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# Perspectives of change: Municipal park and recreation directors perceptions of the importance of specified organizational goals 1983–2008

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PERSPECTIVES OF CHANGE: MUNICIPAL PARK AND RECREATION  
DIRECTORS PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIED  
ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS 1983-2008

A Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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December, 2008

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PERSPECTIVES OF CHANGE: MUNICIPAL PARK AND RECREATION  
DIRECTORS PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIED  
ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS 1983-2008

An Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Christopher R. Edginton, Committee Chair

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Dr. Samuel V. Lankford, Committee Co-Chair

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December 2008

## ABSTRACT

This study examines specified goals park and recreation directors have previously determined are important for their organizations, and how those goals rank in importance in their present estimations, and how those goals rank in future importance. It compares a similar study of goals from 1983, and reports on changes in levels of importance from 1983 to 2008.

Directors' perceptions of goal importance of 2008 present levels and 2008 future levels were determined to be significantly different in 23 of 26 cases. Goals were grouped in four categories, (a) management/adaptation./positional, having to do with management tasks, (b) groups served, those targeted populations, (c) services provided, services of varying kinds provided to other groups, organizations, and individuals, and (d) desired outcomes, those benefits or changes occurring as a result of participation. A factor analysis was performed which confirmed that grouping of goals in these four categories remains relevant. Goals were grouped and ranked in each of the four categories, and then ranked overall. Directors' perceptions of 2008 future levels of goal importance increased significantly over 2008 present levels in 23 of 26 cases. Changes in rank ordering of goals indicate potential shifts in priorities and attendant shifts in allocation of resources.

A comparison of 2008 present goals with 1983 future goals was performed. Significant changes in rank ordering of specific goals were discovered in 16 of 26 goals. Park and recreation directors' perceptions from 1983 to 2008 have moved from organizational concerns to concern for service to specific targeted groups. Children

ranked as the top priority, with teens, seniors and adults all in the top ten rankings in 2008. Special needs populations and management activities goals fell in the rankings, as did programs for people with special needs. Programs for ethnic and cultural minorities rose slightly, but remained in the bottom ten.

A discussion of implications of these perceived priorities among park and recreation directors was conducted, with consideration of both survival and expansion of recreation programs considered. Recommendations for further study and an outline of a study agenda were made to improve the quality and relevance of goals studies overall.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Dan Wheeler, December 2008



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## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

“Would you tell me please which way I ought to walk from here?” asked Alice.

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cheshire Cat.

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

Lewis Carroll  
*Alice in Wonderland*

In the decade of the 1980s research regarding municipal parks and recreation department organizational goals was one of the many subjects in our journals, books, symposiums and graduate management educational philosophies; however, research into organizational goals in such departments in the years from 1990 to the present is difficult to find in journals, and may be in the doldrums. Could it be that goals are no longer deemed relevant as a research or management concern? A national goals study (1983c) examined municipal park and recreation directors’ perception of the importance of eighty-five specified organizational goals across five categories and in two time dimensions, that of present importance and future importance. In that study, Edginton and Neal discovered the top ten goals municipal park and recreation directors thought were important in rank order were:

1. Maintenance of high quality programs.
2. Maintenance of parks areas and facilities.
3. Establishing programs to meet community needs.
4. Properly supervising programs.

5. Maintaining a positive public image.
6. Programming for children.
7. Establishing areas and facilities to meet community needs.
8. Maintaining harmonious relationships with the community.
9. Planning and constructing areas and facilities.
10. Favorable appraisals by political bodies.

Another study completed some seven years later was based on the differences between administrators perceptions of the importance of specified goals compared to board or commission members perceptions of the importance of those goals. From that study it was determined that importance of municipal park and recreation department organizational goals between administrators and board or commission members were significantly different (Edginton, Madrigal, Lankford & Wheeler, 1990). Findings included an emphasis on importance of programmatic type services provided and managerial activities. Managers perceived service goals as very important, board members did not rank them as highly. Elected officials viewed services as significantly more important than appointed officials.

Organizational goals studies in park and recreation departments have not been frequent in the recent literature. Interestingly, the 1983c Edginton and Neal national study was cited as a resource for illustrating the importance of determining organizational goals for park and recreation departments in a textbook published in 2000 (Rossman & Schlatter, 2000), illustrating the paucity of more recent information. Does the lack of contemporary research suggest that the present and future direction of park and recreation programs across the United States is unknown? In contrast to the apparent lack of scholarly interest, the National Recreation and Park Association has required as part of

the accreditation process formal vision, mission and goals statements for both agency and academic accreditation (van der Smissen, Moiseichik, & Hartenberg, 2006). The question of what those goals are or should be is problematic, for while they are required for accreditation, there is not a commonly held understanding of what they might be.

#### A Question of Societal Change and Response by our Profession

In the sixteen intervening years since the last goals study in parks and recreation the future has become the past and American society has undergone substantial changes. Some societal changes impacting the present and future now include but are not limited to issues of security and safety in a world where terrorism is a real threat to peace and security in the world, the growing gap between incomes in the United States and in other countries, the decline and fall of alternatives to capitalism as social constructs, information and technological advances which permit and promote off shoring of jobs and products (Friedman, 2005), accountability for performance and fiscal responsibility, dissolution of community and democracy (Putnam, 2000), and privatization of leisure opportunities as a policy of government. Societal change in the Western world is illustrated by conflicting information about leisure time. Schor (1991) notes some people are overworked, are experiencing a time famine and are working harder for less reward. Yet Stebbins (2004) and Rojek (2005) support Rifkin's (1995) suggestion that valuable paid work will decrease for the majority, thereby increasing forced leisure time. All of these factors have greatly impacted society and municipal leisure service organizations. The question remains as to the relevance and specificity of organizational goals today.

The problem seems to be a lack of clarity in the course that recreation providers have taken or should take in the future. Specifically, we in park and recreation departments have not documented the effects of societal change upon our organizational goals, assumptions and upon our directional compass. Importantly, we have not accounted for deviations in our compass.

All organizations must accomplish similar tasks to insure their own existence and accomplish the purposes for which they were created. These tasks (or goals) can be grouped into categories which provide a broader understanding of the challenges facing such entities. Table 1 illustrates these goal categories.

Table 1.

*General Goal Categories.*

Goal category	Definition
Output	General aims of the organization which may produce services or products for consumption by the intended publics.
Adaptation	These address environmental issues that impact the organization.
Motivation	These apply to the way the organization attracts, inspires, and retains employees and participants.
Management	These are administrative tasks and activities.
Positioning	These goals relate to the position the organization seeks in order to compete for resources, prestige and participants.

These categories of goals have been identified by Hoy and Miskel (1982) as output, adaptation, management, motivation, and positioning. Edward Gross in his seminal work on universities identified similar categories(1968). Additionally park and recreation departments also develop goals in the categories of groups served and services provided. Failure to accomplish goals in each of these categories might threaten the viability of the organization.

Management is the process of organizing and coordinating human, physical, and financial resources for effective and efficient use. Motivation is the process of engaging employees with enthusiasm for their work, to provide incentives and to impel them to excel in those tasks. Adaptation is the ability to modify processes or circumstances to compensate for or take advantage of changing conditions. Positioning is the process of locating the organization or individual in the most advantageous circumstances possible to accomplish objectives. In the case of park and recreation departments, groups served defines the target populations served by the organizations. Services provided are those programs, activities, and opportunities provided for each of the target populations.

Business and education have addressed organizational goals for survival and justification of existence (Hofstede, Van Duesen, Mueller, & Charles, 2002; Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006). Business naturally examines and sets goals to determine relevance to survival as an organization. Park and recreation departments, particularly in an era of decreasing resources and increasing privatization, along with the NRPA mandate for benefits based management need to address these same topics, both to examine relevance and to justify survival.

Rojek (2005), Stebbins (2004), Schor (1991) and others propose deliberate societal change by leisure service organizations in response to issues of globalization, terrorism, inequality, social inclusion, consumerism and other factors. One of Rojek's claims is a Hobbesian scarcity of resources and problems attendant in the equitable distribution of those resources. Recent Marxist and Neo-Marxist analysis of leisure in academia not only imply but explicitly state that conflict over resources such as social status and prestige, economic opportunity, and access to knowledge is both necessary and inevitable (Coalter, 1999). Coalter outlines the present state of research and the differences between the North American and British approaches to understanding leisure and the leisure experience. He states that limitations in both theoretical schools limit understanding of leisure, and that more flexibility in methodology and interpretation of meanings would be of benefit (Coalter, 1999, pp. 516-517).

#### Relevance of Organizational Goals Today

Organizations, governments, communities and individuals have continued to set goals, and measure their success by the accomplishment of those goals. Municipal park and recreation organizations also set goals, and measure their success by accomplishment of those goals. The NRPA promotes the concept of Benefits Based Management, and recommends substantiation of those benefits (van der Smissen et al., 2006). This emphasis results in community support, community recognition, expansion of those programs which succeed and meet the needs and expectations of their constituents and abandonment of those which fail to meet those needs.



Are there specific goals which advance the preferred vision of society? Which goals are those, and whom do they target? If the observation of attenuation of community made by Alfie Khon (1998) is correct, with the haves isolating themselves from society and only thinking of themselves, do leisure or park and recreation organizations have a role in increasing a sense of safety and community? Relevance to societies' problems and leisure as a partial solution requires the careful application of resources, after identification of this process as a goal.

#### Questions for our Profession

The primary questions then become: What are the goals of municipal parks and recreation departments and have they changed over time in response to societal changes? In light of limited resources and budget constraints experienced in every form of public service, where should resources be allocated? What should the vision be, who should determine the preferred visionary future of the world, and how does the mission of municipal park and recreation organizations meet that vision? Has the leisure profession failed to provide a clear voice for social inclusion, empowerment of individuals and groups in leisure choice, and justice? These questions have been addressed in the past by contemporaneous studies of goals for municipal park and recreation departments, discovering what goals have been deemed important, but have not been examined in depth for more than two decades.

Leisure scholars and theorists have since the inception of the field considered attainment of the proclaimed organizational goals of leisure a method of ameliorating many ills of society. Our profession has at times been an instrument of social

engineering, but has unvaryingly proclaimed the benefits of leisure to the individual and society as a net good. Are our present organizational goals in municipal park and recreation departments congruent with this notion? Those theorists who challenge the conventional functional positivist belief have themselves proclaimed that leisure can be an effective force for positive societal change, and have provided a glimpse of what that destination may be like (Rojek, 2005; Stebbins, 2004). It may indeed be time to consider our course, take command and make a careful observation to see where we are, how we have come to be there, and where we are going, rather than relying on dead reckoning to navigate through challenging shoals.

#### Statement of the Problem

Municipal park and recreation departments, which can be described as organizations for the fulfillment of goals (Edginton, Hudson, Lankford, & Larsen, 2008; Etzioni, 1964; Thompson, 1967), are examples of governmental organizations competing for an ever decreasing share of the public tax dollar. A set of goals strongly articulated by the putative leaders, in this case park and recreation directors, with consistent and effective reinforcement may provide direction and purpose for the organization (Peters & Waterman, 1982), and therefore facilitate success as defined by that organization. The organization may adopt the aims articulated by the leaders through the adoption of those goals (Rockwood, 1982, p. 183). Information on park and recreation directors' perceptions of the level of importance of organizational goals may provide an understanding for development of appropriate strategies for provision of leisure services. Thus the problem to be investigated involves comparing municipal park and recreation

directors' perceptions of levels of importance they assign to specific goals at the present and the levels they assign to those goals in the future. Investigation and comparison of the 2008 goals with those same goals from 1983 is an additional facet of this research study.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of municipal park and recreation directors as they relate to the relative importance of specified organizational goals at present, and as they should be in the future. It will also examine and compare data procured in 1983 to discern any trends and changes among directors on their perceptions of the importance of specified goals over the last 25 years. This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified present organizational goals?
  - 1a. Which present organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors?
  - 1b. Which present organizational goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors?
2. What level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified future organizational goals?
  - 2a. Which future organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors?

- 2b. Which future goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors?
3. Are there differences in directors' perceptions of 2008 present levels of importance and 2008 future levels of importance of specified organizational goals?
4. Are there differences in directors' perceptions of levels of importance of organizational goals from 1983 future reported levels and 2008 present reported levels?

#### Hypotheses

Hypotheses are offered in null form:

1. There will be no statistically significant difference between United States municipal park and recreation directors' 2008 perceptions of the importance of specified organizational goals at the present time and their perception of importance in the future.
2. There will be no statistically significant difference between United States municipal park and recreation directors' 1983 future perceptions of the importance of specified organizational goals and 2008 present perceptions of importance.

#### Basic Assumptions

It is assumed respondents of the survey are accurately representing their perceptions and that these perceptions are reflective and characteristic of the importance of goals in the organization. It is also assumed that the directors themselves filled out the

survey instrument, that all respondents interpreted questions similarly, and that goals do exist in these settings.

### Delimitations

This study is restricted to a five category stratified random sample of twenty percent of all municipal parks and recreation departments or special recreation districts in incorporated municipalities in the United States, derived from United States city census data from 2006.

### Limitations

Several limitations are present. Any study using a questionnaire to gather data is limited by the degree to which responses reflect the true feelings of the respondent. Conditions extant in the organization such as agency deadlines, fatigue, higher priority issues, and other pressures could affect the quality of the responses. Those directors who respond do so voluntarily, and their responses could differ from those who do not respond. Dissatisfaction with current goal status could be a common theme as goals reflect desired but not necessarily achieved outcomes. There is also no guarantee the intended subjects of the study actually complete the survey since it will be administered through the mail and on the internet. Other limitations have to do with the lapse of 25 years between the 1983 study and the 2008 study. One recent book on management assumes long range planning to occur over five to seven years (Hurd, Barcelona, & Meldrum, 2008). Setting goals without a deadline or a time of accomplishment suspends accountability. A final limitation is change in the demographic makeup of the cadre of park and recreation directors studied. It is not possible or desirable in the stratified

random sampling process to identify directors with the same background and demographic characteristics from 1983 to 2008. This could be construed as a limitation in the statistical sampling process, as comparisons are not paired directly from 1983 to 2008 data.

### Definitions

1. Goals. These are the general aims toward which an organization devotes its efforts and resources. They represent a desired state which has not yet been achieved, and to which the efforts of the organization are directed. Goals may be formally stated, or informally voiced and interpreted by the administrator/leader.
  - 1a. Current goals. These are the prevailing or presently accepted aims of the organization.
  - 1b. Future or desired goals. These are the aims which reflect the future direction of the organization, the desired improvement of the organization, or the ideal state of the organization.
2. Output goals. These are the general aims of an organization which produce the tangible goods or services used or purchased by the public, and by which the organization may justify its existence and continued support.
3. Adaptation goals. These address environmental issues that impact the organization.
4. Motivation goals. These apply to the way the organization attracts, inspires, and retains employees and participants.

5. Management goals. These are administrative tasks and activities relating to allocation of resources that include personnel, equipment, facilities, and money. These aims also include strategic planning to insure the continued health and potential growth of the organization and the satisfaction and fulfillment of employees.
6. Positioning goals. These goals relate to the position the organization seeks in order to compete for resources, prestige and participants.
7. Desired outcomes. These refer to specific benefits intended as a result of participation in a program of activity.
8. Municipality. This is an organization which pertains to the governance of a city, town, village, borough, or other district incorporated for self-governance. For the purposes of this study, it also applies to a special recreation district with taxing powers.
9. Municipal park and recreation department. The specific municipal department charged with providing facilities, areas and programs for leisure and recreation within administrative boundaries of the incorporated area.
10. Park and recreation director. The chief administrative officer of a municipal organization charged with the responsibility of providing for the leisure and recreation needs of the citizens within the administrative boundaries. This position or person has major responsibility for planning and implementation of leisure services.

11. Perception of importance. The director's rating of the relative importance of a specific goal: current, future, management, output, adaptation, motivation, groups served, desired outcomes, and services provided.
12. Groups served. This refers to the various target markets, publics, or constituents for which programs are intended.
13. Services provided. These are the specific "products" and programs provided to groups served.
14. Goal model of organizational effectiveness. This model assumes (1) a rational cadre of decision makers making the goals and (2) the number of goals is small enough to be administered and understood by all participants. Two types of goals are present in the goal model: prescribed goals developed and mandated from political leadership, administration, or participant/community groups, and derived goals, those which are observed to be of priority through allocation of resources and behavior regardless of overt statements pro or con.
15. System model of organizational effectiveness. This model assumes organizations and individuals in those organizations seek to maximize acquisition of resources in order to attain the most advantageous bargaining position possible in an environment where resources are rare and scarce. Two subsystems of the system model are the survival model, in which the organization performs well enough to survive but not necessarily prosper, and



the effectiveness model, defined as meeting survival criteria and incorporating elements or subsystems which permit growth and prosperity.

16. Goal categories. Goals may be grouped into categories by similar function. Some of these goals in each category may be described as system goals, aimed at acquiring resources and advantages for the organization, while others may be described as specific goals, those which by stating a specific level of performance or importance aid in accomplishing specific tasks. In this way categories illustrate the operation of goal model theory.

#### Significance of this Study

Goals are the cornerstone and embodiment of an organization, and the purpose of establishing an organization in the first place (Culkin & Kirsch, 1986; Edginton, Madrigal, Lankford, & Wheeler, 1990). The proclaimed goals and values of the leadership coalition, generally voiced by the director, have enormous impact on the success of the organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). This study of the perceptions of park and recreation directors of the level of importance of certain goals – current and future – may provide valuable information for a number of uses:

1. To be a necessary first step to developing an understanding of goals and goal theory as it relates to park and recreation.
2. To provide a basis of comparison among municipal park and recreation organizations and leaders when reassessing their mission and purpose.
3. To provide guidelines for curricula for municipal park and recreation programs.

4. To identify strategic models for provision and preservation of municipal park and recreation services.
5. To predict future trends and resources in the provision of municipal park and recreation services.
6. To refine an instrument to measure shifts in the emphasis and provision of municipal park and recreation services.
7. To develop a model of organizational effectiveness to which municipal park and recreation departments may be compared.
7. To help reposition municipal park and recreation services to effectively meet public needs.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to compare the perceptions of park and recreation directors on the importance of current goals and the importance of future goals as reported in 1983 and in 2008. Table 2 outlines the literature reviewed in this section.

Table 2.

