



UNC
GREENSBORO

Department of
Community and
Therapeutic Recreation

THE RECREATOR

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 3 • APRIL 2022 •
A SEASON OF CHANGE

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AND MUCH MORE!

Thank you, on behalf of the entire Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation, for joining us for this third issue of "The Recreator."

The title of this issue, "A Season of Change," is applicable in many aspects. As a University, we are starting to transition back to interactive learning in the classroom, and students are able to engage with one another in a capacity that has not been possible since Spring 2020. The University is undergoing yet another period of adjustment, as is the CTR Department.

In this issue we learn about the retirement of three members of our beloved CTR family. Please use the cards linked on page 10 to wish them well with retirement! Experience first-hand what our undergraduate and graduate students are doing, and so much more. Again, thank you for reading this newsletter, and please use the Alumni Update form linked on page 14 to let us know what you are up to.

A FOND FAREWELL

by Dr. Stuart Schleien, CTR Department Chair

I have been a proud member of the Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation (CTR) for nearly 25 years; 23 of them as Department Chair. The Department of CTR prepares recreation, park, and leisure service professionals to enhance the health, wellness, and quality of life of individuals and communities through teaching, research, and community engagement. We strive to promote active, equitable, and empowered lifestyles through our efforts. Over the years, we have prepared literally thousands of undergraduate and graduate students for careers as highly qualified recreational therapists, recreation center directors and programmers, campus recreation directors, park planners, playground operators, special event coordinators, aquatics maintenance supervisors, forest rangers, trail managers, camp directors, outdoor educators, inclusion facilitators, for-profit entrepreneurs, researchers, etc. We make a real difference in people's lives every, single, day.

So, it is with immense pride that after 25 years, I announce my retirement as Professor and Department Chair, effective August 1, 2022.

I have greatly appreciated my tenure here at UNCG, working with five exceptional Deans, outstanding fellow Chairs, esteemed professors, and wonderful colleagues for 2 ½ decades. I am grateful to all who have worked by my side to establish CTR as a strong and viable department with healthy student programs and concentrations.



I am entrusting the Department to an excellent, vibrant faculty who are actively engaged in the university and community at large. I eagerly anticipate their fresh vision and successful leadership into the future.

For the past 2 years, life at the university and in the community has been trying, to say the least. The current pandemic has disrupted and continues to change our routines, timelines, family lives, special events, and plans. Yet, through tenacious efforts and perseverance, our faculty, staff, part-time instructors, students, and alumni have carried on with creativity and compassion. We have used a combination of face-to-face and virtual teaching methods in our curriculum, and faculty have found ways to accommodate students as learners, test-takers, authors, and community volunteers. In the 2021 calendar year alone, in addition to pursuing many exciting community-based research activities, we remarkably accomplished the following:

- supervised 93 student practicum and internship experiences
- collaborated with 116 different community partners across fieldwork and other service learning and research activities
- graduated 79 undergraduate students
- graduated 22 graduate students
- led 5 grants and contracts

None of this would have been possible without the focused and sustained efforts of our students and graduate assistants, community partners, professional advisory committee members, adjunct faculty, donors and of course, the ongoing support of Dean Carl Mattacola and the School of Health and Human Sciences.

As I reflect upon our field, especially since March of 2020, the work of our Department has become significantly more important to society. We have helped lead North Carolina in improving health and wellness through parks and recreation, including recreational therapy, facilitated equity and inclusion, built stronger communities, and enhanced conservation of natural spaces in communities everywhere. Through recreation service delivery, people are discovering healthy outlets in our recreation centers, state, regional and national parks. In ever-increasing numbers, people are becoming more empathetic and inclusive. Recreation programs and leisure environments have become more universally designed, accessible, accommodating, and relevant for people of varying abilities. The Department has grown into a diverse, multi-perspective organization. CTR has stayed true to its progressive values and mission and has continuously answered the clarion call to serve our citizens in socially just and equitable ways. (continued on page 3)

A FOND FAREWELL (CONTINUED)

