

Department and Program: Department of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation – Recreation and Leisure Services degree program

Submitted by: Dr. Matthew Chase, Professor and RCLS Program Director

Student Learning Outcome: Each student will successfully complete an “end-of-program assessment”, germane to the RCLS major. (Taken from RCLS 490: Senior Capstone in RCLS. Student learning outcome #8)

Time Period of Assessment Activity: Winter quarter - 2010

Method of Measurement: We implemented a (50) question end-of-program assessment exam that measures student knowledge and competencies across the RCLS curriculum core (45 credits). The exam was administered during winter quarter of 2010 in RCLS 490 (Senior Capstone in RCLS). The exam was largely built on NRPA accreditation standards that are in place for each of our required core classes.

Observations Gathered from the Data: This was the second implementation of an end-of-program RCLS assessment exam. The results were okay, not great. The minimum passing score of 70% was met by 62% of the class (n=45). Last year we allowed students to re-test at the end of the quarter, which helped with our numbers. This year, we did not allow for the re-test. Moreover, 100 points were awarded toward final grades for students who passed. All through the 2009 fall quarter we gave hints and direction, to the seniors, in terms of how to properly prepare for the exam. In addition, faculty made themselves available for personalized help. We wanted students to give their best effort and we believed attaching points toward the class total would help in this matter.

Actions Recommended Based on Observations: We intend to stay the course with this exam and format. The exam is telling from two perspectives: first, when the students do well, it can be reflective of effective and coordinated teaching from a faculty standpoint, and second, the exam is a great indicator of what students are learning and retaining over time. We realize that test taking is one mechanism of many for measuring student success, thus we are not necessarily panicked by the results of this exam. We do, however, aim to actively work toward better results in the future. We have met numerous times over the past two years in an attempt to solidify programmatic and individual course learning outcomes. We're also engaging in regular conversation regarding who is teaching what and how. And last, we have a fairly unified idea of what a graduate of our program should know and be able to do. From an accreditation standpoint, a primary goal of the RCLS program is to see the majority of our students pass the national certification exam for professionals, which is administered by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

Plan and Timetable for Taking Action: The RCLS program is in cycle for an accreditation evaluation during the 2010-2011 academic year. The accreditation evaluation team is scheduled to visit campus in April of 2011. As we prepare for this

visit, we plan to re-visit exam data acquired over the past two years. We are always looking to improve the validity and reliability of our test instrument. Moreover, we need to make certain that all questions are pertinent and point to specific standards that are outlined by the NRPA. We will make revisions in the test (and teaching strategies) where necessary. We use the results of this exam as one of several mechanisms for the assessment of student learning in the re-accreditation process.

Overall Evaluation of Progress on Objective: This was our second attempt at implementing an end-of-program assessment exam. Although the overall percentage of passing scores could be higher, the RCLS faculty is not deterred. This was and continues to be a great learning process, as well as a reliable mechanism for faculty communication and quality control. We cannot take for granted what we teach and what the students actually learn and take away. Although aspects of our curriculum are experiential and reflective in nature, we also acknowledge that standardized testing is a reality for students in the NRPA certification process and the larger world of work. We will continue to employ the exam as a base measure of student knowledge and overall course effectiveness.