**Program:** Bachelor of Science, Recreation Administration, Recreation Therapy (RT) Concentration

**Department:** Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall, 2011: 46

Faculty member completing template: Greg Shaw

Date: 01-31-12

**Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present**

1. Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?

   **[Please limit your response to 200 words or less]**

   Assessment for the Recreation Therapy (RT) Concentration has undergone a continual evolution over the last six years. To ensure that the curriculum is current and supportive of our department learning outcomes, we use an Exit Exam, Portfolio Assessment and an Internship Supervisor Survey (please see the Recreation and Park Management document of a description of these). Each of these assessments was designed on the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) accreditation standards of our national accrediting body, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The department also uses input from our Advisory Committee (during three annual meetings) and department alumni (for portfolio review). Results are evaluated during the summer and are reviewed during the faculty retreat before the start of the fall semester. Course changes can be made based on this review.

   Recreation Therapy must also follow the standards governed by the National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC), and therefore, curricular changes in RT must also adhere to these rules. One of the requirements of NCTRC is that students hold a degree from an accredited program in Recreation Administration. Therefore, all RT students complete the same accredited core of courses as students in Recreation and Park Management.

2. Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.

   **[Please limit your response per outcome to 300 words or less]**
The four learning outcomes listed below are not ranked or prioritized. Nor are they the limit of what we assess. We assess all of the learning outcomes as based on the NRPA accreditation standards used by all accredited recreation programs in the United States. The Recreation Therapy Concentration must also follow these standards. These outcomes are from the Department Assessment Plan (although the wording has been changed slightly for this document from our NRPA accreditation standards). The NCTRC standards required additional concentration core courses for RT students. All of the RT courses listed are required courses, not electives.

a) **Students will have an understanding of and ability to apply personnel administration/management techniques, including job analysis, recruitment, selection, training, motivation, career development and evaluation of staff and volunteers.**

The recreation, parks and tourism industry is a wide, loosely associated set of industries and fields that provide experiential products to the public. These agencies can be managed with a variety of different techniques, that can be grouped into those that fall under government administration (National Parks, National Forests, Army Corps of Engineers lands, Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, etc.), non-profit administration (Girl Scouts, Boys Clubs, YMCAs, etc.), and for-profit or private administration (resorts, hotels, cruise lines, etc.). Students in Recreation Therapy are required to understand administration in a variety of settings. While usually clinical, RT practices may be privately or publically supported. Veteran services are typically government in nature, and provide employment opportunities for students in Recreation Therapy.

Under our accreditation, this outcome has several objectives. The department’s Advisory Committee as well as agency internship supervisors have supported this outcome as being essential to a degree in Recreation Administration. The standards emphasize that students can be effective administrators in a variety of recreational settings. This outcome is measured in several core RPTA courses, including RPTA 30, 32, 42, 105, 106 and 109. This outcome is further developed for RT students in the NCTRC required concentration specific core courses of RPTA 115, 117 and 119.

b) **Students are able to demonstrate skills in program strategies and will have the ability to organize and conduct leisure programs and services in a variety of recreation settings.**

Recreation Therapy incorporates the concept of “universal access” in that the industry strives to minimize differences based on physical, mental and emotional disability. Providing inclusive programming is essential to Recreation Therapy practices. Programming is a broad term in the recreation fields that has to do with planning the use(s) of recreation space and resources. Students must be completely competent at creating, organizing, promoting, funding, executing and evaluating programs upon completing their education in RPTA. The NRPA accreditation standards have several outcomes based on the set of skills required for programming. Programming is typically the direct responsibility of students during their first jobs and the department focuses many resources on preparing the students to perform well as they enter the field. Recreation Therapy students often work along-side students in other areas of recreation to provide programming assistance (including adaptive equipment instruction) for special populations.
This outcome is taught in several core courses, including RPTA 32 and 136, and is also developed further in NCTRC required concentration specific core courses RPTA 116 and 118. Department alumni and agency internship supervisors have supported our belief that this outcome should be a core component of our program.

c) **Students will have an understanding of principles and procedures for assessment, planning and evaluation of recreation programs and services.**

The NRPA accreditation standards and several individual employers of our students have stressed the importance of students being able to conduct practical research for an agency, evaluate the data, and then present the data in both written and oral formats. As funding for recreation becomes more competitive, the ability to show concrete results for programs and products is increasingly important. Competency in this area is a primary focus for the department.

