

Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

Strategic Plan (2020-2025) – 1-19-22

Preamble:

Faculty in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management (RPTM) teach, conduct research, and provide service and outreach in the areas of recreation, park, and tourism management to address how humans can derive maximum benefits of leisure.

Our faculty in RPTM work from various disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives to better understand the natural, psychological, sociological, philosophical, economic, and cultural systems influencing human behavior and provision and management of services to support leisure pursuits. Our interdisciplinary systems approach enables faculty to address issues of environmental and human health, wellness, and sustainable development and management through innovative curricula and research programs. Our goal is to create a positive impact at local, state, national, and international levels through innovative social science and to create the next generation of leaders in our field.

Who we are:

Faculty in RPTM teach, conduct research, and provide service and outreach in the areas of recreation, park and tourism management. One of our strengths is the variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives employed by RPTM faculty. A systems approach enables us to address issues of environmental conservation and human health, wellbeing, and development. We teach about and research these issues, working toward a sustainable impact at multiple levels.

RPTM offers a BS in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management with curricular focal areas in Commercial Recreation and Tourism Management (COCR/CRTM), Outdoor Recreation (OUTRC with tracks in Park Management and Environmental Interpretation (PMEI), Adventure Recreation), Community Recreation Management (CMRMG), and Professional Golf Management (PGM). The RPTM Department at Penn State – University Park has approximately 320 undergraduate students at University Park. RPTM students have been very successful in internship and job placement across all options (for example, the PGM option reports 100% job placement among its graduates) . In addition to RPTM-University Park, the RPTM four-year degree is also found at two Commonwealth Campuses (Penn State Greater Allegheny, Penn State Abington) and all three programs share coursework and faculty. RPTM will also be available as a fully online bachelor's degree through World Campus with a Commercial Recreation Option (Spring 2022) or a Community Recreation Option (Fall 2022). In addition to its undergraduate

degrees, Penn State's RPTM Department offers a Masters (M.S.) and Doctorate (Ph.D.) program. As with the Undergraduate degree, graduate faculty from the three campuses (UP, Abington, GA) work collaborative to advise and support this program. Annual enrollment in the graduate program is 25-30.

What we value:

We combine intellectual curiosity with core Penn State values of integrity; respect for others; excellence in teaching, research, and outreach; honesty; accountability; inclusivity; discovery; collegiality; and development of a sense of community.

Our Mission:

To transform human and environmental health and well-being by engaging people of all backgrounds in recreation, parks, tourism and leisure.

Our Vision:

We envision a world wherein all people have an equitable opportunity to experience leisure that contributes positively to quality of life facilitated by sustainable development and management of recreation, park, and tourism resources.

Our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

We recognize the interconnectedness and global nature of RPTM and that the richest learning occurs in situations where there are differences. We believe all of us learn more about others and ourselves through engagement with people who see the world from a breadth of divergent perspectives. These differences include a variety of ethnic backgrounds, countries of origin, disability status, social and economic status, gender and sexual orientations, religious affiliations, appearances, and other aspects. Therefore, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive department in which everyone feels welcome and respected. We encourage and support the development of cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity by providing opportunities for positive intergroup dialogues and celebrating diversity in our office environment, classrooms, and communities.

Goal 1: Teaching and Learning – Continue to increase the quality, access, and relevance of RPTM degree programs and options.

Goal 1a (Undergraduate Degree). Increase “on-ramps” to undergraduate programmatic areas as a means of providing greater flexibility, access, and engagement, particularly from under-represented groups and for areas with untapped educational need.

- *Objective 1a.1:* Review undergraduate options relative to our research themes and curricular innovations
 - *Action Item:* Integrate current events, best practices, and research from the field into our learning outcomes.
 - *Action Item:* Work with instructional designers to develop modules incorporating current events, research case studies, and best practices that can be used both on the World Campus platform and in-residence instruction in a flipped classroom setting.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Within five years, all classes will document and track learning outcomes to reduce repetition, and ensure they are relevant to current events, best practices, and research. This will be documented through curricular mapping technologies.