Through the efforts of many dedicated colleagues, leaders, and scholars with whom I've had the privilege of working alongside over the past 25 years - - including my current colleagues Justin Harmon, Ben Hickerson, Judy Kinney, Kim Miller, Joan Sutton, and Brent Wolfe, and former colleagues, Densie Anderson, Leandra Bedini, Candice Bruton, Lin Buettner, Erick Byrd, Bonnie Canziani, David Cardenas, Catherine Dorwart, Nancy Gladwell, Jerrie Hsieh, Donna Jeffers-Brown, Stephen Maynard, Terry Schwartz, Jim Sellers, Charlsena Stone, and Matt Zuefle; exceptional Administrative Assistants, Amy Chandler and Ann Venable; and Adjunct Instructors, Mike Ackerman, Jennifer Ball, Sue Fitzsimmons, Phil Fleischmann, Alex Hauer, Austin Homan, Jung-Hwan Jeon, Lindsey Oakes, Erik Unger, and Pamela Wilson, just to name a few - - we always maintained an ambitious agenda, tackled tough issues, and stuck to our vision and core values. I want to thank every one of you for placing your loyalty and trust in me for 25 wonderful years. I am proud to have worked alongside each of you, and I will forever cherish the relationships and memories.

This is surely not my exit from the fields of recreation or disability advocacy, as I am passionately devoted to the social inclusion of people of all abilities in our communities. Although a significant change in lifestyle, retirement will allow me to recreate and take on new personal and professional challenges. I look forward to additional creative endeavors with InFocus Advocacy, spending more time with my family, pursuing new hobbies, visiting friends, and when not on the tennis or bocce courts, enjoying a good book and a few great tunes in the comfort of my home.

I am so proud to have been a part of CTR, HHS, and UNCG, and I plan to stay connected as Professor Emeritus for many years to come. Here's to newfound health, happiness, justice, and peace; and the time to enjoy them in fulfilling and meaningful ways.

GRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

by Dr. Ben Hickerson, Co-Graduate Program Director

Have you considered a master's degree to redirect your career, or position yourself for a well-deserved promotion? If so, did you know that the Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation offers a Master's of Parks and Recreation Management?

Our program is highly flexible and allows graduate students to specialize in a wide array of interest areas, including, Therapeutic Recreation, Community Recreation Management, Campus Recreation, and Event Planning. We have numerous opportunities for applied learning experiences, including internships, special projects, and directed research so you can customize a plan of study to fit your career goals.

In addition to costs that are among the lowest in the southeastern U.S., we offer a range of generous financial aid opportunities, including federal programs, scholarships, grants, and loans along with paid graduate assistantships in the department and with local partner agencies.

You will have an opportunity to thrive in a supportive and collaborative learning environment, led by faculty mentors who are committed to your success. We are excited to share access to our professional networks of recreation professionals across the region, state, and nation. Many of whom read this newsletter!

We invite you to learn more by visiting our [webpage](#). Please feel free to contact Dr. Benjamin Hickerson (bdhicker@uncg.edu) with any questions you may have. Act quickly for Fall 2022 enrollment; the application deadline is approaching quickly.



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Gabriela Gonzalez, CTR

Undergraduate Student

Greetings! My name is Gabriela and I am a senior at UNC Greensboro majoring in Parks and Recreation Management with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation. I am currently the Vice President of the Community Therapeutic Recreation Club (CTR Club). I have had an amazing experience learning about the field and the expectations of a professional within my classes and the club. I love learning and being proactive within the field. I strongly recommend taking advantage of all the opportunities the university and the department have to offer, such as events, conferences, clubs, volunteer work, projects, and challenges. I have had the pleasure to serve as a student representative for UNC Greensboro by creating video content and participating in presentations. I have also been a student panelist for both the "R-Word Documentary" and UNCG's NAVIGATE Program. I completed the Bronze Leadership Challenge from the UNCG Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement and was awarded a medallion and a certificate as a result. These opportunities created an impact on my vision for the future and how I could use my skills to help others. My passion is a combination of being able to guide and motivate others along with creating an impact through radiating a positive attitude, which is the reason why I chose recreational therapy. I believe a kind heart and smile can inspire motivation in others. The best advice I could give

any student is to network with other professionals, participate in most the opportunities offered to you, and create a balanced lifestyle. This is important to help develop your character, find your passion, and grow into a professional. Finding your internship will be one of the most important experiences leading into your professional career, so use these opportunities to become a competitive candidate. Your time in college will fly by, and it is important to have fun while you are engaged!

I am grateful for my experience within the field, and it is bittersweet knowing it is coming to an end. I plan to work in the TR field once I graduate and pursue a Master's or Doctorate degree in the future.



