

Rethinking Philosophy of Leisure: A Proposal for Including More Humanism in the Curriculum

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Abstract

This paper argues that recreation and leisure studies curricula too often fail to provide students with adequate knowledge to understand, critically analyze, and discuss leisure. By studying leisure from a humanist perspective—specifically philosophy, history, and literature—educators can respond to this problem. In so doing, educators will be able to further clarify what is unique about a recreation and leisure studies graduate, agree on the content of the core body of knowledge, and move the profession towards a resolution of the unique role that recreation and leisure play in society.

Keywords: humanism, curriculum, leisure, core, profession

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It is arguable that recreation and leisure studies undergraduate curricula too often fail to give our students adequate tools—philosophy, history, literature—to understand, critically discuss, and apply concepts of leisure. If this argument is correct, why is this possible failure important? Some have argued that a student's understanding of leisure is the foundation upon which all professional recreation work—therapeutic, community, commercial, resource management, and others—is based (Burton, 1991; Howe, 1986; Goodale, 1992, 1995b, 1999; Parr, 1999; Riggins, Sylvester, & Moore, 1985; Sapura, 1986).¹ The content of the core curriculum helps both to define the uniqueness of the recreation profession and to indicate what is essential about the profession (Sessoms,

¹ Just as important to the university-based recreation and leisure studies (RLS) department, a curriculum designed toward the goal of having students learn about leisure has the desirable effect of making RLS units central to the mission of the higher education institution—assuming, of course, that being liberally educated remains a primary mission of the university. See Hemingway (1987) for a discussion on the universal nature of the leisure experience and the role of leisure studies in the university.

1990). Consequently, a poor understanding of leisure on the part of a student makes for a less effective professional, and eventually a less effective profession.

The failure of students in recreation and leisure studies to understand, critically analyze, and discuss leisure arguably leads to one or all of the following outcomes: (a) students inability to clearly describe leisure and explain implications of their views for practice and the profession, (b) professional disagreement about what makes a recreation and leisure studies graduate distinguishable from graduates of other disciplines, (c) a lack of clarity about the purpose of the profession, and (d) a lack of agreement among recreation and leisure studies scholars about the core body of knowledge upon which the undergraduate curricula is based.

Sessoms (1990) charged recreation and parks educators with the challenge of resolving some of the uncertainty about the profession. There has been substantive discussion of this issue and a number of good suggestions made (Burton, 1991; Butts, 1992; Fox & Warren, 1990; Goodale, 1992, 1995a; Hemingway, 1993; Howe, 1986; Lahey, 1991; McDonald, 1986; Rancourt, 1986; Riggins, Sylvester et al., 1985; Sapura, 1986; Sessoms, 1995). But it would appear that the above issues have not yet been resolved as judged by recent SPREnet discussions and audience discourse at the 1999 Leisure Research Symposium (Audience comments, 1999; Neipoth, 1997). It is also arguable that these issues can be resolved, and I propose that continuing to advocate for the inclusion of a humanistic disciplines in the undergraduate recreation and leisure studies curriculum—specifically philosophy, history, and literature—will assist students in understanding leisure, further clarify what is unique about a recreation and leisure studies graduate, and move the profession towards agreement on the content of the core body of knowledge, and a resolution of the unique role that recreation and leisure play in society.

It is important to clarify what is meant by humanism and why it can achieve the ends set forth. Lahey (1991) described the major humanistic disciplines as history, philosophy, religion, and literature. She indicated that history and philosophy are the most typical disciplines used in the humanistic exploration of leisure. Religion and literature are also useful. "Humanism" is derived from humanitas, Italian for the education of man as human. It is also derived from what the Greeks called paideia, the education favored by those who considered the liberal arts to be instruments, or disciplines, proper to man which differentiate him from the other animals (Edwards, 1967). Humanists held that the spirit of humans, a spirit of freedom that provides justification for the human claim of rational autonomy, could be understood through the humanities—poetry, rhetoric, history, ethics, and politics. It was believed "that these disciplines alone educate man as such and put him in a position effectively to exercise his freedom" (Edwards, 1967, p. 70). And freedom is the essence of leisure. Leisure is derived from the Latin licere, meaning license or freedom. Consequently, one must have the intellectual tools to understand freedom and leisure, and these tools can be discovered through a humanistic study of recreation and leisure.

