PROCEEDINGS

National Curriculum Conference on Parks and Recreation

Salt Lake City, Utah

October 27 - November 1, 1997
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Foreword

The National Curriculum Conference, held in Salt Lake City, October 27-November 1, 1997, involved a select group of park and recreation practitioners and educators. The meeting was held in conjunction with the National Recreation and Park Congress and was sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association, the American Association for Leisure and Recreation, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, the Academy for Leisure Sciences, and the Round Table Associates, Inc. The delegates were selected by the conference planning committee and the presidents of the various branches of the National Recreation and Park Association according to special interests, regional representation, and levels of responsibility. This by invitation meeting began Monday evening, October 27, with a reception. Prior to the meeting, each delegate had received a copy of Dr. Geoffrey Godbey’s manuscript, Leisure and Leisure Services in the Twenty-first Century, published by Venture Press.

Tuesday, October 28, was a major workday, with background presentations being given by H. Douglas Sessoms, William Niepeth, Mark Searle, and Marilyn Jensen. The delegates were then divided into six work groups: Undergraduate Education, Graduate Education, Internships and Externships, Recruitment and Placement, Continuing Education, and Institutional Support. Each group was challenged to identify key issues and concerns and to offer strategies and recommendations in light of those concerns. After a brief period of discussion, each work group gave a preliminary report to the delegates at large, responded to questions and recessed to work independently over the next three days in preparation of its final report.

The final reports were given Saturday morning, November 1, at a general session of the National Recreation and Park Congress where the Curriculum Conference delegates received additional input from those attending the NRPA Congress. Each work group was then asked to review its report before submitting it for publication in the proceedings. Some questions were raised at the general NRPA Congress session relating to the disposition and implementation of the proceedings and recommendations. It was observed by Dr. Betty van der Smissen that the delegates had spent considerable time on current patterns and behaviors but the critical issue of future behaviors had not been given proper attention. For park and recreation curricula and continuing education efforts to be successful it is imperative that those responsible understand the forces of change which will impact on both the content and delivery of these efforts. It was recommended that a second conference focusing upon those topics be held in the near future.

The final meeting of the Curriculum Conference delegates occurred Saturday afternoon at a luncheon where Tony Mobley gave his observations as a conference summary. Reports of the six work committees and presentations given by the five speakers constitute this proceedings. In the epilogue section a series of challenges and questions still to be addressed are presented.

We are appreciative of the effort of the National Recreation and Park Association staff, especially Dr. Van Anderson, and Anne Sessoms for their help in the development of the conference and the finalizing of this report. We are also appreciative for the cooperation of Venture Press in allowing us to have access to Dr. Godbey’s manuscript prior to publication.
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Prologue

The 1997 National Curriculum Conference

H. Douglas Sessoms
Professor Emeritus, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

For the most part citizens of the twentieth century in the United States and Canada have referred to this field of service as Parks and Recreation. Historians and text writers cite that we evolved from two separate movements: the playground movement and the park movement. In time, with program expansions and services to all ages of the population, our playground departments became departments of recreation and a profession began to emerge.

Professions are defined by their mandates. They differ from trades and disciplines in that they are problem centered, developing the techniques, methods and theories necessary to fulfill their mandate. Most park and recreation professionals view ours as the provision and maintenance of areas, facilities and programs which allow the public to enjoy certain forms of activity, those most often associated with parks, athletic facilities and community center services.

Professions draw their strength from the public, particularly when they provide the services the public expects and in a manner consistent with those expectations. Support declines when ambiguity exists and ambiguity often results from differences in perception of the mandate. When the profession and the public are not in agreement about the methods of service delivery and/or the nature of the services to be provided, confusion results and support is withdrawn. It is important, no, necessary, for a profession to understand its mandate.1

The park and recreation situation is analogous to that of the medical profession. Physicians were never mandated to handle all aspects of health care. Theirs is a specific role within the health care field in which there are a multitude of health professionals and technicians. Likewise for parks and recreation. We are only one of several professional or technical groups involved in the provision of leisure services and, like our physician counterparts, we may assume a major leadership responsibility for the field at large but our role is well defined.

Furthermore, just as general medicine is the core of medical training and practice, public park and recreation services is our center. Specializations within the profession arise to accommodate specific service delivery needs and may take on the characteristics of a profession in their own right but they are not the core. They may differ radically and appear to have non-common roots as is the case with psychiatry and dermatology, but these specializations are built upon the general medical core. In parks and recreation it often seems as if therapeutic recreation specialists and natural resource managers share little in common yet basic to both is parks and recreation. This is certainly the underlying assumption of our certification and accreditation efforts.

In our earlier history, the relationship of professional preparation to the practice of parks and recreation management and operations was clearly understood by both practitioners and educators. Most recreation educators had been recreation practitioners before entering the teaching specialty. They were men and women of action, given to the development and furthering of knowledge about the practice of parks and recreation, especially in the public setting. They also acknowledged the
application of these principles and techniques to other areas of service delivery, e.g., youth work, commercial recreation, camping and the like. There was little ambiguity as to what was the role of the park and recreation professional or the knowledge and skills which graduates should possess when they entered the profession's work force. Similarly, the public and the profession shared the same understanding as to the role of the park and recreation department. It was to provide facilities, programming and services in a manner that allowed all access to them. Participants were viewed as constituents, not customers; there was an interdependent relationship between those who provided the activities and programs and maintained the resources and those who participated in and utilized them. And even though those programs were largely enjoyed by our middle income groups, all had access. Because of this, Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed our parks as Americans' most democratizing institution, a place where persons of all walks of life could come and share the same environment and experience; likewise for athletics, community festivals and instructional programs.²

Two events in the 1960's changed the pattern of staffing park and recreation faculty and our perception of the role of the profession. One was the rapid expansion of park and recreation curricula as universities attempted to meet student demand and interest. Over three hundred universities and colleges established a park and recreation major during that decade. There simply were not enough graduates with doctorates in parks and recreation to meet the demand. Consequently, recreation and park curricula turned to related fields for their instructional personnel. Many had limited experience and contact with park and recreation practitioners but did have a strong interest in leisure. In many instances that interest was more theoretical and conceptual than instrumental. They were more likely to teach the sociology or psychology of leisure than program planning or the design of recreation areas and facilities.

The second event was equally consequential. Universities and colleges were attempting to employ individuals who might further the university's research agenda and attract research dollars. With a growing awareness of scholarship and the need to publish in refereed research journals in order to earn tenure or be promoted, a new breed of faculty was being created. Like their colleagues from related disciplines, they, too, preferred the more esoteric. By 1970 the pattern was well established and recreation education and recreation practice were not necessarily one and the same. One has only to look at the indices of the articles published in our major research journals for verification of this point. Rarely are articles dealing with program strategies, operations techniques, or human resource development published. To many recreation educators these areas are perceived as being technical rather than conceptual, therefore not subjects for our research journals or scholarly writing.

Park and recreation educators have chosen as their model for professional preparation that of the academic disciplines, not the professions. Physicians have never been fearful of describing in great detail a new technique for suturing or a treatment program to improve health care. Their scholarship can deal with any subject which enables the practitioner to be more effective in the practice of the profession. How much further ahead we might be if parks and recreation were to hold the same view.

Are recreation practitioners and recreation educators dealing with the same issues and do they hold a common view as to what we are about? Our accreditation standards suggest so but not the content of many of our research articles. The hiring patterns of recreation educators might also suggest dissonance. In some communities upwards of fifty percent of those hired for recreation positions of park and recreation agencies do not have a degree in parks and recreation, and this at a
time when hundreds of graduates with recreation degrees are seeking employment as professionals. These and related concerns beg a review of what we are trying to accomplish in our programs of professional preparation and continuing education.

With whom do recreation educators identify? According to a recent article in the SPRE Newsletter, their identification is with the Society of Park and Recreation Educators. That is natural and expected. Branch affiliation is encouraged by NRPA practices. Approximately one fourth of the SPRE members hold secondary memberships in other NRPA branches. Of that group (154), seventy five were secondary members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. That was nearly three times the number of SPRE members who also hold secondary membership in the American Park and Recreation Society and approximately the same number who are members of the Travel/Tourism and Aging sections. Yet it is APRS which constitutes the majority of professional memberships of NRPA. If Parks and Recreation is the core of what we do, and if our educators are seeking to be in greater contact with practitioners should not their secondary membership be in the branch which is the dominant practice of the profession?

The late Charles K. Brightbill warned of this potential. He suggested that from time to time activities on the periphery of the profession would appear to be more interesting and exciting than that which was central but we must keep our eyes fixed on that which is core. For parks and recreation that means the delivery of our services and the fulfillment of our social mandate to provide programs and resources for individuals to engage in pursuit of some of their free time expressions and that those opportunities should be available to all segments of the population.

Perhaps it is inevitable that professions as they develop go through stages such as these. We may have assumed when we created the accreditation process and involved hundreds of practitioners in the development of our standards that educators and practitioners were in agreement as to what was critical in the educating of future professionals. This meeting of the minds often occurred at national conferences on curricula, a popular mechanism during the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies. But it has been over twenty years since the last one was held. Much has changed within the practice since then.

It is not the responsibility of the Council on Accreditation to state what the criteria of professional preparation should be. That is the responsibility of the profession. The Council has seen several revisions of its standards but these have occurred primarily for purposes of clarification. The business of credentialing is the business of the profession at large, not the responsibility of educators or the Council alone.

As indicated, the relevance of what our universities teach and the relationship between educators and practitioners is an issue of long standing. It is a healthy issue and requires continuous discourse. SPRE has engaged in such a dialogue using contemporary technologies as its medium. Under the leadership of Bill Niepoth it has invited both educators and practitioners to interact, to share their views on critical issues confronting parks and recreation practice. The results of electronic conferencing were highlighted at the 1997 SPRE Teaching Institute. This is a positive step but one which will involve educators more than practitioners just as the results of the various symposia conducted by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration on the future of recreation services are read rarely outside the Academy community. It is time to bring these and other professional groups together for an old-fashioned dialogue.
There has been no curriculum conference since 1973. It seems appropriate to hold this one in the 60th anniversary year of our first curriculum conference. Such an effort should involve representatives of our many special interests - both educators and practitioners. It should focus on current and future practices, the dynamics of change and the forces which are affecting our futures. That is why this meeting is being held and why you have been invited to help the profession assess its educational efforts. The results could effectively guide us into the twenty-first century.

Footnotes:

In 1995, the SPRE Board of Directors approved a proposal for an e-mail discussion on professional preparation. This was seen as an approach that would permit relatively large numbers of people to interact, without the need for travel expenses or a suitable location and time-frame for an on-site meeting. As the concept emerged, it became apparent that data resulting from the discussions could feed into plans for both a session at the 1997 SPRE Teaching Institute and the 1997 National Curriculum Conference.

Changes in the field, as well as in higher education and society itself, intensify the need for continuing attention to professional preparation. Chris Jarvi, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, City of Anaheim and 1997-98 President of NRPA, was a participant in the electronic project. Early in the discussions, he commented on change and suggested that the stakes are high. That perception serves as an appropriate introduction for this summary report.

... our communities are demanding a professional with a philosophy much different than we obtained in school and we must either evolve to adopt that philosophy or suffer the consequences. Should we ignore what is happening, in terms of the need for brokered services, gang prevention, the economics of amenities, wellness/fitness and neighborhood improvement... we will lose our ability to effectively impact the environment in which we work. Ultimately, we will either become insignificant players or perish. ... (Chris Jarvi)

Background Information

The primary purpose of the electronic discussions was to identify issues, and associated perceptions, related to professional preparation. A secondary purpose was to gather information about the process itself. The initial format was seven discussion groups, each with a moderator. Three groups focused on undergraduate education and one each on graduate programs, continuing education, accreditation and certification, and teaching and technology. Near the end of the project, all seven groups were merged into one overall listserv to facilitate review of the data generated. The discussions ran from mid-October, 1996 until early March, 1997.