*Review of Literature.*

Topics	Sources
Goal importance	Frankl, 1984, Peters & Waterman, 1982, Kotler, 2000.
Purposes of Goals	Gross, 1968, Graham & Klar, 1979, Edginton et al, 2001, Miles et al, 1978.
Integrating Two Theoretical Models of Organizational Goal Determination	Hoy & Miskel, 1982, Simpson & McConocha, 1991, Bennis, 2000, Nanus, 1992, Drucker, 1989, Hitt, 1988, Etzioni, 1964.
Definitions of Goals, Goal Integration, Congruence and Alignment	Bolman & Deal, 2003, Buchanan, 1975, Cyert & March, 1963 Edginton et al., 2004, Drucker, 1989, Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991.
Goal Setting Approaches, Challenges and Goal Types	Behling & Schriesheim, 1976, Etzioni, 1964, Kast & Rosenwieg, 1979, Locke & Latham, 2002, Quinn, 1980, Smith et al., 1990, Bolman & Deal, 1988, Westerlund & Sjostrand, 1979.
Role of the Administrator	Bennis, 2000, Drucker, 1980, Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2002, Nanus, 1992, Peters & Austin, 1985, Peters & Waterman, 1982.
Methods of Discovering Goals	Gans, 1958, Gross, 1968, Smith et al., 1990, Zald & Denton, 1963
Goals Studies in Parks and Recreation	Edginton, 1978, Edginton & Neal, 1983c Goodale & Witt, 1979, Nogradi, 1980, Hastings, 1982, Howat & Edginton, 1986, Edginton et al., 1990, 2004, Shivers, 1963.

### Goal Importance

One belief about the nature of man is that humans are teleological, based on the premise that humans are internally driven toward ultimate goals or ends (Frankl, 1984). These goals or ends are joined to man's search for meaning. Meaning and satisfaction in life have been further postulated to be directly proportional to the amount and quality of progress towards one's goals, and that true achievement was contingent on the quality of the means of attainment as well as the accuracy of the goals selected (Pullias, 1975). Bettelheim (1977) supported meaning as man's primary drive by stating: "If we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives."

Organizations may provide meaning for many people. Peters and Waterman (1982) state:

The excellent companies seem to understand that every man seeks meaning. So strong is the need for meanings, in fact, that most people will yield a fair degree of latitude or freedom to institutions that give it to them.

Success is illusive for many organizations. For example, failures are common in business, a model for many municipal park and recreation agencies. A common statistic is 50 percent failure of new business starts in the first year, with 75 percent to 80 percent failure at the end of five years (Ireland & Hitt, 1992; Siropolis, 1986; Timmons & Spinelli, 2007). Strategic planning to accomplish goals is viewed as critical to success for excellent companies in the turbulent times which have existed since the early seventies (Drucker, 1980; Kotler, 2000). Diversion from goals can create problems for organizations. Peter Drucker emphasizes the importance of knowing answers to

fundamental questions about business orientation, customers, purpose of the organization, and future direction of the business (1973). Without goals and subsequent clearly defined objectives, the efficient and effective expenditure of an organizations' resources is doubtful (Culkin & Kirsch, 1986; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Rockwood, 1982) The realization of these goals provides a rationale for the existence and continued support of the organization. It may also define the life cycle of the organization, and provide a measure of accomplishment or of failure and the need to reevaluate the purposes and goals of the organization.

Justification of organizational existence is an increasingly critical theme (Daft & Weick, 1983). Accountability, responsiveness, responsibility, social awareness, and achievement join the list of factors employees and volunteers use in deciding where to devote time and energy (Drucker, 1989, p. 93; United Way, 2007). Themes prevalent in the literature of management and forecasting indicate increasing uncertainty in the economic and social environment of the United States and the world and the need to respond to those changes (Bennis, 1990; Bennis & Rhode, 2006; Drucker, 1980; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990; Nanus, 1992; Peters, 1987).

A method of identifying the potential effectiveness of an organization is to examine proclaimed goals (Etzioni, 1969). The goals literature supports this approach. A major part of the responsibility of effective leaders includes articulating a clear "vision" with attendant goals and objectives (Bennis, 1990; Fairholm, 2001; Howard, 1990; Ireland & Hitt, 1992; Matejka & Federouch, 1990; Nanus, 1992; Simpson &

McConocha, 1991). It is in this context that goals espoused, voiced, and promoted by the leader of the organization assume importance (Mohr, 1973; Rockwood, 1982).

### Purposes of Goals

Gross (1968) states that goals serve the purpose of translating organizational inputs into outputs. In this regard, an organization is then a vehicle for goal attainment (Etzioni, 1964; Thompson, 1967). Goals provide several benefits to an organization.

These benefits include:

1. Giving legitimacy to the organization through officially stated goals.
2. Providing a sense of direction and decision guidelines;
3. Identifying functions to reduce uncertainty.
4. Providing a standard of performance criteria (Daft, 2007).
5. Providing a source of motivation and inspiration to individuals inside and outside the organization.
6. Helping to establish a set of constraints to limit the scope of the organization's operation (Bedeian, 1984).

Organizational goals help legitimize an organization by justifying its existence in the eyes of those it serves and those who support it. Recognition of the legitimacy of an organization enhances its ability to attract resources and support from its constituents.

Goals can provide a sense of direction and purpose to the individuals within an organization. Graham and Klar (1979) wrote:

“Failure to develop clear goals and objectives prevents one from knowing where one is going, or if and when one has arrived, since a destination has not been charted.”

They also defined a number of advantages to the setting of goals:

1. The public is made aware of the overall values and basic philosophy of the agency. This can give people a strong sense of common identity with the agency when goals are adopted which reflect values similar to their own;
2. Goals provide direction to agency staff members. By being aware of agency goals, they are reminded of potential outcomes and the fact that all service efforts should move toward the theoretical attainment of these outcomes;
3. Goals serve as a powerful public relations tool. Statements of goals can be used to enhance the identity of the agency in the public eye, thereby generating enthusiasm and excitement in the community, which may, in turn, strengthen the potential for continued or increased agency financial, political, and social support; and
4. Agencies which have developed sound goals will be in a position to move to the next phase of the delivery of leisure service: the development of program objectives which support their expressed goals.

Goals define the structure of the organization to a great extent, and conversely, the structure has an effect on the goals. Edginton, Hudson, and Lankford (2001) stated “the structure is dependent on the goals and objectives; however, the goals and objectives are defined to a degree, by the structure.” Goals provide a structure around which efforts are organized and therefore made relatively efficient (Perrow, 1970). Strategic choices (to attain organizational goals) shape structure and process within the organization. Once the

strategy-structure relationship has been determined, difficulty may be experienced trying to pursue activities outside the core business (Miles, Snow, Meyer, & Coleman, 1978).

Such goals also provide an anchor in the face of pressures from the environment and other sources, keeping the organization directed to the task.

Goals have a central position in organizational analysis for several reasons. First, goals limit the attention of members of an organization to a certain object by defining the task that is organizationally relevant. Second, the practices or technological processes which are required to achieve specific goals impose restrictions on the activities of personnel and on the distribution of resources.... Third, goals are centrally involved in the adaptation of resources (Zald & Denton, 1963, p. 226).

Recent emphasis on the importance of mission statements, “vision”, transformational leaders, and increasing productivity in all aspects of life highlight the importance of organizational goals. The sincere and effective communication of vision by leaders of an organization has been promoted as a solution to a sea of troubles (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998; Burns, 1978; Hoogervorst, Flier, & Koopman, 2004; Matejka & Federouch, 1990; Silins, Zarins, & Mulford, 2002; Simpson & McConocha, 1991).

### Integrating Two Theoretical Models of

#### Organizational Goal Determination

Two general theoretical models of organizational behavior are generally accepted as the most common approaches used by researchers. Each has its proponents and detractors. Some discussion will aid in understanding these models.



### Goal Model of Organizational Effectiveness

Prior to the 1960's, the goal model was the dominant paradigm proposed by most researchers. It was considered to be objective and reliable because it was assumed to remove researcher bias. Two basic assumptions supported the use of this model: (1) a rational group of decision makers had a set of goals they wished to pursue; and (2) those goals were few enough in number to be defined, administered and understood by the participants (Hoy & Miskel, 1982, p. 321). Study of goals would then provide a measure of the effectiveness of the organization, and a method of understanding organizational behavior. Two approaches to determining what if any goals are present in an organization are the prescribed approach, and the derived approach (Hastings, 1982).

Prescribed Approach. The prescribed approach depends on official statements about the goals of the organization from people or coalitions sanctioned by the organization. These goals may be contained in a mission statement promulgated by the organization. "A mission statement is a statement of the organization's purpose, what it wants to accomplish in the larger environment," according to Northwestern University professor Phillip Kotler (Simpson & McConocha, 1991). Other authors support this point of view (Ireland & Hitt, 1992; Matejka & Federouch, 1990). Peters and Waterman(1982), Peters and Austin (1985 ), Nanus (1992), Drucker (1989), and Bennis (2000), variously refer to prescribed goals as "vision," "values," "the dream," and the "mission." The commonalty in all these terms revolves around both official proclamation of the goals and consistent informal reinforcement by leadership and management of the official pronouncement.

The difficulties inherent in the prescribed approach are illustrated by the disparities which exist between and among official goal statements and actual organizational accomplishment. These disparities may be the result of numerous factors, environmental and resource constraints (Rockwood, 1982), political realities (Bolman & Deal, 1988), and both conscious and unconscious resistance from individuals and groups within the organization (Hitt, 1988).

Derived approach. The derived approach infers goals from observation of daily activities and actions of the organization members (Etzioni, 1969). The benefits of this approach include the ability to examine actual goal related decisions, priorities among goals, and observation and clarification of unofficial goals in the organization. This is particularly useful in identifying types of goals pursued by individuals and groups within the organization (Westerlund & Sjostrand, 1979). The derived approach is distinct from the prescribed approach in the gathering of goal information. Rather than a list of goals promoted by the leadership of the organization, goals are determined by almost exhaustive observation of the actions of the organization, the leadership, and the constituent members. A derived approach to goal determination includes an inescapable tendency to subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher. Sub-optimization (Perrow, 1970) of organizational activity may be interpreted as goal attainment, thus implying that organizations reach goals constantly. .

#### Limitations of the Goal Model

Limitations in the goal model as defined have been consistently pointed out by researchers. Some of these limitations derive from the inability of organizations and

individuals to attain the “ideal” goals articulated, therefore always reporting failure in accomplishment (Etzioni, 1964). Other criticisms of the goal model (Cameron, 1978) center around:

1. Confusion as to which goals are to be realized.
2. The multiple and contradictory nature of goals in an organization.
3. The tendency of goals to be retroactive, an explanation of behavior rather than a director of behavior.
4. Goals are dynamic, constantly being modified, while the goal model is static.

Some authors dispute the goal orientation approach or even the existence of organizational goals (Altshuler, 1968; Cyert & March, 1963; Dessler, 1976; Perrow, 1961; Warriner, 1965). Some claim much organizational behavior is dependent upon fortuitous and obscure influences difficult to describe, relying on solutions looking for problems in many instances (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Kilduff, Angelmar, & Mehra, 2000). The complexity of organizations increases the likelihood of conflicting individual, subgroup, and collective goals (Maynard-Moody & McClintock, 1987), which rarely add up to overall purpose. Individual and group goals may be congruent but may conflict with stated organizational goals, particularly in human service organizations where much influence and implementation occurs at street level (Lipsky, 1980; Palumbo, Maynard-Moody, & Wright, 1984). Additionally, weak relationships in some studies between stated organizational goals and individual actions cause some authors to feel goals to be rational justifications for previous behavior rather than a predictor of future action (Georgiou, 1973, p. 293; Mintzberg, 1973 ; Perrow, 1978; Weick, 1976). Etzioni,

while one of the seminal contributors to understanding the concept of the organizational goal, advocates a systems utility approach to understanding organizations (1964). While Etzioni and others (Simon, 1964; Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967) propose a non-goal paradigm orientation to organizational behavior, attainment in each alternative paradigm offered is measured in terms remarkably similar to organizational goals (Mohr, 1973).

As part of this discussion, Etzioni (1964, p. 16) has stipulated:

...the goal model approach is not the only means of evaluating organizational success. Rather than comparing existing organization to ideals of what they might be, we may assess their performance relative to one another. We would not simply say that practically all organizations are oligarchic: We would rather try to determine which ones are more (or which are less) oligarchic than others. The comparative analysis of organizations suggests an alternative approach which we refer to as the systems model.

#### System Model of Organizational Effectiveness

The system model, also referred to as the system resource model, defines effectiveness as the organization's "ability to secure an advantageous bargaining position in its environment and to capitalize on that position to acquire scarce and valued resources (Miskel, 1982)." This concept of bargaining position implied the exclusion of specific goals as ultimate effectiveness criteria, according to Miskel, and focused on the "continuous behavioral processes of exchange and competition over scarce and valued resources." Therefore the system model provides opportunity for researchers to identify appropriateness of resource allocation and organizational attention to non-goal activities (Etzioni, 1960). The system model assumes the organization is an open system, inherently actively involved in exchange and competitive relationships in the environment. Effectiveness becomes the ability of the organization to exploit the

environment in the acquisition of resources (Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967, p. 898).

System models are described as concerned with relationships among organizational subsystems (Etzioni, 1975). The difficulty in applying the system model of effectiveness to organizations was that “organizations, by definition, treat all subsystems other than goal attainment as instrumental to goal attainment.” Etzioni suggested the model “might best be referred to as a mobilized system model.”

Mohr (1973) attempted to clarify factors influencing organizational effectiveness by defining and developing measures to determine organizational characteristics. He proposed that effectiveness was a result of three factors: (1) productivity, (2) adaptability, and (3) flexibility. These factors were determined by averaging responses by organizational members about quantity and quality of output, anticipation of and solutions to problems, and adjustment to emergency situations, respectively. Hall (1972) analyzed a variation of the system model known as the multiple criteria approach. He described the incongruence among managers with different functions in an organization. General managers were found to have productivity and efficiency as high order criteria, while research and development managers valued cooperative behavior and staff development. He theorized that organizations could not apply global criteria for effectiveness. An organization could be effective on one or several criteria, but less or ineffective on others. This research is typical of researchers advocating multiple criteria to measure organizational effectiveness. The implicit assumption of a free market, where clientele are free to select the organization best meeting their needs, provides a ready

means of measuring effectiveness. In private organizations profits suffer, and in public entities community support declines.

Two major subtypes of the system model were proposed by Etzioni (1964, p. 19). The survival model consisted of a set of criteria which, if met, allowed the system to exist. The effectiveness model included the survival criteria, but described the components of the system as having alternatives which were more functional than others, thus defining a pattern of interrelations among the elements which exhibited a high probability of goal attainment.

Weaknesses of the system model (Hoy & Miskel, 1982) include:

1. Tendency to place too much emphasis on acquisition of resources, potentially creating damaging effects on outcomes.
2. Increasing inputs or resources is an operative goal; therefore the system model is actually a goal model.

A major criticism of the system model is the factor of time. Lengthy analysis of means and observation of systems is considerably more costly than analysis conducted with the goal model. Differences between the goal and system approach may be semantic in nature. "The acquisition of resources does not just happen. It is based on what the organization is trying to achieve—its' goal--but is accomplished through the operative goals." (Hall, 1972, p. 100). Steers (1977) felt the two approaches were complimentary, and that it was "highly desirable to conceptualize organizational effectiveness by combining the two perspectives."

### Integration of the Systems and Goal Models

Hoy and Miskel (1982) suggest integration of the two models results in "...a more comprehensive theoretical formulation for the guidance of research on organizational effectiveness." They posit that all social systems are required to solve four critical functions: Adaptation (to the environment and economic variables); goal achievement; integration (communication with and motivation of employees in organizational culture); and latency (preservation of the system). They suggested research should focus on three steps:

1. Determination of constituencies who define the important operative goals.
2. Specification of a time dimension, focusing on short, medium, or long term goals.
3. Identification of criterion variables, including indicators of each of the four critical functions.

Integration of the two models implies accomplishment of both general system resource goals and specific individual goals. Both models have been shown to be valuable in ensuring success and accomplishment of tasks in organizations. The categories of management, motivation, adaptation, outputs, groups served and services provided enumerated in the introduction have both general (many of which are systems goals) and specific (which relate to Locke's' Goal Theory) goals, all supporting integration as a more effective and viable method of understanding the importance of goal development in organizations.

Most modern organizations are characterized by the formal establishment and proclamation of goals to specific publics and the subsequent organization of effort to attain those goals. Since there is still no precise consensus as to the composition of an organizational goal, some review of opinion will illustrate and serve as background for discussion.

### Definitions of Goals, Goal Integration,

#### Congruence and Alignment

Thompson (1967) states goals are "... intended future domains of the organization set by those in the dominant coalition" (pp. 127-128). Warner (1967) offers the perspective that an organizational goal is "...a state of affairs or situation that does not exist at present, but is intended to be brought into existence in the future by the activities of the organization" (p. 5). Cyert and March (1963) take the position that only people have goals, and that organizations do not. In their view, goals are a negotiated consensus among the major players in an organization. Etzioni (1964) defined organizational goals as that future state of affairs an organization as a collectivity is trying to bring about. Kast, Rosenzweig and Stockman (1970) view goals as representing not only the end point of planning, but the end toward which other managerial activities such as organizing and controlling are aimed. Connor (1980, p. 70) quotes Gore on the definition of goals:

...the objects toward which organizations direct their energy and concerns. If organization is a means of accomplishing ends beyond the capacities of individuals, goals are collective ends translated into socially meaningful terms...

Bolman and Deal define organizational goals as "...conceptions of desired end states. They are conceptions of what an organization wants to accomplish, produce, or



reach” (1988, p. 34). The organizational goal concept may be further clarified by contrast with other organizational terms. van der Smissen (1972, pp. 12-13) differentiated between goals and philosophy by stating:

...philosophy says, “This we believe”; the goals say “This we seek to accomplish.” Goals must reflect the dynamic nature of community recreation... they are the guideposts for program development....

Edginton, Hudson, Deiser, and Edginton(2004)defined the three related terms of purpose, goals, and objectives. They stated:

Purpose may be defined as the broad intention of an organization.... A goal may be defined...as a philosophic statement toward which the actions of the organization are directed.... An objective can be defined as a specific statement that is quantitative and has some dimension of time.

Kraus and Curtis (1986; 2000) support the foregoing concepts by defining goals as broad statements of purpose which can be quantified by using them as guidelines in developing specific objectives. Bolman and Deal (1988; 2003) describe four frameworks for understanding organizations. In each of these frames goal setting and organizational goals have important functions. In the structural/rational frame they provide direction for the organization. In the human resources frame they provide communication and involvement. When viewed politically, goals provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to make their interests known. As symbols, goals develop shared values and a consensus of opinion, one of the most important aspects of a successful organization (Hitt, 1988; Peters & Austin, 1985 ; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Etzioni (1969, p. 65) stated, “For a full understanding of organizations and their personnel, analysis of organizational goals would seem to be critical.”

