

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843

School of
NATURAL BIOSCIENCES
Department of
RECREATION AND PARKS
Instruction — Research — Extension



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RECREATION AND PARKS AT TEXAS A&M

With only a single month of operation an accomplished fact, the major reason for a newsy mailing is to assure our friends and backers that A&M's new program is off and running. Hopefully, this will also help to establish the habit of regular mailings.

For those who haven't had the privilege and opportunity to establish a major university department from scratch, the process warrants a few words of description. One of the key advantages of A&M's Recreation and Parks program was the University decision to establish it as a full department, with research and teaching; and as soon as practicable, extension functions. Most university programs grow in the sheltering "nursery" environment of a larger department. The new program receives various forms of assistance informally provided by the parent department before the young sprout is healthy and large and strong enough to be separated successfully.

Although we must sink or swim largely on our own resources, Recreation and Parks will grow faster and more solidly from the beginning as a totally independent department. And to be honest, we are receiving exceptional cooperation from our sister departments in the University.

Following is a brief summary of activities for this first month:

ARRIVAL

The Reids left Michigan in below-freezing, blizzard weather on December 23rd, took several short scenic side-trips and arrived in a dead beat with the moving man on December 30th. The 50-60 degree days and blue skies were a welcome change, even though New Year's weekend was spent in unpacking and getting settled in. What a shock to find roses in bloom in the yard on New Year's Day

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Starting without even pencils, paper, or supplies, we already have, as you see, obtained distinctive departmental letterhead stationery.

Headquarters for the Department of Recreation and Parks is the very modern and attractive Pant Science Building. Related departments in this building include Range Science and Forestry, Floriculture and Landscape Horticulture, and parts of Soil and Crop Science, Agronomy, Botany, and Horticulture, along with the Herbarium and specialized research and teaching laboratories.

Come visit if in the vicinity; but check the building Directory -- we're already in process of moving into larger offices. We are staffing initially for myself and three additional professors, secretarial staff, plus research associates and graduate assistants. This staffing will be complete by September.

SECRETARY

This deserves special mention. Efficient initial organization is a "must" for long-range success of a University Department. We are extremely fortunate that Mrs. Hazel Grubbs, formerly of the University President's Office, has agreed to transfer to Recreation and Parks as Departmental Secretary. In addition to top secretarial qualifications and knowledge-in-depth of the University at all levels, our "Hazel" is more attractive and personable than a person could wish for.

DEPARTMENT HEAD ACTIVITIES

Seems like I haven't had much opportunity to slow down since arriving. One immediate need was to prepare a formal report requesting authorization of the Texas Coordinating Board for Higher Education for granting of the M.S. and Ph.D. Degrees in Recreation and Parks, effective September, 1966. More on this later.

Another need has been to submit all desired changes in courses for University Curriculum Committee review. Copies of the specific sequence of courses in the undergraduate program will be distributed as soon as final approval is obtained.

I participated for the first time in the meeting of the Academic Council. President Rudder presided at the meeting of all deans, administrators, and department heads. The meeting began with an invocation, and I was pleased to find lively discussion and frankness not only tolerated but encouraged.

DEPARTMENTAL BROCHURE

Starting from scratch, the Department of Agricultural Information gave us priority and rushed into print a descriptive folder entitled "Careers in Recreation and Parks." A copy is included. Quantities are available on your request for general distribution to interested college entrants and high-schoolers considering career areas.

STUDENT CONTACTS

A considerable number of students interested in Recreation and Parks are already here at Texas A&M in related departments. Every day I counsel with a few of these students and I am pleased at the interest and the caliber of these lads. Our first B.S. graduates will start becoming available as early as June, 1968.

It is difficult to tell what our initial enrollment will be until Spring Semester registration which this year will be February 4-5. So far we have 15 students on campus, 14 off-campus undergraduate contacts, 2 graduate students (M.S.) in residence, and 11 additional potential graduate students.

TEACHING

The first formal course offering in Recreation and Parks will be RP 302, "Principles of Park Administration", taught this coming semester starting February, 1966. Special problems credit on an individual basis for graduate and undergraduate students will also be available.

CAMPUS CONTACTS

Realizing the importance of close working relationships with other University programs, I have been concentrating on this at every opportunity. The response has been excellent thus far, including colleagues in Agricultural Economics, Wildlife Science, Government, Sociology, Landscape Horticulture, Range Science, Forestry, Physical Education, and Water Resources. I believe full cooperation of natural and social sciences is necessary for the best possible program.

