

## Short communication

# ORGANISATION OF MANDATORY SPORTS CLASSES AT RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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## Abstarct

*Physical education and sport play a major role in maintaining healthy lifestyle as well as overcoming negative habits. More and more people are getting involved in various types of physical activity. Most of the students also would love to do sport in order to maintain a good health and spend a good time. Lack of funding is an issue the higher education establishments face trying to ensure students with a possibility to do sport properly. Therefore it is necessary to assign state's supported grants for sport provision at higher educational establishments. A study about mandatory sports classes in the Riga Technical University (RTU) was conducted in order to determine the needs of students. A conclusion was drawn that students are more eager to choose kinds of sport where emotional expressions are involved. Another important agent is proximity of venue of classes to the place of study. 120 – 130 Euro per student is necessary to organize a physical education classes.*

**Key words:** *Physical education, higher education, sport classes.*

## Introduction

RTU has always valued the importance of sport. Since the 1958 when a sport department was established, mandatory sports classes involving various sports have been organized for the Year 1 and Year 2 students two times a week (60min each) and once a week for the Year 4 students. Those classes were mandatory in all higher education establishments and they were funded by the state. A special attention during that time was paid to the youth physical education. During the restoration of the independence mandatory sports classes were liquidated in most higher education establishments due to the limited finances. Only the RTU and

Latvia University of Agriculture kept mandatory sports classes for the Year 1 and 2 students. In 2008 due to the crisis a question was raised about liquidation of mandatory sports classes in the RTU. Only students' survey where more than 75% of students expressed a desire to do sport and support offered by the RTU administration helped to maintain physical education classes for the Year 1 students.

Society acknowledges importance of sport in maintaining healthy lifestyle. More and more people are getting involved in various types of physical activity. Most of the students also would love to do sport in order to maintain a good health and spend a good time. Sports play a major role in overcoming negative habits. Therefore it is clear what role sports play in students' lives and this issue should be tackled at the state's level. It should be made mandatory in all higher education establishments and the necessary funding should be granted. In order to pursue the objective mentioned above, it is necessary to assess the situation concerning students' interests and the cost of organizing mandatory sports classes. It is a topical issue and the goal of the paper.

## **Material and Methods**

Results of the Year 1 student application process to the RTU were summarized for the period of time from 2010 till 2014 in order to determine students' choice of a certain type of sport. More or less popular types of sport among students and the average number of students in one group were determined.

In order to determine the costs of mandatory types of sport over the same period of time, the money per one student in each type of sport spent on wages, expenses incurred by RTU sports bases and leased bases were summarized. Total average expenses were also calculated.

## **Results**

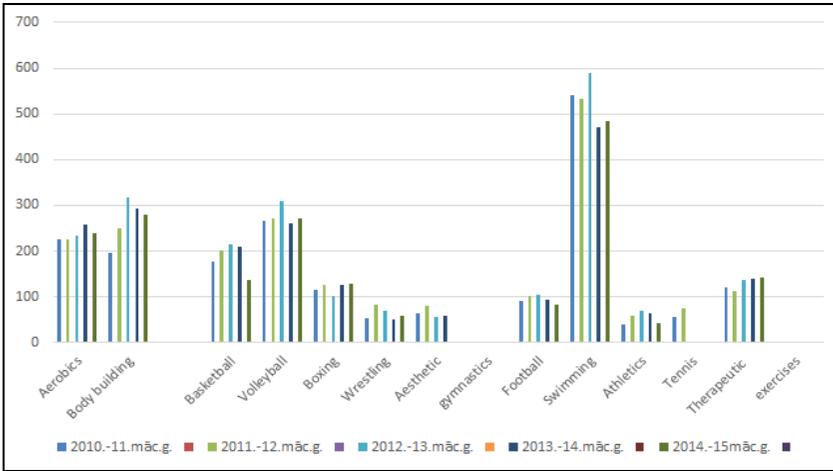
### *Quantitative indicators of different kinds of sport for the Year 1 students*

In the academic year 2010/11 the most students applied for swimming classes. RTU swimming pool offered sports classes for 542 students; average number in one group was 19.4, the numbers for volleyball were, respectively, 266 and 18.6, but for aerobics: 226 and 20.6.

Athletics was less popular: 40 and 13.4; wrestling: 54 and 18; tennis: 57 and 9.5. In the academic year 2011/12 swimming: 533 and 17.8; volleyball: 272 and 25.3; body building: 251 and 17.3.

In the academic year 2012/2013 for swimming: 590 and 18.4; body building: 318 and 24.1; volleyball: 308 and 27.2.