Fourteen papers, related to the various topics, were posted on the SPRE Web page. These papers were intended to encourage and focus discussion. Five were developed especially for the project. Nine papers, related to other discussion areas, were adopted from previously published sources.

Eighty-two people subscribed to one of the seven discussion groups; this number included 15 practitioners and 67 educators. These individuals represented all geographic regions and most of the branches of the Association. Every group included at least one practitioner; two of the undergraduate education groups included a community college educator. A total of 497 messages
were exchanged. This included some housekeeping communication. Activity varied by group. Individual participation varied also. The typical participant sent 10 to 20 messages. Twelve educators and one practitioner sent none. However, the evaluation of the process suggested that all participants read the messages.

The Project Coordinator, who followed individual interactions on-line and later analyzed hard copies of all messages, initially identified issues that emerged from the discussions. All participants received a copy of those issues that seemed evident early in the discussions, and a request for reactions. Near the end of the project, participants received an expanded list of issues as part of a draft of the final report. The draft also included perceptions about the discussion process. The cover message for the draft asked for responses, specifically for the identification of any needed changes. No suggestions were received.

Issues Discussed

Thirty-one issues emerged and were presented at the 1997 SPRE Teaching Institute where those in attendance were asked to rate each of the issues in terms of their importance. Those issues stated as being highly important (4 points or greater on a 6 point scale) and stated in question form are:

- How do changes in society and the field influence professional preparation? (4.44; 1st)
- How does graduate education differ from what occurs at the undergraduate level? (4.11; 2)
- What is the body of knowledge upon which undergraduate education is based? (4.07; 3rd)
- What should we be trying to accomplish in undergraduate education? (4.06; 4th)
- What is the desired relationship between theory and applications at the graduate level? (4.04; 5th)

The total list of the thirty-nine issues identified by average score and rank, grouped by content heading, are:

Undergraduate Education

1 - How do changes in society and the field influence professional preparation? (4.44; 1st)
2 - What should we be trying to accomplish in undergraduate education? (4.06; 4th)
3 - How can we develop a sense of social responsibility in students? (3.95; 6th)
4 - To what degree should undergraduate programs offer specializations? (2.94; 23rd)
5 - How does commercial recreation course work fit as a part of professional preparation? (2.85; 24th)
6 - What kinds of educational experiences will lead to the desired end products? (3.39; 7th)
7 - What is the body of knowledge upon which undergraduate education is based? (4.07; 3rd)
8 - What is the relationship of general education to professional preparation? (3.43; 14th)
9 - What is the role of community colleges in the overall professional preparation scheme? (2.78; 27th)
10 - What are the roles of students, practitioners and educators in curriculum planning? (3.24; 16.5)
11 - To what degree and in what ways does program alignment influence curriculum? (2.80; 26th)
12 - Is it appropriate to identify professional preparation and related matters, with "leisure"? (2.81; 25th)

Graduate Education

13 - How does graduate education differ from what occurs at the undergraduate level? (4.11; 2nd)
14 - What is the desired relationship between theory and applications at the graduate level? (4.04; 5th)
15 - Should internships and/or prior professional experience be required? (3.48; 10.5)
16 - Does the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) play a useful role? (2.48; 30th)
17 - Should there be more content in doctoral programs that focuses on teaching? (3.65; 8th)

Accreditation and Certification

18 - What are the primary advantages and disadvantages of accreditation? (3.11; 21.5)
19 - Are accreditation processes effective and appropriate? (3.48; 10.5)
20 - What are the relationships between outcome assessment and accreditation? (3.44; 12.5)
21 - How can certification programs be strengthened? (3.13; 20th)
22 - Does the CLP exam accomplish what it is intended to accomplish? (3.17; 19th)
23 - Is "Certified Leisure Professional" an appropriate designation? (2.70; 29th)
24 - Can certification be linked to accreditation? (2.74; 28th)
25 - Should certification be a requisite for leadership positions in NRPA? (2.44; 31st)

Continuing Education

26 - What forms of continuing education are most appropriate? (3.37; 15th)
27 - Who should provide continuing education programs? (3.11; 21.5)
28 - How can we assess the effectiveness of continuing education programs? (3.24; 16.5)

Teaching and Technology

29 - What are appropriate uses of technology in professional preparation? (3.56; 9th)
30 - Do the benefits of using computers in instruction outweigh the costs? (3.22; 18th)
31 - What is the best balance between technology and more traditional methods? (3.44; 12.5)

Practitioner-Educator Comparisons.

The method used to collect ratings enabled comparisons between practitioners and educators. There was much commonality. The issue of relevant changes in society and the field was rated highest by both groups. All four of the other key issues were ranked 4.00 or greater by both groups with one exception: what professional preparation programs should be trying to accomplish. Practitioners rated it 3.80 as opposed to 4.10 for educators.

Two additional issues received 4.00 or higher ratings by educators but not by practitioners; one related to developing social responsibility in students (4.10 for educators, 3.50 for practitioners), and the second to including teaching content in doctoral programs (4.00 for educators, 2.30 for practitioners). This last difference was greater than for any other issue.

Three issues appeared on the practitioner list that did not receive average ratings of at least 4.00 by educators. The importance of internships and/or pre-professional experience requirements for graduate students was rated 4.40 by practitioners and 3.20 by educators. This difference was the second greatest for the two groups. The other two issues related to the uses of technology (practitioners 4.10, educators 3.40) and the nature of undergraduate education (practitioners 4.00, educators 3.90).
Perceptions Related to Top Issues

Perhaps not unexpected, the top five issues dealt with undergraduate and graduate education, specifically their intent, outcomes and the forces shaping their content and processes. Briefly let us look at each of these..

1. How do changes in society and the field influence professional preparation?

In the adaptation of his 1992 NRPA Crawford Lecture Chris Jarvi challenged the field to respond to changes in society. He noted that Gray and Greben had identified the need to do so over two decades earlier, and observed that we have not heeded their advice. He suggested that the social and political conditions that concerned the two authors in the 1970s are more complex today and are increasing in geometric proportions.

Tom Goodale (George Mason University) commented on several changes and developments that have possible implications for the field. He focused on four specific conditions: (1) technology and its potential influences on higher education; (2) increasing isolation of individuals who work and play with fewer and fewer meaningful contacts with others . . . and the possible impacts for service delivery, particularly the need to rebuild a sense of community; (3) the continuing disparity between groups in terms of income and opportunity, with consequences for those who cannot afford the costs of private and commercial services; (4) the eroding of the base of support for public opportunities, including recreation . . . and the fact that those who lose most are those who have the least amount of influence on political decisions. Relatively few comments in the electronic discussion focused directly on these or other social issues. However, assumptions about them and the field were evident at many points.

Tom Jelcick (Morale, Welfare and Recreation, USN, Seattle) suggested that there has been a paradigm shift in the field. He noted the move toward targeting specific groups and program objectives, greater brokering of services and also cooperative efforts with other entities, more reliance on self-supporting service promoted by sophisticated marketing, and increased use of performance-based evaluations. He observed that in the Navy MWR Program there is more willingness today to “think outside the box,” as opposed to relying on historical success. His comments were supported by participants from other agency backgrounds, suggesting that these shifts are evident throughout the field.

2. What should we be trying to accomplish in undergraduate education? Two primary generalizations related to this question emerged from the discussions: one, the understandings graduates need to have about the field and its mandate; the other, the skills graduates must possess.

A Clear Sense of Purpose. The baccalaureate graduate’s effectiveness depends on the ability to articulate a vision for the field; one that is clear enough to guide individual practice, and strong enough to sustain effort in the face of inevitable difficulties. This vision should emphasize the contributions of recreation and parks to human well-being and the quality of community life. There must be a realization that the field, and therefore personal action, are parts of the larger social system. The graduate should be aware of relevant conditions in society, and must see the impacts of these on our field and the implications for his or her own specific responsibilities. Part of this involves sensitivity to human circumstances, compassion, and a commitment to help others. The graduate will need to deal with continuing change; to anticipate it, if possible, and respond appropriately to it within the framework of the missions of the field.
Process Skills and Technical Competence. The graduate's ability to fulfill the vision depends on a variety of process skills. There are several themes here. One set involves critical thinking, problem solving and planning. Another revolves around functioning in interpersonal and interagency situations: the ability to facilitate the actions of others, work as a team member, develop networks and build coalitions, collaborate with other people and entities, deal with conflict, and negotiate. Given the fact of change, the graduate also should know how to keep on learning and be motivated to do so. These process skills do not eliminate the need for technical competence in areas such as programming, administration, budget management, and facility operation. But graduates will maximize the effectiveness of these technical skills when they use them in conjunction with the process competencies. Also, several newer professional skills must be added. One of these is the ability to "broker" services. Others relate specifically to working with community problems, such as gang activity, homeless persons, and teen-age parents.

Employer Expectations. The three discussion papers that directly addressed the question of employer expectations and graduate competencies (written by Chris Jarvi; Lyle Laverty, USFS; and Genie Zakrzeewski, St. Louis County Parks and Recreation) supported these generalizations.

3. What kinds of educational experiences will lead to the desired end products [in terms of the characteristics of graduates]? How can we produce the kind of graduate described above? The focus of the discussions related to this question was more on general curricular considerations than specific course work.

Substantial discussion in one of the groups focused on the importance of developing and reinforcing a desirable undergraduate "culture," one based on the traditional values of the recreation and park movement ... one that emphasizes service and environmental responsibility. The unique contributions of the field to individuals and communities are central elements. The objective would be to encourage student assimilation of the culture. To create and maintain such a culture, faculty would have to be clear about the mission of the field and the vision they hold for students and communicate them consistently and in various ways, including modeling behaviors which reinforce the culture. They could emphasize the culture in entrance interviews, and assess student assimilation of it in subsequent interviews. Early student contacts with practitioners could strengthen faculty efforts. Also, use of upper-division student mentors might reinforce the culture.

The issue of specialization was raised by several participants. The key issues were summarized in an article by Karla Henderson (UNC-Chapel Hill) who observed that there is a tendency toward curricular specializations, and suggested that this increases the risk of losing sight of the overall mission of the field. Opinion varied, but there seemed to be less support for specialization than for it (with the exception of therapeutic recreation, and possibly resort and commercial recreation and park management). Some observed that there is insufficient time at the undergraduate level to offer specializations. Others suggested that specialization essentially is only the application of general principles and techniques in different settings. There seemed to be consensus on the need for a strong, common core in any case. There also was much support for an interdisciplinary approach to curricula.

4. What is the body of knowledge upon which undergraduate education is based? Although this issue received high ratings, there was very little in the discussions to suggest what our body of knowledge is. There was some agreement that, whatever it is, we have either not defined it sufficiently or we are not able to articulate it clearly.
Part of the discussion centered on leisure content in curricula. These exchanges seemed to be related to the body of knowledge issue. One set of perceptions suggested that leisure content is an important part of the curriculum. Mary Parr (Kent State University) observed that the concept of leisure cannot be separated from the philosophic base of the field and from what the field stands for in terms of individuals, families and communities. Other exchanges focused on the appropriateness of the term as an identity for other programs or academic units. Several suggested that such an association is counterproductive. The term may not be understood well by other academic disciplines on campus and, perhaps more importantly, it may not have much meaning for the general public.

