Welcome from the Department Head
It is hard to believe that it is already May. Spring has sprung in recent months, and we take this opportunity to share the news. There continue to be many exciting happenings in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. The department will see more than 80 students graduating with their Bachelor of Science degree this May and 8 graduating with Masters or Doctoral degrees. (Continued on next page...)
(Continued from page 1)

Shortly after graduation we have Maymester field courses in Camp Administration and Destination Management starting, and our South Pacific Study Abroad Program in Fiji and Australia will also be getting underway. We have a number of courses regularly taught in the summer, and many of our students will be engaged in internships around the state and nation. Graduate students will be far flung, pursuing research activities for thesis and dissertation work. An exciting activity coming in September is our Former Student Tailgate. We hope that former students from around the state, nation, and world will come back to Aggieland for the weekend of September 30th, 2017 to enjoy each other’s company, catch up on our department, and enjoy Texas A&M football.

That was news as we look ahead to summer and fall, but this newsletter mostly looks at what has been happening this spring. You will read about recent accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff. You will read about events that we have been involved in and get an in depth look at two of our students who exemplify what it means to be a part of the Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences family. Some have even offered words of wisdom for graduating seniors and all of our students to ponder.

In a few places on these pages we ask for your support. This is a great department with many wonderful student opportunities and we want to do even more. Your financial support helps students travel to conferences, pay tuition and participate in field courses, service learning projects and research opportunities to name a few. There are also ways to support the department by providing internship opportunities, serving on advisory committees, hosting field trips, and other options.

We hope you enjoy reading a bit about the department and those who make it a great place to work and learn. May you all have a chance to practice some of what we preach. Enjoy some time for travel, relaxation, exercise, family, friends, exploration, education, culture, art, solitude, reflection, and a myriad of other joys in life. Have a wonderful summer, and take some time to re-create!

Scott Shafer ’80
Department Head
Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Congratulations to Dr. Gary Ellis, Allen Taggart, Dr. Jill Martz, Toby Lepley, and Dr. Tazim Jamal, whose article titled, “Monitoring structured experiences during youth programs: development of brief measures of perceived value and engagement” is published in the latest edition of the *Journal of Youth Development* (vol. 11, number 3).

Congratulations to Dr. Jim Petrick and Dr. Angela Durko as their research on how travel can influence personal relationships was recently picked up by the PBS entity Rewire.

Drew Cavin (former RPTS student) and Dr. David Scott’s work was recently cited in a piece about Acadia National Park and President Obama’s call for more racial and ethnic diversity in our national park system.

Dr. Svitlana Ramer was one of 16 speakers to be featured at TEDxTAMU. TEDx was an independent organized TED event held on Campus this semester.
Congratulations to Steven Migacz, Suiwen (Sharon) Zou, and Dr. Jim Petrick for their article “The ‘Terminal’ Effects of Service Failure on Airlines: Examining Service Recovery with Justice Theory.” This article is currently on-line in the Journal of Travel Research.

Ron Kaiser recently entered into a contract with College Station to continue work that examines issues related to lawn irrigation. Among other services, web based information will be provided to residents about rainfall amounts specific to their neighborhoods with recommendations for irrigation based on those data. This service and other parts of the program are geared toward helping residents and the ground water conservation district consume less water.

Congratulations to doctoral student Andrew Lacanienta who received a Graduate and Professional Student Council Spring Travel Award. These awards are sponsored by the Vice President of Research, are competitive at the university level, and aim to support the professional development and high-impact experiences of graduate students.
Departmental Accomplishments

Dr. Giselle Mora-Bourgeois who was selected as winner of the National Park Service’s 2017 Achieving Relevance through Interpretive Media and Technology Award. The award goes to a national team that created a series of waysides on phenology and climate change across nine national parks.

Congratulations to Mr. Kurt Podeszwa and Camp for All who have received a prestigious national award for excellence at the American Camp Association’s annual conference in Albuquerque. Director Podeszwa is on our Youth Development Advisory Board and has taught courses for RPTS in the past.

Congratulations to Ms. Annie McGinnis and Ms. Betsy McGee who have both been honored by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as Senior Merit Award winners. Senior Merit Awards provide annual recognition of the top undergraduate students in the college.
Congratulations to Lance Jackson!