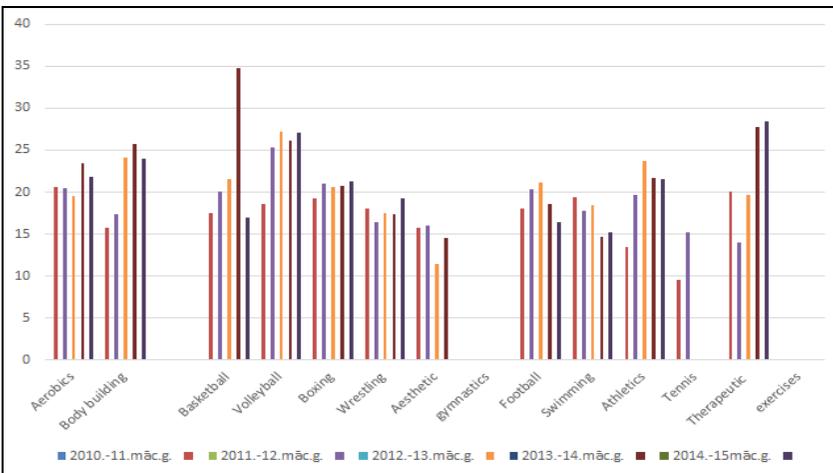
Less popular were: aesthetic gymnastics: 57 and 11.4; wrestling: 70 and 17.5; athletics: 71 and 23.7 (fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Students’ distribution by types of sport during the 2010 – 15 academic years

In the academic year 2013/14: swimming: 471 and 14.7; body building 294 and 25.7; volleyball 294 and 26.2.

Less popular: wrestling – 52 and 17.3; aesthetic gymnastics – 58 and 14.5; athletics – 65 and 21.7 (fig. 2).



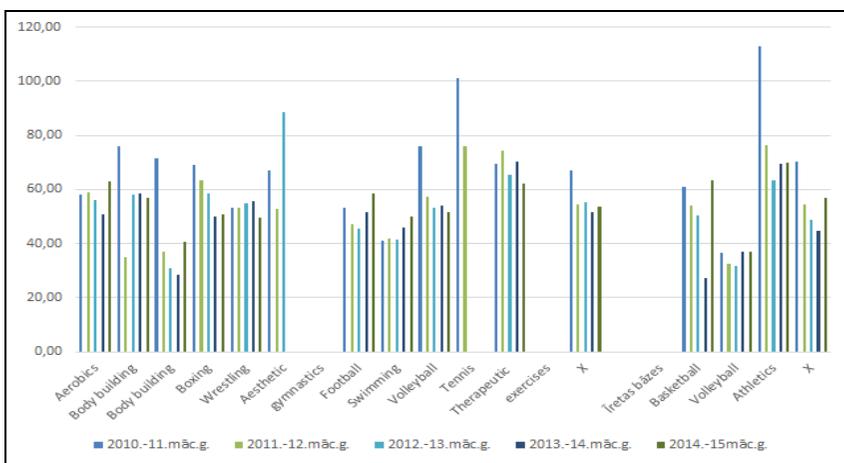
**Figure 2.** Average number of students in a group during the 2010 – 15 academic years

In the 2014.-15 academic year: swimming – 485 and 15.2; body building – 280 and 24; volleyball – 280 and 24. Less popular were: athletics: 43 and 21.5; wrestling: 58 and 19.3; football: 82 and 16.4.

*Sports and work bases costs per one Year 1 student in various types of sports*

During the 2010 – 11 academic years the most money on salaries per one student in our own bases was spent by tennis – 101.2, body building at Skolas street 11 and volleyball at Meža Street 1 – 76.02. Sports bases costs were higher for football – 105.55, wrestling – 89.06 and aesthetic gymnastics - 88. The highest total costs were incurred by football 158.95, wrestling – 142.25 and body building at Skolas street 11 - 133.63. Average costs in our own bases on salaries were 66.82, on sports bases – 42.24 and total – 109.06. The most expensive type of sport in the leased bases was athletics, salary: 112.82, base: 124.5 total: 237.32, on average, respectively, 70.07, 59.78 and 129.85.

Salary per one student in our own bases in total was lower: 66.82 against 70.07 in leased bases and 68.45 on average. RTU sports base costs were also lower: 42.24 against 59.78 in leased bases and total costs 109.06 against 129.85. Total average costs per one student were: 119.46. During the 2011/12 academic year the highest costs per one student in our bases were incurred by tennis: 79.9, therapeutic exercise: 74.46 and boxing: 63.29. Costs of sports basis were the highest for football: 93.13 and wrestling: 89.06. The highest total costs for wrestling: 142.28 and football: 40.26. Average spending on wages: 54.23, on sports bases: 36.37 and total: 90.59 (fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Cost and the average cost of salaries per student in different sports, RTU and rented bases

The most expensive type of sports in the leased bases during the same academic year was also athletics. Salary: 76.49, base: 84.41 and total: 160.9, on average, respectively, 54.32, 46.87 and 101.18. Salary per one student in our bases in total appeared to be the lowest: 54.32 against 76.49 in leased bases and on average it was 65.40. Also costs of RTU sports bases were the lowest – 46.87 against 84.41 on the leased ones and total costs: 101.18 against 160.9. Total costs on average per one student were 131.04.

During the 2012/13 academic year the highest spending on salaries per one student in our own bases was on aesthetic gymnastics: 88.57, exercise therapy: 65.41. The highest spending on sports bases was for football 89.61 and aesthetic gymnastics: 70.67. Reviewing the total costs, one can see the highest costs were incurred by aesthetic gymnastics: 159.24, and football: 134.24. Average spending in our own bases on salaries was 55.24, on sports base: 39.39 and total 94.63.

The most expensive type of sports in the leased bases was athletics – salary: 63.56, base: 72.14 and total: 135.7 but on average respectively: 48.6, 45.08 and 93.68. Salaries per one student in our own bases appeared to be the highest: 55.24 against: 48.6 in the leased bases and on average they were 51.92. RTU bases costs were the lowest: 39.39 against 45.08 and on average: 42.24. Interestingly that in that academic year costs of the RTU bases, leased bases and in total were very similar: 94.63, 93.58 and 94.16. (fig. 3).

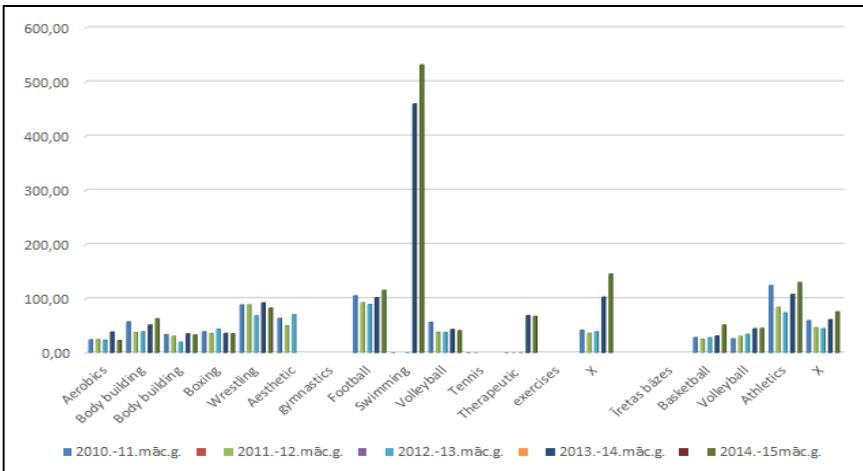


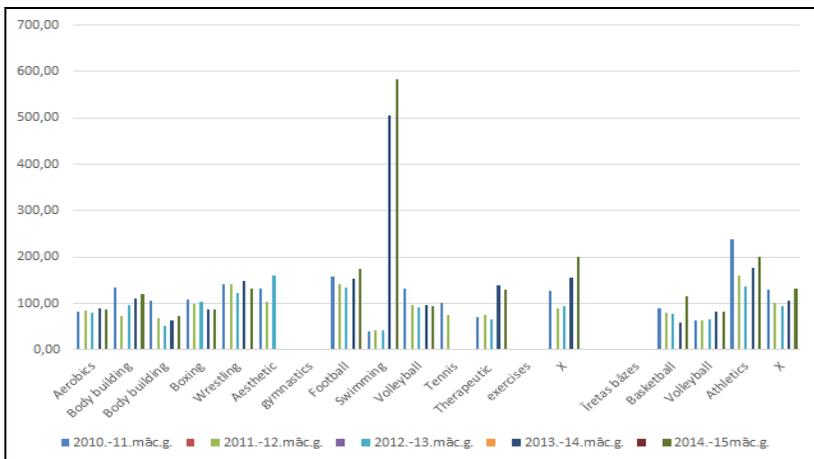
Figure 4. Cost and the average cost of RTU and rented bases per student in different sports

the highest spending on wages per one student in our own bases was for exercise therapy – 70.33 and body building at Skolas street 11 – 58.63. Spending on sports bases was higher for swimming– 459.95 and football – 102.14. This can be explained by the fact that by now the swimming pool, sports halls for exercise therapy and tennis courts were used free of charge; the sports department was not required to make financial contribution and students used them free of charge. However, as we can see, costs are rather high and income from the other clients did not cover all the costs. Therefore the highest total costs were for swimming – 505.95 and football – 153.82. Average costs on salaries in our bases were 51.75, on sports bases – 103.29 and total – 155.04.

The most expensive type of sport in the leased bases was athletics – salary – 69.43, base – 108.25 and total – 177.68, on average respectively – 44.59, 61.59 and 106.18.

