Recreation, Parks, &
Tourism Administration

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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Recreation, parks, and tourism are mainstays of the American culture and a foundation of the United States economy, with an estimated $2.5 trillion spent annually on leisure pursuits. U.S. households spend seven to eight percent of their income on recreation. The United States has been ranked as the top tourism earner in the world and generates over $50 billion from international tourism. Although recreation, parks, and tourism provide activities for people from all walks of life, these industries also provide numerous jobs, both in this country and abroad.

Students are prepared for professional employment in public, non-profit, private, and commercial recreation, parks, and tourism organizations. Students select a concentration in hospitality and tourism management; outdoor recreation management; event planning and management; and sport management. In addition, students may select a course of study in community recreation management.

To prepare students for their professional careers, the major includes a 400-hour required internship (one quarter) with a recreation, parks, tourism, sport, or special event-related organization. Graduates qualify for diverse positions including recreation supervisors, wedding planners, hotel general managers, sport managing directors, park and recreation administrators, ecotourism guides, environmental educators, concert and festival organizers, recreation-related business owners, athletic directors, adventure program planners, camp directors, convention and visitor bureau directors, meeting planners, youth sports coordinators, winery event managers, wilderness educations, and campus recreation directors.

Graduates employed nationally and internationally plan, organize, implement, and evaluate recreation, parks, and tourism programs and services. Management skills, developed through coursework and through practical hands-on applications, allow for career progress into executive management positions within the recreation, parks, and tourism industries.

Students develop those competencies through a myriad of partnerships developed by the department with local, state, national, and international organizations. These partnerships allow students, both in and out of the classroom, to gain valuable experience designing, implementing, and evaluation various recreation-related programs and experiences for diverse clientele.

Undergraduate Program

BS Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration

The Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration (RPTA) department prepares students to be leaders in an industry that promotes healthy lifestyles, protects memorable places, and facilitates life-enhancing experiences for individuals, communities, and the global society. The program is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT).

In addition to major requirements, the curriculum provides a full range of general education and support courses. These courses are designed to fully educate and prepare students for cultural diversity, community engagement, and international understanding in a global society.

Concentrations

Event Planning and Management

Prepares students for a professional career in event planning, leadership, and management for a variety of event genres including festivals, celebrations, conventions, meetings, and expositions, social life-cycle events, mega and hallmark events, sporting, international, and non-profit events. Courses focus on event design, planning, implementation, and management.

Hospitality and Tourism Management

Prepares students for a professional career with organizations that provide leisure products or services for national and international tourists. Students may choose to emphasize in areas such as: hospitality, hotel sales and meeting management, tourism planning, tourism marketing, tour operation, resort management, and entrepreneurship.

Outdoor Recreation Management

Prepares students for leadership positions in a variety of organizations and settings including outdoor and adventure recreation, camp leadership, parks and protected areas management, challenge course management, wilderness education, and adventure travel. Areas of study include the planning, development, leadership, and management of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Sport Management

Prepares students for management positions with sport entities ranging from youth and high school sports to intercollegiate athletics and professional sports. Areas of study include sport marketing and promotion, sport ethics, sport structure and governance, sports-based youth development, and sport event management.

Graduate Program

Cal Poly offers a Master of Science degree in Agriculture with a specialization in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management. Please refer to the MS Agriculture (http://catalog.calpoly.edu/collegesandprograms/collegeofagriculturefoodenvironmentalsciences/#graduatetext) section of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.