On May 12, 2017 Lance Jackson walked the stage, earning his degree in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. Jackson was a Fightin' Texas Aggie Football player for the original Wrecking Crew from 1983-1985. Lance left school in 1985 and was hired by the City of College Station’s Parks and Recreation Department. For the past 19 years Lance has worked with young people as supervisor of the Lincoln Recreation Center here in College Station. A few years ago he decided to return to school and finish the degree he started. We are proud to count Lance Jackson among our graduates in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences.
Attention RPTS Former Students!

On September 30, 2017 the RPTS Department will be hosting a tailgate party on the outdoor balcony of the Student Recreation Center! Join us this fall to reunite with classmates, catch up with professors, and BTHO the University of South Carolina!

Watch our website for more details: rpts.tamu.edu
Kite Fest is an annual event hosted by students in Texas A&M’s RPTS 321 event management course. During the semester, the students are responsible for planning, marketing, organizing, securing vendors and sponsors, and implementing the event. For this event, community members were invited to participate in an afternoon of kite flying and fun activities such as the three-legged race, a sack race, a water balloon toss, a donut eating contest, face painting, and more. This year’s event was a huge success! Thousands of members of the community turned out for the third annual kite fest, which took place on April 30 at Wolf Pen Creek Park. The event was featured on KBTX and The Eagle, and was supported by vendors such as Fungineering, Bricks4Kids, CooknGrow, and more. The students provided kite-making kits, displayed students’ artwork from local schools, provided prizes, and demonstrated their event management skills through the successful planning, organization, and implementation of this community-wide event!
Why did you choose RPTS as your major?

Jessica Burch started at Texas A&M as a Business major with a minor in RPTS. However, after one semester in which she took all RPTS classes, everything changed. She found that her RPTS professors truly cared about her and wanted her to learn. They quickly learned her name and were eager to invest in her education. She also found that she loved the experiences RPTS had to offer and the future career options more closely aligned with what she wanted to do. When she transferred to RPTS, she felt as though she had found her home. She now has an emphasis in Community Recreation and Park Administration and is also pursuing her Event Management Certificate.

What has been your favorite class at A&M?

Although it was a difficult decision, Jessica asserted that her favorite class was RPTS 320, Event Management and Operations. Through this class, she was able to gain hands on experience planning an actual event for a real client. She enjoyed getting to collaborate with fellow students and professionals, utilizing her creativity, presenting the material to the class and her client, and overall gaining hands on experience that had valuable “real world” application.
What is the best advice you’ve received about college life?
Jessica said that the best advice she had received during college was to “Take in as much information as you can from every source and apply it to your life.” She has learned that you can never take information for granted. She explained that there is an abundance of people around us that we can learn from, and although not everything will be relevant, we must glean the lessons that are applicable to make the most of our education and experiences.

What piece of advice would you give to future RPTS students?
Jessica recommended that future students “get involved, get experience, and talk to professors.” She stated that college is such a unique time to develop your education and gain experience. College offers a wealth of resources that should not be taken for granted. She also emphasized that professors are especially important. They want to help you and invest in you to help you be successful in your future career. She encouraged all students to get to know their professors and take advantage of the unique resources surrounding them at college.

What were some of the valuable lessons you have learned or experiences you have gained through your classes?
Through her classes, Jessica explained that she has been able to “learn by doing.” She has gotten hands on experience in planning programs, implementing events, and working with professionals. Through the RPTS Department, she has been able to attend several conferences in which she has been able to interact with professionals and see how class concepts look in the real world. She has also been able to implement program plans created within her classes at the city recreation center in her hometown.
What experience have you gained in the RPTS field?

Jessica has been able to acquire a wide range of experience during her time as a student. She is about to begin her fifth summer as the Special Events Supervisor for the waterpark in her hometown. She has also completed a six-month internship with Disney where she worked with their waterpark, Typhoon Lagoon. Through this internship she learned many valuable skills such as customer service and event management. During her time in Florida, Jessica was also able to take classes at Disney University. In addition to her experience with waterparks, she has also worked with the city recreation center in her hometown. At the recreation center, she has helped run the afterschool program, refereed sports, and coached some of the city leagues. In her spare time, she enjoys helping the city manage their city-wide events.

What is your future career direction?