What is proposed is that students of recreation and leisure studies need to understand leisure and its association with human potential, and not just as free time or individual license, but also as a state of mind. Leisure is a lifestyle productive of the values associated with freedom: in short, life activity that is productive of self, community, and liberty.² It is this understanding that will inform the student of recreation and leisure studies as advocate, practitioner, and citizen.

Student Understanding of Leisure

Comments from discussion at the opening session of the 1999 Leisure Research Symposium provided evidence of difficulties students have in describing leisure. Parr (1999) noted in her commentary that her students described leisure as "relaxation," "disengagement," or "no worries." Students, in their lack of ability to defend one position as better than another, often concluded that "leisure is different for everyone." Anecdotally, faculty reported that students in introductory and senior capstone philosophy classes used similar definitions to Parr's. From this perspective, leisure was "free time," anything individuals freely chooses to do in their "free time," or "having choice." Fox and Warren (1990) indicated that the view of leisure as "opposed to work" and the association of leisure with recreation activity were popular among students. These student definitions of leisure, it should be noted, have their own sort of merit. However, these are not the only definitions of leisure, and critical to the recreation and leisure profession, these definitions fail to describe any of the potential value that can be achieved through a substantive engagement of leisure.³

However, the difficulty that students' have understanding leisure is not just one of definition, but also one of resistance by the students who do not advocate for or discuss their positions. These students argue for a sort of recreation and leisure relativism where "My concept of leisure is as good as yours, and yours is as good as mine." A personal anecdote illustrates this from the student perspective.

Recently I participated in an undergraduate honors-level introduction to philosophy course. It was interesting to see how most of these undergraduate students resisted debating different viewpoints—regardless of the merits of any viewpoint. My original purpose for participating in this course was to see if I could gain insights into facilitating critical discussions about leisure. After some time in the class, with bright undergraduate students representing a variety of majors, I came to two realizations regarding many undergraduate discussions: (a) students too often resist discussions that call for distinguishing between their subjective opinions and a supported position, and (b) we, as teach-

²See Hemingway (1988, 1999) for discussions of leisure, civility, and citizenship. Hemingway's *Reflections on a Greek Ideal* (1988) and *Leisure, Social Capital, and Democratic Citizenship* (1999) provide the reader with an understanding of the social potential evident from the study of leisure through the humanities.

³For discussions that illustrate a substantive engagement of leisure see Dare, Welton & Coe (1998), Goodale (1992, 1995a, 1995b), Hemingway (1988, 1999), and Rojek (1995).

ers, allow this resistance to persist when we fail to provide tools such as humanistic studies combined with critical thinking to facilitate the development of supported positions.

The pattern in the philosophy course was remarkably consistent with those in our discipline: As the philosophy teacher presented different viewpoints, and arguments for and against each one, students resisted views that disagreed with their pre-conceived opinions. At the same time they appeared unwilling to argue either for their own opinion, or against the one they found disagreeable. I came to realize that their subjective view of a right or wrong position held more importance than any of the critical points made in the text or by the instructor. In fact, not only were they unwilling to critically consider views that contrasted with their own, they sometimes became agitated when asked to do so. The professor worked consistently to overcome this resistance. In the end, what I learned from the philosophy professor was that the task of the teacher is not only to present the material of one's discipline, but also to provide the tools, and the justification for using the tools, that allow for the discussion of the material itself. Only then were the students truly engaged in learning.

For many students, an individual's subjective view is seen as "correct" for that person, as was the case in the philosophy course. No other discussion was relevant because, as the students saw it, each individual was entitled to his or her opinion. This resistance, to new or different viewpoints, put a momentary end to learning because the debate became one of whose opinion was better: student versus student or student versus teacher. This perspective is familiar in modern times, and has been described by philosophers such as MacIntyre (1984). MacIntyre argued that the answers to philosophical questions are too often derived from a philosophy of emotivism, where "This is good" means roughly the same as "I approve of this; do so as well" (p. 12).

From this anecdote one can understand how recreation and leisure studies students interpret different views of leisure. Lacking any perspective, one opinion is as good as any other, where either the political position of the proponent or the shrillness of the protest determines the standard of truth. The goal of the teacher, then, becomes one of providing students with the means by which they can discern between emotive arguments and those that are based in reason. The means to achieving this goal resides in the tools of humanism (philosophy, history, and literature) and critical thinking.

