



The **RPTS NEWSLETTER**

SPRING 2014

Editor: Joëlle Soulard

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Join Our Team of Educators !

The quality of RPTS students' education is a result of many types of contributions. Members of our educational team include not only faculty and staff but also donors, advisory committee members, guest speakers, industry leaders, intern supervisors, employers, community partners, and others. We have added a gift catalog to our newsletter so that you may support RPTS!

A list of select department programs and initiatives to which you may contribute is listed on page 18.

Your contributions will benefit present and future Aggies! Donors, welcome to our educational team!

Please contact Gary Ellis (gellis@ag.tamu.edu ; 979-845-6018) if you want to know more about a particular program.

Gary is Department Head and will be happy to speak with you about gifts or any other matter that is of interest to you.

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.

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.

Vision

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.



**RECREATION, PARK
& TOURISM SCIENCES**
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Quality experiences, lives, and communities.



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.



Gary's Gab



Any student who happens to be anguishing over her or his final examinations may find a hint of pleasure in learning that our Department also completed a “final examination” this year. In a new administrative wrinkle, Texas A&M University Provost Karan Watson implemented a “Department Report Card” system for 2014. The Provost and Dean submit grades for every department in teaching performance, research performance, service performance, and Trend. Grades are assigned according to the following scale: “PP” is “plus, plus,” or exceptional; “P” is “plus,” or excellent; “O” is “meets expectations”; “M” is “minus,” does not meet expectations; and “MM” is well, this is not where a department wants to be.



It is April once again! Temperatures linger in the “perfect” range and refreshing rainfall occurs every few days, bearing the spirit of rebirth and renewal and uplifting our spirits. Indian Paintbrush, Bluebonnets, and other Texas wildflowers transform our driving excursions into magical journeys along beautiful paths that must surely be the fruits of the work of a highly artistic Creator. And, of course, April is also the time that RPTS students work feverishly to complete semester projects and begin study for the tradition-rich measurement ritual of higher education: final examinations.



I am very pleased to report that the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences “aced” its exam this year! No grade that is less than “P” appears on our report card. We earned “PP” ratings in each of two categories of teaching, “P” in each of two categories of research, and “P” in each of the two categories of service. Our “Trend” was evaluated as being “UP,” signaling continuous quality improvement.

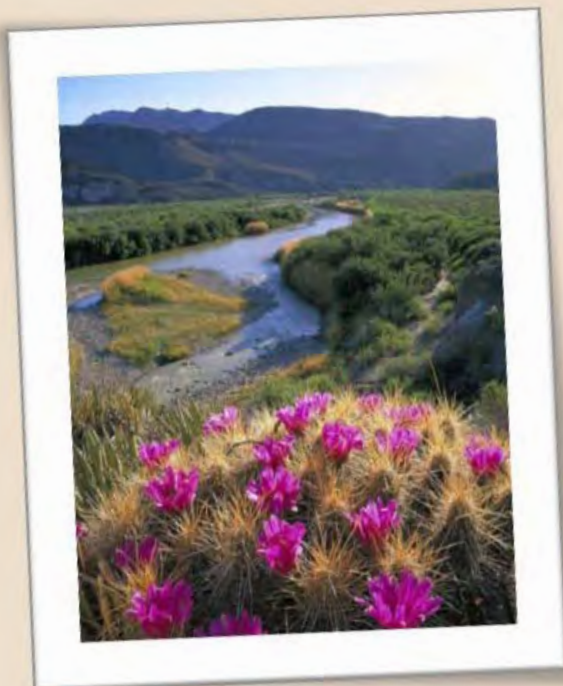
Gary's Gab Con't

This exceptional report card is a tribute to our incredibly talented and deeply committed faculty. As Department Head, I continue to stand in awe of their excellence. To work among them is a humbling experience. As our "PP" grade in teaching shows, RPTS faculty always put their students first. They are fully devoted to the intellectual and professional development of their students, and they also stand ready to assist individual students who must wrangle with often-complex and sometimes tragic challenges that arise during the course of their studies. I am certain that students are not always happy with decisions that are made, but, to the extent of my knowledge, faculty members, without fail, make the decisions that they believe to be in the students' best interest, in either the long term or the short term. Sometimes lessons need to be learned. It occurs to me that our faculty have succeeded in sustaining and building the foundation masterfully crafted by our first Department Head, Dr. Leslie M. Reid. Former students of that era consistently report that Dr. Reid made the department "feel like family."



