

Bachelor of Science in Parks and Recreation Management

Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
College of Education and Allied Professions
Western Carolina University

Self-study Report for the 2010 Program Review

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Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) program at Western Carolina University (WCU) has a long and distinguished history. In 1973, the current PRM Program was created at WCU as Recreation Leadership. Prior to 1992, the PRM program included Recreation Leadership and Hospitality Management. In 1992, Dr. Maurice Phipps was hired to change the Hospitality Management Program to emphasize outdoor recreation and outdoor education. This modification was made to enable a better fit with the Western North Carolina region and the goals of Western Carolina University. In 1993, Dr. Ben Tholkes was hired, which brought the number of tenure track faculty up to two for the program. Over the intervening years, the program has added Debby Singleton, a 25% PRM faculty member, and a number of valuable adjunct professors. Dr. Tholkes and Dr. Phipps have provided stability and consistency to the program for the past eighteen years, and have made significant improvements to the program. At one point, the PRM program grew to over 115 majors, but this number proved to be too great for 2¼ faculty. To ensure the program attracted students who were committed, and to focus on the mission of the PRM program, we instituted a PRM essay for admission into the major and a 2.5 GPA requirement. This reduced our PRM majors to approximately 70, which we feel we can currently manage.

The Parks and Recreation Management program is aligned with the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER) and the College of Education and Allied Professions (CEAP). In 2007, the PRM program became one of four pilot degree programs to participate in the WCU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Dr. Phipps took the lead in preparing the PRM QEP document, which is included in the Appendix 3.10. The Parks and Recreation Management program takes pride in being involved in all aspects of department, college and university initiatives such as the QEP.

Even with the limitation of two full time faculty members, the PRM program has demonstrated steady enrollment, curricular improvements and a high graduation rate. With the addition of much needed resources and an additional faculty member, the PRM program could expand into the vital area of community recreation. This would be a significant benefit to the university and to the wider Western North Carolina community. Future growth of the PRM program, national accreditation and a graduate program are dependent on funding and resources from the college and university. The following self-study report provides a brief overview of the

Program according to the seven standards for Program Review as directed by the Provost of Western Carolina University. Supportive documentation is provided in a separate set of appendices, which includes significant data and background for the conclusions that follow.

Significance and Scope of the Program

Standard 1. *The purpose of the program reflects and supports the mission and strategic vision of Western Carolina University and the mission of its School and/or College.*

Purpose and Mission: The mission of the Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) Program is to promote resourcefulness, independent thinking, the ability to cope with change, and service to society – by preparing leaders in the Parks and Recreation profession. The program strives to maintain an intellectual and caring environment through cooperation and collaboration in active learning and critical thinking. Experiential education is also an important component to encourage application and modification of theories learned. The program prepares professionals to design, plan, promote, and deliver the physical and social components of the leisure service industry. This includes skills in administration, management, research and evaluation, leadership, and instruction. Graduates will be prepared to manage resources, facilities and programs, and to lead and instruct for programs in commercial, public, and non-profit settings.

The PRM program supports the university's and the college's role and mission of teaching and learning by stressing the importance of scholarship and engaged learning in all of our courses. The College of Education and Allied Professions fulfills its mission by developing and maintaining a community of scholars that promotes and recognizes good teaching, service and research. Our PRM students are guided by knowledge, values and experiences. Dr. Phipps, Dr. Tholkes and Debby Singleton use both experiential and cooperative learning in their courses. Students are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process, especially through reflection on and application of the experience. The PRM program also links to the College of Education and Allied Professions' mission by promoting the importance of service and research. PRM students actively participate in research and service during their time at WCU. Each year PRM students conduct research and present their research at the Undergraduate Research Conference and at the Regional Outdoor Adventure Conference. Service to the community is a required component of our core PRM curriculum. Students complete this service through Mini-Internships and Internships with recreation based businesses and agencies. Over the years, PRM

students and faculty have assisted and provided expertise to a number of agencies such as: the National Park Service, National Forest Service, Jackson County Recreation and Parks Department, American Red Cross, Wilderness Education Association, Jackson County Public Schools and other county and national organizations.

