

**National Recreation and Parks Association Congress and Expo
Salt Lake City, Utah
October 12 – 16, 2009**

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Professional Development Grant

Restatement of problem researched, creative work, or professional enhancement opportunity:

The National Recreation and Parks Association is a membership organization for parks and recreation professional, students, and university/college faculty throughout the United States and abroad. The Congress and Expo is an annual event offering over 200 educational sessions, numerous networking opportunities, and an expo hall full of vendors with the latest and greatest in parks and recreation supplies and equipment. The purpose of this trip is to attend educational sessions (especially sessions focusing on accreditation and revisions to the standards), network with professionals, engage the students in professional opportunities and encourage them to meet professionals, and to recruit and promote Arkansas Tech University.

Brief review of the professional enhancement opportunity, creative work, or research procedure:

The National Recreation and Parks Association Congress and Expo was held in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 12 – 16, 2009. The Congress and Expo offers an excellent opportunity to attend educational sessions on a variety of topics related to professional development in the parks and recreation profession. The event also affords recreation and park professionals the opportunity to view and in some cases experience the latest in equipment, materials, and supplies. The Congress and Expo also provides recreation and park professionals and educators the opportunity to network with peers and colleagues not only from the United States, but from outside the country as well.

Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences had:

I attended a number of educational sessions in order to enhance my knowledge in a number of areas related to parks and recreation – this is education that I can share on a day-to-day basis in the classroom with my students. I also attended sessions focusing on the new accreditation standards for programs in higher education. The RPA program at ATU is one of the pilot schools for the new (revised) accreditation standards so it was imperative that I attend these sessions so that the information could be brought back to the department and shared with department colleagues. The Congress and Expo was the perfect outlet to network with colleagues from outside the state and be kept abreast of the current trends and issues in higher education and in the field of recreation and parks.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

I embrace the opportunity to attend the NRPA Congress and Expo due to the knowledge that I gain from not only attendance at educational sessions, but also from meeting new colleagues and networking. It is an awesome experience; one that revitalizes me in a number of ways. I feel like I gain so much from attending the yearly NRPA Congress and Expo and am most appreciative of being afforded the funding to attend.