Our faculty also received high marks for research. Students sometimes do not recognize that they are studying under some of the world's most accomplished applied social scientists and industry leaders when they take an RPTS course. Members of our faculty have the prestigious distinction, "fellow" in each of the honorary Academies of our discipline. Much more importantly, their research informs both policy and practice, empowering experience-industry professionals to continuously improve services that create meaningful, impactful, and memorable experiences for recreationists, tourists, and residents of communities worldwide. Our high marks for service show consistent leadership in our communities, university, and in our professional and scientific organizations.

In my mind's eye, I have a vision of our RPTS students at the end of final exam week. Each student is breathing a sigh of relief and holding her or his head high in recognition of having accomplished significant learning in an exciting class this semester. I hope members of our faculty do the same. This "Gary's Gab" is a tribute to and extraordinary group of educators, scholars and citizens, our RPTS faculty.





Departmental Accomplishments



Dr. John Crompton, had his article tilted, *Costs: "The Rest of the Economic Impact Story,"* published in the *Journal of Sport Management*. Dr. Crompton collaborated with Dr. Dennis Howard of the University of Oregon on this paper.



Dr. Brandy Kelly-Pryor and Dr. Corliss Outley had their article, *"Just spaces: urban recreation centers as sites for social justice youth development"* published in *Journal of Leisure Research*. Their article described an innovative case study that utilized photo-elicitation ("photovoice") methods. They identified three themes: the recreation center as a place of agency and transformation, commitment to the transformation, action toward others.



They concluded that the recreation center "was a space for growth, exploration of identity, and where imagination and motivation were possible." The center also was found to provide a system of social support and was an environment in which the subject of the case "found her voice and sense of hope and power" despite "being demeaned and confronting feelings of powerlessness outside the walls" of the center.



Departmental Accomplishments

Jiaying Lu and Dr. Mike Schuett, had their article titled, "Examining the relationship between motivation, enduring involvement and volunteer experience: The case of outdoor recreation voluntary associations," published in *Leisure Sciences!* Their study involved survey of members of three outdoor recreation voluntary associations. Results suggested that enduring involvement mediates the relationship between membership motivation and volunteer experience. Members who join volunteer organizations for reasons of social networking, civic engagement, and self-enhancement are likely to have greater enduring involvement. Enduring involvement was also found to have a moderator effect.



Mrs. Ann Alexander, who is a member of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences High Impact Program Advising team has received the *UAC 2014 Advising Team Award!*



Departmental Accomplishments



Dr. Jamie Rae Walker, along with other members of the Texas **South Plains Economic Crisis Response team** (Gary Cross, Deana Sageser, Blayne Reed, Todd Beyers, Nancy Andersen, Mandi Seaton, John Villalba, and Stephan Amosson), has been selected as runner up for the Excellence in Teamwork award at the regional level and is being considered for national recognition! Both regional and national awards will be presented at the 2014 NACDEP Conference in Grand Rapids this June.



Dr. Jinmoo Heo, who was recognized by the Bryan-College Station Convention and Visitors Bureau during its annual Hospitality Awards Luncheon! Dr. Heo received ***"Hometown Hero"*** recognition.



Dr. Petrick has been selected as a ***Faculty Fellow for Innovation in High-Impact Learning Experiences***. That appointment is based on reviews of his "Applied Tourism Marketing Project." This program is provided by the Center for Teaching Excellence with the Huggins Endowed Fund for Teaching Excellence.



Departmental Accomplishments



Dr. John Jacob has been selected AgriLife Extension Service nominee for the national **Excellence in Extension Award!** Texas AgriLife Extension Service is an extensive network of specialists, agents, administrators, applied scientists, and support staff who advance agriculture, natural resources, youth development, and overall quality of life of citizens of Texas and beyond. It is quite the significant honor that Dr. Jacob has been selected as the Agency's nominee for this prestigious national award.



