

Want a higher GPA in college? Join a gym

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Michigan State University students work out in one of the college's campus fitness centers. A new MSU study indicates that students who were members of a gym had higher GPAs than those who weren't. Credit: Derrick L. Turner

For those students looking to bump up their grade point averages during college, the answer may not be spending more time in a library or study hall, but in a gym.

New Michigan State University research shows that [students](#) who were members of the recreational sports and [fitness centers](#) on MSU's campus

during their freshman and sophomore years had higher GPAs than those who weren't.

The research also indicated that students with memberships stayed in school longer. An increase of 3.5 percent in two-year retention rates was seen among this group.

"That could equate to about 1,575 people within a student population of 49,000 deciding to move on to a third year of school," said James Pivarnik, a professor of kinesiology and epidemiology at MSU. "These results provide a compelling argument to universities that a higher student retention rate could be enhanced just by having adequate recreational and fitness facilities for students."

The study, led by Pivarnik and MSU doctoral student Samantha Danbert in the Department of Kinesiology, can be found in the most recent issue of the *Recreational Sports Journal*.

The research supports previous theories suggesting that by creating an environment that connects students to an institution, in this case a university recreational facility, an increase in academic success and retention can occur.

During the project, Pivarnik's team analyzed data from a sample of freshmen and sophomores, totaling 4,843 students, and compared the GPAs of those who purchased a fitness facility membership and those who did not. Results showed that after four consecutive semesters, the students with memberships obtained higher cumulative GPAs. They also had more credits completed by the end of their first year in college.

"We found that these students' cumulative GPAs were 0.13 points higher," Pivarnik said. "Although this number may not appear to be significant, in the end, that amount could mean the difference to those

students on the cusp of getting into graduate school or even advancing to the next academic year."

Pivarnik noted that 74 percent of those with memberships successfully gained their sophomore status while only 60 percent reached that goal in the nonmember group.

"The results of this study are important because not only are we retaining more students, but we're retaining those that have higher GPAs which is good for everyone," Pivarnik said.

More information: journals.humankinetics.com/rsj

Provided by Michigan State University

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