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Shayla Lester, Undergraduate Student

Being a part of the CTR Department has been nothing short of inspiring. Coming into college I was not sure where I would fit in, nor what I wanted to do with my career. I was not even aware that there was such a thing as a CTR Department. Growing up, I was always in or around recreation. When I discovered this major, I felt as if what I wanted in life could actually happen. Even though I have had many challenges in my college career, the CTR Department has definitely offered many opportunities for my future and has exposed me to so much more than just the term "recreation." It has proven the true meaning behind the name community recreation. When it comes to making time for class or taking time out for leisure, I have found it to become second nature. I enjoy the classes offered because I am able to relate with those who have the same vision and outlook in the field as myself. Choosing this career path has not only bettered myself in the present, but has created a true foundation for my passion within this career field in the future.

Being a CTR student has been a challenge mentally, simply because I want more for the community and more for the children within the community. I have experienced a lot as a

child, but one thing that got me through it was recreation. Rather it be basketball games on the weekends or field day at school. Having a moment in time to where I could just be a kid and enjoy life for what it is, is something I wish I could have every day. Coming to college I didn't really have a plan, but being a part of the CTR Department and making the connections that are needed have taught me that I need a plan to make something great out of this passion. I want to make a mark. Not only within communities but in recreation itself. CTR has been one of the best motivators when it comes to pushing myself to achieve everything I want in life and for that I am forever grateful.

Best,
Shayla



GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Abby Draut, Community Recreation Management Graduate Student

I have spent my time at UNCG as one of the Outdoor Adventures Graduate Assistants. I currently oversee the Piney Lake Informal Recreation and Events Program. I have had the opportunity to create, plan, and implement 29 new programs and events for Piney Lake during my time here, while managing the informal recreation program. The biggest event was watermelon welcome back where we had over 400 students attend to participate in the watermelon hunt, slip-n-slide and free Kona ice snow cones. The most intricate event to create was Fright Night. This event was where students were led through the hiking trails of Piney Lake that were scattered with zombie actors and spooky surprises. Fright Night is now an annual event put on by Outdoor Adventures at Piney Lake. Many events are in collaboration with other groups on campus, like our upcoming Piney Lake Spring Opening Festival where we will be working with the campus radio station to host the WUAG-apalooza during the event, as well as the Art Department to have a floating art exhibit to paddle around.

Working with Outdoor Adventures/RecWell has truly spoiled me with professional development and creative opportunities. I am so thankful to have been able to spread my wings during my time here. As my time here comes to an end, I am excited for my future career in recreation. I am currently on the job search for a position that will allow me to create, plan, and implement outdoor events through managing teams. I look forward to a career full of creative problem-solving, teamwork, and community service. My time at UNCG has highlighted the importance of serving the community and I am ecstatic to take my skills to the next level and serve larger populations. I would like to offer a huge thank you to my CTR professors, Justin, Ben, Phil, and Dr. Bramwell in the Department of Political Science, as well as my supervisors at OA, Nathan, Alex, and Mike who have supported me through every minute of my time here.



GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Yasmin Martin, Therapeutic Recreation Graduate Student

Hello! My name is Yasmin Martin. I am a first-year graduate student in the Community and Therapeutic Recreation Department. I am from Greensboro, NC. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant for the department. I spend my hours working with the Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (AIR) section of Greensboro Parks and Recreation. Greensboro AIR strives to advocate for and provide recreational opportunities for individuals of all ages and abilities. We provide positive recreational experiences such as competitive sports, community outings, and virtual cooking classes.

I started my journey with Greensboro AIR in August of 2021. This experience has forced me to break out of my shell, placing me in multiple leadership roles. One of my main roles includes being a League Coordinator for the Challenger Football and Basketball leagues. The Challenger Sports program is special because it offers children and adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities a chance to compete competitively against other NC area Parks and Recreation Departments. I handle all communications

within the leagues, as well as design and implement practice plans for the coaches. For the 2022 Challenger Basketball season, I was able to form a relationship with the Greensboro Swarm to provide over 60 athletes with “Swag Bags” that include a Greensboro Swarm drawstring bag, a basketball, and a Swarm t-shirt, as a gift for a job well done during the season.

I also work as an Inclusion Counselor for the after-school program at Lindley Recreation Center. Here I assist the recreation center staff to make adaptations or modifications to programs and activities as well as make sure that the children engage in all the activities with the other participants. Currently, I am assisting in writing grants to help jumpstart an adaptive mountain bike program here in Greensboro.

My time spent with Greensboro AIR truly does not feel like work some days. I’ve had the opportunity to build relationships with many of the wonderful people in our community. Greensboro AIR offers many opportunities for anyone looking to volunteer. I would be more than happy to share information for anyone that is interested.

To see a photo of the Challenger Football team, check out page 7!

FACULTY PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

by Dr. Brent Wolfe, CTR Faculty

“Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.” John Dewey

John Dewey was correct. Students learn best through doing, not simply being passive vessels sitting in a classroom. In an effort to continue to enhance students’ learning experiences in CTR, in fall 2021, students enrolled in CTR 231 (Introduction to Therapeutic Recreation) collaborated with the Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation program (AIR) within the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department to host an Adaptive Sports Expo. This service-learning project was designed to educate students and give them an opportunity to practice concepts being taught in the classroom while providing a service to those in the greater Greensboro community. As students in this class were learning about disability and how recreational therapists can provide treatment for individuals with disabilities, a project of this nature was very natural and contributed to the course learning outcomes.

At the beginning of the semester, students selected groups and were assigned an adaptive sport (wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, boccia ball, goal ball, beep baseball, or seated volleyball). Anna Chiarelli, a graduate student completing her special project for her Master’s degree, worked with the students to teach them the different adaptive sports, while Kaitlynn Temple, AIR’s Assistant Coordinator, worked with the class to talk about AIR and how they serve people with disabilities through a variety of programs. Students continued to work throughout the semester developing an understanding of their sport, researching the rules and classification, and practicing how to both play and coach their sport.

On the day of the event students arrived early and manned their stations, prepared to coach and teach their adaptive sport. In addition to the students, individuals with a variety of disabilities were on hand who had experience participating in the different adaptive sports, including two Paralympians in goal ball! It was truly amazing to watch the students spring into action. They were attentive, friendly, knowledgeable, and did a fantastic job with their adaptive sports.

One of the hallmarks of a service-learning experience is the opportunity for reflection. Every student engaged in the project was able to make a clear connection between what they had been learning in class and what they experienced during the Adaptive Sports Expo. Additionally, when asked what they learned through this experience, students provided these responses:

- “We learned how to adapt to different participants and their abilities in order for everyone to be able to play.”
- “Another thing we learned and witnessed was how adaptive sports is a positive outlet for people with disabilities. Yes, we’re in this class where we learn it, but seeing it in action helped put it into reality that people can do any sport they want to do.”
- “Sports can really influence how someone can view themselves and it can really impact a person’s mood.”

All in all, students in CTR 231 were excellent representatives of the department and provided a very meaningful and memorable experience for those in attendance at the inaugural Adaptive Sports Expo.



Pictured: The 2021 Challenger Football team through Greensboro AIR, managed by CTR Graduate Student, Yasmin Martin.



Our CTR Family



Pictured: Four graduate students with faculty members, Dr. Brent Wolfe and Ms. Joan Sutton, at NCRTA SPIF 2022.



Pictured: Top Left: Dr. Stuart Schleen, Ms. Joan Sutton, Dr. Leandra Bedini, Dr. Judy Kinney, and Ms. Kim Miller. **Top Right:** Ms. Amy Chandler and Kristin Bogner. **Bottom:** Dr. Judy Kinney, Dr. Stuart Schleen, Ms. Joan Sutton, Dr. Leandra Bedini and Ms. Kim Miller.

HAIL AND FAREWELL TO A LEGEND AND A GEM

by Dr. Leandra Bedini, CTR Professor Emerita

It is hard to imagine walking the halls of CTR without seeing Drs. Stuart Schleien and Judy Kinney, but we are happy to wish them well as they embark on their next life chapters of retirement. There will be no challenge to the fact that they both deserve to finally have time to pursue that elusive “life of leisure” that they have spent so many years teaching others about.

Dr. Schleien is a legend in his own right. He came to UNCG in 1997 already internationally known for his work on inclusive recreation and equipped with many administrative skills that have left a lasting legacy on the faculty, staff, and students of CTR over the last 25 years. Through his research, grants, and publications, he has enriched many aspects of the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities by facilitating the design and implementation of innovative inclusive programs as well as working with agencies to engage in policy change.

Dr. Kinney is a gem, often tucked away in her office on the other side of the hall, but sparkling with knowledge, advice, and an endless energy to teach and mentor her students and colleagues. She came to us in 2015 as not only a licensed recreational therapist, but also a certified child life specialist. Through her “clinical” lens, she introduced CTR to a myriad of new complementary and alternative interventions such as virtual reality, especially focused on reducing stress and pain.