Alignment of the Program with the University and College: The mission of the PRM Program is in concert with the mission of WCU, the College of Education and Allied Professions and the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. The PRM mission is linked to, and is a reflection of, the teaching and learning goals that constitute the central mission of WCU; to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the higher standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines.

The PRM program was selected as one of four pilot programs to implement the WCU Quality Enhancement Program (QEP). The QEP was developed in preparation for Western Carolina University's review by the Southern Accreditation of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in April 2007. The overarching goal of the QEP is "students will synthesize knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning". Identifying and diminishing barriers to learning and facilitating student benefit from the interrelationship and connection of both their academic co-curricular experiences is a core activity of the members of the academy. Several enhancements have been made to the PRM curriculum due to the implementation of the QEP and our Annual PRM Assessment of the Program. For example, PRM 350 – University and Career Planning in PRM was created to assist students in their strategic planning and synthesis of knowledge and skills as they progress through the major.

Distinctive aspects of the Parks and Recreation Management Program at WCU:

- Curriculum alignment with Quality Enhancement Program (QEP).
- Numerous local and regional outdoor opportunities.
- Park Service (national and state) and National Forest Service collaboration.
- National and state trails (Appalachian, Bartram, Mountain-to-Sea) located in our area.
- Active application of theories through our PRM labs.
- Many and varied internship sites in state, around the country, and abroad. (Appendix 5.6)
- A very strong and active PRM Club.
- A very strong international component with our Irish exchange program.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program: The strengths of our program relate primarily to the quality and commitment of the faculty. The PRM Program was one of the first to volunteer to pilot the WCU QEP. Other strengths include: a well established internship program, a well written and complete PRM Student Handbook, service by the faculty to the university and the region (team building sessions, first aid and CPR classes for the National Park Service staff, serving on local boards), a good course sequence to enable the QEP (PRM essay, personal strategic planning, PRM 350, PRM 370, PRM 495), a well established Student Interview Portfolio (for future use in e-briefcase), a university recognized Annual Program Assessment, students who are willing and able to perform at the 2.5 GPA level, good facilities in Reid Gym (gym space, equipment storage area, teaching lab, climbing spire, pool), excellent adjuncts with expertise in the field (Earl Davis, Sam Fowlkes, Rhett Langston, Todd Murdock and Rebecca Lindsey), student research presentations at the annual WCU Undergraduate Research Expo, and regional conferences.

The weaknesses of the PRM program relate mainly to our limited resources and staff. This includes: no full time faculty to teach community recreation courses, limited use of Debby Singleton to teach leadership, commercial recreation and adventure travel courses, no faculty member available to teach camp related courses, no ropes course facility on campus, limited use of the WCU climbing wall, a limited budget for purchasing and replacing equipment, use of university vans for transporting students can be difficult, shared use of space (gym space, lab space, climbing spire area, swimming pool) can create conflict, difficulty finding and keeping some adjunct professors, our lack of National Recreation and Parks Association accreditation impacts students who would like to take the Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam.

Program Planning Ongoing and Strategic Planning

Standard 2. The program engages in ongoing, systematic planning that is reflective of the University's strategic priorities.

Strategic planning is a big part of the Parks and Recreation Management Program. Dr. Maurice Phipps has conducted numerous strategic planning sessions for the PRM Program, HPER and other university programs. We feel that strategic planning is necessary for laying out the goals and objectives of the PRM program. WCU has revised its strategic plan recently to cover the period of 2008-2013. Eight strategic directions are included in the revised plan including

preparing students for the 21st century, serving the educational needs of North Carolina, improving public education, promoting economic and community advancement in the region, improving health and wellness in Western North Carolina, modeling environmental sustainability, promoting outreach and engagement in the region, and demonstrating institutional integrity, responsibility and effectiveness. HPER has recently completed a revision our strategic plan for the period 2010-2015 (Appendix 2.4).