Salary per one student in our own bases in total appeared to be higher– 51.75 against 44.59 in the leased bases, on average they were 48.17. Costs on RTU bases were also higher – 103.29 against 61.59 and on average – 82.44. Total costs on average in this academic year in the RTU bases, leased bases and in total were – 155.04, 106.18 and 130.61.

During the 2014 – 15 academic years the highest expenses on salaries per one student in our own bases were incurred by aerobics – 63.00 and exercise therapy – 62.11. The highest costs on sports bases were incurred by swimming – 531.85 and football – 115.84. The highest costs in total were on swimming – 581.92 and football – 174.38 (fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Total cost and average cost per student in diferent sports, RTU and rented bases

On average costs in our bases on salaries were 53.65, on sports bases: 145.87 and in total: 199.66.

The most expensive type of sport in the leased bases was athletics – salary: 69.77, base: 130.23 and total: 200.0. During this academic year the costs on sports bases also increased and that it had an impact on the total costs. On average respectively – 56.69, 75.87 and 132.56.

Salaries per one student in our own and rented bases as well as on average appeared to be rather similar and were respectively 53.65, 56.69 and 55.17. Expenses of the RTU sports bases were the highest: 145.87 against 75.87, and on average: 110.87. The predicted total costs per one student in this academic year in the RTU sports bases were: 199.52, in the leased bases: 132.56 and on average: 166.04.

## **Discussion**

Results of the study showed that from the 11 types of sport offered the most students chose swimming. Many students also choose volleyball, body building, aerobics and basketball. Fewer students apply for wrestling, aesthetic gymnastics and athletics. There are also students with health problems. They follow the directions given by the doctor and do exercise therapy.

Sports games are also popular because they are characterized by emotional expression. Lady students choose aerobics; the classes are accompanied by music which also creates emotional factor. Body building in gym is getting more and more popular in our society which influences the choice of students as well.

Our practical experience with students allows us to draw a conclusion that our students' choice of types of sports is often determined by proximity of sport classes to their place of study. Time saving and transport costs are important factors for students. Therefore rather small number of students chooses such popular kinds of sport as football and athletics. Getting to the sports classes by public transport takes not less than 30 minutes. Compliance of the sports bases infrastructure with up-to-date requirements is also important.[3] Body building in the new sports base at Raņķa dambis 24a is more popular than at Skolas 11.

A special role in organization of the sports classes is played by the number of students in one group. In the regulation issued by the ministry of education of the Russian federation it is stipulated that the number of students in one group should be around 12 – 15. Our experience proves that the number of students can be around 15 – 20. In case there are less than 12 students in one group, the classes become unprofitable. If the number of students in one group is higher than 25, it is very challenging to maintain the

quality of classes and the principle of individuality. Unfortunately due to the lack of funding it is very hard to maintain the optimum number of students in one group.

The highest expenses per one student on salary were incurred by the following types of sport – tennis, body building at Skolas 11, aesthetic gymnastics, exercise therapy, boxing and aerobics. Money spent on salaries depends on the number of students in a particular type of sports. If there are fewer students, the higher are expenses on salary per one student. These costs also depend on the qualification the teacher. The higher was the qualification the higher spending on salaries per one student. Still the qualification of a teacher is important to ensure the highest level of the sports classes. Due to the low number of students, tennis and aesthetic gymnastics appeared to be unprofitable and we were forced to give them up.

The most money per one student in our own sports bases was spent by such types of sport as football, wrestling, and aesthetic gymnastics and recently also swimming. The premises of all those types of sport except swimming are old and have high utility and maintenance bills. Still the costs of swimming pool are the highest per one student as maintenance of the swimming pool is very costly.

Athletics was the most expensive type of sport per one student in the leased bases. There should be options how to reduce costs considered or we will have to give up this type of sport.

During the time of the study the average total yearly costs per one student varied from 94.16 in the 2012-13 academic years to 166.04 in the 2014-15 academic years. During the last year the expenses rose due to the costs of the swimming pool. If it was possible to agree with the managers of the swimming pool on fewer expenses, it would be enough with 120-130 euro per one student. The study fee for students is 1500 euro and 8.7% are spent on mandatory sports classes. This is quite a large figure for the RTU. Therefore it is necessary to have this funding granted by the state for at least study programs funded by the budget in all the higher educational establishments in Latvia.

## **Conclusion**

It is necessary to assign 120 – 130 euro a year per one student to organize the mandatory sports classes.

In order to organize the mandatory sports classes in the higher education establishments in Latvia, it is necessary to have a state funding comprising 8 – 9% of the total study costs per one student a year.

RTU students choose types of sport where more emotional expression is involved and those which are more popular in society.

Important factors which determine choice of type of sports are proximity of the sports base to the place of study and compliance of the sports base with today's requirements.

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