The description of an organization as a goal attainment device (Etzioni, 1964) belies other observations that “Organizations are rarely what they pretend to be (Deutscher, 1977 p. 249).” Goals remain a part of the everyday language of organizations, and a cornerstone of much traditional organizational theory. As a theoretical construct, however, goals are minimized or eliminated from several perspectives on organizations (Maynard-Moody & McClintock, 1987). Abandonment of the organizational goal construct, according to Maynard-Moody & McClintock, would probably present more problems than it solves for theorists. They postulate the effectiveness of goal theory in the understanding of change and situational behavior in organizations, and offer a definition of goals which the researcher prefers. They state:

Goals are units of information that are understood by organizational members to define preferred collective outcomes at a specific moment in time. Goals are a source of “emic” information (information and behavior significant among group members) that are accepted as real, meaningful, or appropriate by organizational members. Goals identify the collective purpose of the organization or its subunits and form part of the informational environment of organizations.

All definitions presented have a common theme. Goals describe the desired end results to which the present and future efforts of an organization are directed (Bedeian, 1984).

#### Goal Integration and Congruence

Goal integration is a development of congruence between the goals of individual organizational members and the organization itself (Paolillo, Jackson, & Lorenzi, 1986). Traditional bureaucratic theory assumes administrators should control subordinates behavior to conform and insure accomplishment of organizational goals. Rules for performance or organizational tasks are felt to automatically elicit desired behavior.

When these proved to be insufficient, theorists advanced the importance of remuneration, norms, values, and other incentives to produce compliance (Louis & Sieber, 1979).

Several authors have pointed out there must be consensus within an organization on the general goals or vision (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Edginton et al., 2001; Edginton & Williams, 1978; Hitt, 1988; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990; Peters, 1987) in order to accomplish the purposes of the organization. Schein (1985) postulated member consensus was critical in the diagnosis of external concerns when change was required. He stated that organizations whose members hold widely divergent concepts on performance and evaluation cannot coordinate remedial action. His research showed that widespread discussion and debate among organizational members often resulted in self-corrective action because people recognized problems about which they could do something.

Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) propose a model which uses the processes of socialization, accommodation and exchange to favorably influence goal integration and expand the area of common goals. Socialization implies that individuals accept organizational values and goals through formal and informal familiarization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Austin, 1985 ; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Steers, 1977). Ideally, the result is a shift of the individual's goals toward those of the organization. This particular approach may offer limited success, either because individual goals are not encompassed by organizational goals, or resistance on the part of the individual to the process. Informal and formal socialization procedures may also work at cross-purposes,

resulting in a domination of the informal attempts with little influence by the formal attempts in the final configuration.

Accommodation can increase goal congruence. Accommodation is present when management modifies organizational goals to be more in line with individual goals (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). Diversity of individual goals and the issue of whether the organization should readjust its goals to accommodate a changing employee mix limit the practical applications of this approach. Even with these constraints, organizations obviously adjust goals to accommodate employees, as the proliferation of child-care facilities, flex-time opportunities, recreation programs for employees, and the evidence of union/management negotiations attest. Exchange occurs as a result of the social “contract” entered into at the time of employment, and subsequent individual-organizational interactions. Both the individual and the organization compromise on certain respective goals so that more important goals may be realized (Schein, 1985).

Two types of congruence have been studied in the literature, that of supervisor-subordinate congruence, and member-constituency congruence. Vancouver & Schmitt’s (1991) research indicated a positive relationship between congruence of goals and the dimensions of job satisfaction, organizational commitment (loyalty), and employee attitudes. Member-constituency congruence, or shared goals within a group, was reported to correlate to satisfaction with the group, and tangentially to organizational commitment.

### Goal Alignment

Similar to congruence/consensus and integration, alignment of individuals around a common organizational goal has been viewed as having impact on the effectiveness of an organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Alignment is described as “the condition wherein people act as part of a whole and recognize their commitment to a common purpose” (Keifer & Senge, 1982). It was postulated by Keifer and Senge that most people seek a personal purpose in life, a concept supported by Frankl (1984) as a result of an opinion poll conducted in France in which 78 percent of the people polled stated their first goal was “finding a purpose and meaning to my life.” Keifer and Senge further asserted that on the organizational level people seek to express themselves, and that if the purpose of the organization is aligned with that of the individual “wherein by expressing themselves people further the manifestation of organizational purpose . . . individuals are furthered in achieving their personal purpose” (1982, p. 7). Peter Drucker (1989, p. 7) states nonprofit organizations which are successful in attracting and retaining high quality volunteers do so in large measure because they proclaim organizational goals which are aligned with the personal goals of the individuals attracted to the organization.

Alignment implies a strong unity between the individual and the organization. Kast and Rosenweig (1979) describe a “psychological contract” that helped fulfill the respective goals of the individual and the organization. Reciprocation as a result of this contract was a method of fulfilling mutual expectations and satisfying mutual needs in the relationship between man and his work environment. Interestingly, the rationale cited by the authors for the need for reciprocation is because in today’s society the work

organization is increasingly important due to the loss of psychological ties to other social groups. Maslow (1971) stated that such ties become so strong that:

The task, problem or purpose was totally interjected by everyone in the situation; that is to say that the task or duty was not any longer something separate from the self, something out there, outside the person and different from him, but rather he identified with this task so strongly that you couldn't define his real self without including the task.

Research studies reported by Kast and Rosenweig (1979) indicate that managers were found to be motivated toward organizational goals when they perceived a high probability of rewards based on performance and when they had an appropriate perception of their organizational role.

#### Challenges to Consensus/Integration/Alignment

As effective and valuable as goal fusion or congruence or alignment is to an organization, there are factors which mitigate against the unity of the individual and the organization. Some of these factors were defined by Buchanan (1975) in an article on organizational commitment. They include:

1. Increasing professionalization of management, fostered by the influence of graduate schools of business and public administration.
2. Trends to shift the focus of commitment away from organizations and onto the profession itself.
3. A widespread tendency for managers to change jobs, perhaps several times in the course of a career.
4. Unrealized expectations.
5. Dissatisfaction with job, colleagues, or superiors.

6. Disappointments of one sort or another.

He went on to describe the role management may play in advancing employee commitment to the organization as they consider three attitudes:

1. A sense of identification with the organizational mission;
2. A feeling of involvement or psychological immersion in organizational duties.
3. A feeling of loyalty and affection for the organization as a place to live and work, quite apart from the merits of its mission or its purely instrumental value to the individual.

#### Goal Setting Approaches, Challenges and Goal Types

The majority of research and literature on organizational goals supports the critical nature of goal setting. Management theorists describe the goal setting process as integral to the successful organization, stating that definition of the goal is the first task of the leader, or that the first responsibility of the leader is to define reality (Bennis, 1990). Three systems of goal setting characterize the majority of methods suggested by most authors. These have been identified (Behling & Schriesheim, 1976) as:

1. The rational systems approach, where goals are the result of the choices of the administrators and/or founders of the organization.
2. The open systems approach, in which goals are the result of environmental relations with regulatory bodies, suppliers, clientele, and competitors outside the organization.

3. The social systems approach, where goals become the result of conflict and competition among groups and individuals in the organization.

Rational systems approach. Goal setting in complex organizations is normally formal, explicitly recognized, and sometimes legally specified. This is the rational systems approach. Involvement in goal setting ranges from democratic vote by all members or constituents to one vote by the individual who owns the organization (Etzioni, 1964).

Open systems approach. The open systems model implies organizational learning occurs as a result of interactions with the environment (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

Organizations are assumed to set goals and modify behavior in response to favorable and unfavorable feedback in accordance with simple decision rules (Cyert & March, 1963).

These assumptions are common among models of organizational learning which suggest that organizational behavior is goal directed, history dependant, and rule based (Leavitt & March, 1988). These models of organizational learning suggest organizational goals are formed, evaluated, and modified by top management over time as feedback from the environment occurs (Lant, 1992; Lyles & Schwenk, 1992).

Social systems approach. Goal setting is often described as a political process, particularly in the social systems approach, as a result of the special interest groups involved in goal formulation. In this perspective, goals set are more a result of the power wielded by coalitions of individuals rather than rational processes (Bolman & Deal, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 2003). Owners and boards desire efficiency, employees desire increased wages, management wishes to maintain power, and clientele demand quality outcomes



(Kast & Rosenzweig, 1979). For example, a university has as a legally mandated goal the education of students. Coalitions of faculty may have that goal, but also have the goal of research, a requirement placed upon them by the realities of the tenure process. They may also have as goals the maintenance of a faculty lifestyle, or to insure that they have the opportunity to consult. All of these goals have an important impact on the decisions made.

### Effects of Goal Setting Theory

Locke's theory of goal setting, summarizing 35 years of research (Locke & Latham, 2002) is the basic theoretical foundation of the belief that an individual's conscious goal setting intentions regulate his or her actions. Empirical studies have supported this theory. It was found in a study of undergraduates that the setting of specific difficult goals most often leads to successful completion of those goals (Smith, Locke, & Barry, 1990). A naturally occurring field experiment in the United States Air Force Tactical Air Command provided evidence that emphasis on goals and the setting of goals significantly improved performance (Locke & Somers, 1987).

One of the assumptions of Locke's goal theory postulates that goals assigned to an individual are expected to be realized to the extent that the individual accepts the goals. Many researchers questioned Locke's conclusions, particularly that something as simple as setting hard goals could increase the performance of employees in real organizational settings (Latham & Yukl, 1975).

Research on subordinate participation in goal setting by French, Kay, and Meyer concluded that (a) participants involved in goal setting typically achieved a greater

percentage of their goals, (b) participants who typically worked in high participation setting performed best on goals they set themselves, and (c) participants who worked in low participation settings performed best on goals their supervisors set for them (Ivanevich, 1976). Locke and Latham (2002) discovered that goal accomplishment and effort is not so much dependent on who sets goals but on communication and information about the goals and their importance of accomplishment.

Goal displacement. Goal displacement describes a process in which an original goal of the organization is modified or abandoned as a result of several factors. Kast and Rosenweig (1979) suggest displacement is a result of the “need for the organization to differentiate activities and form the process of downward delegation of authority and responsibility.” All organizations establish a set of procedures or means to accomplish goals (Sills, 1957). These means may come to be regarded as ends unto themselves, rather than as methods to achievement or to attain organizational goals. Actual organizational achievement becomes secondary to appropriate functioning of organizational procedures (Kast & Rosenweig, 1979). This tendency towards goal displacement has been repeated many times in management literature, and is a common problem. Most authors point out the ultimate source of goal displacement is the delegation process itself. Sills (1957) identified five specific areas which should be observed when members of an organization have been delegated authority:

1. Member status within the organization.
2. Their interpretation of organizational rules.
3. Their execution (adherence to organizational procedures).

4. Their relationship to other participants.
5. Their relationships with the general public.

Another major source of goal displacement occurs within the body of the organization rather than at management levels. Merton (1968 [1949]) suggested that bureaucracies displace goals when tendencies are to follow uncompromising rules or regulations for their own sake. Even when the avowed goal is flexibility of policy application, “adherence to the organization’s policy has become the organizational goal of the bureaucrat (Etzioni, 1964). The potential for goal displacement in an organization is present in three situations (Sills, 1957):

1. When development of group norms is incompatible with organizational goals.
2. When there is development of a sense of common destiny contrary to organizational destiny among participants.
3. When there is informal co-optation into the policy making apparatus of outside groups which exert an adverse influence over the achievement of original goals.

Kast and Rosenweig (1979) suggest that goal displacement will occur when there are strong sanctions to enforce adherence, and when members are restricted to rigid rules and regulations that guide activities. It would appear from these authors that the more emphasis is placed on rigid behavior, the less successful the organization is likely to be in the accomplishment of the original goal. In contrast, Peters and Waterman (1982) emphasize the importance of “looseness” in regulation of organizational activity, while maximizing adherence to the original goal.

### General Versus Specific Goals

Organizations have both operational (specific) and non-operational (general) goals. Operational goals are those defined as having a measurable outcome in a specific time frame while non-operational goals do not (March & Simon, 1958). Both types of goal have advantages, particularly in the areas of attitudes and intentions of the employee in respect to general goals (Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991) and improved performance in respect to specific goals (Locke & Latham, 1984).

Kast and Rosenzweig (1974) suggest several reasons for having broad, relatively general goals:

If goals are stated in general terms, there is room for organizational participants to fill in certain details according to their own perception. Ultra precision can destroy flexibility and make it more difficult for individuals to adapt to changing conditions. Some vagueness makes it possible to work towards goals by many different means. It may also facilitate compromise on the part of participants with diverse value systems. As long as people can read into organizational goal statements their own interpretation of the ends to be achieved, compromise is feasible. Thus, tacit agreement is often reached with regard to both ends and means (p. 173).

In support of this generality of goals, Banfield (1961) states:

It follows that serious reflection on the ends of the organization, and especially any attempt to state ends in precise and realistic terms, is likely to be destructive of the organization. To unify and arouse spirit, the ends must be stated in vague and high sounding terms. When they are given definite meaning they lose their magic and, worse, they become controversial (p. 78).

It may not be possible to specify the goals of an organization too closely in a complex environment. Kast, Rosenzweig and Stockman (1970) postulate that only in a relatively closed system can clear-cut objectives be useful and state:

...in many cases such clarity of goals is not possible. Complex situations often defy explicit statements of goals which can be understood and/or accepted by organization members. In many other cases it is not even desirable to clarify objectives in great detail (p. 404).

These points of view are further supported by Quinn (1980). He claims that specific organizational goals may cause undesirable centralization, provide points of crystallization for internal and external opposition, create unwanted organizational inflexibility and reduce goal commitment. He bases these claims on qualitative rather than quantitative data. Peters and Waterman (1982) also use qualitative data, but they favor the use of specific goals. They use numerous examples of specific goals which drive excellent companies. In their view, general goals, non-operative in nature, drive the setting of and the specifics inherent in the specific or operative goals. One drawback mentioned by Zald and Denton (1963, p. 234) concerning the issue of too much generality in goal setting is the following: "...broadly defined goals with little specificity may permit too much flexibility, in that they result in a weak commitment."

Specificity in goal setting and evaluation is linked to greater productivity in the organization at the micro level, that is, in specific short-term situations and applications (Locke & Latham, 1984 ; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981 ; Mento, Steel, & Karren, 1987; Tubbs, 1986). There have been few studies of group goal setting and almost none of organizational goal setting (Smith et al., 1990; Yearta, Maitlis, & Briner, 1995).

### Types of Goals

Bolman and Deal (1988, p. 35) point out the complexity of organizational goals and state that: "Goals can be individual or corporate, overt or covert, conscious or repressed, taboo or honorific. For any organization, disentangling the actual structure of

goals is a difficult task.” Mohr (1973) examined organizational goals and developed a method of categorizing broad types of goals, based on the work of Edward Gross (1968). He defines those goals which enable an organization to perpetuate itself as reflexive, and those which provide outputs for other purposes (such as a social good or product) as transitive. These concepts may permit understanding of some types of organizational motivation in the goal setting process.

Westerlund and Sjostrand (1979) suggest that organizational goals exist in a variety of forms and are used for different purposes:

1. Honorific “boy scout” goals- fictitious goals that credit the organization with desirable qualities.
2. Taboo goals- goals that are real but are not talked about.
3. Stereotypical goals- goals that any reputable organization should have.
4. Existing goals- a composite of the mixture of goals that are held by organizational participants.
5. Stated goals- the goals the organization announces for itself.
6. Repressed goals- goals that are pursued but would not stand up if confronted with the organization’s values or self image.

#### Role of the Administrator

Many authors state the leader is the focus, the disseminator, and the interpreter of organizational goals. Gross (1968), Yuchtman and Seashore (1967), Price (1972), Zald and Denton (1963), Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse (2002) Sinclair (1999) and Mintzberg (1983) all support the concept that the executive core, the major decision

makers are the most valid source of information concerning organizational goals. The administrator may be an individual or a coalition of individuals, or a combination of several coalitions.

The emphasis on leadership values and the communication of goals and performance standards through example advocated by Nanus (1992), Bennis (2000), Peters and Waterman (1982), Peters and Austin (1985), and Drucker (1980) indicate the need to focus on the leadership or primary decision maker in the effective organization as the source of articulation of the goals and directives driving the organization. The validity of surveying the leadership is supported by these authors. The literature reviewed indicates to the researcher that the leadership coalition in successful or excellent organizations seem to provide a sense of direction for the organization. They do this by selecting or creating a set of goals, general and specific, and communicating those goals in such a way that individuals and groups adopt and adapt those goals as worthy of accomplishment. The leadership coalition seems to modify specific goals in response to feedback from constituent groups, both those who are part of the organization, and those who are beneficiaries of organizational activity. The general goals seem to change much more slowly than do specific goals, and seem to be the motivating factors behind successful accomplishment of specific goals approved by the legitimate constituencies in the organization.

These observations are supported by strategic management literature through research on such topics as decision makers' frame of reference (Hambrick, 1981; Schwenk, 1988), cognitive maps (Ford & Hegarty, 1984), belief systems (Dunbar,

Dutton, & Torbert, 1982), organizational learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Leavit & March, 1988), and interpretive systems (Daft & Weick, 1984; Meyer, 1982). Vancouver and Schmitt (1991) emphasize the executive core as the appropriate group to query on organizational goals.

### Public Agencies as Goal Attainment Organizations

Public agencies have unique constraints placed upon them by their constituents both inside and outside of the organization. In contrast with private organizations or corporations where the measure of organizational success is found in profits generated, the avowed purpose and measure of success in a public agency is the public good. The goals of these agencies become to a certain extent a compromise among the publics the agency serves. Contributors to these goals may be boards of directors, professional staff, volunteers, other governmental agencies or bodies, politicians, interest groups, parents, and participants. The stated goals, generally voiced by the primary decision maker, become the summary and articulation of the purpose of the organization. The effectiveness and efficiency of an organization, along with its justification for existence may become dependent upon the realization of stated goals. This is particularly critical in non-profit organizations where attainment of goals is easily measured, but the goals themselves are not readily found (Daft & Weick, 1983). Successful non-profit organizations are driven by the performance of their mission, or attainment of goals (Drucker, 1989). Drucker goes on to state that the mission "...defines the specific strategies needed to meet crucial goals."



### Methods of Discovering Goals

Given the many approaches to understanding goals and task accomplishment in organizations, it is not surprising that the identification of organizational goals is problematic. Methodologies extant in the literature range from prescribed approaches (Gross, 1968; Zald & Denton, 1963) to that of a derived approach presented by Gans (1958). Goal attainment is often measured by methodologies similar to that contained in this study. Smith, Locke, and Barry (1990) conducted a study evaluating the relationship between goals and planning time spent developing goals. They used a questionnaire to evaluate effectiveness of the planning process. Seventeen questions addressing the criteria of quality planning hypothesized by the authors were arranged with a five point Likert type scale for each item. Each item contained an action verb to solicit a level of performance evaluation from “not at all” to “very much.”