- *Objective 1a.2:* Development of new undergraduate pathways and certificates focusing on industry-specific focal areas.
 - *Action Item:* Continue to develop the Meetings and Event Management Certificate (MEMC) program, including exploring sustainable event management with the National Football League and Sustainability Institute.
 - *Action Item:* Explore feasibility of a certificate or undergraduate pathway in snow sports either a hybrid model or fully World Campus), working with Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI), Pennsylvania government entities, and national and international snow sports corporations.
 - *Action Item:* Explore feasibility of certificates or undergraduate pathway in the leadership and management of camps.
 - *Action Item:* Explore the feasibility of a curricular pathway in Conservation Tourism and write a venture proposal to fund the development of this curricular pathway called *Regenerative Environmental & Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism* (RESET) working with Happy Valley Launch Box, and faculty from the department of Landscape Architecture, and the Department of Geography.
 - *Action Item:* Continue strong relationships with industry partners to promote student learning opportunities Current and potential future partners include, but are not limited to:
 - Professional Golfers' Association of America (PGA), Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Outward Bound International (OBI), Professional Snowsport Instructors of

America (PSIA), Carnival Cruise Line, Marriott Vacation Club, ReVerb, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USDA Forest Service, Live Nation, and Shaver's Creek Environmental Center.

- *Timing and Metrics:* Within five years, RPTM will have multiple new certificates delivered in a blended learning model and applying engaged scholarship approaches (i.e., through World Campus and in-residence instruction and internships) that enrich student learning in career-specific areas and attract new student populations.
- *Resources Needed:* RPTM either needs funding to for marketing dedicated or consistent time from HHD Communications Staff to help with development of materials and marketing strategies. Faculty will need course release time to help the development of these programs.
- *Objective 1a.3:* Maintain and further develop a student-centered focus in undergraduate education.
 - *Action item:* Continue to assess curricular offerings to monitor instructor-student ratios, teaching assistance support, and to identify course opportunities to leverage faculty expertise and interest.
 - *Action Item:* Continue to provide and enhance opportunities for engaged learning opportunities via specific classes and also within various teaching methodologies across all classes.
 - *Action Item:* Seek and explore collaborative teaching opportunities within the department and across the University.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Continuously evaluate results from individual class feedback, peer reviewing, external expertise and graduating student surveys.
- *Objective 1a.4:* Improve undergraduate curricular architecture (course flow and structure), and review (and revise if necessary) curricular content to reflect current issues and industry trends pertinent to RPTM.
 - *Action Item:* Align undergraduate curriculum and other learning opportunities with learning objectives.
 - *Action Item:* Evaluate learning outcomes to ensure revisions to our undergraduate courses reflect a shared, strategic, and stratified delivery of our learning objectives (reflected in syllabi, assignments, etc.).
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Ongoing; Reviewed through feedback from student, faculty, and industry professionals.

- *Objective 1a.5:* Continue to develop and grow our P-3 programs with Penn State Greater Allegheny and Penn State Abington and our World Campus program.

RPTM is now offered at Penn State Greater Allegheny, Penn State Abington, and on the Penn State World Campus. The goal of this collaboration is to provide flexibility and mobility to a diverse student body that crosses campus locations as they seek to earn the degree and complete unique internship experiences.

Action Item 1: Facilitate research among faculty at Penn State Greater Allegheny, Abington and University Park focused on Community Recreation and Parks.

Action Item 2: Explore, among other issues, the impact that urban parks and greater access to recreation has on community health and well-being.

Action Item 3. Collaborate to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in order to recruit under-represented populations of students to the field of recreation

Action Item 4. Help place students on a track toward a professional life in Commercial Recreation, Community Recreation, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism and relevant job sectors with an emphasis on community health and well-being.

Action Item 5. Explore the possibility of adding of the Outdoor Recreation track to the P-3.

Action Item 5. Build on-ramps for alumni that will promote life-long learning and support the principles of *One Penn State 2025* by providing... *a Seamless Student Experience: Achieving curricular coherence and a strong disciplinary and interdisciplinary community; designing relevant and responsive programs defined by disciplinary communities and contemporary needs while also offering flexibility in achieving these outcomes via multiple pathways and achieving the highest level of efficiency of University resources that leverage digital resources and align faculty, academic, and administrative resources to strengthen learning, research, and student support opportunities*

- *Objective 1a.6:* Continually evaluate RPTM’s Professional Golf Management Option to ensure excellence and relevance to society and industry
 - *Action:* Successfully complete PGA Re-Accreditation visit Spring 2022.
 - *Action:* Explore the development a “Golf Management” certificate for students who are interested in working in the golf industry as Non-PGA Members

