

Princeton University

# Outdoor Action

Strategic Planning Advisory Report: January 2010

Rick Curtis '79, director, outdoor action  
Amy Campbell, director, campus life initiatives

# **Outdoor Action Strategic Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

### **January 2010**

For 36 years, Outdoor Action has provided a pre-orientation experiential educational experience for Princeton's freshmen. The program, part of the Princeton Blairstown Center, is administered by Rick Curtis '79, the Director of Outdoor Action.

The Frosh Trip is the signature Outdoor Action program. The annual outdoor pre-orientation program is led by well-trained upper-class students. This preorientation experience for new students is now shared by 55-60% of the incoming class. In addition to an outdoor experience, it is an opportunity to introduce University values and standards including; diversity conversations, alcohol education, sustainability initiatives, campus citizenship and community living discussions to a diverse group of freshmen.

Outdoor Action participants and leaders often become campus and student organization leaders. OA leaders have been elected Young Alumni trustees, received Rhodes and Marshall Scholars appointments and have been winners of Princeton's highest undergraduate honor, the Pyne Prize.

As part of a Princeton Blairstown Center review process started in the spring of 2009, a recommendation was made to move Outdoor Action back under the University structure and within the Office of the Vice President of Campus Life.

In preparation for Outdoor Action's transition from the Princeton Blairstown Center to Office of the Vice President for Campus Life, an advisory committee was created to review and clarify OA's mission, goals and program. The Advisory Committee included faculty, staff and students and members of the Friends of Outdoor Action alumni board. The committee was mindful of the financial climate and understood that no additional financial resources would be available to support the transition.

#### **Revised OA Mission Statement**

To provide educational and character development experiences which advance personal responsibility, health and well-being, community, leadership development, civic engagement, and stewardship for Princeton and the natural world through adventure-based experiential education.

#### **Core Programs**

From building a new community amongst the diverse members of each incoming Princeton class to developing student leadership skills, the Outdoor Action Program has become a unique resource for Princeton. The Frosh Trip Program is the largest of the pre-orientation programs for incoming students and has been the signature program for Outdoor Action since its inception. The Leader Training Program, where students are trained to lead other students on outdoor trips, is the "engine" that drives the Frosh Trip Program. During the academic year, Outdoor Action has offered a variety of activities which build community and enhance the residential life experience at Princeton.

#### **Outdoor Action Strategic Planning Committee Recommendations**

Many of the committee's recommendations can be executed without additional funding or, achieved through reallocation of current funding. Those recommendations that are dependent upon additional financial and/or staffing resources are included to help frame future opportunities when resources become available.

### **Broad Ideas Outside of the Scope of Outdoor Action**

- Arts Atelier Pre-orientation Program
- Pre-orientation Program Common Curriculum

### **General Recommendation Areas**

- Advisory Committee
- Campus Life Partnerships
- Communications and Identity
- Friends of Outdoor Action Board
- Fundraising
- Metrics

### **Freshmen Pre-Orientation Program Recommendations**

- Diversity
- Sustainability

### **Leader Training Recommendations**

- Diversity
- Financial Assistance
- Leader Training Program
- OA Leaders as Campus Leaders

### **Academic Year Recommendations**

- Academic Partnerships
- Alumni Programming
- Financial Assistance
- Graduate School Programming
- Regular Recreation Opportunities
- Sustainability & Environmental Programming

### **Climbing Wall and Leader Training Recommendations**

The students who lead both these programs have provided a list of recommendations to enhance their program and the student experience.

### **Larger Scope Ideas**

The committee identified a series of ideas that expand the current Outdoor Action curriculum and will enhance campus life and leverage existing partnerships.

Led by Rick Curtis, Outdoor Action is well-positioned to play a significant role in campus life; enhancing student leadership training, recreational programming and, in partnership with campus offices, lend the skill and expertise of outdoor skills, team work activities and team building, as components of any group activity or program on or off campus. As we look to the future of OA, we are grateful for the long time stewardship by the Princeton Blairstown Center and look forward to increased campus partnerships as OA moves under the Campus Life umbrella.