The seminal study of organizational goals from which the methodology of this study is derived was that of Edward Gross (Gross, 1968). He examined goals as perceived by administrators and faculty at 70 institutions of higher education across the United States. Goals were determined through research of literature containing organizational goal statements for universities. The forty-seven goal statements which resulted from the literature search were categorized on five dimensions; those of output, adaptation, management, motivation, and positioning, and two levels, present and future. The subjects of the study were university faculty and administrators from 70 universities which met criteria of research, productivity, and variability among goals. The total

population of administrators (n=8,828) and a ten percent sample of the faculty (n=6,756) from the respective institutions were selected. Responses were solicited on a five point Likert-type scale from top importance to little or no importance, with a response for abstention included, resulting in a six point scale. Those responding did so via a questionnaire which was self administered. Data analysis was performed by computing means and ranking all goals in their perceived order of importance on both the current and future levels. Goal congruence between current and future levels was measured by comparing the mean differences by the rank they received in the respective scale.

#### Goal Studies in Parks and Recreation

Municipal park and recreation departments are similar to other public governmental, private, and non-profit organizations in their need to establish clear goals. Indeed, there may be more need now for clear goals, particularly in human service organizations in light of budgetary and resource constraints than there has been in the past.

Specific to the field of parks and recreation, Edginton et al. (2008, p.17) state the goals of an organization represent the desired outcome toward which a leisure service system is directed and for which the formal structure is designed. They go on to describe the consequences of conflict between the formal and informal structures in the search for goal accomplishment. Murphy, Williams, Niepoth and Brown (1973, p. 93) cite four criteria for goals in recreation delivery systems:

1. Goals must be long range: by their remoteness, they ensure that provision is made for tomorrow's needs rather than merely the expediencies of today.

2. Goals must be idealistic and visionary: progress starts with ideas, some of which frequently seem unattainable and even theoretical in nature.
3. Goals must be challenging: they should arouse enthusiasm and stimulate involvement and support.
4. Goals should be locally oriented: only local residents can and should determine what kind and quality of a recreation system they should have.

Hjelte and Shivers (1972, pp. 168-169) further clarify the role of goals in leisure services in the following manner:

Identification of organizational goals...precedes all other organizational aspects. The aim of identifying organizational goals is necessary if the work of the agency is to satisfy community needs.... When organizational goals have been clearly defined, the structure of the organization can be planned.... Organizational planning and position delineation, originating from the basic goals of the system, affect the desired level of performance in a variety of positions created to carry out the goal-dictated tasks.

Organizational goals are critical to the evaluation process. Edginton et al. (2004) queried, "How can a recreation and leisure professional know when an end has been reached if no goals or objectives have been identified to indicate what that end was to be?" They went on to explain that purposes, goals objectives and performance objectives must be established for three reasons: (a) to define the ultimate goal of the professional or organization, (b) to define how the goal will be accomplished, and (c) to provide a basis of measurement to determine when the goal has been reached. In the context of leisure services, Nogradi (1980) stated goals play an important role in attaining and maintaining optimal levels of effectiveness in the delivery of public leisure services.

The traditional or rational approach to goals in leisure service organizations postulates a number of assumptions: (1) that the goals formally stated in charter, ordinance, or other official pronouncements are accepted as the actual goals of the organization; (2) that those goals constitute an harmonious set, if not a single goal, derived in a rational manner by top management; (3) that the goals are specific and definable; (4) that individual and organizational goals are complementary; (5) that goals are enduring and not subject to rapid change; and (6) it is desirable to have the ability to measure and evaluate progress towards goals (Rockwood, 1982, p. 172).

Goals in the delivery of leisure services also appear to affect productivity, as they have been found to do in other organizations. Shivers (1963, p. 75) wrote, "Some groups are affected by a poor understanding of what they are seeking or where they are going. Goals have not been defined or described. As a result the group gets nowhere..."

Goal setting in the field of parks and recreation is the result of a number of variables: the legal mandate, the political framework, experiential background of the department head, the expressed wishes of the people served, the political realities of limited resources (Kraus & Curtis, 2000) and the power of coalitions of interested parties both in the organization and the environment (Rockwood, 1982). Communication of goals to the employee is critical to productivity. Peters and Waterman (1982) illustrate the rise in productivity and efficiency of an organization when goals and purpose are clearly understood by the participants. In the same sense, clearly stated or understood goals in the provision of leisure services are essential for group and organizational morale.

The leader must function in ways which will provide his group with some function or aim toward which they may move. Not only can such action assist in the maintenance of the group against disintegrating forces, but it will allow build-up of morale and a feeling of unified effort in the achievement of some predetermined goal (Shivers, 1963).

One of the ways to increase employee identification with the organization, according to Bannon (1976) and McLean, Bannon, and Grey (1999) is to seek consensus among the group of the means and ends of achieving goal and objectives. The members of groups strongly committed to common goals display high group loyalty and favorable attitudes between superiors and subordinates (Kast et al., 1970). Murphy et al. (1973, p. 111) wrote:

... goals and objectives give employees a sense of satisfaction and gratification when they can feel the pride of a job well done... goals and objectives that are beyond the capacity and capability of employees soon end in frustration.

### Related Studies

Studies of goals in municipal park and recreation agencies have appeared in the literature only since 1977. These studies have been generally concerned with identifying common goals for the profession or categories for goals rather than examining specific agency goals. Municipal parks and recreation departments tend to spend little time or attention on the identification of goals and priorities within their organizations (Edginton & Hood, 1977a). Edginton and others (Edginton & Neal, 1983c; Goodale & Witt, 1979; Hastings, 1982; Howat & Edginton, 1986; Nogradi, 1980) initiated the study of goals in parks and recreation organizations. Table 3 illustrates goals studies specific to parks and recreation.

Table 3.

*Park and Recreation Goals Studies.*

Author(s)	Study Population	Research Focus	Findings
Edginton (1978)	Canadian municipal directors	What goals are, what they should be	Serving children, financing programs, management of facilities high priorities
O'Brien (1979)	Directors in and around Dallas/Fort Worth TX	Goal congruence among municipal recreation staff	Lack of goal congruence between administration and employees, and departments of different sizes. A need for better motivation at all levels
Goodale & Witt (1979)	Two communities in Ontario CN stakeholders	Which goals are and should be of most importance	Areas and facilities deemed important by all. Professionals differed from citizens who ranked programs, citizenship and facilities highly
Nogradi (1980)	21 communities in Ontario CA	Needs assessment and goal formation	Goals used for appraisal, evaluation, should be general in nature
Edginton & Neal (1983c)	Nationwide study of municipal directors in United States	Present and future goal importance levels	Quality of program, service delivery, management, and targeting served populations most important
Hastings (1982)	Comparison of Canadian directors with United States directors	Determining differences between Canadian and United States directors	Levels of goal importance increased significantly, Canadian directors more collaborative, U.S. directors more concerned with direct service goals
Howat & Edginton (1986)	Australian local government parks and recreation administrators	Perceptions of importance of goals present and future	Provision of open space and facilities most important, management and relationships increasingly important
Edginton, Madrigal, Lankford & Wheeler, (1990)	Comparison of directors and board members in Oregon	Determining differences in goal importance among directors and boards	Directors felt all goals across goal categories to be more important than board or commission members.

The first empirical study (Edginton, 1978) of organizational goals of park and recreation agencies occurred in Canada. Edginton developed an 82 statement instrument based on the work of Edward Gross (1968). He adapted to the park and recreation field the five categories of output, adaptation, management, motivation, and positioning measured across the dimensions of perception of importance at the current time, and the perception of importance as it should be in the future. The five categories presented related to the four critical functions required of all organizations as outlined by Parsons (Hoy & Miskel, 1982).

Findings of Edginton's initial study indicated that current important goals as reported in 1978 were:

1. Providing services to children was perceived as an important responsibility.
2. Management and operation of areas and facilities was a high priority.
3. Cooperation with other organizations to attain grants and other resources was given a high rating.
4. The mental health of people served was perceived as important by directors.
5. Family unity was given a low ranking.
6. Enabling functions were rated as low priorities.
7. Little emphasis was placed on researching the needs of participants.

Perceptions of importance of specific goals as they should be in the future in 1978 were:

1. Management activities should receive higher priorities according to directors.
2. Output goals were rated as low priorities.

3. Political involvement received low ratings.
4. Concern with securing a financial base received a low rating.
5. Enabling functions remained low in priority.

From this Canadian national work, several studies developed. Edginton and Hood (1977a) reported Atlantic Canada recreation directors most concerned with adaptation to current environmental factors and a perceived need to allocate resources to provision of services in the future. Management activities were perceived as most important in Manitoba (Edginton & Hood, 1977b ), and output, adaptation, management, positional, and to a lesser extent motivational goals in British Columbia (Edginton & Hood, 1977c ). Future desired goals included raising the importance of management goals.

Services for special groups were of extremely low in priority in a study of organizational goals by Edginton, McDonald, and Smith (1978). In a study of goal congruence of municipal parks and recreation departments in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas, O'Brien (1979) found:

1. A general lack of goal congruence among duty levels.
2. A general lack of goal congruence among organizations of different sizes.
3. Administrators were most concerned with current output and management goals, but felt motivation goals should receive more emphasis.
4. Direct service personnel felt current output goals were most important, but motivational goals should be raised in importance.

A study in 1979 in Ontario (Goodale & Witt) built upon Edginton's work. This study included administrators, supervisors, leaders, and programmers in public and



private agencies, and citizens in two Ontario communities along with the respective municipal recreation staff in the two communities. Seventeen goals identified as output goals were evaluated by ratings on a Likert type scale on current and future dimensions. It was determined at that time that all groups felt the highest importance of goals centered on providing facilities, programs, green spaces and parks, and providing information about those opportunities. The lowest priorities for 1979 were those concerned with leisure counseling, education, personal growth, and the support of other community groups. Future emphasis among all groups was perceived to be continuing to provide parks and green spaces, a need for programs for special populations, a need for information on all leisure opportunities in the community, and the need to allow for citizen input and planning. Leisure counseling and participant involvement in the agencies' own programs received low priority. Interesting differences between professionals and citizens in the future domain included a professional staff who felt a low priority on the provision of facilities, programs, and the development of good citizens, all areas the citizen respondents felt were of high priority. Professional staff felt co-operation and support among community groups for resources and programs was of high priority, while citizens did not.

Nogradi (1980) examined needs assessment and the resultant general goal formation in 21 recreation departments in Ontario, Canada. An interview format was used, with 16 questions to guide the interview. He determined:

1. Municipal park and recreation departments do have goals to guide decisions and actions.

2. Respondents (administrators) indicated general goals were preferable to specific goals.
3. Goal formation was seen by half as an administrative function, while half felt all employees should be involved.
4. Departmental goals were primarily used as appraisal methods for individual and departmental performance.

Perhaps one unarticulated reason for the preference of general goals is the lack of accountability general goals provide. Nogradi inferred the reasons for this preference as providing a safer work environment in the short term, but more tentative in the long run as there is increasing demand for accountability, purpose and responsibility. Four areas of concern were mentioned dealing with specific goals: (1) the notion of flexibility; (2) the element of time; (3) the non-tangible nature of human services; and (4) the special skills and commitment required for their formulation and implementation. The consensus of the group was that general goals were more desirable and useful in the recreation setting.

The Howat and Edginton study in Australia (1986) studied local governments. It was found that the primary goals were those of providing areas and facilities. The local governments depended on other groups to provide programming. Informal recreation was common, with citizens attending to their own needs. Management functions and the building of good relationships were rated as increasingly important.

### Studies in the United States

The first study in the United States used similar methodology and an 85 statement instrument rated on the two levels of current and future goal importance (Edginton & Neal, 1983c). Goal consensus and goal congruence among directors was reported. The findings included:

1. High quality programs were perceived by directors as being of great importance on current and future dimensions.
2. Directors seemed to emphasize the means of service delivery rather than the purpose or ends and benefits to the participants.
3. Motivational and management concerns were ranked as being of high priority in the future.
4. Importance was attached to staying abreast of current issues affecting the organization, but directors would like to avoid it in the future.
5. A shift from providing recreation for all towards providing recreation for those requiring services was evident.
6. The provision of services for special groups or populations, and the issue of planning for parks and recreation were given importance in the future.

The “National Study of Goals” generated a number of state and regional reports. Directors in the Pacific Northwest were reported as primarily concerned with meeting the needs of those served, maintaining a positive public image, and providing areas and facilities. There was a high degree of congruence between ratings of present and future goals (Edginton & Neal, 1982d). In California, recognized as a bellwether state, directors

emphasized maintaining high quality programs, development, planning and maintenance of areas and facilities, and felt that future importance of services to special groups, research, motivation of employees and environmental awareness training would increase (Edginton & Neal, 1982c). Directors in Ohio were reported (Edginton & Neal, 1983b) to see future importance in research studies, development of long range plans, and procurement of land for recreation. Their perceptions of important goals at the time were those of management of employees, particularly motivational activities, positioning and adaptation to the external environment, and maintenance of existing facilities. They also felt seniors were the most important age group served.

Other studies in Illinois (Edginton & Neal, 1982a) New Jersey (Edginton, Neal, & Rothschild, 1983) the southeastern states (Edginton & Neal, 1982b) Washington (Edginton & Neal, 1983a), Colorado (Neal & Edginton, 1982), and the Mid-Atlantic region (Neal & Edginton, 1984) generated by the national study indicated generally high importance for the current goal of maintaining present facilities, providing quality programs, and maintaining a positive public image. Goals which received emphasis for the future in these studies were those of securing land for recreation, development of long term plans and strategies, incorporating results of research into organizational operation, issues surrounding employee management and motivation, and maintaining inter-organizational harmony and co-operation.

Hastings (1982) compared results from the National Study of Goals completed by Edginton in 1982 with a similar study completed in Canada 1978. A comparison of the US data to the Canadian data resulted in a diagnosis of change. All of the goals in the

current category between 1978 and 1982 increased importance in a statistically significant way. He discovered the greatest mean difference between 1978 results and 1982 results was in maintaining a positive public image. Among the ten greatest positive differences between 1978 and 1982 current goals were those of promoting trust in the organization, evaluating personnel, providing services for special groups, evaluating areas and facilities, conducting research on community needs and desires, and securing fees and charges.

The goals which received the lowest increase in importance from 1978 to 1982 included enhancement of cultural heritage, enhancement of citizenship, co-sponsoring activities with other organizations, enabling skills for participants, direct financial and indirect in kind assistance to community groups, and communication of roles of individual employees within the organization. Greatest rank increases, that is goals which increased in rank between 1978 and 1982 included: promotion of trust in the organization, to set standards, control and evaluate staff, to develop participant pride in the organization, maintenance of a positive image, beautification of the community, evaluation of services, and development of long range strategies.

Hastings found that several goals had dropped in rank importance according to directors from 1978 to 1982. Goals which decreased in rank importance included: co-sponsoring activities with other community groups; communication of the role of the organization and the individuals within it; enhancement of cultural heritage; skill instruction for participants; provision of in-kind contributions for services; and protection of employees' labor and professional rights. He came to the conclusion directors in 1982

emphasized tangible, direct service goals rather than those which were facilitative in nature. Increasing problems in an era of limits (Kraus, 1984) may have been reasons for the emphasis on maintaining a positive public image, and for the increased priority given to long range planning, evaluation, and funding.

Hastings found directors' goal mean ratings of future importance of goals to have increased significantly from 1978 to 1982. The greatest mean differences occurred primarily in the management/motivational goal category, with the single largest mean difference in the adaptation/positional goal of maintaining a positive image.

Management goals with the greatest positive changes included: the setting of standards; evaluation and control of staff performance; evaluation of services; securing of fees and charges; proper supervision of on-going programs; and the development of pride in the organization. The future goals with the lowest mean differences, while still significant, were primarily output goals. They included: enhancing citizenship; enhancing cultural heritage; providing direct financial aid; intellectual growth; co-sponsorship of activities; and planning and construction of areas and facilities. Overall, Hastings (1982) found all goals in all categories to have increased in importance. Some trends were identified, particularly those revolving around adaptation/positional goals gaining more importance. Management/motivational goals also increased in importance, particularly those related to financial concerns, and those which influenced morale of employees. These goals increased in importance more than the 1978 directors had predicted, indicating perhaps inaccuracies on the part of the directors. Several goals which forecast increased importance were realized, particularly those dealing with planning and needs assessment.

Generalizations from the data indicated directors felt the most important goals to be those of evaluation, planning, increasing the financial base through fees and charges, serving special groups, and improvement of organizational relationships. Services provided in 1984 were maintenance of areas and facilities, supplying quality programs, and planning and constructing areas and facilities. Services to children were emphasized over any other service group. Directors felt the needs of the future were those of leisure counseling, conducting needs assessments, using volunteers, and enhancing the family unit.

The most recent study of goals available in the park and recreation field examines goal congruence between important constituencies in the leadership coalition (Edginton et al., 1990). Using a similar instrument to Hastings, they studied differences in perceptions of importance of goals on present and future dimensions between park and recreation directors and board or commission members in the state of Oregon. It was found that directors (managers) felt both current and future status of goals in services provided and management to be significantly more important than did board members. Board members of special districts felt service goals were more important than did municipal board members, while all goals across the four subscales of groups served, services provided, desired outcomes, and management goals defined in the study were considered to be more important by the directors than the board members.

The Edginton study of 1978 in Canada was based on the work of Gross. Studies derived from this adaptation such as O'Brien's, Goodale and Witt's, Nogradi's, Hastings', Howat and Edginton's, and Edginton, Madrigal, Lankford and Wheeler's have

been based on this adaptation. No serious defects have been reported with the methodology with the exception of low rates of return on certain studies, a common problem with self administered questionnaires.

### Summary

Goal theory in organizations is an area of continual debate. The apparent inability of a goal model to describe the behavior of organizations has promulgated many other models in an attempt to describe various activities observed to occur within organizations. Many theorists deny the existence of goals entirely, but then proceed to explain organizational behavior in terms of goal attainment. Perhaps the goal model has been too narrow in the past, focusing on only official goals rather than the multiplicity of objectives, and their changing nature. Maynard-Moody and McClintock (1987) may have the best definition when they postulate goals are internal to the organization, understood by members to define preferred collective outcomes at a specific point in time. This definition permits flexibility both in goals and organizational efforts to attain those preferred outcomes.

Even if organizations do not have goals, individuals do (Frankl, 1984). The extent to which managers can enlist individuals in the pursuit of a common goal perceived to enhance the likelihood of individual goal attainment will determine to a large degree the effectiveness of the organization in the accomplishment of the common goal.

