

TRENDS

Volume 30, Number 3, 1993



Certification and Accreditation

U.S. Department of the Interior • National Park Service • National Recreation and Park Association



Contents

TRENDS

Volume 30, Number 3, 1993

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Page 12



Page 16



Page 31

Certification and Accreditation

- 2 Introduction
by Pat Farrell, Ph.D.
- 4 Continuing Education in Parks and Recreation: Trends, Issues and Potential Solutions
by Michael G. Huffman, Ph.D.,
and Mel A. Humphreys, Ph.D.
- 9 Quality Control in Maintaining Certification: The CEU Game
by Stephen M. Holland, Ph.D.,
and M. Linda Thornton, Ph.D.
- 14 Responsibility Privileging in the Leisure Service Profession
by Jeffrey P. Witman, Ed.D., CTRS,
and Sharon J. Washington, Ph.D.
- 17 Professional Certification: Its Benefits and Problems
by Nancy J. Gladwell, CLP,
and Cheryl S. Beeler, CLP
- 21 Accreditation Becomes of Age
by Tony A. Mobley, Ph.D.
- 27 A Proposed Program for the Accreditation of Local Park and Recreation Agencies
by Louis F. Twardzik
- 31 Certification, Accreditation and Professional Maturity
by E. William Niepoth, Ph.D.
- 35 Are We Accrediting Small College Park and Recreation Programs Out of Business?
by Robert Kauffman, Ph.D.,
and Annette Logan, Ph.D.
- 40 Accreditation: Bean Counting or Substantive Analysis
by Pat Farrell, Ph.D.
- 44 COPA Reorganizes
by Michelle Park, CLP,
and Samuel Hope
- 47 Who Can You Turn To?



T. Banks Pool

Steve Abramowitz

INTRODUCTION

by Pat Farrell, Ph.D.

In the 1950s a small group of professionals decided the time was right to make a major commitment to upgrading the recreation professional preparation in colleges and universities across the United States. The increasing number of college curricula was diverse, yet scattered in focus and delivered by an unusual variety of talented faculty. Physical educators, foresters, sociologists, psychologists, landscape architects, social welfare professionals and many others saw the need to incorporate into their curricula these ideas of professional preparation of recreation managers or were instrumental in creating new programs of study on campuses across the country.

As a result of national curriculum workshops sponsored by the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation and the National Recreation Association, it became apparent that some standardized guarantee of our "product" was becoming critical in the marketplace. Early pioneers in the accreditation development process such as Edith Ball and Betty van der Smissen provided significant leadership and deserve our gratitude. Many others in addition to these women spent endless hours and over many years labored in this developmental process. Other professional organizations, notably the American Recreation Society, were developing a code of

ethics and a credo for the profession. These were important and bold steps for an emerging profession, and it was not until 1975 that accreditation was clearly ready for implementation.

Today there is a system in place that is recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation, and those academic programs which have satisfied the criteria for approval number approximately 100. Revisions to the standards and evaluative criteria occur when necessary and the process itself continues to be sharpened.

In addition to accreditation, there was interest in licensure or voluntary registration for recreation and park professionals. Early licensing of professionals

was not widespread. Less than a half dozen states were ever able to work these programs through the state legislatures. Voluntary registration or certification plans became a popular strategy to offset the frustration of legal licensing efforts. Spurred primarily by those working in therapeutic recreation, serious efforts were turned toward national certification programs. There are now two such programs in place: Certified Leisure Professional and Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist or Assistant. Both certification programs are managed by the National Recreation and Park Association headquartered in Arlington, Virginia (telephone 703-820-4940).

Certification programs carry the requirement for professionals to continue to update their knowledge and skill bank.



Special Populations Holiday Hop, 1991

Central to the notion of certification is the concept that enough education is never enough. This process is referred to as amassing annual continuing education units or CEU's. The nature of these requirements has had a signifi-

cant impact on design, management and participation in state, regional and national professional conferences.

This issue of TRENDS contains a collection of articles addressing these attempts on behalf of the leisure, recreation and parks profession to gain sophistication, higher levels of professionalism as well as both an internal and external image of a profession with a significant social and cultural value to society. Each author has written with a passion for his or her particular program of regulation; and those with criticism do so with pride, respecting what is in place and hoping that we are able to better ourselves by suggestions for continuing revision.

Dr. Pat Farrell is an Associate Professor in the Leisure Studies Program at The Pennsylvania State University. She served as editor for this collection of articles.



Special Populations After-School Program, 1991



by Michael G. Huffman, Ph.D., and
Mel A. Humphreys, Ph.D.

Continuing Education in Parks and Recreation:

TRENDS, ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Within recent years the field of recreation and parks has been actively seeking recognition as a profession. And while many would debate whether or not such recognition has occurred or is even possible, it can be argued that leaders in the field's professional organizations have implemented two practices characteristic of all traditionally recognized professions. First, for several years the National Recreation and Park Association/American

Association of Leisure and Recreation (NRPA/AALR) has been accrediting university parks and recreation curricula. Second, many employees in the field have elected to participate in a voluntary certification program sponsored by NRPA's National Certification Board.

One of the requirements to remain certified is the attainment of two Continuing Education Units (20 contact hours of participation in organized continuing education

activities) over a 2-year period. Because of the relative youth of this program, it seems appropriate to examine it in more detail. More specifically, what is continuing education? What is its purpose? What are some of the issues associated with Continuing Education Programs and how can such programs be facilitated in the future?

Continuing Education Defined

Continuing Education is a non-credit program of study planned and organized around learning experiences designed to meet specific learning objectives. This non-credit activity is usually planned in response to an assessment of educational needs for a specific target population.

The Continuing Education Program offers a way of helping individuals gain recognition for their voluntary efforts to update, broaden, develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. It also provides a standardized unit and record system helpful in professions where Continuing Education is mandated.

The standardized unit awarded for program participation is identified as the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). A CEU is a uniform unit of measurement adopted by most regional college and school accreditation associations. A CEU is typically defined as "10 contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education adult or extension experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified

instruction." The CEU is used to recognize an individual's participation in a non-credit activity. While the CEU is a form of credit for an individual's participation in approved programs, *it is not academic credit*. However, when CEU's are awarded to a person, a permanent record is usually maintained by the university sponsoring the program. This record is maintained just as a credit transcript would be, enabling the individual to obtain a record of CEU's accumulated.

It should be noted that the CEU is a flexible unit of measure for non-credit activity and may be used to record an individual's participation in formal classes, courses, programs and informal or non-traditional modes of non-credit education including various forms of independent study.

“
The Continuing Education Program offers a way of helping individuals gain recognition for their voluntary efforts. . . .
”

Who Should Provide Continuing Education?

During its brief history, Continuing Education programs for employees in parks and recreation have almost exclusively been sponsored by NRPA/AALR or their affiliate state organizations. A major

issue for many other professions has been whether or not Continuing Education should be a primary obligation of the initial educating organization (i.e., the professional school or college) or of the organized profession. There seems to be no universal agreement on this subject. Traditionally, Continuing Education for teachers has been almost entirely provided by universities and colleges, although there are trends to place it elsewhere. While most of the post-baccalaureate education of teachers can be considered Continuing Education, it frequently leads to the earning of a master's degree. Given the fact that many employees in the field of parks and recreation have degrees in other academic disciplines, there may be some merit in adopting this approach as one of several methods of continuing education.

Continuing Education in Medicine takes a different approach. Quite extensive in nature, it usually involves several different organizations. Medical colleges, centers, clinics, hospitals and professional societies frequently collaborate to organize Continuing Education opportunities that are normally short in duration and frequently geographically dispersed within a state. Thus with this approach physicians are not necessarily required to close their practices in order to obtain CEU's. As one writer has suggested, Continuing Education in Medicine merits the careful study of other professional groups who are still in the stage

of early or limited development of Continuing Education programs.

Is There Potential for Discrimination?

A second issue associated with Continuing Education programs is the issue of potential for discrimination. It should be noted that a preponderance of the Continuing Education programs provided to recreation, parks and leisure service professionals has been traditionally offered as formal classes or courses at national, regional or state professional meetings. This model of delivery is seriously lacking in flexibility as it apparently limits professional growth and development to those fortunate to have the travel funds and time to attend these meetings. Particularly impacted are entry and lower level staff and employees in smaller parks and recreation departments. Even Continuing Education programs provided at annual state organization meetings can limit the potential numbers of participants because in many states, such programs can be located hundreds of miles away from potential participants.

Another potential category of participants against whom many Continuing Education programs discriminate is the group of individuals interested in serving the professional organization itself. For professionals who are officers and members of committees and boards, obligations at professional meetings can provide few opportunities to attend Continuing Education sessions.

Are the Formats Used for CEU Programs Adequate?

As stated earlier the majority of Continuing Education sessions available to recreation and park professionals occurs in the form of sessions and courses at professional meetings. While this format can be geographically and financially limiting to many participants, there are other format issues as well. Because of requirements established by NRPA, the minimum length of a Continuing Education session is 2 hours. While such a requirement may be acceptable for conferences lasting more than one day, it can be restricting for educational efforts of shorter duration. As a result, many conference organizers are forced to plan their programs around CEU requirements rather than take advantage of what might be more

“
... many conference organizers are forced to plan their programs around CEU requirements
”

appropriate scheduling opportunities. As a result of this requirement, many program participants interested in obtaining CEU credit find that they are locked into attending a few longer sessions on a narrow range of subjects rather than having the freedom to attend a larger number of shorter ses-

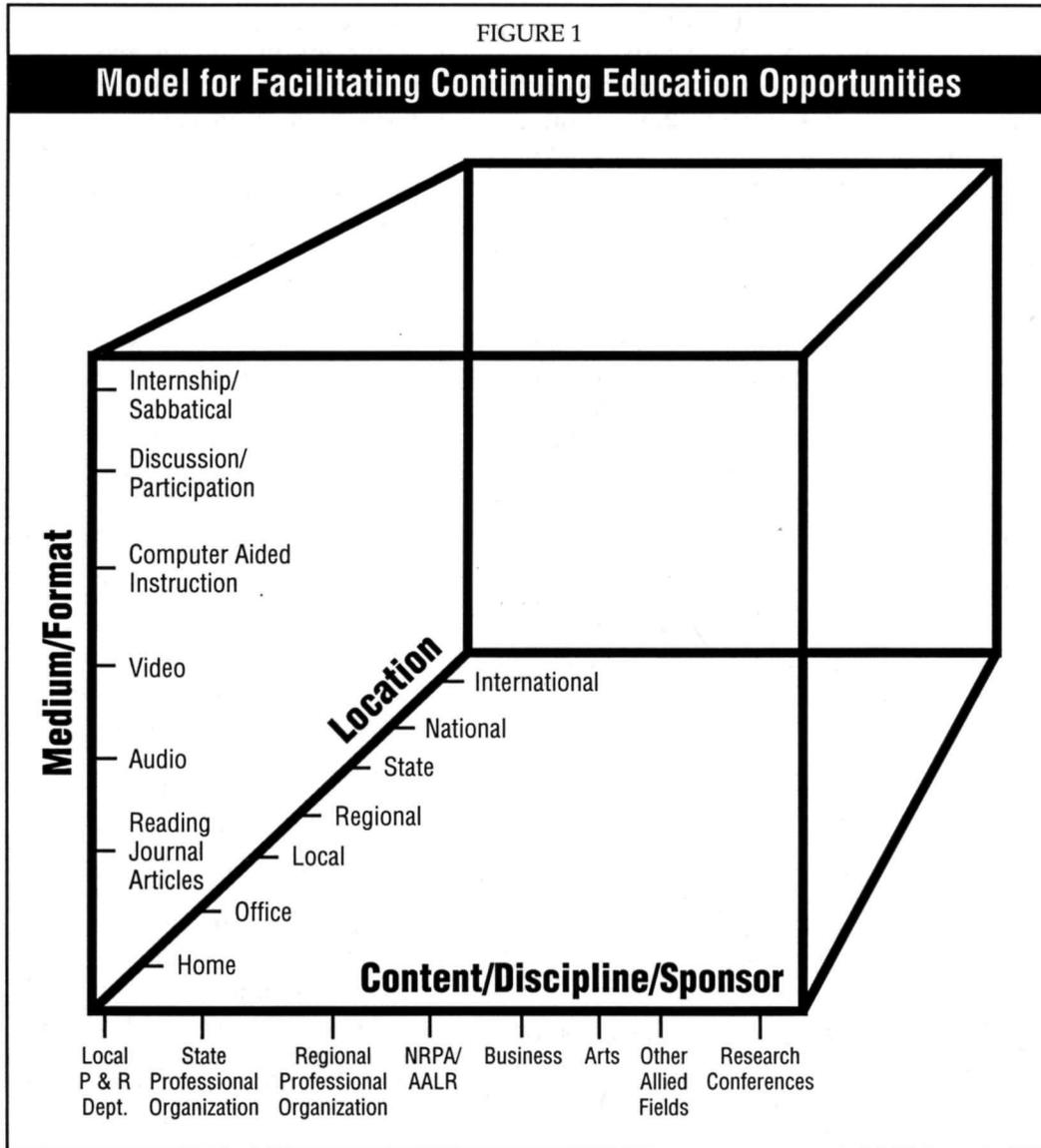
sions on a broader variety of subjects. This situation is analogous to the argument of teaching “depth” versus “breadth” which has been debated in educational circles for years.

Facilitating Continuing Education in the Future

Given the relatively brief period of time that a formal but limited Continuing Education program has been in place for recreation and park professionals, it seems logical to ask how might future Continuing Education efforts be improved? It is time that alternative strategies be explored that could provide CEU's to the park and recreation professional work force in a variety of settings. Figure 1 shows a three-dimensional model for conceptualizing the design of future Continuing Education programs. The three major axes (a) Medium/Format, (b) Location and (c) Content/Discipline/Sponsor illustrate the broad spectrum of potential educational opportunities. From the model, the following non-traditional CEU delivery modes are offered as examples of viable options for future training and development:

- **Long Distance Learning Via Satellite Transmission.** College and university campuses are developing long distance learning classrooms that will offer a new mode of bringing CEU's into the workplace. Interactive video systems can be used to provide for two-way verbal exchanges as courses are in progress. This will allow in-service time to be dedicated to con-

FIGURE 1

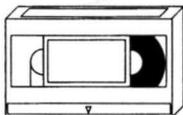


sound. Educational research has shown that many individuals prefer to access information through auditory channels. Therefore audio tapes also offer a viable option for professional growth and development. There are few places where cassette or CD players are not readily available. This medium provides individuals with an option to study and learn at home in addition to the workplace. Further, it should be noted that many conference presentations are routinely recorded onto audio tape and thus provide many potential off-site learning opportunities.

• **Computer-Aided Instruction.** Recent advances in computer technology

continuing education activity. As a result, CEU's can be earned on the job.

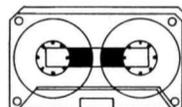
• **"Canned" Courses on VHS Tape.** Video tape offers a viable option for professionals unable to attend live presentations or formal courses.



The VCR and monitor are stan-

dard pieces of communication equipment in most workplaces today. This mode of learning is appropriate for small groups as well as individual use. In addition, the workplace or home can be used for this medium.

