Marshall University Marshall Digital Scholar

Management Faculty Research

Management, Marketing and MIS

Summer 2000

An Overview of Recreation and Parks Professional Preparation Programs in Higher Education

Jennifer Y. Mak Marshall University, mak@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://mds.marshall.edu/mgmt_faculty Part of the <u>Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons, Higher Education</u> <u>Commons</u>, and the <u>Natural Resources Management and Policy Commons</u>

Recommended Citation

Mak, J. (2000). An overview of recreation and parks professional preparation programs in higher education. Journal of Physical Education & Recreation (Hong Kong), 6(1), 30-38.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Management, Marketing and MIS at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Management Faculty Research by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.

FREERSERS S

ISSN 1028 - 7418 Vol 6, No. 1, Summer 2000

Journal of Physical Education & Recreation (Hong Kong)



許士芬博士體康研究中心

Dr. Stephen Hui Research Centre for Physical Recreation and Wellness

香港浸會大學 HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

An Overview of Recreation and Parks Professional Preparation Programs in Higher Education 探討大專院校的康樂及公園管理專業課程

Jennifer Y. M. Mak

School of Health, Physical Education & Recreation, Indiana University, USA

麥婉鳴

美國印弟安立大學健康及康樂學院



Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of recreation and parks professional preparation programs in higher education. This paper will (a) help to understand the framework of recreation and parks professional preparation programs, (b) discuss the factors which influence the professional preparation outcomes, and (c) help to identify future research needs. The discussion is based on the framework for studying professional preparation programs by Stack, et al. (1986). The key element of the framework for studying recreation and parks professional preparation environment which was the product of external, internal and intra-organizational influences. The recreation and parks professional preparation environment influences the design of education process, which intends to achieve recreation and parks professional preparation outcomes.

摘要

本文章旨在探討大專院校的康樂及公園管理專業課程,內容計有 (a) 幫助了解康樂及公園管理專業課程的架構;(b) 影響專業發展的因素;及 (c) 策劃未來的研究路向。討論內容主要是以 Stack (1986) 等學者所倡導的架構作為參考,並分析各 元素的內因和外因對專業課程的影響,從而建議康樂及公園管理專業課程在教育範疇上的改革。

Introduction

There is much research on the topic of professional preparation programs. However, much of these have occurred in isolation, for instance, focusing on specific options, specific courses, curriculum design, and professional competencies. The linkages among educational processes, the professional preparation environment, and professional preparation outcomes have not been explored. The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of recreation and parks professional preparation programs in higher education. This paper will (a) help to understand the framework of recreation and parks professional preparation programs, (b) discuss the factors which influence the professional preparation outcomes, and (c) help to identify future research needs. The discussion is based on the framework for studying professional preparation programs by Stack, et al. (1986). Figure 1 shows the key elements of the framework for studying recreation and parks professional preparation programs. Three different forces influence recreation and parks professional preparation programs: (1) internal, (2) intra-organizational, and (3) external. These forces create the recreation and parks professional preparation environment, which, in turn, influences the design of educational processes that intend to achieve recreation and parks professional preparation outcomes.

Recreation and Parks Professional Preparation Environment

A key element of the framework is "the recreation and parks professional preparation environment." It is the product of external, internal, and intra-organizational influences. External influences are the factors from outside the recreation and parks professional preparation programs which influence the recreation and parks professional preparation environment. Internal influences are the influences from the education program. Intra-organizational influences are the influences of the university, school, college, department, or division on the specific program.

External Influences

External influences include societal influences, and professional community characteristics. There are six forces in societal influences. They include reward system, marketplace for graduates, media, government policies, government funding, and licensing. There are nine forces in professional community characteristics. They include knowledge base, client orientation, practice settings, professional autonomy, accreditation and standards, market control, ethics, publications, and alumni involvement (See Figure 2).