Dr. Angela Durko and **Dr. Alex McIntosh** for recognition of their outstanding contributions at the AgriLife Centennial Conference. Angela received the Vice Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Graduate Student. Alex and his colleagues were recognized with a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Superior Service Award for excellence in collaborative research.



Dr. Ellis, **Dr Jorgensen** and **Dr. Ruddell** had their article titled, "**Fear Perceptions in Public Parks: Interactions of Environmental Concealment, the Presence of People Recreating, and Gender**" published in *Environment and Behavior* (vol. 45)!

Former Student Spotlight :

Interview with Angela Durko



1) What made you choose the RPTS Department at Texas A& M University?

I had applied to a business program at that other university in Texas before I moved from Germany. During my interview, I discovered their program a bit regimented for my taste, meaning the schedule was very structured, and there would be little opportunity for me to find my niche. Plus, everyone there wore a suit, and that didn't match my flip flop lifestyle. I began to research several other programs and found the RPTS department at Texas A&M. An email exchange with Dr. Crompton referred me to a meeting with Dr. Petrick. Walking into his office in Francis Hall for the first time, I was greeted by Parrothead décor and someone who I quickly gathered had passion for his career, students and travel... and flip flops. Learning more about the program, I felt it would be a perfect fit for me to combine my love of travel, my background in Marketing, and my goal of teaching at the university level. The program was challenging and yet very rewarding, and the willingness of faculty to work alongside graduate students as their colleagues is a priceless attribute to this program. Fast forward four years, and I can say without doubt, this was the best decision of my life. I am honored to have walked across the stage in May 2014 to receive my PhD. And yes, I wore flip flops.

2) What projects are you currently working on?

My dissertation examined the benefits of travel for adults, specifically how travel can increase satisfaction with life and build positive relationships. Publishing the findings and implications from this research will be my first priority this Summer. I'm also working on further developing the transcultural tourism program I've started for RPTS 202 students. Finally, if time, I'd like to get reintroduced to the concept of a free weekend again.



3) Could you talk a little about your experience with the video conference between the students from RPTS 202 and the students from Herat University?

I developed an experimental learning program designed to bring A&M students enrolled in RPTS 202 in contact with students of their same age from various countries. This was done to attempt to overcome stereotypes, reduce constraints to travel to certain locales, assist with tourism development and bridge the gap between cultures. I believe we started the project with the most challenging and possibly unknown culture to our students, as we worked with Herat University in Afghanistan.

A&M students were asked their perceptions of Afghanistan in the beginning of the semester, and these ranged from the complete unknown to negative information they had only viewed on Western media. Several weeks later our students met virtually with Herat students to discuss everything from politics to religion, hobbies, and daily college student life.



From the first minute our students were greeted by those in Afghanistan with a loud “Howdy,” to discussion about women’s rights, video games and college life, I was beyond impressed with the eagerness our students showed to learn more about a culture many had misunderstood. The final project for the course showed a drastic change in knowledge of each country and showed an increase in student’s motivation to travel and participate in study abroad programs around the world. The most rewarding part of this project is hearing the students still talk today about their interactions with their new Afghan friends, and to know they still have contact with them. This project allowed the travel market of the future firsthand experience with a culture and country poised to become important to the tourism industry in the future. Students of RPTS 202 are now currently concluding the same project with a university in Dubai and another in Ghana to continue to provide our students contact with people of different cultures and customs they are likely to interact with in their future careers.

4) What is your favorite destination?

My favorite destinations are those where I could live in flip flops year round with the ocean outside my window. My top two favorite spots are Jost Van Dyke in the BVI due to its lack of commercialization, and Okinawa Japan for amazing diving, food and people.





5) What is your favorite Aggie tradition?

To know me is to know I love dogs, and often quite often take home dogs I find that appear homeless. That said, I absolutely love the tradition of Ms. Reveille as a mascot, and as the highest ranked member of the Corps of Cadets. I love that the tradition started when Reveille I was found by students who took her in to care for and made her an important part of their life and the campus. This small action is a prime example of the Aggie spirit and student hospitality. We all come here as outsiders, but quickly feel part of a family and part of a tradition.

6) What do you like the best about Bryan/ College Station?