• **Audio Tapes.** More than 60 percent of human intelligence is transmitted through



such as multi-media and hyper-media have greatly reduced the difficulty of developing computer-aided instruction packages. Many large corporations are using such technology. There is no reason to believe that similar packages



could not be developed for professionals in parks and recreation.

- **CEU's as In-Service.** The Continuing Education program can be easily brought into the workplace. In-service programs provide an excellent vehicle for CEU delivery. Sometimes it is more feasible to bring the educational program to the professional as opposed to bringing the professional to the educational program. This is especially true during times when funding is facing reduction and restriction.

- **Professional Internships and Sabbaticals.** Many individuals learn best through active participation. Professional internships and sabbaticals, either paid or voluntary, have the potential of allowing professionals to expand their skills and diversify their experience by working with other agencies and organizations.

- **CEU's as After-Work Programs.** The Continuing Education program can also be easily scheduled after normal working hours in the workplace. Inter-agency and university cooperative agreements could greatly facilitate this notion. Such programs could provide an excellent opportunity for elective learning by those employees volunteering to participate.

- **CEU's as Extension/ Correspondent Course Work.** Academic credit has been presented as extension and/or correspondent credit for a long time. This strategy has possibili-

ties for selected types of continuing education courses. Homework could focus on professional reading, viewing videos, listening to tapes or other forms of learning and discovery. Of particular importance is the opportunity for education through reading. The allied health professions provide numerous Continuing Education opportunities to participants who read articles from professional journals. One of the biggest limitations of research in the field of recreation and parks has been its dissemination to and utilization by practitioners. As an example, the international journal *Leisure Studies* has fewer than 150 subscribers in North America. *The Journal of Leisure Research* has only a few thousand subscribers, the vast majority of which are libraries and professors. Continuing Education credit extension or correspondent course work has a great potential to help narrow the gap between research and practice.

- **University Campus-Based CEUs.** Colleges and universities offer a wide variety of continuing education programs each quarter or semester. In addition most continuing education departments are delighted to receive specific requests, especially if a cohort of students can be identified. Most college and university programs can be tailored to individual needs and interests as well as scheduled at the most opportune times.

- **CEU's for Attending Related Discipline**

Conferences. The recreation, parks and leisure services field is very much a multi-disciplinary quasi-profession. Conferences involving conservation, planning, management, human resources, marketing, public relations, advertising, physical education, performing arts and many other related fields offer excellent opportunities for earning CEU's in settings similar to but different from traditional NRPA or state association professional meetings. Cross-fertilization and discipline mixing is potentially enriching for all concerned. This strategy holds many possibilities for CEU's.

Summary

Leaders in the field of parks and recreation are to be commended for their interest in encouraging the continuing education of professionals. While past efforts have produced some outstanding educational experiences, much can be done to broaden the scope and increase the number of educational opportunities in the future. Continuing Education program planners must expand their perspectives on what constitutes appropriate media, locations and sponsors if professional education is to excel in the future.

Dr. Michael Huffman is an Assistant Professor and Head; Dr. Mel Humphreys a Professor, both at Memphis State University in the Division of Recreation, Parks & Leisure Studies.



Quality Control in Maintaining Certification: The CEU Game

by Stephen M. Holland, Ph.D., and
M. Linda Thornton, Ph.D.

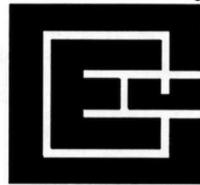
While attending professional conferences, one often sees people scurrying about, signing up at tables, crowding into rooms and filling out forms, all in the process of earning CEU's. A CEU (Continuing Education Unit) is awarded for each 10 contact hours of instruction received in pre-arranged classes or programs that have specified learning outcomes, relevant educational content, qualified instructors, time requirements and procedures for attendance verification. Most CEU sessions range from 3 to 6 hours and offer .3 to .6 CEU's per program. The CEU process is a part of professional licensure in a variety of occupations including nursing, therapy and counseling, teaching, emergency medicine and some businesses.

Why do people take CEU courses? Individuals who are certified are required to enhance their proficiency by regularly attending CEU courses. The intent of the certifying organization is to facilitate maintenance and improvement of knowledge and skills useful in a particular profession. If a person does not complete the required number of CEU's, his/her certification expires and can only be renewed through reexamination or (within a limited time period) making up the deficient CEU's.

Now that National Recreation

and Park Association (NRPA) certification exists and many individuals have demonstrated their competency in the leisure profession by achieving certi-

The Continuing

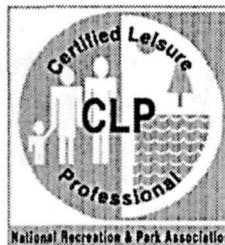


Education Unit®

Certification Examination, a system to facilitate continuing competency and skill development is needed.

The Florida Recreation and Park Association (FRPA) has established two boards to guide the certification process; the Professional Certification Board (PCB) and the Professional Development Board (PDB). Florida has the second largest (behind Illinois) number of certified members—CLP's and provisional CLP's (Certified Leisure Professionals), and CLT's (Certified Leisure Technicians) at 749 in 1990-1992 (41% of FRPA membership). The PCB processes and manages the initial certification qualification procedures (pre-exam screening) while the PDB

fied status, either in the past through education and work experience or currently through the National



monitors, approves and promotes the Continuing Education (CEU) courses that are offered to maintain certification.

CEU courses do not just appear the day of a conference. Months before the on-site scurrying, there is a flurry of behind-the-scenes planning ranging from writing and evaluating the CEU program proposal, reviewing instructors' resumes, checking content quality, scrutinizing schedules and orchestrating the logistics that guarantee minimum time and attendance standards. For Florida CLP's and CLT's to maintain certification, FRPA requires earning two CEU's in career-related courses during every 2-year period. One CEU is composed of 10 "contact hours" or course hours in "approved" CEU courses. It has been the experience of the authors, who have served several terms as members of the FRPA Professional Development Board, that this seemingly straightforward requirement of enrollment in 20 hours of "approved" coursework per 2-year period has unfolded into confronting a multitude of details and issues. The remainder of this article summarizes some of the experiences of the FRPA PDB in establishing a quality control system in the certification maintenance-renewal process.

Logistical Aspects of a Professional Development Board

One of the first important steps was determining the qualifications for the five-member Professional Development Board. Currently the criteria are: each member must be certified and an active member of FRPA; three members represent practitioners while two members are educators. A mix of member

specialties (e.g., TR, community park, etc.) and representation from different geographic regions (districts) of the state is preferred. The chair of a separate Education Committee and the FRPA Executive

Director serve as ex-officio members with a staff liaison serving as treasurer. Prospective PDB members are nominated by district chairs and confirmed by the FRPA executive director and FRPA president. Staggered 3-year terms, with an annually elected chair and secretary, comprise the Board's structure.

Routine Issues of CEU Quality Control

In order to monitor the quality of potential CEU offerings, the PDB accepts "member" petitions from individuals wanting to take a non-NRPA or non-FRPA CEU class and get credit towards certification renewal and "sponsor" petitions from

individuals wishing to offer a CEU session. The primary check points on member petitions are 1) the "relevancy" of the content to their career, 2) the focus on a coherent and substantial topic or theme for a minimum of three hours (with 15 minutes of break time), 3) a minimum of 55 minutes of contact time (with a maximum of 10% of the time spent on testing) per each .1 CEU awarded, 4) the course is



Brandon Spriggs conducts session at Land Between The Lakes, Tennessee.

not being taken also for academic credit simultaneously and 5) (post-program) verification of attendance. The primary check points on sponsor petitions are the credentials of the speaker(s) and the same five points reviewed for member petitions.

Each petition is reviewed by a PDB member who is assigned to review the petitions submitted for a given month. The reviewer checks the points noted above and classifies it as approved, amended, pending (needs more information) or denied. If a complex or questionable petition is unclear, it is circulated to the other PDB members who discuss and vote on it at their

next meeting. A \$10 sponsor and \$5 member petition application fee is charged (slightly higher fees for non-members) to cover the cost of printing, copying and mailing petition forms, phone calls to petitioners, staff and travel costs for the PDB to meet three or four times per year. Also, a portion of these funds partially supports a FRPA student scholarship fund and another portion is transferred to

the Education Committee to pay for future national quality speakers for CEU programs.

To monitor the CEU session quality on-site, as well as time schedule and attendance, CEU programs sponsored by FRPA have

"Verification Officers" (VO's). VO's attend a training program conducted by PDB members, serve as the "eyes and ears" of the PDB at sessions and are instructed to inform participants that PDB may adjust the advertised number of CEU's in case of irregularities in the program. Actual incidences that have occurred are participants leaving early, failure of a key speaker to appear, a program finishing 45 minutes early, an electrical failure causing a substantial loss of session time during a computer class and the perennial problem of attendees arriving late for a CEU session

Steve Holland, Ph.D.

with a variety of excuses. The VO reports the facts to PDB who issues a ruling on the CEU status for all or certain attendees.

Irregular and Complex Issues

Although the above process seems relatively straightforward, over the past 10 years the PDB seems to be constantly addressing new issues and special circumstances. Many policies are still in an "evolving" state; thus the following section is addressed to some key issues.

"Blanket" Course Approval

Should everyone who takes a Red Cross Intermediate First Aid, CPR or NYSCA course be required to apply and pay the application fee? PDB has ruled that once an agency has a demonstrated track record of quality, standardized courses, then PDB will issue a "blanket" approval and a CEU petition for such courses is no longer required. CEU courses offered by the Red Cross, NYSCA, NRPA or any Florida college are approved.

Petition Form Submission Deadlines

A constant struggle for PDB has been applicants turning in

their forms a week before a session and wanting immediate feedback. Initially PDB "required" petitions to be submitted 45 days before the session to allow time for reviews but found that this deadline was routinely ignored with pleas of ignorance or statements of unawareness that a CEU session was even being offered until 2 weeks before. The deadline was relaxed, yet approval of peti-

take a course that is later downgraded or disqualified. For sponsor petitioners, we caution that the phrase "CEU Approval Pending" must appear on promotional brochures unless the petition has been approved before printing.

Relevancy to Career

One purpose of certification and adult education is to update and enhance career skills. PDB

has found "relevancy" difficult to enforce because of the wide range of skills relevant to recreation and park professionals. For example, new PDB members may grimace initially at the idea of approving CEU's for "Puppeteering," "Juggling and Magic Trick Skills" or

"Self-Defense" courses, but in most cases these skills are legitimate enhancements to the job responsibilities of the applicant. PDB has adopted the policy of requesting a statement from an applicant's supervisor verifying career relevancy, if there is any doubt. The few denials have usually been based on applicants who enroll in CEU courses related to investing (e.g., Stocks, Bonds and Retirement or Personal Financial Planning) when that applicant has no career responsibility for financial matters.



Bob Jones speaks at Piney Campground, Land Between The Lakes, Tennessee.

Steve Holland, Ph.D.

tions was required before attendance at a CEU session. This was enforced for several years, but regular incidents occurred where an application was "delayed by the mail" or "misplaced" for a few days. Currently PDB accepts petitions up to 30 days after a session has been attended (if CEU's were awarded). However, the petitioner is warned that there is a risk that PDB will deny the petition or reduce its advertised CEU value. By submitting a late application, the attendee is risking the possibility of paying to

Video/Audio Courses

There are individuals interested in earning CEU's through video-taped or audio-taped sessions (or other so-called "Alternative Delivery Methods"). PDB has taken the position of not encouraging the use of taped programs except when accompanied by a qualified discussion leader who is knowledgeable on the topic, available for questions and who organizes the

program to meet other CEU criteria (e.g., length, attendance verification, etc.). It is the position of PDB that video or audio programs are useful but not as stand-alone programs. For home study tapes or correspondence courses, PDB will consider approval on a case-by-case

basis, but it is the responsibility of the applicant to prove the validity and quality of the course and to provide some evidence (write up, test result, etc.) that the content has been learned. PDB has also recommended that no more than 1.0 CEU per certification renewal period be earned from video or audio programs.

Field Trips

Following the policy of the Council on Continuing Education Unit (CCEU), PDB will approve a field trip or other

experiential course activities for CEU credit, but usually on the basis of at least two experiential hours being required for each contact hour of instruction (minus travel and other administrative time).

Research Credit

In one sponsor petition, a city recreation manager applied for CEU credit for 20 employees engaged in a recreation needs



Land Between The Lakes, Tennessee.

survey. The application indicated the employees would receive 2 hours of instruction on interviewing and research methods and then would complete approximately 20 hours of field interviewing. PDB ruled that if another hour of instruction were added, it would be approved for .3 CEU but would not count the field interviewing as this was a regular duty and therefore not applicable for CEU credit.

Quality Control in Conjunction with Conferences and Meetings

Some meeting planners view offering CEU's as a way of attracting people and seem to outdo themselves trying to offer more CEU sessions every year. This puts pressure on meeting organizers to qualify almost any session as a CEU. It also puts a load on PDB to review and approve so many sessions. PDB

is extra vigilant in reviewing sessions for conferences and tries to inform conference planners that not every session qualifies as a CEU. For example, meeting time devoted to business or committee meetings, welcoming speeches,

announcements, luncheons, receptions or dinners are not eligible for CEU credit. In addition, with many concurrent sessions and meeting conflicts, there is a greater tendency for participants to request "special exemptions" (e.g., "I need to leave a half-hour early because I'm speaking at a luncheon" or "my business meeting ran 30 minutes over, so can I start late?"). Verification officers are advised to be especially alert during multi-session conferences.

Siere Holland, Ph.D.

Tracking

Recently there have been requests to consider various "theme conferences" that have 30 shorter sessions and let the participants "pick and choose" among these sessions, add them together for a total CEU value equal to .1 CEU per hour attended. This approach has been labeled "tracking." PDB generally discourages tracking as a "slippery slope" where quality

becomes difficult to maintain because of limited coverage of the topic and the logistics of quality assurance of multiple sessions and attendance verification. Also, the Council on Continuing Education Unit states that meetings, conferences or conventions do not qualify, per se, as continuing education experiences. Specially organized courses, workshops or seminars held in conjunction with such meetings do qualify when CEU criteria are met.

However, NRPA indicates that CEU hours do not have to be adjacent and several "related" sessions can be aggregated to meet the 3-hour minimum. Consequently PDB has approved a few petitions where there is a clear connection and common theme between shorter (i.e., less than 3-hour) sessions.

To illustrate, petitions have been denied from individuals attending a Therapeutic Recreation conference who wanted to "track," for example, a 2-hour session on "Drug Therapy Primer" with a 1-hour session on "AIDS Prevention" with a 2-hour session on "ADA Standards." These topics are simply too disjointed even though all are related to TR. However, someone who attend-



Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Dover, Tennessee.

ed the same conference and participated in a 1-hour session on "What is ADA?" and a 2-hour session on "ADA Standards" and a 2-hour session on "How to Write an ADA Manual for Your City" would be approved for .5 CEU. There is a clear unifying theme and content focus.

An important point is that PDB cannot (by NRPA and CCEU rules) retroactively assign CEU credit to sessions that were not CEU-approved when offered. Thus, if an individual attends several sessions of non-CEU presentations with CEU classes in totaling up their

tracking of contact hours, PDB cannot assign CEU credit to the non-CEU sessions unless they have been previously petitioned and approved as CEU-qualified before attendance. In sum, all sessions to be considered for tracking must be CEU sessions.