Societal Influences

Reward system, the first of the six forces of societal influences, is the payment and social status received by the recreation and parks profession. According to the statistical report of the 1998-99 occupational outlook handbook by the U.S. Department of Labor (1998), median annual earnings of recreation workers who worked full time in 1996 were about \$18,700, significantly lower than the median of \$25,600 for workers in other occupations. The middle 50% earned approximately between \$12,900 and \$28,900, while top ten percent earned \$37,500 and above. Secondly, marketplace for graduates is the availability of jobs for the new profession. The U.S. Department of Labor (1998) reported that there were about 233,000 jobs in 1996. Half worked in parks and recreation departments of municipal and county governments. Nearly 20% worked in membership organizations with a civic, social, fraternal, or religious orientation, such as YMCA's, Boy's Clubs, Girl's Clubs, and Boy Scouts. About ten percent worked in social service organizations, such as senior centers, adult daycare programs, and group homes. Another ten percent worked for nursing and other personal care facilities. Other employers included commercial recreation, amusement parks, sports and entertainment centers, and tourist attractions. Moreover, employment of recreation workers was expected to increase 21% to 35% between 1996 and 2006 with faster growth than the average for all occupations (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998).

Media is defined as the media portraying the profession. There are fewer media portrayals of the recreation and parks profession than of other professions (e.g. Business, medicine, music, and law). For example, the US News or the Times Magazine never reported the recreation and parks profession in the national ranking of different fields or programs.

Government policies are the degree to which the government regulates the profession. Traditionally, recreation and parks services have been considered as a function of local government. Mostly, federal and states only involve the management and operation of parks and recreation lands, and the activities of regulatory agencies. Government polices seldom regulated the professional preparation programs (Sessoms, & Hederson, 1994). Funding is the availability of government funds to finance recreation and parks education programs in higher education. Government does not have direct funding in recreation and parks education programs; however, the state-funded universities and federal-funded universities offer most of the recreation and parks education programs in higher education. Unfortunately, the public funding for higher education is decreasing. Institutions need to generate external funding. Financial support will be a problem throughout the future (Mobley, 1997).

Licensing is the setting of entrance standards and persistence requirements outside of the profession. There is no licensing system in the recreation and parks profession. Certification is not usually required for employment; however, employers may trend to hire the person with a demonstrated record of professional achievement represented by certification. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) National Certification Board offers certification as a Certified Leisure Professional (CLP) for those with a college degree in recreation, and as a Certified Leisure Associate (CLA) for those with less than four years of college. The National Council of Therapeutic Recreation Certification offers Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS).

Professional Community Characteristics

The nine forces in professional community characteristics are knowledge base, client orientation, practice settings, professional autonomy, accreditation standard, market control, ethics, publications, and alumni involvement. Knowledge base is the knowledge in which the recreation and parks profession accounts necessary successful practice and specialization. Unfortunately, the knowledge base is not well defined by the profession. Sessoms and Hederson (1994) stated that "the fragmentation of the movement into subspecialties or special interest groups will only retard the identification of parks and recreation as a unique profession" (p.328). Sessoms (1997) stated that "specialization within the profession arise accommodate specific serve delivery needs and may take on the characteristics of a profession in their own right but they are not the core" (p.1). Identifying the knowledge base is an ongoing issue in the field (Kraus, 1990; MacLean, Peterson, & Martin, 1985; Sessoms, 1997).

Client orientation is the service-oriented profession to either individuals or groups; and service that is either altruistic or contractual. In general, recreation and parks service is oriented toward groups rather than individuals; and it is altruistic rather than contractual. Most of the services organized by government or non-profit organizations are delivered in an altruistic way.

Practice setting is the availability of facilities for field or clinical experience. For instance, YMCA's, YWCA's, Boy's Clubs, Girl's Clubs, municipal parks and recreation agencies, military bases, and higher education settings provide a large variety of practice settings to the potential recreation and parks profession. The Committee on Internships and Externships of the National Curriculum Conference of Parks and Recreation (NCCPR) recommended three components of an internship experience (1997). They are:

- Exposure. The first component would be taken as part of a course or concurrently with sophomore/junior level course work. This would be the first required "field experience" and serve to help the student become exposed to the field of service.
- 2. Junior Internship. The second component would serve as a partnership with agencies in the community. This practical experience would be structured so that students would relate the experience to their course work yet to be taken and integrate it with the body of knowledge already learned and yet to be acquired. The focus is to bring information back into the classroom rather than to apply it to the work world.
- Senior Internship/Externship. The third component could exist as a culminating internship or as an "externship" (i.e., practical experience taking place after graduation). This experience would serve as "springboard" to employment in the community. Here the student would relate experiences to the work would and his/her career aspirations (p.30).

