

RECREATION, PARKS, AND TOURISM ADMINISTRATION
2008-2009 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Program Description

The Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration (RPTA) Program is housed within the Natural Resources Management Department in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences. The program was initially accredited by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 1985 and has been reaccruited in 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2005. Seven full-time and five part-time faculty instruct approximately 300 undergraduate students and approximately 15 graduate students.

Program Mission, Vision, and Goals

The mission of the RPTA program is to provide a dynamic learning environment dedicated to leadership development and the advancement of knowledge in recreation, parks, and tourism beneficial to individuals, communities, and society.

The RPTA Program is a student focused “Learn by Doing” environment dedicated to:

- Developing students’ full potential
- Teaching and academic excellence
- Lifelong learning
- Leadership development
- Applied research and scholarship
- Environmental stewardship
- Enhancing communities through partnerships, community-based learning and service
- Fostering critical and analytical thinking
- Instilling an appreciation of the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism profession
- Advocating the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism profession’s contributions to quality of life

Assessment Plan and Findings

Assessment plan. The RPTA Program is accredited by the National Park and Recreation Association. The accreditation process has been a guiding force in the development of the program’s curriculum. As the accrediting body, NRPA has developed professional competencies required for entry-level positions. The professional competencies have been incorporated into the core Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration courses as primary educational learning outcomes.

The RPTA Program focused its 2008-2009 outcome assessment efforts on the following areas of investigation:

1. Quality of faculty advising, (indirect measurement)
2. Student ability to facilitate recreation experiences for diverse clientele¹,
3. Student ability to write program oriented goals and outcomes (direct measurement), and
4. Student understanding of management principles and procedures (direct measurement).

The following NRPA accreditation standards were assessed during the 2008-2009 academic year.:

- | | |
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| 5.04 | There shall be ongoing evaluation and development of the student advisory process including academic advising and professional and career advising. |
| 8.14 | Ability to implement the following principles and procedures related to program/event planning for individual, group, and community quality of life (8.14.02, Development of outcome-oriented goals and objectives). |
| 8.18 | Understanding of fundamental principles and procedures of management. |

Findings.

Assessment Area 1: An advising survey to evaluate faculty advising.

As a component of the RPTA Program's outcome assessment for the 2008-2009 academic year, a survey was conducted to assess the academic advising provided by the faculty. Faculty (tenure track and full-time lecturers) assume advising responsibilities as a portion of their assignment. During the 2008-2009 academic year, seven full-time faculty served as advisors for approximately 300 students enrolled in the major.

Instrument description and distribution: The questionnaire developed for the 2005-2006 assessment process and used in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 assessment processes was distributed to RPTA majors using the Zoomerang web survey tool (see Appendix A). The web address for the questionnaire was sent to all RPTA students using the RPTA major email distribution list. Ninety-four useable questionnaires were completed for a 31.3% response rate.

¹ Due to time and resources constraints, this learning outcome was not assessed. It will be assessed during the 2009-2010 academic year.

The questionnaire included 15 statements regarding advising using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). In addition, respondents were asked about their REC 110 binder usage and NRM office file updates, concentration or advisor approved elective area, gender, and year in school.

Of the one-hundred and fifty seven respondents, 83.0% were female (n=78) and 48.4% (n=45) reported they were in their fourth year of school (see Table 1). As shown in table 2, the majority of respondents identified their concentration/advisor approved elective area as Special Events Management (n=34, 36.2%) and Sport Management (n=14, 14.9%). Forty-nine percent of respondents maintain and update their REC 110 binders quarterly (n=46), and 75.5% (n=71) students do not update their files before they meet with their advisors.

Table 1
Year in School (n=93)

Year	Frequency	Percentage
First	10	10.8
Second	10	10.8
Third	19	20.4
Fourth	45	48.4
Fifth or more	9	9.6

Table 2
Concentration/Advisor Approved Elective Area (n=94)

Concentration	Frequency	Percentage
Natural Resources Recreation (Outdoor Rec/Eco/Adventure Tourism)	6	6.40
Special Event Management	34	36.20
Sport Management	14	14.90
Tourism Planning & Management	13	13.80
Community Services Management	3	3.20
Minor/ICS	18	19.40
Undecided	6	6.40

Frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were calculated for each of the 15 aspects of academic advising (Table 3). All scores were between strongly agree (4) and disagree (2). The highest mean scores were for “advisor holds posted office hours” (3.68), and “advisor is available by appointment” (3.61). The lowest mean scores were for “advisor provides career information” (2.98), and “I support peer advising” (3.02). Students reported “don’t know” for a number of items related to academic advising. For example, many did not know if their advisor responds timely to phone messages (n=58, 61.7%), “advisor is knowledgeable about campus resources” (n=38, 40.4%), and “advisor is knowledgeable about transfer courses” (n=33, 35.1%).