Conclusions

If continued certification after initial qualification is to mean anything, then vigilance in

maintaining the quality of CEU sessions is central to the process. The Florida Recreation and Park Association has monitored the quality of CEU sessions through the establishment of a Professional Development Board whose members review CEU

course petitions to verify quality, attendance, relevancy and content consistency in an impartial manner. The process has evolved into an institution with many guidelines but in need of continuing flexibility and judgment.

Drs. Stephen M. Holland and M. Linda Thornton are both Associate Professors at the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at the University of Florida at Gainesville. Both have served as members of the Florida Recreation and Park Association Professional Development Board.



Responsibility Privileging in the Leisure Service Profession

by Jeffrey P. Witman, Ed.D., CTRS
and Sharon J. Washington, Ph.D.

The breadth and depth of credentialing in leisure services have grown in recent years. Registration programs involving hundreds of practitioners have expanded to certification and licensing programs affecting thousands. Accreditation of academic preparation programs in leisure and recreation has expanded as has development of specialized training/certification in various activities (e.g., camp directing, coaching, officiating, lifeguarding). Therapeutic recreation professionals, influenced by the healthcare systems in which many of them work, have taken the lead in promoting more rigorous credentialing. A current trend in therapeutic recreation — clinical privileging — appears highly relevant to the broad field of leisure services. "Privileging" creates a level of credentialing more rigorous than certification. The intent of this article is to present the concept and process of privileging policy and to provide examples of how it could be utilized in leisure service organizations.

Rationale

Are all certified basketball officials qualified to work an NBA final?

Are all certified teachers competent to teach physics? How about first grade?

Are all licensed drivers ready for 18-wheelers?

Are all licensed beauticians able to give great perms?

recent college graduate who is a CLP and the holder of a BS from an accredited leisure studies program. She is starting work as a recreation program leader in a city of moderate size. Her job description includes the devel-

Steve Abramowitz



"Old Maryland Farm"

opment of sports, games and cultural activities for all of those in the area served by a recreation center. Other duties include budgeting, marketing, leadership of programs and the recruitment/supervision of volunteers. Do her degree and credential ensure high levels of competence in these duties? Probably not, in that the relationship between knowledge and application for particular competencies has not been established.

Are all certified leisure professionals competent to perform all duties and responsibilities of every leisure service organization? The answers to these questions point to the need to look beyond basic credentials in establishing who is qualified or privileged to perform the various levels of responsibility associated with employment in leisure service positions which is no different from other professional fields. For example, imagine the case of Tracy, a

The National Recreation and Park Association Job Bulletin's claim that "[CLP's] have demonstrated that they meet standards of education and experience and update their knowledge and skills through continuing education," while true, has only a general connection to effective job performance. Privileging provides a mechanism for sharpening and creating the relevance of credentialing to specific job responsibilities.

Phases of Privileging Policy in Leisure Services

PHASE 1: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Goal- To identify job responsibilities which require privileging.

Sample Actions

- a summer camp analyzes accident reports and targets those programs with highest rates for staff privileging system
- a YWCA establishes written policies which specify requirements for leadership of various groups/programs

PHASE 2: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Goal- To establish systems which link privileges to specific qualifications.

Sample Actions

- a seniors' center utilizes American Red Cross and American College of Sports Medicine credentials as requirements for employment in aquatics and aerobics programs
- an amusement park establishes a sequence of entrance gate responsibilities from lowest to highest volume of customers
- a rehabilitation center creates an "apprentice" program for prospective specialty (e.g., crafts, dance, music) activity positions
- an aquatics center relates participation in continuing education programs to continuation/expansion of specific privileges

PHASE 3: FEEDBACK

Goal- To monitor and improve performance and system.

Sample Actions

- a ski area utilizes a customer satisfaction survey related to specific job functions
- a park system conducts a peer review program in which colleagues exchange visits, observation and critique
- a "latchkey" program relates periodic performance evaluations to privileging and to job enrichment through expansion of privileging

Privileging policy is designed to go beyond the entry-level or core-level competence implied by certification (e.g., CLP, CTRS) and ensure that an individual's competence is well matched to the specific tasks and functions that individual is performing. The formulation of privileging policy requires analysis of job responsibilities within an organization and identification of those responsibilities which require expertise beyond the basic level of general certification. The process of privileging policy follows from this analysis. Some functions are deemed part of the general privilege of being an agency employee while others are considered specialized and require additional qualifications (e.g., experience, training).

New employees and those new to a responsibility are given probationary privileges. Specific training or experiential requirements for various specialized privileges are determined. Standards for maintaining a privilege are determined and systems for client/customer feedback as well as regular peer and supervisory review are established. Figure 1 gives examples of privileging policy development, implementation and feedback for various leisure service organizations.

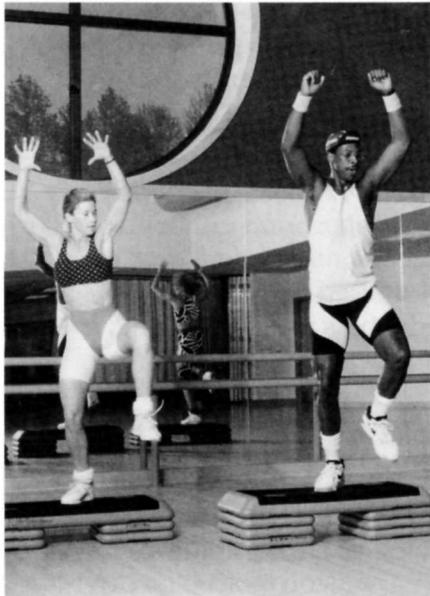
Significant aspects of privileging policy—external or existing training and systems, internal or inservice training and experiences, and systems of feedback/performance evaluation are detailed in the sections which follow.

External or Existing Training and Systems

Significant growth has occurred in formalized training and credentialing for leisure service professionals. In addition to the CLP and CTRS programs many activities now have formalized education and certification opportunities. In the fitness area, for example, there are five certification agencies all of which are widely recognized.

Employers need to acknowledge those job responsibilities for which credentialing pro-

grams exist. Where there are multiple programs they need to identify which one(s) best match their organization's programming. Employers also need to identify, in those areas in which credentialing is not established, training programs relevant to responsibilities. These might include activity (e.g., Project Adventure training), process (e.g., host or human relations training), or administrative (e.g., accounting or marketing classes) skills.



Internal or Inservice Training and Experiences

The distinctiveness of particular leisure service providers and the importance of experience in developing many skills require that employers provide training and experiential opportunities to acquire privileges for specific agency responsibilities.

With some responsibilities simply repeating the task a number of times will develop competence. With other responsibilities working with an experienced colleague as an assistant or co-leader for a period of time may enhance skill development and refinement. Training, be it self-study (e.g., readings, workbooks) or instructional sessions, can be utilized in concert with these "hands-on" experiences.

Systems for Feedback and Performance Evaluation

Employers need to relate the continuation of an individual's

privileges in a job responsibility to that individual's effective performance of the responsibility. Determining effective performance is an ongoing process and works best when it includes multiple (e.g., consumer, peer and supervisor's) perspectives.

Systematic feedback mechanisms which promote growth and insure competence need to be established by employers. They need to catch employees doing things right as well as wrong. Specific techniques can include review of videotapes, peer review of materials or of leadership of programs, observations by supervisors and interviews with consumers.

A Closing Thought

Privileging policy is, perhaps, most easily and fully implemented in large organizations where sequences or ladders of responsibilities or specializations can be determined and developed. Even small or one-person organizations, however, need to identify responsibilities which require privileging. Those functions for which no one is privileged may best not be provided unless qualified volunteers or contracted staff are available.

The utility of privileging is perhaps best understood in the context of risk. Leisure experiences have the power to help participants in many ways through enjoyment and personal development. They also, however, have the power to hurt participants. Potential "hurts" of leisure participation are magnified by inadequate or inappropriate

leadership/supervision. The extent to which privileging policy is effectively developed and implemented can be directly related to minimizing risks and maximizing benefits in many leisure experiences. An ounce of privileging may be worth a pound of liability insurance. Additionally satisfaction and personal development may be enhanced by leaders/facilitators who are well qualified for their responsibilities. While perceptions of optimal qualifications will and should change over time, the pursuit of quality is timeless.

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P

rofessional Certification: Its Benefits and Problems

by Nancy J. Gladwell, CLP,
and Cheryl S. Beeler, CLP

Professional certification programs have existed since the Middle Ages, and even today they are popular and well established in the United States in many long standing professions such as education, law, medicine and accounting. Students successfully completing the rigorous course requirements and earning academic degrees in these established fields are not considered practicing professionals until they earn a professional designation by meeting predetermined qualifications. For example, an individual with a bachelor's degree in accounting cannot use the designation CPA without passing the national CPA examination. And to retain certification, CPA's must earn a minimum number of continuing education units every 2 years.

Many professional associations have recognized the benefits that certification programs have brought to the members of these long-established professions and subsequently have seriously pursued certification as an avenue to bring prestige, status and recognition to their members' occupation. The

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is no exception. One of the primary goals of NRPA is to improve and promote professional competence within the field of leisure, recreation and parks. One of the many ways that NRPA has chosen to promote professional competence is through its national certification program.

Certification Defined

Certification "is a voluntary national process whereby a governmental or nongovernmental agency or association grants recognition to an individual who has met predetermined qualifications" (Carter, 1989, p. 89). The qualifications that an individual must meet are established by the agency or association and in the case of NRPA, the standards are set by its National Certification Board (NCB). The NCB has the responsibility for establishing the criteria which distinguish a competent professional. The criteria include minimum standards for academic preparation, professional experience, evidence of ethical behavior and employment in the field. The

NCB is also responsible for administering competitive examinations and awarding (and revoking) the professional designations.

Since the inception of the NRPA's Model Certification Plan in 1981, there has been an on-going debate over its merits. There are both benefits and problems associated with certification. The purpose of this article is to address both "sides" of the certification debate.

Benefits of Professional Certification

To the Individual. There are several potential benefits for individual professionals who choose to obtain and then maintain certification, such as:

- retards obsolescence if the individual pursues job-relevant continuing education;
- provides economic advantage to those who are certified (many professionals maintain certification by upgrading their education and skills through CEU programs which make them more competitive for higher level, higher paying professional positions);

National Recreation and Park Association
National Certification Board

Let it be known that

has met the requirements of the Standards
set forth by the National Certification Board
as is hereby granted certification as a

Date Certified

Expiration Date

Certificate Number

Chairman

- creates an opportunity to gain increased respectability (We are always comparing ourselves to other professions and professionals, and we gain more respect for ourselves knowing we are having to achieve similar standards.);
- gives professionals a “property right” (Selden, 1972) to function in their profession because of their investment of time, energy and money in acquiring education and professional expertise; and
- provides psychological rewards to the individual

including a sense of accomplishment, self worth and confidence.

To the Profession.

Certification also has the potential to have significant impacts on our profession as a whole. It can help our profession to clarify its functions. Certification aids in improving the quality of the profession by serving as a baseline for quality assurance (relevant educational programs and qualified speakers). Another benefit of certification is its ability to influence academic preparation programs posi-

tively. No academic program would want to acquire the reputation that their graduates were not successful when taking an entry level competency exam. They want their graduates to be competitive for entry level professional positions; therefore, they should be able to master minimum entry level competencies. Certification can also help to enhance the prestige of the profession in the eyes of other professions and, more importantly, in the eyes of the public. Today’s public is credential-conscious. If certification can aid in the individual practitioner’s

continued education and professional development, would there not be an impact collectively on the profession's continued growth and development? According to Sessoms (1990),

To some degree certification and accreditation efforts are helping to redefine the role and function of the profession. They are requiring the profession to identify what it perceives to be the critical role it plays and what the skills and knowledge necessary for its practitioners to fulfill that role are. They also serve to alert the public that the profession is staking out certain unique responsibilities, and that the profession is willing to control its practices. These actions are beyond the marketing of an image or the promotion of some public visibility programs. They seek to define what is unique about what its members do, the role and function they serve. (p.36)

To the Professional Association. The professional organization can also benefit from professional certification. Examples of how are as follows:

- provides the opportunity for self-evaluation and organizational development (particularly if the profession is attempting to respond to the needs of the occupation);
- provides the opportunity to increase membership (especially with establishment of specialty certification designations such as aquatic facility operators, etc.)
- allows for the provision of an additional member service;
- increases the influence of the association (members want certification); and

- provides the opportunity to broaden the association's financial base, especially if professional certification is linked with employment or specialty certification programs are established.

To the Employer. Certification can protect employers against inadequate or unscrupulous practitioners. It also may be a vehicle for attempting to ensure that practitioner is competent. As van der Smissen (1991) stated, "an agency is charged with the legal responsibility of employing competent personnel. Certification is one evidence of competence, until the person can demonstrate competence in actual performance." (p. 99)

Certification may also serve as a marketing tool for an agency that employs certified personnel. When an agency has a job vacancy, the manager's/administrator's primary concern is to hire the most qualified individual to fill that position.

Certification can help in evaluating applicants during the selection process. It assists not only in indicating an individual's educational background and work experience, but also reflects a critical "intangible" . . . that of attitude. Since certification is rarely a requirement for a job in parks and recreation today, obtaining and maintaining certification can be viewed as a philosophical statement concerning an applicant's professional commitment.

To the Public. The public may well be the ultimate benefactor of professional certification. Certification assures the public

protection against inadequate or unscrupulous practitioners. Parents would not consider taking their child to a doctor who was not licensed; why should they entrust their children to participate in recreational programs which are not organized and supervised by certified professionals?

“The public may well be the ultimate benefactor of professional certification.”

Problems with NCB Certification

Just as there are benefits to professional certification, there are also problems. In order for certification to become a more viable credentialing tool, the following problems must be addressed and resolved.

- Many employers do not require or encourage certification as a desired element of employment. Many educators do not support, encourage or inform students about certification. As a result, employees and students see no immediate benefit to becoming certified.
- In several states, city and county governments are not allowed to participate legally in certification programs. It is felt that it is financially draining to employ certified public servants.
- Many employers do not support employees financially

who need paid leave to travel to the exam site; expenses for applying and taking the exam; expenses for travel, room and board for the exam; paid leave to attend continuing education programs; and expenses for continuing education programs.

- Entry level salaries for entry level professionals are frequently low. If employees are required to pay their own expenses, the cost for becoming and remaining certified is prohibitive.
- There are a limited number of exam sites, which therefore require travel and increasing the cost of becoming certified.
- Currently the exam is offered only twice a year.
- Many long established and successful administrators and supervisors did not earn a degree specifically in recreation/leisure and do not see the value in being certified.
- Many of the continuing education programs offered are not job relevant and yet count for CEU credit.
- There is much dissension among professionals in the field with regard to what constitutes CEU credit.
- Certification is not known or recognized outside the realm of public parks and recreation. For example, NCB certification has no meaning to many commercial recreation employers.

The first problem listed above is possibly the most urgent one that must be resolved. In order for professional certification to become a viable credential, a direct link must be developed

between certification and employment. NRPA and the NCB are currently working on developing that link for those in municipal and county parks and recreation. The possibility of having the NCB certification program accredited by the International City/County Management Association is being studied. If this particular problem can be resolved, it will help in solving some of the other problems stated above.

