

Outdoor Action 2.0



The Frosh Trip 2016 Team - 292 strong
Green - Command Center, Blue - Leaders, Floral - OA Office Staff, Red - Support Teams

We believe that anyone can learn to become an effective leader—if we provide them with professional training, mentoring and with real-life leadership experience. I’ve seen thousands of students transform their leadership abilities through OA. That’s why we’ve added a tagline to the OA Website—**Leadership Starts Here**. Because it does.

We focus on teaching students to be intentional about implementing the core values of OA—creating a learning environment that asks people to challenge themselves and building a safe space where that can happen. By doing this we inspire a cadre of people who go out and embody those values in their careers and family life.

Each of you should feel incredibly proud of the positive impact you have had as leaders in helping first year students learn about Princeton and about themselves. Your commitment to

OA and its mission has built the foundation of this incredibly important program. No longer are we a ‘pilot program’ trying to explain why there is value in small-group experiences outdoors. The University ‘gets it.’ That’s why OA and other small-group experiences are now integrated into Orientation. I want to thank each of you for helping make OA an integral part of the fabric of the Princeton experience.

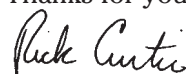
Outdoor Action 2.0 - What’s Next?

Where we have come from and what we have accomplished for so many people is incredible, but we can’t rest on our laurels. We are at the beginning of a whole new journey for OA. What should the next development be for this great program? What should OA 2.0 look like?

When you look at the history of the program, our greatest impact has been student leadership development. There is nothing more important that OA can do for Princeton and the world, than to prepare the next generation for the leadership roles they will have in society after they graduate. We want OA to become the very best “living, learning, leadership laboratory” at Princeton. How we get there, and what the program should look like to accomplish this goal is a huge question.

In order to explore this question about the future of OA, we have formed the OA Alumni Advisory Group. We’ll need your ideas and input and will be reaching out for you to help us create a sustainable road map for OA’s future.

Thanks for your incredible ongoing support of OA!



Rick Curtis '79 h04 h13
Director, Outdoor Action

Reflections on 35 years as Director

I am an amazingly lucky person. For the past thirty-five years I’ve been able to spend every day at work as the Director of Outdoor Action. At Reunions in June I was recognized at a reception celebrating those thirty-five years. It was great to see hundreds of OA Leaders—old friends—people who I have mentored and who have mentored me. There were so many generations of Princetonians from Russell Willis '66 all the way up to leaders from '16.

During my time at Princeton, I’ve witnessed some amazing changes in OA. On my first trip as Director in 1981, there were 220 frosh and 44 leaders on 22 trips. This fall we had 703 frosh and 225 leaders on 89 trips. Since OA began in 1974, **over 20,000 students** have gone on Frosh Trip and we have trained thousands of OA Leaders.

I’ve overseen the OA Leader Training Program grow from basic outdoor skills into one of the nation’s most comprehensive programs, where students learn everything from outdoor and first aid skills, to effective group facilitation, conflict resolution and how to promote diversity and inclusiveness. What’s unique about OA is how much of this leadership development is done by students teaching other students.

President Eisgruber has called OA “one of Princeton’s shining jewels,” and he is totally correct. OA is far more than a ‘just a camping trip.’ In many ways we have transformed the definition of what it means to be a Leader at Princeton. By providing so many students with the opportunity for personal development through challenging experiences in the outdoors, and by training and developing leadership skills in thousands of OA Leaders, OA has made leadership one of the cornerstones of the Princeton experience.

Leaders Explore the Goals of Frosh Trip

Here's how leaders described the importance of the Frosh Trip for incoming students.

Delaney Thull '19

I would name empowering individual freshmen and raising a collective conscience of the incoming class as major Princeton Orientation goals for Frosh Trip. The OA ethics of “challenge by choice” and “choose to be challenged” embody the Orientation goal of empowering individual students. Feelings of inadequacy, of not belonging, or of underachieving can be overwhelming to a Princeton freshman. Completing an Outdoor Action trip is an experience that can replace feelings of intimidation with self-confidence. I remember often reminding myself that if I could complete an OA trip in the wilderness, then I could definitely conquer an assignment, or a new class, or an intimidating social situation. Princeton is a challenge, and an Orientation goal is to empower incoming students to confidently take responsibility for choosing how to engage with and shape their Princeton experience.

