUN academic classes; CSUN student based programs (AS, RMA, USU); community contract and/or individual enrollment programs; others.

*4. Expand the Research Function at the Aquatic Center* for existing and new programs and create stronger ties with RTM faculty and other faculty for research agendas. New research initiatives would include but are not limited to:

4.1 Outcome research for existing at-risk youth programs currently in place.

4.2 Outcome research for obesity reduction programs and other wellness programs through active outdoor recreation participation

4.3 Outcome research for leadership development programs focused on youth or adult leaders.

4.4 Outcome research on health transitions in cooperation with the Brown Center.

5. *Explore the Expansion of additional Corporate Training Programs* in team building and leadership for companies in the Santa Clarita valley area including the installation of an additional ropes course facility in the old program docks area.

6. *Explore the Potential for the Archery Range Project* in concert with Easton corp and university development office.

7. *Explore the Potential for a Zip Line Tour* at Castaic as additional revenue stream.

**B. Change organizational patterns consistent with expanded program and research initiatives.**

1. Continue the financial funding for undergraduate credit classes from state side part-time faculty resources or other permanent instructional resources of the campus.

2. Hire a faculty tenure track line position in 2011-12 year (beginning 2012-13) that would be supported by and/or support initiatives in this plan and who would serve as the executive director of the Aquatic Center.

4. Create program and operational level staff positions commensurate with growth in revenue.

5. Increase operational efficiencies by 'stream lining of financial mechanisms' related to funding through state side, corporation, and USU/AS. (I.e. remove some of current headaches of gas reimbursement, explore state side versus AS with salary or other, etc.)

6. Create financial budget expectations such that a percent of revenue from Aquatic Center is available to fund other RTM department initiatives.

**C. Fund Raising Projects**

1. Develop fund raising strategies for 'endowments' for the center maximizing John's many relationships and the juncture of his retirement. Implement these strategies in the next 2 years (2011-2013).

1.1 Conduct feasibility for an 'endowed' professor chair in aquatic and outdoor programming attached to the Aquatic Center. Test and then raise a minimum of 500K for an endowed chair. The chair would be related to the center and anchor the research initiatives of the aquatic center. The success of this campaign will allow other faculty line growth in the department.

1.2 Conduct feasibility for expanding the existing 'endowment' to support annual operations and scholarships for under-served communities. While 1.1 is being implemented commit to an annual growth of the endowment through a commitment from the operations budget. After 1.1 is completed; then a specific annual fund raising plan can supplement annual contributions from the operations budget. The goal is to bring the endowment fund to \$500,000 over the next five years.

### **III. Summary for Increasing the Financial Stability and Sustainability of the Aquatic Center**

1. Enhance the existing revenue stream mix so that the total result is a system that is less dependent on a primary source. The current revenue stream mix includes grants from Boating and Waterways, other external grants, group contracts, internal CSUN grants from AS, and IRA grants from AS.

The future will see annual income supported from the existing revenue streams plus new pieces to diversify income streams. Specifically: User fees from community open enrollment programs, user fees from expanded CSUN student programs, research based grants, and annual allocations from the endowed professor Chair and the operations endowment.

