SPORT CLUB GRADUATE ASSISTANT

JESSE GEER

During Spring 2016, many sport clubs competed and challenged themselves a full schedule of games. Men’s Lacrosse and Ultimate made the playoffs; Baseball Club started up again. Moreover, great strides were made during the President’s meeting reviewing a variety of topics. Lastly, the Sport Clubs Corner show had a great time recapping the news each month. I look forward to next semester with new students and new presidents for some clubs!

MEN’S VOLLEYBALL

RYAN LEE

Throughout the 2015-2016 season, the team spent a lot of time in the gym working with players at different positions to see where our new players were most successful. The team was comprised half of returning players, some which have been on the team for four years and the other half of the team were new faces. The mix of younger and older players was not obvious on the court when this team competed; many practices helped to develop the chemistry between all of the players. Many changes happened with our lineup between the fall and spring semester due to players graduating or not returning in the spring, but we had versatile players stepping up to fill the gaps.

After we competed for the first time in an Iowa State tournament and placed first in the bronze bracket, we returned to the gym and went from there. The hours practiced showed a few weeks later at Northern Illinois University losing by a couple points to the 2015 NCVF championship team, UW-Oshkosh. After this match, our intensity level stayed up defeating a hard fought game against the University of Illinois. The team is eager to continue to play and train for the NCVF nationals next year.

BASEBALL

JACOB KRUGER

The Leatherneck Club Baseball team had its first season of play in Spring 2016. The team consisted a hard working bunch of players who wanted to play baseball and have fun. Although the team finished 2-6 on the season, it ended on a very high note. After three tough games against Saginaw Valley State University at the end of March, the team faced Northwestern University in the beginning of April; some improvements were made defensively and offensively. The next weekend, the team took a road trip to Cape Girardeau, Missouri to face Southeast Missouri State University. The first two victories ever won by the club baseball team took place with a combination of great pitching and an outstanding offensive display; the team went on to take 2 out of 3 for the series win. Throughout the year, the team was learning how to bond as a team; the more time spent together on and off the field, the better the team played. After finishing a season filled with promise, the Western Illinois Club Baseball team is excited to play again in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017.
FENCING CLUB PROSPERS

KALEIGH STRODE

Fencing had a prosperous year with a record number of members participating in Assaults - the technical name for matches, and learning the skills of epee (fencing style). As the Fencing Club president, it is my job and pleasure to design teaching methods to help residents of Western Illinois University learn more about our amazing sport. We held our first 75-point assault between two very competitive members! It is our goal to have a strong, passionate team next year and hopefully host our first tournament. Our club prides itself on its ability to train anyone who wants to learn how to fence; anyone is welcome to come try a hand at this amazing sport.

WOMEN’S FASTPITCH SOFTBALL

KALEIGH STRODE

The WIU Women’s Fast Pitch Softball Club team’s fall season started off strong, practicing every Monday and Thursday evening at Veteran’s Park. The club participated in the Fall Huskie Palooza tournament at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. This tournament consisted of several university club teams from Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Spring semester brought new club members and new club leaders. The team played a doubleheader against Northern Illinois University on April 17 and Eastern Illinois University on April 23. The club consists of a diverse group of girls with many different skill sets. This club/team sticks together through good times and tough times. They always find a reason to smile or laugh no matter what, which is what makes this team very unique.

MEN’S LACROSSE

CONNOR BELAWICH

The Leatherneck Men’s Lacrosse Club competes every fall and spring in the Great Lakes Lacrosse League (GLLL). The spring holds the regular season around 12 games including playoffs in Madison, Wisconsin yearly. In 2016, the Leatherneck Men’s Lacrosse Club finished off the regular season 8-0 with notable wins over Northern Illinois, Southern Illinois, Bradley, Lake Forest, and University of Chicago. With 18 members on the team, the key ingredient to success was the leadership from the five seniors and a supporting cast from underclassmen. The lacrosse team has improved tremendously over the last 4 years going from a 1-7 regular season in 2013 to a perfect 8-0 in 2016.

RUNNING CLUB

MIKE STRACHAN

The Leatherneck Running Club continues to keep strong in its endeavors to participate in races. In the fall, we participated in and helped direct two road races, the Fallen Soldiers 5K and the YMCA’s Halloween 5K/10K. We also participated in and won the Super Light Blue 5K with President Michael Strachan finishing as the first male and Caitlen Bishop finishing first for females. In the spring, Michael Strachan took second place in the Nearly Naked Mile. The year has been going strong and we hope it continues into next fall. The season will end April 29 in our first self-contained mile timed trial to see how much we have improved since the beginning of the year.
When Matt and I left for Missouri, I looked at him and said we are going to do well. I told Matt all I wanted to do was qualify for the national championship; you need a top 10 finish. This is a very hard task to accomplish with a large quantity of boats that attend these tournaments. With that being said, I never imagined that we would win. We had four days of practice on a lake that we have only been to one other time. On the first two days of practice, we revisited those spots that produced fish last year. This is the first time that Matt and I fished together. This part of the lake did not produce fish at all and I began to get worried. We did not have anything figured out in two days of practice, but something told me to try up the most famous river arm in the entire lake.

After day two of practice, we researched maps and found spots that we thought would produce the type of fish needed to qualify. The next two days were absolutely magical; we caught some of the best quality fish. On tournament day, we launched and made a 30-minute boat run up the James River arm. Within the first 15 minutes after arriving at our spot, we had two worthy fish in the boat and I began to get confident. We visited another spot and found our limit which consists of five fish. Running back to another spot that we found, Matt and I looked at each other and found something that looked similar to everything that produced fish. We pulled in there and replaced a two pounder for a four-and-a-half pounder. Then we had one other fish that needed to be replaced. We sat on the other fish for two hours. We decided to run back closer to the ramp to a spot we found. Running down the lake I closed my eyes and said a prayer that I needed one more chance for a bigger fish. As soon as I opened my eyes, the first thing I saw was a spot.

We had never fished this spot and was not sure if it would produce but I told Matt we needed to try it. Three casts later I hooked into our biggest fish from the entire trip. Matt and I looked at each other in complete silence for a solid minute. This was the closest I have ever felt to God. It was a magical experience. We won first place in the regional qualifier and beat 100+ boats. We will be fishing in the National Championship next spring; this is the second team in two years we have participated in a national championship.