Program Strategic Goals and Objectives and the Process for Developing/Modifying goals/objectives: During our recent strategic planning session, we established eight goals, and listed objectives and strategies for each of the goals. The goals included planning, communication, resources, quality, outreach, growth, public relations, and research. For each goal, we listed our PRM objectives and strategies for obtaining our objectives. Under the goal of planning, our PRM objectives include a plan for PRM expansion, completing the PRM Program Review, outcomes assessment, and program risk management plans. The strategies for reaching these objectives included presenting a written PRM proposal to the Dean, researching other programs' Program Reviews, continuing our current outcomes assessment plan and continuing our current risk management plan. We continued this process for each of our eight goals and established a timeline for completion of the strategies. In addition to setting PRM Program goals, objectives and strategies, we also completed goals, objectives and strategies for HPER. For example, under the goal for planning, the HPER objective listed the Risk Management Plan with the strategy of completing a department risk management plan and all faculty members becoming trained in first aid and CPR. This same process of writing HPER objectives and strategies was completed for all eight of the HPER goals.

Relation of Program Goals / Objectives to Curricular and Programmatic Activities and Process of Implementation: Our strategic goals and objectives represent a logical extension of our existing curriculum and faculty scholarship. We plan to integrate our program goals within programmatic activities whenever possible. We will achieve this through faculty scholarship and service. Our students benefit from our ongoing connection with professional contacts in the field of Parks and Recreation Management. For example, our involvement with the National Forest Service enables students to conduct research on visitor use in Panthertown Valley, a part of Nantahala National Forest. This provides an excellent educational opportunity, plus it provides research data to be presented at local and regional conferences. We plan to

continue the process of strategic planning in a way that fosters improvement in the program and extension of our expertise to further our students' learning and our service to the western North Carolina area.

Program Curriculum and Instruction

Standard 3. The program provides and evaluates a high quality curriculum that emphasizes student learning as its primary purpose.

Alignment of Curriculum with Disciplinary Standards: In designing our curriculum, we examined the Council on Accreditation for Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) standards for our profession. Our curriculum was designed to meet CAPRA standards, and also to take advantage of our excellent location in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Student learning benefits from a rigorous academic base and a strong experiential component. In addition to our work with the National Forest Service mentioned earlier, we also work with the National Park Service through their Volunteer in the Park (VIP) program to provide students with valuable service opportunities in the park's visitor centers and backcountry areas. Another valuable link is with the National Ski Patrol. Students are able to complete the National Ski Patrol training in Outdoor Emergency Care (PRM 356) and receive national certification as Outdoor Emergency Care Technicians. This enables students to provide service to local ski areas as members of the National Ski Patrol. Our curriculum also offers opportunities for students to obtain certifications in swiftwater rescue, American Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED, National Ski Patrol Mountain Travel and Rescue. These certifications and experiences add to our curriculum and have a tremendous impact on our student learning and their future employability.

Amount of time needed to complete the curriculum: The degree in PRM includes a total of 120 credits with 42 credits in the WCU liberal studies program, 41-43 credits of PRM major requirements, 23-25 credits of guided electives and 12 credits in a concentration area. Our guided electives section is an open curriculum for the student to select courses with faculty guidance. Students can elect to complete a minor as part of their guided electives, or take a series of courses that will benefit them during their career preparation. For each of our concentration areas, we have a suggested list of guided electives to aid the students in designing their program. Currently, the PRM program has four concentration areas. Students can select from a variety of courses to prepare themselves for a concentration in community recreation,

outdoor leadership and instruction, commercial and resort recreation or recreation resource management.

Prior to their declaration of a major, PRM students are required to write an essay in order to share with us their experiences, goals and strategies. Based on the content of the essay, we are able to assign the student to an advisor, based upon the advisor's specific strengths. During a student's first major advising session, we help him/her create a strategic plan. The strategic planning session helps the advisor and students set a plan of action towards successful completion of the curriculum. The final requirement for students to enter and complete the program is a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5. We found it necessary to implement this GPA requirement in order to keep our number of student majors at a level that we could meet their needs with the resources available to us. Over the years, the PRM program's graduation rate per full time faculty has been one of the highest at WCU.

