



## **ANNOUNCING THE ACADEMY FOR PARK & RECREATION ADMINISTRATION (AAPRA) 2021 BEST MASTER'S THESIS 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) Master's Thesis Award of \$1,000 plus expenses and up to \$500 in travel funds to attend the NRPA 2021 Annual Conference in Nashville, TN. (Note: If the Academy does not hold an in-person event at the NRPA Conference or if the selected winner is unable to attend, travel support will not be provided.)
- Two (2) Certificate of Merit Awards to the two (2) "Best Paper Master's Thesis" finalists.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

1. The submission must have been written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree.
2. The submission must have been completed within the previous two (2) calendar years and including spring semester of the current year. For the 2021 Award, eligible theses are those completed in 2019, 2020, and Spring 2021.
3. The submission 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 master's thesis must provide a 5-minute synopsis of their thesis (and its implications for the profession) for presentation to the Academy membership either in person or virtually.

### **BEST PAPER CRITERIA:**

The papers are evaluated 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.

#### **ENTRY PROCEDURE:**

Complete the online application (<https://redbarn.submittable.com/submit/c520b02e-f271-4347-9bde-3fbb764d5d8d/2021-aapra-best-paper-application/eligibility>) by May 28, 2021 and upload the appropriate documents:

1. Cover page listing the title of the master's thesis; 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 submission was completed; and date the degree requirements were completed.
2. The executive summary of the paper, not exceeding 1000 words; the title of the paper should be listed on the top of each page of the summary.

Writers of the three (3) executive summaries which receive the highest ratings will be requested to submit a full electronic copy of their master's thesis to the Committee Chair by July 9th. The Committee will then review each entry, select the winner, and announce the results. The final awardee(s) will be notified in August.

#### **TIMELINE:**

- April 15                      Call for papers (master's thesis only)
- May 28                        Deadline to submit electronic executive summaries
- June 22                        Evaluation of executive summaries and narrowed to the top three (3)
- July 9                         Top three (3) entries will submit full thesis (electronically)
- August 13                     Evaluation of three (3) theses completed
- August 20                     Awardees/non-awardees notified
- September (TBD)          Presentation of winning paper made to the AAPRA (either in person or virtually)

**QUESTIONS?** Contact Dr. Denise Anderson, AAPRA Best Paper Committee Chair; [dander2@clemsn.edu](mailto:dander2@clemsn.edu); 864.656.5679.