GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  

PRLS 610 – Recreation Administration and Planning (3 credits)  
Fall 2011  

DAY/TIME: TH 7:20 – 10 pm  
LOCATION: RAC 2203  
INSTRUCTOR: Jesse Ellis  
EMAIL ADDRESS: jellis1@gmu.edu  
OFFICE LOCATION: Please email or call  
PHONE NUMBER: 703-324-5626  
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment  
FAX NUMBER: 703-803-8598  

PREREQUISITES  
None  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
Examines recreational administration concepts regarding organizational structure and operations, personnel management, financing, policy development, and public relations procedures.  

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
Students will be able to:  
1. Explain the relationship among participants, organizational management concepts, and recreational programs.  
2. Identify the variety of businesses, agencies, and institutions providing recreational programs while interpreting their financing, policies development, and public relations’ procedures.  
3. Articulate the fundamental principles and practices required of professionals managing recreational programs.  
4. Complete an in-depth investigation into and discussion of current organizations, their operations, challenges, and possible future changes in the recreation industry.  

COURSE OVERVIEW  
This course examines the challenges and demands facing managers of recreational programs. Through readings and observation students will acquire the skills to develop policy and effective personnel management, investigate public relations procedures, and secure financing. An in-depth investigation within the course will provide future managers with resources to function as professionals in the 21st century.  

ATTENDANCE AND HONOR CODE  
Students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code. You are expected to attend all class sections, actively participate in class discussions, complete in-class exercises and fulfill all assignments. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the specified date due or no credit will be given.  

REQUIRED READINGS  
There is no textbook for this class. Articles and other readings are assigned per week. Please see schedule below.
EVALUATION
This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points. (See the “Assignments” section below for descriptions.)

Class Participation: 35 points
Reaction Questions: 15 points
Assignment 1: 5 points
Assignment 2: 5 points
Paper 1: 15 points
Paper 2: 25 points

Grading Scale

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TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
Readings are to be completed prior to the class for which they are listed. You do not need to read the starred (**) articles unless you will be presenting them. All readings can be accessed through the GMU library’s e-journals or at the websites listed.

September 1: Class Overview, Vision & Mission

September 8: Organization and Management Theory

September 15: Organization and Management Theory


September 22: Strategic Planning


Be sure the read the articles before reviewing the strategic plans below.


September 29: Human Resources


October 6: Budget and Finance


Fairfax County Budget Guidance for FY2011 and FY2012. (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/)

Fairfax County’s 10 Principles of Sound Financial Management. (http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/finance/transparency/)


October 13: Budget and Finance


**October 20: Performance Management**


**October 27: Park and Facility Planning**


November 3: Partnerships
National Association of Counties. (2009). County health and county park and recreation department partnerships to create active, healthy counties. (http://www.naco.org/research/pubs/Pages/default.aspx)


November 10: Policy Development

Hall, J.L., & Jennings, E.T. (2010). Assessing the use and weight of information and evidence in U.S. state policy decisions. *Policy and Society, 29*(2), 137-147. (This journal is not available as an e-journal. You can access the article through the ScienceDirect database.)


November 17: Public Participation


November 24: No Class – Thanksgiving

December 1: Marketing


December 8: Special Topic To be Determined

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

**ASSIGMENTS**

**Class Participation**

Time in the classroom will be approximately 20 percent lecture and 80 percent discussion. The class will be a success only if everyone fully participates. In other words, read all of the assigned readings and come to class ready to discuss them. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and to challenge each other –
and me. Consider everything in the context of what it means for practice. Do all of this and you should earn a good participation grade.

**Assignments 1 and 2**
Choose one of the starred (**) articles from the list of readings above. Prepare a one-page (single spaced) review of the article, concluding with a paragraph on your thoughts regarding the article’s practical implications. Provide copies of your review to all classmates and be prepared to lead a discussion in class on the article after presenting an overview to the class. (It will help if you prepare some discussion questions to get the ball rolling.) You will do this twice over the course of the semester; you will sign up for articles to present during the first week of class.

**Reaction Questions**
Each class, turn in three questions that you have in reaction to the assigned readings. The questions should be well thought-out and include a few sentences to set the context and background for your question. Here’s an example:
Crompton claims that public recreation departments must position themselves to compete with other agencies for funding. But that seems contrary to best practice, which indicates that agencies must partner to truly achieve their intended outcomes. Could repositioning, while perhaps a smart resource development tactic, in fact have a negative impact on the community the agency is supposed to be serving?

The assignment is for three questions per week, not per reading. You can submit multiple questions per reading, and a single question could cover multiple readings.