Multi or Interdisciplinary Strengths of the Program: One of the strengths of our program is its interdisciplinary nature. PRM students are required to complete courses such as Health 250 and Recreation Therapy 250. Our guided electives requirement encourages students to take a variety of courses in order to prepare themselves for their chosen profession. In addition to their required PRM courses, students are encouraged to take classes in Criminal Justice, Natural Resource Management, Hospitality and Tourism, Health and Physical Education, and other areas across the university. Occasionally, we advise students to complete coursework outside of WCU. Our PRM students may take classes such as the Seasonal Law Enforcement Training or Wilderness Therapy at Southwestern Community College. Students can also receive field experience credits for participation in Outward Bound, Wilderness Education Association or National Outdoor Leadership School courses. Our concentration area courses require students to select from courses offered by Physical Education, Sport Management, Recreation Therapy, Accounting, Business, Hospitality and Tourism, and Management. Since PRM only has two full time faculty, we feel it is important to use the interdisciplinary opportunities available to our students. Providing opportunities for interdisciplinary studies as well as interdisciplinary interaction is encouraged by the College and is a priority of our Program.

Alignment of Curriculum to Meet the University Needs: All PRM courses are offered to students outside the PRM major to meet university needs. Our PRM 270 – Leadership and Group Dynamics - course is a required course for Recreation Therapy students. Our PRM 356 -

Outdoor Emergency Care - course attracts students from Emergency Management, Natural Resource Management, Criminal Justice and other majors. Many of our introduction courses, PRM 250 – Foundations of Parks and Recreation, PRM 254 – Introduction to Outdoor Pursuits and PRM 270 – Leadership and Group Dynamics, attract students from across the university. If resources were available, a PRM course developed to meet Liberal Studies goals and objectives would be very popular.

Advising: One of the hallmarks of the WCU QEP is a significant emphasis on student advising to guide the student to the synthesis of knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become intentional participants in their own learning. The advising process for PRM students begins even before they are declared as a PRM major. The process begins with the writing of a PRM essay in which the students shares with us their experiences, goals, and strategies. The PRM essay also assists us in assigning a PRM student to an advisor. Once an advisor has been assigned, the student meets with the advisor to begin the process of personal strategic planning. This strategic plan is important in mapping out the future of the student. Another important step in preparing the student for success in our program is the review of our student handbook. Dr. Phipps wrote the PRM Student Handbook a number of years ago to inform students about the PRM program and to use it as a guide throughout the program. In order to prepare our students for the advising process, we conduct a PRM students all majors meeting on Advising Day each semester. At this meeting, we talk to our majors about items of interest in the PRM Program, share with them the PRM course offerings for the next semester, and provide sign-up sheets for advising sessions. We feel that the All Majors Meeting is an important tool for preparing our majors for advising. During the advising period, we schedule 20-minute sessions to discuss with our students their current courses, share ideas for the upcoming semester and answer any questions the students may have. Since we have a large number of advisees, we encourage students to come to the meeting prepared and to schedule additional advising time if needed. Currently, Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes advise approximately 30-35 advisees each and Debby Singleton assists us by advising 10-12 students. Our advising sessions have always received very high ratings from the HPER Advising Evaluations.

In addition to advising our current PRM majors, we also have approximately five PRM minors and five students who are working to achieve the 2.5 GPA necessary in the PRM Program. Dr. Tholkes is available during the summer months to advise incoming freshman and

transfer students. We feel this summer contact is important to begin the process of orienting the new students to help them acclimate to the WCU community. We also have three courses integrated into the PRM Program to assist students with the advising process and successfully moving them through the program. PRM 350 – University and Career Planning in PRM - is designed to begin the process of preparing the students for success in the PRM program. PRM 370 – Internship Orientation - prepares students for their capstone PRM internship and PRM 495 – Senior Seminar - aids students in preparing for their final steps in completing the PRM Program and compiling their senior PRM portfolio.

Course Syllabi: Included with this report are our course syllabi in Appendix 3.3. In order to comply with the current WCU standards, all of our course syllabi include well-defined course objectives, teaching methods, an explanation of the faculty grading system, and a grading scale based on A+ through F grades. Additional information included in all syllabi are: attendance policies, the WCU Academic Honor Code, the sexual harassment policy, and accommodations for students with disabilities. Due to new printing and copying restrictions, we have been asked to post our syllabi online, e-mail our syllabi to our students, or prepare a 2-page syllabi to hand out to our classes. Many of our courses contain a lab or activity component. The syllabi need to explain the nature of the lab to be sure the students understand the importance of integrating the lab as a part of the course.

