



ANNOUNCING THE ACADEMY FOR PARK & RECREATION ADMINISTRATION (AAPRA) 2020 BEST DISSERTATION AWARD

DESCRIPTION: The Academy (AAPRA) is an organization of distinguished practitioners and scholars committed to the advancement of the park and recreation field and has three primary purposes:

- To advance knowledge related to the administration of public parks and recreation.
- To encourage scholarly efforts both by practitioners and educators to enhance the practice of public parks and recreation administration, and to promote broader public understanding of the importance of public parks and recreation to the public good.
- To conduct research, publish scholarly papers, and/or sponsor seminars related to the advancement of public parks and recreation administration.

In light of the Academy's focus, AAPRA hosts an annual competition that alternates between best master's thesis (odd years) and best doctoral dissertation (even years).

THE AWARD: The following three awards will be given:

- One (1) Best Dissertation Award of \$1,000 plus expenses up to \$500 for the author to travel to the Academy's Annual Membership Meeting to receive the award and present the dissertation
- Certificate of Merit awards to the two (2) next "Best Dissertations" submitted.

ELIGIBILITY:

1. For the dissertation award, the submission must have been written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree
2. The dissertation must have been completed within the previous two (2) calendar years and including spring semester of the current year. For the 2020 award, this includes dissertations completed in 2018, 2019, and Spring 2020.
3. The dissertation should make a contribution to scholarly literature and have clear implications for the improved practice of park and recreation administration.
4. The author of the winning dissertation must attend the Academy's annual membership meeting (currently scheduled for the 2020 NRPA Conference in Orlando on October 27th) and will present a five (5) minute synopsis of their dissertation (and its implications for the profession).

ENTRY PROCEDURE:

1. Submit **two** electronic files to Andrew Mowen, Chair of the Academy's Best Paper Award Committee no later than **Friday May 29th, 2020** at amowen@psu.edu The files should include:
 - a. File #1:
 - i. Cover page listing the title of the dissertation; student's name, current mailing address, e-mail address and phone number; academic advisor's name, e-mail address, and phone number; date on which the dissertation was completed; and date the degree requirements were completed.
 - ii. The executive summary of the dissertation, not exceeding 1000 words
 - b. File #2:
 - i. Cover page with the title of the dissertation and no other information
 - ii. The executive summary of the dissertation, not exceeding 1000 words
2. A blind review of the executive summary will be undertaken by the Academy's Best Paper Committee.
3. Writers of the three (3) executive summaries which receive the highest ratings will be requested to submit a full electronic copy of their dissertation to the Committee Chair (by July 17th). The committee will then review each dissertation, select the winner, and announce the results. Final awardees will be notified toward the end of August.

CRITERIA: The dissertations will be evaluated by a committee of Academy members using a weighted scoring system with the following criteria:

1. **RELATIONSHIP TO PARK AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION** (15 pts): The subject matter must relate to park and recreation administration in some way. While it may use a separate disciplinary approach – for example, management, marketing, economics, financing, evaluation – it must have relevance to park and recreation administration in the broad context. Given these parameters, is the topic timely and of importance?
2. **QUALITY OF THE PROBLEM DEVELOPMENT** (25 pts): The methodology should be clearly presented and should demonstrate knowledge of techniques appropriate to the research and its objectives. Methodological quality should be judged in the context of the discipline and type of study which is most appropriate.
3. **CREATIVE APPROACH** (20 pts): The study should make a creative contribution. Does the study examine a new problem? Does the study make a creative contribution to the knowledge of park and recreation administration? Does the study use new techniques to examine an old problem? Does the study extend beyond present understanding of the topic?
4. **USEFULNESS AND APPLICABILITY** (20 pts): While the development of theory is important, the study should have implications for the improved practice of park and recreation administration. This criterion is concerned with measuring practicability.
5. **QUALITY OF PRESENTATION** (20 pts): The quality of the writing, including readability and use of graphics, is measured by this criterion. Technical jargon may be necessary but the writing should be understood by practitioners. The organization, continuity and clarity, are of concern together with the quality of the style and grammar.

TIMELINE:

- April 28 Call for papers (dissertations) formally announced/posted
- May 29 Electronic executive summaries due to Andrew Mowen, amowen@psu.edu
- June 22 Evaluation of the executive summaries completed by committee and narrowed to three (3)
- July 17 Top three (3) entries will submit full dissertation (electronically) to Andrew Mowen
- August 21 Evaluation of three (3) dissertations completed and winners notified
- October 27-29 Oral presentation of winning dissertation made at the AAPRA membership meeting (currently planned to occur along with the NRPA Conference in Orlando, FL)

For more information: Andrew J. Mowen, Ph.D., Chair of the Academy's Best Paper Award Committee, amowen@psu.edu – 814-777-5848 (cell)