5. What is the appropriate relationship between theory and application?

While discussion focused on this matter at the graduate level, the question has implications for undergraduate programs. Mary Parr noted the relationship and the implications for professional preparation, acknowledging that the field appropriately draws upon theories from many other disciplines but that we are also striving to develop our own unique body of professional knowledge that includes "leisure theory." Dr. Parr stated that curricula tend to present leisure theory in a way that is divorced from practice. This approach assumes that students will be able to make the appropriate applications if they "know" the theory. However, undergraduates frequently do not have sufficient professional experiences to make this jump so they tend to dismiss theory as irrelevant. She suggested an "integrated" approach that helps students see relationships and implications. In the discussion itself, comments suggested the importance of both theory and applications. One participant indicated that, in her experiences, academicians tend to put too much emphasis on theory. Another individual noted the disadvantages of undue focus on practice; without a strong theoretical base, the "career ladder plateaus quickly" for new professionals.

6. What are the essential characteristics of graduate education? How should these differ from those at the undergraduate level?

Ron Hodgson (CSU, Chico) identified the essential differences between the undergraduate, master's degree and doctoral levels. He suggested that undergraduate education focuses on the application of standard or proven methods to solve relatively common problems. At the master's level, the focus shifts more to synthesis; to bringing together knowledge (frequently from other field) to deal with unusual and unexpected problems, where "off the shelf" solutions are not appropriate. This often involves evaluation where no set standards exist. Doctoral programs are characterized by skepticism and inquiry; by the encouragement to scrutinize accepted principles and beliefs of the profession and seek new and unexpected knowledge. Education at this level should extend synthesis skills developed earlier, and lead to recombination of knowledge in novel ways. It may lead to paradigm shifts. In the discussions, Doris Berryman (New York University) also commented on differences between graduate levels. She noted that specialization is more appropriate in MA/MS curricula than in doctoral programs, and suggested that doctoral programs should expand the horizons of students and develop national and worldwide perspectives.

Karla Henderson observed that graduate programs differ from undergraduate education in terms of emphasis on research. While BA/BS students should have some research skills, that content will be much more evident in post-baccalaureate programs. Dr. Henderson expressed concern that we may not be preparing students at the master's level who are motivated to use research findings in their professional work or willing to conduct relevant studies in their agencies.
Graduates with doctorates in the field typically accept university or college teaching positions. Some of the discussion suggested that doctoral curricula do not prepare students to function effectively in such roles. Programs usually do not include any course work on how to teach. In addition, graduate courses tend to focus on such areas as research, philosophy, and the supporting social sciences. This is appropriate; however, those areas typically constitute a small part of what faculty teach at the baccalaureate level. If graduates do not have prior professional experience, they will have very little background to draw upon in their own classrooms. Some participants noted that they had benefited from graduate teaching assistantships, and also from mentor teachers. However, those who commented on this issue generally wished there had been more preparation for the teaching role.

Other Issues

Continuing Education. While none of the issues related to continuing education received average ratings of 4.00 or greater, the topic did generate considerable discussion. For that reason, a short comment seems appropriate. The majority of the exchanges related to the kinds of continuing education that are most effective, and the best ways to evaluate such programs. Participants felt that continuing education should be defined very broadly, and that a variety of both formats and providers is appropriate. One individual observed that the roles of professional organizations, in providing CE opportunities, may become even more important as colleges and universities continue to struggle for funding and make organizational adjustments. Discussion of evaluation methods included the point that there are two aspects to evaluate; delivery and outcomes. Methods need to move beyond simple assessments of how attendees felt about the session; the emphasis must be on what people learned that they can apply in their jobs. There was difference of opinion about whether or not appropriate evaluation methods exist.

Another part of the discussion related to CEUs (continuing education units) and their relationship to maintenance of certified status. The importance of criteria for designating CEU sessions at NRPA Congresses was identified. One participant suggested that too many sessions receive this designation, and also that there is too much pressure for members to "get their CEUs." He observed that both continuing education and continuing professional development are important, but that we should distinguish between them.

Technology and Teaching. While the issues associated with technology also did not receive average ratings of 4.00 or higher, the relationship of the general topic to change justify a brief statement. Jeff Hill (UNC. Wilmington) noted the rush by educators to use technology. He observed the tendency to see educational technology as synonymous with computer hardware and software, and pointed out that the computer is only one tool among many available to educators. Dr. Hill suggested that relatively few questions about educational efficacy are being asked; questions about use that must be considered in the larger arenas of educational practice and contexts. Discussion participants also supported the importance of instructors analyzing their own situations and the needs of their students when making decisions about technology. Several individuals noted that computers are expensive, not just in terms of initial investments but more so in terms of time and money to keep current. Other impacts emerged. One was that older faculty members who did not "grow up" with computers as many younger faculty have, might be threatened if academic units (intentionally or not) create too much pressure to change or set expectations unrealistically high. Similarly, the implication that traditional methods are "not as good" could be threatening to some instructors.
**General Education. Roles of Community Colleges. Social Responsibility.** General education was one of the issues that emerged but there was little discussion of it, either in terms of its relationship to the body of knowledge or to professional preparation generally. This is somewhat surprising given accreditation standards, and recent attention on many campuses to the nature and purposes of general education. There also was limited comment on the issue of community college education. Initially, there was an opportunity in the project for participants to subscribe to a separate listserv group for this area. Only two individuals expressed interest. Therefore, it was assumed that the topic would be covered in the discussions of undergraduate education. However, there were three comments related to community colleges: one on the transfer and career missions of two-year programs; one on job markets for graduates; and one on specialization.

Dr. Goodale's paper was the stimulus for initial comments on social responsibility, and the subject surfaced early in the discussions. It also was implied in the interchanges about an undergraduate culture, and reflected in comments about developing a clear sense of purpose in students. However, the issue did not generate as much direct attention as it might have, given the fairly high ratings it received. Specific comments that were exchanged suggested that encouraging appropriate student attitudes toward social problems is a worthy goal, but one that is difficult to achieve.

**Concluding Comment**

The core of this project was the e-mail exchange. Practitioners and educators who sent messages represented a broad spectrum of interests and backgrounds. Their thoughts, and ideas contained in the papers posted on the SPRE Web page, support the contention that change is needed. Another thread that ran through the discussions was the importance of focusing on student needs and characteristics when considering change. A message from Chris Howe illustrates this concept very well. Although Dr. Howe was referring to graduate education, her comment applies at all levels. It seems most appropriate to conclude this summary with one of the insights she shared in the discussions.

... a rich and enriching graduate education is one that provides systematic opportunities for the examination of our beliefs, values, and previous experiences. Whether those deliberately created opportunities come through Carnegie Units, volunteer hours, assistantships, or paid full-time employment may become moot as technology and perceived cost-savings lead us to distance learning, time-variable degree programs, and a concern with retention and graduation. Perhaps the "ideal" graduate education in recreation and leisure studies will/would/could be one that is truly learner-focused ... based on a thorough and accurate assessment of the learner and his or her needs, interests, (and) styles ...
Views of American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration Members on Selected Curriculum Issues

Mark S. Searle* and Richard Gitelson
Department of Recreation and Tourism Management
Arizona State University West

The issue of curriculum development in recreation and parks has largely been left to our academic institutions and oversight organizations such as the Council on Accreditation over the past several decades. It has been some twenty-five years since the field as a whole has had an opportunity to consider and reflect on the nature of our curriculum and extended education activities. In order to have a better understanding of the views of practitioners in recreation and parks concerning the education of aspiring professionals this survey was undertaken involving members of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA).

The Academy represents some of the most senior and committed professionals in the field. As such, it was felt that such a source would be useful for input concerning their views of curricula. The data derived from this study should not be considered representative of the breadth and scope of the field. It was simply an identifiable group with a strong commitment to parks and recreation who would have an important perspective given that many have served and continue to serve in key leadership positions throughout the United States. The outcomes from this study provide one source of input into this national curriculum conference.

Method

The subjects for the study were selected from the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration Directory. All members excluding those who had academic appointments were sent a mail questionnaire. The survey was designed with the assistance of a committee within the Academy. Forty-five members responded with usable returns. Of those who responded, 37 were male and 8 were female. This is not particularly surprising given the preponderance of males who are members of the Academy. All of the respondents had at least a bachelor's degree and 37 of the 45 reported having a master's or Ph.D. degree. The content areas for Masters or higher degrees were largely in recreation and parks, leisure studies, or parks management with 25 of the 37 reporting their degrees held in that area. The rest were distributed among public administration, business and planning.

The questionnaire poses a series of questions concerning accreditation, licensure, decisions about hiring, curriculum content, continuing education, and internships. The following is a brief summary of those particular findings.

Findings

In the first series of questions concerning accreditation and licensure the respondents indicated that sixty two percent (62%) were knowledgeable about the existing accreditation standards. There were 19% of the respondents who reported that they had hired staff from only accredited programs and 60.5% who stated that they were familiar with the latest test content for the certified leisure professional (CLP) exam. A total of 22.7% had served on an accreditation team. It was clear
among the subjects of this particular survey that they had a fair amount of knowledge about accreditation and a fair amount of knowledge also of the CLP test exam. Of those who reported familiarity with the licensure exam, we asked them if the test measured what young professionals needed to know in order to be effective. Of those who responded, 15 (33% of the total sample) answered unequivocally yes. There was only one who indicated no, so among those who knew of the test exam it seemed as if they felt very strong that this was a useful exam.

Of the group who were studied, 45% indicated that they would prefer to hire a graduate from a specialist degree program such as sport management or arts administration for specialist positions in their department. Fifty-five percent would rather hire a recreation and park graduate for such specialty positions.

**Curriculum Content**

We then asked respondents to comment on a series of nine different curriculum content areas. Each of these curriculum content areas was drawn from the accreditation standards used by academic programs throughout the United States. In each case, respondents were asked to describe the importance of each item and secondly to rate the degree which they felt young professionals graduating have high levels or poor levels of knowledge in these same areas. Responses for the importance measure were on a four point scale from very important to not at all important while responses for the knowledge scale were on a three point scale (very good, satisfactory, or poor) with a fourth answer category labeled “unable to rate.”

The results for the curriculum content areas are depicted in Tables 1 and 2. Briefly summarized, it is clear that most of the respondents perceive our graduates having satisfactory knowledge on many items with perhaps only four items which had substantially high numbers in the poor category. The respondents also indicated that not all of the items that are in the accreditation standards are as important as certain others. It is interesting that among the items seemed most important, writing and public speaking skills is the one area where professionals feel graduates have the least knowledge. These data suggest that there is considerable work yet to be done to determine what levels of excellence undergraduate students need to be able to achieve in order to perform well upon completion of their studies.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual foundations</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the profession</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the leisure services</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivery system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program planning and</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment, planning &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; management</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative &amp; legal aspects</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &amp; public speaking</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Ratings of Knowledge of Curriculum Content Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Very Good Knowledge</th>
<th>Satisfactory Knowledge</th>
<th>Poor Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual foundations</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the profession</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the leisure services</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivery system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program planning &amp; implementation</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment, planning &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; management</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative &amp; legal</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &amp; public speaking</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the questions of importance and knowledge levels of various curriculum content areas, respondents were asked if there were particular areas in the curriculum that they perceived as being over emphasized and also were there areas in which there was an under emphasis. The three areas which were most often cited as being over emphasized were concepts of recreation and leisure, therapeutic recreation, and programming.

Respondents cited several items in response to the open ended questioning concerning under emphasis. The first among those identified as being under emphasized was conflict management/negotiation and collaboration skills which could be subsumed under the broader heading of leadership and supervision, but there was a clearly specific interest in the areas of conflict management, negotiation, and collaboration. Also identified as being an area of under emphasis were communication skills, those being written, public speaking and presentation skills. In light of the comments the respondents provided on this area and when asked about curriculum content, this was a consistent response. Also noted by respondents was the lack of content in resource management, financial management, strategic planning, the benefits of recreation and parks, and personnel management.