Goal determination is difficult. As many researchers have illustrated, stated goals may be circumvented by a number of factors, and goal displacement may prevent even



the identification of alternative goals pursued. Evaluation of the aims of an organization is crucial to effective and efficient management. Establishing difficult, challenging goals for an organization has many advantages. No matter the system used for modeling the organization, recent research has shown such goals result in attainment similar to that predicted for a rational systems model (Lant, 1992). Continued evaluation of goals has obvious advantages in both adaptation to a changing environment and in planning and anticipation of future opportunities. Research on organizational goals for municipal park and recreation organizations is still relatively young. There is continued need for such research in response to environmental factors and the changing demographics of target populations. Researchers need to continue to discover goals, develop knowledge of goal priorities, and intervening variables.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study compared and analyzed United States municipal park and recreation directors' perceptions of the level of importance of specific organizational goals on two levels. The levels are: (1) current perceived importance of organizational goals; and (2) importance of such goals as they should be. Directors' perceptions were gathered in 2008 and compared with similar goals reported in 1983. This chapter details the procedures used in conducting the research and analyzing the data, and covers five major areas: (a) research design, (b) subject selection, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

#### Research Design

The data from a study of the level of importance directors of municipal parks and recreation assigned specified organizational goals were analyzed. The study consisted of a questionnaire designed to elicit response from a select population of municipal park and recreation directors. Previous studies conducted in Canada, the United States (Edginton & Neal, 1983c) Australia (Howat & Edginton, 1986), the State of Oregon (Edginton et al., 1990) and most recently an unpublished study of organizational goals between public service and armed forces directors (Lankford & Edginton, 2002) provided the basis of the research design.

#### Subject Selection

The sampling frame included the entire population of directors of municipal parks and recreation departments and recreation districts in the United States in incorporated

municipalities derived from the 2006 United States Census of Cities. The census bureau data was stratified into five categories by the researcher, cities with populations of 250,000 and above, cities of population between 100,000 and 249,999, cities with population of 50,000 to 99,999 cities with populations between 25,000 and 49,999 and cities between 10,000 and 24,999. These ranges are aligned with the National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal Award categorization scheme (2008a). A random sample of twenty percent of each strata resulted in a sample size of 531. Sample size determined represents a compromise among several values. Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) recommend a statistical power value at .80 percent when significance is set at the implicit level of .05 percent. A power level of .80 percent provides a 4 to 1 chance of correctly rejecting a null hypothesis. Dillman (2007) recommends a sample size 40 percent above the desired significance levels in order to minimize the non-response bias inherent in mail surveys, resulting in a sample size of 434. A sample size of 531 is therefore judged to be conservative in determination of significance for the purposes of this study. Minimum city size of 10,000 was set for comparison with the 1983 study (Edginton & Neal, 1983c). Cities of under 10,000 were determined to have limited park and recreation facilities or departments in many cases, rendering data collection problematic.

#### Data Collection

Contact information for the director of each of the respective cities was obtained by a combination of internet search of each municipality's website and telephone contact. The instrument was delivered by mail and electronic media through the commercial

survey website Survey Monkey, using procedures recommended by Dillman (2007) to enhance the response rate. Dillman's Total Design Method when used in its entirety has produced response rates of over 70 percent consistently.

He advocates the following procedures:

1. A cover letter is produced with appropriate letterhead with the personal signature of the researcher at the bottom and an individually typed name and address at the top. This letter is included with a copy of the questionnaire and a self addressed stamped business envelope in an individually typed envelope and mailed to the subject.
2. One week following the first mailing, a post card follow up is sent to all included in the first mailing. A preprinted message signed by the researcher is on one side, with the individually typed name and address of the subject on the other. This serves as a thank you to those who have responded, and a reminder to those who have not.
3. Three weeks after the first mailing, a follow-up is sent to non-respondents. It contains another questionnaire and envelope as well as another cover letter stating the response has not been received, and restating the basic purpose and appeal of the study.

The initial mailing contained a cover letter of introduction (see Appendix A) with an endorsement of the survey(see Appendix B) from the then current president of the American Park and Recreation Society, Mike Clark of Batavia IL. Parks, a paper copy of the survey (see Appendix E) and a link to the internet version of the survey instrument.

The second contact was an email (see Appendix C) reminding the directors of the survey and included a link to the Survey Monkey website. The third contact was a postcard (see Appendix D) with a link to the Survey Monkey website and the researchers' email address if a paper copy of the survey was desired.

A total of 244 surveys were returned in the 2008 study, 77 from the internet site and 167 paper surveys, for a 46% overall return rate. Seven of the surveys were incomplete, and were eliminated from analysis, leaving a total of 237 surveys to be analyzed.

The sampling frame of the 1983 National Study of Goals was comprised of the entire population of directors of municipal parks and recreation departments in cities greater than 10,000 in population and whose names appeared in the 1980 National Park and Recreation Association directory. A total of 382 responses were received in 1983 from a mailing of 1,066 surveys, for a response rate of 36%.

#### Instrumentation

The instrument used is a refined version of the instrument first used by Edginton (1978). The goal statements included in the present study are a result of a screening procedure performed by Hastings (1982) on responses to Edginton, Griffeth, and Neal (1982) in a survey of park and recreation departments in the United States. A 1990 (Edginton et al.) study of goal congruence between park and recreation directors' and their respective board or commission members in the State of Oregon examined six subscales: desired outcomes (specific benefits derived from participation), management (administrative tasks), motivation (methods used to attract, retain, and inspire employees

and participants), adaptation (response to environmental conditions impacting the organization), groups served (target publics for which the programs are intended), and finally, services (the products or programs offered to constituents). Analysis of the data resulted in a consolidation of the adaptation, management and motivation subscales because of high inter-correlations among goal statements. This instrument was used in the development of the Lankford and Edginton study comparing public and armed forces leisure service providers (2002, p. 5). This resulted in a four subscale instrument. Subscales were identified as (a) management/adaptation/positional, (b) services provided, (c) groups served, and (d) desired outcomes.

Table 4.

*Goal Categories and Definitions.*

Goal categories	Definitions
Management/adaptation/positional (MM)	Those goals having to do with motivating, administrating and adjusting to environmental situations.
Services provided (SP)	Support and other services provided to groups and individuals outside of normal recreation programming.
Groups served (GS)	Targeted populations for whom specific programs are created.
Desired outcomes (O)	Specific benefits and behavioral modifications as a result of participation.

The instrument used in this study is identical to the final instrument used in Oregon in 1990 and in 2002 with the exception of demographic questions. Goal

statements are grouped into their respective subscales and response alternatives arranged in a Likert-type format with five levels varying from extremely important to extremely unimportant. Two sample goal statements are illustrated in Table 5. These statements are identical save for dimensions of present goals and future goals. The entire instrument is located in Appendix E.

Table 5.

*Sample Goal Statement, 2008 Goal Study.*

A. Present management Goals	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Favorable appraisal by political bodies	1	2	3	4	5
A. Future Management/ Adaptation/Motivation Goals	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Favorable appraisal by political bodies	1	2	3	4	5

This type of scale has a long history of use. As early as 1967, Likert Scales became the "...most widely used method of scaling in the social sciences today. Perhaps this is because they are much easier to construct and because they tend to be more reliable than other scales with the same number of items" (Tittle & Hill, 1967). The advantages of Likert Scales in social science research lie in simplicity both of construction and administration, the likelihood of a highly reliable scale, and, since each item is equally weighted, and respondents are scored rather than the items. Likert scales are inherently at ordinal levels, since they indicate rankings only, and not an interval measurement. Data obtained from Likert scales has been analyzed as interval if the scale meets two key criteria, that of visual appearance of equal intervals and an equal number

of positive and negative descriptors (McNabb, 2004, p. 161). Similar to Thurstone scales, the apparent distance between anchors is not actual but psychological. In keeping with the purpose of the study to measure directors perceptions, Dyer (1995) states “...attitude scales do not need to be factually accurate - they simply need to reflect one possible perception of the truth. ...[respondents] will not be assessing the factual accuracy of each item, but will be responding to the feelings which the statement triggers in them”. There is some debate still occurring in the literature as to whether Likert Scales are appropriate for measuring attitudes or perceptions. It is suggested that they do not elicit causes for answers and therefore have little usefulness and that major reviews claim their two main problems lie in lack of conceptual clarity in defining perceptions and technical difficulties and limitations in the instrument used to assess perceptions (Gal & Ginsburg, 1994). In spite of these drawbacks, Neuman (2000) states the real strengths of the Likert Scale are ease of use and simplicity.

The relative robust nature of the instrument and successful use in previous studies argues for continued application in this circumstance. Each director was asked to respond to the specified goal statement on two levels: (1) the actual or current level of importance of the listed goal as perceived by the director, and (2) the director's perception of the future importance of the listed goal.

Reliability. Reliability of this instrument in the 1990 Oregon study was estimated using Cronbach's (1951) alpha and item-to-total correlations for each subscale. A large alpha coefficient for each subscale in the Oregon study indicated adequate representation of the construct that motivated the measure. Relatively large correlations of each item to



the total score of each subscale measure indicated that each item had an equal contribution to the common core of the construct, according to Edginton, Madrigal, Lankford, and Wheeler (1990). Confirmatory factor analysis of loadings of the respective goal statements on the appropriate subscales revealed that the four subscales determined to be relevant in the 1990 study continue to be relevant in 2008.

Validity. Validity of the original instrument was established by soliciting goal statements from practitioners as well as analyzing formal statements of goals from recreation literature. This procedure is supported by Yuchtman and Seashore(1967), Price (1972), and Zald and Denton (1963), all of whom focused on the primary decision makers, the executive core, and the perceptions held or voiced by these individuals as valid indicators of organizational goals. Additional statements necessary to fill gaps in the subscales chosen were written following the procedures established by Gross (1968).

#### Determining Goals

A number of approaches toward establishing a goal determination procedure have been postulated in the literature and outlined in chapter two. None have been advanced as universally acceptable. The procedure used in this study is similar to the procedure first used by Gross in his study of goals in a university setting. This methodology, operationalized by Gross in 1968, is consistent with goal determination recommendations advanced by management theorists (Etzioni, 1964; Perrow, 1961; Zald & Denton, 1963) and further supported by Burns (1978), Hitt (1988), and Quinn (1989). These authors posit organizational goals are most likely to be found in the leadership of the organization. Emphasis on top management and the shared perceptions of organizational

goals and performance criteria important to the management team is increasing (Lyles & Schwenk, 1992). This is consistent with recommendations proposed by Price (1972) whose four principles of goal determination Gross satisfied by: (1) targeting major decision makers; (2) rating of organizational goals rather than individual goals; (3) measuring effort expended on actual goals rather than official goals; and (4) evaluation of organizational intentions by measuring importance of goals at present and in the future.

Gross (1968) identifies some problems with goal determination and justifies the use of this particular methodology. Specific problems he identifies are those of the tendency of respondents to confuse ideological elements of the organization with actual goals, and the problem of defining a goals measure not dependent on specific measurable outputs, which are only available for some goals. His solution to these problems in his study and implemented in the present study are as follows:

1. The questionnaire does not ask for a volunteered goal statement, but provides a standardized response that eliminates “ideological confounding” on the particular goal.
2. The questionnaire keeps separate the perception of what is and the feelings about what should be.
3. The “score” of a given goal provides a measure of the emphasis it receives, whether the outputs are clearly visible or not.

Other researchers have used similar methods of developing instruments (Littel, 1967; Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991; Weir, 1986). Edginton (1978) adapted this method to municipal park and recreation departments in Canada, and

Goodale and Witt (1979), Edginton and Neal (1983c), Nogradi (1980), Hastings (1982), Howat and Edginton (1986), and Edginton et al. (1990) have all employed similar methodologies in municipal park and recreation departments. Borg and Gall (1989) define face validity as that state which exists when an instrument appears to cover relevant content. A review of the content of this questionnaire during pilot testing with practitioners, colleagues and users of the data revealed no major concern with validity. There has been no overt criticism of this methodology from individuals in the fields of education, organizational behavior or park and recreation. This tacit approval lends credence to the face validity of this instrument.

#### Data Analysis

Means and standard deviations were computed for each 2008 goal statement on two levels, those of current and future ratings. Independent t-tests permitted answers to the following questions about park and recreation directors in the United States.

1. What level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified present organizational goals?
  - 1a. Which present organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors?
  - 1b. Which present organizational goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors?
2. What level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified future organizational goals?

2a. Which future organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors?

2b. Which future goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors?

3. Are there differences in directors' perceptions of present levels of importance and future levels of importance of specified organizational goals?

Comparison of the 2008 present levels of goal importance with the 1983 future levels of goal importance provided answers to research question 4.

4. Are there differences in directors' perceptions of levels of importance of organizational goals from 1983 future reported levels and 2008 present reported levels?

Means and standard deviations were determined for each of the survey questions, and paired t tests between 2008 present and future goals determined significance of any change. Seven tables were created to analyze the 2008 data. Each of the four categories in the 2008 study was evaluated by creating a table which summarized the rankings within the respective category. The ratings of goal importance were ranked in each table on both present and future dimensions. A table (see Table 10) was created which ranked each individual goal statements' overall level of importance on present and future dimensions in relation to all other goals. A final table (see Table 11) without statistical information was created to directly compare goal importance rankings in a more readable fashion.

One table (see Table 12) was prepared to compare data from the 1983 National Study of Goals with the 2008 study. Means and standard deviations had been previously calculated for the 1983 goal statements and this data was matched with the 2008 goal statements. This table compared 1983 future goal rankings and 2008 present goal rankings. Again, a final table (see Table 13) was prepared without statistical information to present the data in a more readable fashion. Results were then tabulated and presented for discussion and recommendations. Demographic information was compiled and presented in Table 14.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This study compared the perceptions of municipal park and recreation directors in the United States on two levels and at two time periods. Those two levels are the present level of importance and the level of importance they should have in the future. Time periods involved a comparison of data collected in 1983 and in 2008. Data collected from the 2008 study is presented first through a series of five tables, one for each of the four goal categories, and a fifth for an overall ranking of all goals. Each goal category is presented with the present individual ranking of goal importance and the future individual ranking of goal importance, with each goal's respective mean, standard deviation, and a p score which compares any significant change in perceived importance from present levels to future levels. A mean difference score is also presented, derived by subtracting the present mean from the future mean. This mean difference score indicates importance of future change as perceived by park and recreation directors. The difference may indicate a desire for improvement or change only. It is possible an important goal in both the present and future would show little change. Comparison of 1983 data with 2008 data is then presented by matching the relevant question from each study.

Goal categories determined by previous studies of park and recreation directors' perceptions of importance as relevant to this study are:

1. Management/adaptation/motivation- the process of managing personnel, physical and financial assets to deliver services, adapting to environmental

change to insure organizational survival/success, building successful, effective, efficient employees.

2. Services provided-specific services designed to meet the needs of targeted populations.
3. Groups served- effectively providing services for specific targeted populations.
4. Outcomes- attaining targeted goals for both general and specific programs.

The first null hypothesis stated there would be no statistically significant difference between United States municipal park and recreation directors' 2008 perceptions of the importance of specified organizational goals at the present time and their perceptions of importance in the future. The data was separated into a table for the respective category, rank ordering the goals within the category, and discussing each category. The data was then presented in a table illustrating the overall rank order of all goals across all categories and discussing the overall findings.

#### Reporting of Results

Analysis of the data revealed that of the 26 comparisons conducted between present and future ratings in 2008, 23 were statistically significant at the .05 level. Null hypothesis one, that there would be no significant differences between perceptions of goal importance between present and future was rejected in 23 cases and retained in three. The only goals not showing a statistically significant change were those of providing programs for children, receiving positive appraisals from political bodies, and setting standards, evaluating, and controlling staff. All other means increased

significantly in all categories and over all goals from present levels to future levels.

Mean difference scores (calculated by subtracting present means from future means) ranged from a -.01 to .39.

#### Management/Adaptation/Position Goals

Table 6 illustrates park and recreation directors' rankings of present and future management/adaptation/position goal importance. Of the eight management goals presented in this table six were rated significantly more important in the future.

Table 6.

#### *2008 Management/Adaptation/Positional.*

Present			Goal	Future			p	MD
Rank	Mean	SD		Rank	Mean	SD		
1	4.53	0.63	Positive appraisal from political bodies	1	4.58	0.68	0.17	0.05
2	4.37	0.63	Set standards, evaluate and control staff	5	4.43	0.58	0.23	0.06
3	4.36	0.61	Be responsive to future leisure trends	2	4.51	0.61	***	0.15
4	4.23	0.78	Secure alternative and non-governmental funding	4	4.47	0.67	***	0.24
5	4.21	0.77	Secure fees and charges in support of programs	3	4.5	0.62	***	0.29
6	4.14	0.74	Communicate philosophy, goals, and objectives	7	4.29	0.65	***	0.15
7	4.03	0.78	Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals	8	4.2	0.62	***	0.17
8	4	0.84	Recruit and train volunteers	6	4.35	0.67	***	0.35

Note:, MD is Mean Difference, SD is standard deviation.

\*\*\* indicates p score less than .001 from two tailed t test.



Two of those goals, positive appraisal from political bodies and setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff, were not statistically significant, but remain ranked as important goals in this category.

The management goal rated as most important by the directors was that of maintaining positive appraisal by political bodies. This specific goal ranked as number one in both present and future management importance. The change between 2008 present and 2008 future was not statistically significant. Second in ranking in the present was setting standards and controlling staff, while that goal ranked fifth in the future and did not change in a statistically significant way. The third ranked goal in the present was to be responsive to future leisure trends. That goal increased in rank importance from third to second, and had statistical significance. To secure alternate and non governmental funding remained in fourth place, but the mean score increased positively and significantly. Financial concerns in the present as defined by securing fees and charges for support of program was the fifth ranked goal in the management category. That goal increased in importance significantly and gained third place in the future rankings. Communicating organizational philosophy and goals increased in significance from the present to the future, but the ranking dropped from sixth to seventh. The same situation applied with the seventh ranked present goal of maximizing staff professional opportunities. That goal increased significantly but became the lowest ranked future goal in the management category at number eight. The eighth ranked present goal of recruiting and training volunteers also increased significantly, and gained sixth place in the future rankings.

The general management/adaptation/position goals became more important from the present to the future, with the general emphasis of increasing resources both financial and human. The goals which increased in ranked importance most according to directors were increasing fees and charges and recruiting volunteers. The goal which fell the most from present to future rankings in 2007, from second to fifth, was setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff.

Mean difference scores reveal some trends. The largest mean difference between present and future in this category was in recruiting volunteers (0.35), with securing fees and charges next (0.29) and obtaining non-governmental and alternate funding (0.25) the third. Grouped similarly were the goals of maximizing staff opportunities for professional development (0.17), communicating organizational goals, philosophy and objectives (0.15), and being responsive to future leisure trends (0.15). The mean difference scores which changed the least were those of gaining positive appraisals from political bodies (0.05) and setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff (0.06). Positive appraisals ranked first in this category, both in the present and the future.