Student Learning Outcomes: The PRM program has been praised by the university for the quality of our annual assessment of student learning outcomes. As part of our learning outcomes, we have determined eight educational goals for the program. Details of the educational goals and measurement tools can be found in Appendix 3.9. The assessment master plan can be found in Appendix 3.8. Another part of our outcomes assessment is our PRM 495 – Senior Seminar final exam. PRM seniors are required to complete a comprehensive final examination in order to demonstrate their retention of important PRM concepts. The comprehensive examination includes essay questions, true/false questions, short answer and multiple-choice questions. The test questions are prepared from all eleven PRM core courses. The test has 150 points, the highest score recorded during the assessment period was 140 points, and the average score was 131. During 2009-2010, we had 24 PRM seniors take the examination and most scored well in all areas. Prior to the exam, students were observed sharing course materials and assisting each other in preparing for the examination.

As another important part of the Senior Seminar course, Dr. Phipps, Debby Singleton and Dr. Tholkes meet with the PRM seniors for a discussion about their experiences as PRM students. In addition to the round table discussion, students are asked to complete a senior survey (see Appendix 5.9). As a major assignment in our PRM 495 – Senior Seminar class, each PRM student is required to prepare a senior portfolio. Senior portfolios contain student résumés, letters of recommendation from internships, certifications, and selected course work from PRM classes. We are very proud of the quality of our student portfolios and encourage our students to use their portfolios during job interviews. We have had very positive comments from students and interviewers concerning the quality of our student portfolios. The senior portfolio process begins in PRM 350 – University and Career Planning in PRM, when students are instructed in the use of the electronic briefcase. Students are instructed to begin saving important papers, coursework and reflections on their learning. All of this material is then presented to their advisor for review and feedback.

A final measure of our student learning outcomes is professional certification that our students are able to complete. In 2009 – 2010, our students received national certifications in five areas during our PRM courses: We feel these certifications are an important accomplishment for our students and make them competitive in the job market.

Faculty Resources

Standard 4. The program has sufficient faculty resources to meet its mission and goals.

Information on faculty credentials, backgrounds, demographics, faculty contributions, development, work environment and instructional loads, as well as Health, Physical Education and Recreation Collegial Review standards are well documented in Appendix 4. The PRM program has served the university well over the years with only two full-time tenured faculty members. Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes have provided stability since 1993, while attempting to expand the PRM program and broaden its curriculum. In 1996, Debby Singleton was hired as an adjunct to teach in the commercial and resort recreation concentration. In 2001, Debby became a full-time, non-tenured track faculty member of the HPER department with 25% of her teaching load assigned to PRM classes and to assist with advising PRM majors. As of this year, Debby has been assigned the added responsibility of coordinating the Liberal Studies Health courses within the HPER Department. Debby has been an excellent addition to our faculty, but her additional departmental responsibilities have limited her to teaching no more than three courses

in the PRM program per year. We have found it increasingly necessary to rely on adjunct professors for a number of our PRM courses. Luckily, we have been able to recruit a number of very talented adjunct faculty members from a very limited pool of qualified applicants. However, there are certain PRM courses that we have not been able to offer simply because we do not have faculty members available to teach them.

In addition to our teaching loads, we find ourselves carrying a heavy load of advising, student strategic planning, career counseling, writing references, completing student applications for graduation, attending university open house sessions, and responding to questions about our program. The student to faculty ratio for the PRM Program is high, placing high demands on our faculty both in teaching and in advising. At this time, the student to faculty ration in PRM is approximately 30 to 1. This ratio is much higher than in other programs at WCU and higher than other similar programs in North Carolina. Over the years, our class size and number of majors has held strong and our graduation rate per full time faculty is one of the highest at WCU (data in Appendix 5.4).