Fox and Warren (1990) propose that recreation and leisure educators need to teach critical thinking skills in order to assist students in recognizing and evaluating claims about leisure from different conceptual frameworks. They indicated that "what is sometimes difficult... is to move a student beyond a conception of leisure in terms of her/his personal values and conceptual framework toward a conception of leisure involving other, perhaps competing values and conceptual frameworks" (p. 27). Goodale (1995a) states that according to the modern conception of leisure is that "for many, the highest use and best use of wealth and freedom is laying on a beach somewhere or taking a funship cruise. But as Paul Goodman (1960, cited in Goodale, 1995a) noted decades ago, mil-

lions of individuals having a good time doesn't add up to anything" (p. 107). Goodale then asks the crucial question: Once we are rested, then what do we do?

Teachers need to enable students to answer this type of question using humanistic studies and critical thinking as tools. Critical thinking skills are crucial to the teaching *about leisure in four respects*. They empower students to: (a) think critically about the nature and practice of leisure, (b) move beyond their modern conceptual frameworks (e.g. leisure as free time and individual benefit) to alternative conceptual frameworks (e.g. leisure as personal engagement or community activity), (c) examine potentially problematic assumptions made about leisure in the literature, and (d) reflect on the implications different views of leisure have for human potential and practice (Fox & Warren, 1990).

So why is the humanistic perspective so important for enabling students to engage in substantive discussion of leisure? I argue that one reason students resist discourse is because they lack the tools (the perspective granted by humanistic studies) as well as a sense of connection between leisure theory and practice. The challenge of articulating a personal leisure philosophy is beyond the capability of one who has not been trained to think critically about the field from a humanistic perspective. Lacking language, understanding, and a sense of historical perspective, students can not develop a personal leisure philosophy that can be critically discussed.

When students lack a sense of other views of leisure developed through a discussion of various cultures and philosophical systems throughout recorded history, all questions come to be phrased in the highly subjective sense of self. Goodale (1992) noted that "it is impossible to teach social responsibility without teaching history and philosophy; because the casual why of positivist science should not preclude also pursuing the purposeful why of our lives" (p. 85).

When the humanistic perspective is lacking, students often think of personal leisure philosophy in highly subjective terms: "What is leisure to me, and what, in my opinion, and experience, should leisure be?" The student's subjective exploration of what the professor has called personal leisure philosophy lacks framework outside his or her subjective experience, and the student has little basis for critical consideration and discourse about different perspectives. Hence questions about the value of leisure such as, "What is the good life?", "What is the role of leisure and recreation in the good life?", and "What is the role of the leisure and recreation professional in helping others lead the good life?" are only answered from the student's subjective point of view.

With a limited worldview (the view that exists in the absence of humanistic perspectives) it is not surprising that students often arrive at the answer, "What is right for me is right for me, and what is right for you is right for you." Lacking the tools of humanism and critical thinking, the discussion ends at this point because an impasse, where one person's opinion is compared to another person's opinion, has been reached.

There is no framework outside of the individual's subjective experience upon which to base a critical discussion. But given the tools of humanistic studies and critical thinking, the discussion becomes one rich in perspectives such as human potential, freedom, action, individual, community, and so on. Specifically, the philosophical arguments used throughout the history of the profession can be compared and contrasted, and students can compare their own subjective positions to those that have been held by others in the field. In so doing, the process of understanding is begun.

Professional Disagreement Over the Educated Recreation and Leisure Studies Graduate

My second argument deals with the lack of agreement among recreation and leisure studies professionals pertaining to the unique qualities of the educated recreation and leisure studies graduate. Parr (1995) noted her concern about this issue:

I once asked one of my professors what was unique about leisure services; what distinguished leisure studies students and their careers, from business students? The professor replied, 'That's easy, we know something about leisure!' But the question remains: How does knowledge of leisure, or leisure theory, fit into a curriculum so that it informs practice? (p. 1)

Other indicators show that the discussion pertaining to "what we are about" continues. Audience comments from the 1999 Leisure Research Symposium Session on "Re-thinking Leisure" reflect similar views. One speaker questioned, "Are we clear on our identity? Can we communicate a vision to the public [or to our students] without first having the dialog with ourselves?" (Audience comments, 1999). Another individual noted that, "We have not agreed what we are about, what the central tasks are, or what we should be doing" (Audience comments, 1999). The fourth ranked issue (out of 31) from the summary of Society for Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE) 1995-1997 electronic discussions on professional preparation was "What should we be trying to accomplish in undergraduate education, in terms of students?" (Neipoth, 1997, p. 3). The summary further elaborates:

The baccalaureate graduate's effectiveness depends on the ability to articulate a vision for the field; one that is clear enough to guide individual practice, and strong enough to sustain effort in the face of inevitable difficulties. This vision should emphasize the contributions of recreation and parks to human well-being and the quality of community life. There must be a realization that the field, and therefore personal action, are parts of a larger social system. (Neipoth, 1997, p. 5)

To some it may appear that this issue has been resolved. Many have argued effectively (over the past 15 years) that a well-rounded liberal education for recreation and leisure professionals teaches professional skills that are complemented both through lei-

sure studies and core classes. These classes draw from, and build upon, the liberal education base (Burton, 1991; Butts, 1992; Goodale, 1995b, 1992; Howe, 1986; Lahey, 1991; McDonald, 1986; Riggins, Sylvester, & Moore, 1985; Sabora, 1986). This well-rounded liberal education can ensure that the technicians who know "how" also "know 'why,' 'whether,' and 'when' [and]...they can apply technical skills in a broader framework of aims and values" (Riggins, et al., 1985, p. 53). Sessoms (1995) indicated that this issue is (at least somewhat) resolved in his reflections on the evolution of the parks and recreation profession. He noted that the 1980s were the "age of entrepreneurialism" when increasing specialization was embraced along with an accompanying change in language and priorities. He contended that the 1990s saw the profession returning to the social issues of the last decade of the 19th century, and the period of 1990-1995 has been about the profession re-discovering the social mission of parks and recreation. Sessoms concluded the profession has established its identity as "Parks and Recreation" and that we are grounded in two social movements: social welfarism and conservation (p. 96).

But the curricula in recreation and leisure studies continues to move increasingly to specialized courses and restrictions that limit credits available for electives and humanistic pursuits (Butts, 1992). Goodale (1995b) noted that the trend toward specialization in contemporary society continues to have its parallel in the delivery of recreation and park services. Goodale noted that the specializations in recreation and leisure studies curriculum include: "event management, fairs and festivals, winter cities, rural economic development along with travel and tourism, eco-tourism, hospitality management, resort and commercial recreation" (p. 1). Further, Goodale indicated what these specializations might mean to service delivery and the recreation and leisure studies curricula:

If anything, it means, as before, re-examining some central concepts: leisure, freedom, individual, collective/communal, public, private, etc. It also means re-examining the business we are in, or whether 'business' is even the appropriate word for what we do. That means we have to re-examine where we belong in the university, assuming we belong there at all, and re-examine why. (p. 3)

In sum, Goodale argued that specialization has resulted in a concurrent de-emphasis on the examination of our central concepts (e.g., leisure, freedom, individual, community) in favor of the specialized tools needed to perform successfully in business (e.g., marketing, event management, and health care financing).

The passion evident in these debates indicates that disagreement continues as to what the educated recreation and leisure studies graduate needs to know (Audience comments, 1999; Butts, 1992; Goodale, 1995b; Neipoth, 1997; Parr, 1995). My position is that we need to continue to advocate for more emphasis on humanistic studies and critical thinking by complementing professional skills classes with a core that contains these elements. By not doing so, we run the risk of training businesswomen and businessmen who know "how" but lack the ability to reflect on the "why, whether, and when" (Riggins, Sylvester, & Moore, 1985).

Interestingly, support for this position of a humanistic understanding of one's field supporting professional practice comes from the world of business itself. A poll of Fortune 100 CEOs by Neff and Odgen (1998) revealed that, while college is important preparation (97% of the CEOs had college degrees), a liberal arts major is as good as or better than any other area of study including the study of business (21% had liberal arts degrees, 22% engineering, and the rest were divided between everything from business administration to the classics). And while graduate study was also frequently evident, less than 50% of the graduate degrees were MBAs. This seems to beg the question as to whether or not technical skills are indeed the best (or at least, the only) training needed to survive in the current business arena. In fact, Neff and Odgen explained that the skills needed to succeed in the present business climate of globalism and rapid change include "a broad based understanding of the relevance of technology" [emphasis added]. The CEO of tomorrow must be a quick thinker and an eloquent speaker, able to make friends, inspire confidence, and work skillfully to form strategic alliances.

