



WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Recreation, Park & Tourism Administration

Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Administration, College of Education & Human Services

Program of Study

The Recreation, Park & Tourism Administration curriculum is designed to prepare you for the many phases of the profession. We emphasize innovative instructional techniques and learning experiences through application of knowledge and skills in career-related settings. Noted authorities are invited to campus regularly for lectures and special programs, and students travel to various recreation, park, and tourism agencies for observations and direct experiences.

Faculty

Our faculty members have diverse interests and experiences. Coupled with a sensitivity to student needs, this provides an excellent climate for learning. The majority of the faculty hold doctoral degrees from institutions across the United States and Canada such as the Universities of Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, and Minnesota; Texas A&M; and the University of Waterloo–Ontario in Canada.

Scholarships

The RPTA department currently offers 12 scholarships and awards to its majors, seven of which are named after RPTA Emeriti faculty. Other scholarships are available to our students from outside agencies such as the Illinois Park and Recreation Association, the National Recreation and Park Association, the Illinois Tourism Council, and a variety of park districts and other agencies throughout the state. The amount of these awards ranges from \$100 to \$1,500. Contact the RPTA office, (309) 298-1967, for more detailed information on department scholarships. Additional information on scholarships is available from the Scholarship Office, (309) 298-2001, or on the Web at wiu.edu/Scholarship.

Honors in RPTA

To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must have an ACT composite score of at least 28 OR have a 26 or 27 composite ACT and be in the top 15% of their graduating class OR have an ACT composite score of at least 24 and be in the top 10% of their high school graduating class. Transfer students with at least 12 semester hours (SH) and up to 59 SH of undergraduate courses are admitted with a GPA of at least 3.3 OR 3.4 for 60 SH or more. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. In the RPTA major, honors students take courses for honors credit, and as seniors, they prepare an honors thesis under the direction of the department's Honors Adviser.

Horn Field Campus

Western's 92-acre Horn Field Campus, one mile south of Macomb, is operated by the RPTA department as a laboratory for courses in camping, outdoor education, resource management, interpretation, leadership, and adventure education.

HIGHER VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Student Activities

RPTA majors who qualify may apply for membership in Rho Phi Lambda, the National Professional Recreation, Park, and Leisure Services honorary fraternity. The department also offers students the opportunity to become involved in a variety of organizations such as the RPTA Student Recreation Society, our department professional organization; H.E.L.P. (Horn Environmental Learning Project), an organization dedicated to maintaining Horn Field Campus while learning about resource management; the Student Therapeutic Recreation Society, an organization for students with an interest in working with special populations; and the Adventure Club, a University sport club that enjoys hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, and other adventure activities.

Special Opportunities

- Students graduating with a B.S. in Recreation, Park & Tourism Administration are immediately eligible to sit for the examination to become a Certified Park and Recreation Professional and thereby acquire this valuable credential for professional advancement. Successful completion of prescribed courses in therapeutic recreation results in eligibility to sit for the examination to become a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.
- Nonprofit education and certification is available through an affiliation with American Humanics, an alliance with national partners such as YMCA, Junior Achievement, Campfire, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and others.
- The department is a member of a five-university consortium in outdoor recreation, which meets annually in the spring at the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, Tennessee.
- Each winter, the department invites camp directors to campus for the annual Summer Camp Job Fair. Students from all majors are interviewed for summer camp employment.
- ECOEE (Environmental, Conservation, Outdoor Education Expedition) emerged in 1976 as a semester-long professional in-the-field experience. It deals with principles of leadership, conservation, camping, wilderness trip leadership, adventure education, and outdoor education.
- Each spring, the department sponsors the Professional Development Conference during which alumni of the department return and present seminars on topics that are purposeful for young professionals.
- The RPTA department also offers travel workshops, which are opportunities for students to gain additional learning, skills, and professional preparation broadly in the field. The travel workshops are scheduled throughout the year and vary with each course in terms of credit available.
- Students are required to do a 12-week internship that may occur during the fall, spring, or summer. Students research, interview, and select, along with the internship coordinator, an appropriate site. In addition to the site supervisor, each student will be assigned a faculty supervisor to work with during the internship.
- The department has a very active alumni association that supports the curriculum through presentations, visits to campus, scholarships, and investment opportunities to continue the tradition and legacy for future generations.



After College

Professional careers in recreation and leisure services offer challenging, meaningful, and highly rewarding opportunities. Whether your interests are in working with children, teens, adults, or seniors; with outdoor adventure, cultural arts, sports, or social activities; or in hospital/clinical settings, theme parks, or the military, recreation and leisure services offer job opportunities for you.

For More Information

The department welcomes visitors. Call the RPTA department chair at (309) 298-1967 or e-mail the department at rpta@wiu.edu to set up an appointment. You can also learn more about the department by visiting our website at wiu.edu/rpta.

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Currens Hall 400 • Western Illinois University
1 University Circle • Macomb, IL 61455-1390
Phone: (309) 298-1967

