It’s been a very unusual time since the last RPTS newsletter. Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic we experienced a very different spring semester in Aggieland. But, good things happened and there have been reasons to celebrate. In this issue we celebrate all of our May graduates. We wanted you to see them and many provided pictures. These 2020 grads missed their walk across the stage but remain positive about the future. Speaking of a missed graduation, one of the difficulties of Covid has been the inability to gather. In this issue you’ll read about the many ways professors adapted to offer unexpected but excellent educational experiences after face-to-face classes went on-line. A great example was in our Event Management area. Student groups developed a number of on-line events as substitutes for in person experiences. The on-line opportunities they created, including games, fund raising auctions and other activities, were impressive.

Tim Bradle of the Lower Colorado River Authority is featured as our former student. Tim has been a friend of the department for many years having worked with Dr. Kyle and others on a variety of research projects related to boater experiences and safety on the Highland Lakes. Former students like Tim are one of our greatest resources.

Lastly, we had a happy and sad event this spring with the retirement of Mrs. Tina Vega. We are happy for Tina but sad she will no longer be in the office and at the lunch table. Mrs. Vega worked for Texas A&M for 47 years and with RPTS for 45 of those years. She stayed the course, giving a lifetime career to all who passed through the department since 1975. Tina has three grand children spread from Houston, Texas to Lima, Peru. She is looking forward to spending more time with those beautiful kids. We already miss her but wish her the very best.

In a recent article, the Center for World University Rankings also looked at universities globally by subject. We are pleased to say that RPTS was ranked 6th in Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism. To check out the full article visit:

https://today.tamu.edu/2020/06/12/texas-am-rises-in-world-university-rankings-now-in-top-4-percent/

Yell Leader Statue beating the hell outta Covid-19 by wearing a mask.
Our Newest Former Students

Say Congrats to the Spring Class of 2020

Doctorate Graduates

Dr. Lauren Redmore

Dr. Michael Petriello

Bachelor Graduates

DeLanie Allen  Romeo Alvarado  Alexi Arstein  Madison Botkin  Jon Drew Burt

Camille Carter  Tayler Cole  Katie Crawford  Luke DeFatta  Emily Dedmon
Bachelor Graduates

Kassie Espinoza  Olivia Farrell  Jean Ferguson  Carter Freas  Darby Gardner

Sean Giffin  Sarah Gilliam  Katie Guerra  Brandie Guice  Ann-Marie Haley

Emma Hileman  Justin Holifield  Shelby Hotz  Kylie Killough  Leah Lancaster

Katy MacManus  Coby Moscowitz  Sarah Oelze  Carly Pappert
Bachelor Graduates

Shawna Parks  David Pham  Abby Sandy  Amber St. John
Jake Vasquez  Madison Witherwax  Allison Wong  Jessy Zarate

Bachelor Graduates Not Pictured

Matthew Albrecht  Noah Lira  Rylan Schroeter
Dylan Bates  Clayton Mannen  Caterina Serna
Jacob Boyer  Lorelei Mellenbruch  Angela Squiric
Jessica Boyle  Jaime Minter  Sylvia Vause
Thomas Croft  Conner Moskal  Aaron Verwold
Sarah Driver  Emily Nash  Thomas Vincent
Hannah Freund  Abigail Newman  Cody West
Brananu Galentine  Cassandra Owens  Andrew Wong
Faith Heitz  Nicole Polites  Aaron Yeater-Mireles
Brandon Johnson  Lauren Rachuba
Angela Krupp  Preston Ray
Please tell us a little bit about yourself and your relationship with the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences (RPTS) at Texas A&M University.

I began my career while still as a student in RPTS by working in the marine recreation research lab, then directed by Dr. Robert (Bob) Ditton. I think my interactions with Dr. Ditton, as well as all of the faculty and staff helped mold me and influence me to the career I have today. They have always been a group of world-class professionals with amazing character and optimism. When opportunities presented themselves over the years, I found myself collaborating with some of the RPTS faculty on various research and planning projects. I consulted with some of them while I was developing Florida’s statewide outdoor recreation and conservation plan, economic impact studies of Florida state parks, statewide and lake specific studies of fishing in Texas, and most recently on boating and lake recreation on the Highland Lakes of Texas. Many of those opportunities led to contracted research projects, offering greater expertise and end-product research than my agencies were capable of. Drs. Scott Shafer and Gerard Kyle have been an essential resource for special studies on recreational boating and lake use, which has helped us tremendously in policy development.