Views of Faculty Members

Faculty members’ expertise was the subject of the next question. Respondents were asked to what extent faculty members with whom they had come in contact in university recreation and park programs had adequate expertise in the operation and management of parks and recreation services. There were four comments that were consistently raised by respondents and among those, one was raised by 18 different respondents. That comment concerned the fact that too many faculty had no or limited experience in the field, and they found this to be especially true of recent graduates of doctoral degree granting programs who are now teaching. Other comments concerning the perceptions of faculty members indicated the need for ongoing contact with the field because of the speed of change and that the faculty needed to use more professionals in the classroom in order to ensure the kind of relevance they felt was important for students receive. The positive perspectives that did exist tended to be tied to the specific programs with whom the respondent had had an experience.
Continuing Education

The final category concerning professional education was about continuing education. The respondents were asked to identify what conferences they attended and were also asked to what conferences they generally sent their staff. These data are reported in Table 3. As can be seen from the data it is clear that there was a preference for more focused training events like the various NRPA and other agency sponsored schools such as Executive Development Program or the Revenue Resource Management Program. However, there was also great value placed on NRPA regional conferences and state conferences because of the variety and exposure they provided to information not otherwise available. The one concern about NRPA regional conferences and state conferences seem to be that they lacked the specific skill development and depth of information that was sought in the other venues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NRPA</th>
<th>NRPA Regional Conference</th>
<th>NRPA Specialty Schools</th>
<th>State Association Conference</th>
<th>Other Sources of Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

These data suggest that members of the American Academy of Parks and Recreation Administration believe there is a gap between what is most important to know and what undergraduates know upon completion of their studies. Areas in need of attention seem to be in various management and interpersonal skills, communication abilities, and knowledge of the benefits of parks and recreation. It was also apparent from the responses that the faculty members are perceived as increasingly remote from the field of practice and that maintaining a closeness in that regard is an important part of remaining relevant from the perspective of the sample. Finally, continuing education seems to be focused on both broadening experiences and acquiring more detailed technical information offered in more specialty events.

These data provide some useful insight into the perspectives held by a senior group of professionals in the field of parks and recreation. They also raise the question of how to promote a more regular dialogue between professionals and academics to ensure that the curriculum we teach remains valued and relevant to the careers for which they are intended. Future studies of a more heterogeneous group of professionals would enhance this information base and provide academics with a useful resource in their curricular decision-making.

*Dr. Searle was the presenter of this paper.*
Challenges and Trends in Higher Education

Marilyn Jensen, Associate Vice President
California State University, Long Beach

As park and recreation professionals what do you think the President of your state university would say about your profession? How would the President describe its park and recreation curriculum? How would the Provost describe it? What would the Dean say? Its alumni? Its students? The practitioners in your state? By their responses, it is difficult sometimes to tell if all are talking about the same department.

Another good set of questions to ask which reflect the status of recreation education and its relationship to the university’s mission and our place in it are: Which department on your campus is perceived as being the most influential? Which one is the most richly funded? Which one is the most highly regarded? Which one is mentioned by the dean of your college or school most frequently at public gatherings? Which one is best known by the public? And, a final one, What is the sleeper department, the one which receives few public accolades but genuinely provides outstanding service to students, to the campus community and to the community at large?

I have been playing with these questions with a number of groups over the last three or four years, and at no time has the recreation department has been mentioned. I find that very disturbing and depressing as well; hopefully some of you are on a mission to change that. What will it take to counter this behavior, this trend toward invisibility? Is our situation the result of social change or is it a product of our own doing? What is happening in higher education and what will happen to us?

Nicholas Negaponte, director of the MIT media lab, predicts that within ten to fifteen years half of the people who obtain a college degree will do it by virtue of the Internet. He goes on to say that there are other agencies that do a better job than we do in preparation of materials and know how to deliver them. If we are to survive we must understand change and how it affects all of us, especially those responsible for professional preparation.

Granted, there is the ever present search for money and the challenge of attracting students and faculty and staff which represent the diversity that we see in our country. But we must go beyond that. We have to develop campus plans for incorporating the new technologies, to facilitate the shift from the teacher centered model of learning to a learner centered one. Developing a different vocabulary that has at the top of its list words like assessment and accountability, and a world view which sees the effects of the global economy on what each of us does in our own environment are critical challenges for us in higher education.

In preparing for this presentation I did a quick literature search on the Internet on the topic of trends in higher education. There I found some eight thousand “hits” and what appeared to be eight or nine basic trends. With all that information out there it is disturbing that most of us are unaware of or at least fail to take time to look at the forces which are affecting our life and the future of our profession. Fortunately, some of our members have issued wake-up calls. I think Tom Goodale’s essay on social conditions and service delivery is one. I suggest if you have not
read it that you take the time to do so. It is on the SPRE Web. Then look at Marcia Carter and Jean Folker’s paper identifying some of the external forces impacting our curricula. I think these writings set the stage for some of our discussions. But you are also going to find articles there with titles like “Alter or Falter,” “Web-based Life in the Year 2012,” “Revolutionary Changes - Understanding the Challenges and Possibilities,” “A University without Tenure,” “Fast Forward - the Digital University,” “Drive-through U,” and so on. The message is loud and clear. Universities must change, which mean we, you and I, must change as well.

I think Peter Drucker created a stir in 1996 when Forbes printed an interview in which he stated that thirty years from now the big university campuses will be relics. Universities, as we know them, will not exist. The change will be as significant as the first printed book. Yet universities have endured and have responded to change over the years; there is no reason why they cannot do it again. It will require a sensitivity to change and an understanding of the issues confronting us, several of which come to mind.

First, and key to everything else, is the setting of national priorities. Unfortunately, there seems to be no urgency to do so. The lack of this urgency may result from what the economists describe as a shift from guns to butter, that we are no longer tied to the threats of war even though our national priorities appear frozen in a cold war mentality. Saying that does not discount societal concerns like K through 12 education, crime and new prisons as they impact on the availability of discretionary funds. For example, we have now crossed the line in California where more is now being spent on prison construction than on higher education. Global competitiveness and the lack of national health care policy as a new set of priorities have not risen with the same kind of urgency that generated public investment in military hardware, evident over the last fifty years.

There is a report from the American Council on Education that I recommend to you entitled “The American College - the Fragile Coalition - Public Support for Higher Education in the 90s.” According to surveys conducted between 1993 and 1994, the public is more convinced than ever before that a college degree is essential for economic success in today’s world. At the same time, people are convinced that a degree is only a necessary condition, not a guarantee. They cite that college costs remain a major problem but support the idea that students and their families should pay for at least part of their tuition or fees. There is concern about the widening gap between those who can afford to go and those who can’t with all the problems attendant to that. The concept of a national service program is still popular, as is the belief that government bears some responsibility for providing a college education. But while support for cutting federal aid to higher education is nonexistent, only a minority would support raising federal aid. Confidence in college teachers remains relatively high and about half of all Americans believe white males have an easier time getting into college than women and minorities. At the same time, three quarters of Americans oppose entry preferences for equally qualified black males for college or the work force.

There are some additional issues noted. Most people know little about the academic world and are not deeply concerned. Consequently, they cannot be expected to rush to the defense of higher education when budget cutbacks threaten. In fact, they probably would support legislation to subvert some of the funds now directed to higher education to occupational schools. This lack of sophistication about higher education makes it easy for the public to focus on one thing that it has no trouble understanding. And that is the allegation that its administrators are overpaid.

Gordon Davis recently reported on twenty years of higher education that, partly by policy and partly by accident, the United States has made colleges and universities the gateway to just about
everything we judge to be good in our society: productive work, self reliance, better health, labor saving techniques, recreation and aesthetic experiences. Consider the development of the land grant institution and the community college as American innovations and you have verification of our belief in universal access to advanced learning.

There are mass educational needs. In California we refer to it as “Tidal Wave II” which offers the possibility that by the year 2015, only one of every three qualified high school graduates will be admitted to our state college system. That is a frightening statistic and calls attention to the discrepancy between what is needed and what we are able to provide. Consequently, we have talked about the end of the university as a model of centrally stored information under one institutional roof. The fact that information flow is not dependent on the classroom, and that every avenue for accessing information needs to be explored, is a reality and that gets us into a wide range of possibilities.

The ubiquitous model of “anytime, anywhere” education is epitomized by “Drive-through U.” Phoenix University, which is described in the October 20-27, 1997, issue of the New Yorker, is founded on the premise that its students do not really want the education. They want what the degree provides for them. They want better jobs, to move up in their careers, have the ability to speak up in meetings, that kind of stuff. President Gibbs, its president, might be right about that “kind of stuff” because something is attracting them. Here is an organization that has grown from 3000 students to 40,000 in less than ten years. The profit line for the Apollo group, of which Phoenix University is a principal subsidiary, has increased just as substantially. They reflect something like a 35% increase on their initial investment. Phoenix University has no campus in the traditional sense and therefore no physical grounds to be maintained. There is little intellectual life, interactions between students and faculty, and no tenured professors. Its presence contradicts the notion that a university must have open spaces, libraries and stacks of books, a place for meditation, where the exploration of ideas is foremost.

The Florida Gulf Coast University offers another model different from the traditional institution. Developed in response to Florida’s growth, the emphasis is on alternative strategies of instruction, including Internet and television, coupled with flexibility in course scheduling. Instead of tenure, its faculty work on multi-year contracts and its curriculum is structured to emphasize knowledge across disciplines. That is an appealing proposition for many people and it certainly has been for many of the educators who have gone to Florida to take part in this experiment.

A third issue is grounded in changing political views. There is a fragile coalition at the intersect between the American public and community leaders. The public in general does not necessarily understand the academic community but supports it even though there are those who are critical of its performance. The perspective that higher education is the center point of an educated society has shifted from the notion of education as a public good to education as a private good. Driven by the economic free fall during the early nineties, many universities engaged in cost cutting exercises which have compromised the foundation of higher education. Consequently, more of the financial burden has been placed on the individual who is seen to be the recipient of the educational experience, not the community at large. Tuition costs have been raised which further disenfranchised many prospective students; it has also focused more attention upon the length of time required from entrance to the academy through to completion of the undergraduate degree. Emphasis is now placed on assessment and accountability; there appears to be little regard about the effect on society as a whole.
The debate over unions or no unions continues on campuses and has strongly influenced the behavior of the campus community. I was intrigued to find that at one institution its union has worked out a bargaining agreement which states that faculty cannot be required to use technology in the classroom. At Long Beach our union has set the faculty work load; it now affects the way our faculty function. It gives us a degree of flexibility we have not had in the past. The only trouble is no one can quite figure out how to interpret the new contract. It will be some time before we see it put in place, but when it is done we will experience a new kind of creativity.

We hear a lot about teaching research and service, over and over and over. It is usually the case in academe that research is thought of with a capital R while teaching and service enjoy a second place and although the Retention-Tenure-Promotion process downgrades the importance of service, the new university is dependent more than ever before on a public perception that the contributions of higher education are critical to our society, and that public wants a say in how education will be delivered. Nothing is clearer than the 1996 South Carolina performance indicators approach to measure the value of an education. When you start talking about funding a system 100% on the basis of response to performance indicators, you know we have got to change or we are in serious trouble.