The most impressive thing I have noted about this area is the hospitality shown to strangers, rivals and all others. Coming from another SEC school, I watched how rivalries create divides between fans. I have been beyond impressed with the hospitality offered visiting fans during events. During a football game last year, a lost Bama student found his way to the Aggie student section. He looked terrified to be in the middle of so many Aggies, but after just a few minutes, our students had made room for him in their section and began explaining Aggie traditions to him. He actually asked if they were joking, or if everyone was really that nice in College Station. While the exception at many other universities, it was the norm for our students to display such amazing hospitality.



7) What advice would you give to undergrads?

My best advice for undergrads is to travel; far and near there is always an adventure waiting to happen. Be as adventurous as you can while traveling and immerse yourself in the local population. Some of my favorite countries are those I visited where I relied solely on locals to tell me what to see, do and eat. Sometimes this leads you to an amazing hidden dive spot, other times you're eating something you'd rather not identify. Regardless, it's all an adventure.

Undergraduate Student Highlight:

Interview with Ashton Corder



1) What made you pick RPTS as your major?

RPTS gave me the opportunity to pursue my passion to travel and to share that excitement with others through its event planning program. The unique career opportunities that RPTS offers were also, something I found new and exciting.



2) What do you want to do with your degree?

After much searching and finding how I could best meet the needs of others, I learned I had a change of heart from event planning to teaching. Event planning allowed me to see I want to put those skills towards educating others. I am now pursuing a career in teaching of which RPTS also offered me the chance to gain experience and understanding through its emphasis area in Youth Development.

Howdy!
from Texas A&M

3) What is your favorite Aggie tradition? Why?

That is tough because there is more than just one. However, I really enjoy the Aggie greeting—"Howdy!" It is a great way to show respect whether it be to visitors or other fellow Aggies.





4) What is your favorite class at A&M?

My favorite class is Foundations of Tourism (RPTS 202). It was my first class I took for RPTS and the most challenging. I also met some great people through the group project assignment. I was never bored because class discussion was encouraged and of course tourism was interesting to me.

5) What is the best advice someone has ever given you about college life?



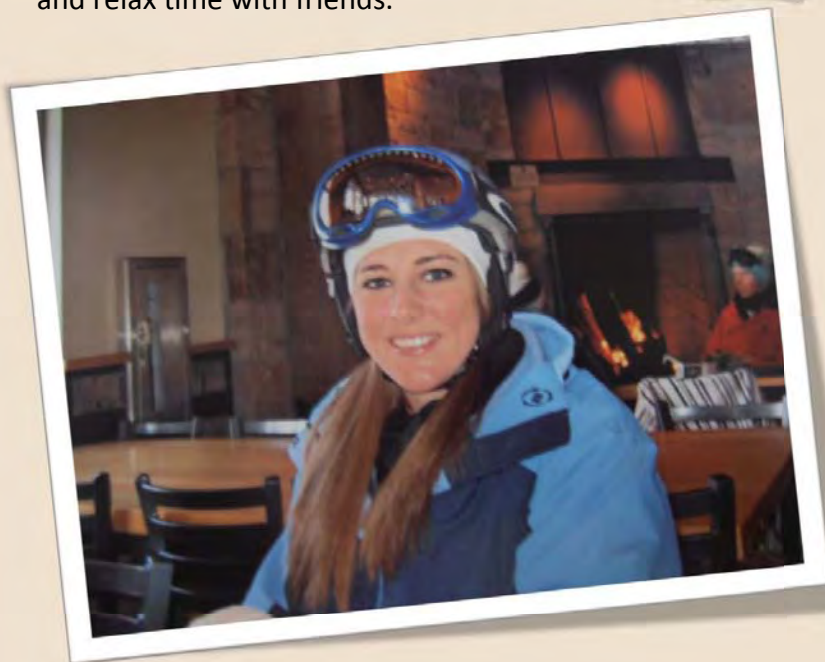
Get involved whether it's through church, hanging out with friends, or through school functions and

organizations. I loved this because while grades and studying are important, it is also important to have a healthy balance of work and relax time with friends.



6) What do you like most about Bryan/College Station?