#### Services Provided Goals

Table 7 illustrates services provided goals and their rank order in both present and future dimensions as determined by park and recreation directors in 2008. All goals in this category increased in importance significantly but did not change between present and future rankings save for two goals which exchanged their positions. Those two goals, in the present ranked by park and recreation directors as fifth (providing in kind

assistance to other groups) and sixth (making staff available for consultation to other groups) reversed position in the future.

Table 7.

*2008 Services Provided.*

Present			Goal	Future			p	MD
Rank	Mean	SD		Rank	Mean	SD		
1	4.33	0.69	Supply a balanced level of programs	1	4.52	0.58	***	0.19
2	4.01	0.74	Co-sponsor activities with other groups	2	4.33	0.66	***	0.32
3	3.97	0.76	Make resource information available to groups	3	4.08	0.68	***	0.1
4	3.89	0.73	Equip people with leisure skills	4	4.01	0.74	***	0.12
5	3.7	0.82	Provide in kind assistance to other groups	6	3.86	0.72	***	0.16
6	3.68	0.82	Make staff available for consultation services to groups	5	3.9	0.74	***	0.22
7	3.62	0.78	Co-ordinate community human resources	7	3.82	0.76	***	0.2
8	2.98	0.75	Provide leisure counseling	8	3.3	0.8	***	0.32

Note: SD= standard deviation, MD= mean difference.

\*\*\* indicates p score less than .001 from two tailed t test.

The first ranked goal of supplying a balanced level of programs in present services provided maintained the top rank in the future. Second was co-sponsoring activities with other groups, third was to make resource information available to groups. Equipping people with leisure skills ranked fourth in order both in the present and in the future. As stated previously fifth and sixth exchanged position in future importance. The last two goals of coordinating community human resources (seventh) and providing

leisure counseling (eighth and last) remained in their respective positions in perceived importance from present to future.

Again, mean difference scores indicated some trends. Co-sponsoring activities with other groups (MD .32) and providing leisure counseling (MD .32) were perceived by directors as increasing the most from present to future levels. The first ranked goal of supplying a balanced level of programs (MD .19) indicated the traditional role of providing program to still be the top priority of directors in this category. Providing in kind assistance to other groups (MD.16), equipping people with leisure skills (MD .12) and making resource information available to groups (MD .10) complete the category.

#### Groups Served Goals

Table 8 illustrates the perceived importance of 2008 groups served goals.

Table 8.

#### *2008 Groups Served.*

Present				Future				
Rank	Mean	SD	Goals	Rank	Mean	SD	p	MD
1	4.81	0.49	Providing programs for children	1	4.8	0.45	0.59	-0.01
2	4.55	0.73	Providing programs for teens	2	4.72	0.5	***	0.17
3	4.48	0.74	Providing programs for seniors	3	4.66	0.58	***	0.1
4	4.34	0.7	Providing programs for adults	4	4.48	0.68	***	0.14
5	4.18	0.92	Providing programs for people with special needs	5	4.43	0.71	***	0.25
6	3.94	0.95	Providing programs for ethnic minorities	6	4.07	0.9	***	0.13

Note: SD= standard deviation, MD= mean difference.

\*\*\* indicates p score less than .001 from two tailed t test.

Groups served goals include those goals ranked most important overall in both the present and the future. The rank order of goals served did not change from present to future in the 2008 study, but every goal with the exception of providing service for children increased significantly in importance present to future. The most important group served as perceived by park and recreation directors in 2008 were children. This ranking held true in both the present and future. Teens were next in rank order, then seniors, then adults. People with special needs ranked fifth, with ethnic minorities the lowest rank of groups served.

The mean difference score which increased the most was for people with special needs (MD .25). The mean difference score changing the least was programs for children (MD -.01). This goal ranked first in 2008 in this category both in present and in future importance, and was the goal ranked first overall in the 2008 study. The rankings may indicate park and recreation directors are concerned with groups which may be perceived as needing recreation services, children, teens (MD .17), seniors (MD .10), and then adults (MD .14). The somewhat incongruous nature of people with special needs (MD .25) and racial and ethnic minorities (MD .13) ranking fifth and sixth in this category was commented on by several directors in open ended questions. They implied the first four ranked groups included people with special needs and minorities.

#### Desired Outcome Goals

Table 9 illustrates the rank order park and recreation directors assigned to the category of desired outcomes as a result of participation in recreation programs.

Table 9.

*2008 Desired Outcomes.*

Present			Goals	Future			p	MD
Rank	Mean	SD		Rank	Mean	SD		
1	3.94	0.84	To educate the public about environmental concerns	1	4.33	0.79	***	0.39
2	3.81	0.73	To provide opportunities for self expression	2	3.98	0.72	***	0.17
3	3.65	0.87	To enhance citizenship	3	3.87	0.85	***	0.22
4	3.58	0.81	To enhance cultural heritage	4	3.77	0.83	***	0.19

Note: SD= standard deviation, MD= mean difference.

\*\*\* indicates p score less than .001 from two tailed t test.

Desired outcomes in 2008 followed the trend of not changing the rank order of the goals from present to future and also of each goal increasing significantly in importance. The first ranked goal reported by directors in desired outcomes was that of educating the public about environmental concerns (MD .39), the second to provide opportunities for self expression (MD .17), the third to enhance citizenship (MD .22), and the fourth to enhance cultural heritage (MD .19). While the overall rankings did not change, each goal increased statistically significantly in this category.

Overall Goal Rankings, 2008 Present and Future

The overall ranking of individual goals illustrated in Table 10 permits an understanding of the rank order park and recreation directors assigned to 2008 present and future goals across all categories. The top two goals in 2008 present rankings were programs for children and teens, with the top three goals in the future programs for children, teens and seniors. Favorable appraisal by political bodies fell one rank from third to fourth from the 2008 present to the future. Setting standards, evaluating and

controlling staff was ranked fifth in the present, but eleventh in future importance.

Responsiveness to future trends in leisure was sixth in both present and future rankings.

Directors decided that supplying a balanced level of programs should rise from eighth in the present to fifth in the future rankings, while grants and non-governmental funding remained at ninth in importance.

Table 10.

*2008 Overall Ranking of Goals.*

Type	Present				Goal	Future				p
	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank		Mean	SD	MD	CI	
GS	1	4.81	0.49	1	Programs for children	4.8	0.45	-0.01	±.075	0.59
GS	2	4.55	0.73	2	Programs for teens	4.72	0.52	0.17	±.11	***
MM	3	4.53	0.63	4	Favorable appraisal by political bodies	4.58	0.68	0.05	±.12	0.17
GS	4	4.53	0.63	3	Programs for seniors	4.66	0.58	0.13	±.11	***
MM	5	4.37	0.63	11	Set standards, evaluate, control staff	4.42	0.58	0.05	±.11	0.23
MM	6	4.36	0.6	6	Be responsive to leisure trends	4.51	0.61	0.15	±.11	***
GS	7	4.34	0.7	8	Programs for adults	4.48	0.69	0.14	±.13	***
SP	8	4.33	0.69	5	Supply a balanced level of programs	4.53	0.58	0.2	±.11	***
MM	9	4.22	0.79	9	Secure grants and non-governmental funding	4.47	0.67	0.25	±.13	***
MM	10	4.21	0.77	7	Secure fees and charges in support of program	4.5	0.62	0.29	±.13	***
GS	11	4.18	0.92	10	Programs for people with special needs	4.43	0.71	0.25	±.15	***
MM	12	4.14	0.74	15	Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives	4.29	0.65	0.15	±.13	***

(table continues)

Type	Rank	Mean	SD	Goal	Rank	Mean	SD	MD	CI	p
MM	13	4.04	0.78	Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals	16	4.2	0.62	0.16	± .13	***
SP	14	4.01	0.74	Co-sponsor activities with other groups	13	4.33	0.66	0.32	±.13	***
MM	15	4	0.84	Recruit and train volunteers	12	4.35	0.67	0.35	± .14	***
SP	16	3.97	0.76	Make resource information available to groups	17	4.08	0.68	0.11	± .13	***
O	17	3.94	0.84	To educate the public about environmental concerns	14	4.33	0.79	0.39	± .15	***
SP	18	3.94	0.95	Programs for ethnic minorities	18	4.07	0.9	0.13	± .17	***
SP	19	3.89	0.73	Equip people with leisure skills	19	4.02	0.74	0.13	± .13	***
O	20	3.81	0.73	To provide opportunities for self expression	20	3.98	0.72	0.17	± .13	***
SP	21	3.7	0.82	Provide in kind assistance to other groups	23	3.86	0.72	0.16	± .14	***
SP	22	3.68	0.83	Make staff available for consultation	21	3.9	0.74	0.22	± .14	***
O	23	3.65	0.87	To enhance citizenship	22	3.86	0.85	0.21	± .15	***
SP	24	3.62	0.78	Co-ordinate community human resources	24	3.82	0.76	0.2	± .14	***
O	25	3.59	0.82	To preserve cultural heritage	25	3.77	0.83	0.18	± .15	***
SP	26	2.98	0.75	To provide leisure counseling	26	3.3	0.81	0.32	± .14	***

Note: MM= management/motivation/adaptation, GS= groups served, SP= services provided, O= desired outcomes, CI= confidence interval, SD= standard deviation.

\*\*\* indicates p score less than .001 from two tailed t test.

Programs for adults declined one rank from seventh to eighth from present to future. Financing of programs through fees and charges increased from the number 10



ranked goal to number seven, while providing for people with special needs rose one rank from 11 to 10. The management goals of communicating philosophy, goals and objectives, and of maximizing staff development opportunities fell from 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> present levels respectively to future levels of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The management goal of recruiting and training volunteers rose from 15<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> in importance from present to future. This goal has the highest mean difference score of all such scores in this study. The outcome goal of informing people of environmental concerns rose from 17<sup>th</sup> place to 14<sup>th</sup> from the present to the future.

Present and future rankings in 2008 are presented in Table 11 without statistical information for rankings clarity. The top 50% of goals ranked by directors in 2008 present levels were management, adaptation, and positioning goals or goals targeted to specific groups with only one service provided goal, that of providing a balanced level of programs. The present level goals ranked in the bottom 50% of 2008 rankings were services provided and outcome goals with only one management goal, recruiting and training volunteers, in the lower half.

Research question 2, what level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified future organizational goals, along with sub-questions 2a., which future organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors and 2b., which future goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors are answered in Table 11.

Table 11.

*2008 Rankings Comparison Present and Future.*

2008 Present Rankings	2008 future rankings
1. Programs for children GS	1. Programs for children GS
2. Programs for teens GS	2. Programs for teens GS
3. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM	3. Programs for seniors GS
4. Programs for seniors GS	4. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM
5. Set standards, evaluate, control staff MM	5. Supply a balanced level of programs SP
6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM	6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM
7. Programs for adults GS	7. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM
8. Supply a balanced level of programs SP	8. Programs for adults GS
9. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM	9. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM
10. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM	10. Programs for people with special needs GS
11. Programs for people with special needs GS	11. Set standards, evaluate, control staff MM
12. Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives MM	12. Recruit and train volunteers MM
13. Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals MM	13. Co-sponsor activities with other groups SP
14. Co-sponsor activities with other groups SP	14. To educate the public about environmental concerns O
15. Recruit and train volunteers MM	15. Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives MM
16. Make resource information available to groups SP	16. Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals MM
17. To educate the public about environmental concerns O	17. Make resource information available to groups SP
18. Programs for ethnic minorities GS	18. Programs for ethnic minorities GS
19. Equip people with leisure skills SP	19. Equip people with leisure skills SP
20. To provide opportunities for self expression O	20. To provide opportunities for self expression O
21. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP	21. Make staff available for consultation SP
22. Make staff available for consultation SP	22. To enhance citizenship O
23. To enhance citizenship O	23. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP
24. Co-ordinate community human resources SP	24. Co-ordinate community human resources SP
25. To preserve cultural heritage O	25. To preserve cultural heritage O
26. To provide leisure counseling SP	26. To provide leisure counseling SP

Note: MM= management/positioning/adaptation, GS= groups served, SP= services provided, O= desired

outcomes.

All groups served goals are included in the top 50% of ranked goals with the exception of racial and ethnic minorities, ranked 18<sup>th</sup>. Directors who commented on this

issue in the open ended questions stated they were serving all groups by serving children, teens, seniors and adults. The only services provided goals included in the top 50% were those of supplying a balanced level of programs, ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, and co-sponsoring activities with other groups at 13<sup>th</sup>. Management goals continue to be in the top 50% of future goals judged to be important, although maximizing staff chances to pursue professional goals and communicating philosophy, goals and objectives slipped into the lower 50%. Outcome and service provided goals comprise the majority of goals in the lower 50% of importance, although directors indicated the need or desire for increase in level of importance of those goals. The five greatest mean differences between present and future overall were in (a) educating the public about environmental concerns (outcome goal ranked 14<sup>th</sup>, MD .39), (b) recruiting and training volunteers (management goal ranked 12<sup>th</sup>, MD .35), (c) co-sponsoring activities with other groups (services provided goal ranked 13<sup>th</sup>, MD .32), (d) providing leisure counseling (services provided goal ranked 26<sup>th</sup>, MD .32) and (e) securing fees and charges in support of program (management goal ranked 7<sup>th</sup>, MD .29).

The five goals with the least mean differences from 2008 present to future are (a) providing programs for children (groups served goal ranked 1, MD -.01), (b) favorable appraisal by political bodies (management goal ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, MD .05), (c) setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff (management goal ranked 11<sup>th</sup>, MD .05), (d) making resource information available to groups (services provided goal ranked 17<sup>th</sup>, MD .11) and (e) three goals all with mean differences of .13, programs for seniors (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>)

programs for ethnic minorities (ranked 18<sup>th</sup>), and equipping people with leisure skills (ranked 19<sup>th</sup>).

Research question three is therefore answered. There are significant differences in the perceptions of importance of 23 of the 26 specified organizational goals between present and future as defined by municipal park and recreation directors in 2008.

#### Comparison of 2008 Present Data with 1983 Future Data

The second null hypothesis states that there would be no significant difference between 1983 park and recreation directors' future perceptions of goal importance and 2008 directors' present perceptions of goal importance. Sixteen of the 26 individual goal comparisons showed statistically significant differences from 1983 to 2008 in Table 12. Management/adaptation/position and outcome goal categories each had 75% of their respective goals significantly different between 1983 and 2008 at the .05 level. Only two of the eight (25%) services provided goals changed significantly, decreasing in importance. Eighty three percent of groups served goals showed significant differences.

Groups served goals. A greater emphasis is placed by directors on those groups served in the 2008 rankings as compared with the perceptions of directors polled in 1983. Five out of the six groups served mean scores were significantly different at the .05 level from 1983 to 2008. Programs for children had the greatest mean difference score (.56) and was ranked #1 in 2008, but #4 in 1983. Programs for racial and ethnic minorities was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in 1983 (MD .55) and 18<sup>th</sup> in 2008. Programs for teens (MD .51) ranked second in 2008 and ninth in 1983. Programs for seniors (MD .39) ranked fourth in 2008 and seventh in 1983. Adult programs, ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in 1983, rose to seventh in 2008, with

a mean difference of .31. Programs for people with special needs fell in the rankings, eighth in 1983 to 11<sup>th</sup> in 2008 (MD .09) and was not statistically significant.

Table 12.

*Rankings Comparison 2008 Present with 1983 Future.*

Type	2008 Present				1983 Future				t score	MD
	Rank	Mean	SD	Goal	Rank	Mean	SD			
GS	1	4.81	0.49	Programs for children	4	4.25	0.84	*	0.56	
GS	2	4.55	0.73	Programs for teens	9	4.039	0.85	*	0.51	
MM	3	4.53	0.63	Favorable appraisal by political bodies	12	4	1.12	*	0.53	
GS	4	4.53	0.63	Programs for seniors	7	4.139	0.83	*	0.39	
MM	5	4.37	0.63	Set standards, evaluate, control staff	1	4.39	0.81	0.32	-0.02	
MM	6	4.36	0.6	Be responsive to leisure trends	6	4.146	0.87	*	0.21	
GS	7	4.34	0.7	Programs for adults	10	4.034	0.86	*	0.31	
SP	8	4.33	0.69	Supply a balanced level of programs	2	4.37	0.80	0.63	-0.04	
MM	9	4.22	0.79	Secure grants and non-governmental funding	5	4.149	0.98	0.94	0.07	
MM	10	4.21	0.77	Secure fees and charges in support of program	13	3.997	0.99	*	0.21	
GS	11	4.18	0.92	Programs for people with special needs	8	4.09	0.84	1.24	0.09	
MM	12	4.14	0.74	Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives	3	4.3	0.80	*	-0.16	
MM	13	4.04	0.78	Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals	17	3.85	0.90	*	0.19	

(table continues)

Type	Rank	Mean	SD	Goal	Rank	Mean	SD	t score	MD
SP	14	4.01	0.74	Co-sponsor activities with other groups	14	3.98	0.92	0.44	0.03
MM	15	4	0.84	Recruit and train volunteers	26	3.08	1.05	*	0.92
SP	16	3.97	0.76	Make resource information available to groups	16	3.94	0.86	0.59	0.03
O	17	3.94	0.84	To educate the public about environmental concerns	20	3.69	0.99	*	0.25
GS	18	3.94	0.95	Programs for ethnic minorities	25	3.39	1.06	*	0.55
SP	19	3.89	0.73	Equip people with leisure skills	15	3.98	0.94	1.24	-0.09
O	20	3.81	0.73	To provide opportunities for self expression	18	3.74	0.94	1.02	0.07
SP	21	3.7	0.82	Provide in kind assistance to other groups	21	3.56	1.03	1.77	0.14
SP	22	3.68	0.83	Make staff available for consultation	19	3.7	0.95	0.27	-0.02
O	23	3.65	0.87	To enhance citizenship	23	3.4	1.10	*	0.25
SP	24	3.62	0.78	Co-ordinate community human resources	11	4.02	0.91	*	-0.4
O	25	3.59	0.82	To preserve cultural heritage	24	3.39	0.95	*	0.2
SP	26	2.98	0.75	To provide leisure counseling	22	3.48	1.06	*	-0.5

Note: MM= management/motivation/adaptation, GS= groups served, SP= services provided, O= desired outcomes, CI= confidence interval, SD= standard deviation, MD= mean difference.

\* indicates t score significant at the <.05 level from two tailed t test.