Technology and distance education are discussed at every organizational level in the educational and corporate world and are regularly cited in professional journals, magazines and daily newspapers. Initially the computer was described as a tool, then as a mirror. More recently it has been described as a gateway to the world through the looking glass of the screen. A term called "digital homeless" was coined by Negapointe to describe the typically middle-aged segment of the population which has not embraced technology. Unfortunately, many of those administering schools and businesses are in this category; they do not understand cyberspace. Yet, there are the two clusters of digital groups who do: our children and the thirty per cent of those over 80 who have computers. There is hope. However, there are some developments in technology which bother me. For example, even though I have had a lot of different kinds of computers and hardware, I am not sure that I am interested in wearable computers, eye glasses that allow me to access my e-mail, and I don’t support the activities of the academic “guru for hire” who writes term papers for fifty dollars a page, guaranteeing to include the most recent date from the Web.

The California State University is now involved in creating the California Educational Technology Initiatives (CETI), a partnership between the CSU and four of the big guns: GTE, because of their global telephone communication network; Hughes, who happens to build satellites; Fujitsu, known for their computers; and Microsoft, who, well, you know. This partnership is embarking on the task of moving the CSU into the 21st century by building the necessary technological infrastructure. And, of course, profiting from the intellectual property of faculty. As tidbits of information surface, it also appears this group will have first right of refusal on our hardware purchases and probably capture the software choice as well. Its presence raises an interesting question about the role and relationship of higher education and the business community. Who will develop its policies and determine institutional practices?

It is also true that higher education is not doing very well with staying technologically current. No one could really take issue with that. It has been suggested that the average bowling alley has more computerized projection power than do our campuses. The year 2000 is coming closer and concerns are tightly focused on the problems which are going to occur when our computers shift over to the year 2000. Right now they are saying that if we don’t take care of this, 90% of our applications are likely to fail on January 1, 2000. It is a little disconcerting to know that only 28%
of the colleges have a technology plan; it is another case of pouring money in but not really having something well thought out as to how it is going to be used or the impact that is going to have on the total university.

We are all experiencing the “plug and play” generation of students, raised in the era of video games, surrounded by electronic media, and challenged by virtual reality. The traditional classroom is a boring place for them; our faculties have to catch up to the students. To do that requires changing the technology learning culture, teaching according to the learning culture, for when we introduce new technologies several habits have to be changed. The student work load has to change. No longer are they going to be the passive recipients of whatever happens to be given from the podium. Instead they are going to be active, engaging members of the curriculum process and of learning productively. Then, too, the amount of preparation that is required to use technology is vastly different from what is required in the more traditional sense of classroom instruction. And although there might be regard for making sure the technology is there, I have not seen any plans which give equal attention to the need for faculty development so that its members are not placed in the position of having to learn new programs and techniques, when that time should be used to communicate information and ideas. For example, UCLA will create a web site for every class in its school of humanities this fall. That will fundamentally alter the way its faculty work with their classes. We, at Long Beach, currently offer a fascinating class on philosophy via the Internet. I can tell you from first hand experience that the number of hours required by the faculty to make this a comprehensive course is awesome, and it is not something many people are willing to undertake. They simply don’t have that commitment.

There are discrepancies between what practitioners and our faculties feel we should offer. Both Mark Searle and Bill Nieporth have alluded to that, and what is possible. Recently we invited some practitioners in to look at our curriculum, to help us work through what it should look like. They identified areas like strategic planning, technology savvy, sound decision making, the ability to deal with societal issues, violence in the work place; they also wanted marketing skills and leadership. Our faculty had identified these areas, too; however, it cannot be, for what was identified as needed equaled 184 units. And that was before we got to the general education requirements. To implement such a curriculum would result in a seven to eight year baccalaureate degree program.

I have been monitoring the NRPA Net. I think I have about 250 examples of questions that people in the field have raised through it. They range from everything from how do I do this kind of a program to how to I keep geese off the golf course. Temper these expectations against a backdrop of university trustees urging a program of four years and out. Then place that against a backdrop of the local tensions and fiscal uncertainty, as we at the university cope with the under prepared student. If you are having to spend half a million dollars to help bring students up to a college/university admission level in math and English it obviously takes something out of the core curriculum that you would hope would be a more important part of the university program. No wonder the for-profit institutions grow financially rich. They have demonstrated a responsiveness to the learner’s need that we have not. We get so bogged down with procedures that it often takes two to three years for the idea to become a reality. By this time the field has taken another turn, gone another direction. We are still at the starting gate trying to find out where the first quarter pole is.

As recreation professionals we have to ask ourselves who are we and what do we want to be. Until we identify what is basic, how can we determine what is to be our agenda? The same is true for higher education. It has discovered “community service learning,” a concept a part of any
recreation degree program for years. We called it “fieldwork”; it is one of the most important ways to establish civic engagements. We know that students work harder when there is a service learning component within the classes. We also know that their grades are higher and that it is important to integrate it with class discussions so that it becomes reality learning experience. We hear everyone talking about this need to collaborate, to be a member of a team. Yet, if you look at a college curriculum, you will see that with our field work requirements we have tended to work in isolation. Perhaps that is why the university has not turned to recreation and parks to lead its community service learning effort. Recreation educators have a lot to offer the general education of both our students and faculty, but to do so we must make ourselves known.

There needs to be provision for the ample use of technology. We cannot expect to provide software for all occasions but we have to integrate it with course work and make it a natural part of the student’s life. We need to be able to use e-mail, data bases, the web and simulations; the computer is more than a word processor that students need to have in order to get by in most classes. We need to foster interdisciplinary projects on the campus, integrating courses with compatible courses in the humanities, the sciences, business, allied health and human services. We need to strengthen on campus affiliations and communicate the results, to take advantage of the resources of the university. We have engineers who can help us prepare students who are expected to design and maintain facilities. We need to work with our biologists and natural resource specialists on problems of pollution and conservation. We cannot be an entity unto ourselves. Unless we are a part of the fabric of the university community we are going to be excluded from that community.

The concern for loss of identity certainly is evident as we watch some of our programs become subsumed under larger units. Potentially, we are a cut and divide program. Nearly every department on campus can probably find a portion of our program they could take as their own. Unless we can show that our knowledge is unique and complements the course offerings of others, that we are consistent with the mission of the institution, there is no reason for our being.

Our accreditation program has aided our cause. It has made administration aware of us and our standards. I know there are comments and ground swells in some quarters about whether accreditation is of value to the university but think about the environment in which we are functioning. If you are working with boards of directors, governors and trustees, you will quickly learn they will want their programs accredited if such accreditation is available. I suggest you do not throw it out without giving consideration to what the long term implications are.

Finally, we need to focus on being agile. We need to project a new market. We need to respond by developing knowledge and delivering a product. In academia we can talk anything to death, but today’s learners are not going to allow it. They will simply buy it elsewhere, perhaps from business and industry. As our historians tell us, “those of us who refuse to live in the future are condemned to live in the past.” I do not think that is a position in which we want to find ourselves. It is time to walk forward with a new focus. Rather than predicting the future, let us help generate it. To paraphrase Alvin Toffller, this is our week, this is our time. The twenty-first century is upon us and we must respond.
Reports of the Committees

Committee on Undergraduate Education

Members: Gerald Fain, Chair; Ken Brensinger, Ludd Colston, Debbie Cotton, Thomas Goodale, Jonathan Korfhage, Janna Rankin, Thom Skalko, Jesse Washington

The Committee on Undergraduate Education believes that the highest priority for baccalaureate education in recreation and parks is to graduate a well-educated person. The aims of this education are traditionally found in liberal education with depth and breadth which encourages students to acquire a solid grasp of one subject, and a broad exposure to a variety of other fields. Drawing from sources including "Standards and Evaluative Criteria For Baccalaureate Programs in Recreation, Park Resources and Leisure Services," NRPA/AALR Council on Accreditation (1995), and "The Harvard Core Curriculum," in The Great Core Curriculum Debate, Change Magazine Press, 1979, the Committee reaffirms the general purposes and organization of knowledge for undergraduate education. It is centered in the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Specific learning should result from studies in literature and the arts, history, social analysis, moral reasoning, biological sciences, physical sciences, behavioral sciences and diverse and foreign cultures.

This curriculum is not, however, thought of as a prescribed set of courses or a collection of great books, but a liberal education with interest in the education of the student for the sake of becoming a well-educated person. Generally stated these are the hallmarks of a well-educated person:

1. A well-educated person thinks and writes clearly and effectively.
2. A well-educated person has the power of reasoning and analysis achieved from depth in one or more fields of knowledge.
3. A well-educated person has critical appreciation of the ways in which knowledge is gained and applied - specifically acquired from literature, the arts, history, social sciences, mathematics and physical and biological sciences.
4. A well-educated person has understanding of experience in thinking about moral and ethical problems, and a measure of informed judgment which enables one to make discriminating moral decisions.
5. A well-educated person is worldly, and understands other cultures, other times and is able to see life beyond one's own context.

A foundation in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences allows for concentrated study in recreation where the basic or core learning regarding the role and practice of the recreation professional are taught. From social sciences a student learns about human behavior, which can lead to a deepened study of play behavior. From mathematics and economics comes understanding essential for those who wish to manage organizations. And, from philosophy one can learn how to think critically and reason morally; this is useful in the protection and advancement of democratic ideals and in the defeat of abhorrent prejudice and discrimination.

In brief, we see a seamless education where the liberal arts is thoughtfully joined with concentrated study in recreation. With this in mind, we hasten to add that the continuing use of terms such as
"parks," "leisure studies," or "leisure service" diverts these aims by allowing for trend driven proliferation of undergraduate specializations, thereby undermining the academic integrity of curriculum and careers in recreation. In contrast, we see the cultural history of recreation as a public trust, and the legacy of those who have devoted themselves to recreation as a career is evidenced and embodied in the organization of our communities, in the open-space reserves for public use, and in the unending provision of recreation programs in all of its forms across the entirety of our population. This is a history where toleration, beneficence, and justice define the character of practice. Together this cultural history of recreation defines the meaning of this public trust, and ought to serve as the foundation for these programs.

Three (3) issues, along with the respective strategies and recommendations, were identified. They are:
1. Graduates who fail to meet the standards expected of a well-educated person.
2. Proliferation of specializations has weakened the core curriculum, and the common core of concentrated study in recreation remains undefined.
3. External influences, including rapid shifts in funding priorities and proper utilization of new technologies, significantly influence the ongoing operation of undergraduate programs.

ISSUE 1. Graduates who fail to meet the standards expected of a well-educated person.

Employers report recent graduates are unable to effectively communicate orally and in writing and perform job responsibilities associated with program leadership, supervision and routine management. The basic strategy offered to resolve this issue requires:

a. the strengthening of the basic education curriculum which serves as the foundation for concentrated study in recreation.

b. the establishment of closer ties with colleagues who teach in the arts and sciences, thereby strengthening the relationships across the undergraduate curriculum.

c. the routine review, critique, and improvement of the value of the general education curriculum in our undergraduate programs.

To accomplish this it is recommended that we should not assume the extent of these problems across programs. To form a more accurate assessment, a group should be assembled and charged with the responsibility to produce a study on general education requirements recommended for the undergraduate degree in recreation.

ISSUE 2. Proliferation of specializations has weakened the core curriculum and the common core of concentrated study in recreation remains undefined.