Where are you from?
Lampasas, Texas. Although, as a military kid, I lived in Italy, Germany (twice), Thailand and several states all before high school.

What would you like people to know about you?
I love fishing, boating, flying airplanes and playing guitar. My daughter (Mary) just graduated from TAMU in December 2019. She was a student worker for a few months in RPTS last summer. I was introduced to her mother in RPTS – Francis Hall in 1988. Marguerite Van Dyke had something to do with it!

What do you do for a living?
I’ve remained within the parks and recreation profession since graduating from TAMU. I also earned an MS degree in recreation and parks from Florida State University – Tallahassee. I enjoyed several years working in outdoor recreation and state park planning with Florida State Parks. I worked for Texas Parks & Wildlife in grant projects, state park management and law enforcement, and in human dimensions of fisheries research. I now supervise several programs at the Lower Colorado River Authority that regulate recreational boating, marinas, residential docks and buoys / restricted areas.

What is the most rewarding part your job?
Happy customers!
How do you see the field changing in the future?

I see the profession changing in several ways, but the end-product will remain primarily an intrinsic value. I can see how technology has evolved into the forefront of our daily work, but I’ve also recognized that this technology isn’t what bears responsibility for decision making. It’s definitely a tool to assist and inform us. But professionals will always be the ones who make the decisions and sometimes those decisions may not exactly coincide with technology. I’m just saying that much of the technological approaches can seem to dominate the focus of the work we do, but I think it’s important that we not lose sight of the mission of what we do, which begins back at the beginning from the social and environmental sciences. Happy customers don’t care about your satellite imagery, laser measurement tools and code scanners. They care about the memories that they take home. And they use those memories to make decisions about how they choose to commit their future unobligated time and effort.

How did RPTS help prepare you for your career?

The personal networking with faculty and the combination of foundational sciences from social psychology and natural resources helped to mold me towards managing recreation resources in the natural environment. Faculty also demanded a higher standard of performance than what I experienced from classes in other departments at TAMU. Not to throw any of them under the bus (John Crompton, Bob Ditton, Les Reid), but I will admit that I left as a graduate with much better communication skills.

What advice would you give to future graduates of RPTS who wish to pursue a career in the Event Industry?

While they are still students in RPTS, they should start their careers right where they are! Student worker positions, research lab jobs, opportunities in the local community. Even volunteering in those areas can be helpful. I suggest putting in the time to get to know the faculty more closely; identify career role models and network with them often; participate in professional development opportunities – and not just go to conferences, but be involved with them. Join and be active in professional organizations such as the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, National Recreation and Park Association, and state associations like TRAPS. They always look for graduates entering the field and offer plenty of development opportunities. Even more, these folks are essentially well established professionals that are in middle and senior level leadership positions. Take advantage of that!

Side Question: What is your favorite quarantine activity?

Fishing!!
Where are you from?
Born and raised in Kathmandu, Nepal

What do you enjoy doing in your leisure time?
I love to explore new places when I am free.

What led you to pursue an education in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences?
I loved being outdoors as a child and I decided to study courses related to the nature; something that was uncommon in Nepal. My options were limited to forestry and agriculture. I chose forestry as it would allow me to better understand the nature and thus began my academic journey. I did my undergrad in Forestry and that raised my interest in the relationship between human and nature. I decided to further my study in the US. I did my masters in human Dimensions of Natural Resources in the University of Missouri where I fell in love with what department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Sciences has to offer. The concept of Parks and Recreation was new to me and I was intrigued by it. Thus, I decided to do my PhD in RPTS and luckily, I was accepted by Dr. Schuett. So here I am.