# Outdoor Action Strategic Plan

## January 2010

### **I. Introduction to the strategic planning process**

For 36 years, Outdoor Action has provided a pre-orientation experiential educational experience for Princeton's freshmen. The program, part of the Princeton Blairstown Center, is administered by Rick Curtis '79, the Director of Outdoor Action. The annual outdoor pre-orientation Frosh Trip is led by well-trained upper-class students. This pre-orientation experience for new students is now shared by 55-60% of the incoming class. In addition to the outdoor experience, it is an opportunity to introduce University values and standards including; diversity conversations, alcohol education, sustainability initiatives, campus citizenship and community living discussions to a diverse group of freshmen. (OA trips are organized primarily by residential college affiliation only. Groups are a mix of students from different backgrounds, interests, nationality, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and class.) During the academic year, OA sponsors recreational outdoor trips, leader training courses and team building exercises for campus offices and departments.

Outdoor Action participants and leaders often become campus and student organization leaders. OA leaders have been elected Young Alumni trustees, received Rhodes and Marshall Scholars appointments and have been winners of Princeton's highest undergraduate honor, the Pyne Prize.

As part of a review process the Center started in the spring of 2009, a recommendation was made to move Outdoor Action back under the University structure and within the Office of the Vice President of Campus Life which oversees student non-academic program and offices including; the Department of Athletics, Office of Religious Life, University Health Services, the Pace Center for Civic Engagement and the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students. In preparation for Outdoor Action's transition from the Princeton Blairstown Center to Campus Life, an advisory committee, led by Rick Curtis, director of outdoor action and Amy Campbell, director campus life initiatives, was created to review and clarify OA's mission, goals and program. The review concluded with a strategic plan, to guide Outdoor Action as it becomes part of the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life. The committee was mindful of the financial climate and understood that no additional financial resources would be available to support the transition.

In addition to leading the advisory committee, Curtis and Campbell met with the Treasurer's Office and the Office of General Counsel to review and initiate the transfer of budgets, use of the climbing wall and external programming. Meetings were also held with two OA student groups, the climbing wall staff and the leader trainers who were thoughtful in their reflections about Outdoor Action and how moving forward, the program can have an even greater impact on student life. Their independent reports are attached in the addendum.

The Advisory Committee included faculty, staff and students and members of the Outdoor Action Board. Their willingness to think critically and creatively about the transition will well serve Outdoor Action and Princeton University. We are grateful for their time, ideas, passion and commitment to the role Outdoor Action has played in the lives of Princetonians for 36 years and the role it will play as it moves under the organizational structure of the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life.

## Outdoor Action Strategic Planning Advisory Committee

Megan Adams	Director, Risk Management
Kathryn Bailey '10	Outdoor Action Leader
Jennifer Bornkamp	Outdoor Action
Kathleen Braunstein	Office of the Treasurer
Amy Campbell	Office of the Vice President for Campus Life
Rick Curtis '79	Director, Outdoor Action, co-chair
Maria Flores-Mills	Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students
John Gager	William H. Danforth Professor of Religion, Emeritus; former Master Forbes College
Jim Garret '65	OA frosh trip support and Outdoor Action Board
Jeremy Harvey	Office of Risk Management
Gail Johnson '75	Princeton Blairstown Center
Matthew Kinsey '98	Office of the Executive Vice President
Dave Leach	Campus Recreation, Athletics
Glenn Morris '72	Chair, OA Board
Paul Nehring '10	Outdoor Action leader
Sankar Suryanarayan	Office of General Counsel
Janet Dickerson	Vice President for Campus Life, executive sponsor

The Committee met seven times throughout the fall to review, discuss and make recommendations in the primary program areas:

- Outdoor Action's mission statement and goals
- Pre-orientation program (Frosh Trip)
- Leader Training
- Academic Year
- How to best integrate Outdoor Action as it relocates to the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life

The Office of the Vice President for Campus Life will be responsible for coordinating the transition of:

- Finances
- Personnel
- Facility and Equipment use and agreements
- Separation agreement with Princeton Blairstown Center

The addendum includes:

- 2007 report from Rick Curtis about the future development of Outdoor Action
- Reports for Climbing Wall Staff and OA Leader Trainers to the Strategic Planning Committee
- Climbing wall use prospectus
- Summaries of strategic planning committee meetings

## **II. History**

The Outdoor Action Program (OA) was started in 1973 by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students as a pilot project to lessen the sense of isolation experienced by students when they first arrive on campus and to provide an opportunity for increased interpersonal interaction and personal growth. The pilot program involved a small group of entering freshmen who participated in a weekend outdoor activity in the fall of 1973 and again in the spring of 1974. The program was an immediate success, creating a bonding experience for new Princetonians, an opportunity to meet upper-class students, and a chance to explore the outdoors. Student leaders with wilderness camping skills were recruited and backpacking equipment was purchased, so that the program could serve more students. The first full Frosh Trip in September 1974 had 100 participants. Over the next thirty-five years the program has expanded to include 744 (57%) of this year's freshmen class. Over 56% of all enrolled undergraduates have participated in some form of Outdoor Action activity through trips, training programs, or on-campus events throughout the year.

