

Dear alumni and friends,

As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to reach out and again express my appreciation for all you have done to support our program and Western Illinois University this year. Our department continues to provide exceptional educational opportunities for tomorrow's leisure industry leaders. We couldn't do what we do without your support.

Below you will find invitations to our Alumni and Friends Gathering in Chicago, the 2020 Summer Camp Job Fair, and the 2020 Professional Development Conference, program updates, and links to our social media accounts.

**You are cordially invited to the
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration's
Alumni & Friends Gathering!**

Friday, January 24, 2020

Visit with us at Elephant and Castle anytime between 5:30 pm and 8:30 pm

Elephant and Castle
111 W. Adams St.
Chicago, IL 60603
312.236.6656
<https://www.elephantcastle.com/home/adams/>
Program will begin around 6:15 pm

This casual event will provide opportunities for alumni and friends to engage with current faculty and students in a fun and festive environment located near the 2020 IPRA/IAPD Conference.

Because of our anticipated attendance exceeding room capacity, we're not at the Elephant and Castle on Wabash. Our event is at the Adams St. location that's located closer to public parking so that all alumni and friends can attend. Appetizers will be provided; cash bar will be available. I will provide a brief update about the state of the department and the Berousek Distinguished Alumni Award will be presented.

To make sure we have an appropriate amount of food, we'd appreciate you registering at bit.ly/RPTAChicago

**You are cordially invited to the
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration's
2020 Summer Camp Job Fair!**

The Summer Camp Job Fair will take place on Thursday, January 23, 2020 from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm in the University Union. Day and resident camps are invited to visit

campus to interact with students, including a large number from the Chicagoland area. Attending the fair provides you with a wonderful opportunity to recruit students from a wide variety of majors, and to network with fellow camp directors. Last year's attendees had the opportunity to interact with 49 camp directors and more than 250 students. We expect this year's Summer Camp Job Fair to be even larger. For more information, please contact Dr. Megan Owens at mh-owens@wiu.edu

**You are cordially invited to the
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration's
2020 Professional Development Conference!**

The conference will take place on Friday, April 3, 2020 from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm. Immediately following, RPTA will host its annual departmental awards celebration.

Throughout this academic year, we have made it our goal to celebrate the partnerships that have made RPTA successful. At this year's PDC, we will be celebrating the merger of RPTA and Hospitality Management and the tremendous impact that our alumni and friends have in mentoring and providing professional guidance for current students.

As part of our celebration and recognition of alumni and friends, we are requesting presentation submissions from qualified speakers interested in sharing their knowledge with students. We are excited to announce that WIU Interim President Martin Abraham will be our keynote speaker. This year nine, 45-minute sessions will be selected. Presentations can be delivered through traditional face-to-face format, or live streamed.

For the last two years, we have hosted a mini-career fair during our Professional Development Conference. We invited agencies affiliated with our disciplines to present materials and engage with students throughout the conference. The agencies set up before the conference began and then engaged with students during registration and at the conclusion of the conference. It was a wonderful success and we'd like to open it up to more agencies this year.

If you are interested in presenting and/or participating in Professional Development Conference, please complete the registration form found at bit.ly/RPTAPDC

Program Updates & Social Media Links

In my last email, I shared with you that we were focusing on recruitment, retention, and curriculum this year. Our faculty have reviewed our undergraduate curriculum and will be proposing significant changes to both the Hospitality Management and Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration majors in the spring. We will also be proposing changes to the Event Planning and Management, Hospitality Management, and Therapeutic Recreation minors.

These proposed changes provide students with more hands-on learning and professional development opportunities. Learning centers have been created in our department where students can gather to work with faculty, and we have hosted monthly events for students to engage with the department outside of the classroom. We have actively participated in recruitment events coordinated by campus and have participated in events like CareerSpark in Peoria. We have secured additional external graduate assistantships, and continue to work with industry leaders to develop internship opportunities for our students. It has been a good semester for RPTA.

I want to make you aware that WIU is offering many new scholarships for incoming students. In addition to the Legacy Scholarship and Commitment Scholarships, WIU is now offering a Leatherneck Visitor Scholarship that gives incoming (accepted) freshmen and transfers a one-time \$1,000 award if they attend an on-campus WIU Undergraduate Admissions event, such as Discover Western, daily campus tour, Welcome Wednesday or Experience Western program. Our RPTA Professional Development Conference scheduled for Friday, April 3, 2020 will be one of these activities. For more information on the scholarship options, please visit http://www.wiu.edu/news/newsrelease.php?release_id=16730

We would certainly appreciate your help in promoting our programs on social media. Please consider following us and sharing information about our program. Every share helps us reach more students.

RPTA Social Media

Webpage - <http://www.wiu.edu/coehs/rpta/>

Facebook - WIU Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration @rpta.wiu

Instagram - WIURPTA - #wiurpta

Again, thank you for all you have done and continue to do for the department and our students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mike



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