I contend that these skills are more common in those that have been liberally educated and that to de-emphasize humanistic studies and critical thinking about leisure in exchange for technical skills is to actually limit our students chances for success. This de-emphasis also has the unfortunate effect of devaluing what is unique about our profession: our social mission and the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all through leisure. Clearly we need to do both.

The Lack of Agreement Among Recreation and Leisure Studies Scholars About the Body of Knowledge

Related to the lack of agreement about undergraduate education is the lack of agreement within the discipline about the body of knowledge upon which the undergraduate curriculum should be based. As noted earlier, the content of the undergraduate recreation and leisure studies curriculum has been discussed extensively (Burton, 1991; Butts, 1992; Goodale, 1992, 1995b; Howe, 1986; Lahey, 1991; McDonald, 1986; Riggins, Sylvester & Moore, 1985; Sabora, 1986). Agreement on the core is important because "the issue of the development of a core body of knowledge is key to the attainment of professional status" (Parr, 1997, p. 77). According to Hartsoe (1973) the agreement on a systematic body of knowledge, and the professional authority based on that body of knowledge, are two of the characteristics that make a profession (cited in Cordes & Ibrahim, 1999). However, the SPRE electronic discussion on professional preparation in 1995-1997 indicated that the issue "What is the body of knowledge upon which undergraduate education should be based?" ranked third in importance (Neipoth, 1997, p. 3). Further evidence of disagreement about the core body of knowledge in recreation and leisure studies appears in the evolution of National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Accreditation Standards (NRPA, 1992, 1995; Sessoms, 1998; van der Smissen, 1998).

An examination of NRPA Accreditation standards from 1986 through the present shows a trend of increasing specialization with an accompanying de-emphasis on the study of leisure from philosophical and humanistic perspectives. This change in emphasis is manifested in both the general education (GE) requirements and the conceptual foundations for recreation and leisure studies degree programs.

In 1986 the GE requirements included "Knowledge of arts and the humanities," and the professional education core included "Knowledge of theory and philosophy of leisure and recreation." In the 1992 revision a new emphasis on western civilization was added to the GE requirements: Standard 7.04 read, "Knowledge of the development of western civilization, including the history of the United States," in addition to keeping the standard for "Knowledge of arts and the humanities" (NRPA, 1992). The standard for the conceptual foundations, "Knowledge of theory and philosophy of leisure and recreation," was removed, and new standards were added. These new standards read:

Standard 8.01: Understanding of the conceptual foundations of play, recreation and leisure for all populations and settings;

Standard 8.02: Understanding of the psychological, sociological, and physiological significance of play, recreation, and leisure from an historical perspective of all populations in all settings;

Standard 8.03: Understanding the technological, economic, and political significance of play, recreation, and leisure in contemporary society. (NRPA, 1995, p. 15)

Notable among these three new standards, which specify demographic, social science, scientific, technological, economic, and political perspectives on play, recreation, and leisure, is the loss of the standard of a philosophical understanding of these concepts. While the addition of these other disciplines is laudable, the loss of the philosophy—the science of sciences—arguably undermines the good that comes from the addition. Furthermore, while it could be argued that these standards include a liberal arts approach to teaching these concepts, their replacing of philosophy with social science, scientific, and other disciplinary methods has made possible the creation of a curriculum that is devoid of any substantive discussion of leisure from a philosophical perspective.

It should be noted that other current accreditation standards implicitly continue to support the goals of humanistic studies and critical thinking:

8.06 Understanding of the history and development of the leisure services profession.

8.09 Understanding of the ethical principals and professionalism as applied to all professional practices, attitudes and behaviors in leisure service delivery.

8.14 Ability to promote, advocate, interpret, and articulate the concerns of leisure service systems for all populations and services.

8.34 Ability to utilize effectively the tools of communication, including technical writing, speech and audio-visual techniques (NRPA, 1995).