As the program began to grow in the late '70's, students and administrators involved in the program encouraged Outdoor Action to provide additional outdoor experiences during the academic year. As a result, OA began offering trips and programs throughout the academic year for all students, faculty, and staff. This continued through 2001 when financial constraints dictated a reduction in programming.

In 1996, oversight for Outdoor Action was moved from the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students to the Princeton Blairstown Center. During the past thirteen years as part of the Princeton Blairstown Center, the OA program has expanded significantly. The size of the Frosh Trip grew from 593 participants in 1996 to 744 participants from the Class of 2013. The number of leaders trained each year has grown from 80 new leaders each year to 120. This period has also seen a significant expansion in the professionalization of the entire program from the standardization of the Leader Training curriculum to the addition diversity education and alcohol education as part of the Frosh Trip curriculum. OA has also developed outreach programs that include leadership development for other groups on campus, community service programs at the Climbing Wall, and sustainability initiatives.

Outdoor Action, led by Rick Curtis, has been a pioneering program for Universities across the country. OA is the largest outdoor pre-orientation program in the United States. Outdoor Action also has one of the largest groups of trained student leaders. The Outdoor Action Web site is used by college and outdoor programs around the world as a source of information.

## **III. Mission & Goals**

Since its inception the focus of Outdoor Action has always been on student leadership development through exploration of the outdoors. Over the course of the fall the Advisory Committee revised the OA Mission statement to better capture the scope of the program as it would exist under the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life.

The previous OA Mission Statement read: To provide enriching educational and personal growth experiences that encourage leadership development, civic engagement, personal skill development, and stewardship of the natural world.

## **Revised OA Mission Statement**

To provide educational and character development experiences which advance personal responsibility, health and well-being, community, leadership development, civic engagement, and stewardship for Princeton and the natural world through adventure-based experiential education.

## **IV. Core Programs**

From building a new community amongst the diverse members of each incoming Princeton class to developing student leadership skills, the Outdoor Action Program has become a unique resource for Princeton. The Frosh Trip Program is the largest of the pre-orientation programs for incoming students and has been the signature program for Outdoor Action since its inception. The Leader Training Program, where students are trained to lead other students on outdoor trips, is the “engine” that drives the Frosh Trip Program. During the academic year, Outdoor Action has offered a variety of activities which build community and enhance the residential life experience at Princeton.