Although on opposite ends of the practice spectrum, together these two have helped CTR offer a balanced core and TR curriculum. Both are passionate and dedicated

beyond the fray. They both have embraced important leadership roles within the department and university as well as in the community. More impressively, however, their passion and dedication always extend to an investment in the “family” of CTR. Examples range from game parties at Dr. Schleien’s home to welcome new graduate students, to his long days working side-by-side with faculty to address critical curricular and departmental issues; or Dr. Kinney personally assisting students as they negotiate first conferences, to serving on the licensure board to fight when TR licensure was threatened. They worked hard to make CTR our second home. Their doors were never closed when we needed them; they sought to collaborate with us in professional projects; they truly enjoyed their work.

While we are very sad to say goodbye, we bask in their lasting legacies – what we learned from them in the classroom; what we learned from them through their mentorship; what we learned from them by example; and the friendship they shared along the way. We wish them all the best: time to read a non-professional novel uninterrupted, a guilt free Sunday night that does not entail grading, the opportunity to sleep in past the crack of dawn, and enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee/tea at home (not the EUC).

Thank you, Stuart and Judy - for your unending love and dedication to the Department, School, UNCG, and the profession. CTR is better because of you. You will be greatly missed but content to know it is finally your turn to “leisure.” Congratulations and best wishes for a happy retirement.

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY AND THERAPEUTIC RECREATION DEPARTMENT

by Dr. Brent Wolfe, CTR Faculty and Ms. Kimberly Miller, MS, CPRP, CTR Faculty and Director of Undergraduate Studies

In addition to the retirement of Drs. Schleien and Kinney, another CTR stalwart will be retiring this year, Ms. Amy Chandler. Ms. Amy, as she is affectionately referred to by students, has held every answer we can imagine. Have a question about classes, Ms. Amy knows the answer. Have a question about room locations, Ms. Amy has the answer. Have a question about how to fix a computer, Ms. Amy has the answer. Ms. Amy has tirelessly worked behind the scenes to make the department run smoothly. For

students, Ms. Amy is often the first point of contact with the department, and she serves as an invaluable source of information and guidance. For faculty, she is the glue that holds the department together, where she assists new faculty in getting oriented to the department and university and existing faculty with timely information to keep everyone on track. She is patient. She is kind. She never seeks praise or attention for her efforts. Rather, she works relentlessly to enable others to do their work. Amy Chandler is certainly the definition of a

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY AND THERAPEUTIC RECREATION DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED)

servant leader and has quietly been the backbone of our department for over 20 years. We are tremendously appreciative of all her work, encouragement, smiles, and patience. Amy, you will be deeply missed upon your retirement in July 2022.

If I were asked to describe Amy Chandler, I would say she is absolutely the most important person in the department. Amy is everything to our department. Without her, nothing runs. What amazes me most about Amy is her Radar O'Reilly (a character in an old TV series called M.A.S.H. for you young folk) type skill of knowing what faculty, staff, and students need before they even realize it. Furthermore, I have always been astonished at how welcoming, understanding, and supportive she has been of all our students, no matter their needs. Across the 20+ years that Amy has been with us, she has received some odd requests from the faculty, as well as students, yet she has never blinked an eye or said, "I can't do that" or even, "I'm not sure if I can do that." Instead, those crazy requests have always been met with a "Let me find out about that."

While we don't have a lot of classic, funny stories about Amy's time with us as we do with others—such as the delivery of a pallet of paperclips from the office supply store instead of the package we thought we had ordered—we do have wonderful memories; memories we will hold close to our hearts as Amy moves on to the next phase of her life, retirement. Whatever you do Amy, make sure you earn an A+ in "Retirement" by getting out there and picking blueberries, foraging for mushrooms, spoiling the grandbabies, watching for the international space station, cuddling with your dog, and going on beach trips. Oh, and I almost forget, spending time with your husband (just joking Paige, I would never forget to list you as an important part of her retirement plans). Amy, just know that you will be missed dearly!

Please Join us in wishing Dr. Stuart Schleien, Dr. Judy Kinney, and Ms. Amy Chandler Happy Retirement! Click the cards below to leave them messages!



[Click here](#) to wish Dr. Stuart Schleien Happy Retirement!

[Click here](#) to wish Ms Amy Chandler Happy Retirement!



[Click here](#) to wish Dr. Judy Kinney Happy Retirement!

CTR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN 2021 ARE SOARING!

by Ms. Kimberly Miller, MS, CPRP, CTR Faculty and Director of Undergraduate Studies

There is nothing that makes faculty more excited than to see students graduate and move on to either graduate school or successful careers. To look back on where these students started when they entered our program and how they grew into the professionals they have begun, is awe inspiring. While faculty may provide guidance and nurturing along the way, it is the student who digs deep inside and makes it happen.