This outcome is addressed in the core courses, RPTA 136 and 110. NCTRC has required that programs also teach a documentation course, which includes some aspect of assessment. The department has responded and created the course, RPTA 115.

d) **Students will have knowledge of the legal foundations and responsibilities of leisure service agencies, and of the legislative process and the impact of policy formation on leisure behaviors and service in all levels of government, community organizations, and business enterprise.**

This outcome is anchored in the NRPA accreditation standards. Students in Recreation Therapy are employed most often (80% according to NCTRC data) in clinical settings. The legal issues related to those locations specify additional learning for RT students. Likewise, students must be fluent in the legislative processes that affect funding for RT services, especially as they relate to returning Veterans.

Recreation Therapy students are exposed to these topics in RPTA 30, 105 and 106. Students in Recreation Therapy must also take RPTA 115 as part of the NCTRC standards criteria.

3. For undergraduate programs only, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

**[Please limit your response to 400 words or less]**

RPTA has based its department assessment outcomes on the national accreditation standards. For RT, there is also the inclusion of the NCTRC standards. Both of these sets of standards lend themselves to following the university’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals.

*Competence in the Disciplines: Addressed by all four department outcomes used in this document. It is closely tied with the practical skills associated with administration, evaluation, assessment, programming and the knowledge required for a foundational understanding of the legal issues and legislative processes related to RPTA agencies.*

*Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World: Addressed in the first two outcomes used in this document. All students, including Recreation Therapy students, take core courses in natural resource management that includes a study of the physical world related to*
outdoor recreation land management. In addition, human cultures are explored in core courses related to leisure theory and history and dealing with diverse populations and universal access to recreation. RT students are required to take several additional courses in physical, mental and emotional issues related to diverse populations. RT students are also required to learn adaptive recreational equipment for participants that want to experience the physical environment.

*Intellectual and Practical Skills:* This relates to most closely to the first three outcomes listed above and the RPTA portfolio. The RPTA student portfolio is completed by all RPTA undergraduates. The portfolio uses graded rubrics to measure student learning outcomes in three competency areas: oral skills (presenting), written skills (formal written paper) and group work (team leadership and group dynamics administration). Students also are exposed to numerous opportunities for creating thinking and problem solving (both individually and in groups), and take core classes in information literacy and quantitative literacy.

*Personal and Social Responsibility:* This relates to the forth outcome listed above. Students are required to know the legal and legislative foundations for administration, as well as with regards to inclusion of diverse populations and persons with disabilities. More than one core course in the major requires students to volunteer at community agencies and plan programs for agencies in the community. In addition to the class requirements, all RT students are required to complete 600 hours of pre-internship prior to the 560 hour internship (larger than the internship required for RPM students).

*Integrative Learning:* This goal relates to mostly to the first, second and forth outcomes. The RPTA internship requirements and the culminating RPTA 119 are required by all Recreation Therapy Students. These courses require a synthesis and application of numerous skills from previous courses and pre-internship experiences.

4. For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:
   a) Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
   c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.
   d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

   [Please limit your response to 200 words or less per learning outcome]

*Students will have an understanding of and ability to apply personnel administration/management techniques, including job analysis, recruitment, selection, training, motivation, career development and evaluation of staff and volunteers.*

   a) Competency in this objective is assessed over a series of courses, the department’s exit exam and the agency internship supervisor survey. The RPTA core requires courses in
administration (an introductory course and an advanced course for RT students are required). The introductory course uses group problem solving assignments of management-related issues, exams, and an oral presentation of findings/results to measure knowledge of management in the three basic areas of government, non-profit and for-profit. Core courses: RPTA 30, 105, 117.

b) All students must take the above described courses and complete the exit exam. The exit exam is made up of questions as determined by the NRPA accrediting standards.

c) See appendix.

d) The exit exam results are compiled by a designated faculty and then reviewed at the department retreat before the beginning of the fall semester. While students have typically performed well (approximately two thirds each year score above 85% while the lower third scores between 70-84%), we do make modifications to courses by combining the results of the exit exam, the comments from external portfolio review (conducted by RPTA alumni), suggestions from the Advisory Committee and changes in accreditation standards.