Management/adaptation/position goals. Six out of eight of the management category goals were significantly different from 1983 to 2008. The greatest mean difference (.92) was in recruiting and training volunteers. That goal, 26<sup>th</sup> in 1983, jumped eleven ranks to 15<sup>th</sup> in 2008. Favorable appraisal from political bodies (MD .53) was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in 1983 future importance scales. In 2008 that goal was ranked third in present importance. Finding financial support for park and recreation programs was a major topic of future goals in 1983, with obtaining grants and other non-governmental funding ranked fifth (MD .07), and obtaining fees and charges ranked 13<sup>th</sup> (MD .21). The directors felt the 2008 present importance was ninth and tenth respectively. Communicating philosophy, goals and objectives fell significantly in rank (MD -.16), ranking third in 1983, but was relegated to 12<sup>th</sup> in 2008 present scores. The only management related goal not in the top 50% of all ranked goals is that of recruiting and training volunteers. That goal was predicted to be the lowest in the future in 1983, but ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in 2008. The remaining management/motivation/adaptation goal, that of helping staff maximize opportunities for professional growth (MD .19), ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in future importance in 1983, was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in importance in 2008.

Outcome goals. Three of the four outcome goals increased their mean score in a statistically significant way from 1983 future importance to 2008 present importance. The outcome goal which was ranked the highest in this category between the 1983 predicted level (20<sup>th</sup>) and the 2008 present level (17<sup>th</sup>) is that of educating the public about environmental concerns (MD .25). The goal of providing opportunities for self expression (MD .07) did not change significantly from 1983 predicted levels (18<sup>th</sup>) to

2008 present levels (20<sup>th</sup>). Enhancing citizenship (23<sup>rd</sup> in 1983 future and in 2008 present scales) and preserving cultural heritage (24<sup>th</sup> in 1983 future and 25<sup>th</sup> in 2008 present scales) means increased in a statistically significant way, but maintained a similar ranking.

Outcome goals rank in the lower 35% of all goals in the opinion of directors in both 1983 and 2008. The prediction of directors in 1983 of the future importance of outcome goals seems to have held true in the 2008 evaluation by directors of their present importance as indicated by the rankings.

Services provided goals. Seventy five percent of services provided goals did not show a statistically significant change from 1983 predicted levels to 2008 present levels. The 1983 future prediction that providing a balanced level of programs (2<sup>nd</sup>) would be a top priority was not reflected in the 2008 ranking (8<sup>th</sup>). The goals of cosponsoring activities with other groups and making resource information available to groups maintained 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> rank respectively in both 1983 and 2008. Equipping people with leisure skills (teaching specific skills such as tennis or swimming), ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in 1983, fell to 19<sup>th</sup> in 2008. The only two service provided goals which changed in a statistically significant way fell in the rankings. These goals were to coordinate community human resources (ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in predicted importance in 1983, 22<sup>nd</sup> in 2008), and providing leisure counseling, (ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in predicted importance 1983 and 26<sup>th</sup> in 2008 present importance).

Table 13 presents rank order data for the 2008 present to 1983 future without statistical information for clarity.



Table 13.

*Comparisons of 2008 Present Rankings with 1983 Predictive Rankings.*

2008 Present	1983 Future
1. Programs for children GS	1. Set standards, evaluate, control staff MM
2. Programs for teens GS	2. Supply a balanced level of programs MM
3. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM	3. Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives MM
4. Programs for seniors GS	4. Programs for children GS
5. Set standards, evaluate, control staff MM	5. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM
6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM	6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM
7. Programs for adults GS	7. Programs for seniors GS
8. Supply a balanced level of programs SP	8. Programs for people with special needs GS
9. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM	9. Programs for teens GS
10. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM	10. Programs for adults GS
11. Programs for people with special needs GS	11. Co-ordinate community human resources SP
12. Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives MM	12. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM
13. Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals MM	13. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM
14. Co-sponsor activities with other groups SP	14. Co-sponsor activities with other groups SP
15. Recruit and train volunteers MM	15. Equip people with leisure skills SP
16. Make resource information available to groups SP	16. Make resource information available to groups SP
17. To educate the public about environmental concerns O	17. Maximize staff chances to pursue professional goals MM
18. Programs for ethnic minorities GS	18. To provide opportunities for self expression O
19. Equip people with leisure skills SP	19. Make staff available for consultation SP
20. To provide opportunities for self expression O	20. To educate the public about environmental concerns O
21. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP	21. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP
22. Make staff available for consultation SP	22. To provide leisure counseling SP
23. To enhance citizenship O	23. To enhance citizenship O
24. Co-ordinate community human resources SP	24. To preserve cultural heritage O
25. To preserve cultural heritage O	25. Programs for ethnic minorities GS
26. To provide leisure counseling SP	26. Recruit and train volunteers MM

Note: MM= management/positioning/adaptation, GS= groups served, SP= services provided, O= desired outcomes

Demographic information.

Park and recreation directors in the 2008 study completed a demographic survey in addition to the goals survey. Directors responded to twelve questions concerning governance, planning, longevity in the position and as a professional, education, age and gender (see Appendix E). Highlights of this information are presented in Table 10.

Table 14.

*Demographics of 2008 Survey Respondents.*

Population of municipality	Gender	Avg. age	Age range	Mean time as professional	Mean time with city	P&R degree	Master's degree or higher	City rec. plan
250,000 and up	m 6	53.4	35 to	22.7	15.75	2 yes	45%	10 yes
	f 4		58			8 no		1 no
100,000-249,999	m 10	50.4	28 to	27.2	16.7	10 yes	55%	12 yes
	f 8		59			8 no		5 no
50,000-99,999	m 30	50.2	33 to	25.3	16.7	31 yes	37%	35 yes
	f 16		64			15 no		10 no
25,000-49,999	m 43	49	27 to	25	13.5	35 yes	33%	39 yes
	f 14		63			22 no		18 no
under 25,000	m 83	48	26 to	19.8	13.2	58 yes	25%	61 yes
	f 19		77			44 no		40 no
Totals	m 172	50.2	26 to	24	15.17	135 yes	32%	157 yes
	f 61		77			97 no		74 no

Note: totals do not add up to 237 because of non-response to some demographic questions.

Stratification of the sample permits some observations. Of directors in cities with populations in excess of 100,000, some 42% were female. Thirty four percent of directors in cities of 50,000 to 99,999 were female, but only 20% of directors in cities

with populations under 49,999 were female. Of those directors who responded to questions about their education, approximately 42% stated they did not have any degree in parks and recreation, though a total of 32% had a master's degree or higher. Sixty eight percent of directors reported that their community had a recreation master plan. Larger communities were more likely to have a master plan. Communities under 25,000 had the lowest rate of master planning activities.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, GENERALIZATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The discussion that follows in this chapter includes (1) a summary of the problems and procedures addressed in this study; (2) findings of the study as a result of the research questions investigated; (3) some generalizations from the data obtained; (4) recommendations for further development and additional studies, and (5) a concluding statement.

#### Summary of Problems and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of United States municipal park and recreation directors in 2008 on the importance of specified organizational goals in terms of their present level of importance and the level of importance assigned to those goals in the future. This study also included comparisons with a previous study completed in 1983 (Edginton & Neal, 1983c).

The subjects in the 2008 study consisted of a stratified random sample of municipal park and recreation directors in incorporated communities of larger than 10,000 people, as obtained from United States City Census data. Names and addresses of directors and departments were obtained by internet search of city websites and by telephone contact. The questionnaires were delivered initially by mail with an option to complete the survey online and were similar in a five point Likert format and goal classification system between the 2008 and the 1983 studies. Content of the 26 goal statements evaluated in both studies was verbatim, although the format of the instrument was identical to the study performed in 1990 (Edginton et al.). Means and standard

deviations were computed. Independent t tests were calculated for the 2008 study to determine significance between present and future perceptions of importance by park and recreation directors. A confirmatory factor analysis of the four categories determined that goal loadings on the respective factors remains relevant. Comparisons made by conducting independent t tests between the 1983 future goal means and the 2008 present goal means provided a check on predictive efficacy of the 1983 study.

### Summary of the Findings

Significant differences were found in the comparisons. The 2008 data comparison between present levels of goals importance and future levels of goal importance indicated that 23 of the 26 studied goals were significantly different at the .05 level.

#### Research Question 1.

This question, what level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified present organizational goals, is answered overall in Tables 6 and 7 in Chapter 4. Programs for children is the first ranked goal, with teens, seniors and adults ranked two, four and seven. The rankings indicate park and recreation directors are concerned with groups which may be perceived as needing recreation services, children, teens (MD .17), seniors (MD .10), and then adults (MD .14). It may be speculated that each group is perceived as less at need than the previous one, since there are more options for adults than for seniors, for seniors than teens, and for teens than children. These groups are also easily identifiable, perhaps permitting other goals to be realized in the management category.

Management/adaptation/positional goals also rank highly, with securing favorable appraisal from political bodies ranked three, setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff, and being responsive to leisure trends fifth and sixth. This may indicate a realization of the reality of political life, since budget and support are linked to favorable appraisals. The 2008 present emphasis on setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff and being responsive to leisure trends could be considered to be synergistic with the populations specified in the groups served goals. Serving those groups to their satisfaction with current activities may create positive feedback for the organization, garnering positive appraisal by political bodies. Having staff performing well also meets the need to be positively viewed by constituents.

Research Question 1a. Which present organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors? The top ten ranked goals (Tables 6 and 7, Chapter 4) in the present in 2008 are:

1. Programs for children GS
2. Programs for teens GS
3. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM
4. Programs for seniors GS
5. Set standards, evaluate, control staff MM
6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM
7. Programs for adults GS
8. Supply a balanced level of programs SP
9. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM

10. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM

Goals ranked eight, nine, and ten may also be reflective of synergistic effects desired by park and recreation directors. To gain positive evaluations, there must be an identifiable group served, with the appropriate delivery system in place. A balanced level of popular programs served and administered by competent staff would also provide justification for financing of those programs through fees and charges and through other sources of funding. The ranking of programs for people with special needs at 11<sup>th</sup> may reflect the relatively small proportion of those individuals in the general population. It remains a significant goal.

Research Question 1b. Which present organizational goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors? The goals ranked as least important (Tables 6 and 7, Chapter 4) of the 26 goals in the present in 2008 are:

17. To educate the public about environmental concerns O
18. Programs for ethnic minorities GS
19. Equip people with leisure skills SP
20. To provide opportunities for self expression O
21. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP
22. Make staff available for consultation SP
23. To enhance citizenship O
24. Co-ordinate community human resources SP
25. To preserve cultural heritage O
26. To provide leisure counseling SP

It is important to remember that while these goals are rated of lesser importance on this instrument, it does not necessarily follow they are not important. It may be these goals could be considered of lesser priority than other goals, or that these goals are more difficult to evaluate or to accomplish, and perhaps do not lend themselves readily to the synergistic applications of the goals ranked in the top ten. It may also be there are other considerations outside of the purview of park and recreation directors which render the accomplishment of these goals more problematic. Coordinating community human resources in the provision of leisure services or for other purposes may be an example of such a situation.

Research Question 2.

What level of importance do municipal park and recreation directors attach to specified future organizational goals, is answered in Tables 6 and 7 in Chapter 4.

Research Question 2a. Which future organizational goals rate as most important among municipal park and recreation directors? The top ten rated goals for the future (Tables 6 and 7, Chapter 4) in 2008 are:

1. Programs for children GS
2. Programs for teens GS
3. Programs for seniors GS
4. Favorable appraisal by political bodies MM
5. Supply a balanced level of programs SP
6. Be responsive to leisure trends MM
7. Secure fees and charges in support of program MM



8. Programs for adults GS
9. Secure grants and non-governmental funding MM
10. Programs for people with special needs GS

Changes in rank ordering of the top ten goals from the present to the future include the dropping of setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff from the top ten, and the inclusion of programs for people with special needs. Finances remain a priority, but the groups served category now has five of the top ten rankings. It may be the dropping of setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff is wishful thinking on the part of directors, since the nature of their job requires that management activity. Interestingly, recruiting and training volunteers, a management goal, increased in importance from 15<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> overall. This may indicate an interest on the part of directors in the future to apply the synergistic effects of reduction of costs through volunteers, involvement of the public in the provision of leisure, and the attendant increase in positive feedback as those people become more involved in programs. This would have the effect of increasing supervisory requirements, rather than reducing them.

Research Question 2b. Which future goals rate as least important among municipal park and recreation directors? The bottom ten ranked goals for the future (Tables 6 and 7, Chapter 4) in 2008 are:

17. Make resource information available to groups SP
18. Programs for ethnic minorities GS
19. Equip people with leisure skills SP
20. To provide opportunities for self expression O

21. Make staff available for consultation SP
22. To enhance citizenship O
23. Provide in kind assistance to other groups SP
24. Co-ordinate community human resources SP
25. To preserve cultural heritage O
26. To provide leisure counseling SP

Educating the public about environmental concerns did rise in the standings, indicating that this goal is of concern to park and recreation directors, perhaps as a result of media amplification of global climate issues and perhaps as a result of interest in and pressure to reduce the negative impacts of caring for park areas and facilities. Again, though these goals are ranked of lesser importance, they are still important overall, and are of priority to park and recreation directors.

### Research Question 3.

Are there differences in directors' perceptions of 2008 present levels of importance and 2008 future levels of importance of specified organizational goals? Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the specific differences between each present and future goal. Independent t tests were conducted on the mean scores of each goal statement. Twenty three of the 26 goals compared between 2008 present and future had statistically significant differences. These differences were in a positive direction, implying directors felt the goals to be more important of accomplishment in the future than in the present. This may be an effect of the continual evaluation of "we could do better" rather than a real need to improve, although that may also be important. Although three of the goals

were not significantly different from present to future in 2008, (a) programs for children, (b) positive appraisal from political bodies, and (c) setting standards, evaluating and controlling staff, these goals still remain among the top ranked goals of directors.

#### Research Question 4.

Are there differences in directors' perceptions of levels of importance of organizational goals from 1983 future reported levels and 2008 present reported levels? Tables 8 and 9 answer the final research question. Sixteen of the 26 comparisons were found to have statistically significant differences. Thirteen of the significant differences were increases in the perception of goal importance from 1983 to 2008, with three of the comparisons decreasing in goal importance significantly at the .05 level, those of (a) communicating philosophy, goals and objectives, (b) coordinating community human resources, and (c) providing leisure counseling. The major difference between 1983 future goals and 2008 present goals is in the shift from management/adaptation/positional goals to groups served goals as top priorities. Management goals are still considered important, but do not have the rankings predicted in 1983.

Favorable appraisal from political bodies was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in 1983 future importance scales. In 2008 that goal was ranked third in present importance. This may be a result of the need to maintain a good reputation with and support from those same political bodies. Finding financial support for park and recreation programs was a major topic of future goals in 1983, with obtaining grants and other non-governmental funding ranked fifth (MD .07), and obtaining fees and charges ranked 13<sup>th</sup> (MD .21).

Communicating philosophy, goals and objectives fell from a ranking of third in 1983 to 12<sup>th</sup> in 2008. It may be that the increase in emphasis on vision, mission, and goals in the intervening years has removed the urgency felt in 1983. This difference between levels of importance predicted in 1983 and the levels of importance reported in 2008 may be a result of a need on the part of recreation departments for identifiable groups with identifiable benefits accruing to those groups.

The drop from 11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> for coordination of community human resources may reflect several things. It may be there has not been available staff, time, or funding for such activities. It may also be that other organizations and their staff are resistant to being coordinated. Cooperation among agencies may be the ideal, but few may be willing to give up perceived autonomy and reputation to another agency, no matter how well intentioned unless there is extensive groundwork beforehand.

Perhaps the most interesting of the goal changes is that of recruitment and training of volunteers, ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in 1983, and rising to 15<sup>th</sup> in 2008, with a further prediction of 12<sup>th</sup> in the future. This change in perceived importance may be reflective of budgetary considerations, an increase in desire to involve the community, a need to reduce liability through training, or a combination of all these factors.

The lapse of 25 years between the 1983 national study of goals and the 2008 study presents some problems in interpretation. Park and recreation directors may define the future in terms of five or ten years, rather than 25 or more. Most strategic plans are five to ten years in nature, thus providing a time limit and measuring points. The National Recreation and Parks Association through CAPRA, the Commission for

Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, has an accreditation cycle of five years, reevaluating agencies which provide park and recreation services, their goals, performance, and all other criteria judged to provide quality programs (National Recreation and Park Association, 2008b). Therefore conclusions arrived at as a result of this study are preliminary, and, while they may provide a baseline, are only a first step in establishing trends in goal importance. Reevaluation of directors' perceptions of importance of specified organizational goals should occur on a regular and timely basis in order to provide a valid and reliable guide.

#### Generalizations from the Data

Several generalizations may be made from the data, keeping in mind the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1. It appears there is a consistent effect between present and future rankings of goal importance in the 2008 study which tends to inflate or increase the future ranking of importance uncharacteristically. This inflation may be either conscious or unconscious perception on the part of directors that they are not doing enough or not doing things well enough, and should be better, rather than reflective of actual performance.
2. Groups' served goals are ranked as increasingly important both in the present and the future in 2008 and show a strikingly increased presence over 1983 rankings.
3. Management, adaptation, and positioning goals maintain a high level of importance to park and recreation directors, with favorable appraisals and

financing programs ranked highly, and reducing costs through recruiting and training volunteers increasing in importance.

4. Park and recreation directors rank managing staff as important in the present, but rank it quite a bit lower in the future. Other staff development goals are ranked higher in the present than in the future. The 1983 future rankings of these management goals are lower than the 2008 present rankings as well, indicating a trend toward emphasizing goals other than staff development. This trend may be actual, or may be reflective of a desire of directors to do other than human resource tasks.
5. Outcome goals and services provided goals rank the lowest overall with few exceptions. While each of these goals increase significantly in importance from 2008 present to future rankings and indicate a trend towards improving outcomes, other goals (which may be evaluated as goals which insure the survival of the organization) are ranked higher in importance overall.
6. Management, adaptation and positional goals were predicted as becoming top priorities by the 1983 park and recreation directors. Directors in 2008 perceived their most important goals as providing programs for specific groups, while the 1983 groups served goals were lower in rank.

#### Implications for Professional Practice

Directors nationwide determined that groups served goals would increase in priority. This would indicate a potential need to justify the expenditure of resources on this goal category. Benefits to these groups should be documented and published to meet

the needs of not only the groups served, but the management goal of obtaining favorable appraisal from political bodies. The management goals of obtaining financial support would indicate the necessity of gaining more acumen in these areas. Development of pricing strategies to justify fees and charges to groups served would also provide a synergistic response in other management goals. Transparency in the budgeting of services if handled well could increase accountability and favorable appraisal as well. Grant writing is perceived to be a needed skill in order to obtain alternative funding. Park and recreation departments could obtain training through college and university partnerships to more effectively present the case for additional and alternative sources of income. Directors perceived two more areas of concern and potential growth. The first area is that of environmental education for participants. This emphasis would require a conscious effort on the part of recreation departments to gather appropriate information to communicate to the public. The second area involves recruiting and training volunteers. This requires management skills not only for administrative staff, but for those involved in front line services. Training of front line personnel to interact appropriately and to assist volunteers be successful would seem to be a critical task. These are both challenging and rewarding opportunities, and will be important in responding to the changes in provision of recreation.