It is believed that undergraduate programs in parks and recreation are fragmented and over-specialized; lack control to raise standards and/or limit admissions; are driven by institutional competition for shrinking resources; have failed professionally to adequately define and implement a unified core concentration; and have moved too far from our traditional and essential public service mission. To counter these conditions the following strategy is offered:

a. that we place the raising of academic standards including admission, class size, student faculty ratios, and requirements for degrees as a priority in our respective undergraduate programs.
b. that faculty should resist the continuing proliferation of specializations, and focus greater attention on recreation and parks.
c. that greater depth be given to our core recreation courses.
d. that faculty excellence in service to the publicly sponsored recreation and parks fields be encouraged and recognized.
e. that recreation and park curricula identify and recognize practitioner excellence as public service and best practice so as to more effectively incorporate this work into undergraduate career preparation.
f. that common professional objectives and outcomes be identified and encouraged in such a manner that undergraduates could show evidence of them through their capstone projects or comprehensive portfolios, thereby documenting and illustrating progress in careers reflective of the unifying aims of undergraduate education in recreation.
g. that there be more effective use of practitioners in the review of undergraduate programs.
h. that there be more effective use of the community college system to support the remedial and basic education of aspiring undergraduate recreation majors.
i. that the pressing need for course syllabi and texts where depth of subject matter from core academic disciplines is addressed.
j. that the proper and effective use of technology as a means for classroom instruction and as a form of recreation be encouraged.
k. that the recreation concentration is grounded in the study of program development and leadership, play behavior and social development, the technology necessary for a well-educated person and career preparation, entry-level business management, and moral philosophy and social ethics.
l. that field-based programs which place students in the company and under the mentorship of talented and effective practitioners be encouraged.
m. that there be a distinction made between distribution requirements and the core curriculum.
n. that a plan for study be established which would serve as a foundation, common across fields, to unify and thereby strengthen the tie between the undergraduate programs and the public trust.

In order to achieve these strategies it is recommended that a group be assembled and charged with the responsibility to produce a study of the recreation concentration requirements recommended for an undergraduate degree in recreation.

ISSUE 3. External influences, including rapid shifts in funding priorities and proper utilization of new technologies, significantly influence the ongoing operation of undergraduate programs.

Faculty and practitioners alike find a growing loss of control over the direction of their work. Driven in part by the external influences, and joined by a void in leadership and scholarship, the employment outlook for graduates of undergraduate programs is uncertain and troubling. A strategy which has students routinely involved in community service and field-based learning experiences which culminate in career relevant outcomes appropriate for professional school education should be employed. For example, faculty and practitioners might collaborate on capstone projects or portfolios that demonstrate mastery of entry level competence and public service. This collaboration could result in valuable public service, needed research, and opportunities for leadership.
It is recommended that a group be assembled and charged with the responsibility to produce a descriptive analysis of our current undergraduate efforts with attention being given to admissions standards, academic profiles, demonstrated mastery of subject-matter material, and preparedness for entry-level careers in recreation; and that this analysis continue over a period of years, thereby, providing an evaluation of these programs for the purposes of raising academic standards.

In review, we submit one over-arching recommendation to the Committee. We believe that this work is vitally important to the future of these programs, that this not be our last meeting, and that this work not be considered completed with the publication of a report. We urge that properly constituted groups be assembled and charged with their respective responsibilities as soon as possible.
Committee on Graduate Education

Members: Karla Henderson, Chair; Donald DeGraaf, Dovie Gamble, Kathleen Halberg, William McKinney, John Potts, Roger Schmitt

In considering the nature and issues related to graduate education the committee focused its attention on four concerns: the nature and relationship of various graduate degrees, the problems associated with the graduate education culture, criteria for graduate study, and responsibility for quality assurance. Strategies and recommendations related to the issues were developed.

ISSUE 1. What is the nature of graduate education? How does graduate education differ from undergraduate education? How does a masters degree differ from a doctorate? What is the relationship of theory, practice, and experience in the graduate program?

Strategies:

Key to the resolution of this issue is the identification of the differences between bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs. A bachelors program should focus on developing students with interpersonal and communication skills who know how to solve problems and work with people. An introduction to the standards currently outlined in the accreditation standards is a good foundation. More important than a specific specialization at the undergraduate level is a broad understanding of the leisure service delivery systems, the benefits of recreation and leisure, and the ability to find answers to questions.

No distinction should be made between a "terminal" masters program and other masters programs. Students at the masters level should possess the characteristics of competent undergraduates as they enter a masters program. The foci of the masters program should be on leisure concepts and philosophy, applied research, and preparing professionals for the eventuality of becoming mid-level managers in a specialty area within the field.

Doctoral students should be moving toward a focused analysis of leisure concepts and theory, creation of the body of knowledge including both theory and practice, and the ability to teach within the undergraduate core and with an area of specialization.

Students should combine practice, experience, and theory in the masters program. Concepts and theory should be a central aspect of the graduate program at both the masters and doctoral level but it should be based on a grounding in practice. The emphasis should be more on practice and experience at the masters level and more on theory at the doctoral level.

Recommendations:

1. Curricula offering graduate programs should determine the rationale for the appropriate mix of practice, theory, and experience within the Masters and Doctoral programs.
2. A meeting should be held at NRPA periodically for all interested individuals to discuss the relationships between and among graduate and undergraduate professional preparation.
3. Curriculum planners in doctoral granting institutions should meet with other educators and practitioners to discuss needs for education at that level.
4. NRPA, in conjunction with SPRE and other branches, should develop a statement of differences between a graduate and undergraduate degree.
5. The Future Scholars program should be continued as a means to encourage outstanding Masters students to pursue doctoral study and to understand the level of education needed to be a successful scholar.
6. Periodic assessments of the demographics of graduate students should be made to determine who they are and what they need or want. This assessment can be done as a part of the SPRE Curriculum Survey.
7. Discuss the curricula offered for graduate students at the next SPRE Teaching Institute to be held in South Carolina in 1999.

ISSUE 2. What is the culture of students/professionals we are creating with graduate programs?

Strategies:
In as much as we are trying to create a community of students who share a common commitment to the field of recreation and leisure, we want students who see the big picture within the field and who see their profession as a calling and not just a job. We want students who appreciate the value of research as it relates to practice as well as how it can contribute to the body of knowledge. We need to develop students who are articulate and knowledgeable about benefits based outcome measures.

A diversity of methods will be needed for graduate education in the future. Distance education via satellite and the Internet should be an option available to students. This technology should not preclude opportunities to create a community of scholars. Neither should this technology replace faculty but rather expand the opportunities available. Technology should not be viewed as an either/or situation but as a way of expanding the classroom.

Recommendations:
1. Provide opportunities for students to interact with a variety of students, faculty, and practitioners within their university in research and other projects.
2. Provide students with as many professional opportunities as possible such as state and national meetings and opportunities for distance learning.
3. Focus on the value of concepts and research as well as specializations within curricula.
4. More students should be encouraged to present their research at university as well as state and national research colloquia.
5. Students, faculty, and agencies should seek collaborative ways to do research and solve questions of an applied nature.

ISSUE 3. How should we admit graduate students? What are the criteria? What are the prerequisites?

Strategies:
Rigorous criteria for the selection of the students for graduate school must be established. These criteria may include a demonstration of communication skills, and criteria similar to other units
within the university. Students who do not have undergraduate degrees in recreation ought to be required to take prerequisite or co-requisite courses to bring them to a similar level as other students.

Since the Masters program is one of practice, a student ought to have some experience in recreation subsequent to or concurrent with the course work experience. This experience should be documented as an additional criterion for admission or as a requirement for graduation. Multiple measures ought to be considered when admitting students to the graduate program.

Recommendations:

1. Universities ought to define the criteria for admission to graduate programs so students can move to higher levels of breadth and depth within the recreation program.
2. Universities ought to determine the minimum level of skills and abilities necessary to begin a masters program. Develop prerequisites or co-requisites to address deficiencies.
3. Universities ought to determine whether different criteria for admission ought to be applied to masters and doctoral students and provide a rationalization for that difference if needed.

ISSUE 4. Who is responsible for ensuring that the graduate programs in recreation, leisure studies, and tourism maintain a consistent level of quality across the country.

Strategy:

Inasmuch as there is no accrediting body or other group monitoring graduate programs in the field of recreation and leisure it is essential that guidelines be developed and distributed to masters and doctoral programs throughout the country. Educators need to help practitioners understand their situations and work together to establish best practices.

Recommendations:

1. SPRE should appoint a committee of practitioners and educators to develop guidelines or best practices for graduate study.
2. Develop educator/practitioner exchanges or sabbaticals whereby each group can learn more about the other.
3. Concerned individuals should write a response to the AARPA study identifying some of the questions this study raises.
Committee on Internships and Externships

Members: Leandra Bedini, Chair; Marcia Carter, Lynn Jamieson, Tom Jelcick. Michal Anne Lord, Merry Moiseichik, Mary Parr, Nathaniel Wilkins.

Seven issues were identified and discussed by the committee. Strategies and recommendations for each issue are offered.

ISSUE 1: The field needs to determine the purpose of the internship experience before taking any actions.

Strategies:

The group felt as if it were almost impossible to pursue the questions related to internships if we did not first define the purpose of the practical experience. After much discussion, three components of an internship experience which functioned as a "sequence of experiences" were developed. The three experiences are separate but build upon previous experiences in conjunction with relevant course work. They are:

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(c) 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 a "springboard" to employment in the community. Here the student would relate experiences to the work world and his/her career aspirations.

Recommendations:

1. To Universities and Colleges. Since each department is different, the university/college departments should take individual responsibility as to how to implement this system. However, it is strongly recommended that all three facets exist in some form. Several programs have 1-3 credit mini-field work experiences to aid the student gain exposure and experience and eliminate populations and settings with whom they do not want to work. Regardless of the credit allocation, this group believed that sequential and building field experience is essential for student growth and understanding in the field of leisure services.

2. To Council on Accreditation. Currently, the accreditation standards do not include a sequencing and description of practical experiences as described above. By including the three components as a standard, accredited programs might provide more consistent and in depth fieldwork experiences for students in leisure services.

3. To National Recreation and Park Association. The NRPA should reinstitute funded externships for students who have completed their respective curricula and have graduated but who want and perhaps need further experience in practical settings. These funded externships can
function equivalent to the co-ops provided by the federal government or post-doctoral fellowships offered by many colleges and universities.

4. To State Park and Recreation Societies. Similar to the suggestion for NRPA funded externships, state societies should be encouraged to create, maintain, and/or develop state funded externships for students with their respective states to continue and experience relevant practical experiences.

ISSUE 2. Diversity of internship standards/requirements among colleges and universities.

Currently, there are a minimum of four sets of standards that are being implemented for internship and practical experiences in the field of leisure services (Council on Accreditation, National Recreation and Park Association, National Therapeutic Recreation Society, and American Therapeutic Recreation Association). Additionally, many colleges and universities have their own standards and requirements for fieldwork experiences.

Strategy/Recommendation:

The NRPA should take leadership in bringing together all interested parties to examine their standards for consistency.

ISSUE 3. The field needs to identify what the 21st century will look like for leisure services as well as programs that will prepare leisure service providers.

A key sub-issue to this is that the resource base for all of the above services and programs is diminishing greatly. The internship could be the link between the 21st century university and the 21st century practice setting. The essential strategy here is to seek collaboration and partnership in action. In other words, practical settings and universities and colleges need to merge resources to prepare their students effectively. Both our universities and agencies must be invested in the process as well as the product. We need to consider how technology can facilitate our training and services and reduce cost to each setting.

Recommendations:

1. To National Recreation and Park Association. a) NRPA should commission a state of the art assessment and report outlining the resources which exist, both within the universities and agencies, that are threatened, and are being developed. Survey should be disseminated to students as well as faculty and practitioners. b) NRPA should consider offering a pre-institute at Congress on the application of technology for hands-on simulation and other techniques relevant to internship and pre-internship experiences.

2. To National Recreation and Park Association and State Recreation and Park Societies. These organizations should establish, develop, and maintain financial assistance for worthy students to do internships in those worthy settings that cannot provide adequate funding. Students are often limited by financial obstacles and stay near home as a result, often compromising potential practical experiences.
ISSUE 4. Certification of agency and university internship supervisors.

