CSULB Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies Receives Academic Accreditation

The National Recreation and Parks Association's Council on Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) conferred Academic Accreditation with Commendation on CSULB's Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies on October 7, 2013 in Houston, Texas. In its report, the Council said, "the department has demonstrated its commitment to the park, recreation, tourism and related professions by complying with a body of standards deemed essential to a quality curriculum and learning environment, and having met or exceeded stated criteria of educational quality."

The CSULB Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies has been accredited for over 30 years and is one of 12 distinct departments in the College of Health and Human Services. Established in 1965, by Dr. David Gray, the department has been in existence for 47 years serving undergraduate and graduate populations. The department offers, both a B.A. in Recreation and a B.A. in Recreation with an option in Recreation Therapy, in addition to an M.S. in Recreation Administration.

In tandem with the accreditation, a 2012-13 Self-Study Report was developed and prepared with input from faculty, staff, alumni, and students of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. The process provided an opportunity for all members of the Department to thoroughly assess their efforts in providing quality professional education to CSULB students. The report is a formal component of an ongoing review of programs and services that the Department completes yearly to ensure compliance with the Council on Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions standards and with the guidelines set forth in program review by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

The purpose of the Self-Study and visit is for reaccreditation of the general baccalaureate and the Therapeutic Recreation curricula. The report was based on Accreditation Self-Study reports prepared by two previous department chairs. Dr. Michael Blazey served as lead author of the 1996 and 2002 reports, and Dr. Maridith Janssen served as lead author of the 2007 report. Developing the Accreditation Self-Study is a lengthy process that included focus groups to gather student feedback from the department’s capstone course, a departmental SWOT Analysis, and Strategic Planning Process. Dr. Janssen developed the initial draft of the Self-Study. Under the leadership of Dr. Katherine James, Department Chair and lead author, the 2013 Self-Study document was compiled, formatted and submitted to COAPRT. Throughout the process, the faculty were assisted by the Department Coordinator, Seyha Chea.

In the Spring Semester of 2013, Dr. James facilitated the site visit of the COAPRT Accreditation Team assigned to CSULB. In July 2013, she submitted the CSULB Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies' Response to COAPRT Accreditation Visitor Report. In this response, the department addressed recommended changes the site visit team indicated were partially met. Dr. James noted that in the Fall Semester 2012, the department revised the undergraduate curriculum to meet the new 7.0 standards, and created a distinct B.A. in Recreation with an option in Recreation Therapy in addition to the existing B.A. in Recreation. Drs. Melissa D’Eloia and Maridith Janssen collaborated to prepare the 7.0 standards for the Therapeutic Recreation program, which is the first program in the nation to submit Therapeutic Recreation accreditation materials under the new 2013 standards.

In September 2013, Joanne Conley, M.S. submitted an additional and final response addressing additional changes that had occurred. Drs. Keith Fulthorp and Maridith Janssen, represented the Department at the Accreditation Hearing in Houston TX in October 2013, at which time the department was awarded Reaccreditation for the general Recreation program and Accreditation for the Therapeutic Recreation Program.

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