While many former students continue to contact our faculty and let us know how they are doing and where their career or schooling is taking them, the department hasn't had a very formal way of capturing this in the past. We decided to change that in 2021. Undergraduate students who graduated in either May or August 2021 were sent a very brief survey, 3-months post-graduation. To say that we are happy with the results would be an understatement.

Of all these former students, 27% applied to graduate school, and of those, 100% were accepted. How is that for success? And 2021 graduates' success in securing employment was just as impressive, especially given the continued backdrop of COVID. Ninety-one percent (91%) of 2021 graduating students were employed 3-months post-graduation. When just looking at the August 2021 graduates, this number was even more impressive with 94% being employed 3-months post-graduation.

The faculty are proud of all these students. We hope that they will remain in touch with us and lend their expertise to the future generation of professionals through guest lectures, sites for the program planning class, provision of volunteer opportunities, and as practicum and internship sites.

Let's continue the cycle of greatness among CTR graduates of the G!

CTR STUDENT CLUB

The CTR Student Club encourages participation in career programs offered by CTR. The club promotes professionalism among students, provides opportunities for professional development, creates an awareness of CTR through public relations, and provides opportunities for members to professionally and successfully make contacts in the CTR field.

Membership in the CTR Student Club is free and open to all CTR students, so join today!

Contact the CTR Student Club via email at ctr@uncg.edu and follow us on Instagram for important updates!



[@uncg_ctrclub](https://www.instagram.com/uncg_ctrclub)



WHAT MAKES AN INTERNSHIP SUCCESSFUL?

by Ms. Joan Sutton, MS, CTR Faculty

What makes an internship successful? I have been asked this question a few times recently. My response to students focuses on five essential qualities: a) the work environment, b) skill development opportunities, c) networking, d) evaluation methods, and e) mentorship.

A good work environment that helps set a student intern up for success is when organizations provide a student intern job description, a manual, and a schedule. These three essential items help a student intern best understand the clear goals and expectations an organization has of them during the internship experience, which permits the student intern to better schedule their time to promote a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, providing a student intern a place to work (desk space), access to computer systems, and a spot to leave their personal belongings can help a student intern feel like a valued member of the team. In turn, feeling like a part of the team makes a student intern more likely to invest in their learning experience and will feel empowered to ask questions, build relationships with department members, and be more invested in skill development opportunities the agency provides.

Skill development is the number one driver of the intern experience; it provides student interns with the opportunity to gain practical learning experiences by applying classroom theory into “real world” settings. The student intern’s professional growth is enhanced when the internship is comprehensive in nature and provides exposure to a variety of different agency functions (e.g., program planning, budgeting, ordering supplies, supervision of volunteers). While the university sets its own required student learning outcomes to meet certification and accreditation standards, many student interns have their own professional goals or interests they hope to explore. Site supervisors that create/re-create learning opportunities for student interns through meaningful projects and additional learning experiences ensure that student interns have a chance to see the impact their contributions have made from their set or desired learning outcomes. These experiences help student interns increase their confidence to tackle real work-related problems with the resources at their fingertips.

In addition to skill development, working on specific projects and tasks can encourage a student intern to network with a particular department or team members. Student interns benefit from interviewing or observing other professionals in different job roles at the agency. This helps student interns gain a better understanding of

the work and expertise of the agency, gives them a sense of the various ways things can be done (remember we don’t all do tasks the same way), and allows for student interns to seek career advice, inspiration, business connections, and explore other career interests. Finally, by networking with others, student interns can receive constructive feedback, which helps them with future performance evaluations.

Performance evaluations are one of the most important communication tools an internship site can use to evaluate student intern progress. In addition to meeting weekly with a student intern, the university requires performance evaluations in which site supervisors evaluate a student intern at the middle and end of the internship experience. Recently, I have become more aware of internship sites awarding high praises or ratings on performance evaluations. In conversation, it’s expressed that these supervisors want the student intern to do well or get a good grade on the internship. However, I feel this defeats the purpose. Midterm and final evaluations provide feedback, recognize quality performance, and set expectations for future job performance evaluations. It is also a time to have candid conversations about performance that is lacking and how performance can be improved. Ongoing performance discussions can assist in avoiding serious problems in the future. From my experience as the department’s clinical fieldwork supervisor, a high (think all 5 out of 5’s) mid-term grade gives the intern no goals to shoot for and that full marks on an item should mean that they have nothing else to learn on that item, not that they are making good progress. In other words, full marks imply the intern has exceeded expectations. In reality, I ask you, is this true?