Since the HPER department is small and has a limited number of tenured faculty members, the PRM faculty are called upon to serve on many Department, College, and University committees. Currently, Dr. Tholkes is serving his third term on the WCU faculty senate in addition to other College and Department committees. We also find ourselves in demand to serve on community and regional boards and committees. In addition to service, we work hard to fulfill our University, College and Department requirements to conduct research and present at national, regional and state conferences. Without additional faculty resources, the PRM Program will have a very difficult time meeting the long-term strategic goals of our Program.

Student Quality

Standard 5. The program attracts, retains, and graduates high quality students.

Specific and detailed information on the size and demography of students in the Program, diversity, enrollment patterns, academic qualifications of students, consistency of advising, student engagement opportunities, and student exam results are documented in Appendix 5. The number of PRM students has remained either constant or increased over the years. As a result of the implementation of our 2.5 GPA requirement, the quality of PRM students has increased. We currently have approximately 70 majors in our program plus approximately 5 – 10 students who are in the process of declaring PRM as their major. The quality of our majors has improved due

to the implementation of a prerequisite essay to enter the PRM program, our strategic planning with a PRM advisor and the 2.5 GPA requirement.

By attending each of the Western Carolina University open house sessions, we begin the process of attracting students to our program. We feel that each one of our students is an ambassador for the PRM major. We find that many students that come to our classes, or inquire about our major, have been referred to us by a current or former PRM student. Our involvement in community, regional and state activities provides excellent opportunities to inform prospective students about WCU and the PRM program. We also have a close working relationship, and an articulation agreement, with the Southwestern Community College Outdoor Leadership program. A number of excellent students have transferred to our program to pursue a four-year degree with us.

Our program's graduation rate demonstrates that we have a very high retention rate for our majors. We feel our curriculum has a lot to do with our retention rate. PRM Senior Student Surveys (Appendix 5.9) have consistently indicated that students are satisfied with the PRM program and enjoy the experiential nature of our courses. Conducting labs and experiential activities in our course requires considerable planning and organization by the faculty, but the experiences add significantly to our students' satisfaction and retention.

Since we have limited faculty and our classes are generally full, we have not been actively marketing our program in order to attract additional students. We find that many of our students transfer to us as sophomores or juniors, once they have talked to one of our PRM majors or after they have experienced one of our courses. With additional faculty resources, we could actively recruit students to our major and increase our course offerings to meet the demand.

Administrative Resources

Standard 6. The program has an administrative structure that facilitates achievement of program goals and objectives.

Decision-making: The PRM program practices a collaborative and consensus-building model of decision-making and is supported in the current administrative structure of the HPER department, CEAP, and the university. We feel it is important to meet regularly to discuss pertinent issues. Even though Dr. Tholkes is program director, he relies heavily on the experience of Dr. Phipps and Debby Singleton for making program decisions. Dr. Tholkes

regularly updates the HPER Department Head on important issues relating to the program and relies on the Department Head for assistance on decision making related to the program.

Support and Training Opportunities for the Program Director: The program director receives training and support from the college and department. The PRM program director receives a one-course release each year, which allows time to spend on program issues.

The University provides many opportunities and mechanisms for training and professional development for faculty functioning in leadership roles. These opportunities are facilitated primarily by the Provost's Office, the QEP Program and the Coulter Faculty Commons. CEAP and HPER support training and professional development opportunities by appropriation of budget dollars on an annual basis.

Faculty Involvement in Ongoing Program Activities: The faculty participates in the assessment of program structure and activities, curriculum development and review, admission decisions, and have all contributed to this Program Review. Faculty have also been active in committee work at all levels of the University. This faculty engagement has been helpful to incorporate knowledge of university-wide initiatives and feedback into the development and evaluation of the curriculum.