Table 3
Academic Advising - 2008/2009 (n=94)

Item	Mean	“Don’t know” Frequency	“Don’t know” %
Advisor holds posted office hours	3.68	3	3.20
Advisor is available by appointment	3.61	4	4.30
Advisor is knowledgeable about catalog	3.28	2	2.10
Advisor is approachable	3.47	2	2.10
Advisor provides career information*	2.98	8	8.50
I support peer advising*	3.02	4	4.30
Advisor is knowledgeable about major courses	3.57	2	2.10
Advisor is helpful with concentration courses	3.41	6	6.40
Advisor is knowledgeable about transfer courses*	3.15	33	35.10
Advisor provides professional development opportunities	3.22	13	13.80
Advisor responds timely to emails*	3.48	5	5.30
Advisor is knowledgeable about graduation requirement^	3.59	17	18.10
Advisor responds timely to phone messages	3.58	58	61.70
Advisor is knowledgeable about campus resources*	3.33	38	40.40
Advisor is knowledgeable about GE requirements	3.54	2	2.10

*n=93

^n=92

The 2008-2009 data were cross-tabulated using an independent sample t-test with the 2007-2008 (Table 4) results in order to compare student opinions about RPTA faculty advising. There were no significant differences in RPTA faculty advising between 2008-2009 and 2007-2008.

Table 4
Academic Advising - 2007/2008 (n=157)

Item	Mean	“Don’t know” Frequency	“Don’t know” %
Advisor holds posted office hours	3.58	2	1.30
Advisor is available by appointment	3.53	5	3.20
Advisor is knowledgeable about catalog	3.33	3	1.90
Advisor is approachable	3.45	3	1.90
Advisor provides career information	3.00	22	14.00
I support peer advising	3.03	13	8.30
Advisor is knowledgeable about major courses	3.60	6	3.80
Advisor is helpful with concentration courses	3.41	15	9.60
Advisor is knowledgeable about transfer courses	3.01	53	33.80
Advisor provides professional development opportunities	3.16	23	14.60
Advisor responds timely to emails	3.47	13	8.30
Advisor is knowledgeable about graduation requirements	3.48	39	24.80
Advisor responds timely to phone messages	3.20	94	59.90
Advisor is knowledgeable about campus resources	3.27	54	34.40
Advisor is knowledgeable about GE requirements	3.42	12	7.60

Many respondents reported that they did not know whether or not their advisor responded timely to phone messages, was knowledgeable about campus resources, or was knowledgeable about transfer courses. Regarding advisor responses to phone messages, students increasingly use email rather than telephones as a means of communicating with their advisors, either to arrange advising meetings or to ask questions. This may explain the high percentage (nearly 62%) of students not knowing if their advisors respond timely to phone messages. A minority of students in the RPTA program are transfer students, explaining the high percentage (34%) of students who do not know if their advisors are knowledgeable about transfer courses. Many students reported they did not know if their advisors were knowledgeable about campus resources (34%). This may indicate that students consult with their advisors about curriculum during advising meetings and seek out other sources of information regarding campus resources.

Assessment Area 3: Student ability to write program oriented goals and outcomes (direct measurement)

During Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, students enrolled in REC 210 (Introduction to Program Design) were evaluated on their ability to meet the NRPA/AALR standard 8.14.02, addressing the development of program outcome-oriented goals and objectives. In a direct assessment method, a question was imbedded into the course mid-term

requiring students to demonstrate their ability to effectively write program outcome-oriented goals and objectives.

While all students in both class sections were required to complete the exam for assessment purposes, only a random sample of exam responses were assessed. There were a total of 77 students and the random sample consisted of 15 responses. Two faculty members were selected to review and assess the exam responses. For the purpose of the exam, the students were directed to write the following types of goal and objective statements related to the development of a specific recreation program.

- Planning Goal: Defines basic areas of programming effort.
- Management Goal: Specifies programs to accomplish.
- Program Design Objectives: Addresses program design elements.