One recommendation I have for site supervisors is to be realistic in evaluating a student intern. Student interns will only be at a site for 12-14 weeks, so exceeding expectation scores doesn’t help a student intern identify their personal strengths and weaknesses as they begin to pursue full-time employment opportunities. By being honest in your evaluation feedback, a site supervisor can become a mentor. In my opinion, great mentors provide advice, help a student intern establish professional goals, assist in refining a student’s skillsets needed for the field, and serve as a sounding board to interns as they step into the field. Remember, interns are sponges, and those site supervisors who provide mentorship, you are helping to create a whole new set of incredible field experts.



FACULTY RESEARCH UPDATE

by Dr. Brent Wolfe, CTR Faculty

In the fall of 2020, students enrolled in CTR 231 (Introduction to Therapeutic Recreation) had the opportunity to participate in a disability simulation. The purpose of the simulation assignment was for students to become more sensitive to the requirements placed on individuals with disabilities, to develop an awareness of physical and attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities face, and to engage in a direct experience with a disabling condition. For this project, students spent six-hours simulating a disability of their choice while they engaged in their daily routine: going to class, grocery shopping, cooking, spending time with friends, going out to eat, etc. They were encouraged to keep their daily routine as normal as possible and not allow the simulation to interfere with their activities.

To aid in the completion of their disability simulation, students were able to choose which disability they would like to simulate. Wheelchairs were provided for students to reserve and, as a result, most students elected to complete their simulation in a wheelchair. Additional disabilities were offered for simulation for two reasons: (a) for students who had a particular concern or aversion to being in a wheelchair and (b) to allow students to experience something other than a visible, physical disability.

At the completion of their projects, students were required to develop a creative project that told their story from their time engaged in the simulation. Their only requirements: no papers, no formal presentations, and to be as creative as possible. Student projects far exceeded the expected depth of insight and creativity expected! Students submitted everything from videos to poems, to blogs, to TikToks, to sculptures and other works of art.

Simultaneously alongside their disability simulation, students had the opportunity to enroll in a research project designed to evaluate the effects of a disability simulation. Disability simulations have mixed reviews in the literature, so this project was intentionally looking to add to the collective knowledge about how these experiences impact undergraduate students' recreational therapy education. Data are currently being analyzed to examine how the experience impacted their empathy and understanding of working with people with disabilities. In the preliminary analysis, it is clear that students were moved by the experience, gained a level of empathy they could not otherwise have gained, and were able to learn lessons that will have direct impact on them as practitioners.

Final results from this study are currently being written collaboratively with Meaghan Conway, a current CTR graduate student, and will be submitted for publication this spring.

One of the hallmarks of the Community and Therapeutic Recreation Department at UNCG is the commitment to student education and engaging in practical, real-world research. This particular project allowed students to both gain a deeper understanding of what it can be like for individuals, but it also exposed them to the overall research process. While not all students elected to participate, all students witnessed research in action.



ALUM UPDATES HERE

by Kim Dunlap, CTR Alumna

My name is Kim Dunlap and I graduated with my MS degree from the CTR Department in the winter of 2020. I completed the Advanced Master's Program, starting in my undergrad after I transferred from a local community college. I currently work as one of two recreational therapists at a brand new behavioral health facility at UNC Caldwell—Jonas Hill Hospital & Clinic. I have learned a lot throughout my time and in my role as the recreational therapist. I was most eager when offered this job to help establish what RT looks like for this facility and to advocate for RT not only to staff, but for patients. As we slowly built our census up, I tried to create different programming for the unit. One of the first programs I established was a 5K walking program to help initiate physical activity and give patients goals to work towards during their downtime. During my assessment, I explain the program and give each patient a handout on the benefits of exercise and mental health. Then, if the patient chooses to complete a 5K, they can track laps and hand it back in for a prize and certificate. Another program I established is an instrument group. I originally wanted to write a grant to fund these instruments, but when I spoke with our CEO, she offered to pay for them! I selected some drums, shakers, guitars, and ukuleles. If the patient is appropriate, then they can engage in drumming circles or instrument exploration with staff supervision. My time at UNCG guided me to become the best practitioner I could be. During my time there, I wanted to take advantage of every opportunity that came up in hopes that it could one day apply to my career down the road. I am pleasantly surprised that my degree and experience with the CTR department opened doors to additional paths I did not imagine while in school. I work as a LGBTQIA+ victim advocate for survivors of sexual assault in the Hickory, NC and surrounding areas through the Family Guidance Center. My classes in community recreation and event planning have helped a