### **Frosh Trip Program**

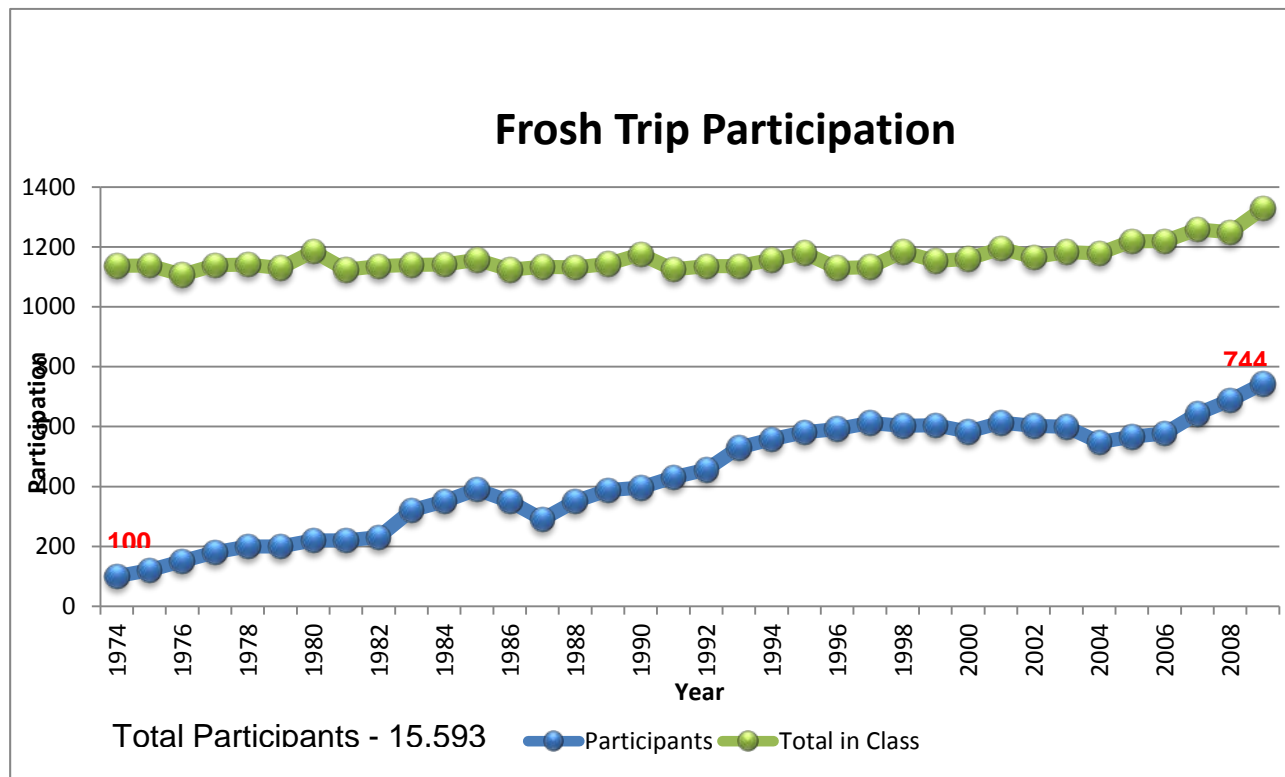
Each fall, more than half of the incoming freshmen class begin their Princeton experience with a six-day wilderness trip through activities like backpacking, camping, canoeing, and rock climbing. With the help of a dedicated group of Outdoor Action leaders—Princeton upperclass students—freshmen learn not only about campus life, but also about themselves and their new classmates by learning to work together as part of a productive team. What attracts so many students to the Frosh Trip each year is not just the special quality of the outdoor environment but also the unique emphasis that Outdoor Action places on how to create a successful student experience at Princeton. OA pioneered the ‘Leave a Trace’ model, in which trip leaders, as role models, teach the new students about values like community and diversity, a model which has since been adopted by colleges across the country. Princeton’s Frosh Trip is the most emulated of any college outdoor pre-orientation program and continues to be the largest single program in the nation. Since it began in 1974, Outdoor Action has introduced more than 15,000 students to the University through the Frosh Trip and what it means to be a member of a diverse community.

### Goals

The committee reframed the goals of the pre-frosh program to align with the revised mission statement.

- To provide a transition experience from home and high school to college life and ease this transition through the development of positive relationships with peers
- To provide information about life on the Princeton campus
- To allay social and academic anxiety
- To provide incoming students with personal challenges in a supportive group environment to foster an increase in self- esteem and a better understanding of how they can effectively cope with the demands of academic and residential life at Princeton while assuming roles within the Princeton community
- To encourage discussions on issues relating to issues of peer pressure such as alcohol and drug use, and to focus on other issues including gender, diversity and sexual orientation
- To encourage acceptance and compassion towards others including those different from one’s self and to respect the values of others

- To develop trust in others
- To decrease fragmentation on campus by introducing incoming students to other freshmen from different residential colleges and geographic areas
- To provide approachable and accessible upper class role models
- To encourage students to take leadership roles within a group setting
- To encourage respect for the environment
- To model and encourage integrity, responsibility to the community, to self and to others as a citizen of the university
- To learn to live with less



### Leader Training Program

Outdoor Action is one of the few programs on campus that focus specifically on student leadership development. OA trips are led by students who have completed an extensive program in outdoor leadership that prepares them for the physical, social and emotional challenges of being responsible for the well being of outdoor novices in outdoor settings. Students who participate in the program become role models for other students across the campus. The broad-reaching impact of the Leader Training program is evident in the myriad ways that OA Leaders enhance campus life through their involvement and leadership as RCAs, on sports teams, student government, student organizations, and community service. Outdoor Action is the only college experiential education program that allows any interested student to participate in the benefits of the leader training program.

Students must complete an extensive training program that includes

- CPR
- wilderness first aid



- team building skills
- outdoor safety
- leadership and group dynamics
- backcountry living skills

Most importantly, this is a hands-on, experientially-based training program that is structured to require students to practice their leadership skills in a supervised setting prior to assuming leadership responsibilities. The fact that almost half of the students who become involved in OA Leadership Training are students who had their first outdoor experience with the OA Frosh Trip demonstrates the effectiveness of the role modeling of OA leaders for new students. Another special aspect of OA Leader Training is that it is students teaching other students. From first aid and CPR to leadership and group dynamics to outdoor skills, trained student leaders and leader trainers are gaining experience by teaching the next generation of OA Leaders.