The Council on Accreditation of NRPA/AALR, National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS), and American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) have their own standards to implement internship and practical experiences. Moreover, many institutions have their own standards and requirements for fieldwork experience.

Professional autonomy is the degree of autonomy allowed or amounts of regulation imposed on members of the professional associations. There is no licensing system in the recreation and parks profession; therefore, there is a relatively high degree of autonomy in the recreation and parks profession, in comparison with other licensing professions such as law, medicine, and accounting.

An accreditation standard is defined as a standard set by accrediting agencies. The NRPA and American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR) council of accreditation has been provided an accreditation systems to degree programs since 1977. In 1997, 93 bachelor's degree programs in parks and recreation were accredited (U.S. Department of labor, 1998). The NRPA/ AALR council of accreditation has been a member of the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation (COPA) since 1986 (Henkel & Mobley, 1986). COPA was the accrediting body for accrediting bodies such as Association of American Law Schools, American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, and National Architectural Accrediting Board. The accreditation process of NRPA/AALR included (National Recreation and Park Association, 1991):

- 1. A program applies for accreditation.
- The program conducts a self-study, using standards (criteria) developed by the council on Accreditation.
- 3. The Council, in communication with the program, selects a three-person team of educators and practitioners. The team reads the program's Self-Study Report, and visits the campus to collect data and confirm information in the Report. The team then submits a report on its perceptions to the Council.
- 4. The Council reviews the program's Self-Study Report and the team report, and then conducts a hearing on the program with representatives of the program and the team. Base on the information review, the Council awards accredited status (sometimes with conditions), or defer or deny accreditation. Deferral or denial must be on the basis of the program" failure to meet standards.
- The program submits annual status reports and maintenance fees to the Council.
- 6. Initial accreditation is for give years. The review process, described above, is repeated every five years for continuing accreditation. Unless there are special circumstances, only one individual visits the program for the first five-year review and every ten years thereafter. A three-person team conducts the visits at the end of the ten years, and then every ten years thereafter (p.2).

Market control is the regulation of the number of new professions entering the markets. There is no market control for the recreation and parks profession. Education needed for recreation worker jobs range from a high school diploma to graduate education. Full-time career professional positions usually require a bachelor's degree with a major in recreation and parks, but a college degree in any liberal arts field or business administration field may be sufficient for some jobs. Occasionally, high school graduates are able to enter career positions (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998).

There are no enforcing codes of ethics in recreation and parks profession. The NRPA prepared a recommended code of ethics in environment for the profession (National Recreation and Park Association, 1996):

- Purchase and use environmentally safe and sensitive products for use in faculty and parks operations taking into consideration the effects of product production, use storage and disposal.
- Implement management practices and programs, which help to conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality and protect wildlife.

- Investigate, implement, and promote the use of "state of the art" energy conserving technologies as they can be applied to ongoing operations.
- Reduce waste production, reuse and recycle materials form facility and parks operations, use recycled products and handle hazardous and all other wastes according to lawful and safe procedures.
- Use planning and design techniques which will recognize the unique environmental characteristics of the site and will emphasize those characteristics through the sites proposed development, management and interpretation.
- Provide innovate and creative programs which increase appreciation for the national world, promote environmentally conscious lifestyles, emphasize selective consumption and low-impact resource and transcend the boundaries of our own agencies.
- Implement maintenance management practices, which recognize the natural attributes and sensitivity of the sites being maintained, and support the mission of the profession to promote the value and integrity of our parks assets.
- Cooperate with allied organizations and individuals by forming partnerships, sharing resources, assisting in conflict resolution, and advocating the values of the environment to ensure proper stewardship for the descendants that follow us (p.1).