What inspired you to choose your field of study?
While I was travelling around the country as an undergrad, I learned that people in rural areas of Nepal were completely dependent on the forest for their livelihood. They developed their own strategies to adapt to environmental changes despite numerous hardships and obstacles. These experiences helped me figure out what I wanted to do in my life. I was very much interested in understanding how and why they made the decisions, what motivated them, etc.

What topics in your studies are of most interest?
I am interested in understanding the interaction between people and natural resources and how they coexist. I’m interested in understanding the thought process behind the decision making regarding the environment.
What have you learned through your experiences while in the RPTS Department?

I've learned to try new things and explore different courses in and outside the department. Activities in and outside the classroom has help me grow as a person. With the knowledge and experiences, I've gained, I feel I can make a real difference in the field.

Where do you see yourself in the future? How might your current studies influence your career and/or your life in general?

I don't know where exactly I see myself in the future, but I see myself conducting research in the field. Addressing the needs of people while preserving the ecosystem is a delicate balance. I want to find innovative ways to solve problems associated with human-nature interactions, especially in the third world countries.

What advice would you give new students or those thinking about becoming students in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences?

You are in one of the best programs in the world and there are opportunities everywhere. Just go for it! Like they say, life begins at the end of your comfort zone. And one of the most important things I have learned here is “You are not the only one who is anxious”. Remind yourself that all your friends and peers are going through it too.

Side Question: What has been your favorite quarantine activity?

Watching movies, TV series and cooking new dishes.
Where are you from?

I was born and raised in the Houston suburbs for the most part. However, when I was a baby, my family moved to South America for my father’s work. He ran the computers for the geologists looking for oil in the Amazon. So, we lived in Brazil and in Colombia for a while. My first words were actually in Portuguese because of this.

What do you enjoy doing in your leisure time?

It hasn’t felt like I have had much leisure time in the past four years, between school, commuting, running a household, and being a mom, but what time I have had has been spent sewing, cooking, and hanging out with friends, usually while playing Dungeons and Dragons or some other tabletop RPG.

What led you to pursue an education in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences?

When I first went to college, 25 years ago, I didn’t really have a clear sense of what I wanted to be “when I grow up”. I stumbled around in education, chemistry, Latin, and English majors until I finally dropped out of college, got married, and became a stay at home mom to two. Thirteen years ago, my daughter came home with a Girl Scout sticker on her chest and begged me to join, and I finally found the thing that ignited my passion. Being a Girl Scout Leader allowed me to combine my love of the outdoors, my passion for teaching (but impatience with teaching those who don’t want to be taught, teachers are amazing people), and my creativity in a single activity. The program also helped me develop my own leadership qualities as I tried to teach them to my Girl Scouts. As my marriage was ending, I realized I needed to find a career to support myself and my kids, and I kept glancing through the job postings for Texas Parks and Wildlife and for my local Girl Scout Council. To get the job, I needed a degree and that led me to RPTS – which is basically majoring in Scouting!

What topics in your studies are of most interest?

The Youth Development classes, of course, but I have also become very interested in management, especially for volunteers in nonprofits, and well as management resource.

What have you learned through your experiences while in the RPTS Department?

Dr. Durko taught me to make connections in unexpected places, like Afghanistan. Dr. Crompton taught me how valuable my connections will become. And Dr. Ettekal created a monster, because she taught me to never underestimate myself ever again, and now I refuse to settle for anything less than my goal.
Where do you see yourself in the future? How might your current studies influence your career and/or your life in general?

My studies are going to be the foundation of the rest of my life. I will be beginning my Master’s degree in the Fall, and will be communicating with my local Girl Scout Council to see whether we can develop a new position for in-house evaluation data collation and outcome-based research to help with program development. Eventually, I would also like to get my doctorate and find a permanent position as a researcher on a national level for a large youth development organization, such as Girl Scouts or 4H.

What advice would you give new students or those thinking about becoming students in Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences?

Have fun, it’s what we do after all.

Side Question: What has been your favorite quarantine activity?