The sense of community here is great. Pretty much everywhere I go people go out of their way to make you feel comfortable. Chick-Fil-A, my favorite fast food spot, employees say "my pleasure" and even at HEB the cashiers will always talk with you. Not to mention, chivalry. The corps of cadets gives up their seat for others on the bus and give a willing hand to hold the door open for others.



7) What is your dream vacation?

A trip that offers outdoor activities and has some historical significance. I have always wanted to visit Hawaii, Rome Italy, and Whistler Canada. They each offer unique experiences with so much to do and explore.



RPTS Career & Internship Fair



The 2014 RPTS Career & Internship Fair was held on February 19 and was organized by the RPTS Aggie REPS. Approximately 30 companies were present during the event.

The RPTS Department has two undergraduate degrees: Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences and Community Development (CDEV). RPTS undergraduate students focus their studies on one of the following emphasis areas: Youth Development, Parks and Conservation, Community Recreation and Park Administration or Tourism Management. Each degree plan requires an internship of at least 400 hours of work (for 6 university credits) with a company or organization related to the student's emphasis area.

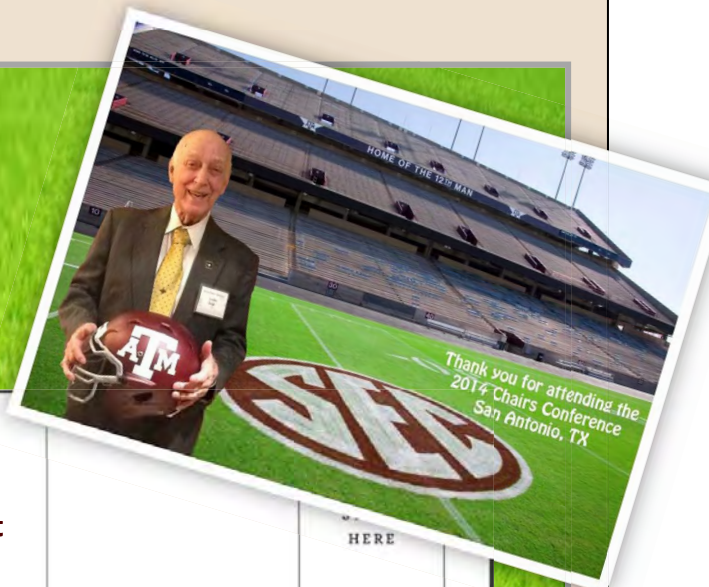
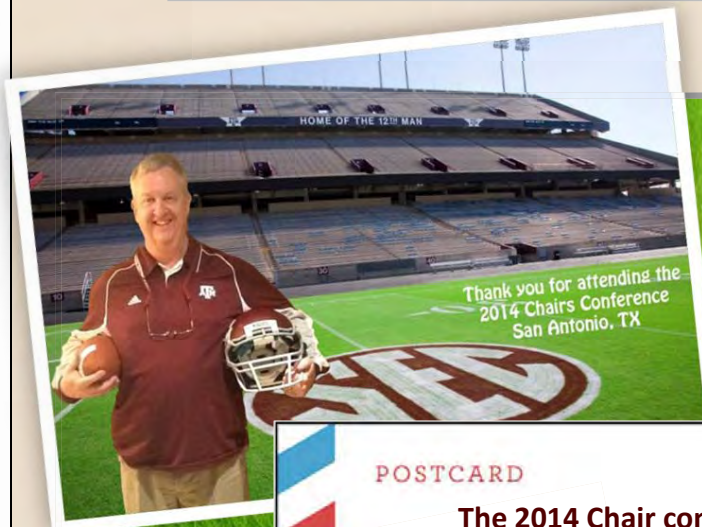


The RPTS Department is also the host for the Professional Event Manager Certificate Program. Approximately 120 RPTS and CDEV students will graduate in December 2013 and May 2014 combined.