You do not need to submit reaction questions on the weeks when you submit Assignments 1 and 2.

**Paper 1: Organizational Structure and Management**
The Town Council of Recland, USA, has just approved the creation of a new Recreation and Parks Department for the next fiscal year. As an expert in recreation administration and organizational management, you have been hired as a consultant to develop the new agency’s organizational structure. Develop an organizational chart for the new agency and discuss the reasoning behind your choices. Be sure to draw from the organizational management literature we have read and discussed. Key points you’ll want to highlight include: chain of command, division of labor, methods to incorporate elements of high performing organizations, and how the organization is structured to ensure quality services and motivated employees.

Although labor does not need to be divided by the type of service, the Town Council is mandating that the agency offer the following services:
- Land acquisition and park development;
- Park, trail, and athletic facility operations and maintenance;
- Recreation center operations, to include fitness facilities, classes for all ages, and summer camps;
- Senior centers and teen centers that focus on the specific needs of those populations;
- Services for people with disabilities;
- Sports leagues for youth and adults; and
- Other services, if it is determined they are needed.

According to the 2010 Census, Recland has a population of 25,115. The racial and ethnic composition of the population is 24.4% non-Hispanic white, 47.8% non-Hispanic black, 0.4% Native American, 3.1% Asian Indian, 6.1% other Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 0.4% non-Hispanic reporting some other
race, 3.8% reporting two or more races, and 15.5% Hispanic or Latino of any race. This contrasts with 2000, when there were 19,960 people. The 2000 racial makeup was 52.24% White, 34.50% African American, 0.38% Native American, 6.89% Asian, 0.21% Pacific Islander, 2.30% from other races, and 3.47% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 6.24% of the population.

There are 8,931 households, of which 26.7% have children under the age of 18, 33.9% are married couples living together, 13.3% have a female householder with no husband present, and 48.1% are non-families. 37.4% of all households are made up of individuals and 5.2% have someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older.

The age distribution is 22.0% under the age of 18, 8.6% from 18 to 24, 42.9% from 25 to 44, 19.7% from 45 to 64, and 6.7% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 34 years. The median income for a household in the city is $49,415, and the median income for a family is $58,552. About 4.3% of families and 6.4% of the population are below the poverty line, including 7.8% of those under age 18 and 6.4% of those age 65 or over.

A recent youth survey indicated that 3% of high school students identified themselves as members of a gang, although there have been several high-profile gang-related violent incidents in the past year. The rates of heart disease and obesity are higher in Recland than in other neighboring jurisdictions and than in the county as a whole.

If your concentration is not Recreation Administration, please see me and we can determine another type of organization to write about.

Formatting: Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, 1” margins, double-sided
Suggested length: 8 – 12 pages

Due: October 20

**Paper 2: Strategic Plan**

Develop a five-year strategic plan for the Recland Recreation and Parks Department (or the organization you wrote about in your first paper). Include the following sections:

A. **Background**
   a. Basic information on Recland
   b. Basic information on Recland Recreation and Parks

B. **Strategic Plan Initiatives**
   a. Financing and resource development
   b. Performance management as a means of improving services
   c. Citizen participation in planning and policy development
   d. Workforce development
   e. Organizational structure and management
   f. Partnerships to better serve constituents

For each initiative area, include at least three specific actions, each with an objective and a plan to measure performance. Using the readings from this semester and other sources, discuss the rationale behind your choices. Describe how actions are developed to achieve effectiveness, efficiency, equity, or some combination of the three.

Formatting: Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, 1” margins, double-sided
Suggested length: 20 – 25 pages

Due: December 17 (by email)

Some Notes About Papers:

• Remember to cite all sources using APA format. A good resource on citation formatting can be found at http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/.
• The suggested lengths are suggestions only. Turning in an eight page paper won’t count against you, in and of itself. If you can coherently and effectively make your point in that amount of space, you should earn a good grade. Likewise, if your paper is 30 pages, isn’t too verbose, and stays on topic, the length won’t affect your grade. But the suggested lengths are likely to be about right for a good paper.
• Grammar and spelling are important. Even if your paper is making a good argument, if it’s written like this, your grade will be affected. Don’t rely on spell check alone; it’s not perfect. Be sure to proofread your paper.
• If you email me a draft of your paper by Monday before the class before it’s due (i.e., 10 days before it’s due), I’ll review it and provide comments and suggestions to you at that week’s class. In my experience, students who take advantage of this opportunity rarely get less than an A on their papers.

Student Expectations

• Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

• Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

• Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].

• Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

• Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

• Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

• The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of
professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

• The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/]

• For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See http://rht.gmu.edu].

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: “Ask a Librarian” http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html