An even more significant change was made to the most recent set of Accreditation Standards. The 1995 revision included the elimination of the 7.0 series for "Foundation Understandings. Instead, the standards accept the "...regional accrediting body's general/liberal education requirements" (NRPA, 1995). At my institution, East Carolina University, for instance, students can choose from a broad menu of courses such as anthropology, communication, economics, geography, history, psychology, sociology, and political science. A student can complete their social studies and humanities or fine arts requirements for a four-year baccalaureate degree without any courses in history or philosophy. East Carolina University is not unique, and it should be noted that there is on going debate over what ought to be taught in the four year college curriculum (Douglas, 1992; Lucas, 1996; Wilshire, 1990).

Sessoms (1998) and van der Smissen (1998) both indicated that there is continuing debate in the field between those who argue for a generalist approach to undergraduate education and those who argue for specialization of recreation and leisure studies knowledge at the undergraduate level. van der Smissen (1998) noted her concern that there must be constant vigilance regarding "special interests infiltrating and losing sight of the larger profession" (p. 130).

Taken together, this evidence is indicative of a young profession that has attained status through accreditation and certification but is still evolving. Furthermore, it is arguable that this debate is a very healthy one. It is an indication that recreation and leisure studies have evolved into a more mature discipline that debates its essence and traditions in a manner that is vital and ongoing. But again, I contend that we need to continue to advocate for a curriculum that includes more humanistic studies and requires critical thinking about leisure, or we risk losing touch with the uniqueness and value added by our profession: the development and actualization of human potential through leisure.

Perhaps the de-emphasis on philosophy, which is critical to understanding humanistic perspectives, is in part due to a lack of understanding among educators about "what" and "how" philosophy can add to the curriculum. The following discussion provides some specific suggestions.

A Potential Solution

The above debate indicates that recreation and leisure studies continues to work to establish its identity in a time of increasing social and cultural change. Yet I argue that this uncertainty is a source of real strength and opportunity. Recreation and leisure professionals are uniquely positioned to address social issues through the exploration of

leisure and the good life, and to provide professional services that help people to live good lives. Studying leisure from the perspective of humanism can provide the necessary analytical and critical thinking skills to move the field toward the resolution of these problems and a future that contains clarity of purpose in terms of a social mandate. As Goodale (1995b) noted "education about cultural diversity may be wasted on people who know nothing about their own culture... and history, philosophy, and literature provide evidence that people are in fact capable of greatness, and that our ideals are in fact attainable" (p. 85).

The unique value added to contemporary society by recreation and leisure studies professionals is that we deliver services that help others lead the good life. We are in all of our specializations ultimately a helping profession. While there is not, and probably never will be, agreement on what "the good life" consists of, one reason for studying it is to help create the kind of person who asks questions like "What is the good life?" and "What is the role of the recreation and leisure studies profession in helping others lead the good life?" Through these questions, and others, educators can hope to inculcate an appreciation for the importance of leisure, to help others lead the good life, and to critically examine what leading the good life means in terms of service delivery. If public opinion were to concur that recreation and leisure professionals could uniquely contribute (at least in part) to peoples' ability to lead the good life, Sessoms (1990) charge for "educators and practitioners to rediscover in concert with the public a unique role set for park and recreation" (p. 40) would be realized.

Put differently and more simply, recreation and leisure studies are quite able to provide a quality liberal arts education. A student's ability to think about, and reason through, different viewpoints regarding leisure may be the most important part of his or her undergraduate program, and the foundation upon which all other coursework and practice is based. Such an ability might be what Plato called living the "examined life." Graduates of four-year colleges are, hopefully, capable of living the examined life. And as a side note, recreation and leisure studies is central to any university's mission to the extent that it is able to help students realize this goal.

The study of leisure should be organized in a way such that it fosters the aim of liberal education which is "the development of that critical and creative intelligence through which men and women realize their human potential" (Charles, 1992, p. 124). Similarly, the concepts of leisure, freedom, individual, and community are best studied from a liberal arts perspective that students in recreation and leisure studies can acquire this perspective if we integrate more study of the humanistic disciplines and critical thinking skills into our curriculum.