This issue raised several sub-issues and questions of relevance. For example, are certified individuals more competent than non-certified? Should staff be required to be certified in order to supervise student internships? Should both the agency supervisor and the university supervisor be certified?

Strategies:

Before these issues can be resolved, it is essential that action be taken to validate the Certified Leisure Professional examination and the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist examination to determine if they (a) reflect the body of knowledge in leisure services and (b) reflect needed competencies.

Recommendations:

1. To National Recreation and Park Association. NRPA should commission the design and implementation of a study to determine if individuals who are certified as CLP and or CTRS are "more competent" as practitioners than those who are not certified.
2. To State Recreation and Park Societies. Individual state recreation and park societies should encourage agencies to hire certified individuals.
3. Park and Recreation certification agencies should create, maintain, and advertise a "fast track" for student who come from NRPA/AALR accredited programs and seek certification either as CLP or CTRS.

ISSUE 5: Graduate internships.

The major issues about graduate internships dealt with the diversity of practical experiences with which students enter graduate programs. The group identified that regardless of the entry experiences, the underlying factors of graduate internships should be: (a) to "add growth" to the students experiences, and (b) that internship requirements within a graduate degree should depend on the intent of the degree (i.e., student needs internship to get certified versus getting practical experience in the field versus learning about a new technique or population).

Strategy:

If student has no practical base, the internship should be built into the degree program and occur in early stages of course work, rather than as culminating experience or capstone.

Recommendation:

Individual colleges and universities should address the above issues dependent on their intent and the nature of their programs and the types of students they tend to attract.

ISSUE 6. Institutional support.

This proved to be a very frustrating issue. There seems to be widespread lack of institutional support for adequate summer salaries for university supervisors, travel funds, and release time for
 internship visits. Consequently (a) many students do not get visited; (b) it is often difficult to explain this "lack of attention" to agency supervisors; (c) faculty are often asked to take an overload to accommodate internship supervision needs; (d) faculty often have little incentive to do research or additional services due to the overload; and (e) there exists the potential for reduced quality of internship experiences.

Strategies:

The profession and universities/colleges need to make sure that the internship is realistic without compromising the fundamental philosophical foundations underlying the internship concept; that being, internships are truly a partnership among the student, the agency and the academic institution. There are three foci in addressing this problem.

1. Universities/colleges need to demonstrate that they value the educational process for all departments that conduct internships. Specifically, they need to (a) consider the internship a part of the faculty load and (b) provide financial support for faculty to visit students outside their immediate geographic area.

2. The agency needs to contribute financially to the visitation process to assure face to face contact and interaction.

3. The field (professional organizations) needs to demonstrate the importance of this triad of support by collecting data on the benefits of interactive supervision.

Recommendations:

1. To National Recreation and Park Association. The NRPA should: a) revisit internship standards and amend and strengthen those that could warrant face to face visitation requirements; and b) conduct a study and compile data on the constraints to quality internships and the consequences that follow that can be used by universities and colleges to present to their administrators.

2. To Council on Accreditation. The COA should identify indicators of quality sites (i.e., manuals, supervisor resumes, goal statements, guidelines) to demonstrate rigor in practical experiences when accreditation is being considered.

ISSUE 7. Faculty experiences.

We believe that faculty should be able to relate more efficiently with agencies through a variety of possibilities. This connection is important in keeping the faculty up to date and alert to the practical experiences in which the students are engaged.

Strategy:

To resolve this issue there must be a partnership between universities and the community agencies related to extended education and the application of current technologies which facilitate communication.

Recommendation:

The National Recreation and Park Association and state Park and Recreation societies should explore and address the establishment of teleconferences for the faculty and practitioners who supervise internships.
Committee on Recruitment, Placement and Retention

Members: Sandra Whitmore, Chair; Mike Blazey, Jimmy Calloway, Ira Hutchison, Dan McLean, Harold Smith, Barbara Wilhite. Jane Boubel joined in the Saturday discussions.

ISSUE 1. How do we bring qualified and diverse individuals, especially students, into the Parks and Recreation profession?

Strategies:

1. The profession must be marketed to the public at large. Such an effort must involve targeting the benefits of the profession to the community, participants, and providers of the service. The targeting of the benefits of the profession to potential students and their parents should be continuous: when they (1) are enrolled in recreation programs, (2) are employed as part time workers in recreation settings, and/or (3) attend career counseling or fairs.
2. Other approaches suggested were: to encourage the creation of advisory groups and remind practitioners they are ambassadors to potential students, that they have the potential to influence decisions and become mentors; to target school guidance counselors as to the career benefits in Parks and Recreation; to encourage non-traditional populations/diverse populations to consider Parks and Recreation as a career; and to ask CAPRA (agency accreditation) to create a standard which demonstrates how a recreation agency and its personnel are serving the profession by encouraging people to enter the field.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that college and university curricula, local park and recreation agencies and the NRPA assume responsibility for the implementation of the above strategies. Media messages including print, radio, TV, video, web sites can all be utilized to spread the message. NRPA's Benefits are Endless can be a starting point for a unified campaign.
2. Universities and colleges should work with local agencies to help with the recruitment and training of summer personnel and assist in the provision of appropriate in-service training for part time staff, many of whom might become future students. Practitioners can continually work with potential students to encourage them to pursue this profession.
3. Current Recreation and Park students should also be urged to recruit potential majors.

ISSUE 2. How do we retain quality students, once they have enrolled in our curricula?

Strategies:

1. A sense of community within the department needs to be established. This can be accomplished by having each major connect with someone in the department, for instructors to become mentors and by implementing a program of peer (student based) advising.
2. Park and Recreation curricula must present a positive image on campus, must be a part of the larger university retention process, must establish and nourish a relationship with the public affairs officer, and utilize practitioners and alumnae in their class rooms and clubs to continually interface with the students.
Recommendations:

1. Each university curriculum should assign one of its staff the responsibility of working in a public relations capacity with its alumnæ, students, and profession to create networks that work.
2. Both university departments and local park and recreation systems should accept mentoring as a basic responsibility and establish a formal mentoring process.

ISSUE 3. What is the role and responsibility of the curriculum and profession to assist graduates and alumnæ in obtaining employment as a Park and Recreation professional?

Strategy:

Prior to the implementation of any action related to job placement decisions must be made related to role and responsibility; for example: Should faculty seek to place individuals in specific jobs (matchmaking)? Should students be encouraged to apply for announced jobs or only those which the faculty deem professionally suitable (salary and opportunity)? Should agencies recruit only those who have the potential to be certified? These are only a few among the issues which must be resolved prior to the implementation of a placement strategy.

Recommendations:

A variety of approaches should be used in placement activities and these should occur concurrently. The committee recommends the following as means to gaining employment:
1. Use the World Wide Web to advertise positions.
2. Send e-mail and faxes to universities and colleges when positions become available; give SPRE Internet address to practitioners.
3. Ask state societies to devote a portion of their web pages to advertising job opportunities.
4. Students should be encouraged to utilize university training services to prepare them for job applications and interviews. If the university does not have this service, the recreation and park curriculum should create its own.
5. Mentors should help identify potential jobs. Mentoring of students should be from the time they enter the major, continue through placement and continue through their career.
6. Potential employers and university faculty should be encouraged to work together to enable students to graduate when jobs are available or to be able to take a position prior to graduation with a mandatory job requirement of graduation by a certain date.

ISSUE 4. What is the university's responsibility its graduates end upon graduation?

Many qualified professionals leave the field each year. What role should the university play in assisting the profession in retention of qualified personnel? What are the factors which cause professionals to leave the field and how can they be counteracted?

Strategies:

1. It is critical that information about former students and their career choices be developed and maintained by park and recreation curricula.
2. Exit information as to why people leave needs to be analyzed and specific steps taken to correct problems in the profession.
3. Opportunities for professional development and mid-career mentoring are essential.

Recommendations:

1. Universities should track their graduates and seek to learn the reasons why when one of their graduates leaves the field.
2. Mentoring does not end with the graduation of the student. Universities should use a wide range of technologies and techniques to continue the mentoring process and assist their graduates with career counseling.
3. Professional development opportunities should be a major focus for all agencies. Educators and practitioners should work together in determining which types of continuing development programs should be offered based upon both the agency’s needs and the needs of individual staff members.
4. A task force in each state or region should be set up to track information on people leaving the field. This should be a combined effort of the universities as well as agencies.
Committee on Continuing Education

Members: Phil Rea, Chair; Jane Adams, Charles Brittenbring, Bill Fisher, John "Pat" Harden, Steve Illum, Al Jackson, Phil McKnelly

The Committee on Continuing Education used the following working definitions for clarification in its discussions of continuing education and professional and career development:

**Continuing Education** - On-going education through structured programs such as classes, workshops and conferences that are focused on learning new skills, strategies and techniques that have direct application to improving one's job performance.

**Professional/Career Development** - All those professional and career experiences, such as writing published articles, presentations, continuing education experiences, and professional involvement and leadership, that enhance an individual's professional skills and knowledge, resulting in improved job performance and career enhancement.

Three major issues were identified by the Committee. They are: 1) the valuing of continuing education by individuals and organizations associated with recreation, park and leisure services; 2) the development of alternative means of evaluating the effectiveness of continuing education; and 3) the relevance of continuing education to agencies and employees and the delivery of programs that are efficient and cost effective.

**ISSUE 1. The valuing of continuing education by both the individuals and organizations responsible for the provision of recreation, park and leisure services.**

**Strategies:**

1. The importance of professional and continuing education should be emphasized in college/university curricula. It is impossible and inappropriate to attempt to teach every aspect of the management of recreation, park and leisure services within the confines of an academic degree program. Faculty should emphasize that the degree students receive represents the "commencement" of their professional learning and that continuing education and professional/career development are necessary throughout one's career to assure individual and professional growth.

2. An emphasis on professional and continuing education should be included in curriculum accreditation standards and emphasized by those academic institutions seeking accreditation, the Council on Accreditation and their visitation teams.

3. The need for continuing education must be recognized by recreation and park professionals interested in career advancement. Due to the breadth of responsibilities found within and among recreation and park agencies, it is critical for professionals to have opportunities available to learn new skills, techniques and strategies that have direct application to improving one's job performance, and to facilitate professional advancement.

4. The agency accreditation process should reinforce the importance of having professional development plans for employees. Agency accreditation standards currently stress the importance of providing continuing education opportunities for employees. As the accreditation process evolves, agency professional staff should be encouraged to create professional development plans that will enhance the services provided to citizens while helping to facilitate the personal career development of employees.
5. Professional peer mentoring programs should be developed within larger agencies and by state professional organizations.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct a nationwide study of the perceived importance and impact of professional and continuing education in the career development of park and recreation leaders. Such a study would indicate the value of professional and continuing education to successful leaders in their career development, and would identify opportunities for the development of new programs.
2. The CLP (Certified Leisure Professional) process should be reviewed relative to the acceptance of CEU (Continuing Education Units) provided by professional organizations, regulatory agencies and other groups in addition to NRPA and its affiliates.
3. A system of peer mentoring should be encouraged through the agency accreditation process and through state professional organizations.
4. Review the agency accreditation process and standards relative to the amount of emphasis placed on the importance and support for employee continuing education.

ISSUE 2. Develop means other than CEU’s for evaluating the effectiveness of continuing education experiences.

Most CEU granting continuing education experiences place emphasis on the development of learning objectives by presenters and on attendance by participants, as opposed to what was learned. Other means to measure effects need to be considered.