The faculty reviewers developed a five point rating scale. Separate scores were given for each goal and one score for the three objectives. The three scores were combined for a final overall rating. The rating scale consisted of the following point system:

1. Not acceptable
2. Less acceptable
3. Acceptable
4. More Acceptable
5. Most Acceptable

Results:

- A. Combined ratings measuring the ability of the 15 respondents to write both goals and objectives the following distribution (Table 5):

Table 5
Goal and Objective Writing (n=15)

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Most Acceptable	2	13.33
More Acceptable	7	46.67
Acceptable	2	13.33
Less Acceptable	1	6.67
Not Acceptable	2	13.33

B. Ratings measuring the ability of the 15 respondents to write goal statements (Table 6)

Table 6
Ability to Write Goal Statements (n=15)

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Most Acceptable	7	46.67
More Acceptable	2	13.33
Acceptable	4	26.67
Less Acceptable	1	6.67
Not Acceptable	0	0.00

C. Ratings measuring the ability of the 15 respondents to write objective statements (Table 7).

Table 7
Ability to Write Objective Statements (n=15)

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Most Acceptable	4	26.67
More Acceptable	6	40.00
Acceptable	2	13.33
Less Acceptable	3	20.00
Not Acceptable	0	0.00

A similar assessment was conducted in 2004-2005 to measure students' goal writing skills. The results of the 2008-2009 are consistent with the 2004-2005. As indicated by the ratings for both studies, the majority of the REC 210 students were able to write acceptable or higher rated goals and objectives statements. However, compared to the earlier study, there is a drop in the percentage of acceptable or higher ratings for the 2007-2008 students' ability to write planning goals. While the subjects for both studies were based upon a random sample, the 2004-2005 study consisted of 32 responses compared to the current 15. It is possible that the reduction in subjects influenced the outcome of this year's study. It is recommend for future studies to maintain consistence in the sample pool. The findings for the management goals or objective statements were comparable with the 2004 – 05 findings.

Conclusions:

The ability to write program outcome-oriented goals and objectives is an element of the planning process. Based upon the assessment results, it appears that REC 210 provides the students with the foundation for the planning process. As a sophomore level course,

student take the class early in their academic career. To further develop students' planning skills, planning elements should be incorporated in other recreation courses.

Assessment Area 4: Student understanding of management principles and procedures (direct measurement)

In winter quarter 2009, students enrolled in REC 405 (Managing Leisure Services), were evaluated on their ability to understand the fundamental principles and procedures of management. The assessment meets the NRPA/AALR standard 8.18. Questions were embedded into the course mid-term examination to validate and demonstrate knowledge of this area with both short essay and multiple choice questions and answers.

A total of 43 students were required to take the examination. Only select questions have been identified to represent the sampling for this assessment. The pertinent questions are as follows:

- Exam question # 8: Identify 2 of the 3 types of management classifications. (1 pt.)
- Exam question #11: What is the definition of *management*?. (2 pts.)
- Exam question #12: List Henri Fayols five primary functions of management. (2.5 pts.)

Each question was identified as correct, incorrect, or partially correct (students were given partial credit).

Results:

A. Exam question #8 – Management Classifications.

Ninety-three percent of student responses were identified as correct, and approximately 5% received partial credit. Therefore, a majority of students were able to identify two of the three types of management classifications (supervisors, bureaucrats, or managers).

B.. Exam question #11: The Definition of Management.

Over 97% of students (n=42) were able to define the concept of management effectively, while another two percent received partial credit. A majority of students were able to define management at the midpoint of the quarter.

C. Exam question #12: Henri Fayols Function of Management.

Over 90% of students were able to identify the Fayol's five primary functions of management. Because another 9% of students received at least partial credit for their responses, most of the REC 405 students could identify Fayol's management functions.

Findings:

Based upon the embedded questions of the examination, the students from the RPTA405 Managing Leisure Services course, for winter quarter 2009 appear to understand or comprehend the basic fundamental principles and procedures of management .

Appendix A
REC Advising Survey

CAL POLY RPTA SPRING 2009 ACADEMIC ADVISING SURVEY

This survey is designed to evaluate the Academic Advising of the Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration Program at Cal Poly. Please respond to the following questions as completely as possible. Your participation in the study is voluntary and your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following aspects of academic advising by circling one number for each statement. If you do not have knowledge about a particular item please circle "DK" for don't know.

Agreement

<i>RPTA Academic Advising</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
My advisor holds posted office hours	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is available by appointment	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about my curriculum catalog	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is approachable	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor provides career information	1	2	3	4	DK
I would support a peer advising program	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about RPTA major courses	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is helpful with my RPTA concentration courses	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about transfer courses	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor provides professional development information such as conference opportunities	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor responds to emails in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about senior graduation evaluation requirements	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor responds to phone messages in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about resources on campus such as study skill workshops	1	2	3	4	DK
My advisor is knowledgeable about GE requirements	1	2	3	4	DK

2. I maintain and update my REC 110 binder quarterly. ☐ Yes

☐ No

3. I update my file in the NRM office before meeting with my advisor. ☐ Yes

☐ No

4. What is your concentration/advisor approved elective area/minor? _____

5. Are you? ☐ Female ☐ Male
6. What is your year in school? _____

Thank you for your time in our efforts to enhance our RPTA academic advising!