The interest in the Leader Training Program has grown considerably over the last five years. Last year Outdoor Action trained almost 120 new student leaders. The increase in student leaders is partly a result of the availability of financial aid funds for leader training. The growth in the number of leaders has also allowed OA to increase the size of the Frosh Trip Program as the size of the incoming class increased this year.

### **Academic Year Program**

In 1975, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students decided to extend the frosh trip program to offer activities throughout the academic year. This was a natural use of the available resources already developed for the Frosh Trip—trained leaders, equipment, and staff management. During the period from 1977 through 2001 Outdoor Action offered thousands of activities that included day trips, weekend trips, and multi-day trips over breaks in such activities as backpacking, rock climbing canoeing, kayaking, biking, and cross-country skiing as well as training classes, workshops, films and speakers series. Due to rising costs and limited funds to subsidize day and multi-day trips at a level affordable to most students, OA significantly reduced most academic year activities starting in spring 2001.

The major programs currently offered during the academic year are the Leader Training Program, which is critical to the Frosh Trip and the Climbing Wall Program. Other more modest programs have continued:

- Team building programs: OA has provided leadership development and team building activities for various groups on campus including varsity sports teams the pace Center etc.
- Recreational outdoor trips: OA has offered a limited number of day trip activities for the Residential Colleges and to the general campus. These have included day hiking, canoeing, and rock climbing trips on weekends and multi-day backpacking trips over break.
- The Annual Banff Mountain Film Festival: Draws over 300 members of the campus and surrounding community each April.

- Alumni Activities and Education Programs during Alumni Day and Reunions: The Climbing Wall has been open for alumni and their families during Alumni Day and Reunions. During Reunions each year OA offers a range of activities for alumni and their families including speakers' series and films.

Programming during the academic year must first focus on leader training since this supports the core OA program, frosh pre-orientation. The other program areas will be shaped by available funding and staff resources.

## **V. Facilities and Equipment**

### **Equipment Room**

The Outdoor Action Equipment Storage Room includes two separate facilities, one at 350 Alexander Street and the other at the Princeton Stadium that comprise 2,000 square feet of space. Outdoor Action maintains an extensive amount of outdoor equipment for backpacking and camping, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, biking, cross-country skiing and winter camping. The program also owns two canoe trailers and a box trailer which are insured through the University. This equipment is valued at over \$200,000. It is used primarily for the Frosh Trip and Leader Training programs as well as for other OA trip activities. During the academic year equipment is available for rental by the general University community.

An outdoor low ropes and team building course was built in 1995 in the woods adjacent to Jadwin Gymnasium and the Armory. In 2001 the course was retired due to the unsafe condition of the trees.

### **Office**

The Outdoor Action office is located at 350 Alexander Street and provides space, computer equipment, and other office support equipment for two staff members and a work study students during the academic year. In the summer space and computers are provided for additional four students who work fulltime to organize and prepare for the Frosh Trip. The Outdoor Action office handles all of the files and materials for the more than thirty-five years of the program including an extensive library of more than 400 titles on outdoor education related topics.

### **The Climbing Wall**

The Climbing Wall has been integral part of Outdoor Action's on-campus programming for over twenty-five years. Each year thousands of students climb at the OA Climbing Wall.

In 1982 Outdoor Action recognized the need for permanent climbing wall as a gathering space for climbers and as site for teaching rock climbing skills. In the spring of 1983 over forty students, graduate students and staff built the first climbing wall out of wood in an empty corner of the Armory near the stadium. Outdoor Action was one of the first universities to build an indoor climbing wall. The Wall was expanded several times over the next fifteen years. In 2007 the University built a brand new state-of-the-art Climbing Wall in a dedicated space for Outdoor Action in the Princeton Stadium to replace the old wall which was demolished when the Armory was torn down.

The success of the climbing program at Princeton is due primarily to the Climbing Wall. The Wall is open five days a week and is a facility that brings together students, graduate students, faculty and staff in direct interaction. Students belay faculty members, people teach each other basic technique,

and individuals encourage each other as someone tries a difficult new route. The Outdoor Action climbing wall has been one of the most successful campus facilities for creating interaction across the different campus communities. It serves as the gathering place for climbers of all ability levels and for many people has been their introduction to a life-long love of the sport of climbing.