Jessica would like to work with an event management company in the future. She enjoys planning events for corporations and would like to pursue this path. She has been considering working for Capital One, an American bank which sponsors many national events and competitions in addition to hosting conferences and sales rallies. She hopes to either work with Capital One or a corporation that offers similar experiences when she graduates.
Advice from the Faculty

“Students need to gain RPTS related experience, paid or volunteer, during their time at Texas A & M and do not forget to document these experiences on their resume.”
- Mr. Rick Harwell

“Always have a plan...have a goal, know the steps you need to undertake to achieve the goal, and what you need to do to achieve each step....Be methodical, purposeful and deliberate. Own the plan and own the outcome. Getting what you want in life is hard work...but all is achievable with a well developed and executed plan.”
- Dr. Peter Witt

“Sacrifice now, enjoy later.”
- Dr. David Matarrita Cascante

Dr. Matarrita Cascante advised students to make sacrifices and build a strong CV now so that they could enjoy a good academic job in the future.

“The only things worth learning are the things you learn after you know it all.” - Harry S. Truman
- From Dr. David Scott

To Graduating Seniors:
“...You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary.
And I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge,
And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge,
And all knowledge is vain save when there is work,
And all work is empty save when there is love;
And when you work with love, you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.
...
Work is love made visible.
And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.
For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man’s hunger.
And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine.
And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man’s ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.” — Kahlil Gibran
- From Dr. Gary Ellis

From Dr. Gary Ellis

“The only things worth learning are the things you learn after you know it all.” - Harry S. Truman
- From Dr. David Scott
“Show up and be nice. Do this and you’re golden.”

-Dr. Scott Shafer

“Words of wisdom:
- Be true to yourself
- Love what you do and do what you love
- Be open to new possibilities
- Never stop learning
- Find a mentor and mentor others
- Actively participate in professional organizations
- Find balance
- Choose your battles
- Trust your intuition
- Be a leader and not a follower
- Listen more than you talk
- Find humor—don’t take yourself too seriously”

-Dr. Jill Martz

“Find the time to enjoy your country. Travel, learn, enjoy. Understand your natural heritage, your cultural heritage, and your personal place in all of it.”

-Dr. James Gramann

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

-Maya Angelou

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

-From Mrs. Debe Shafer

“IN SOLIDARITY AND LEARNING
It’s an honor to be working with our RPTS students
Our knowledge and lives are enriched as we learn from you, too.
RPTS 426 students this spring are reaching out to diverse students and resident groups
Joining in solidarity to celebrate our common humanity
Recognizing that we share our campus and this land
With diverse species and ethnicities
Sometimes we have to reach and extend beyond our comfort zone
To see the world from the eyes of another, understand their fears and their joys
But as ambassadors of RPTS, such is the promise of peace, tolerance and cross-cultural understanding through travel and tourism.”

-Dr. Tazim Jamal
What is your area of study?
Andrew Lacanienta is an RPTS graduate student pursuing his PhD in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M. He has concentrated his area of study on experience design. This area of study has led him to explore recreation and leisure experiences and focuses on creating more memorable experiences in a broad variety of fields. In the past, he has studied experiences as they related to work settings, as well as experience in relation to families and youth development. He is currently expanding his research interests to include experiences related to live action role play.

Why did you choose the RPTS department at Texas A&M?
Andrew attended Brigham Young University (BYU) in Utah where he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Experience Industry Management and a Masters in Youth and Family Recreation. During his time at BYU, he attended several Experience Industry Management Conferences where he was introduced to Dr. Ellis, a professor from Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M. Andrew's advisor, Matt Durden, recommended that he apply to the RPTS Department at Texas A&M. Like Andrew, Dr. Ellis also had an interest in experience design, and because of Andrew's focus in this area, RPTS at Texas A&M became his new home.
How have you gotten involved at Texas A&M?

While at Texas A&M, Andrew has gotten involved in many areas. He currently teaches RPTS 201, “The Foundations of Recreation, Park and Tourism,” which he enjoys immensely. He also works with the RPTS Aggie Reps, a student organization that represents the RPTS Department at a variety of events and conferences. In addition, Andrew provides consulting services to undergraduate students on how to improve experiences in different situations and settings. He has attended many conferences in which he has given presentations on his area of study, and he is currently working with Dr. Ellis to research different aspects of experience design.

What are some lessons you have learned at Texas A&M that will help you in your future career?

One of the biggest lessons that Andrew mentioned was that “balance is key.” He described how there needs to be a separation between home life and work in order to avoid exhaustion and burn out. To maintain this balance, Andrew is intentional about including leisure time in his schedule. He bikes to work and schedules times to go rock climbing during the week. He also leaves his computer at work, which forces him to focus on other things when he is home. This allows him to be refreshed on both ends and gives him better focus.

Another lesson Andrew has learned is the importance of giving back to those who have invested in you. He discussed how so many individuals in the department had invested time and effort into his education and he has learned how important it is to invest his own time in giving back to the department and the surrounding community.