“

A profession is only as strong as the individuals who make up that profession.

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Summary

Just as the recreation and parks profession is relatively “young” when compared to other professions such as medicine and law, so are its credentialing processes. Professional certification offers many benefits to the individual practitioner, the profession, the professional organization, the employer and the public. It is one means of attempting to ensure that an individual possesses the minimum amount of knowledge, experience and skill deemed necessary to deliver quality recreational service to the public.

Even for all its benefits, the NCB certification program is not without its problems. The primary problem associated with the NCB certification pro-

gram is the lack of job linkage. The National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) has developed a strong link between its certification program and employment in therapeutic recreation. That may well account for the approximately 22,000 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists and Assistants. This particular issue may well be one of the most important (if not the most important) issues that the NCB and NRPA must remedy in the immediate future.

Even though the NCB certification program is not without problems, it is still an important part of our profession’s continued growth and development. A profession is only as strong as the individuals who make up that profession. Possibly the most significant benefit of certification is that it requires individuals to continue their education and skill development. Individuals who continue to learn and therefore, grow and develop professionally, aid their profession in its continued growth and development. Ultimately it is the public who will benefit by receiving quality programs and services delivered by knowledgeable professionals.

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Accreditation Becomes of AGE

by Tony A. Mobley, Ph.D.

Accreditation is the most important thing that has happened to parks and recreation education since professional preparation in this field began early in this century. Greater focus on the definition of the field and its body of knowledge and the quality of instruction in institutions of higher education have been greatly impacted by accreditation. As the need for professional preparation of personnel to provide leadership for the parks, recreation and leisure services movement emerged, it became apparent that certain guidelines and expectations should be established to shape the development of a curriculum for this field.

As is usually the case in these circumstances, there was a "time lag" between curriculum program development as several institutions moved forward with the establishment of curriculums during the 1930s and 1940s and the design of professional standards for all recreation and park 4-year curriculums. During the 1950s, the concept of accreditation took shape under the leadership of both educators and practitioners in the field. At this time a large number of institutions of higher education throughout the United States established curriculums to prepare individuals to enter the rapidly developing field of parks and recreation. There were no clear guidelines for either curriculum develop-

ment or faculty qualifications, and the type and quality of programs and faculty varied greatly. It was already obvious that certain minimum standards were needed to establish a minimum level of quality of programs which produced graduates entering a rapidly expanding field. Institutions with strong, recognized programs provided the leadership, and these were among the first programs accredited upon the establishment of the Council on Accreditation.

Other institutions strove to meet the newly established standards and evaluative criterion. At the same time, those institutions with weak programs did not attempt to pursue accreditation or they dropped their programs altogether. More than 90 programs have been determined to meet the standards and have been accredited by the Council on Accreditation, and these institutions represent the strong reservoir for the production of qualified leaders for the field. Administrators and academic leaders in colleges and universities are indicating that if their programs are not strong enough to receive accreditation, they will "get out of the business." Therefore, accreditation is producing the desired result.

During the 1960s, standards and evaluative criteria were developed, and these were tested and refined. These efforts culminated in the establishment

of the Council on Accreditation in Recreation, Leisure Services and Resources Education sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association in cooperation with the American Association of Leisure and Recreation on May 8, 1975.

The history of accreditation in this field will be left to other articles or publications, and the preceding paragraph is meant as a general statement. However, the first purpose of this article is to provide some general observations regarding the importance of accreditation and the accreditation procedure during the last 17 years. The second purpose is to provide a more detailed description of the efforts to achieve recognition by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation (COPA).

Observations on the Accreditation Process

This writer has experienced the accreditation process from almost every standpoint including chairing a program as one of the original four pilot projects, serving on several visitation teams, serving as a member of the Council on Accreditation for three terms, and working with Dr. Donald Henkel and co-chairing the efforts to achieve COPA recognition. All of this has developed an enormous respect for, and commitment to, the accreditation process and its contribution to the future of the field. Out of this has come some

random observations which may make some contribution to our future development.

Standards and Evaluative Criteria

Representing the substance of the entire process are the standards and evaluative criteria (Figure 1). In the early days, these were very specific standards in terms of courses, competencies and experiences for the students. During subsequent revisions the Standard and Evaluative Criteria have become more general and flexible with emphasis on competencies and outcomes as opposed to specific activities and courses. This probably represents a maturing of professional preparation in the field. There was a danger that all curriculums in

parks and recreation would "look alike" if every institution followed in specific details the Standard and Evaluative Criteria.

It is important to allow institutions enough flexibility to experiment with new approaches to instruction and competency development in producing a liberally educated graduate with the professional knowledge and skills to function in the field. Considerable latitude should be allowed by the Council on Accreditation and by visiting teams in meeting the standards. However, it is critical that this broad interpretation not be used to cover low quality.

Self-Study Process

Once the institution has completed the application process

and the self-study begins, the real value of accreditation is underway. The process of the completion of the self-study document is, in itself, an extremely valuable exercise to the institution. The approach should not be to merely meet the requirements of the self-study for the accreditation team visit, but it should focus on a careful self-analysis of the needs, strengths, weaknesses, potential and future of the program. At the conclusion of this process, the status of the program at that institution should be obvious to all concerned. From this point on, it is a process of strengthening, expanding and refining the program under consideration for accreditation.

FIGURE 1

Schematic of Revised Curriculum Standards

GENERAL EDUCATION

REQUIRED BY INSTITUTION

Courses that meet standards in the 7.00 or 7A, 7B, 7C or 7D series may count toward general education requirements, at the discretion of the institution.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

REQUIRED BY COUNCIL FOR ALL ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

7.00 foundation understandings
8.00 professional competencies

OPTIONS WHICH MAY BE ACCREDITED

ONE OR MORE MAY BE OFFERED IN ADDITION TO THE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

9.00 series PLUS:

<p>Leisure Services Management</p> <p>7A.00 series 9A.00 series</p>	<p>Natural Resources Recreation Management</p> <p>7B.00 series 9B.00 series</p>	<p>Leisure/Recreation Program Delivery</p> <p>7C.00 series 9C.00 series</p>	<p>Therapeutic Recreation</p> <p>7D.00 series 9D.00 series</p>
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The Faculty

While every aspect of a program which is covered under the Standard and Evaluative Criteria is important, the primary concern should always be the strength of the faculty. All other aspects of the program including the curriculum outline, library, strength of supporting activities, etc., may be very strong, but without a high quality faculty, the program will never achieve its potential. However, a strong faculty can function in almost any environment and produce qualified graduates. Obviously the best programs have both a strong faculty and supportive curriculum and services. Therefore, the most important single quality measure for any program is the strength of the faculty.

Visitation Teams

Qualified and experienced individuals must be assigned to the visitation teams which are composed of both educators and practitioners. Each team represents the entire profession to the institution being visited. The team will influence the perception of the field by university administrators and academic leaders in a way that can have a significant impact upon the present and future of the program in that institution. These visits have not always gone well, and careful planning must go into the selection of team members and the conduct of the visit in order to enhance the integrity of the accreditation process and to make an objective and valid evaluation of the program under consideration for accredi-

tation. As has been said, "The basic objective of accreditation is not so much to render a judgment as it is to help institutions improve the quality of their program."

Written Reports

Upon the completion of the visitation team report, the institution makes a written response to the Council on Accreditation prior to final consideration. It is important that institutions not make numerous changes in the curriculum, faculty or other supporting aspects prior to consideration by the Council. Of course, if additional information is requested or certain quantitative aspects can be changed or enhanced, it may be useful to do so. However, those aspects which speak to objectives, scope, quality and other similar concerns should be first discussed with the Council on Accreditation before changes are made. On several occasions, institutions have made changes in response to the visitation team's report which were later to be determined as inappropriate by the Council on Accreditation. This is a "consultative process" with a lot of "give and take" as a program moves toward the achievement of accreditation. The institution should not merely attempt to "meet the letter of the law" to achieve accreditation, but the objective should be to develop the strongest possible program within the scope of the institution and the resources available.

Institutional Costs

The cost of the entire accreditation process has been a much

discussed issue over the years. Obviously there are costs involved in the accreditation process including both energy, time and financial resources. The amount of fees and travel expenses, along with other direct costs, are not large when compared to other similar programs. Even in a time of scarce financial resources for institutions of higher education, if an institution cannot afford the cost of the accreditation process, in all probability it cannot afford to support a program which should be accredited. Some will view this as a rather arbitrary position on this particular issue, but it would seem to make sense from an overall perspective.

There are clearly many other issues which could be identified and observations which could be made, but this list may serve to generate some thought and discussion as the entire process is strengthened and refined.

COPA Recognition

The second purpose of this article, as indicated earlier, is to provide a more detailed description of the efforts to achieve COPA recognition which represents a significant accomplishment for parks and recreation education. The Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation (COPA) is the "accrediting body of accrediting bodies" and is involved in the recognition of accreditation in various disciplines such as medicine, law, journalism, architecture, social work and teacher education. On October 3, 1986, COPA extended recognition to the Council on Accreditation for

Recreation, Leisure Services and Resources Education. It marked the first time that an authoritative American higher education organization recognized the legitimacy of professional preparation in parks and recreation.

The efforts to achieve COPA recognition were chaired by Dr. Donald Henkel of NRPA and this writer over an 8-year period. It was an extended, frustrating, joyful and satisfying experience. Dr. Henkel and this writer prepared a report on the entire procedure which was published in *Parks and Recreation* magazine in November 1986, and that article forms the basis of what is to follow.

On May 17, 1974, the National Commission on Accrediting, the forerunner of COPA, denied recognition for parks and recreation education accreditation for the second time because of a desire to minimize the proliferation of specialized accrediting bodies and because of their feeling that there was a lack of evidence that parks and recreation was, at that time, a unique discipline.

As indicated earlier, a large number of new park and recreation curriculums were developed throughout the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. Quality control of these programs from the profession or external agencies in higher education was non-existent. Therefore, in 1974, after the second denial of the national commission on accrediting, the National Recreation and Park Association, in cooperation with the American Association of

Leisure and Recreation, began a new "in house" program of accreditation. During the next several years, this accreditation program grew and expanded.

By 1978, the Council on Accreditation had accredited a small number of programs and several other institutions had made application. During that time, a small number of park and recreation curriculum chairs were indicating that central administrators at their institutions were prohibiting the application for accreditation for parks and recreation because COPA had not yet recognized the council. The presidents of land grant universities had adopted a resolution whereby specialized accrediting bodies, such as parks and recreation, should not be permitted on their campuses unless they had COPA recognition. The Council on Accreditation became deeply concerned and again initiated the process in 1978 for recognition by COPA which had, by that time, replaced the National Commission on Accrediting.

For almost 3 years little progress was made because COPA put the recognition of new programs "on hold" while staff changes, reorganization and new procedures were developed. As one might surmise, this was an extended period of extreme frustration for the Council on Accreditation.

In 1981, COPA notified the Council that they were finalizing new procedures and indicated that the Council on Accreditation could proceed with the application.

COPA had many executive

staff changes and little stability until a talented and enthusiastic vice president, Dr. William J. MacLeod, arrived on the scene. Beginning in 1982 he guided, explained, advised and clarified issues throughout the remainder of the process. The stability he brought to the executive staff of COPA and his insight and help were vital in the entire process.

The Council submitted its initial material to COPA on February 3, 1982. This material covered the "demonstration of need" which was to include definition and clarification of the particular field's uniqueness. On April 30, 1982, the COPA Committee on Recognition refused to allow the Council on Accreditation to proceed with the process, stating: "the central issue is the most ambiguous—what the accrediting body really is and what it covers. No one could ascertain that this is a clearly defined field or discipline not presently being served, and this must be cleared before any judgment can be made."

This was the same issue faced in the early 1970s when the National Commission on Accrediting denied application on the same grounds. Subsequent meetings with Dr. MacLeod helped with understanding what needed to be done to bring some sense of order and coherence to the description of what has always been a diverse field. In August 1982, the Council submitted a second attempt at definition. In October 1982, COPA responded that the Committee on

FIGURE 2

Institutional Alternatives			
ALTERNATIVES	DESCRIPTION	STANDARDS REQUIRED	NOTE ON PUBLICITY
REQUIRED OF ALL INSTITUTIONS TO HAVE AN ACCREDITED PROGRAM	Professional Program	7.00 series 8.00 series	PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM may be advertised as accredited
Alternative A: with EMPHASES	Professional Program plus Emphases or Career Thrusts in any designated area	7.00 series 8.00 series No additional standards for emphases	PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM may be advertised as accredited <i>Emphases may be advertised BUT NOT AS ACCREDITED</i>
Alternative B: with OPTIONS	Professional Program plus one or more options which institution elects to have accredited	7.00 series 8.00 series plus standards for options: 7A.00 & 9A.00 7B.00 & 9B.00 7C.00 & 9C.00 7D.00 & 9D.00	PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM and Approved OPTIONS may be advertised as accredited
Alternative C: with OPTIONS and EMPHASES	Professional Program plus one or more options plus emphases in any designated area	7.00 series 8.00 series Standards for options (see above)	PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM and Approved OPTIONS may be advertised as accredited <i>Emphases may be advertised but only as subs under an option, NOT AS ACCREDITED.</i>

refine and evolve an understanding and acceptable definition of the field for individuals who have little knowledge about the field. Several practitioners and educators were selected to provide additional input on the question of definition. A dean of a west coast institution from another discipline reviewed the original material and provided some very helpful insight. He indicated that the message he got from the materials is one of a group of people who want to do something out of the belief that different kinds of leisure activities will make people happier, healthier or somehow more fulfilled. That kind of focus does not constitute a discipline. The purpose of psychology, for instance, is to study and better understand human behavior—not improve mental health. It is that distinction that separates discipline from other forms of activities. Professionals are normally

Recognition expressed its continuing lack of understanding of the precise scope of the field, but nevertheless, it permitted the Council on Accreditation to proceed with the next steps in hope that this would assist in the clarification process.

During the next several months, almost 400 letters supporting accreditation were solicited from various individuals ranging from university presidents to park and recreation practitioners. There was an intense effort to further

is to study and better understand human behavior—not improve mental health. It is that distinction that separates discipline from other forms of activities. Professionals are normally

distinguished by the application of some technique or theory.

His comments, combined with the views of others in the field, began the process of refocusing the scope and definition toward the study of leisure behavior, its affect upon people and social institutions, and the identification of a leisure service professional as an applied behavioral scientist who uses the knowledge and motivation of leisure behavior in prescribed ways.

With all of this input, it was possible to hammer out a new definition which took place in a hotel room at Dulles Airport outside of Washington, DC, on January 20, 1984.

On May 1, 1984, the Council on Accreditation received official word from COPA that the definition had been accepted and the process could move forward to the next steps. This was a major breakthrough, and everyone was optimistic.

