

Master of Science in Recreation and Parks Management

The Master of Science in Recreation and Parks Management (RPM) is a program designed to provide professionals who have some administrative and supervisory experience with the skills and techniques necessary to become upper-level managers in public, non-profit and commercial agencies in the parks and recreation field. Individuals with degrees in allied fields who are currently working in the parks and recreation field are encouraged to apply and will find the program professionally and personally fulfilling.

The Recreation and Parks Management curriculum has several innovative features that are designed to provide students with a quality education. The program is designed to train the next generation of leaders in the parks and recreation field, and it caters to those working in the field who are interested in advancing themselves professionally. Next, the program introduces the students to the RPM faculty in addition to seasoned upper-level practitioners in the field throughout the 10 required classes. Students may select from various templates to complete a final project that is applicable to their area of interest with a focus on providing professional advancement within their current agency and the profession as a whole. Lastly, the program is offered totally online, with the exception of a 3-day orientation prior to the start of classes to help orient the students regarding the program, provide online training, introduce students to faculty and enjoy some social interaction prior to the beginning of their educational journey!

Online Learning Approach

Throughout its 15-year history, the master's program has traditionally been offered through a weekend cohort approach in the Maryland metropolitan area. Due to the growing needs of professionals without available access to a graduate degree and the busy schedules of our students, the program has transitioned to an online format with one face-to-face orientation. There are 10 required courses that make up the 30-credit program. If a student completes all requirements, the program will take 2½ years to complete. The program is designed to accommodate professionals working in the field who desire to remain employed while completing their program. Since most students are working professionals, they are part-time students and will be expected to complete two classes each semester (spring and fall). A new cohort will begin every fall. Early admission is April 1 with the final deadline for application of June 15, pending availability in the cohort. The application must be fully complete to be considered. All applications received after the deadline will be placed on a waiting list for the pending cohort for which they originally applied. Once a cohort is full, applicants will be placed on a list for the following year.

Final (Capstone) Project

The program offers students the opportunity to select from one of five templates to complete their final Master's Project: Business Plan, Case Study, Traditional Thesis, Strategic Plan, and Program or Facility Design and Development. Each of these projects enables students to build upon and integrate their experiences into the curriculum. Also, these various approaches focus on planning, problem solving, decision making and understanding organizational structures that are characteristic of management positions for which the program is preparing students.

Mentorship Program

This program offers students the opportunity to choose a leader in the field as a mentor. The focus of the mentorship program is person-oriented rather than position-oriented, which differentiates it from an internship. Although graduate credit is awarded, completion of the mentorship program is in addition to the normal requirements for the master's degree. Students with minimal experience in the recreation and parks field may also be required to undergo a mentorship to help gain a greater understanding of the profession. Provisional students may be required to complete a mentorship.

Entrance Requirements

Completion of the baccalaureate degree at a regionally accredited institution of higher education with an undergraduate cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and proper undergraduate preparation for study are required for entrance to the program. Provisional status can be granted to students with less than a 3.0 on a case-by-case basis. Students having completed 15 or more graduate credits may use their graduate GPA in lieu of the undergraduate GPA. In addition to the general admission requirements, students are required to meet the criteria listed below. If any deficiency courses are required, they will be assigned by the coordinator upon entry into the program.

A. Professional Experience

The program is designed for professionals with experience in the parks and recreation field. Generally, there are three avenues of entry into the program.

1. Students should have the equivalent of 3 year's experience in the recreation and parks field.
2. Students with a minimum of 3 year's professional experience in allied fields who are interested in making a career shift may also apply. A field experience, mentorship and/or deficiency courses may be required of these students.
3. Although the program is designed for professionals working in the field, a limited number of recent graduates from baccalaureate programs may be admitted based on the combination of professional experiences, volunteerism and extra-curricular involvement of the applicant and on the composition of the students currently in the program.

Coordinator:

Dr. Maureen Dougherty
Department of Recreation and Parks
Management
443-840-4603 or 301.371.6886
mdougherty@frostburg.edu

B. Recommendations

Three letters of recommendation are required reflecting the student's professional and academic background.

C. Career Goals

The applicant needs to include a statement of career goals and how the master's degree program relates to these goals.

D. Resume

The applicant is required to submit a current resume or professional vita.

E. Official Transcript(s)

Students should submit an official sealed copy of all prior transcripts that contributed to the completion of the bachelor's degree as well as any graduate-level coursework previously taken.

F. Completed FSU Graduate Program Application

Students will need to complete the Graduate Program Application available through www.frostburg.edu/grad.

G. Technology Verification Form

Students will need to complete the technology verification form as part of the online supplemental application process to determine appropriate level of technology awareness and experience in addition to verification of access to computer, high-speed connection and available computer software.

H. On-site Orientation

Students are encouraged to attend a 3-day orientation at FSU's main campus prior to the start of the new cohort. This orientation will typically take place the first Thursday-Saturday of August. Students will make their own travel arrangements but a lodging and meals package will be offered. Students will also be encouraged to return to campus the day prior to their graduation to present their final projects to the campus community. Although this is encouraged, it is not a requirement of the program.

Program Description

The program consists of 10 courses requiring 30 credit hours. The program is divided into four blocks: foundations, resource management, administration and research. A fifth block, supplemental courses, includes deficiency courses (e.g., Field Experience) and courses that are not required toward the completion of the degree but enhance the student's program (e.g., Mentorship Program).

Foundations (3 credits)

RECR 611 Concepts and Foundations of Leisure

Planning & Management of Natural Resources (3 credits)

RECR 641 Management, Conservation and Protection of Open Space Resources

Administration (15 credits)

RECR 651 Organizational Behavior and Leadership in RPM

RECR 652 Fiscal Management in RPM

RECR 653 Communications and Organizational Decision Making in RPM

RECR 654 Developing Promotional Information Systems in RPM

RECR 655 Current Management Issues in RPM

Research (9 credits)

RECR 681 Research Methods and Evaluation in RPM

RECR 683 Thesis Preparation

RECR 700 Research Project or Thesis (3 credits)

Supplemental Courses

RECR 593 Field Experience in RPM (3-6 credits)

RECR 694 Mentorship Program in RPM (3-6 credits)

RECR 699 Individual Research in RPM (3-6 credits)

Minimum credit hours: 30