- *Action:* Continue to work with the PGM APG to create a recruitment award to focus on DEI.
- *Action:* Frequently review courses being delivered by other departments, including but not limited to: Business, Marketing, Hospitality, Kinesiology, and Agronomy. Develop a Biomechanics of Golf course.
- *Action:* Create or update, and deliver the PGA of America's three levels of golf instruction classes and Facility Management class for PGA Golf Management student.
- *Action:* Coordinate and deliver a Player Development Program that exceeds PGA accreditation requirements and leads to enhanced player performance.
- *Action:* Create innovative golfer performance curriculum and education by conducting research that informs and prepares golf professionals to meet the diverse needs of golfers.
- *Action:* Host seminars and guest instruction sessions. Use technology to enhance the learning experience and facilitate productivity for each student.
- *Action:* Enhance the integration and emphasis of emotional intelligence and soft-skills in the curriculum (e.g., listening skills, interpersonal skills, verbal communication, and professionalism skills, professionalism, and written communication skills).
- *Timing and Metrics:* Ongoing; Dependent upon Actions but include indicators such as an increase in donations, PAT pass rates, test performances, number of seminars/guest instruction sessions, donations, etc.

Goal 1c. (Graduate Degrees) Continue to grow and improve the quality of our MS and PhD programs.

- *Objective 1c1:* Grow our graduate student enrollment with an emphasis on increasing diversity.
 - *Action Item:* Increase number of graduate faculty in a manner that aligns with College and University strategic goals, and global gaps in research, teaching, and service.
 - *Action Item:* Develop diversity-focused graduate student recruitment strategy.
 - *Action Item:* Increase enrollment of high-quality graduate students (e.g., fall admits of 6-8 students consistently).
 - *Action Item:* Develop funds dedicated to enhancing graduate student recruitment.
 - *Action Item:* Continue to expand our faculty research portfolio to support our research focal areas and the recruitment of graduate students.
 - *Action item:* Create a pathway for student teaching mentorship, ultimately resulting in teaching their own course(s) prior to completing the PhD program.

- *Action Item:* Find resources dedicated to increasing release time, so that graduate curriculum can be redesigned and resubmitted for Faculty Senate Review.
 - *Action Item:* Pursue partnerships and collaborations with programs across campus to expand the number of GTAs/GRAs available for graduate positions.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Within 5 years, increase our student enrollment to a rolling average of ~30-35 with an emphasis on increasing student diversity.
 - *Resources Needed:* RPTM either needs funding to for marketing dedicated and consistent time from HHD Communications Staff to help with development of materials and marketing strategies to be used in graduate student recruitment efforts.
- *Objective 1.c.2:* Improve curricular architecture (course flow and structure) for the MS and PhD degrees and review (and revise if necessary) content to reflect current issues and theories pertinent to RPTM.
 - *Action Item:* Align curriculum and other learning opportunities with graduate learning objectives.
 - *Action Item:* Evaluate learning outcomes for both MS and PhD to ensure revisions to our graduate courses reflect a shared, strategic and stratified delivery of our learning objectives (reflected in syllabi, assignments, etc.).
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Obtain and maintain consistently high SRTEs within all our graduate courses; obtain and maintain positive feedback from graduate alums concerning their educational contributions to their careers.

Goal 2: Research - Enhance the quality, quantity, and impact of our multi-disciplinary research programs and collaboratives

- *Objective 2.1:* Continue to operate as a world-class scientific program through research scholarship associated with the Outdoor Recreation, Protected Area, and Environmental Education Research Group; the Hahn Consortium for Values and Experiential Learning Research Group; the Golf Teaching and Research Center (GTRC); the Travel and Tourism Research Group (TTRG); and the Community Health and Well-being Research Group (CHWB).
 - *Action Item:* Increase research proposals and funded grants, contracts, and awards; number of publications in high-quality/impact journals
 - *Action Item:* outreach locally and globally; and recruitment of high-quality graduate and undergraduate students, and postdoctoral scholars.

- *Action Item:* Conduct research to understand and inform ways to positively emerge from pandemic conditions, addressing inequities and health disparities through leisure-associated interventions.
- *Action Item:* Pursue collaborative and interdisciplinary research partners and cross-disciplinary appointments across Penn State and other institutions and organizations
- *Action Item:* Develop or partner with transdisciplinary and cross-university centers related to one or more of our research focal areas.
- *Action Items:* Build or emphasize the concept of “resilience” into our research focal areas. Investigate the impact of climate change on various leisure pursuits. Study intervention methods in fostering sustainability practices in leisure activities.
- *Action Item:* Strengthen our research partnerships with industry specific organizations including by not limited to: Professional Golfers’ Association of America (PGA), Outward Bound International (OBI), Professional Snowsport Instructors of America (PSIA), Marriott Vacation Club, Reverb, PA Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR), Local tourism bureaus, PA tourism offices, Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA), National Park Service, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics (LNT), River Mountain, Live Nation, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as foundations and funders who focus on health disparities.