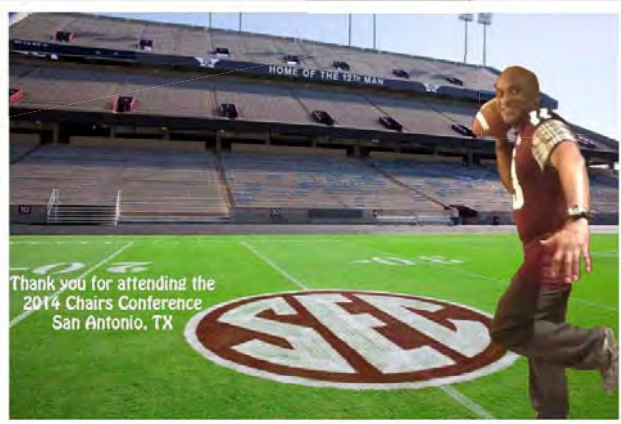
2014 Chairs Meeting



POSTCARD

The 2014 Chair conference was held in San Antonio, Texas. It regrouped U.S. departments which are specialized in park, recreation and tourism. This year, the RPTS Department of Texas A&M organized the event.

Approximately 35 attendees came to the conference. Among the topics discussed were: learning outcomes, managing curricula, assessment, differential workloads, and faculty titles.





Aggieland Saturday is an annual campus-wide open house for prospective students and their families. During this one day, prospective students can meet current students, tour the dorms, visit libraries and computer labs and see what Texas A&M has to offer.

Many students stopped by the RPTS stand to get information about our major. The RPTS football booth was particularly successful in attracting visitors!



Gift Catalog



We invite to you to learn more about giving to the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. This webpage can link you to specific student enrichment projects that need your support. Wherever you chose to direct your gift, it will have a lasting impact on our students' lives.

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

The quality of RPTS students' education is a result of many types of contributions. Members of our educational team include not only faculty and staff but also donors, advisory committee members, guest speakers, industry leaders, intern supervisors, employers, community partners, and others.

Please contact Gary Ellis,
Department Head of Recreation,
Park and Tourism Sciences,
Please mail your contributions to:

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2261 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2261

The Texas A&M Foundation
401 George Bush Drive
College Station, TX 77840



To give online please visit our website at <http://rpts.tamu.edu/gift/>

Sponsor a “Legend!”

[Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series](#)\$1,000 per “Legend”

The “Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series” brings travel industry leaders to the Texas A&M campus. Over a two day period, the speaker makes presentations to classes and interacts with students through meals, receptions, and other events. Students gain unique insight into the joys and challenges of managing major travel and experience industry attractions.

Mr. Paul Serff, President-Emeritus of the Texas Travel Industry Association, RPTS Tourism Management Advisory Committee member, and part-time Lecturer created this exciting program for us. Your gift of \$1,000 will establish you as a sponsor of a visit by a “Legend!”



Support a student's success!



Generous donors have endowed the following scholarships, and we always welcome additional contributions to those **in any amount!**

Contributions to endowments, of course, grow the principal and result in increased awards to students. If you are interested in establishing an endowed scholarship a minimum donation of \$25,000 is required.

- [COADC Jana Wisenbaker Scholarship in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences](#)
- [Leslie M. Reid Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [Lon and Inger Garrison Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [COADC Joyce Nies and Peter Witt Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [John L. Crompton Scholarship](#)
- [Elizabeth B. Crompton Scholarship](#)
- [COADC Heidemann Wuest Foundation Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [Sue Wittens '72 Memorial Scholarship](#)
- [Louis Hodges Scholarship in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences](#)
- [Marquerite Van Dyke Graduate Scholarship](#)
- [Korean RPTS Alumni and Marquerite Van Dyke Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [Thomas G. Viilo Endowed Memorial Scholarship](#)
- [TAES Jake Hershey Fellowship in Natural Resources Conservation](#)
- [Bradberry Chair for Youth Development](#)
- [Robert B. Ditton Endowed Scholarship](#)
- [Peter Witt and Joyce Nies Youth Development Excellence Endowment](#)

Help RPTS sustain and grow excellence!



[RPTS Endowed Fund for Excellence](#) Gifts in any amount welcome

The RPTS Excellence fund provides support for special unanticipated opportunities for our students that arise during the course of many academic years.

Your gift to our excellence fund will grow the endowment and provide us even better opportunity to pursue opportunities and continue to grow quality experiences for our students.

Mr. Royce Wisenbaker and his wife Jana Wisenbaker endowed this excellence fund for RPTS, and your contribution can help us continue to grow that endowment.