Just like a lot of people, my son and I have been baking sourdough, with mixed success. We’ve made bread, of course, but also scallion pancakes, pizza, kolaches, burger buns - and I am now completely addicted to sourdough popovers!!
Dr. Ettekal’s 602 Class (Social Science Foundations of Leisure) transitioned the class into a research study about the COVID-19 pandemic. She and her graduate students are doing a research study to answer questions concerning the impact of the pandemic on young adults’ leisure. The study aligns with the major components of the class as the questions were grounded in prominent leisure theories, utilized various social science research methods, and provided students a real-world example of applied research. Students were assigned different facets of the study and developed research questions, designed survey components, obtained IRB approval, and will implement the study and disseminate findings well beyond the end of the class. She expresses undoubted enthusiasm, pride, and support for her students who rose to the occasion to do meaningful and impactful research during the pandemic.

Dr. Petrick’s 331 Class virtually hosted guest speaker, Peter Grant, the Senior Director of Entertainment for Norwegian Cruise Line. Grant helped the students with their project which was conducted to help NCL develop new ideas for future offerings on their ships.

Susan Scott’s 307 Class, “Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Resources,” videotaped thematic talks about parks and tourism destinations with either family or imaginary audiences instead of presenting to classmates. Interpretive brochures were created which highlight experiences at events and public sites.

Dr. Courtney Suess Raeisinafchi’s 421 Class (Hotel and Resort Operations) worked with the GM of the Texas A & M Hotel and Conference Center to transition online and used an online hotel simulation where student operated hotels as a competitive set in teams.

Dr. Donna-Lee Sullins’ 311, 320, & 321 Event Classes virtually transitioned in a variety of ways. In all three of her classes she continued to host guest speakers, who offered numerous insights into aspects of the event world. These industry professionals shared their expertise while answering questions the students submitted for them, much in the same way as they would have in an in-person class. In the reflective learning exercises the students completed after hearing from their online guest speakers, most found this to be a favorite part of the class, learning “behind the scenes” information in areas of career aspirations and keeping them engaged with others, even during a time of isolation.

While many students took the opportunity to rest and recuperate from the unexpected ending of the spring 2020 semester, 18 RPTS students took on the challenge of earning 3 college credits, normally taught in 14 weeks, in a 14 day period. Starting the day after spring finals, RPTS 311 students attended two classes each week day, with assignment deadlines at 1pm and Midnight until the first day of Summer 1 classes began. Students used virtual contact to work in groups to create a marketing and promotion plan for an event at Texas A&M, practicing using the Texas A&M University brand guide. In addition, three industry professionals gave the students one more opportunity to evaluate career goals while learning essential skills in the production of leisure programs.
Even though our campus and community clients opted to have a pilot of a virtual event rather than one with their actual clientele in attendance, the distinctive learning experience for both the student volunteer participants and the student event managers on conducting an event in a virtual space that meets the same client outcomes was phenomenal. Additionally, the exposure to ideas and implementation strategies our clients had not yet considered helped to them expand their horizons on what was possible for special event participation, even in the time of a pandemic.

The RPTS Scholarship & Awards Banquet

When our team was first told that our event was going to be completely virtual, we felt a little lost, but we were ultimately ready to take on the challenge. The most important goal of the annual banquet is to honor the exemplary students in the RPTS department that have been awarded scholarships, so we wanted to make sure that the celebration aspect was still accomplished with the virtual event. When discussing what our event would look like, our group decided to rule out a large scheduled zoom call, and rather create a website where all recipients could be honored on their own time. We landed on the website idea because it was flexible for participants, everything was in one place, and it was different from what other groups were doing with their virtual events.

To dive a little deeper into the website, we had seven tabs at the top – the home page, a page for the recipients, the mocktail hour, a local businesses page, a page for our activity, a tab honoring the 2019 banquet, and a page saying a special ‘Thank You’ to all that helped in making this event a success. As mentioned earlier, it was very important to us to have the recipients feel like they were still adequately honored, so the recipients page had a picture and some fun facts about each recipient. This was a way for those that would’ve attended the banquet, as well as others in the department, to learn more about the scholarship recipients from home. Our group also worked closely with Ronin Farm & Restaurant in Downtown Bryan in order to send a gift card to each recipient, with hopes that they will be able to enjoy a nice meal when things (hopefully) settle down!