I was fortunate in being invited to speak on "Recreation in the New Age" at the conference sponsored by the Wildlife Science Department at Texas A&M, for Texas and (Federal) Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife personnel. The excellent program for the 2-day short course was the work of Dr. JAMES TEER.

OFF CAMPUS CONTACTS

I have a campaign going to travel throughout Texas as there is opportunity in order to get acquainted with park and recreation persons, resources and recreation programs. This month I was privileged to accompany A&M President Rudder to Austin to meet with State officials, including a most cordial visit with the Executive Director, Director of Parks, W. MARK GOSDIN, and staff of the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife. Similar visits were made to the Texas Highway Department and the State Office of SCOT (Sportsmen's Clubs of Texas).

Being closest, I toured Bryan with JAY WILLIAMS, Park and Recreation Director, for a first-hand inspection of the City's parks and recreation facilities.

There also was time for a quick visit to Houston, but so much of interest there that a repeat visit is in order in the near future.

Final travel for this month will be to Texoma State Park, Kingston, Oklahoma for the Southwest Park and Recreation Training Institute,

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

During January, we have corresponded or talked with a number of people concerning park and recreation problems. Among these were Uvalde, Texas, requesting information about Summer programs; Victoria, Texas needing Zoo information; the Louisiana Bureau of Outdoor Recreation desiring information concerning recreation demand studies; and a request from Mexia, Limestone County, for assistance in planning a theme park at the Confederate Reunion Grounds. Let us know if we can be of assistance directly, or in obtaining help elsewhere.

MATERIALS RECEIVED

As you know, it takes time to develop good reference files on recreation programs, parks, and outdoor recreation. I want to encourage sending along materials of all kinds concerning recreation and parks for our yet uncrowded shelves. This month we received reports, maps, and other materials from the following agencies:

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission
National Park Service
City of Bryan, Texas
National Recreation & Park Association (A.I.P.E.)
United States Forest Service
City of Amarillo, Texas

These are much appreciated.

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

With students already enrolled in our program, questions are piling up regarding the possibility of working in a park situation this coming summer. These students constitute a labor pool having unusual interest and motivation regarding recreation of all types. Some have expressed an interest in State and Federal agency employment, in and outside Texas. Some would rather get practical experience in metropolitan or local park situation. If you are likely to have an opening for which these students might apply, please contact me. You'll get willing workers.

PUBLICITY

Really this is about the first real attempt to publicize the operation of our new program. Unsolicited, we were given a very nice write-up by Mr. NELSON ANTOSH, of the Houston Chronicle. Arrangements have been made for information to appear in the campus paper, THE BATTALION, with respect to the Spring Semester course offering. Also, notice about Recreation and Parks at Texas A&M was noted in the December issue of "Texas Recreation and Park News", JOE HOFFMAN, Editor. Plans for more news releases in the coming months.

PLANS FOR FEBRUARY

1. Teaching "Principles of Park Administration."
2. Distribute Careers in Recreation and Parks to high schools, counselors.
3. Answer out-state student requests for information.
4. Travel Mexia, other Texas locations.
5. Extend contacts; U.S.P.S., Corps of Engineers, B.O.R., etc.
6. Begin preparation of more detailed Departmental brochure.
7. Investigate Park and Recreation shortcourse possibilities.
8. Make preparations for March Ag Convocation on "Parks" theme.

GENERAL REMARKS

I've already "tasted" my share of Aggie jokes. In case you're not familiar with this, I find the "Aggies" of Texas A&M are variously loved, respected, maligned, or rejected--all fervently--by various people.

My initial reaction may be tempered, or reinforced!, by experience, but at this point in our acquaintance, I believe the Aggies have been hiding their lamp under a bushel, I've been very surprised at--and I had no knowledge of this before I came--the emphasis on academic excellence at this University. This student body is dedicated to learning, and the thrust of the resident instruction program is designed to wring out the best they have in them. It's a pleasure to work with students who are eager to learn, and I'm happy to be a part of such an educational environment.

Moreover, I've come face to face with the Aggie Spirit that is widely treasured or condemned, and it is tangible on this campus. It's a friendly campus--a cooperative, warm-hearted place. This school exudes it, and I'd rather see it known as PRIDE, the glow that results from knowledge of a good job done in a difficult course, the self-discipline and team effort that can bring about success.

I believe this Country can use many more young lads who are alert, eager to learn, devoted, and able.

I may become an Aggie yet----

-----L.M.R.-----