Building a collective conscience among the incoming class is another worthy Orientation goal. Frosh Trip really does provide a good circumstance for having genuine conversations about important topics for the Princeton University community. Frosh may not have been meaningfully exposed to the experiences of others regarding topics such as racial diversity, religious faith, socioeconomic difference, or sexual identity. Frosh may also have questions about social life, including the Street, alcohol, or dating and hookup relationships. I see validating concerns and introducing other perspectives from students of different backgrounds or experiences on Frosh Trip as crucial to accomplishing the goal of developing a Princeton class that is able to support one another and positively contribute to the greater Princeton University community.

Justin Athill '18

Frosh Trip is unique because it creates an environment for freshmen that can't truly be replicated on campus. Out in the wilderness, freshmen are challenged and encouraged to rely on each other, and this creates a bond where students are comfortable enough to address and discuss important topics. We help freshmen understand the person they are going into college, including their strengths, weaknesses, and the individuality they contribute to campus culture and diversity. At the same time, Frosh Trip helps to create a bridge between who they are now, and who they want to be in college by preparing them for this major transition. In addition to all of this, freshmen have

also spent five days at the edge of their comfort zone, having grown as a person and have gained the confidence to tackle the new challenges that lie ahead.

Help us Build a Great Year-round Program

These are some of the goals for OA and the funding we will need to secure OA for the future:

- Help us continue to deliver the very best Leader Training Program for free to students. (\$70,000 needed annually)
- Create permanent funding to support the OA Climbing Program and Climbing Wall. (\$25,000 needed annually)

You can help us reach these goals by giving to OA. Just like the impact of OA, your gift will ripple out through the program and across the campus.



High atop the Green Mountains in Vermont



G6 reenacts Washington crossing the Delaware

Carly Bonnet '19

I believe that first impressions are very important; a handshake says a lot about a person. The most beneficial part of Frosh Trip is its ability to bring out the most candid and organic parts of each individual immediately prior to their new Princeton experience. Living a week without phones, social media, nice clothes and make-up forces people to rely on their character, and to make friends solely based on genuine interpersonal interactions, rather than material aspects such as appearance or popularity on social media accounts. Creating this momentum helps to foster real interactions back on campus between people who feel both comfortable being themselves and enthusiastic about making other deeper-than-surface-level

Help Build the Next Generation of Leaders!



Outdoor Adventure Trips at Blairstown

interactions and friendships with others. This healthy community is in my opinion, one of the best parts of Princeton; OA is incredible because it promotes this positive atmosphere and creates this long-lasting first impression of life at Princeton.

Emma Latham '18

I think that one of the most important Orientation goals for Frosh Trip is creating a community on campus where the freshmen feel welcomed and comforted, while also pushed out of their comfort zone to interact and accept people from different backgrounds. During freshman orientation, students are coming from all over the world from a diverse range of countries and cultures. For many freshmen, they are separating from their family and friends for the first time in their life, which can be a shocking and overwhelming experience.

Because of these changes, the freshman are feeling disoriented and trying to understand their new home at Princeton. This means that OA leaders have the important responsibility and power to form a positive community and model how to interact positively with others on campus. We create a space where we accept difference and productively dialogue. By being put into a random group, frosh are able to connect with people with different interests that they might not meet in other

settings. While frosh are interacting with a group of new people, leaders can describe how Princeton is a space for everyone, and is working towards becoming a safer space for LGBTQ, students of color, low-income students, and other groups that were excluded in Princeton's history. Also in this more informal space, frosh learn that their peers and leaders are humans, not the academic gods that they are portrayed to be in the application process. This helps them acclimatize to the Princeton community without the intimidation of the campus itself.

Angela Paoletta '19

Outdoor Action, more than any other element of Orientation, teaches freshmen that they will be able to handle Princeton. Most freshmen enter Princeton with some sort of fear, such as expecting difficult academics, scared they won't make good friends, or concerned about being away from their families. OA should have the goal of making this transition easier by helping freshmen to realize that they can thrive at Princeton and instilling a support system to assist them in doing so.

After participating in Outdoor Action, it becomes clear to freshmen that if they can trek through the wilderness, or send a route their first time rock climbing then they can take on a



We're all in this together!



Leaders celebrating the summit

tough midterm or survive writing seminar. By placing freshmen outside their comfort zone, they are able to expand their comfort zone farther than they thought possible. It is also important that OA ensures no matter how far outside their comfort zone freshmen go, there will be people supporting them so that they can take on any of Princeton's challenges with confidence.