Overall, our group learned that, in order to have a successful virtual event, it is necessary to utilize marketing tools and create a virtual environment that is new and exciting so that participants are inclined to join. This event wouldn't have been possible without our lovely client, Dr. Scott Shafer, and so many others, so to all that played a role in the virtual RPTS Scholarship & Awards Banquet – Thank You!
Boys & Girls Club Gala and Golf Tournament

Katie Seabolt, Avery Cable, Tori Bitner, Lien Nguyen, Allison McWilliams, Zeena Jarrar, Cameron Searcy, and Benjamin Conrey was the team behind converting this event to a virtual format.

Switching this particular event to an online platform was a challenging feat for our team. This task called for creativity, on-the-spot adjustments, and a lot of teamwork! The hardest part was making sure we created an online experience that still accomplished the goals of our client! The main goal was to raise money for the Boys & Girls Club of Brazos Valley, but we also wanted to remain aware of the other goals laid out by our clients, such as maintaining community relations, giving our guests a fun and memorable experience, and creating awareness for the organization! These 4 goals guided all of our decisions when creating this new event.

For this event, we created an event website through Wix.com that not only informed visitors about the event and the Boys & Girls Club of Brazos Valley, but it also served as our platform for online bidding in our silent auction and our virtual golf tournament registration. Our bidding opened a week before the synchronous virtual event would be held via Zoom. On the day of the event, we had a large Zoom meeting with all of our volunteer participants. During our event, we watched a virtual Aggie Wranglers performance, played virtual golf through the WGT Top Golf App with our Aggie Legends leading the breakout sessions (this was just my team and I who picked the Aggie Legends we wanted to act like for the day), and finally announced the winners of the online auction! Overall, we got great feedback from our participants, our clients, and Dr. Sullins, and we were really happy with the final product. I know my team and I were all very thankful for the opportunity to work with the Boys & Girls Club, and we were really excited to further develop our event planning skills to match the new trend of virtual events.

“Designing and managing a well-run virtual event is more than knowing the technology of your platform, which is still largely important. Engaging participants in your program and progressing with a logical and well scripted flow prove to be just as important, if not more so, than in face to face events.”

- Dr. Donna-Lee Sullins, RPTS 321 Event Management Professor
Dancing For The Health Of It

Dancing For The Health Of It is a non-profit event used to raise money for Health For All, a health clinic in Bryan, Texas. With Covid-19 affecting many impactful events, the fundraiser scheduled for April 4, 2020 was moved to a later date. This news was extremely saddening for not only our clients but for my group’s learning experience. But that didn’t stop us from turning our in-person event to a virtual setting.

Transforming our virtual event to make it as real as we possibly could was difficult. My group was the first to attempt the planning and implementation of the virtual event in less than two weeks. At first it was overwhelming trying to communicate with one another to make this event fun, impactful, and memorable. But with commitment, strategic planning, and dedication we were able to pull off an amazing event.

Dancing For The Health Of It was an 80’s themed event so we wanted to bring that fun and energetic energy to life. We encouraged our participates to dress in any 80’s gear they may have, we started off with Mrs. Elizabeth Dickey the Executive Director of Health For All talking a little bit about the organization, had a silent auction with different packages to bid on, had dance couples perform and encouraged those to vote for who they thought was best, and for the final entertainment we had a live dance party where we had “celebrities” lead. We wanted to make those that participated feel as if they were at the in-person event.

The virtual event was a huge success and without Dr. Sullins and Jordan Woosley’s guidance, none of our success would have been possible. Thank you to everyone who participated and made our virtual event come to life!

Another event that went virtual is Kite Fest 2020. The Kite Fest team choose to host their event via Facebook over a few days. Their event included fun arts and crafts projects, such as tie-dying and kite making, to a day full of kite flying in the comfort of your yard.
Mrs. Faustina (Tina) Vega

Retired from Texas A&M University and the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences on May 31, 2020

Mrs. Vega has worked for Texas A&M for more than 47 years, 45 of those with Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. Unfortunately, we will not be able to gather and celebrate Mrs. Vega in a way she truly deserves.