With more than a decade of experience, the Council on Accreditation had accredited more than 50 programs and received application for more than 80 programs. Much of the information required by COPA's next steps in the procedure could be answered out of the direct experience with conducting the "in-house" programs. The Council completed the remaining steps in the pre-application process in which it had to prove its capability to carry out accreditation. On October 18, 1984, COPA indicated the successful completion of the consultative, pre-application process and granted permission to move to the final phase. This process included:

1. The assignment of an outside COPA reviewer to analyze council-developed written materials, observe the council in action at one of its meetings and observe an accreditation visitation team.
2. Comments about the application by third parties which involved persons outside of the particular field.
3. A hearing before the COPA Committee on Recognition.
4. Final action by the full COPA Board of Directors.

Dr. Robert E. L. Strider, president-emeritus of Colby College, Maine, and former chair of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, was appointed by COPA as the official reviewer. He reviewed the written materials, observed the Council in action in Dallas in October 1985, and participated with an on-site visitation team in early February 1986. Dr. Strider subsequently presented a copy of his full report. Though he recommended a number of technical changes, his summary stated: "The Council on Accreditation goes about its business in a thoroughly professional manner. The application for recognition corroborated the favorable impression I had gained from the two site visits, one to the Council itself in succession, and the other accompanying a visiting team on an accreditation visit."

Finally the process approached the next to last, and most important, final event in the recognition process which was the open hearing before the

COPA Committee on Recognition. This was scheduled for April 14, 1986, in New Orleans.

There was much preparation for the 45-minute appearance. Dr. Strider was as supportive in his oral report to the Committee as he had been in his written report, and all questions were answered in a thorough manner. Though it was still unofficial at the time, the Committee indicated that the decision would probably be favorable. On May 6, 1986, a report from the Committee on Recognition indicated that a positive recommendation would be made for final approval by the full COPA Board of Directors meeting in Chicago on October 3, 1986. After 8 years of intensive efforts, recognition had been achieved!

Even recognition by COPA is a continuing process, and on October 17, 1990, the Council on Accreditation was granted "continued recognition" for another five years extending to July 1995. COPA recognition of this accrediting process represents another "milestone" in parks and recreation education. There will be others, but the initial establishment of the accreditation program and its subsequent recognition by COPA represent two important "milestones" on what should be an exciting journey into the future in this field.

Dr. Tony A. Mobley is Dean of the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Indiana University.



A Proposed Program for the **ACCREDITATION OF LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES**

A PROGRAM TO PROVIDE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION

by *Louis F. Twardzik*

History and Logistics

In January 1989, Mr. Ford Hughes, President, American Academy for Park and Recreation Administrators, with approval of the Board, established a Committee to prepare a plan to create a National Accreditation Program for local park and recreation agencies. While this was an historic moment in the public park and recreation movement, it was preceded by earlier interests in evaluating the services of local park and recreation departments. In 1972 Dr. Betty van der Smissen, then at Penn State University, revised a 1965 publication she had done with professionals in the Great Lakes Region. This revised document, "Evaluation and Self-Study of Public Recreation and Park Agencies," provided standards and evaluative criteria that were recognized and adopted by many local park and recreation directors throughout the country. The Illinois Park and Recreation Association used her work as a basis for their program for local agency evaluation.

Professor Louis F. Twardzik, Department of Park and Recreation Resources, authored "Accreditation: A Method for

Evaluating Public Park and Recreation Systems" in 1987. As a member of the Academy Board, he recommended a national accreditation project to President Ford and the Board in 1988. Professor Twardzik was appointed Committee Chair and continues to serve in that capacity.

Other members of the Committee are:

Donald Cochran
Michael Pope
James Colley
R. Eric Reickle
Vern Hartenburg
James Truncer
Donald Henkle
Betty van der Smissen
Donald Jolley
Ford Hughes, Advisor
Ray Kisiah
Jody Hamilton, APRS Liaison
Michelle Park
Roger Coles, AAHPER Liaison

It is important to note that the concept of accrediting local public service systems is not new. Some of the programs now in effect include zoos and police, and a public works accreditation program is underway.

In 1990 the Academy asked the National Recreation and Park Association to enter into a joint agreement to develop the proposed program, including

financing, and it was agreed. Dr. Donald Henkel, Donald Jolley and Michelle Park, current Director of Professional Activities, NRPA, were added to the Local Park and Recreation Accreditation Committee.

The Committee entered into a contractual agreement with the Park and Recreation Resources Department, Michigan State University for development services. Dr. Betty van der Smissen, Professor Louis F. Twardzik and Professor Theodore Haskell serve as an executive team for the Committee.

Purpose

The purpose of the accreditation program is to improve local park and recreation services by providing standards and procedures for their evaluation through a program of outside peer review.

Accomplishments

Two separate documents, Organization and Administration of the Accreditation Program and Standards for Accreditation in the fourth draft, have been submitted to the Committee by the Executive Team for review in June 1992, and another draft was submitted to the Academy and NRPA

FIGURE 1

Outline Example for Section 4.0 Human Resources

- 4.1 Employees
 - 4.1.1 Staffing
 - 4.1.1.1 Competent and adequate staff
 - 4.1.1.2 Supervision
 - 4.1.1.3 Job analysis
 - 4.1.2 Recruitment and Selection
 - 4.1.2.1 Recruitment process
 - 4.1.2.2 Affirmative action and equal employment opportunity
 - 4.1.2.3 Selection process
 - 4.1.2.4 Background investigations
 - 4.1.3 Management Policies and Procedures
 - 4.1.3.1 Personnel manual
 - 4.1.3.2 Professional considerations
 - 4.1.3.2.1 Professional ethics
 - 4.1.3.2.2 Professional organizations
 - 4.1.3.3 Compensations, benefits, conditions of work
 - 4.1.3.3.1 Compensations (salaries and wages)
 - 4.1.3.3.2 Fringe benefits
 - 4.1.3.3.3 Conditions of work
 - 4.1.3.3.3.1 Physical examination
 - 4.1.3.3.3.2 Health and physical fitness
 - 4.1.3.4 Training, career development
 - 4.1.3.4.1 Orientation program
 - 4.1.3.4.2 On-the-job training
 - 4.1.3.4.3 Career development
 - 4.1.3.5 Performance appraisal
 - 4.1.3.6 Promotion
 - 4.1.3.7 Disciplinary action, appeals and grievances
 - 4.1.3.7.1 Disciplinary action
 - 4.1.3.7.2 Appeals and grievances
- 4.2 Volunteers
 - 4.2.1 Utilization
 - 4.2.2 Recruitment
 - 4.2.3 Selection Procedure
 - 4.2.4 Orientation
 - 4.2.5 Supervision
 - 4.2.6 Recognition
 - 4.2.7 Evaluation
 - 4.2.8 Liability
- 4.3 Consultants (Contract Employees)

Boards for the meeting of both organizations at the 1992 NRPA Congress in Cincinnati.

The Organization and Administration plan is a straightforward document establishing a national accreditation commission to develop and implement a national program of accreditation for local park and recreation agencies. The staff, including the Executive Director, will be employed by NRPA and shall have NRPA fringe benefits.

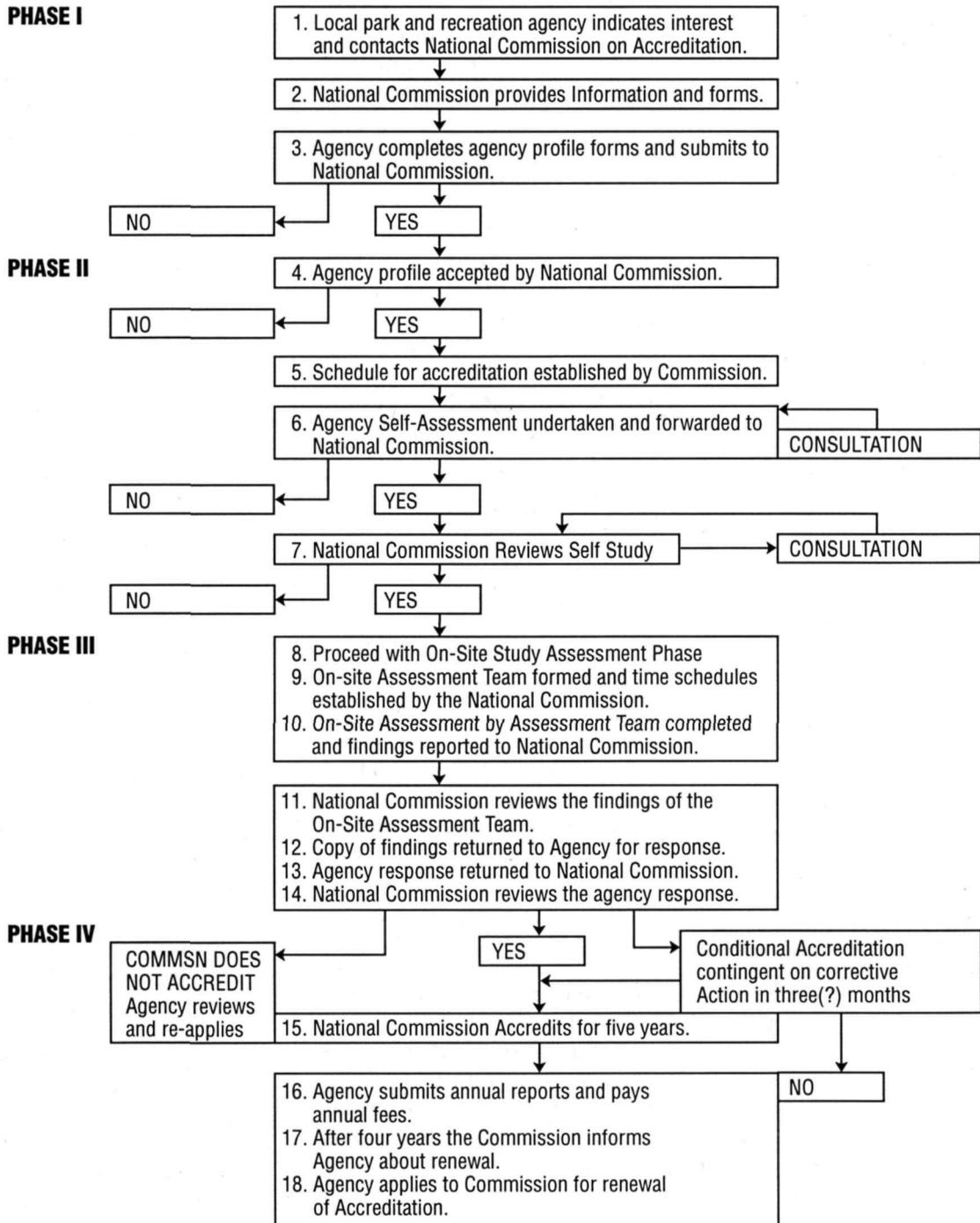
The Standards document, on the other hand, is more complex in that it makes judgments on what is important to the successful operation of a local park and recreation service by identifying those component parts that are required to make up the whole for an effective public service. The following are the Sections included in the Standards:

- 1.0 Agency authority, role and responsibility
- 2.0 Planning
- 3.0 Organization and administration
- 4.0 Human resources
- 5.0 Finance (fiscal policy and management)
- 6.0 Program and services management
- 7.0 Facility and land use management
- 8.0 Safety and security
- 9.0 Risk management
- 10.0 Evaluation and research (evaluative research)

Figure 1 provides an example of how the detail within each major section is designed to operationalize each specific section.

FIGURE 2

Procedural Sequence: Accreditation Process



Special Goals

The Commission is especially sensitive to the need to:

1. Prepare a user-friendly program of standards and procedures. To this end they will be under continued revision.
2. Assure agencies serving smaller communities that they can also apply for and receive accreditation probably easier and at less expense than the agencies serving larger communities.
3. Maintain a wide-open information policy to local agencies and state agencies even though materials are not in final form.

Special Areas of Interest and Concern

Typical to any new professional enhancement, potential administrators had questions regarding this new program. Questions were expressed to members of the Accreditation Committee during its meetings with the various NRPA sections and committees at the 1992 NRPA Mid-Year Conference. While they were answered at the time, space does not permit the same here. Most importantly the questions clearly indicate the concern, and interest, in the project by a national representation of local public park and recreation agencies.

Not surprisingly, the questions centered on the process and inherent value of accreditation. How much will it cost? Can small units meet the requirements? Must we meet all the standards or how many can we "miss"? What are the benefits or

why should we be accredited? Who are the site visitors? If we don't "pass," then what? What other accreditation programs are there? What is the difference between accreditation and certification? Can these standards be used for awards or recognition? For how long is the accreditation? How does accreditation provide for uniqueness of communities? Who does the accrediting? What is the process to get accredited? What is the commentary to the standards? The answers to the above are available by writing to the author; and as other more formal materials become available, these too will help articulate the specifics of the process.

Future Plans

The Committee is committed to preparing additional documents including a Procedures Manual and a Self-Assessment Manual. The Self-Assessment Manual will provide information about how programs should be evaluated against standards and those required actions of the assessors and the local park and recreation authorities to achieve accreditation. A funding plan will also be proposed to indicate the short-and long-term costs and ways of generating income.

The Procedures Manual will explain the schedule and detail involved for the local authorities to learn about and apply for accreditation and how to proceed with their self-assessment, including hosting a visiting team of evaluators. Figure 2 gives an indication of the steps involved.

Management of the Accreditation Process

The schedule adopted by the Committee includes the executive team submitting a report, along with documentation, to the Committee at a meeting each July at Michigan State University. At that time the Committee reviews and critiques its work and develops an agenda for the following year. Individual committee members are assigned tasks, usually to assist in developing, reviewing and refining materials.

The Accreditation Committee will meet twice a year. One meeting will be held during the annual NRPA Congress in which it will report to the Academy Board and membership on its actions during the past year with recommendations for the next year's agenda. The committee will also sponsor educational sessions on the subject of agency accreditation at the NRPA Congress. The second meeting of the Committee will take place during the NRPA Mid-Year Meeting to review on-site assessment team reports.

The Committee's work program includes making the National Accreditation Commission for Park and Recreation Agencies operational in 1994 with the selection of pilot programs in select communities throughout the country.

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CERTIFICATION, ACCREDITATION AND PROFESSIONAL MATURITY

by E. William Niepoth, Ph.D.

The average person, when asked to name a profession, likely will mention medicine or theology or maybe some other occupational field. Ask the same person about what it means to be a "professional," and you are likely to hear one of the following opinions. A professional is someone who gets paid for doing what she or he does. Professionals are those who work competently and with dedication to principles of high service. Professionals carry out certain characteristic activities. This last opinion reflects the emphasis in some of the historical literature on professions.¹

Professional Maturity

Expanded, this point of view suggests that professions serve complex social needs. In order to do so, they validate their techniques through research, provide extended educational programs for those who wish to enter the field, identify workers who are competent and develop ethical codes that define appropriate professional behavior. To carry out these responsibilities on a collective basis, fields maintain professional organizations. The purpose of all this is to provide effective service. The degree to which a profession carries out each responsibility defines its maturity; a field might be more mature in one area than another.²

A profession meets its professional responsibilities through

individuals. This is where the "professional" comes in. Collective action is needed to be sure, but it is what administrators, supervisors, therapists, rangers and other personnel do that determines the professional status or maturity of the field. The basis for this article is that point of view.