- *Timing and Metrics:* Within five (5) years we will:
 - Increase the number of grants, publications, graduate and undergraduate students involved in RPTM-based research and engaged scholarship.
 - Increase the number of peer reviewed publications written with undergraduate and graduate students.
 - Increase the number of conference presentations with undergraduate and graduate students.
 - Increase and diversify the graduate student cohort through targeted and intentional recruitment efforts.
 - Increase the number of international collaborations and expand to new areas of the world (indicators include co-authored publications, LOIs/MOUs, exchanges, etc.).
 - Receive awards and fellowships for our research and service.
 - Secure a named professorship in tourism, golf, or community recreation.
 - Show a bi-annual average increase in the number of proposals submitted for external funding.
 - Attract media to come to the RPTM Faculty for expertise on pressing issues related to RPTM.
 - Increase media mentions (including social media) of RPTM research and initiatives.
- *Resources Needed:* Dedicated staff and faculty load assigned to graduate program affairs; administrative staff support on grants/proposals

Goal 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Foster a more inclusive and welcoming environment and society by increasing the diversity of our RPTM community and develop curriculum and educational activities that promote awareness of diverse needs and interests.

- *Objective 3.1:* Promote a welcoming and inclusive campus climate:
 - *Action Item:* Provide opportunities for positive intergroup dialogues by double the number of lunch circle dialogue participants;
 - *Action Item:* Celebrate diversity in our office environment, classrooms and communities by recognizing holidays and heritage months; and
 - *Action Item:* Work with the College media team, check communication and marketing materials for the Department for diversity content and wider representations, and ensure media content addresses diversity.
- *Objective 3.2:* Build a more diverse student body:
 - *Action Item:* Reach out frequently to students at commonwealth campuses and involve faculty members in commonwealth campuses, and
 - *Action Item:* Double the number of students from minoritized groups, through outreach to high schools, international audiences, and historically Black colleges and universities.
 - *Action Item:* Support faculty mentorship of students from minoritized groups (e.g., through option to earn course release through DEI-related service and mentoring)
- *Objective 3.3:* Advance and build a diverse workforce and management:
 - *Action Item:* Advocate for a tenure-track/tenured line with research focusing on diversity and social justice issues and with a committed to under-represented groups.
 - Develop strategies to retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups
- *Objective 3.4:* In order to develop a curriculum that fosters United States and international cultural competencies:
 - *Action Item:* Create undergraduate courses highlighting indigenous, international, and marginalized populations, and
 - Increase the number of course readings authored by women/minority authors
- *Objective 3.5:* Invest in and work closely with our P-3 collaborations in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to promote more on-ramps to the RPTM degree at Penn State Abington (PSA) and Penn State Greater Allegheny (PSGA). PSA and PSGA are among the most diverse campuses in the PSU system.
 - *Action Item:* Continue to strengthen relationships with our co-funded faculty at PSA and PSGA through research and teaching collaborations.
 - *Action Item:* Develop a bi-annual P-3 meet up among program leaders and faculty.

- *Action Item:* Explore the potential of hybrid coursework that accommodate students at the Commonwealth campuses, the World Campus and the University Park Campus.
- *Action Item:* Raise money that helps off-set additional course costs for hybrid courses that include travel.
- *Objective 3.6:* Develop clear 2+2 pathways for students who start at PSA or PSGA who wish to come to University Park campus for degree completion.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Within five (5) years we will...
 - Increase lunch circle dialogue participation to at least 50 lunches per year (doubling pre-pandemic participation rate)
 - Have at least two cultural recognition or holiday celebrations per semester
 - Have completed a full audit of all communication and marketing materials to ensure they adequately address diversity
 - Promote the RPTM major at commonwealth campuses.
 - Increase the number of students from minority groups.
 - Reach out to high schools, international audiences, and historically Black colleges at least 3 times per semester to promote the department.
 - Increase support for faculty mentorship of students from minoritized groups.
 - Advocate for a tenure-track/tenured line with research focusing on diversity and social justice issues
 - Develop and begin implementing a plan to retain faculty and staff from underrepresented groups
 - Regularly offer at least one undergraduate course highlighting indigenous, international, and marginalized populations
 - Monitor the percentage of course readings authored by women/minority authors and meaningfully increase this percentage in each course
 - *Resources Needed:* Continued funding support for activities of the RPTM DEI Committee
 - Staff time allocation (or assistance) for communications reviews and update
 - Undergraduate advisor time allocation (or assistance) to promote department to various audiences
 - Faculty course buy-out to develop new undergraduate course
 - New faculty hires approved by Dean which expand our diversity