lot as I am helping plan fundraisers and events. My role includes providing victim services through a crisis line, two survivor groups, a nature walking group for trauma survivors, and a trauma informed yoga group. Additionally, I was offered an opportunity to teach a cooking class to adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities at Catawba Valley Community College. I loved my time teaching cooking so much that I have decided to help out as needed with additional developmental courses to help teach students the life and occupational skills to succeed. I hope to continue to grow as a professional as I engage in RT conferences, in studies, and additional roles through my various job titles. I love having students at Jonas Hill and hope to teach adjunct psychology or recreational therapy courses at nearby colleges. I am grateful to still have a solid connection with the faculty in the CTR Department as they still help facilitate my growth as a practitioner long after graduation.

Best,
Kim Dunlap, MS, LRT/CTRS



Late-Breaking News!
Dr. Justin Harmon has been promoted to Associate Professor with permanent tenure.
Congratulations Dr. Harmon, we are so excited for you!

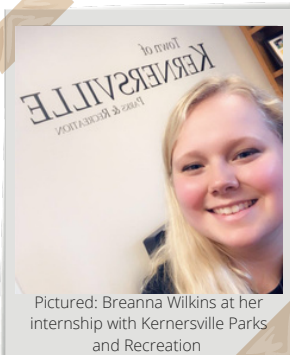
ALUM UPDATES

by Jathan Burnette, CTR Alumnus

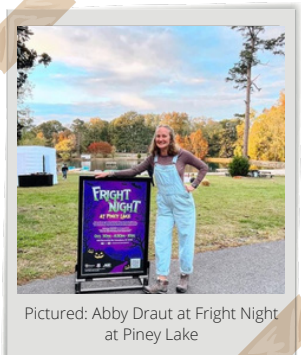
Hello! My name is Jathan Burnette and I graduated from UNCG in May 2021 with a degree in Recreation and Parks Management. I completed my internship at Cork and Grind in High Point, NC! At UNCG, the CTR department is amazing and has wonderful professors who love what they do. They were able to foster my love for recreation and working with people into a degree. I have had several opportunities to do community outreach, meet people in our field, and pick up some helpful tips along the way. Not only that, but I was able to network and build relationships with classmates as well. I also loved the department's emphasis on inclusion which is very important because we want everyone involved and having fun together. One of my favorite classes was CTR 213 with Ms. Kim because I was able to work with the Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation Program at the Greensboro Sportsplex. I also enjoyed learning about the Grateful Dead with Dr. Harmon in CTR 416. Finally, here is some advice from me. Get out and explore; go to a state park or the mountains. They are beautiful and the scenery is amazing. Secondly, networking is key! Go to conferences and network because you will never know who you will meet. Also check out the CTR Club! They always have something new and interesting going on! Lastly, explore the Greensboro Parks System. Learn about everything the city has to offer, because there is a plethora of opportunities right in our backyard!



Pictured: Jathan Burnette at his internship site, Cork and Grind



Pictured: Breanna Wilkins at her internship with Kernersville Parks and Recreation



Pictured: Abby Draut at Fright Night at Piney Lake

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to know what you have been up to. If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that every accomplishment, regardless of size, and connections with others is crucial. Let us know about any awards, accomplishments, or life events and we will share them in our next edition of The Recreator.

Now that you've read all about us, use the [Alumni Update Form](#) so we can read about you!

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

We want to
hear from you!



TIMES ARE TOUGH AND MONEY IS TIGHT...

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting everyday life, we thank you for your continued support and wish our CTR family health and peace. Right now, our department faces new challenges. As we adapt to these unprecedented circumstances, we'll continue to serve our CTR community as best we can. While there's a lot of uncertainty, we know that we need to adapt fast to our changing reality. Now, more than ever, our CTR family needs us, and we need you.

To make a gift, click the link below, and search for the area you would like to support!

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CAN'T DONATE? YOU CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- Let us know of any positions opening at your agency
- Host an intern
- Nominate someone for the next issue's "Kudos" page

WRITE A PIECE FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER!

Do you have a story to share with your CTR family? Interesting research, relevant topics, or opportunities? We are always looking for new authors and articles, so please let us know!

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We are so proud of our alumni and we want to stay in touch. Let us know where you are now so we are able to keep an accurate database of our students for future opportunities.

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