

Recreation and Leisure Studies are a branch of the social sciences that focuses upon improving people's lives through the provision and management of meaningful leisure time programs and therapy. Professionals work in a variety of settings such as public parks and recreation, rehabilitation centers, travel and tourism, hospitals, private organizations such as the YMCA, commercial agencies such as theme parks and fitness centers, long-term care facilities, and many more. Recreation and Leisure Studies use the principals of human motivation and satisfaction, current trends, and a philosophy of practice to provide programs and services that improve lives.

THE PROGRAM

The primary purpose of the program is to provide both classroom AND practical learning experiences in the study of Recreation and Leisure. Nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Park, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions, the Department supports students studying one of two career tracks: Recreation Management and Recreational Therapy. The curriculum infuses practical learning opportunities with outside agencies within courses providing "real-world" experience to reinforce classroom work and allow students to hone their career preferences. The program is nationally recognized for its assessment, work with alumni and professionals, and ensuring that all graduates sit for the examination to become a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist or Certified Park and Recreation Professional.

THE MAJOR

The Recreation and Leisure Studies major requires a seven course "core" which provides the foundation for each student to undertake a career track in either Recreational Therapy or Recreation Management. The career tracks require an additional five courses of specialization. All students are required to complete a final semester capstone internship. This semester-long internship allows the student to earn "real-world" experience and apply their coursework with a recreation agency locally, nationally, or internationally.

THE COURSES

Classes at VWU are small and interactive. Students pursuing the Recreation Management track complete courses in Recreation Programming, Advanced Management, a Junior Internship, and select from individual career interests such as Sport Management, Campus Recreation, Travel and Tourism, and Ropes Course Management. Students pursuing the Recreational Therapy track will complete courses studying Disabilities, the Recreational Therapy Process, Management and Organization, Analysis and Assessment, and selected courses in areas such as Psychology and Anatomy and Physiology.

INTERNSHIPS

All students complete a final semester internship with an agency of their choice. The semester prior they will work with a faculty advisor to select the internship that mirrors their interests. This internship experience gives the student a "competitive edge" as they transition from college to the workplace or graduate studies.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Graduates have not only worked in traditional recreation agencies and healthcare, but have also used the content of their courses and the experience from the internship to work in administration, teaching, sales, health care, consulting, professional association management, law enforcement and more. Students have also entered graduate school to study fields as diverse as Education, Sport Management, Theology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Pathology.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Douglas A. Kennedy, Ed.D., CPRP

Chair of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies

dkennedy@vwu.edu