Goal 4: RPTM Operations - Improve the communication, efficiency, and transparency of RPTM Operations

- *Objective 4.1:* Improve efficiency and impact of operational processes (e.g.,)
 - *Action Item:* Increase transparency by providing updated access to procedures, policies, communications, and work-flow processes/steps.
 - *Action Item:* Finalize, communicate, and adhere to work-flow systems and departmental procedures.
 - *Action Item:* Organize staff and committee functions to spread workload in a coherent/efficient manner (e.g., Reduce multiple functions with one staff or faculty member during critical deadline periods).
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Within five (5) years we will...
 - By the end of 2022, we will be fully staffed and meeting notes, materials and other department resources will be accessible in a common group folder on One Drive.
 - In one department meeting per year faculty will provide a feedback on perceived transparency of department procedures. Adjustments will be made until positive feedback is collected.

Goal 5: Develop a communication strategy that will produce more visibility via an improved RPTM Website, stories in the popular press, and social media exposure.

- *Objective 5.1:* Improve the website, social media campaigns and write stories about our research and teaching programs
 - *Action Item:* Hire communications expert to work collaboratively to support CHHD communications office and RPTM communications
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Within two years
- *Objective 5.2:* Engage RPTM faculty, staff, and students in departmental affairs with regularly scheduled meetings, workshops, and communications.
 - *Action Item:* Hold monthly PIC/Operations meetings that are open to all faculty and staff members to discuss Departmental affairs. Prioritize staff with dedicated agenda items to allow each staff member to update their key operational areas.
 - *Action Item:* Provide weekly or biweekly Department Head update emails that include information about departmental affairs, accomplishments, upcoming events and deadlines, and other pertinent information.
 - *Action Item:* Host monthly faculty and staff meetings to provide important updates and to host discussions on important departmental affairs. Invite one graduate student representative to all meetings.

Timing and Metrics: Regular biweekly and monthly meetings and weekly or biweekly updates via Department Head emails.

- *Objective 5.3:* Update and maintain the RPTM website to include all pertinent departmental information that adhere to CHHD guidelines and are informed by social media/website best practices.
 - *Action Item:* Bring the RPTM website to HHD template and standards.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Complete website update by the end of the 2021-2022 academic year and maintain the website with regular updates every six months moving forward.
 - *Resources Needed:* Either dedicated time allotted to an existing member of the RPTM staff or assistance from CHHD with this project will be required to successfully complete this project.

- *Objective 5.4:* Launch a marketing campaign to market undergraduate resident programs, the undergraduate World Campus program, graduate program, and to communicate significant RPTM accomplishments. (Note: this work should include both a traditional marketing campaign and social media efforts and with input from the RPTM APG).
 - *Action Item:* Hire a staff member in RPTM specializing in communications to oversee program marketing, social media engagement, and to monitor metrics.
 - *Action Item:* Work with the HHD Communications team to coordinate efforts with the College and to leverage the systems that their team is building in the areas of communications and social media.
 - *Timing and Metrics:* Develop marketing materials with an approved outside marketing firm (commercials of different lengths, print materials, digital materials) to be used across website, social media outlets, and shared with strategic partners. This should be completed by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year.
 - *Resources Needed:* A new staff position will be needed to oversee these communication efforts (website, social media, marketing). Also, the marketing campaign will require funding from CHHD or RPTM to employ a professional marketing firm.

- *Objective 5.5:* Affiliate Program Groups (APGs) are chartered by their college or campus alumni society. APGs are similar to societies, with the exception that this connection is focusing on the promotion and development of the academic department rather than the entire college or campus. RPTM has two APGs, one affiliated with the PGA Golf Management Program (PGM) and one representing the other options in RPTM. Our goal is to develop two APGs that represent the professional network of RPTM graduates.
- Action Item 1. Set aside a small amount of funding in the annual budget to cover operational costs of the APG to help cover meet/greet events and/or college meeting attendance.
- Action Item 2. By the end of 2022, the APG will work with RPTM faculty and staff to host a networking event.
- Action Item 3. Work with HHD Communications office to develop promotional materials and videos related to professional options of our field.
- Action Item 4. Assign a portion of a staff member's time to help organize, be a liaison and oversee the RPTM APGs.

Timing and Metrics: By the end of AY 2023, the RPTM APG will receive the College of Health and Human Development MAC Award.