Curriculum Suggestions

Some specific suggestions for curriculum are as follows. One, students should examine concepts of leisure that can assist them with developing a personal philosophy of leisure that they can compare and contrast with other views. Concurrent with the

study of concepts of leisure, students could explore questions about dimensions of the good life and the role of recreation and leisure in leading the good life. Through this exploration, students can consider the many ways recreation and leisure professionals can work to address contemporary social concerns. Two, students can learn to describe leisure using the classical philosophical frameworks of being (metaphysics), knowledge (epistemology), and value (axiology). By asking questions about the nature of being, how we come to know what we know, and what is valued (and discussing relevant implications for recreation and leisure), students can learn to articulate defensible views about important issues that relate directly to practice. These include: (a) the type of recreation and leisure service organizations that provide services congruent with their view of leisure, (b) the selection of programs and methods of delivery that will be congruent with the mission of an organization, and (c) an evaluation of the types of knowledge that are helpful in their professional lives. This is, in essence, a personal mission statement: this personal mission is what we, as teachers, often call a "philosophy of leisure."

An example illustrates how this framework can be used. Students can be taught the traditional aspects of philosophy, that philosophy literally means "love" (philo) combined with "wisdom" (sophy). Philosophy provides us with tools to ask and answer questions critical to understanding leisure. Metaphysics, the study of the nature of reality, is used as the basis for discussing three concepts: (a) views of the nature of being (e.g. dualism, monism, mind, body, existence), (b) that one's view of the nature of being has implications for how one sees the nature of the universe, and (c) how one sees the nature of God. Epistemology, the study of the nature of knowledge, can be used as a starting point to discuss different ways of knowing (e.g. reason, observation, authority, experience, narrative, and so on). Students can explore how epistemological positions follow from one's metaphysical position and discuss what types of knowing are valued in different settings, professions, and cultures. Axiology, the study of the nature of values, is perhaps most relevant to the student of recreation and leisure studies. Questions addressed may include: "What is right and wrong?", "What is the common good?", and "What consequences do different views of humans have for morality and community?" One can connect with students and professionals by asking questions such as "What is the good life?" and "What is the role of recreation and leisure studies in living the good life?"

A hypothetical (and summarized) discussion of the works of Plato might go as follows. Plato is a dualist, who saw the universe of ideas as supreme; the human mind-spirit is temporarily housed in the earthly body. Plato believed we came to know reality through reason, and that our senses were prone to mislead humans from the truth. The good life according to Plato is a life of leisure. Not leisure as free time, but leisure in the classical sense, a life spent in the pursuit of wisdom where asking questions about justice, virtue, and furthering the politic through civic action is a form of leisure. Students may discuss how, in Ancient Greece, leisure was the basis of culture (as opposed to our modern view that culture defines leisure). Students can then explore how the virtues promoted by Plato and his view of the good life have relevance for our culture today.

Certainly moderation is a popular concept for debate in the context of good leisure and bad leisure, and students can provide many examples of both excess and moderation in current leisure behavior. Plato's view that the sweetest form of happiness was contemplation (classical leisure) can give rise to discussion about whether people in contemporary culture use leisure to get in touch with reality (as Plato advocated) or whether it is used to disengage from reality. The implications of both views of leisure are interesting to explore. Thus the student developing a personal philosophy of leisure is enabled through these tools to reflect critically on the implications of her or his evolving views of leisure. It does not take students very long in this course of study to realize that there is a lot more to living the good life than material acquisitions and excessive amounts of free time, and that time spent getting in touch with reality does more to further growth of the individual and the community than disengagement.

Recreation and Leisure Studies Curriculum and the Liberal Arts

Charles' (1992) proposal for how kinesiology can fit into the liberal arts is adaptable to recreation and leisure studies. Notably, a number of recreation and leisure studies programs currently use the liberal arts and humanistic approaches for general education and core classes: UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Georgia, Western Washington University, Indiana University, Miami University of Ohio, SUNY College at Brockport, and Community College of Baltimore County.⁴ Charles describes four pillars that can serve as models for integrating humanism into introductory and capstone courses.

First "each student should gain an understanding of the world of nature, individual and social behavior, historical knowledge, world cultures, the arts, and philosophical systems" (College of William and Mary, 1988, cited in Charles, 1992, p. 124). Addressing this first pillar, recreation curricula are quite capable of contributing to these liberal arts objectives beginning with the study of recreation and leisure in ancient civilizations, ancient Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Reformation, Industrialization, Modernization, and Post-modernity. Students can explore the associated development of philosophical systems and the implications of leisure in each culture.