Publication is defined as the professional publication that influence practitioners and trainers. The NRPA prepared 11 different publications for the parks & recreation profession (National Recreation and Park Association, 1996). They are:

- Parks & recreation magazine a full-color, monthly feature magazine featuring the latest issues facing the parks and recreation field, including hands on and informational articles for the practitioner in the field
- Dateline a monthly news publication which focuses on the latest in legislative and policy action
- Journal of leisure research a professional quarterly journal which gives in-depth attention to studies, surveys and experimentation in the field of recreation and parks
- 4. Therapeutic recreation journal a professional quarterly journal which covers developments in therapeutic recreation services for individuals with mental and physical disabilities, and other groups with special needs
- Job bulletin a listing of current position vacancies in recreation and parks throughout the United States and Canada
- Recreation and parks law reporter a quarterly publication series devoted to a review of recent court decisions concerning personal injury liability affecting parks, recreation and leisure services
- Parks practice three publications produced in conjunction with the national parks service including design, trends and

grist, which deal with parks management and provide new concepts, plans, designs, programs and operational methods designed to have special value to urban parks systems

- Programmers information network a quarterly publication focusing on innovative tools to help recreation professionals in their programming efforts
- Recreation ... access in the 90s a bi-monthly newsletter which addresses the changes parks and recreation organizations will face with the implementation of Americans with Disabilities Act
- Branch and section newsletter each section and branch provides a quarterly newsletter to its members
- 11. Friend of parks and recreation is a newsmagazine dedicated to the citizen volunteer which features successful programs and honors outstanding citizens (p.1).

Alumni involvement includes the influence of professional education. Alumni involvement varied between different universities; however, departmental administrators felt that supportive alumni were one of the keys to success in the programs (Bialeschki, 1994).

Intra-organizational Influences

Intra-organizational influences are the influences of the university, school, college, department, or division on the specific program. These include the mission, program centrality, program interrelationship, financial or technological support, and governance pattern (See Figure 3).

Mission includes history, traditions, and purposes of the institution. Program centrality is the significance of the program in conveying the mission of the institution. Program interrelationship is the relation of the program to other units of the institution. Financial and technological support is the support received from the institution or from units within the institution. Governance pattern is the degree to which the organization influences the curriculum and processes. All of these factors vary between programs. For example, programs offered under different types of institution (Research-institutions, state institutions, or private institutions), and different types of program description (School of Education, School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, or School of Forestry) will have different intra-organizational influences. The Committee on Institutional Support of the National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation (1997) recommended three strategies to acquire support:

- To assure satisfactory resources, those who provide them must be aware of the needs and convinced they are important enough to be allocated in a timely fashion.
- There also must be alignment between the institution's mission and the goals and objectives of the academic unit. This

relates to the "centrality" of the unit. Support within the university also may be linked to the breadth of involvement and interdependence of the program unit with other academic units (e.g. interdisciplinary programs, general education courses, etc.)

 Support from community agencies and their constituents' helps to demonstrate need for resources. That support is facilitated when appropriate relationships exist. Accreditation and other processes at state and national levels also help (p.40).

Internal Influences

Internal influences are the influences from the education programs, which include the mission, staffing, program organization; the structure of the recreation and parks professional program; curricular tensions; and continuing professional education. There are four components in mission, staffing, and program organization. They are faculty background, faculty mix, ideology and mission, and evaluation of faculty. There are six components in professional program structure. They are specialization, time requirements, student evaluation, student mix, entrance requirements, and student/ faculty ratio. The six components in curricular tensions include methodology, balance of practice and theory, core courses, contextual study, sequencing of courses, and course evaluation. Continuing professional education is defined as an on-going education through structured programs such as classes workshops and conferences (See Figure 4).

Mission, Staffing, and Program Organization

The four components in mission, staffing, and program organization are faculty background, faculty mix, ideology and mission, and evaluation of faculty. Faculty background is the education, specialization, and experience of faculty. Mostly, faculty requires having a doctoral degree in recreation and parks; however, some of the faculty may come from different disciplines, such as physical education, business, and sociology. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research conducted on faculty background. The specialization of the potential faculty could be projected through the doctoral student enrollments. Mak (1998) reported that out of 196 full-time doctoral students enrolled in fall 1997, 24% of the doctoral students specialize in administration, 23% in tourism, 16% in leisure behavior, 14% in therapeutic recreation, and 23% in outdoor recreation.