Trekking Patagonia: The Torres del Paine Circuit 2016

In February we ran our second alumni trip in partnership with Princeton Journeys, this time to the wind-swept plains of Patagonia, Chile. During eight days on the trail the group trekked over 70 miles through Torres del Paine National Park, a scenic wonderland without parallel. Patagonia is the land of changeable weather and we had the complete experience: beautiful sunny days, condors soaring overhead, watching avalanches pour off the peaks, strong winds, rain, spectacular rainbows, crossing the Gardner Pass in the snow, and the seventeen-mile-long Gray Glacier.



The Gray Glacier, Torres del Paine Park, Patagonia, February 2016
 Standing: Merc Morris '72, Bob Wright '72, Naomi Miller Stein '82, Jan Hirschman, Scott Fulmer '90 Bruce Patterson '82
 Kneeling: Steve Massad '72, Sue Kohler Patterson '82, Rick Curtis '79

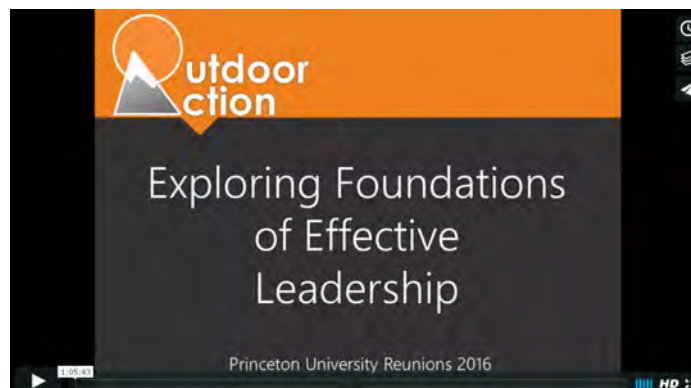
Watch for announcements about future alumni adventures with Outdoor Action and Princeton Journeys at Reunions 2017!



Photo by Christopher Michel @ChrisMichel

Sunset in Torres del Paine Park, Chile

Explore the Foundations of Your Own Effective Leadership



As part of OA's mission to foster leadership development across the campus, at Reunions 2016 we hosted a panel on **Exploring Foundations of Effective Leadership** that brought together a distinguished group of alumni from academics, business, government and the non-profit sector as well as current student leaders to talk about leadership. The panel included: **Derek Lido '73**, Entrepreneurship Specialist and Lecturer in Electrical Engineering and the Keller Center for Innovation in Engineering Education; **James Lee '86**, partner Jackson Hole Group, Adjunct Professor for the University of San Francisco's Graduate School of Business; **Amy Sennett '06 JD**, U.S. District Court, District of MA; **Brady Walkinshaw '06**, State Representative Washington State Legislature; **Jesse Caldwell '16** OA Leader Trainer. It was a great event and we've posted it for you online at Vimeo.

Watch the video at <https://vimeo.com/168976462>

Notes from the Trailhead

For more Notes from the Trailhead and to share your news, memories of OA and photos visit:

<https://outdooraction.princeton.edu/alumni/trailhead>

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Dean Buchenauer '85: For the past five years I've been working with a local Scout Troop and teaching hiking & packing skills to new adult leaders in our district. In 2014 I led our troop of 40 Scouts to summer camp in central Oregon. It's great to see OA making such a difference to young folks.

Edward Nottingham '99: We took our kids (4 & 7 year olds) on their first backpacking trips this year and are planning to circumnavigate Mt. Blanc in the Alps to celebrate our 10th anniversary!

Kathleen Baum Mettenbrink '01: We had a great gathering of OA folks at the 50th Anniversary of the National Outdoor Leadership School in October 2015.
Barb Cestero '88, Rick Rochelle '87, Shannon Rochelle '87, Trina Peterson '86, Kate Williams '89, Ethan Meers '03, and I.

Kristina Alemany '03: Thank you OA for introducing me to the joys of backpacking. I haven't stopped since that first time on Frosh Trip '99!

Kat Bailey '10: Last fall **Mary Reid Munford '10, Alex Godfrey '10, Maura Mathieu '10, Ben Oseroff '11 and Cliff Whetung '13** and I met up for a wintery climb up Mt Moosilauke with excellent views of the White Mountains. I started my pediatrics residency over the summer.

Brooks Barron '11: I graduated in March from Stanford with a joint MBA/MS in Environment & Resources and will join Ohmconnect (a San Francisco clean energy startup). I'm getting outside as much as I can, including leading intentional & reflective trips for friends and volunteering with Bay Area Wilderness Training.

Leland Baldwin '14: I enjoyed Boston's cold and snowy winter by snowshoe-