#### Recommendations

Regular research should be conducted in determining rankings and therefore priorities of park and recreation directors. While priorities and therefore rankings change within each department based on the individual situation and political realities, tracking

these changes would seem to be important if there is an interest in changing the environment in which parks and recreation programs operate. Rather than responses designed to insure mere survival of the organization through providing the program of the day, park and recreation directors need to plan for deliberate change of the recreation experience based upon input from constituents and from political bodies. This would ensure growth and development of the organization and the accomplishment of outcomes.

This evaluation of organizational goals could be applied to other organizations tasked with similar responsibilities. Some of those organizations might be youth serving, such as the Boy and Girl Scout programs, Campfire, and the Young Men and Young Women Christian Associations. This could reveal goals and management strategies which might be applicable across all such organizations and define what "best practices" might be. It is further recommended that the instrument used in this study be used in additional studies to develop a baseline of responses from which to measure change.

#### Selection of Subjects

A stratified random sample of subjects should be consistently studied at regular intervals of approximately five years. This is consistent with planning, certification and accreditation cycles adopted by the N.R.P.A. and would be reflective of initiatives endorsed by that organization. Support for this research should be solicited from the organizations most benefited by such information. Stratifications should be consistent and proportionate within the award categories administered by the N.R.P.A., namely from communities under 25,000, 25 to 50,000, 50 to 100,000, 100 to 250,000, and 250,000 and above. A data base of all communities with recreation departments should



be compiled to eliminate omissions experienced by Edginton and Neal in the United States and to provide equal opportunities for statistical sampling of all communities. Directors of these recreations departments should be identified as the recipients of the survey.

### Instrumentation

The review of related literature in this study indicates that there are two distinct approaches to goal determination, that of the prescribed approach and the derived approach. The present study uses the prescribed approach through goal interpretation by park and recreation directors as the articulators of actual organizational goals. This approach was selected because of the relative ease and rapidity of responses. Some weaknesses of the prescribed approach were addressed in previous chapters. While these weaknesses were addressed, there is a need to use the derived approach to correlate results accurately. A pilot study for the derived approach would be best accomplished by selecting a stratified random sample of park and recreation departments. Directors of the departments should then be administered the prescribed approach instrument used in this study. Researchers trained in implying organizational goals (the derived approach) should then examine the goals of those departments after going through the processes described by Gans (1957) on page 140 when he explained this approach:

In order to determine the practiced (operative, derived) goals of agency, it is necessary to analyze the programs which the agency seeks to implement, and to isolate the goals which are manifest or latent with it. By programmed are meant here statement of intended agency actions, including policy statements, budgets, standards, and outlines of activity schedules.... The practiced goals of an agency can only be determined properly through intensive fieldwork. Methods should involve observation of agency behavior, analysis of the programs, interviewing the

actors who developed these programs, determining user and community goals, and then by a process of elimination inferring the practiced goals.

After this admittedly exhaustive process correlations of the results of the two approaches should be made. If the combined correlations are consistently  $+0.7$  or better (Weber & Lamb, 1970) the prescribed approach should be used exclusively. If they are not then both approaches should be used, with the means of the two independent responses as the closest approximation of goal importance. Since specific goal determination would be problematic, the use of Prices' (1972) four guides to goal identification would help clarify the process. The present and future ratings of goal importance should be retained, but be more narrowly defined for the future to avoid multiple interpretations. Rather than an idealized state, the future rating should be a prediction by each director of future goal importance for practical application of resources.

#### Data Collection and Recording

Methods used would be determined to a great extent by the correlation outcomes of the pilot study. If correlations are high between the prescribed and derived approaches, a mailed survey should be sent with accompanying cover letter and stamped self addressed envelopes. Access should be provided to an online survey with the same format as the printed survey in the cover letter, and an email with a link to the survey should be sent to the selected directors. If correlations are not sufficiently high, the two stage process of directors filling out the survey and the derived evaluation by a trained researcher should be used. Tables similar to the tables presented in this study should be

created for the data. Goals should be listed individually as well as the category, means, and standard deviations on both present and future levels as well as for the stratification levels addressed in the study.

### Data Analysis

Using city size and level of perception (present/future) as independent variables and directors perceptions of goal importance as the dependent variable, an analysis of variance would be performed to determine statistical significance. This analysis could answer the following questions, among others:

1. Is city size a significant factor in influencing perceptions of goal importance?
2. Is level of perception (present/future) a significant factor in influencing perceptions of goal importance?

Demographic data including age, education, gender, geographical region, experience level and other pertinent variables would permit additional treatment of data, answering such questions as:

1. Is level of experience or longevity in the profession a factor in influencing perceptions of goal importance?
2. Does educational level or emphasis influence perception of importance of specific goals?
3. Do perceptions of goal importance differ among geographical regions?
4. Are there cultural considerations in perceptions of goal importance which cause that perception to differ according to population size, ethnic mix, or dominant group?

This proposed study would be a major undertaking for a researcher in both time and finances. It would provide a model which would overcome many of the weaknesses inherent in the prescribed and derived approaches and which would present a more accurate view of organizational goals in park and recreation departments across the United States. In addition, it would provide a model of goal determination for application to other organizations, and development of an analysis tool which could be more convenient and accurate than any presently available.

### Conclusion

Park and recreation departments can be described as goal attainment organizations (Etzioni, 1964; Thompson, 1967). The directors of such organizations have as part of their role the opportunity and responsibility to articulate the goals of the organization to both external and internal publics. The articulated goals are those the director decides are important and worthwhile in meeting the needs of the each of the constituent publics if success is to be attained in fulfilling those needs. Every director of any organization is required to address the following categories of goals.

1. Output goals. These are the general aims of an organization which produce the tangible goods or services used or purchased by the public, and by which the organization may justify its existence and continued support.
2. Adaptation goals. These address environmental issues that impact the organization.
3. Motivation goals. These apply to the way the organization attracts, inspires, and retains employees and participants.

4. Management goals. These are administrative tasks and activities relating to allocation of resources that include personnel, equipment, facilities, and money. These aims also include strategic planning not only to survive but to insure the continued health and potential growth of the organization.

Finally, observations during the research process show there are many questions left unanswered, and are therefore recommended for some study. Some of these questions could be:

1. What are the differences between park and recreation departments which are thriving and those which are struggling?
2. Which goals are survival goals and which are growth goals?
3. Should human resource skills be emphasized in education or in-service programs for park and recreation agencies?
4. Are there differences in perceptions of goal importance between directors with a degree in parks and recreation and those with other training and degrees?
5. What role does electronic media and access to the internet have in the provision of recreation programs in park and recreation departments?

These and other questions provide a fertile field of inquiry now and in the future in the discipline of parks, recreation and leisure studies.

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APPENDIX A  
SAMPLE COVER LETTER.

Dear Director :

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. You have been randomly selected through your state recreation and parks association or through census data to participate in this national study of park and recreation goals. The last such study was completed in 1983, and both society and circumstances have changed in the intervening 25 years. This survey has been endorsed by Mike Clark of Batavia, IL, current president of the American Park and Recreation Society as a potentially valuable addition to the knowledge base. Your participation will be invaluable in providing a baseline of both present and future goals, and in creating a direction for the future. The results of this survey will be made available on the internet for broadest dissemination, and for a reference and check not only for you but for all park and recreation programs on the community level. The University of Northern Iowa School of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Studies is supervising this research as part of a doctoral dissertation projected to be completed by August of 2008.

This study is designed to discover and rate the goals that you and your peers across the United States feel are important to provide services and outcomes to your communities. It will take approximately 20 minutes, depending on your individual goal observations and comments. All responses will be recorded and statistical operations will be performed to determine how each of the goals rate in comparison to others within this survey. Individual comments and responses on goals you may feel are important will also be recorded and reported. No personal identifying information will be associated with any individual comment. No personal identifying information will be attached to any report produced as a result of your participation. There are a few foreseeable risks to your participation. Some of those risks include the time and effort spent

in answering these questions, and the political risk which may be associated with your criticism of your organization or community. Responses to surveys will be tracked for follow up purposes. After data collection, any personal identifiers of responses will be destroyed. Data obtained will be retained for further analysis and reporting.

You have the opportunity of participating in this research by completing the enclosed survey and returning it in the prepaid envelope, or by logging on to the Survey Monkey Website at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv\\_2fRecgA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv_2fRecgA_3d_3d)

Participation is purely voluntary. There are no penalties or consequences if you decide not to participate or to cease participating at any time. If you do participate in the survey through filling out and returning this paper copy or logging on to Survey Monkey and completing the survey, it means you have read and understood the information in this letter and have volunteered to be a participant in this research study.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact me or the UNI Human Participants Coordinator at the University of Northern Iowa, at (319)273-6148.

Sincerely,

Dan Wheeler

Doctoral Candidate

School of HPELS, 203 WRC

University of Northern Iowa

Cedar Falls, IA 50613

[dwheeler@uni.edu](mailto:dwheeler@uni.edu)

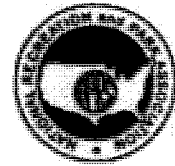
## APPENDIX B

## ENDORSEMENT LETTER

This endorsement letter is addressed to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Northern Iowa. Permission to state the study was endorsed by Mike Clark, just installed as president of the American Park and Recreation Society, was secured through personal communication during the National Recreation and Parks Congress held in Indianapolis Indiana in 2007.



## American Park & Recreation Society



November 26, 2007

IRB committee  
 Attn. Anita Kleppe, MSW  
 Re. 07-0113  
 Office of Sponsored Programs  
 University of Northern Iowa  
 213 East Bartlett Hall  
 Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0394

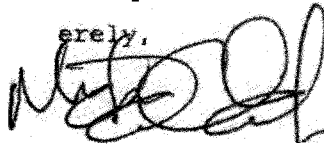
Dear Anita:

On behalf of the American Park and Recreation Society (APRS) it is my pleasure to inform you that we are working cooperatively with Mr. Dan Wheeler for a study with park and recreation agency directors and the future of our industry.

The APRS supports such research and feel it is important to gain insight into the various research topics that are being conducted throughout the nation. Please accept this letter as our intention and support of this worthwhile survey and project.

If you require any further information or have any questions please feel free to contact my office at the Batavia Park District, IL. I can be reached at 630-879-5235 x2008 or [mikec@bataviaparks.org](mailto:mikec@bataviaparks.org).

Sincerely,

erely,  


Michael Clark, CPRP, MBA Executive Director Batavia Park District

APRS President

APPENDIX C  
EMAIL CONTACT

Dear Director ,

Recently you should have received a survey on organizational goals endorsed by Mike Clark, current president of the American Park and Recreation Society. If you have already responded and the survey is in the mail, please accept my apologies for this contact.

Your time is valuable. You may not have had the time to fill out the survey and mail it in. It is available for your perusal and participation at the following Survey Monkey website:  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv\\_2fRecgA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv_2fRecgA_3d_3d)

Clicking on this link will take you to the survey. Other directors who have used the online survey have completed it in less than 10 minutes. Your participation would be extremely helpful to other directors to determine the status of goals in park and recreation organizations in the United States. The last such survey was completed 25 years ago. Again, participation is purely voluntary (but greatly appreciated). Results will be made available to you after the survey is complete, either through publications or email contact depending on your preference.

Thank you for your consideration and participation.

Sincerely,

Dan Wheeler

APPENDIX D  
THIRD CONTACT POSTCARD

Dear Director ,

You should have recently received a survey endorsed by Mike Clark, current president of the American Park and Recreation Society. The purpose of the survey is to determine the importance park and recreation directors assign to specified organizational goals and how goals have changed in the past 25 years.

Many of your peers have responded and provided valuable information, as well as some very relevant comments on goals. If you have responded already, thank you. If not, you have a final opportunity to participate in this national study by linking to the Survey Monkey website at:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?ssm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv\\_2fRecgA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?ssm=9QkZwKwgI2ConIfv_2fRecgA_3d_3d) .

You may also request a paper copy or a link to the survey by contacting Dan Wheeler at [dwheeler@uni.edu](mailto:dwheeler@uni.edu).

Please respond rapidly to ensure that your opinions are included in the first study of this type in 25 years. If you would like to see the results of the survey upon completion, please indicate that in your email.

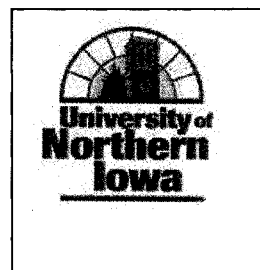
Thank you for your participation.

Dan Wheeler

521 East 550 South

Orem, Utah 84097

[dwheeler@uni.edu](mailto:dwheeler@uni.edu)



APPENDIX E  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The entire survey instrument is included beginning on page 135 reduced from the original format and type size. This permits the instrument to be printed on three sheets of paper double sided with room for individual comments on the remaining side.



Park and Recreation Directors Perceptions of Importance of Specified Organizational Goals  
Present and Future: A National Study

The following survey is designed to determine the importance of various goals facing your organization. It will also determine the importance of those goals at the present time and in the future, providing a potential planning tool for park and recreation directors across the United States. Many goals are prescribed by the organizational vision and/or mission statements required and set by governing bodies. Other goals may be derived from citizens, employees, or in response to economic, political or environmental issues. These goals have been found by other studies to be classified into five categories:

- A. Management- the process of managing personnel, physical and financial assets to deliver services
- B. Adaptation/positional- adapting to environmental change to insure organizational survival/success
- C. Motivation- the process of helping to build successful, effective and efficient employees
- D. Outcomes- attaining targeted goals for both general and specific programs
- E. Groups served- effectively providing services for specific targeted populations

As you respond to the following questions, please reflect on these categories. You will have an opportunity to include any goal or issue not addressed at the conclusion of the survey.

**Part 1. Present importance of specific goals to your organization.**

Please rate the importance of the following management /adaptation /motivation goals as they apply to your organization (please circle your answer).

A. Present management Goals	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Favorable appraisal by political bodies	1	2	3	4	5
Be responsive to future leisure trends	1	2	3	4	5
Recruit, train, and use volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Set standards, evaluate and control staff	1	2	3	4	5
Secure nongovernmental grants and alternative sources of funding	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives to appropriate groups	1	2	3	4	5
Secure fees and charges in support of programs	1	2	3	4	5
Maximize opportunities for staff to pursue professional goals	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the importance of the following services as they relate to the management of your organization (please circle your answer).

B Present services provided	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Supply a balanced level of programs	1	2	3	4	5
Coordinate community human resources	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Present services provided</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Equip people with leisure skills	1	2	3	4	5
Provide leisure counseling	1	2	3	4	5
Provide in-kind (non capital) and/or assistance to community groups	1	2	3	4	5
Co-sponsor activities with other community Groups	1	2	3	4	5
Make resource information available to groups	1	2	3	4	5
Make staff available for consultation services to community groups	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the **importance** of serving the following groups. (Please circle your answers)

<b>C. Present groups served</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Programs for children	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for teens	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for adults	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for persons with special physical and mental needs	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for ethnic minorities	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the **importance** of **desired outcomes** to your organization

<b>D. Present desired outcomes</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
To enhance cultural heritage	1	2	3	4	5
To provide opportunities for self expression	1	2	3	4	5
To enhance citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
To educate the public about environmental Concerns	1	2	3	4	5

## Part II Future importance of specific goals to your organization

This section asks the same questions as in the previous pages, however we are interested in your opinions regarding the **FUTURE** importance of the issues and goals to your organization. Please rate the **FUTURE importance of these goals as they apply to the FUTURE of your organization.**

A <b>Future Management/ Adaptation/Motivation Goals</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Favorable appraisal by political bodies	1	2	3	4	5
Be responsive to future leisure trends	1	2	3	4	5
Recruit, train, and use volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Set standards, evaluate and control staff	1	2	3	4	5
Secure nongovernment grants and alternate sources of funding	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate philosophy, goals and objectives to appropriate groups	1	2	3	4	5
Secure fees and charges in support of programs	1	2	3	4	5
Maximize opportunities for staff to pursue professional goals	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the **FUTURE** importance of the following **services** as they relate to the management of your organization (please circle your answer).

B <b>Future Services provided</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Supply a balanced level of programs	1	2	3	4	5
Coordinate community human resources	1	2	3	4	5
Equip people with leisure skills	1	2	3	4	5
Provide leisure counseling	1	2	3	4	5
Provide in-kind (non capital) and/or assistance to community groups	1	2	3	4	5
Co-sponsor activities with other community	1	2	3	4	5
Make resource information available to groups	1	2	3	4	5
Make staff available for consultation services to community groups	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the **FUTURE importance** of serving the following groups. (Please circle your answers)

<b>C Future Groups served</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
Programs for children	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for teens	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for adults	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for seniors	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for persons with special physical and mental needs	1	2	3	4	5
Programs for ethnic minorities	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate the **FUTURE importance** of **desired outcomes** to your organization

<b>D Future Desired Outcomes</b>	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Not at all Important
To enhance cultural heritage	1	2	3	4	5
To provide opportunities for self expression	1	2	3	4	5
To enhance citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
To educate the public about environmental concerns	1	2	3	4	5

**One final question.**

Definitions: Prescribed goals are those given by mandate or specifically stated by leaders or mission statements. Derived goals are those a third party might observe and infer from actions of individuals or groups, but which are not specifically stated. Most of these goals are subject to interpretation by the observer. An example might be the stated goal of access for all constituents of a program, but if resources for such access are not available or are allocated to other goals it may appear to the observer the goal is to restrict access.

Are the goals you attempt to fulfill prescribed by leaders or derived by observation or a combination of both prescribed and derived?

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**Please indicate any organizational goals you feel are important either now or in the future that were not addressed in this survey. Please use the back of this paper if needed.**

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About yourself and your agency

What is the population of your service area?

Under 25,000

25-50,000

50-100,000

100-250,000

Over 250,000

How is your organization governed?

County

Township

Special Park District

Municipality

School District

Have you adopted a strategic plan?  yes  no

What year was the plan adopted? (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your official job title? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked for this organization? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a P and R professional? \_\_\_\_\_

Education completed (highest level) \_\_\_\_\_

Area of emphasis/major \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a degree in parks, recreation, or tourism? Yes  No

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you  Female  Male

Thank you for your assistance with this research. If you have any questions, or would like a copy of the results of this survey, please contact  
 Dan Wheeler at 801-885-2966  
 dwheeler@uni.edu  
 Thank you!