Faculty mix includes the ratio of men to women, ratio of representatives from various ethnic backgrounds, and ratio of practitioners to theorists. 1990 SPRE survey reported that the average number of full-time tenure-track faculty was five and 1.6 of these faculties were females (Bialeschki, 1992). Bialeschki also reported that 49% of the female faculty members were untenured while only 21% of the men were untenured and there were 78% of faculty had no color. The ratio of the men to women and ratio of representatives from various ethnic backgrounds in the 21st century could be projected through the current doctoral student enrollments. Mak (1998) reported that 39% of doctoral students enrolled in fall 1997 are females and 95.1% of U.S. doctoral students had no color. The lack of diversity in ethnic backgrounds is an area of concern.

Ideology and mission is the emphasis in research, teaching, and service; the balance of levels in graduates and undergraduates; and the types of students sought. All of these factors vary between different institutions. Research-institutions (e.g. Indiana University, Texas A&M and the University of Illinois) place more emphasis on research. However, for teaching oriented institutions (e.g. San Francisco State University, and Indiana State University) have more emphasis in teaching. There were 17 institutions reported in the 1996-1997 Society of Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE) curriculum catalog (1995) which offered doctoral programs in recreation and parks profession. This implied that the balance of levels in graduates and undergraduates would be different between doctoral-granting programs and non-doctoral-granting programs.

The components of faculty evaluation include evaluation methodology, frequency, criteria, etc. Bialeschki (1994) reported that the strongest concern addressing faculty productivity included publication rates, credit hour production, and acquisition of grants. The study also reported that it was essential to have a strong chair and credible faculty. And also, educators in accredited programs felt the need for faculty to work together as a team more than those in non-accredited programs (Bialeschki, 1994).

Professional Program Structure

The six components in professional program structure are specialization, time requirements, student evaluation, student mix, entrance requirements, and student/faculty ratio. Specialization differentiates a general program into different areas of emphases. Different institutions name the specialty area differently. According to the NRPA/AALR Council of Accreditation, there are four different options for recreation and parks professional preparation programs. They were: (1) leisure service management option which is management-oriented, (2) natural resources recreation management option which provides greater understanding of the natural environment, (3) leisure recreation program delivery option which requires a greater depth in program and behavioral sciences in managing of program services, and (4) therapeutic recreation option which relates to individuals with disability and leisure services (National Recreation and Park Association, 1991).

體康學報六卷一期

Journal of Physical Education & Recreation (Hong Kong) Vol.6 No.1

Four years is the common duration to complete a bachelor degree in recreation and parks. The components of student evaluation include evaluation methodology, frequency, criteria, etc. The evaluation of student varies between different institutions. Also, there is a lack of research conducted on student evaluation. Student entrance requirements are the criteria for entrance into a program. In general, the high school diploma is the basic entrance requirement.

Student mix is the ratio of men to women and ratio of representatives from various ethnical backgrounds. The 1990 SPRE survey reported that women comprised the majority of the students with 56% and the percentage of students of color was only eight percent (Bialeschki, 1992). Student/faculty ratio is the number of students per faulty member. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research conducted on student/faculty ratio. The components of program evaluation include evaluation methodology, frequency, criteria, etc. The program evaluation varies between different institutions. Also, it is a lack of research conducted on program evaluation. However, the accreditation process could be perceived as a program evaluation.

Curricular Tensions

The six components in curricular tensions are methodology, balance of practice and theory, core courses, sequencing of courses, and course evaluation. Methodology is the teaching strategies and methods of presenting knowledge. This varies between faculties. Balance of practice and theory is the degree of emphasis between knowledge and practice. Field experiences and internship were listed in the NRPA/AALR Council of Accreditation standard. Under 8.40, internship is defined as a full-time continuing experience in a leisure services assignment, of at least 400 clock hours over an extended period of time but not less than 10 weeks (National Recreation and Park Association, 1991).

Core courses are the basic foundation of the program. The NRPA/AALR Council of Accreditation defined the core courses as the institution general education requirement with the additional courses in generic options (leisure services management, natural resources recreation management, leisure/recreation program delivery, and therapeutic recreation) (National Recreation and Park Association, 1991). Contextual study is the supporting study and the extent to which professional program builds on it. These courses (e.g. Life span development, psychology, and sport skill) fall outside the profession, which may also offer outside the recreation and parks department.