A second pillar includes "seminal events, movements, and ideas that have shaped Western civilization [that] may be studied through the lens of physical activity" (p. 124). These concepts can be studied through the lens of leisure. The recent text, Concepts of Leisure in Western Thought, provides one such example (Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1998). This text covers the major thinkers and philosophical positions in Western tradition. Concepts of leisure range from the ancient Greeks, who saw leisure as the highest virtue but were anti-democratic; to John Locke, who denied leisure and turned work into the democratic ideal (the opposite perspective to Greek culture); to Marx, who democratized classical leisure but neglected philosophical perspectives; to existentialism and its

⁴ This list of programs was compiled from responses I received to a request I sent on SPREnet February 2000 for information on recreation and leisure studies programs currently using the liberal arts in the curriculum.

implications for leisure (Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1998). Denby (1996) argued that literature from the Western tradition includes multiple views, and consequently is not ethnocentric. He contended that Western literature can effectively provide students from diverse backgrounds with more than a nominal connection to the past; that students who do not know the arguments of Western thought are consequently not influenced by them but instead by the media. While some contend students need to study mainly intellectual positions outside of their own culture, Denby pointed out that any critical discussion of the philosophy of humanism is liberating and enlightening, and that the ethnocentric argument assumes that students take one view and are not informed of others. What we really have (in the absence of Western thought) is no informing of any type of thought, Western or otherwise (Denby, 1996). All of these concepts of leisure are correct in the sense that they examine the best that a person can be. But, it is through the discussion of these competing concepts of leisure that recreation and leisure studies students can strive toward being the best recreation and leisure professionals that they can be.

Returning to Charles' (1992) model, the third pillar "involves overcoming ethnocentricity. Because play [recreation and leisure] and sport are universally practiced in ways typically reflective of the cultural traditions of the participants, study of these movement behaviors is an avenue to multicultural awareness and international understanding" (p. 124). Examination of the role of leisure, recreation, and play in societies in the United States and around the world can help students in gaining this type of understanding. Literature and narrative may be particularly useful in this regard (Lahey, 1991).

"The final pillar, a general knowledge of philosophical systems, can be fulfilled through kinesiology" (Charles, 1992, p. 125) and leisure studies as well. By teaching students the fundamentals of philosophy—metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology—they can learn how to use this framework to better understand and discuss recreation and leisure as illustrated previously.

Conclusion

The culminating effect of the students' studies of leisure through the humanistic disciplines will be an understanding of leisure that they can discuss critically, defend, understand, and apply to professional practice. In so doing, our students will be able to argue for and justify the role of the recreation and leisure studies professional in helping others lead good lives and actualizing their human potential. Being articulate about what our profession brings to individuals and culture can help remove the self-imposed stigma from our profession as second-class. Indeed, the undergraduate student studying contemporary culture can see that the services provided by leisure professionals are at the very core of a healthy civilization. Having tools to understand and discuss leisure provides each student with an understanding of their personal mission, and helps students select the type of recreation organization that is congruent with their values. They will also be equipped to make a thoughtful selection of programs and methods of delivery that will be congruent with their mission. The learning will not stop when students graduate

because they know more about the many ways of living the examined life. As the students' views about the good life evolve, concurrent with professional maturity and social change, hopefully so will the students' selection of organizations, programs, and methods. With the pace of change increasing faster than our ability to keep up, a humanistic foundation can serve as a basis for critical questions and discourse that will allow professionals to make the best possible decisions. I conclude that the best way to prepare undergraduate students is to include more concepts from humanistic disciplines so that they can critically respond to the challenges that will face them in their practice as recreation and leisure studies professionals in the 21st century.

This paper is exploratory and argumentative in nature. I put forth these ideas for criticism, discussion, research, and modification. I do not believe the study of leisure from the humanistic perspective is a concept whose time has passed—rather, I believe it is a concept that continues to be a highly relevant. It is a timely issue that has already generated many quality debates. The generalist preparation of recreation and leisure professionals in the undergraduate core needs to include more emphasis on the humanistic disciplines to ensure that our graduates are prepared to face the social mandates of the future. Members of the recreation and leisure studies profession need new ways to facilitate conversations and learning about leisure in order to prepare ourselves for the social problems and opportunities of the 21st century. Faculty and practitioners in recreation and leisure have an obligation to ourselves, our students, and to society. Our society stands to benefit the most from the best-trained recreation and leisure studies professionals undergraduate education can produce. Revising the curricula of recreation and leisure studies to include more emphasis on humanistic disciplines and the accompanying implications for leisure is one way to ensure the future of the profession of recreation and leisure studies.

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