Strategies:

1. Explore the development and utilization of methods other than CEU's for evaluating the effectiveness of continuing education programs.
2. Develop a system to recognize "leadership and training" units as equivalents to CEU's for professional contributions such as leadership in professional organizations, instruction or presentation of programs at conferences and training programs, editorship of professional literary publications and so forth.

Recommendations:

1. Expand the curriculum survey recently completed of members of the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration, most of whom are agency directors, to include mid-level personnel that may be more familiar with the qualifications of recent graduates of recreation and park curricula.
2. Recommend to the National Certification Board the development of a system that recognizes professional leadership as a means of earning units equivalent to CEU's. The units may be referred to as PDU's (Professional Development Units), or LDU's (Leadership Development Units).

ISSUE 3. Continuing education must be relevant to agencies and employees focused on critical issues and challenges, and delivered through a variety of media to minimize costs while maximizing impact and efficiency.
Strategies:

1. Programs must be delivered in ways that balance costs to agencies and employees without compromising quality. On-site programs that require significant travel and time may be necessary for some forms of continuing education but other alternatives should be considered, including interactive teleconferencing, Internet, CD-ROM, distant learning, etcetera.
2. NRPA’s establishment of its “vision” program is an appropriate step in dealing with issues related to youth development, health and wellness, aging, conservation, welfare and cultural diversity, with implications for professional and continuing education needs. The next action should be the creation of “preferred futures” for these efforts.
3. Cooperation with other agencies and organizations providing continuing education services is essential. These agencies need to be identified and assessed for their value to park and recreation services.
4. Explore continuing education delivery systems that are time and cost efficient.
5. NRPA should take a proactive stance in collaborating with other allied professional organizations that have direct responsibility for specific interest areas such as interpretation, golf, landscaping, horticulture, youth development, historic preservation and economic development.

Recommendations:

1. NRPA should consider the possibility of conducting a series of "vision" conferences that incorporate experts from other disciplines that impact recreation and park services such as community tourism, welfare, housing, youth development, schools, marketing, as well as professional organizations that serve city, county and state administrators.
2. Develop alternative delivery systems that emphasize time and cost efficiencies.
3. Improve the structure of presentations earning CEU credit by requesting that instructors include an outline of proposed processes or techniques in addition to learning outcomes.
4. NRPA should explore methods of providing and/or facilitating continuing education opportunities on a local level where needed, but where those services are not currently available.
Committee on Institutional Support

Members: Bill Niepoth, Chair; Lori Daniel, Nick DiGrino, Charles Hartsoc, Marilyn Jensen, Darrell Lewis, Mark Searle, Chris Smith, Lisa Turpel

The end results of professional preparation are competent graduates, through whom the field carries out its collective mission. Faculty and program administrators cannot achieve their objectives without institutional support, reflected through adequate resources (i.e., staff, budgets, etc.). Other things being equal, greater resources lead to more effective preparation.

Premises:

1. Institutional support involves both an internal dimension (resources provided by the institution) and an external dimension (resources such as advocacy efforts, fieldwork placements and service on advisory committees), provided by community agencies and other off-campus entities.
2. High quality instruction and advising both depend upon, and justify, high levels of support.
3. Provision of external support is maximized when there are on-going, reciprocal relationships between faculty and agency personnel and their constituencies. Reciprocity implies benefits for agencies as well as the institution. There are specific ones, beyond the provision of qualified graduates, such as action and evaluative research that respond to agency needs, guest lectures, and consultation.

ISSUE: The one basic question is "how can appropriate levels of support be achieved and maintained?"

Strategies:

1. 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.
2. 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.).
3. 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.

Recommendations:

1. That the National Recreation and Park Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, through their respective constituencies, encourage and facilitate the maintenance of strong, on-going relationships between practitioners and educators, and other community stakeholders, and educators. These relationships will be most effective when they take the form of strategic partnerships. In essence, the partnership concept implies that educational/research institutions are critical elements of the recreation opportunity delivery system. While NRPA and AAPRA are the logical organizations to assume initial responsibility for implementing this recommendation, the entities involved in the partnerships represent a much broader scope.
2. That the Council on Accreditation revisit its Standards related to institutional support. The purpose would be to assure that they call for levels of resources that enable quality professional preparation.

3. That the department and unit administrators, who meet annually, assess strategies designed to prepare doctoral students for both the recreation and park profession and service in higher education to see if proper attention is being given this topic. This is a socializing process. Relative to institutional resources, there is a need for graduates to be able to function in political arenas (i.e., as related to advocacy, competition for resources, etc.).

4. That the leaders of the 1997 National Curriculum Conference develop an overall plan for carrying these recommendations, and the recommendations developed in the other topical groups, forward to those entities responsible for implementation.
Closing Observations

Tony A. Mobley, Dean
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This National Curriculum Conference has been an outstanding first step in assessing the status of curriculum in parks, recreation, and the leisure services in 1997. There has been a thorough exploration of the trends and issues existing today as well as a challenge to the field to be more visionary in its approach to curricula in colleges and universities in the future. It has been twenty-three years since the last National Curriculum Conference, and tremendous changes have taken place in both the professional field and in the academic environment since that time. It will be important to build upon the work which has taken place here in Salt Lake City to continue to develop curricula for the future.

Colleges and universities are very different places than they were just a few years ago and they are extremely different from what they were when many of us present in this room began our academic careers. The political climate and the scholarly environment are changing in fundamental ways. State legislators and private college governing boards are demanding that state universities and private institutions be much more accountable for what takes place on the campus in terms of learning outcomes and what the students in our programs as well as the general public receive for the investment of resources in our institutions.

Time will not permit a detailed exploration of the trends and issues which are affecting academia. The following is simply a brief outline of some of the trends and issues which are impacting our education in parks, recreation, and the leisure services.

-There will continue to be an increasingly strong emphasis on the quality of undergraduate education and good teaching in all types of institutions. While parks and recreation programs have had a strong service orientation toward students and good teaching, other issues remain such as substantive content analysis, course sequencing, challenging requirements, and result assessment.

-Quality graduate education and the pursuit of important research will continue to be a challenge. Institutions must assure that graduate education, particularly at the doctoral level, is of the highest quality. The pursuit of so-called "trivial research" must no longer be tolerated, and meaningful research must become the basis of scholarly inquiry.

-Funding for higher education in general and for parks and recreation, in particular, will undoubtedly be a problem throughout the foreseeable future because of a lack of reliable and predictable resources both in the "hard money" and "soft money" areas. Public funding for higher education is decreasing in proportion to other public needs, and institutions are finding it increasingly necessary to generate revenues from other sources such as increased fees, grants and contracts, and through private support and fundraising.

-Technology has dramatically changed this society and it has particularly impacted academic life because of the tremendous accessibility to information. The electronic library and the electronic
classroom are both realities and have great potential for improving programs. This statement in and of itself is certainly not surprising to anyone in today's society, but the key factor is how programs in this field respond to the use of these technologies.

-Distance education or distance learning is expanding rapidly, and the "virtual university" may not be far away. This raises all types of issues regarding the quality of education, academic credit, political boundaries, funding, etc.

-Globalization perhaps is a term that best describes what technology, information flow, and travel are doing to our world. Strong academic leaders must now take a less parochial "world view" as we prepare students to practice our profession in the future.

While all of this is happening, there are other real issues closer to home which should be addressed. The following represent but a few items directly related to higher education and parks, recreation, and the leisure services.

-Programs in this field must continue to demonstrate centrality to the mission of our institutions. With the contribution to the quality of life and many of the trends in this society, there is little question regarding centrality to mission, but a better job must be done in interpreting this to campus leadership and to governing bodies.

-Faculty members must become good citizens of the university or college. The days of the "mobile professor" are over and institutional loyalties are important in further developing these programs. There will continue to be tension between the demands of scholarly development for tenure and promotion and the pressure to provide more service to students, the institution, and the state.

-General education is under review in almost every major institution today, and the way in which the curriculum in this field interfaces with general education will continue to be of major importance.

-While looking at curriculum development, faculty members must carefully analyze the marketplace for the graduates in terms of professional needs and demands and how well graduates are prepared to provide leadership in the future.

-As the field broadens its base in terms of new job opportunities and new areas that have previously not been served (i.e., tourism, commercial recreation, etc.), it is essential to expand and strengthen the philosophical base so that we are not simply graduating "leisure technicians" with a degree. Graduates must have a broad enough base to be able to adapt to a dramatically changing society.

-The old issue of the generalist versus specialist is still very much alive. Programs seem to be going in both directions at once. This is a good issue to keep on the agenda for future curriculum conferences.

-Internships and placement activities need more study in terms of their interrelationship and to what extent colleges and universities are involved in close supervision of internship experiences and their role in the placement of graduates in professional positions.
-The "name game" continues as we search for the right name for the field. The term "leisure studies" has not served us well on campus and with the public. While it may be philosophically accurate, it has not been instructive or helpful in gaining support for our programs.

In closing, any discussion of curriculum in this field, it is important to indicate what might be obvious, but unsaid, in the area of faculty. The best curriculum in the world does not function well without dedicated, high quality faculty members who lead in the pursuit of knowledge and challenge students in their intellectual development while preparing to enter the profession. As we face the challenge of the future, it is essential that we preserve those fundamental aspects of the past and to explore new ways of delivering the best possible professional preparation programs to the students and the public we serve. There will be some things that will not work, but we must not be afraid to try and fail as we continue the pursuit of excellence in our programs. I believe that all of the ingredients are in place for us to move forward with visionary ideas and developing creative, meaningful, and effective curricula for the future. As I indicated at the beginning of the remarks, this national conference has been an excellent beginning. Now, let us move forward.
Epilogue

The intent of the 1997 National Curriculum Conference was to assess the current status of park and recreation's professional preparation and continuing education efforts. The format used in identifying problems, issues, strategies and recommendations generated considerable data about our present efforts and how they might be improved. However, limited attention was given to the future and the effects of current forces of change. They need to be addressed. Likewise, there were some major questions posed by the delegates which require additional thinking. Those questions, as well as some generated after the conference through correspondence with the delegates, provide a clear agenda for a subsequent meeting. We need to look at the impact and influence demographics, technology, and values are having and will have on the direction and content of park and recreation efforts. We need to assess the current social mandate to see if it has changed or will change. It, more than any other factor, defines who we are and what we should be doing. It also defines the field and sets priorities for professional preparation.

It is difficult to forecast the future yet experience suggests that five and ten year plans do give direction, allow for the assessment of objectives and aid in the clarification of issues. One of the objectives of the subsequent curriculum conference would be to identify the actions and steps which should be taken within the next five to ten years to keep curricula relevant and address the issue of continuing professional development.

Some of the specific questions which were posed but went unanswered in the 1997 curriculum conference are: To what degree should universities be involved in providing short courses in continuing education courses for practitioners, and if so, who should be the instructors? To what degree should the park and recreation field encourage private industry and entrepreneurs to develop programs to meet our pre-practice and continuing education needs? To what degree should park and recreation curricula attempt to address specific expectations of therapeutic recreation, travel and tourism, and other specialties at the undergraduate level within the generalist curriculum? Also, is the liberal arts approach, as suggested for the basic baccalaureate program in recreation, realistic for those colleges and universities emphasizing technical training? Are we attracting the right type of students to our major and should recreation agencies give preferential consideration in the hiring of our majors as entry level employees? To what extent should professional organizations be advocates and involved in the establishment or maintenance of university curricula?

Finally, whose responsibility is it to assume leadership in dealing with the issues of curriculum: the profession at large through its national organization? The Society of Park and Recreation Educators? The Council on Accreditation? Perhaps a new structure is needed to give direction in this area of professional responsibility. The issues are significant and demand our attention.

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