Sequencing of courses is the order in which courses are taken. Most of the programs have their own sequencing of courses; however, there is a lack of research to investigate what is the proper sequencing of courses (e.g. the correlation between the pre-requisite course to the course to be taken). The components of course evaluation include evaluation methodology, frequency, criteria, etc. There is lacking of research and standardized guidelines for course evaluation. The course evaluation varies between different institutions, sometimes, even varies between faculties.

Continuing Professional Education

Continuing professional education is defined as an on-going education through structured programs such as classes, workshops, and conferences. Classes, workshops and conferences are focused on learning new skills, and techniques to improve job's performance. There are three main issues in continuing professional education (Committee on Continuing Education, 1997). They are:

- The valuing of continuing education by individuals and organizations associated with recreation, parks and leisure services.
- The development of alternative means of evaluation the effectiveness of continuing education.
- The relevance of continuing education to agencies and employees and the delivery of program that are effective and cost effective (p.37).

Committee on Continuing Education (1997) recommended three strategies to deal with these issues. The strategies included: (1) to conduct a nationwide study of the perceived importance and impact of professional and continuing education in the career development of parks and recreation leaders, (2) to expand the curriculum survey of the American Academy of Parks and Recreation Administration, and (3) to develop a time and cost effective continuing education delivery systems.

Professional Preparation Outcomes

Professional preparation outcomes include professional competencies (conceptual competence, technical competence, integrative competence, contextual competence, adaptive competence, and interpersonal communication) and professional attitudes (professional identity, professional ethics, career marketability, scholarly concern for improvement, and motivation for continued learning) (See Figure 5).

Professional Competencies

Stack et al. (1986) classified six professional competencies by behavior and knowledge that influence professional practice. Conceptual competence is the understanding of the theoretical foundations of the profession. Technical competence is the ability to perform tasks required by the profession. Integrative competence is the ability to integrate theory and practice. Contextual competence is the understanding of the societal context (environment) in which the profession is practiced. Adaptive competence is the ability to anticipate and adapt to changes important to the profession (e.g., technological changes). Interpersonal communications is the ability to use written and oral communication effectively. On the other hand, the NRPA/AALR Council of Accreditation classified the professional competencies according to the specific service delivery needs (leisure services management, natural resources recreation management, leisure/recreation program delivery, and therapeutic recreation). As the knowledge base is not well defined by the profession, identifying the professional competencies by behavior and knowledge instead of specific service delivery needs is an alternative method to identify the body of knowledge.

Professional Attitudes

There are five types of professional attitudes. They include professional identity, professional ethic, career marketability, scholarly concern for improvement, and motivation for continued learning. Professional identity is the degree in which a graduate accepts the norms of a profession. Professional ethics is the degree in which a graduate internalizes the ethics of the profession. Participating and sharing in professional associations' conferences or activities could help graduates to cultivate the professional identity and professional ethics.

Career marketability is the degree in which a graduate becomes marketable due to acquired professional preparation programs. Even through a college degree in any liberal arts field or business administration field may be sufficient for some jobs, career professional positions usually require a bachelor's degree with a major in recreation and parks. Scholarly concern for improvement is the degree to which a graduate recognizes the need to increase knowledge through research. Participating in national or regional conferences could help graduates to recognize the need of research. Motivation for continued learning is the degree to which a graduate desires to continue to update knowledge and skills. The development of Continued Education Unites (CEU) system provides an extrinsic motivation for continued learning to the profession.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The framework of recreation and parks professional preparation programs gives us an idea about the linkage among educational processes, the professional preparation environment, and professional preparation outcomes. Several issues are posed by the discussion. Externally, financial support for recreation and parks education programs is decreasing. The employment of recreation workers is expected to increase 21% to 35%. The median annual earnings of recreation workers were significantly lower than other occupations. Could professional preparation programs meet the workforce demand? Do programs need to expand the enrollment? Do programs have enough financial resources for expansion? Will the low reward system become the hindrance of students' recruitment?

Internally, the knowledge base in the recreation and parks profession is not well defined. There is a lack of diversity in ethic backgrounds. The Council of Accreditation plays a leadership role in dealing with the criteria of professional preparation programs. What is the knowledge base in the recreation and parks profession? What is the consequence with low ethical background diversity profession to serve a diversity public? Who has the responsibility to direct the future of the professional preparation programs (e.g. practitioners or educators, professional associations or institutions)? What are the desired professional preparation outcomes?

