

**Department of Recreation Administration
Eastern Illinois University
Proposal to Create a Minor in Leadership in Community Recreation**

Proposed Minor Title: Leadership in Community Recreation

Proposed Definition & Overview

The proposed program change is to establish a Leadership in Community Recreation minor in the Department of Recreation Administration. Defined as an “influential relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (Zenger & Folkman, 2009) the Leadership in Community Recreation minor seeks to develop the competencies necessary for administrative, supervisory, and direct leadership experiences. In achieving this goal of leadership development, the minor also intends to foster student’s ability to integrate learning through environments that “address real-world problems, unscripted and sufficiently broad to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, offering multiple solutions and benefiting from multiple perspectives” (Huber & Hutchings, 2004). The proposed minor is designed for those outside the Recreation Administration major who have an interest in leading community-based recreation programming and services.

Leadership in Community Recreation – Rationale

A large number of our students (and graduates) reside within the State of Illinois. As one example of the breadth of leadership opportunities in community recreation, consider the following: Illinois, as a state, has the largest number of local park and recreation agencies in the United States. Within the state of Illinois there are 356 park districts, 125 municipal park and recreation agencies, 13 forest preserve districts, and 8 conservation districts, **employing more than 60,000 individuals**. Many, if not all, of these agencies require professionals to plan, design, deliver, and evaluate programs and services within the areas of recreation. The breadth and scope of these community park and recreation operations requires professionals that possess administrative, supervisory, and direct leadership skill sets to promote the importance and contributions of public park and recreation agencies to the community’s quality of life.

Eastern Illinois University’s Department of Recreation Administration also has a reputation for developing recreation professionals within the three classes of leadership (administrative, supervisory, and direct) who are dedicated to “making a difference” in their communities. The proposed Leadership in Community Recreation minor would serve to formalize this existing track record of successful leadership development and “open the door” for students outside the major to obtain these respective competencies via a minor within the program.

Despite the different classes of leadership (administrative, supervisory, and direct), researchers have identified the general competencies of a successful recreation leader (see Zenger & Folkman, 2002; 2009). Specifically, leadership character can be attributed to an individual’s personal capabilities; (focus on) results; ability to lead change, and; problem-solving skills. Commonly referred to as the “know how”, personal capabilities are those competencies that are specific to accomplishing tasks. These capabilities are typically taught to “leaders-to-be” and

include areas such as programming, activity leading, planning, evaluation, and human/physical/financial resource management. Based upon this competency area, recreation courses in direct leadership (REC 1320), programming (REC 2290), and assessment and resource management (REC 3900, REC 4600, REC 4740, REC 4830, or REC 4850) appear to have merit for inclusion within the minor.

The second competency area, (focus on) results, suggests leadership is a combination of results and an individual's attributes. For instance, an individual with strong attributes who produces minimal results would have limited leadership ability. Conversely, an individual who produces short-term results while lacking attributes to sustain long-term success will also have limited leadership ability. The key is to ensure the individual can produce results in the long-term that accurately represent the agency, staff, and constituencies. One method for developing an ability to manage the complexities associated with results production while balancing the needs of the internal and external publics is through "real-world" applications. Specifically, "real world" experiences allow the individual to witness first-hand, the delicate balance between decision-making that is strictly results-driven with little concern for its long-term impact on an agency's resources versus a more strategic and inclusive framework for achieving targeted results. Guided by this framework, a course providing students with meaningful field-based experiences (REC 3550/3551) appears to have merit.

The third and fourth competency areas (ability to lead change and problem-solving skills) indicate leaders possess the ability to resolve conflict among staff and the publics they serve; display strong internal and external communications; facilitate cooperation; are strategic thinking, and; have a strong understanding of the internal and external environments in which they operate. Taken collectively, leaders must be able to understand their service market to change the agency's mission and goals, chart new directions, or add new products/services when needed. In developing these competencies, courses where students engage in needs assessment projects (REC 4740), strategic decision making (REC 4600), cooperative agreements (REC 4830), personnel management (REC 4830), and internal/external communications (REC 4830/REC 2290) are recommended.

Based upon this leadership framework, the following courses are recommended for inclusion within the Leadership in Community Recreation minor:

Proposed Leadership in Community Recreation Minor

Total Semester Hours: 21-22

9 Semester Hours from the following leadership core courses:

- REC 1320 - Leadership in Recreation. Credits: 3
- REC 2290 - Programming for Leisure Agencies. Credits: 3
- REC 3550 - Fieldwork in Recreation I. Credits: 3
or
- REC 3551 - Fieldwork in Recreation II. Credits: 3

Three courses (9-10 credits total) from the following leadership resource management areas:

- REC 3900 – Operations of Leisure Facilities. Credits: 3
- REC 4600 – Planning & Design of Leisure Service Facilities. Credits: 4
- REC 4740 - Research & Evaluation in Leisure Studies. Credits: 3
- REC 4830 - Administration of Leisure Services. Credits: 3
- REC 4850 – Financial Practices in Leisure Agencies. Credits: 3

Electives, 3 semester hours:

Three semester hours of electives (normally one course) in Recreation Administration selected in consultation with a Recreation Administration advisor. These elective hours may include any of the following:

- REC 1780 - Introduction to Leisure Service Agencies. Credits: 3
- REC 2250 - Principles of Therapeutic Recreation Credits: 3
- REC 3300 - Commercial and Employee Recreation. Credits: 3
- REC 3310 - Travel and Tourism. Credits: 3
- REC 3320 – Festivals and Special Events. Credits: 3
- REC 3510 - Camp Administration and Leadership. Credits: 2
- REC 3860 - Environmental Interpretation. Credits: 2
- REC 3900 – Operations of Leisure Facilities. Credits: 3
- REC 4600 – Planning & Design of Leisure Service Facilities. Credits: 4
- REC 4740 - Research & Evaluation in Leisure Studies. Credits: 3
- REC 4830 - Administration of Leisure Services. Credits: 3
- REC 4850 – Financial Practices in Leisure Agencies. Credits: 3

Footnote:

Students cannot declare this minor and a Recreation Administration minor.

Approvals:

Date approved by the department or school: 2/6/12

Date approved by the college (CEPS) curriculum committee:

Date approved by the Honors Council (if this is an honors course): NA

Date approved by CAA: