M.S. in Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management
2022 Assessment Report

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management M.S. is to prepare students to address real-world problems through scientific inquiry as they relate to the understanding and management of natural resources and associated protected areas for recreation and tourism. This mission is achieved through the innovative teaching, research and service of the PTRM faculty who conduct basic and applied state-of-the-art research at various scales from the local to the global. PTRM faculty and graduate students interact with public agencies, protected area managers, private enterprises, and decision-makers to facilitate the appropriate use of scientifically generated knowledge in policy and management decisions.

DEPARTMENT ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

After listing each departmental objective, indicate which of the five Priorities for Action the objective supports. In this section, you may also briefly describe any innovative or noteworthy programs/initiatives that support the Priorities for Action.

1. Foster the success and professional growth of students and faculty who desire to solve an increasingly complex array of environmental and social challenges in parks, tourism, and recreation. **(PFA 1, PFA 2, PFA 4)**

2. Deliver a high-quality graduate degree program in the natural and social sciences which prepares graduate students to engage as professionals in science, policy, or management **(PFA 1, PFA 2, PFA 4)**

3. Cultivate an interdisciplinary cadre of faculty, students, and other researchers, who support a community of scholarship and an environment conducive to innovation and cutting-edge research **(PFA 1, PFA2, PFA 3, PFA 4)**

4. Provide research experience and training that prepares students to work at local, regional and/or international scales and to address the big problems facing natural and human systems **(PFA 1, PFA 2, PFA 4)**

5. Aspire to develop knowledge and skills in the social and natural sciences to advance more sustainable and resilient social and/or ecological systems **(PFA 2, PFA 4)**

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Student Learning Outcomes	Committee Coursework Evaluation/ Approval	Thesis Proposal Preparation and Defense	Thesis Presentation and Defense	Feedback from Professional Partners
Demonstrate knowledge of relevant natural and/or social principles and paradigms related to PTRM	X	X	X	
Ability to understand a range of research methods and their suitability to particular topics	X	X	X	
Self-direction and ability to identify a current and relevant challenge		X	X	X
Demonstrate ability to successfully and rigorously conduct research		X	X	
Communicate effectively orally and in writing	X	X	X	
Conduct scientific research in an ethical and professional manner		X	X	
Complete the thesis and plan for dissemination of results		X	X	X
Prepares students for professional careers	X	X	X	X

RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

We realize these are not traditional results and modifications, but we are currently engaged in an assessment of our graduate program as we explore new opportunities to best serve our current students and a different market of students and professionals. These results and modifications are highly relevant to assessment because they will influence the revision of the Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management M.S. and how we measure and assess the program.

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
Student enrollment is increasing in the PTRM M.S. program; From 2017-2019, there were 3 students that graduated. From 2020-2022, there were 2 students that graduated, but currently there are 6 actively enrolled students in the program, reflecting a trend towards growth. We currently receive many more inquiries for graduate school then the current faculty can accommodate.	Over the past few years, we were able to hire a tenure-track faculty member who has actively recruited graduate students in the degree and we recently hired a new Director for the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research that also is now recruiting and advising graduate students in the program.

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
Students are demonstrating knowledge of relevant natural and/or social principles and paradigms related to PTRM: PTRM 595 Theory of Protected Area Management Final Paper (100% of students received an A). See Appendix 1.	PTRM 595 started as an experimental course and is now being proposed as a permanent course offering in the PTRM graduate curriculum. We are also assessing our graduate offerings to ensure we are meeting the needs of foundational concepts in PTRM. We have struggled with the inability to offer PTRM graduate courses each year and expand on any courses due to retirements and transitions of faculty. We hope this can change in the future to better serve our students and grow the program.
We have been trying to develop and explore strategies to reach a broader group of students and professionals in the PTRM graduate program to be a completive and relevant program in our field. We have a graduate certificate, the Protected Area Distance Education Program, that includes 15 credits of PTRM graduate courses and has had 23 students complete the certificate over the past five years. These courses can serve as a foundation for a potential online M.S. degree for PTRM or serve the current PTRM M.S. students on-campus.	The success of the PAMDEP certificate and the potential to combine it with the Wilderness Management Distance Education Program (which is currently under transition) holds potential for broadening the reach of the PTRM MS to working professionals and to expand the offerings for PTRM-focused courses in our degree. Additionally, the PTRM faculty are exploring the option of a 4+1 option that would include the four year undergrad B.S. in PTRM and then an additional year of coursework/activity to get a professional Masters in PTRM.

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

- To better understand how the graduate degree is preparing students for professional careers, we propose to start a system to track data of where graduate students get jobs and also reach out to them to get feedback on what was helpful from the graduate program in preparing them for jobs and what could enhance the graduate program to better prepare students for careers.

- To better understand the overall experience of graduate students in the program and the quality of mentorship and professional development, we propose to start getting feedback through a questionnaire and/or exit interviews. This information can help assess whether we are meeting goals and allow for improvement in curriculum, graduate experience, and faculty mentorship.

- To better understand how a 4+1 or online degree can help PTRM reach its outcomes and grow the program, we plan to assess other graduate degree programs that offer these options at University of Montana and other similar public universities. We also plan to meet with the Senior Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in our College to assess the feasibility of these options.

- To better understand how graduate certificate programs, like the Protected Area Distance Education Program and the Wilderness Management Distance Education Program can align and support the M.S. in Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management, we plan to assess alignment of goals and courses in the future.

- The International Conservation and Development (ICD) option that is under the M.S. in Resource Conservation attracts a lot of students who want to do international work. A large portion of the students in the ICD program are advised by PTRM faculty because they focus on topics related to sustainable tourism and protected area management, but in an international context. To better understand the relationship between the ICD program and PTRM, we will have discussions with faculty and the Senior Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in our College to assess the best ways to provide options to graduate students, but streamline degrees.

APPENDICIES

1. Assessment Results

Appendix 1: <u>Assessment Results</u>

PTRM 595: Theory of Protected Area Management
Final paper   (65 points)
This assignment serves as the capstone of this course, wherein students must define a research question founded in social science theory. This research question can be either hypothesis-driven and be followed by empirical analysis or lead to a literature review that significantly engages with a topic discussed in class. Regardless of whether-or-not the manuscript is hypothesis-driven, the manuscript must be related to protected area management. The theory (or theories) chosen for engagement may be one (or multiple) discussed in class, or one selected by the student in discussion with the instructor. A primary goal of this assignment is to provide students with the opportunity to create a product that can be used to further their own research agenda.

This assignment has four components. Approximately one-third into the semester, students must write a 100-250 word abstract defining their research question and paper idea. Approximately two-thirds into the semester, students must provide a draft of approximately the first half of their paper. The course will conclude with 15 minute research presentations given by each student. Final papers (written adhering APA 7th ed. style guidelines) are due at the conclusion of the semester (see the rubric below)

Criteria	Unsatisfactory - Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Total
Paper Focus	**0-6 points**	**7 points**	**8 points**	**9-10 points**	/10
	Fails to identify a relevant research topic or is not clearly defined and/or the paper lacks focus throughout.	Identifies a research topic but may be too broad in scope and/or the thesis (if applicable) is somewhat unclear and needs to be developed further.	Identifies a relevant research topic and a thesis (if applicable) that provides adequate direction for the paper with some degree of interest for the reader.	Identifies a relevant research topic and a thesis (if applicable) that provides direction for the paper that is engaging and thought provoking.	
Analysis	**0-6 points**	**7 points**	**8 points**	**9-10 points**	/10
	Demonstrates a lack of understanding and inadequate analysis of the research topic and thesis (if applicable). Analysis is superficial based on opinions and preferences rather than critical analysis.	Demonstrates general understanding with limited critical analysis of the research topic and thesis (if applicable). Summarizes perspectives, counter-arguments, or opposing positions.	Demonstrates an understanding and some critical analysis of the research topic and thesis (if applicable). Adequately compares/contrasts perspectives, counter-arguments, or opposing positions but broader connections and/or implications are not as thoroughly explored.	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding and careful, critical analysis of the research topic and thesis (if applicable). Compares/contrasts perspectives, considers counter arguments or opposing positions, and draws original and thoughtful conclusions with future implications.	
Evidence	**0-6 points**	**7 points**	**8 points**	**9-10 points**	/10
	Lacks sufficient research sources to support the central position and/or, if included, are generally not relevant, accurate, or reliable. Contains numerous factual mistakes, omissions, or oversimplifications. Sources, if included, are not properly referenced and cited in the paper.	Some sources may not be relevant, accurate, and reliable and/or appropriately referenced and cited in the paper.	Sources are referenced and cited appropriately throughout the paper for the most part.	Research sources are highly relevant, accurate, and reliable and add to the strength of the paper; and are effectively referenced and cited throughout the paper.	
Organization	**0-6 points**	**7 points**	**8 points**	**9-10 points**	/10
	Paper lacks logical organization and impedes readers' comprehension of ideas. Central position is rarely evident from paragraph to paragraph and/or the paper is missing multiple required components.	Paper is somewhat organized, although occasionally ideas from paragraph to paragraph may not flow well and/or connect to the central position or be clear as a whole. May be missing a required component and/or components may be less than complete.	Paper is adequately organized. Ideas are arranged reasonably with a progression of thought from paragraph to paragraph connecting to the central position. Includes required components (introduction, body, conclusion, Reference List, etc.) for the most part.	Paper is effectively organized. Ideas are arranged logically, flow smoothly, with a strong progression of thought from paragraph to paragraph connecting to the central position. Includes all required components (introduction, body, conclusion, Reference List, etc.).	
Spelling, Grammar, and APA (7th ed.) formatting	**0-5 points**	**6 points**	**7 points**	**8 points**	/8
	More than five errors	Three to five errors	One or two errors	No errors	
TOTAL POINTS (sum of 5 Criteria)					**/48**

A – 9
B – 0
C – 0
D – 0
F – 0

PTRM 554 Geographies of Tourism

Annotated Bibliography Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to get students engaged with geographic literature pertinent to their chosen topic for their paper.

Activity: Students will prepare an annotated bibliography of ten references that will inform their final paper. Each article needs to have a proper citation and a summary of one page(double-spaced). Students will also introduce the topic at the beginning of the annotated bibliography in a page or less and then explain at the end how the articles will contribute to their understanding of the topic and be applied to the final paper (1-2 pages).

Instructions: Because you are interested in a specific topic, the annotated bibliography will be selective in its coverage. You will want to select the 10 'best' geographic sources for your topic to annotate rather than just the first 10 you come across. Sources for this assignment will be limited to academic writings published in peer reviewed journals or books (book chapters). Please organize your bibliography either alphabetically or chronologically (whichever works best in your case). For your annotations you will want to both summarize the source and evaluate it. Please write in paragraph form and use complete sentences.

Grading Breakdown: N/A