Finally, Andrew discussed how he has learned that stress is what you make of it. Stress is a choice, and it should not govern everything you do. By prioritizing, staying on top of things, and taking everything one step at a time, stress can be avoided and will not be enabled to rule your life.
Where do you see yourself going in your future career?

From the beginning, Andrew has had a desire to teach. He enjoys working with students and would like to become a professor, mentor students, and possibly even provide consultation services for businesses on how they can improve customer experiences.

Upon graduation, he would like to return to BYU and teach in their Department of Experience Design and Management because their curriculum so closely aligns with his area of study. He also has family ties to the area and would like to return upon completion of his PhD. However, he is keeping his options open and will consider his opportunities when the time comes.

Do you have any advice for future students?

Andrew’s advice for undergraduate students was to explore. He suggested taking a variety of classes to get a feel for what one’s interests are and what one likes to do. He also emphasized the importance of talking to a wide variety of people in one’s area of interest to determine what they actually do on the job and if their career sounds like a good fit.

For graduate students, Andrew recommended treating the degree like a job. He suggested working like the degree was an eight to five job and then returning home and leaving work at the office to maintain the balance between home life and work life.

For all students, Andrew emphasized the importance of sharing your skills and talents with others. Share what you know and what you are good at to encourage others and support them as they pursue their goals. Who knows? Perhaps they will one day do the same for you.
We invite you to learn more about giving to the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. The give now icon below links you to an opportunity to support RPTS. Wherever you choose to direct your gift, it will have a lasting impact on our department.

Through your gifts, you can be a fellow “educator,” helping us to maintain and enhance the outstanding quality of the Department’s faculty, students, and programs.

Activate the GIVE ONLINE button below to make a donation. You may give to support students through an enrichment fund. You may also support faculty and staff enrichment. These enrichment funds support either students or faculty and staff with travel to conferences, small research grants, educational enhancement, or professional development of different types. You can see more detail on the following pages.

For more information about giving including details about contributing to specific scholarships, please contact Dr. Scott Shafer, Department Head, Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, at sshafer@tamu.edu or call 979.845.7324.
Click the *Give Online button* on the previous page (or [here](#)) to support RPTS students, faculty, and staff. On the Foundation webpage, the drop down menu will provide the two options described below.

**Student Enrichment**— Giving to our student enrichment fund will support student participation in conferences, domestic and international field courses, thesis or dissertation research, scholarships, and other opportunities to enhance student education. If you would like to give to an existing scholarship account, please contact Scott Shafer (sshafer@tamu.edu; 979-845-3837) in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences.

**Faculty and Staff Enrichment**— Giving supports faculty and staff through professional development, continuing education, conference participation, research grants, and other opportunities to excel in their work.
Mission

We enhance individual and social well-being and environmental and economic sustainability by generating and disseminating knowledge about the management and development of recreation, park, community, and tourism resources.

Vision

Our mission is achieved through undergraduate and graduate education, outreach, and research that integrate social science and natural resource management disciplines. We strive to understand and respond to the global and local implications of recreation, parks, tourism, and natural resource dimensions of diverse and changing societies. We endeavor to conduct an effective mix of theoretical and applied research, and liberal and professional education that prepares society-ready graduates and provides responsive service and outreach that meets the needs of our constituents.

Core Values

We believe that our education, scientific research, and outreach programs contribute to the expansion of knowledge and to the enhancement of the quality of life. We believe that our primary responsibility is to the people of Texas; we believe that our contributions to the State of Texas will be enhanced by scholarly activities at the national and international levels. We value the contributions that parks, recreation, community development, and tourism can make to the health of communities. We believe in preparing society-ready graduates, with a solid educational foundation that includes experiential and liberal education, and development of skills for career employment and lifelong learning. We believe that the process of education is a collaborative learning experience, and students, faculty, practitioners, and professionals from other fields are participants in this process. We recognize the growing demographic and geographic diversity of Texas and the United States; the value of diversity in thoughts and ideas among the faculty, staff, and students; and the opportunities presented by an international border. We recognize the value of human diversity and interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, research, and extension, and affirm the individual strengths that people bring to the Department. We are committed to the contributions of recreation, parks, community development, and tourism make to the sustainability and stewardship of cultural, historical, and natural resources. We are committed to the concepts of social and environmental justice. We value scholarship that is validated by peers and external audiences; and we believe that scholarship can be expressed through teaching, research, and extension.
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