



Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair: Terry Robertson Date: 10/30/2025
Terry Robertson

Dean, CHHS : Grace Reynolds, D.P.A. Date: 10/30/2025
Grace Reynolds, D.P.A.

Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung Date: 10/30/2025
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Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding
Master of Science in Recreation Administration
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
College of Health and Human Services
September 2025

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the consensus reached by the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, the College of Health and Human Services, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the Self-Study submitted in May 2023 and external program review conducted in 2024. Drs. Terry Long and Jamie Hoffman completed the external review in May 2024. This report and MOU are issued in September 2025, and they describe the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU during the next program review cycle. Progress toward these goals will be addressed in the annual report.

The Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies offers a B.A. in Recreation, a B.S. in Recreation Therapy, and an M.S. in Recreation Administration. It also offers minors in Recreation and Event Planning, along with certificates in Wilderness Studies and Recreation Therapy. The bachelor's degrees are accredited by Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT); therefore, only the M.S. in Recreation Administration will be the focus of this review. The M.S. program consists of a 30-unit curriculum, culminating in a Comprehensive Examination, Project, or Thesis.

The program's previous MOU, signed in 2010, included the following recommendations: 1) The Department will analyze the overall learning experience in the M.S. program to determine whether appropriate depth and rigor are achieved, particularly in the 400/500-level courses, and whether graduate-level learning outcomes defined by the faculty are being achieved by students; and 2) The Department will continue to refine the learning outcomes established for both undergraduate and graduate programs, making them more specific and demonstrable in terms of how they align with the larger curricula.

The Department has met the terms of the MOU with respect to developing program outcomes but has not fulfilled the assessment and reporting requirements. Since 2012, the Department has not regularly filed annual assessment reports as required. In addition, the heavy reliance on 400/500-level courses remains a concern.



Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study 2023
2. External review 2024
3. Previous MOU 2010
4. Department catalog and website

Strengths Identified in the Reports

1. **Mission and Outcomes.** The department's mission and program outcomes are appropriate, aligned with the University, and clearly presented on the Department website. This ensures transparency and consistency with institutional goals.
2. **Curricular Adjustments.** Since the last review, the Department has made curricular changes aimed at improving the program. In particular, the recent introduction of multiple culminating experience options (e.g., comprehensive exam, project, or thesis) appears to have contributed to shorter time-to-degree completion. The Department has also reduced the overall number of units required for graduation, demonstrating a commitment to student progress and efficiency.
3. **Faculty Engagement.** Five core courses are taught by tenure/tenure-track faculty, providing a strong academic foundation. Faculty members are also actively engaged in student recruitment, offering a level of personal involvement that helps to connect prospective students with the program.
4. **Program Redesign for Professionals.** The program plans to redesign the degree to better serve working professionals by offering flexible online delivery. This strategy is anticipated to enhance accessibility and increase enrollment, making the program more competitive in the current higher education landscape.

Concerns Noted in the Reports

1. **Learning Outcomes and Assessment.** While the program's outcomes are appropriate, they could be better aligned with the needs of working professionals and include stronger connections to community agencies and professional organizations. Curricular changes have not always been guided by systematic assessment or feedback from students, alumni, and employers, which limits the program's responsiveness.
2. **Enrollment and Student Success.** Enrollment has fluctuated significantly, ranging from a low of 8 students in 2016 to a peak of 19 in 2019, and returning to 8 in 2023. These low numbers raise concerns about program viability. Small cohorts also make it difficult to accurately assess student success, as individual outliers can disproportionately influence outcomes. Average time to degree ranges widely from 2-5 years, with total units completed varying between 34.1 and 57. Graduation rates have declined substantially



over the review period, with 2- and 3-year completion rates falling from 71.4% and 85.7% to just 25%.

3. **Curricular Concerns.** The program is heavily research-based, with 12 of 20 units dedicated to research courses, which may not align well with the needs of professional students. Additionally, half of the curriculum consists of cross-listed undergraduate/graduate courses, raising concerns about the rigor expected at the graduate level.
4. **Program Leadership and Consistency.** The graduate advisor role has changed four times during the review period, resulting in limited program consistency and slower long-term development.

Opportunities for Development Identified in the Reports

1. **Assessment and Outcomes.** The Department has an opportunity to strengthen assessment practices by implementing both direct and indirect measures to inform curricular decisions. Learning outcomes could be refined to better reflect professional competencies and to include stronger elements of community engagement.
2. **Curriculum Design.** Several curriculum-related improvements were identified. Electives could be redesigned to serve practicing professionals, with new offerings in areas such as policy, trends and issues, grant writing, and fundraising. Applied or action-based research projects could be added as capstone options, giving students a practical alternative that could be completed in a single semester. Streamlining existing coursework, such as combining *REC 595 Data Analysis in Recreation Administration* and *REC 696 Research Methodology*, would further improve curricular efficiency.
3. **Support for Diverse Learners.** A remediation course for students without a bachelor's degree in recreation, leisure, or sport could provide foundational knowledge and help these students transition more successfully into graduate study.
4. **Innovation and Emerging Skills.** To prepare graduates for the evolving workforce, the curriculum should incorporate training in the professional use of artificial intelligence (AI). This would equip students with valuable skills and enhance their competitiveness in the job market.
5. **Recruitment and Retention.** Expanding recruitment strategies through technology-driven and regionally targeted campaigns (e.g., using search engines, social media, and streaming platforms) could broaden the program's reach. Additionally, reviewing and improving admissions deadlines, notification processes, and onboarding systems would help reduce barriers for incoming students. Collaboration with the Hospitality and Tourism program offers another opportunity to strengthen recruitment pipelines and curriculum delivery.
6. **Faculty Development and Expansion.** As the program is working on transitioning to an online program, expanding the part-time lecturer faculty pool by recruiting experienced



professionals from across the state will provide valuable expertise. At the same time, investing in professional development for current faculty will ensure high-quality online teaching and learning.

Recommendations

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies will collaborate with the College of Health and Human Services and Division of Academic Affairs to:

1. Develop and carry out a comprehensive assessment plan that includes both direct and indirect methods. Use the results to close the loop by demonstrating how assessment data inform decision-making. Provide an annual update on progress toward MOU actions (due September 1) to the CHHS Dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators of Program Review and Assessment. The review cycle will span 2023-2030, with a comprehensive self-study due in June 2030 for the 2030–2031 academic year review process.
2. Create and widely publicize clear, learning-focused outcomes for the M.S. in Recreation Administration program.
3. Design and implement a curriculum revision plan that addresses the following:
 - a. Assess and revise the culminating activity to ensure relevance to the profession, alignment with student goals, reasonable time to completion, and manageable faculty workload.
 - b. Redesign the degree for online delivery, allowing students to complete courses and degree requirements at their own pace.
 - c. Redesign electives to meet the needs of practicing professionals, ensuring graduate-level focus rather than reliance on 400/500-level cross-listed courses.
4. Examine historical and current enrollment trends to identify opportunities for growth, and implement proactive recruitment and marketing strategies to increase enrollment to levels consistent with the University's benchmark for graduate programs.
5. Continue to assess, develop, and leverage both internal and external partnerships to enhance student learning and professional opportunities.
6. Provide greater consistency in the graduate advisor role to support long-term program stability and student success.
7. Explore ways to expand the adjunct faculty pool by recruiting experienced professionals and provide professional development for faculty to support curriculum updates and the transition to online delivery.
8. Investigate processes and systems that affect recruitment, retention, and degree completion, and implement improvements to reduce barriers for students.

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Office of Program and Institutional Effectiveness



This report/MOU has been reviewed and approved by:

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