Moreover, some factors which influence the professional preparation outcomes but go unanswered because there is a lack of research in conducting the areas of media portrays of the profession, faculty background, balance of theory and practice, and course sequencing, etc. It is essential that the profession should pay more attention to the professional preparation programs as a whole instead of focusing on specific options. The profession should try to explore the best educational processes for the professional preparation programs with the consideration of professional preparation environment and desired professional preparation outcomes.

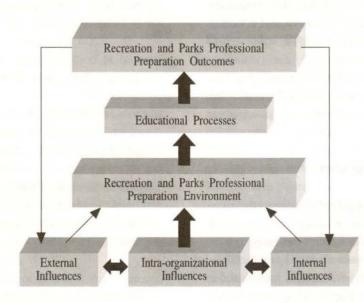
References

- Accreditation Standards of the National Recreation and Park Association. (1991). Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Bialeschki, M. D. (1992). The state of parks, recreation and leisure studies curricula. *Parks and Recreation*, 27(7), 72-76, 95.
- Bialeschki, M. D. (1994). What's happening to our curricula in recreation, park resources, and leisure services? *Parks* and Recreation, 29(5), 24-25, 27.
- Committee on Continuing Education. (1997). Report on continuing education, National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation (pp. 30-33). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- Committee on Institutional Support (1997). Report on continuing education, *National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation (pp. 40-41)*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

- Committee on Internships and Externships (1997). Report on internships and externships, *National Curriculum Conference* on Parks and Recreation (pp. 30-33). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- Henkel, D. D., & Mobley, T. A. (1986). The quest for COPA recognition. Parks and Recreation, 21(11) 50, 53-54.
- Jamieson, L., & Niepoth, E. W. (1995). Recreation and education: curriculum catalog 1996-1997. Arlington, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Kraus, R. G. (1998). *Recreation and leisure in modern society* (5th ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett.
- MacLean, J. R., Peterson, J. A., & Martin, W. D. (1985). Recreation and eisure: The changing scene (4th ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Mak, Y. M. J. (1998). A Statistical Profile of Doctoral Students in Recreation, Park, Tourism, and Leisure in the United States. Unpublished master's thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- Mobley, T. A. (1997). Closing Observations, National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation (pp. 42-44). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

- National Recreation and Park Association (1996). National Recreation and Park Association code of ethics on the environment. (Available at http://www.nrpa.org/about/envethic.htm)
- National Recreation and Park Association (1996). National Recreation and Park Association Publications. (Available at http://www.nrpa.org/)
- Sessoms, H. D., & Henderson, K. A. (1994). Introduction to leisure services. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Sessoms, H. D. (1997). Prologue: The 1997 national curriculum conference, National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation (pp. 1-12). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
- Stark, J. S., Lowther, M. A., Hagerty, B. M. K., & Orczyk, C. (1986). A conceptual framework for the study of preservice professional programs in colleges and universities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 57(3) 231-258.
- U.S. Department of labor (1998). 1998-99 Occupational outlook handbook. Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Figure 1. A Framework for Describing Recreation and Parks Professional Preparation Programs.



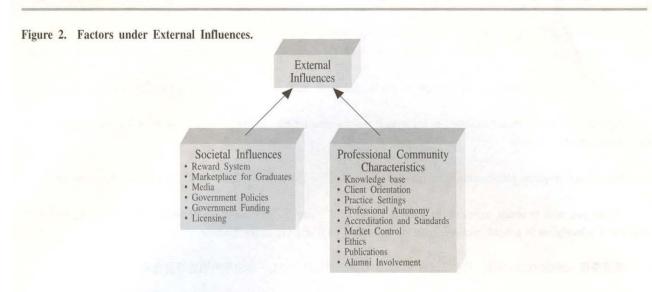


Figure 3. Factors under Intra-organizational Influences.

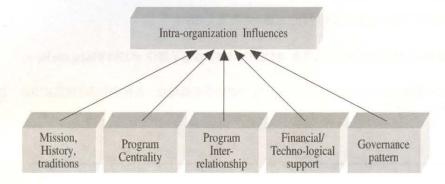


Figure 4. Factors under Internal Influences.