The Beginnings of Professionalism

It was not until the late 1940s and early '50s that recreation and park personnel began to think seriously about professionalism. The written statements of some of the early administrators in the field reflect this developing interest.³ The adjective "early" might make these individuals seem ancient, but the field was fairly young at mid-century. In 1952, George Hjelte, then a leading spokesperson for the field and the top administrator for the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks,

observed that recreation personnel "... have very much desired that their field should be afforded the status of a profession." Howard Holman, a contemporary of Hjelte's, suggested that the field, "... slowly but surely ... is being accepted as a professional calling." Roy Sorenson, another respected leader and General Manager of the San Francisco YMCA at the time, felt that the question of professional status was not yet resolved. He noted that "... with a narrow definition of recreation, there is not enough intellectual content on which to build a profession. With a broad definition of recreation goals, a profession is a necessity." Holman added a qualification to his earlier statement, and suggested that "Parks and recreation people are making serious pretensions toward professional status. Unfortunately, a great deal of the work done to achieve these pretensions has been mere vocalizing."



See "Who Can You Turn To" for footnotes.



The First Formal Assessment

The professional characteristics of the field in the late 1940s and early '50s were not well established. Earl Kauffmann, in a doctoral dissertation completed at New York University in 1949, confirmed that fact. This probably was the first research focused on professional status and the field. Kauffmann studied the professional attributes of recreation and found them to be lacking when compared to education, law, medicine and social work. He observed that the field did not have a scientific base and noted a "wanton disregard for scientific research and study."⁴ He also noted the lack of an operational code of ethics. Relative to the status of such organizations as the National Recreation Association (NRA) and the American Recreation Society (ARS), Kauffmann concluded that the NRA was not a professional society and its dominance complicated the efforts of other organizations like the ARS to attain stature and influence.

The Beginnings of Certification

Kauffmann did find evidence that the ARS and the NRA recognized the need to develop standards of practice. However, he noted the absence of controls

on who entered the field and saw little evidence of support for a licensing system. We can assume there also was no widespread interest in certification. What interest there was appeared several years later.

The Council for the Advancement of Hospital Recreation (CAHR; later the National Therapeutic Recreation Society) instituted a voluntary registration program in 1956.⁵ In 1961 the ARS appointed a National Board of Registration. These and prior actions by several state societies set the field on the road to voluntary registration rather than licensing. Twenty-eight state plans existed at the time, the first one dating from 1954. By 1962, the Board had developed a national registration plan that was adopted by the ARS. The plan went on hold in 1965 when the ARS joined with the NRA, the American Institute of Park Executives, the National Conference on State Parks and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums to create the National Recreation and Park Association. Four years later, in 1969-70, the NRPA conducted a series of regional forums on registration. These led to an NRPA Registration Board in 1970 and to a model registration plan in 1973. Eight years later the program changed to the current

Model Certification Plan administered by the National Certification Board.

The Beginnings of Accreditation

In 1949, Kauffmann noted the absence of an accrediting system in spite of the increasing number of institutions offering coursework in recreation. He further noted that the lack of accreditation made it difficult to assure that institutions were preparing graduates adequately. This observation appeared shortly before the first concrete actions to develop standards for professional preparation.

Delegates to national conferences on professional preparation in 1948 and 1950 worked on standards. The development of procedures came later. The American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (later AAHPERD with the addition of Dance) and the ARS furthered interest in accreditation in the 1950s. In 1963, the Federation of National Professional Organizations for Recreation sponsored the Recreation Education Accreditation Project. Leaders of the project worked to establish accreditation procedures and conducted pilot studies at eight campuses in 1968 and 1969. By 1970, the NRPA became involved and established a Board on Professional Education. This led in 1974 to the creation of the National Council on Accreditation, sponsored by the NRPA in cooperation with the American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR). The Council

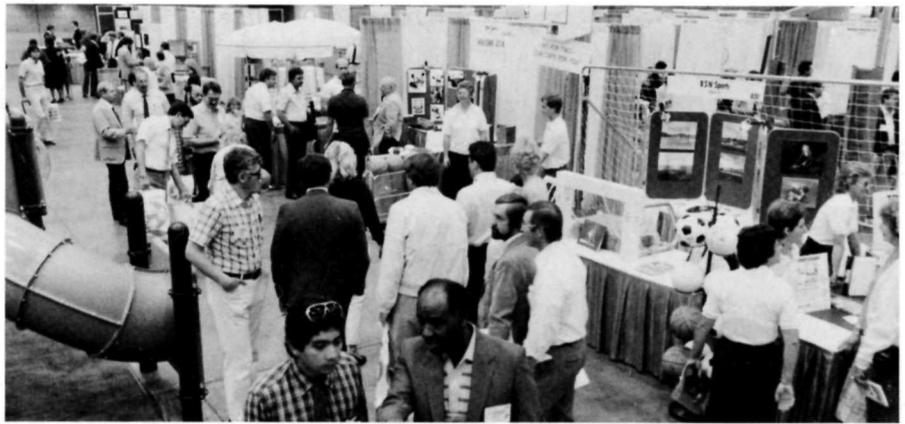
accredited the first baccalaureate program in 1977 at North Carolina State.

Actually the first recreation and park program to be accredited in the United States was at California State University, Northridge in 1972. The California Council on Accreditation, sponsored by the California Park and Recreation Society, predated the NRPA program and operated from 1971 to 1974. CPRS dropped its plan when the national program became operative. The National Council on Accreditation "blanketed in" the three schools accredited under the California plan.

This thumbnail history fails to show the enormous number of hours devoted by many individuals who worked to bring certification and accreditation into reality. It also does not reflect the controversies, frustrations and disappointments they encountered. What we have today is the result of past efforts of people who had vision and energy, and the continuing efforts of professionals who believe it all is worthwhile.

Current Professional Characteristics

We have a body of research that continues to expand. Several research journals serve the field; these include the *Journal of Leisure Research* and *Leisure Sciences*. The annual Research Symposiums, held concurrently with NRPA Congresses, have expanded from modest beginnings to the current sessions which occur over a 3-day period. At these



sessions, scholars present findings from both funded and independent studies. In 1992, over 100 individuals presented papers.

A broadly representative NRPA Task Force on Ethics is analyzing existing codes of state and national bodies to identify principles that define ethical behavior. And, the group is working to develop enforcement procedures, a part of the whole picture that has not been highly evident in the past.

The NRPA includes on its roster about 22,000 individuals who hold memberships in one or more of seven branches and three sections. The Association hosts an annual Congress that draws approximately 4,500 professional delegates. These individuals can select from among many diverse educational sessions, as well as a host of institutes, general sessions and social events. NRPA also sponsors various regional training programs, produces several publications, monitors and works to influence relevant federal legislation, and promotes general understanding of the significance of leisure and the recreation and park field. The AALR, with a membership of about 5000, serves similar purposes.

There are problems, of course. Practitioners frequently complain that research reports are too esoteric for application in field settings. Some academi-

cians doubt whether or not university departments can support both research in the leisure sciences and professional preparation in recreation and park management. It probably will be difficult to implement disciplinary measures for ethical misconduct, even if we can agree on what the measures should be. Professional organizations, including the NRPA, often must operate with smaller budgets than they would like. The initial development of professional characteristics was not without difficulties; the present situations likewise are not trouble-free.

Certification Today

Forty-two states now have certification plans approved by the National Certification Board. As of February 1992, over 7,600 individuals held certification through one of these state plans or through the Board's Direct National Certification plan.⁶ Individuals may be recognized as Certified Leisure Professionals (CLP) or Certified Leisure Technicians (CLT). Direct certification standards include educational requirements for both designations, and successful completion of an examination for CLP's. If a CLP applicant's degree is not from a program accredited by the Council on Accreditation he or she must meet additional experience requirements. Maintenance of certified status



requires Continuing Education Units (CEU's) earned by attending designated sessions at NRPA Congresses or through other approved methods. The Board is working with the NRPA Trustees to encourage linking of certified status to employment in the field.

Accreditation Today

Currently 96 colleges and universities hold accredited status granted by the Council on Accreditation. After the initial approval, the Council reviews each program every five years. The review process is for the bachelor's degree only. It includes completion of an exhaustive self-study by the program and verification of the study on campus by a three-person visitation team (or an individual, depending on the particular cycle). Practitioners and educators who meet requirements as approved visitors serve on the teams. The Council meets twice yearly to conduct hearings on programs. The basis for the granting or denial of accredited status is compliance with standards. The Council may set conditions on an approval which the program must meet by a specified time. If the program does not document compliance with the conditions, the Council withdraws accreditation. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

granted recognition to the NRPA/AALR Council in 1986.

Changes and Challenges

The certification and accreditation systems are not static. Both programs have experienced changes in standards and procedures. For example, the Council on Accreditation, with appropriate input from other segments of the field, modified the evaluative criteria six times during the period from 1975 to 1990. In 1991, the National Certification Board considered a proposal from the National Therapeutic Recreation Society that would have shifted responsibility for identifying therapeutic personnel to NTRS. The Board decided not to accept the proposal. Both the Board and the Council will face other issues in the future, probably on a continuing basis. Both will make future decisions that will influence the field and the publics we serve.

As opinions differ about what professionalism means, they also differ about whether it is good for the field or not . . . or rather, if it actually benefits the public or instead if it is self-serving? Peter Witt, in a thoughtful analysis of professionalism, asks the question: "Who benefits?" Do we seek further professional status to provide better service or to enhance our own welfare?

Others have raised similar questions. Does professional status discourage individual and community initiative, and encourage dependency? Does the presence of a profession narrow the options available to people? Does professionalism foster fragmented, specialized service? Does it focus on the apparent problems of individuals rather than on the underlying influences of the social system?

As entities of the field such as the National Certification Board and the Council on Accreditation consider future issues and make decisions, their members will need to ask Witt's question: Who benefits? What will be the impact of our decisions on the publics we serve? The issue does not have to be an either-or question. The concept of maturity clearly suggests that the things personnel do to meet professional responsibilities lead to better service. Benefits for the field and for recreation and park personnel logically will follow, but these should not be the primary motivators.

Would it be possible for the field to meet today's leisure needs without continued professionalization? Possibly, but not with the same potential for effective service that results from carrying out professional responsibilities. Certification and accreditation should enhance that potential.

Dr. William Niepoth is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Recreation and Parks at California State University at Chico. He is the current chair of the Council for Accreditation for NRPA.



Are We Accrediting Small College Park and Recreation Programs Out of Business?

by Robert Kauffman, Ph.D.,
and Annette Logan, Ph.D.

Currently the park and recreation field faces a problem which if not corrected may seriously limit the number of students prepared by colleges and universities for careers in the park and recreation field. As accreditation becomes more of a criteria in hiring newly graduating professionals, viable small college programs could be eliminated from the delivery system. The problem focuses on the differences in program structure between the larger university programs and their counterparts found in the small college. The small college or "one-person" program generally consists of one full-time employee experienced and

trained in the field who forms the backbone of the program complemented with another full-time person or several part-time instructors. The question is whether the small college programs provide an important niche in the total delivery system, whether the accreditation standard which requires three full-time faculty members is necessary and accomplishes its program objective, and whether the small one- or two-person programs meet the program objectives set forth in the accreditation standards.

Size is a Central Issue

The problem of accrediting that puts small programs in jeopardy stems from a structural difference between the small college and university system. Whereas most universities require instructors to teach six or perhaps nine credits, small colleges require their faculty to teach 12 or even 15 credits a semester. Allowing for adminis-

trative release time and field experiences, in practical terms this often translates into six to eight courses a year for each faculty member. Usually these are not multiple preparations for the same course. Three full time faculty efforts translates into 18 to 24 courses taught a year. At three credits per course, recreation courses needed to support three faculty can consume between 54 to 72 credits a year, or what in most colleges is almost an entire undergraduate major's program.

With this much course production required, there is a strong tendency to create park and recreation programs which by any criteria are top heavy in major's courses. The bottom line is that the standards encourage park and recreation programs which are not economically feasible in the eyes of the administration. The result is that the administration will withdraw their support for our programs and will place their limited resources in more profitable programs such as business administration or engineering which also provide them with more prestige within the academic community.

The economic realities of the small college system and its affect on accreditation requirements can be viewed another way. Normally, in the small college setting, course enrollments need to be in the range of 20 students for the administration to consider them economically viable. If a curriculum has a 4-year turnover in students,

approximately 80 majors (i.e., 4 years x 20 students/year) are needed to support the major's course, if it is offered once a year. Offer the course twice a year, and the program needs in the range of 160 majors to support the program. Add to this the requirement that two of the three faculty members must be full-time employees in the program, the salary requirements of these two people discourages

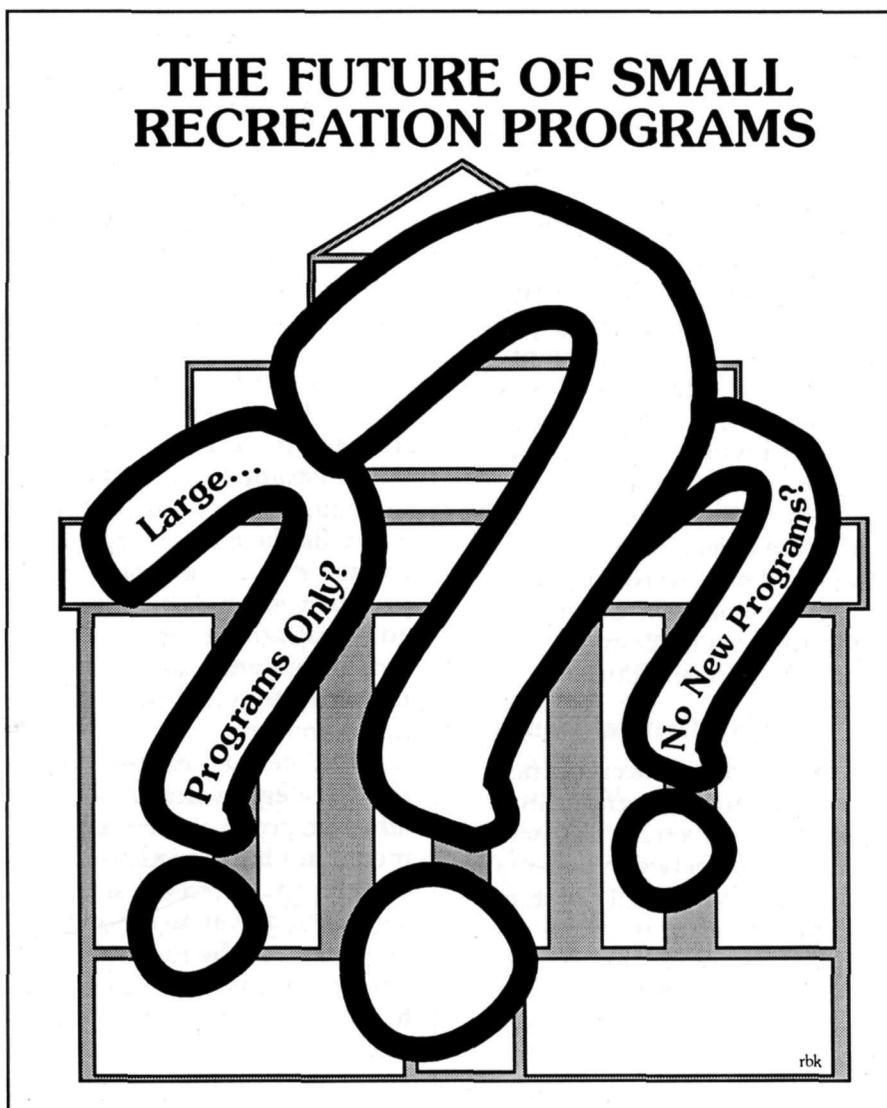
the administration from supporting park and recreation programs.