**Students are able to demonstrate skills in program strategies and will have the ability to organize and conduct leisure programs and services in a variety of recreation settings.**

a) Competency in this objective is assessed primarily in two core courses, RPTA 32 and RPTA 136. The department’s exit exam is also used to assess this goal as well as exams, projects and assignments in the core courses. As many student internships also involve inclusive programming as part of the internship final project, the agency internship supervisor survey is also used to measure this outcome. The internship is graded, although not all students are required to complete programming for their internship.

b) All students must take the above described courses and complete the exit exam.

c) See appendix.

d) The exit exam results are compiled by a designated faculty and then reviewed at the department retreat before the beginning of the fall semester. Both the exit exam and outside internship supervisors support our students’ strengths in this area.

**Students will have an understanding of principles and procedures for assessment, planning and evaluation of recreation programs and services.**

a) Competency in this outcome is assessed by the department’s exit exam, and the agency internship supervisor survey. This outcome is measured specifically in the core course, RPTA 110, although several courses, including RPTA 105, 115 and RPTA 136 contain elements of this objective. Students are advised to take RPTA 110 in the last semester before their internship so that they already have many of the foundational skill necessary to complete research and evaluation. The department’s exit exam is also used to assess this goal as well as exams, projects and assignments in the RPTA 110 course. Students are required to complete a paper during their internship on evaluation methods used at their particular agency. This paper is graded, as is the entire internship.

b) All students must take the above described courses and complete the exit exam.
c) See appendix.
d) The exit exam results are compiled by a designated faculty and then reviewed at the department retreat before the beginning of the fall semester. Specifically for this objective, evaluation is an area that students perform very well in. Both the exit exam and outside internship supervisors support our students’ strengths in this area.

Students will have knowledge of the legal foundations and responsibilities of leisure service agencies, and of the legislative process and the impact of policy formation on leisure behaviors and service in all levels of government, community organizations, and business enterprise.

a) This outcome is assessed by the department’s exit exam and in the core courses of, RPTA 30, 42, 105 and 106.
b) All students must take the above described courses and complete the exit exam.
c) See appendix.
d) The exit exam results are compiled by a designated faculty and then reviewed at the department retreat before the beginning of the fall semester.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less per item]
In relation to all learning outcomes assessed by national accreditation, the accreditation report (our most recent was submitted in 2010 following the 2009 accreditation visit) indicates the changes that will be made to curriculum, other assessment strategies, learning outcomes, etc. Relevant changes are described below in relation to each outcome.

All Exit Exam and Portfolio comments and scores are reviewed by faculty during the department’s fall retreat. We also meet with the department’s Advisory Committee three times annually to discuss changes to better prepare our students. The department/committee jointly performs a SWOT Analysis to generate a list of areas to improve.

Currency with NCTRC is ongoing, and a course title was changed in 2010 to remain current with NCTRC standards. In addition, a new course, RPTA 115 was created in 2010 to prepare students to meet the new certification examination requirements which will go into place in 2013. Finally, in 2010, the concentration name was changed from Therapeutic Recreation to Recreation Therapy in keeping with NCTRC currency.

a) Students will have an understanding of and ability to apply personnel administration/management techniques, including job analysis, recruitment, selection, training, motivation, career development and evaluation of staff and volunteers.

