

Langara Recreation Studies Applied Research Project Proposal

The focus of this project is to determine why people choose a career in Recreation and how to promote Recreation as a chosen career versus a path to a different career. BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) will be the partnering organization in this project.

Background and Rationale

In comparison to more established fields such as Education, Medical, Engineering or Protective Services, Recreation and Leisure Services is a relatively new field of study and career of choice. It is perhaps due to this relative newness of organized Recreation that prevents people from seriously considering Recreation as a life-long career.

Many people are unaware of the opportunities that exist in choosing a career in Recreation. The idea of choosing Recreation as a field of study and career of choice is often not considered; rather many people work in Recreation as a means to support themselves while they are pursuing other professions.

In BC, organized Recreation and Leisure Services has only been available to the public since the 1930's when it was introduced as a new concept to keep idle youth busy. Formal training for Recreation Professionals in BC started in the mid-1960s with Langara College having one of the longest standing programs for Recreation accreditation (History of BC Recreation and Parks / The Role of BCRPA, 2018). Yet currently, post-secondary institutions that offer Recreation Education in the form of diplomas or degrees are struggling to increase enrolment.

This applied research project provides an opportunity for the researcher to determine why people choose a career in Recreation, the types of jobs Recreation professionals hold, the salary range of various Recreation positions in profit, non-profit and public Recreation organizations and the benefits of working in the Recreation field. The outcomes of this research will provide BCRPA with a foundation to develop a section of their website that informs people who are not familiar with Recreation careers, rationale for choosing a career in Recreation. The outcomes will also be valuable to Langara Recreation Department's Program marketing strategy.

Description of Proposed Project

Working with BCRPA, the researcher will:

- Explore, through primary research, the reasons and rationale of why people in various Recreation streams; profit, non-profit and public and at various levels within the organizations chose pursue careers in Recreation.
- Complete a Literature Review of scholarly research
- Do an environmental scan of what internet language is saying about recreation as a career, including what sites are promoting this.
- Investigate the salary ranges of various Recreation full-time positions (entry level, supervisory level and administrative level)
- Determine the benefits of a full-time career in the Recreation field.
- Develop a list of recreation education institutions in BC and their respective focus.

Connection to Langara College Academic Plan, Strategic Plan, Vision, Mission and Values

This project connects strongly to the Langara College Academic Plan and Strategic Plan as well as the values of the college in significant ways:

Academic Plan Priority Two - Student support – This research will provide support for students in their educational goals. Students that are unfamiliar with the Recreation sector will gain specific information about opportunities for practicums, co-ops, volunteer and paid jobs. This will lead to creating new student pathways into the Recreation job market.

Academic Plan Priority Four – International initiatives. Organized Recreation is viewed differently in various parts of the world, as such, a Recreation career is not often seriously considered. This is supported by the fact that the Recreation Studies Department has a proportionally lower international student enrollment than other departments within Langara College. As a result of this research, international students may consider a career in Recreation a worthy career choice.

Academic Plan Priority Five – Environmental, financial and social sustainability. There is a strong element of ‘cross-disciplinary’ intention in this proposal, working with the BC Recreation and Parks Association and building relationships with profit, non-profit and public Recreation organizations. This project will build connections with the professionals in the recreation field, engage alumni, existing and retired faculty and provide applied research in a tangible way to the community and to the Recreation sector.

Langara Strategic Priority – People and Culture. This project serves to expand Langara’s profile with key stakeholders in the profit, non-profit and public Recreation sector. It creates a valuable connection for the Langara College Recreation Studies Department to the Recreation field and expands the profile of the faculty and program.

Langara Strategic Priority – Communities. This project will consult with Langara Recreation Alumni, industry leaders and pioneers to provide learning opportunities to the wider community about the benefits of choosing a full-time career in Recreation.

Langara Strategic Priority - Relevant and Innovative. This applied research project will address the evolving needs of potential and existing Recreation students, BCRPA and other partner institutions, and the Recreation Studies Department faculty.

This project provides 80-100 hours of researcher work in this area.

Deliverables

Provide a report outlining the reasons and rationale of why people choose a full-time career in Recreation, the benefits of choosing a full-time career in the Recreation field and the salary ranges of various jobs in profit, non-profit and public Recreation organizations. The report will also include a list of Recreation Education institutions in BC and their respective focus.

Proposed Researcher

It is recommended that this project is completed by Langara Recreation Studies faculty; Joanne Edey-Nicoll.

Timeline

It is proposed that the Applied Research project begin in the Summer 2018 and be completed by December 31, 2018 – Specific timeline of the research will be coordinated with BC Recreation and Parks Association.

Benefits to BCRPA and the Recreation Field in BC

The research could be utilized to inform people outside the field of recreation about the benefits and opportunities of working in the Recreation sector.

BCRPA

The report could be used by BCRPA to promote Recreation as a full-time career choice. Possible applications could include:

- A link could be placed on the BCRPA website that anyone interested in a career in Recreation could explore to find out what it is like to work in profit, not for profit and community recreation.
- Based on the results of this project, a series of inspiring videos about the purpose and possibilities of a career in Recreation, similar to the ones that Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture did (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyWTal2HEXE>) could be used by BCRPA and Recreation Educational institutions to promote their programs, and for training purposes in Recreation organizations.
- Based on the results of this project, a series of inspiring posters produced by BCRPA/Recreation Facilities Association of BC and financially supported by the Recreation Foundation of BC that could be made available to Recreation Departments throughout the province to post in their Recreation facilities highlighting the benefits of a career in Recreation – with the target audience being auxiliary staff and participants in Recreation programs and services.
- A BCRPA/Langara team could present the findings at Symposium 2019 May 1-3.

Langara Recreation Studies

- Based on the findings of the research, Langara Recreation Department could enhance their marketing plan for the Recreation Leadership Diploma and the Bachelor of Recreation Management Degree.
- Potential students will have the opportunity to gain a clear understanding of the opportunities and possibilities of a career in Recreation. Existing students will be able to access information about potential career choices, and further Recreation education opportunities.

This proposal was created in collaboration with the BCRPA Chief Executive Officer, Rebecca Tunnacliffe, rtunnacliffe@bcrrpa.bc.ca. A letter of support is included with this Applied Research Proposal.

This proposal is submitted by Joanne Edey-Nicoll, Recreation Studies Faculty, June 27, 2018.