The net effect of accreditation coupled with the economic realities of a small college setting is programs which are not economically feasible, which are often top-heavy in recreation courses or which require large numbers of majors to support them. The requirement of three full-time faculty only exacerbates

this problem. For the small college there are ways around this problem (e.g., service courses to the general student body; all university courses required of all students like English, math and physical education activity courses; etc.). However, accreditation structures the situation against the small recreation and parks program. It prevents programs from standing on their own where the majors produced by the program support the faculty in the program. Like the straw which broke the camel's back, the standard's three full-time faculty requirement has the potential of accrediting small college recreation and parks programs out of business.

Estimated Effects

Elimination of small college park and recreation programs will have several detrimental effects for the field. First, the niche filled by the graduate of a small college will be left unfilled. Experience in the state of Maryland and the cooperation among educational institutions in MARrec (Maryland Recreation Consortium of Leisure Educators) suggests that small colleges and universities tap different employment markets. Also, the experience with MARrec suggests that collectively the small college and large university programs together expand the total employment market within the state so that all benefit. This includes the practitioners in the field who benefit from an academic program in their community, the large universities and the



small colleges which serve localized markets.

Second, for the field to grow, a mechanism or vehicle must be provided for starting new programs. This vehicle is the small program. Elimination of the small program removes the first step by which many programs will eventually develop into larger programs. It is one thing for a school to commit a full-time person and move two additional people part time into a program, and it is another thing to require a commitment of two full-time people to initiate a program. If the formation of new programs is restricted and not encouraged, the eventual effect will be the educational stagnation of the field.

Although a case can be made that small college economics cannot support three full-time faculty programs given the current accreditation requirements, the primary issue is the quality of the program provided. What benefits do the faculty provide a program, and more specifically, what benefits result to a program from the addition of each additional person to the faculty? Do the benefits double with the addition of

a second person or are they merely marginal? Does the addition of a third person to the faculty result in three times the benefit of the first person or is there only a small marginal increment in benefit over the addition of the second person? Perhaps the benefits may be

program. It provides several important functions including curriculum and teaching, advising, job placement, support services to students, program continuity and consistency and administration of the program. There is little question that a program requires a person

familiar with higher education and with the field. This person is necessary for all these reasons. In this case, a senior level faculty member trained in the field is the best insurance of a quality program. However, once a program has such a person the addition of another full-time person will accrue less benefits to the program than the addition of the first faculty member.

In terms of accreditation, does the addition of a second or third person significantly increase the ability of the program to meet accreditation standards? The answer is that the addition of these persons only marginally add to the quality of the program. The key concern here is the qualifications of the primary person in the program. This person needs

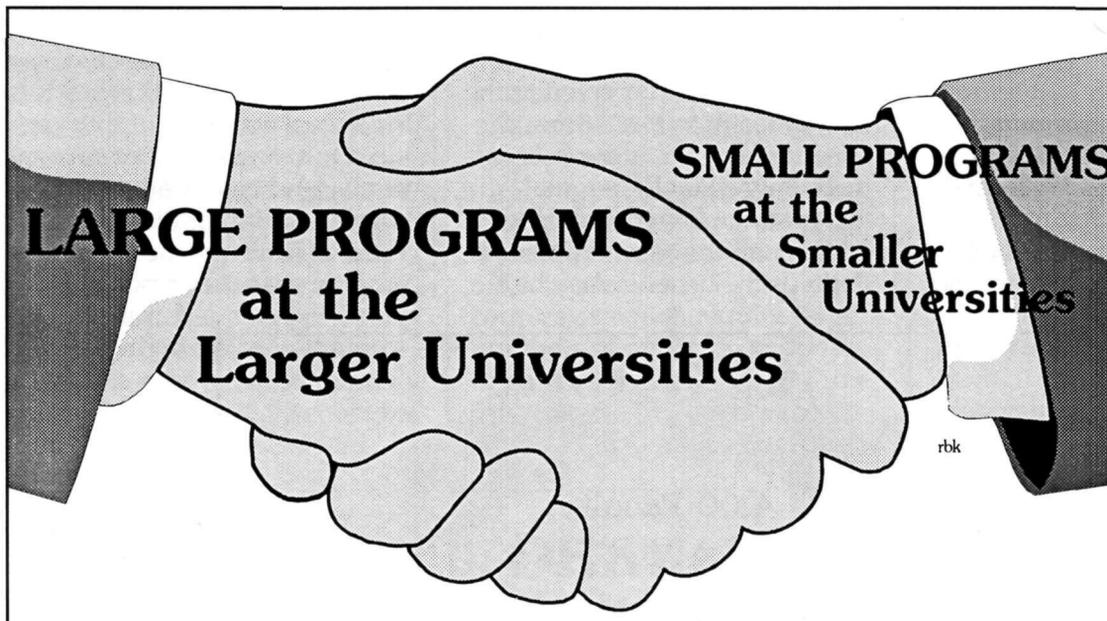
4.00 Faculty

4.05 There shall be at least three full-time equivalent faculty members of the baccalaureate program serving the academic, unit, two of whom shall be full-time. There shall be in addition to the foregoing, another full-time faculty member for each option beyond the first option. rbk

only marginal. This is particularly true when the primary person in the program is a senior level faculty person, knowledgeable about the field of recreation and parks and the requirements of higher education.

The faculty is probably the most important ingredient in determining the success of a

program. It provides several important functions including curriculum and teaching, advising, job placement, support services to students, program continuity and consistency and administration of the program. There is little question that a program requires a person familiar with higher education and with the field. This person is necessary for all these reasons. In this case, a senior level faculty member trained in the field is the best insurance of a quality program. However, once a program has such a person the addition of another full-time person will accrue less benefits to the program than the addition of the first faculty member.



accomplished equally well by low level faculty (i.e., instructors, assistant professors), a senior level faculty member usually has the experience to perform this function without draining energies from other academic tasks.

Continuity and consistency in a small program is a problem

to be competent, possess a terminal degree in the field and be a senior level faculty member (i.e., associate or full professor). A person of this stature in a program is more important in determining the viability of a program than a program consisting of two or three full-time people who have little or no concept of the field.

Reviewing services to the program provided by the faculty may suggest ways of revising the standards to accommodate small college programs while ensuring quality programs. Faculty advising consists of assisting students in selecting the proper courses for their program of study. An informal survey at one small school indicated that faculty advisees ranged from 10 to 130 students. These advising loads were not for recreation but business, chemistry, history and other social science programs. Depending on the construction of the advis-

ing system, one faculty member can handle 50 or 60 students without any problem. If advising is a problem for the standards committee, then a sliding scale should be constructed where the total faculty committed to the program or to advising is proportional to the students enrolled in the program.

In most schools, senior level status is an indicator of the faculty member's involvement within the regional and national community. A senior level faculty member has developed the contacts to assist the student in job placement. For small college programs the standards should focus on the professional commitment and community service of the senior level faculty member.

Development of a student society and student involvement in recreation programs in the community are examples of support services to students. Although this function can be

regardless of the number of faculty members in the program. Unfortunately a small program rises or falls on the drive, dedication and involvement of its faculty. Even though it may meet the accreditation requirements, a senior level faculty member with one or two low level members is little insurance against this problem. Only when all members of the faculty are experienced senior level members will this problem be abated.

The standards require that the chair of a program be of senior level. This requirement has purpose, and the requirement that the primary faculty person in a small program should have senior status is consistent with this requirement.

Except for continuity and consistency, a small program with one or two primary faculty can offer the program services necessary to operate a program.

Lastly a case can be made that a program structured with two people, one full-time senior level person complemented with part-time instructors who create a second full-time faculty effort, is adequate to meet the standards. This approach links the program more closely with the community which it serves and, in turn, utilizes the resources available in the community. With the use of part-time faculty, students are exposed to more professionals in the field and to different views held by these professionals. This exposes the students to both academic and professional viewpoints, an advantage over three academic faculty encouraged by the standards. Also, the use of part-time faculty increases the networking capabilities of students with professionals in the field.

The three full-time faculty requirement for accreditation is the one requirement which in and of itself will deny accreditation to a program. Although the intent of the standard is valid, the standard denies the realities faced by programs in the small college system, and it attempts to accomplish objectives which can be accom-

plished equally well through standards which focus on the quality of the faculty and the program. In this sense this standard is arbitrary.

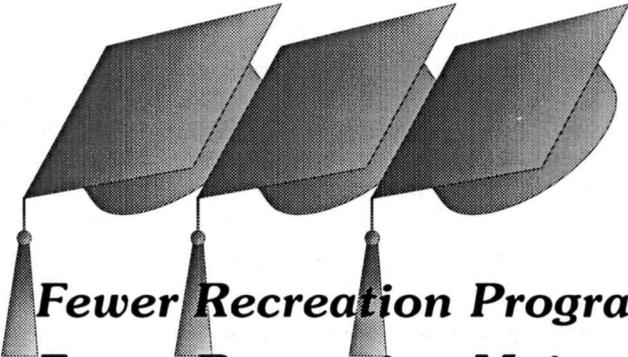
Small college programs can produce programs which meet the programmatic standards set forth in the standards. The accreditation council needs to construct standards which ensure quality programs and ensure that small college programs, as do all programs, meet these standards. If the small college programs are accredited out of business, the loss of this component in the delivery system will affect the entire field.

Just as this author is the silent partner who faithfully and dependably maintained the business for Fred Olmstead, so too are the small college park and recreation programs an often overlooked and unrecog-

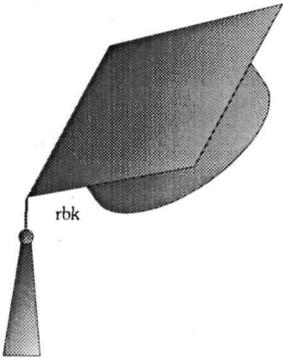
nized member in the total leisure services delivery system. Small college recreation and parks programs are the silent partners in the delivery system. They are important and provide a valuable service. Their loss will affect everyone.

Editor's note: This article first appeared in the Fall 1989 issue of the SPRE Newsletter. The questions raised seem appropriate to this publication for they are still real and relevant issues today.

Dr. Robert Kauffman is an assistant professor and head of the Recreation program in the HPER Department at Frostburg State University, Maryland. Dr. Annette Logan is an Associate Professor and Head of the program at York College of Pennsylvania.

***Fewer Recreation Programs,
Fewer Recreation Majors,
Fewer Positions Filled,
Fewer Majors Demanded.***



rbk

ACCREDITATION: *Bear Counting or Substantive Analysis*

by
Pat Farrell, Ph.D.

Any process that is directed towards regulation, by its very nature, is usually as specific as the regulatory body can afford or design. Few would argue that standards are not necessary in our highly developed technological society. In almost every aspect of government, industry, education, health services, safety regulations, etc., there has been interest in setting a standard for preferred practice.

The service professions have been late entrants to use the accreditation technique yet have brought a significant aspect to the standards design process. It might be characterized as both an effort to raise the level of professionalism to a particular profession as well as protectionism of the profession itself. The former is a laudable context for the development of standards

resulting in an accreditation process, while the latter has a far side that could be evidence of professional insecurity.

Regulation in the Human Services

The service profession has generally had difficulty defining itself, its boundaries and those qualities acceptable for employment in the variety of agencies. In particular, the human service professions have had an additional challenge to define what are the successful qualities that

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The service profession has generally had difficulty defining itself, . . .
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are acceptable for personnel in these service fields. Recreation and park professions share this dilemma of identification of pathways to success. In addition, this same professional field is served to a large extent by people who have never had professional preparation, and the resulting effect is many who have served have been particularly successful in both performance and leadership in the field.

Development of Standards for Recreation and Parks

Thus, the efforts to bring a professional code or standardized preparation process to the field of recreation and parks has been long, frustrating and exciting, yet not without the real agonies of putting in place a program that has generally been assumed to be a significant step in our evolving process of pro-

fessionalizing our field. Years of real devotion to this task have been given by some of our finest and best. And yet our existing document may require major revision which could demonstrate a quantum step in professional maturity.

Perhaps digression would be appropriate here. The field of recreation and parks (as well as

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We have spent too many years attempting to find the real focus of what we wished to accredit in the academy.
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other salient titles) has always had an underdog attitude, and rightly so. We have struggled for respect in the human services field, the colleges and universities, the resource fund allocation processes, etc., and find ourselves always having to defend the idea of leisure, or argue that professionals are needed to bring sophistication and a value added essence to park and recreation services in both the public and private venues. So, when the time is right to think about standards of practice, licensing, accreditation, et al., we are unable to shed this "less than" image. And in this context it is tempting to design a system that might be termed a "we'll show them how rigorous and professional we can be" document. The intention to raise the professional image

and abilities of those serving the field is particularly sound, yet the context in which standards are thus determined tends to be open for the criticism that there is still evidence of a professional immaturity and defensiveness in the final document.

Where Should Accreditation be Directed?

It is this writer's opinion that the development of criteria for accreditation in the recreation, resources and parks professional fields has strayed across the line of a professional enhancement, to far too much attention to fine points and unnecessary detail.

We have spent too many years attempting to find the real focus of what we wished to accredit in the academy. Should accreditation be only for the undergraduate program? Or should graduate programs be credited? What about options? What options are we willing to approve? These new options that spring up at some universities—are they acceptable, or are additional criteria needed? The process to be approved by the Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation was helpful in answering some of these questions. We have all tried to find these answers. And we are making these efforts still in an atmosphere of professional uncertainty. Those of us who have been given the opportunity to adjust, modify, delete and create standards have agonized very little over some of these fundamental questions. Mostly we have attempted to write clear and understandable criteria that we believe are "impor-

tant" elements in professional preparation.

The Process

Our current criteria and standards document is well-organized, clearly sectioned for solid organization, written in fair and understandable terms and generally is a useful guide for those schools wishing to apply and/or renew for accreditation. No matter what the size of the student body, the faculty serving the program, the university, whether undergraduate and/or graduate, five or no options, this one document serves as the single point for accreditation reporting and analysis. Those who have prepared the self report know the process to be lengthy and an organizational challenge for sharing information. These reports over the years from universities have varied dramatically. From voluminous notebooks of 500 pages each to a single, crisply written 150-page report would be a fair characterization of the self studies. In all reports there are, by virtue of the requirements, appendices attached which include faculty vita, course outlines, policies and additional college/university-wide information.

All of these data are reviewed by the visiting team as well as members of the Council on Accreditation, a joint body formed by NRPA and AARL. The first-time costs of this process are high enough to make this process a serious budget consideration. And although most college and university administrations are fully knowledgeable regarding accredita-

tion processes, justification is usually required. With significant expenses comes serious questions of the value added context to the school.

Fortunately, our affiliation with the Council on Post-Secondary Education has eased the harsh justification battle some of the early applicants sought with their central administrative offices.