Involvement of Students, Alumni and Other Program Constituents in Program Decision-making: We feel the student feedback from our annual senior survey provides us with valuable information for ongoing changes to our program. Each semester, Dr. Phipps, Dr. Tholkes and Debby Singleton meet with all of our PRM seniors in PRM 495 – Senior Seminar. During this session, we encourage our students to give us honest feedback about our program. Over the years, we have used this feedback to consider changes to our program. Our annual PRM Program assessment demonstrates how some of the students' ideas have been integrated into our program. We also stay in touch with our alumni through professional organizations, informal contacts and e-mail correspondence. We have assisted many of our students with their initial job placement in the field of parks and recreation. Our former students stay in contact and provide us information about changes to our profession. We also invite our alumni to visit our classes and share their ideas and experiences with our current students. Our adjunct faculty members are also a valuable resource for assisting with program planning and decision-making. We currently have adjunct faculty with expertise in swiftwater rescue, ropes course facilitation

and community recreation. We feel these professionals in the field serve as an informal advisory committee for our program and provide us with valuable input for our decision-making.

Evaluation of Administrators: Each year, we are provided the opportunity to complete an evaluation on the Department Head of Health, Physical Education and Recreation and the Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions.

Program Resources

Standard 7. *The program has adequate resources to meet its goals and objectives.*

Adequacy of Budget: Budgeting has always been a mystery to us. It seems there are occasional pots of money available for limited purposes, but we are not part of the college or departmental budgeting process. We occasionally receive notices from the Department Head or Dean that there is money available and we can submit a list of needed equipment. These pots of money have helped over the years when we need to buy or replace equipment. However, this system makes long range planning very difficult. Due to the experiential nature of our program, we do need to constantly update or upgrade our equipment. Dr. Phipps and Sam Fowlkes have been able to tap into outside funding sources on occasion to obtain needed equipment funds. One ongoing source of funding for our program over the years has been lab fees, approximately \$1,600, which we have used to purchase small equipment related items for the program.

Adequacy of Facilities and Instructional Technology: Like many departments on our campus, we suffer from lack of available space for classes, especially for activities. Our office space seems to be adequate at this time and the Department has furnished us with an equipment room in the back of Reid Gym and a storage area for our canoes and kayaks. Reid Gym does have adequate space for teaching and activities, but we are competing and sometimes sharing the space with other groups across campus. Each semester, we encounter difficulty when we attempt to reserve classrooms, teaching space and use of the gym and pool.

The university has a plan for upgrading our computers on a regular basis and it seems to be working. The university recently implemented a plan in which the department is charged directly for the copies we print and this has had a negative impact on our ability to provide copies for our classes. We have a copier/printer in our outer office area that we share with a number of other faculty members. Most of our classrooms in Reid Gym are equipped with full teaching stations, which make it possible to bring technology into our classes. Heating, cooling and lighting are an ongoing problem in some of our classrooms. Reid Gym is an older building

that has been renovated and redesigned a number of times, but continues to struggle with the effort to make classrooms and offices comfortable teaching and activity spaces.

Faculty members have access to the full Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Acrobat, and WebCat (Blackboard) and other software upon request. Training for all of the technology is available through university centers and the Coulter Faculty Commons. Other sources of help with technology are the university IT Help Desk and the Faculty Sandbox.

Equipment and Supplies: In order to continue the experiential component of our program, we have a constant need for replenishing equipment and supplies. Each of our courses that include an activity component off campus, such as rock climbing, paddling and camping trips require well-stocked first aid kits, which need to be replenished regularly. Our program's rock climbing equipment (ropes, harnesses, carabiners, and helmets) also needs to be inspected and replaced as required. The program's camping equipment (tents, sleeping bags, stoves, fuel, tarps, and backpacks) also needs to be repaired or replaced on occasion. If funding is available, we could use additional teaching equipment such as portable initiatives, canoes, and climbing equipment. One necessary piece of equipment that we struggle with is a reliable van to transport our students and equipment to off campus activities. We do reserve vans from the WCU motor pool. Although within the past several years, we have had issues with vans breaking down, not having working seat belts, missing seats, and at times being in questionable working condition. The vans may or may not have trailer hitches for use with our boat trailers. If a motor pool van is not available, we must call other departments and programs on campus and try to borrow a van for our activity.

Library Resources to Support Mission and Goals: Our program does have library funding available to purchase library books and DVDs. Last year, Dr. Tholkes meet with Nancy Kolenbrander to order a number of books and DVDs for use in the program.