Please help us with an alternative to let her know how much she is appreciated. Offer your congratulations and thanks on this page. Sentiments will be shared with Tina and all who know and have worked with her over a long and successful career!
Way to Go!

Dr. Angela Durko
- and PhD graduate Steve Migacz recently completed a travel study that examined the influence of COVID. While working toward a journal publication they have received interest from the media. Check out the KBTX story run yesterday [https://www.kbtx.com/content/news/COVID-19-wont-stop-some-Texans-summer-travel-570453831.html](https://www.kbtx.com/content/news/COVID-19-wont-stop-some-Texans-summer-travel-570453831.html)
- is also involved in a Learner Experiences in COVID-19 project and has initiated a project to analyze service recovery methods during COVID-19.

Dr. Amanda Stronza
- is part of a team that is submitting a proposal to USAID for $100 million, as part of large TAMU consortium led by the Institute for Infectious Animal Diseases. The Vet School and the Bush School are involved as well. The focus is on stopping the viral spillovers that cause pandemics like COVID-19. She is part of a team of four people who will lead research on the wildlife trade.

Dr. Andrea Ettekal

Dr. Courtney Suess-Raeisinafchi
- has several projects in the works two are: 1) NSF Decision Risk and Management Sciences Program: COVID-19 Related Hospital Patient Spill-over into Hospitality Facilities. Converting Hotels into Long-term Acute Care Hospitals and Skilled Nursing Facilities; 2) X Grant: COVID-19 and tourism: a multidisciplinary assessment. Research to determine travelers propensity to book travel during public health emergencies.

Dr. David Matarrita
- is collaborating with scientists at Universidad de la Frontera, Chile looking at the intersection of enterprises and community as they work together to build resilience to the COVID pandemic.

Dr. Jun Wang & Dr. Darlene Locke
- are working on a project related to Learner Experiences in the Covid-19 Educational Transition (in collaboration with TAMU CTE and colleagues across several colleges). Together they are submitting a Covid-19 Innovation X Grant for a Culturally Responsive Virtual Mentoring Program for Asian- and Mexican-American Teenagers.

Dr. Tazim Jamal
- was interviewed for a piece picked up by the Texas Tribune. The article considers tourism in a COVID world. See: [https://www.texastribune.org/paid-post/tourism-world-covid-19/](https://www.texastribune.org/paid-post/tourism-world-covid-19/). The article is based on a paper that Tazim wrote with epidemiologist Christine Budke of the Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences here at TAMU.
Our department is committed to providing an excellent education. We hope that the educational experience you had in our program and at Texas A&M is proving to be a positive influence in your life. Collecting information from former students like you will help us communicate the RPTS profession and plan for the future. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Responses will not be identified with you. Results will be aggregated and used to advise prospective students, assist current students, and plan for positive changes to the program.

Please go to the address below to complete the survey: https://bit.ly/2SZduvZ
We invite you to learn more about giving to the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences. The web-page link below can link you to specific opportunities that need your support. 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 RPTS Department’s faculty, students, and programs.

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.

To give online, please visit: [www.txamfoundation.com/give.aspx?c_id=2&d_id=13](http://www.txamfoundation.com/give.aspx?c_id=2&d_id=13)

*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.*
Mission:

Our mission is to generate and disseminate knowledge that increases our ability to understand relationships among people, environment and economy in order to respond to the needs of a diverse society.

Vision:

The Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences Department is committed to supporting wellness and prosperity through sustainable environments and positive experiences.

Core Values:

We value...
- the contributions that parks, recreation, community development, and tourism can make to the health of communities.
- scholarship that is validated by peers and external audiences; and we believe that scholarship can be expressed through teaching, research, and extension.

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.
- that our primary responsibility is to the people of Texas;
- that our contributions to the State of Texas will be enhanced by scholarly activities at the national and international levels.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- concepts of social and environmental justice.