People and Resources

Thus, the involvement of many people is required and costs follow this activity in every way from staff time to prepare the self report to the final appearance before the Council. At the minimum, at least 20 people will read the report. Half this number will spend hours beyond measure in working with the document both in its writing and in the analysis of how well the self report matches the criteria for the standards. Each reader sees and understands in different ways. At this point, the criteria become the focal point of the accreditation process.

The report writer reads the description of the standard and understands that his or her program does or does not meet the criteria and responds accordingly in the report. As the visiting committee investigates each standard of the report written by College ABC, their analysis may note some question about a specific item in the self report; so during the team visit, questions are asked and discussion follows. This is a natural process that continues until the visitation team has completed its on-site review. Of course, the

visiting team submits its report as an advisory group to Council. Standards are again reviewed and those in question are discussed.

It then becomes the Council's task to decide whether a standard, as it was written, has been met. Standards written for clear understanding on the part of those preparing the self report are now being analyzed under scrutiny not possible in the written text. Subtle notions of quality, fine points of accomplishment, numbers and counting of items have been undefined. Judgments differ on many points of involvement and those left to make the final decision are occasionally guided by their own views rather than an exact and literal use of the standard itself. Let it be said quickly that this is expected as a function of human nature and well-intentioned people trying to do a difficult task.

Yet the consequences of this fuzzy distance between the written word and the understandings brought to the decision at every step of the process could cause some difficulties. Further, there is another significant side to the standards themselves.

With so many standards, it is difficult for Council members (or any of us) to defend each and every criterion as absolutely necessary. Does every criterion carry the same weight? If there are more than 5 percent of the criteria unmet, should accreditation be denied? What is our legal basis for insisting on each and every criterion? An argument can be made that the composite of criteria is, in fact, a

necessity. That the interrelationship of each criterion with every other one makes a whole cloth.

And it is here that perhaps we have overdone the detail required for crisp analysis of whether a program should be accredited. Even though many have labored hard and well in the design of this system, it seems that now might be a good time to step back from our document and our experience with accreditation and reflect on its value to the profession, its efficiency, its cost requirements, its level of sophistication within the larger university system, and whether we are able to measure any significant results after managing this process for about 15 years.

A Wider View of Accreditation

Accreditation has spread to almost every discipline within the university curriculum. University administrators are beginning to be wary of accrediting units that come onto the campus and encourage additional resources to be given to specific units—all in the name of accreditation standards. Some accrediting units have handled this with more sophistication than others. Needless to say, university administrators are beginning to resent the pressure from these visiting teams, especially in light of the current economic situation in higher education.

All of this to say—is it time to review our process in light of how we make accreditation decisions? Are we confident enough professionally to be a leader in modifying our accredi-

tation system? Are we ready to be critical of our process in an evaluative context and determine whether major changes are needed? Or secondarily, are we willing to measure and assess the effects of accreditation? Perhaps it is too soon to do nothing when all the signals are pointing to administrative resistance to "outside rules," forcing resource allotments, programs being deleted from the university curricula in spite of their accreditation status and criteria that need serious attention, all point to a call for boldness and redirection.

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... all point to a
call for boldness
and redirection.
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Is it Bean Counting Time or What?

How might we redirect our process? An article without a few suggestions is incomplete, so here are a few thoughts:

1. Refocus the total effort of accreditation to the course outlines which should include measurable course objectives, assignments, reading and reference materials as well as copies of examinations. These materials would be confidential to a small number of selected reviewers who would assess the quality of the learning experience design for each course as well as how well the evaluative criteria had

been met. Reviewers would feed back to an accreditation team chair for each university.

This chair then would be the single visitor to the school applying for accreditation. His or her task would be to assess the general nature of the department, administrative structures and comparative data points across the university.

2. For those who would support the position that a curriculum is as good as the faculty it is suggested that a team be chosen to review only the curriculum vita of the faculty and staff of the unit applying for accreditation.

The team members would assess the quality of the personnel and recommend to a team chair a point value developed for score ranges. This system would require redesigning the standards into a much broader set of philosophical statements and thus require the department to announce itself to the reviewing team.

The team chair would then be a single visitor to the college or university. The chair's presentation to the Council would be much more quality driven and focused on the excellence factors rather than minimal standard levels.

3. Design standards for faculty that are similar in context to the tenure and promotion elements. If there are too many worrisome aspects to

option number 2 above, then state in specific numbers what faculty accomplishment should be over a 3-to 5-year period.

The intent of this system is to acknowledge that as the faculty matures and produces, the students will become beneficiaries of this scholarly and academic activity.

Summary

It is important that the reader understand that this writer is not against accreditation, but only in the way it is designed to work. The title expresses more clearly the context of this point. Our current guidelines reflect more detail than is necessary, and signals our immaturity as a profession as we make every point so clear that there is no room for judgment. And yet it is judgment that is required to assess quality and excellence by those who are able to objectively judge value. Just as we believe our system is airtight in terms of clarity, we know that well-intentioned people let words mean different things to each of us and, therefore, many decisions are both inside and outside the standards as they are written. So, this is a call to pull back from such detail and find a way to have this review process move to a higher level of quality. If we dare!

Dr. Pat Farrell is an associate professor in the Leisure Studies Program at The Pennsylvania State University and former Vice-Chair of the Council on Accreditation for NRPA.



COPA

Reorganizes

by Michelle Park, CLP,
and Samuel Hope

By now you may have seen articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or one of several notices announcing that the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) plans to go out of business by the end of December 1993. For 19 years, COPA served as a national forum for discussion of accreditation policy issues and as a private sector recognition body for institutional and specialized accrediting organizations. COPA also served other functions such as professional development for accreditation staff members, government relations and public relations on behalf of accreditation.

COPA consists of four component organizations: the Assembly of Regional Accrediting Bodies (ARAB), which are the directors of the nine regional accrediting bodies and are the commissions that accredit entire institutions of higher education; the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB), representing about 60 organizations and committees which review and accredit programs that prepare for entry professions; the Assembly of National Institutional Accrediting Bodies (ANIAB), representing six national agencies that accredit proprietary institutions or other free-standing institutions; and the President's Policy Assembly on Accreditation (PPAA), representing seven major presidential higher education organizations.

COPA has had a rocky history.

It was incorporated in 1974 by a merger of the Federation of Regional Accrediting Bodies of Higher Education (FRACHE) and the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA), the latter an organization supported by higher education institutions and committed to the avowed purpose of controlling the proliferation of specialized accrediting bodies, which it did through a formal recognition process.

The initial members of COPA were the regional commissions of FRACHE, the specialized accrediting bodies recognized by NCA (all of which were also members of the Council of Specialized Accrediting Bodies) and a few accrediting bodies not affiliated with either FRACHE or NCA, including agencies devoted to Bible colleges, trade and technical schools, home study programs, and independent colleges and schools. FRACHE and NCA went out of business with the establishment of COPA. CSAB continued for nine more years before finally dissolving and transferring its assets to COPA for the specific purpose of supporting professional development.

Over the years COPA has gone through several self-studies, reorganizations and transitions of leadership. The divergent interests of its constituents always have made for conflicts and controversies.

In January 1993, the executive

directors of the regional accrediting organizations announced their intent to lead their organizations out of COPA.

By early April, the chief staff officers of such organizations as the American Council on Education had expressed the same intent. After four days of meetings in mid-April, the prudent course seemed to be to wipe the slate clean and find new means for fulfilling COPA's functions. Some individuals associated with COPA have called for a major national study on accreditation. Others find the study problematical—too slow, potentially biased, a substitution of public relations gestures for content, etc.—and unlikely to yield much lasting value.

It is apparent to the accreditation community that all of these functions will continue to be served, because all of them are important to the national accreditation system. However, it is not yet clear how these functions will be distributed, nor is it clear that a single body will be responsible for any or all of them. The dissolution resolution passed by the COPA Board requires preparation of a proposal for a successor recognition mechanism. However, there is no assurance that such a proposal will be accepted by the majority even though in theory, most accrediting organizations find a united approach more attractive than a fragmented one.

The specialized accreditation community, of which the NRPA/AALR Council on

Accreditation is a part, is moving forward to establish a new organization. The specialized accrediting groups have expressed willingness to undertake all of the functions of COPA if necessary, but address them only from a professional accreditation perspective. The organization in formation plans to involve significant numbers of representatives from the higher education community (presidents, provosts, deans, faculty, etc.), the professions and the public as well as from specialized accrediting bodies.

Many accrediting organizations have invested a great deal of money and staff time trying to make COPA work, but COPA was unable to withstand new pressures in the accreditation arena. The major concern remains the future relationship between non-governmental accreditation and the federal government. The Higher Education Act now in force and associated regulations due shortly for public comment are attempting to turn accreditation from a service-oriented activity to a regulatory one. Although COPA did the best possible job under the circumstances to work with the Higher Education Act reauthorization and the ensuing regulations, these activities took place under internal working conditions that emphasized exchanging positions rather than finding common ground. Proposals to revise the COPA recognition process seemed to be following the regulatory philosophy of the federal government rather than providing an alternative approach based on academic and profes-

sional values. These proposals produced more internal friction.

The failure of COPA is not an indicator that accreditation is failing. In fact, all accrediting bodies have become increasingly sophisticated, and many are at their highest levels of productivity and sensitivity to the various conflicting pressures in their environment. Accrediting agency executives became frustrated because COPA seemed increasingly focused on internal politics and power symbols rather than on policy and operational issues important to accreditation.

COPA did not break up over tensions between the various types of accrediting bodies. The regional organizations, the national institutional accreditors, and the specialized and professional accreditors exhibit virtually no generic antagonisms, although it is not clear that their respective approaches to accreditation share as much in common as heretofore. There are at the national level tensions between the proprietary and not-for-profit higher education communities that influence the accreditation policy discussion.

While there are natural tensions between accrediting bodies on the one hand and chief executive and academic officers of multipurpose institutions on the other, there are positive interactions in a majority of cases. To be effective, accrediting bodies must seek the best possible relationship with all individuals on a campus; accreditors are sophisticated enough to understand that antagonism or unreasonable demands produce a counter-

productive atmosphere for the effective pursuit of high educational goals. While accreditation site visits are carried out by volunteers who can create misperceptions or even act inappropriately on occasion, extrapolating isolated campus incidents into norms, or pretending that accreditation is the only pressure being experienced by institutional executives seems unwarranted.

For your own review, below is the resolution passed by the COPA Board of Directors on April 7, 1993.

RESOLVED,

Whereas, the concern over the role and value of voluntary accreditation has increased dramatically over the past several years; and

Whereas, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) has not been viewed as a viable organization in terms of addressing societal and governmental concerns relative to the role and value of accreditation; and,

Whereas, the current organizational structure of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) precludes the development of strong proactive measures relative to matters pertaining to quality assurance in American higher education; and

Whereas, the need for strengthening of voluntary accreditation in no time in our history has ever been greater; and

Whereas, the continuation of such a flawed organization as the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) serves no societal value;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Directors of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) hereby dissolves the corporation, effective December 31, 1993.

Amendment to Dissolution Resolution:

Plan of Dissolution

That COPA continue to provide recognition for all qualified, dues paying accrediting bodies until December 31, 1993; and

That a COPA Special Committee be appointed and given responsibility to design a successor structure for the non-governmental recognition of accrediting bodies and assure the orderly transition from COPA recognition to the successor structure;

a) The Special Committee would be appointed by the present executive committee and include: continuing executive committee members, persons knowledgeable about accreditation and other respected leaders in American higher education.

b) The committee's work should reflect a profound commitment to the assurance of quality and improvement in post-secondary education through non-governmental accreditation as well as a sensitive awareness of the several purposes accreditation serves. It should also seek the counsel of COPA member agencies and other interested parties in the higher education community.

c) The successor structure should be designed such that: (1) it would be capable of constituting in January, 1994; and (2) initial recognition would be

granted to accrediting agencies on the basis of their COPA recognition as of December 1, 1993.

That, to the extent possible, the operating budget fund the Special Committee; and

That the Corporation shall otherwise cease to conduct its affairs except insofar as may be necessary for the winding up thereof; and

That the President shall cause notice of the proposed dissolution to be mailed to each known creditor of the Corporation, to appropriate federal and state governmental departments and agencies, and to the members of the Corporation; and

That using the estimates of liabilities, obligations and assets attached hereto, the Executive Committee, advised by the Finance Committee, shall more particularly determine the Corporation's liabilities, obligations, and assets and report thereon to the Board of Directors by November 1, 1993; and

That the Executive Committee, advised by the Finance Committee, shall then collect and convert to cash the Corporation's assets and apply them to pay, discharge or compromise all liabilities and obligations of the Corporation or to make adequate provision thereof and to distribute any remaining assets equally among such members of the Corporation or their successors as are in existence and qualify as tax-exempt organizations under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

That the Executive Committee, advised by the Finance Committee, shall com-

plete application and distribution of the Corporation's assets by December 1, 1993 and report thereon to the Board of Directors; and

That a final audit of the finances of the Corporation shall be performed by Grant Thornton and provided to the Board of Directors and each member of the Corporation; and

That the President shall cause articles of dissolution to be filed with the Mayor of the District of Columbia such that a certificate of dissolution may be issued by December 31, 1993.

It is the hope of the specialized accrediting community that the successor of COPA will hold the same level of credibility for its recognition of programs as COPA has. The functions COPA performed are of the utmost importance. The most important thing is that the accreditation community find mechanisms for restoring COPA's functions and ensuring they are fulfilled with a high level of effectiveness, dignity and sophistication, no matter what the organizational format. It is the intent of the NRPA/AALR Council on Accreditation to play an active role in the development of the successor to COPA and will keep its members well informed of its evolution.

Michelle Park, CLP, is the Director of Professional Services for the National Recreation and Park Association and Staff Liaison to the NRPA/AALR Council on Accreditation. Samuel Hope is the Executive Director of the National Officers for Arts Accreditation in Higher Education and serves as a member of the COPA Board of Directors.



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2. Kinney, L.B. and L.G. Thomas (*Toward Professional Maturity in Education*. San Francisco: California Teachers' Association, 1955) developed the concept of professional responsibilities and professional maturity. R. Smith ("Maturity of Education as a Profession." unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1956) applied the concept in an evaluation of the field of education. The present author applied the concept to individuals in the field of recreation (E.W. Niepoth, "The Professional Maturity of Recreation Administrators," unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1962).

3. Quotations in this section are from various sources. The actual citations appear in Niepoth's dissertation, pp. 1-6.

4. Kauffmann, E., Jr., "A Critical Evaluation of Components Basic to Certain Selected Professions With a View to Establishing Recreation as a Profession." unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, New York University, 1949, p.264.

5. Much of the historical information in this and the following section is from the Special Bicentennial Issue of *Parks and Recreation* (July 1976). See especially the article by Don Henkel on "Professionalism" (pp. 52-54). Other articles in this issue deal with the status of registration/certification, professional preparation, accreditation and continuing education in 1976. Also, see Michelle Park's concise history of certification published in *Dateline: NRPA*, October 1991, p.5.

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Council on the Continuing Education Unit, 1101 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20036

Maintaining Professional Certification in Florida (brochure)

Policy and Procedure Manual for CEU Acquisition and Re-Certification

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