Administrative Support: Currently, our department has one full-time office administrator to assist 13 faculty members. Additional support is supplied by student workers on a part-time basis. At one time, PRM had our own office assistant, but this position was lost when we moved to Reid Gym. We now have a printer/copier located in our office area (Reid 122), but we still need assistance with copying or printing big projects such as tests and syllabi.

Program Staffing Needs: Our greatest staffing need at this time is in the area of community recreation. Many of our students are interested in pursuing careers in city and county

recreation agencies. Over the years, we have used adjunct faculty to teach PRM – 461 Management and Administration of Parks and Recreation. This class needs to be taught by someone with community recreation credentials. Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes share the advising load for the community recreation concentration area, but a community recreation faculty member would be better suited for assisting our majors in this area. A full-time faculty member would assist us with our advising duties, research, committee assignments and provide service to our community recreation partners. An additional full time faculty member would assist us with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) accreditation of our PRM program. Currently, we do not have the necessary number of faculty personnel to apply for accreditation through the NRPA. We are one of the few parks and recreation programs in the University of North Carolina system that is not accredited. Until we are able to add an additional full time member, we will be unable to successfully complete the accreditation process.

Program Areas of Concern

Based on discussions among the faculty, PRM student surveys, and feedback from alumni, it is clear that there are several areas where program improvements are needed.

Staffing needs: As mentioned above, one of our greatest needs is for another full-time, tenure track faculty member. A new faculty member with expertise in the area of community recreation would fill many of our current needs. This faculty member could teach courses that we currently need to find adjunct faculty to cover. A new full-time faculty member would also allow us to expand our course offerings and possibly offer our recreation research and park facilities and planning courses again. A new faculty member would be able to assist us with advising, committees and community service. With an additional faculty member added to our program, we may be able to pursue accreditation with NRPA. In addition, since Dr. Tholkes and Dr. Phipps are within a few years of retiring, a new faculty member should be hired to begin working towards tenure with the goal of eventually taking over the job of PRM Program Director. It would be a great benefit to our program to have a smooth transition from our current faculty to a new team of faculty members. Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes have built up many valuable community and regional contacts over the years and a new faculty member would benefit by working with them during the transition period. Dr. Tholkes has worked closely with the National Forest Service, the National Park Service and the National Ski Patrol over the years and a new faculty member would benefit from these contacts. Dr. Phipps has worked closely

with the Wilderness Education Association (WEA) and would like to see the WEA expedition courses continued under a new faculty member.

Equipment and Supplies: Through careful purchasing and maintenance of our equipment and supplies, we have been able offer valuable “hands-on” experience to our students over the years. However, budget constraints and repeated use have taken a toll on our equipment and supplies. Our greatest concern is a need for adequate transportation options to take our students to off campus teaching sites. As mentioned earlier, WCU vans may not be available when we need them and when they are available they suffer from lack of adequate maintenance. At times, we need to transport canoes and kayaks to the teaching site and WCU vehicles may not be usable for this purpose. If another area (like athletics) needs a vehicle, we may find that our reserved vehicle is not available to us. We would like to request an equipment budget so that we can replace and repair our equipment as needed. In order to plan our courses a semester in advance, we need to know that we will have the equipment and supplies necessary.

Facilities: Although we are satisfied with our current facilities, there is room for improvement. Our classes require not only classroom space, but also activity space. We currently need to work with and around other classes in order to conduct activities with our classes. We have our climbing spire in the back section of the gym, but we may not be able to use that area if someone else is using the area. We have used the climbing spire for about 10 years and a new bouldering/rappelling area would be a great addition to our program.

Summary

Over the years, the WCU Parks and Recreation Management program has done an excellent job of serving the university community and our PRM Students. Our number of majors has held steady over the years even with the implementation of the 2.5 GPA requirement and the loss of the travel and tourism component. Our graduation rate has remained consistently high over the years and our student evaluations in our senior student surveys have been excellent. We have alumni working in the PRM field throughout the state of North Carolina and across the nation. Dr. Phipps and Dr. Tholkes have provided stability to the program over the years, but it is time to look towards the future and begin the process of grooming a successor in the program and to even consider a broad expansion of the program.

This brief overview report is supported in a separate document of appendices, which includes significant data and background for this report.