Throughout the academic year Outdoor Action uses the facility for weekly recreational climbing as well as for teaching beginning and intermediate rock climbing classes. Part of the vision of having an excellent facility is to expand the range of uses. In addition to 'open hours' the Climbing Wall is used as a non-alcoholic social alternative on Thursday nights supported by the Trustee Alcohol Initiative. It is used as a team building facility for varsity athletic teams, RCA groups and other student organizations. OA has partnered with Campus Recreation offering intramural climbing events and bouldering competitions open to the entire campus. The Climbing Wall has also been open to other groups including University alumni at Alumni Day and Reunions, as well as prospective students during Princeton Preview.

OA developed the first community service program at the Wall last year through Peak Potential Princeton, which brought children with disabilities to the Climbing Wall on a weekly basis to build self-esteem and confidence through climbing with student volunteers. Outdoor Action has also offered a number of extremely successful community service-based climbing programs for groups from the Student Volunteers Council, Community House, and Princeton-Blairstown Center.

The Climbing Wall is staffed by an extremely dedicated group of paid student workers who manage the facility during open hours and Alcohol Initiative nights, and are responsible for setting climbing routes and facility and equipment maintenance. In addition the staff work events such as team building and other activities as needed.

Part of the goal in opening the new Climbing Wall facility in the fall of 2007 was to professionalize the overall operation of the Climbing Wall to be in sync with standards in the Climbing Wall industry. We were able to achieve that in large part through an OA Program Coordinator staff position which had significant responsibility for managing the facility and the student staff. (This position was eliminated in 2009 due to financial constraints) Since the spring of 2008, the use of the Climbing Wall is free for all students, with a modest charge for faculty and staff use. Since the use fee for students was eliminated, student use has increased significantly.

The OA Climbing Program also includes outdoor climbing trips which are offered during the academic year and as part of the Frosh Trip Program. The Frosh Trip climbing activities have been extremely popular and we have added additional climbing trips in the last two years to respond to the student interest.

## **V. Campus Partners**

Over the years Outdoor Action has developed a number of extremely successful partnerships with offices and programs both within the Office of the Vice President of Campus Life and with the larger University community. Some of these are jointly sponsored programs, others are Outdoor Action providing a particular program service to another department. For example, OA has worked closely with University Health Services in a number of areas including alcohol education & CPR training for

eating club officers and RCAs. OA has partnered with Campus Recreational Sports to offer intramural Climbing Wall events and skills training classes and has worked with the Residential Colleges to over day trip activities including hiking, canoeing and rock climbing. Outdoor Action's integration into the Campus Life Office will facilitate two types of collaborative options it can provide as part of its service to the University: One is joint programming as outlined above and the other is to provide activity/training services to particular departments. For example, OA Director Rick Curtis provided a three-hour training encounter for the Bridge Year Program students during their August orientation on campus. These partnerships should be explored and developed wherever possible.

The diagram below shows an Outdoor Action "partnership map" in two different ways. The left side of the map shows potential partners and the right side of the map shows the types of programs where partnerships are possible. OA's two core programs, Frosh Trip and Leader Training are highlighted.



## **VI. Outdoor Action Strategic Planning Committee Recommendations**

The advisory committee recognizes and is fully supportive of the mandate that the transition of Outdoor Action from the Princeton Blairstown Center to the Office of the Vice President of Campus Life will be cost neutral. Many of the recommendations can be executed without additional funding or, achieved through reallocation of current funding. Those recommendations that are dependent upon additional financial and/or staffing resources are included to help frame future opportunities when resources become available.

### **Broad Ideas Outside of the Scope of Outdoor Action**

Over the course of the committee's discussions there were a number of ideas presented that were outside of the scope of the Outdoor Action Program and which should be explored by the Campus Life Office as possibilities for the future.

#### Arts Atelier Pre-orientation Program

The committee discussed the idea of an additional arts-based pre-orientation program which could attract students who are not currently attending either the OA or CA pre-orientation programs.

#### Pre-orientation Program Curriculum

The importance of the pre-orientation experience in helping incoming students start at Princeton has been documented over multiple decades. The committee suggested that the Campus Life Office work to establish a series of best practice guidelines to inform the curriculum of all of the pre-orientation programs so all incoming students receive core information essential to their success at Princeton.