2. The new mix of fees will increase the total operational budget of the center significantly.

### **IV. Staffing Patterns for Aquatic Center**

#### The Transition Plan

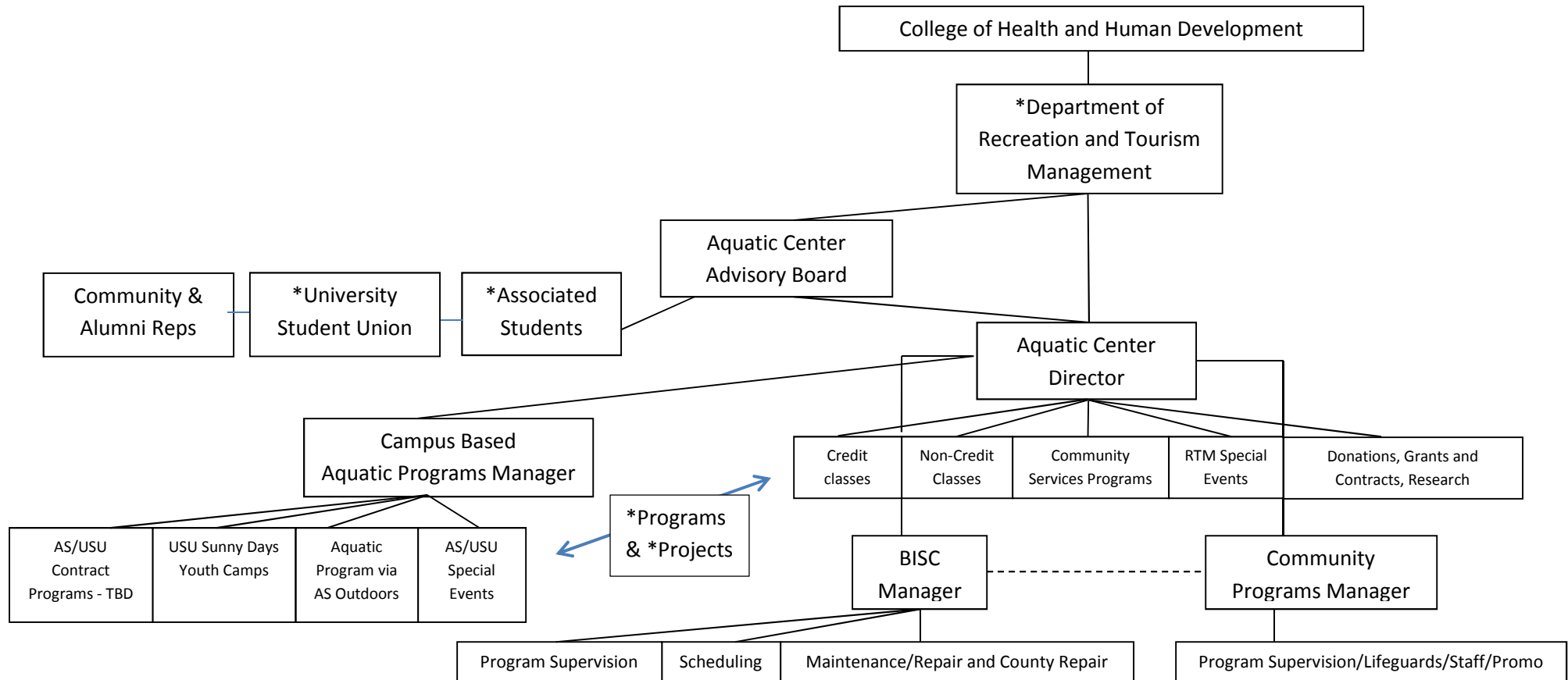
With John's anticipated retirement in the summer of 2011 there is a need for a transition plan in leadership of the center. John has agreed to continue in a part-time role as the Interim Executive Director of the Aquatic Center. As an annuitant John would be limited in his duties but would focus on fund raising, teaching of credit classes, and delegating operations to the BISC Manager and the Community Programs Manager.

During the transitional year, RTM would be pursuing the tenure track hire that would become the Executive Director of the Aquatic Center/ Professor. The new position would be targeted at 6 units of administrative directorship of the center, 3 units of research and traditional departmental/college duties, 6 units of instruction per semester (additional instructional time – could be bought out by other funded grants and/or contracts).

The creation of a program manager position in addition to the BISC operations manager should protect the Executive Director/Professor position from being consumed by operations. The additional staff roles would allow the new position to focus on executive leadership issues, grants development, teaching and research. The mix of unit assignment may vary in the future as the aquatic center grows and fund raising objectives are met. Clear alignment between the Aquatic Center and a tenure track line involved in research initiatives (endowed or not) will be the point of consistency.

The attached sheet represents a functional staffing plan for the Aquatic Center.

# Proposed Aquatic Center Administrative Functions and Staff Flow Chart



\*Proposed Financial Contributions and Support

USU  
Contracts, Program Fees,  
Equipment Purchases

RTM  
Staffing, Facilities, Equipment,  
Contracts, Grants and Donations,  
IRA, Program Fees

AS  
Allocations, Accounting  
Services, Staff, Program Fees,  
Equipment Purchases