Sponsor an RPTS Quiz Bowl Student!

[RPTS Quiz Bowl](#) \$1,000 for sponsorship of a team member or a coach

RPTS students compete with top students from other universities in national Quiz Bowl competition each year.

Teams are comprised of four students and a coach.

Students are quizzed on park, recreation and tourism management, marketing, foundational knowledge, and planning and staging of experiences.

You have the opportunity to sponsor one or more members of our team or even our coach (your choice).



Become a partner in advancing our high-impact learning programs!

[High-Impact Learning Courses](#) Gifts in any amount are welcomed

The Department offers a variety of “high impact learning” classes.

These classes engage students in direct experiences with managers and marketing professionals.

Students study in major attractions, state and national parks and forests, in cities and towns, and even aboard cruise ships!

Students must bear the cost of special fees for such courses, to cover transportation, lodging, and related expenses. Your support will provide access to students unable to pay those fees.



Connect RPTS students with industry through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service!

**Connected Learning for Industry Professionals and Students (E!CLIPS)
5,000 to sponsor an RPTS student intern for a semester**



E!CLIPS is a Texas A&M/ RPTS AgriLife Extension Program that supports real-world training and action research by connecting professionals in recreation, park and tourism businesses and agencies around the world with students and professional learning programs from RPTS Extension.

Opportunities are available in nature tourism, youth development, customer service, event planning, park and trail planning, and public input programs.

Congratulations to Our Graduates!

B.S.	Christopher James Jackson	Matthew Thomas Rogers
Kinsey Hope Adamson	Julie Bradshaw Jackson	Catherine Marie Roman
Alexandra Lea Anderson	Bethany Aliece Jenn	Shayna Leigh Russell
Kindall Ann Arnst	Jessica Lee Johnston	Michelle Catherine Schuett
Mae Margaret Artz	Brooke Nicole Jorgensen	Mason Wyatt Starnes
Thomas David Baine	Kolby Dale Karaff	Calley Jordan Stene
Charles Croxton Baker	Devon Frances Keith	Megan Chelsea Stewart
Joseph Hampton Bradford	Samuel James Keith	Anne Madeleine Strout
Caleb Randall Brammer	Cara Cathleen Krueger	Ana Elise Stockdale
Kathleen Preston Callison	Lucinda Jane Levine	Colton Lee Summerlin
Shelby Lea Carter	Steven Ashley Lyons	Kalley Rose Terry
Ivanna Carolina Chapa	Scott Andrew Martin	Kristen Ingrid Thompson
Christine Marie Chavez	Morgan F McCoy	Erin Michelle Vire
Ruth Ann Cooper	Austin Clark Melton	Emily Louise Wallace
Cody Nelson Crowder	Christopher Wayne Miller	Jennifer Leigh Welch
Darcy Malyn Cruikshank	Zachary James Muhleman	Lindsey Marie Welch
Natasha Alexandra Cruz	Daniel L Mullins	Paige Cherie Wells
Hannah Patricia Cutbirth	Cortney Cheri Nelson	Elizabeth Mihaela Wilkins
Sarah Ann Davis	Kristina Kelly Norton	Kayla Ann Wood
Justin Coy Dobbins	Tyler A Nucklos	Julie Anne Woods
Caitlin Rose DuMars	Kelly Christine O'Keefe	
Bruce Andrew Duani	Alexandra Karynn Ogle	M.S.
Joslyn Christine Elsworth	John Matther Ortega	Jessica Nichole Girard
Hannah Mae Goodwin	Jennifer May Penn	Ju Tu
Garrett Keith Gramling	Megan Leigh Philips	
Kristina Alexa Gruenes	Brandi Lynn Pierce	Ph.D.
Dean Michael Hargis	Morgan Elizabeth Pool	Angela Durko
Matthew Patrick Heaton	Casey Michael Prescott	Carena J Van Riper
Margaret Starr Henderson	Amanda Lee Quisenberry	
Rachel Alyse Herrod	Kaydee Malloy Rayburn	
Jacob Jay Holt	Cedar Brooks Risica	
Katherine Deaun Houle	Taylor Christian Risica	
Christina Lynn Hultquist	Jennifer Anne Roessler	