### **General Outdoor Action Recommendations**

#### Advisory Committee

Create an ongoing committee, appointed by the Vice President for Campus Life in consultation with the Director of Outdoor Action, to advise the Director of Outdoor Action and Campus Life on issues related to OA and the University community. Representation should include faculty, staff, students and alumni.

#### Campus Life Partnerships

Working with the Office of the Vice President for Campus Life, identify campus partners that would benefit from Outdoor Action programs and expertise including: the Office of International Programs, the Pace Center and Residential Colleges. While these offices may benefit from the expertise OA has developed particularly with regard to leader training, working with campus life units will benefit OA as Outdoor Action learns from and about the best practices from other campus life units. This 'cross-fertilization' of ideas and practices will benefit the entire campus life community helping to further integrate Outdoor Action as a full participatory partner in campus life.

Leverage existing structures making better and more efficient use of OA and the skills of the OA leaders and Director.

#### Communications and Identity

Expand the use of the website and positioning of Outdoor Action to better inform the University community of Outdoor Actions' programs and the students who participate in and lead OA programs.

- Highlight the new mission statement

- Include information for parents and ‘value add’ of a pre-orientation experience
- Working with OA student leaders, identify “OA gear” for climbing wall staff and OA student leaders that helps enhance visibility for OA on campus.
- Recraft the OA website to align with the Campus Life sites, information and links
- Partner with Campus Recreation for trip sponsorship, advertising and sign up through campus Recreation website
- Collaborate with Admissions Office, Office of Communications and other offices to present the goals and benefits of Outdoor Action programs to the broadest possible audience.

### Friend’s of Outdoor Action Board

The advisory committee recommends the Friend’s Board revise their mission and assume a Friend’s model similar to the athletics friends groups by providing fundraising and solicitation support for Outdoor Action. The Friend’s group will continue to nominate and support the Josh Minor Award and have representation on the newly formed Advisory Committee. The Board will also assist in the development of Outdoor Action alumni trips and programs.

### Fundraising

Continue to support efforts of the Office of Development to meet the Outdoor Action’s 1.5 million dollar Aspire Campaign target. This target will enable Outdoor Action to incorporate a number of the recommendations and position OA’s future development.

### Metrics

Identifying the right assessment questions and measures is a critical component to the long term success of Outdoor Action. Working with the Vice Provost for Institutional Research, the OA experience surveys comprised of; the frosh trip, leadership development and academic year programming, can be folded into existing and future University surveys with outcomes benchmarked against other University data tracking the Princeton experience. Using the 2006 Campus Recreation survey, identify activities and programs that OA and Campus Recreation could sponsor jointly.

There may also be opportunities to partner with other organizations, both on campus and off, in a more general way to assess the impact of experiential learning.

### Post-Princeton Opportunities

Create a post-graduate fellowship for an OA leader, supporting programming during the academic year and logistical support during the Frosh trip program.

### **Freshmen Pre-Orientation Program Recommendation**

#### Common Curriculum

Work with other Campus Life offices to identify and explore the most effective curriculum for orienting new students to the Princeton community.

#### Diversity

Continue to offer and develop a broad range of program options that allow students of different interest, experience, and ability levels to participate in the Frosh Trip Program. Work to ensure that diversity education for leaders continues to be an essential part of the program mission. This includes

reaching out to other campus offices to promote the trip to a more diverse group of incoming freshmen.

Expand the variety of trip offerings to appeal to the broadest possible audience. Increase the availability of equipment for the frosh program.

### Sustainability

Continue to expand the sustainability education program as part of Frosh Trip.

## **Leader Training Recommendations**

### Diversity

Work with other Campus Life offices and student groups to expand the diversity of the Outdoor Action leader pool.

### Financial Assistance

Identify additional funding sources to help off-set the overall cost of leader training and decrease the out-of-pocket costs for student participants to make the opportunity of becoming an Outdoor Action leader affordable for all students.

### Leader Training Program

Expand the training for new Outdoor Action student leaders in areas such as outdoor skills, diversity and cross-cultural education and first aid. Increase professional training opportunities for current leaders and instructors to deepen their skills. Increase the number of students trained to accommodate the level of interest in the Frosh Trip Program for the incoming class.

### OA Leaders as Campus Leaders

Encourage connections with other campus offices to use OA leaders in various capacities and continue to enhance the student-to-student peer education model of Outdoor Action by developing new opportunities for OA leaders to deliver leadership and other training to other groups across the campus. Encourage other student leadership positions to participate in OA training exercises.