Our primary focus with this outcome has been to strengthen the bridge between the NRPA required courses and the NCTRC required courses. In this way students move more
seamlessly between the general recreation management and the more specific management related to Recreation Therapy.

b) **Students are able to demonstrate skills in program strategies and will have the ability to organize and conduct leisure programs and services in a variety of recreation settings.**

The department has increased the use of adaptive equipment in recreation programming to give students more experience using equipment for special populations. The internship requirements for Recreation Therapy have also recently been increased by NCTRC to 560 hours (up from 480). These additional hours relate in part to a recognized need for more program execution experience. Our students have actively taken the larger internship so that they will be in compliance with the new rule when it comes into effect in 2013.

c) **Students will have an understanding of principles and procedures for assessment, planning and evaluation of recreation programs and services.**

The department has an ongoing commitment to excellence in this area as professionals in the industry have recently become more concerned with the evaluation of programs and concrete analysis of data in relation to program effectiveness. This directly affects budgeting for programs in both the public and private sectors.

In Recreation Therapy, a new NCTRC required course, RPTA 115, provides further experience for students with regards to assessment in relation to documentation.

d) **Students will have knowledge of the legal foundations and responsibilities of leisure service agencies, and of the legislative process and the impact of policy formation on leisure behaviors and service in all levels of government, community organizations, and business enterprise.**

The legal issues for Recreation Therapy, especially those related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have been covered in core courses required by both RPM and RT students. For RT, further emphasis on legal issues has been put into RPTA 115 and 116 so that the department remains in compliance with both NRPA and NCTRC standards.

6. **Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.**

[Please limit your response to 300 words or less]

RPTA has an Advisory Committee of professionals in the various recreation fields, many of which are alumni of the department. The department’s faculty meet three times annually with the Advisory Committee to discuss curriculum, accreditation standards and the specific concerns of the various sectors of the leisure services fields that our students will become employed in. The Advisory Committee review recent curricular changes and also perform a SWOT Analysis with department faculty to determine new directions for the next academic year.

In addition, alumni are part of our annual portfolio review. Each year alumni are contacted through faculty, the Advisory Committee and through online sources such as Facebook, to participate in a review of student portfolios. The review covers not only the content, but also the quality of the student work, the rubric comments by faculty and the
professionalism of the portfolio itself (including cover letter, resume, personal mission statement, career goals and portfolio organization). Alumni are actively invited to make comments on the portfolios and the feedback has been positive and helpful. For example, when the cover letters were determined to be one of the weaker elements of the portfolio, RPTA 101 was modified to include a mandatory visit the career center for career planning and cover letter review.

7. Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

[Please limit your response to 300 words or less]

The Recreation Therapy Concentration does not exceed the outcomes identified as important by our accrediting body, the NRPA, our internship agency supervisors and our Advisory Committee. The department has worked hard to make our program as efficient as possible, and still maintain the high standards of our national accreditation. RT currently does not exceed the 2013 requirements of NCTRC, which is when most of our current students will take the certification examination. Our coursework is very effective in meeting the standards with the minimal number of “core” courses and required internship hours. The coursework also effectively meets the Baccalaureate Learning Goals. Finally, the RT program has been designed to include only core courses so that students do not need elective courses.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

[Please limit your response to 200 words or less]

Recreation Therapy is primarily a clinical occupation, which makes it distinct from the Recreation and Park Management Concentration job placements.

Over the last six years, the department has maintained a close connection with NCTRC and the NRPA to make sure the program is meeting all of the requirements. The department has changed the name of Therapeutic Recreation to Recreation Therapy, renamed and redesigned courses to remain current with national standards, and created a new course, RPTA 115, in documentation, as required by NCTRC. In short, we value Recreation Therapy greatly.

The program in Recreation Therapy is growing in numbers. This program is tightly assessed by several methods, including two sets of national standards. The national average for first-time passes on the NCTRC certification exam is 51%. Our students’ first time pass rate is significantly higher at 70%.
Appendix

The online appendix contains the following information which may help the committee:

- Exit Exam for Bachelor of Science
- Internship Agency Supervisor Survey
- Portfolio Guidelines
- Portfolio Grading Rubrics
- RPTA Course Listing

(http://www.csus.edu/indiv/s/shawg extra/IPP_Appendix.htm)