Find ways to augment the skills of the entire leader pool and include partners from across campus in the Leave-A-Trace Day training.

### Leader Trainer Logistics

Develop creative solutions to the ongoing problem of storage and accommodations before and immediately after the spring training week at the end of the academic year.

## **Academic Year Recommendations**

Outdoor Action's programming during the academic year should focus on three areas:

- Campus Partners: identify and work with University office and programs supporting OA programming



- Leadership Training: continuing to train new OA Leaders and establish leadership training programs developed in conjunction with university offices and programs
- Service Programs: OA provides a service (e.g. leadership development) to another office or department

### Academic Partnerships

Contribute to academic initiatives on campus that involve experiential education through OA's ability to provide leaders skilled in facilitating group interaction, wilderness skills and outdoor field trips.

Develop custom trip programs and program support for groups like the Bridge Year Program, the Center for Jewish Life, the Women's Center, the International Students Association, WWS, Graduate School, etc.

### Alumni Programming

Alumni activities during on-campus events like Alumni Day and Reunions offer opportunities to connect alumni with the program. Alumni outdoor trips in collaboration with other departments and programs can provide educational activities for alumni along with current students and can encourage ongoing alumni support.

### Financial Assistance

Identify additional funding sources to help off-set the overall cost of activities during the academic year and work to decrease the out-of-pocket costs for student participants to ensure that OA activities are accessible to all students.

### Graduate School

Partner with the Graduate School to explore an outdoor orientation program for incoming graduate students, use of the climbing wall, leadership training, trips, and other opportunities for graduate students.

### Recreation Opportunities

Partner with Campus Recreation, Residential Colleges, the Graduate College and other groups to sponsor weekend day trips and multi-day trips over breaks. Partnering with these groups, collaborate on advertising trips and identifying what kinds of trips would be most popular.

### Sustainability & Environmental Programming

Continue to develop OA sustainability education initiatives in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability and campus environmental groups.

## **Climbing Wall Recommendations**

### Regular Hours

The current regular hours are 4:30-6:30 PM on weekdays. This is a time when athletic practices and music rehearsals occupy the schedules of many students who would otherwise like to climb at the wall. Additional evening and weekend hours would give more students the opportunity to climb and engage in a fun and social activity.

### Alcohol Initiative (AI) Saturdays and Theme Nights

AI Thursday night events are popular, especially with students who are seeking an alternative social activity. Adding Saturday evenings would create opportunities for additional programming and theme-based evenings to increase turnout and make each week unique. Collaborating with other campus groups can also expand the diversity of students utilizing the Wall.

### Outdoor Climbing

The Climbing Program also includes outdoor-based rock climbing. A greater number of outdoor trips can be offered during the academic year.

### Guest Policy

Explore the pros and cons of a guest policy which would permit family, visiting friends of students, pre-frosh, and alums the opportunity to use the Climbing Wall. Explore feasibility with the Office of Risk Management. Discuss income opportunity with the Treasurer's Office.

### Gender Nights

In the past, the Wall staff has hosted events exclusively for women, staffed by women, so that women who are prohibited by their religion to climb in front of men or who simply feel uncomfortable climbing in a mixed-gender setting can use the wall and benefit from it. These have been extremely successful and should be expanded to also include men's only nights.

### Community Service Programs

Identify ways to partner with the Pace Center for Civic Engagement, which the Climbing Wall could be used for community Service programming both as Outdoor Action sponsored programs and programs in collaboration with other campus partners.

### Financial Assistance

Identify additional funding sources to help off-set the annual operating costs of the Climbing Wall so that usage of the Wall can remain free or at a low cost for students.

### **Larger Scope Ideas**

- Establish a way to communicate the benefits of participating in the pre-orientation programs to students and families who may not have perspective on these kind of programs for long-term success as a student. (perhaps have alumni groups (ABPA, ALPA, IAAP, A4P) call freshmen who have not signed up for a pre-orientation trip and discuss the benefits)
- Begin discussions to explore opportunities for OA leaders who are RCA's to lead frosh pre-orientation trips
- Begin discussions to include OA leaders as facilitators of freshmen orientation programs complimenting the role of the residential advisor
- Work with campus and outside organizations to provide summer student leadership internships and opportunities, domestic and international
- Create hard copy 'journals' for student leaders and participants as a part of the OA frosh experience to chronicle experience and used as an educational tool to foster the OA mission and central university values.
- Identify on-campus space for OA offices and space for equipment distribution.