

## What's next for Outdoor Action?

### Outdoor Action joins the Campus Life Office

This August I began my 30th year as Director of Outdoor Action. I remember arriving back on campus in 1981 and my good friend Hugh Miller '79, acting director that summer, handed me a notebook describing Frosh Trip—and then headed off to medical school. I took a deep breath and started my professional career with OA.

That year we had 44 trips with just 220 participants. This year we had 94 trips with 793 participants and 228 leaders. Outdoor Action has become the largest outdoor orientation program in the United States with more student trip leaders than most programs have participants. The fact that OA serves more than 60 percent of the incoming class is a major factor in the University incorporating the program into the Vice President for Campus Life Office. I want to thank Vice President Janet Dickerson (now retired) for her support of OA during her tenure in the Campus Life Office. We look forward to working with Cynthia Cherrey, the new Vice President for Campus Life, to find more ways for OA to reach out and impact the campus.

### Transition Committee charts new directions

As part of OA's transition back into the University, a strategic planning committee of students, faculty and staff met last fall to identify the key strengths of the OA Program and brainstorm how OA could serve an even larger number of students as part of the Campus Life Office. I want to encourage all of you to read the Transition Committee Report that is posted on the OA Web site ([www.princeton.edu/~oa/reports/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/reports/)). In this document we identify the many important contributions OA has made to the University over the past three decades and explore future strategies on how Outdoor Action's focus on leadership development, environmental stewardship, and community building can further enhance campus life as defined in our new 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.*

### Where is OA going next?

Now that Outdoor Action is part of the Campus Life Office, the University hopes to expand the range of Outdoor Action activities during the academic year and develop partnerships between OA and various programs and departments on campus. This is both a huge opportunity for the program and a significant challenge. I know that OA has been instrumental in transforming the lives of students for almost four decades by teaching them how to be effective leaders in a wonderfully diverse campus community. I also know that we have just



Frosh Trip Group G8 in the Delaware Water Gap, NJ

scratched the surface of what OA is capable of contributing to the fabric of campus life. Our challenge, and my challenge to you is to help us build the kind of resources that OA needs for the future.

Our long-term goal is to build an endowment fund for Outdoor Action to provide permanent funding for a rich set of leadership development and outdoor activities for the entire campus community both with the Frosh Trip Program and throughout the academic year. OA and future generations of Princetonians need your support as we take this next important step in OA's growth. Your annual Friends of OA dues are critical for supporting the program each year.

I want to thank all of the OA alumni and parents who have supported OA. Your generous gifts have kept the program alive and growing.

### New OA Office

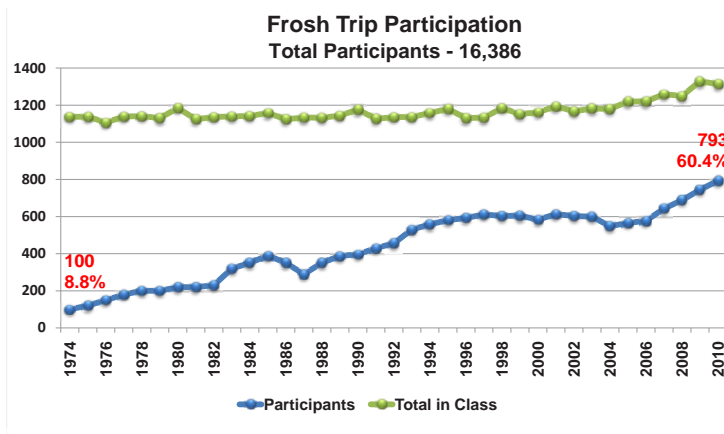
As part of our transition into the University the OA Office has moved back to the main campus. The new OA Office is located at Dillon Court West, behind Dillon Gym towards Whitman College. Our new office location is making it much easier to interact with leaders on a regular basis. When you are on campus, please stop by and visit.

*Rick Curtis*

Rick Curtis '79

Director, Outdoor Action

# Highlights of the Transition Report



## Growth of the Frosh Trip Program

To say that OA has grown over the past 30 years underestimates the broad impact the program has had on campus and on the lives of thousands of students. What began as a 'pilot project' has more than doubled in size over 20 years and OA participants who once were a small minority of the incoming class, now represent the majority of incoming freshmen. The Leader Training Program has grown extensively as well. We now train over 120 new leaders each year in order to keep up with the growing demand of Frosh Trip applicants each fall. As you can see from the chart above, Frosh Trip continues to grow and impacts a significant portion of the incoming class and all of the OA Leaders involved in the program.

## Programs & Partnerships

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 like last spring's Nature & Spirituality Retreat with the Office of Religious Life, and others are departments that enlist Outdoor Action to provide a program component. For example, OA has worked closely with University Health Services in alcohol education & CPR training for eating club officers and Residential College Advisors. As part of the Campus Life Office, OA can facilitate two types of collaborative opportunities to the University: joint programming as outlined above and activity/training services to particular departments. You can read more about our proposed collaboration efforts in the Transition Committee Report.

## Major New Goals for OA

The Transition Committee identified a number of strategic goals for OA moving forward. Everyone agreed that OA is an 'untapped resource' for promoting student leadership development on campus. We know that the experiences that OA Leaders have are incredibly valuable and we want to develop a rich set of new programs that can provide leadership development training to a broader set of student groups—from student government and student organizations to sports teams and community service volunteers. We've already been piloting these efforts through our training of Bridge Year students, Pace Center volunteers, and some varsity sports teams. The second area of growth is to expand our trip offerings during the academic year. By providing a wide array of multi-day trips over

school breaks, day trips on weekends, and increased training activities on campus, we can create even more opportunities for OA Leaders to develop their leadership, facilitation and outdoor experience and provide students with opportunities to meet new people on campus and engage in the outdoors. Moving forward on these two ambitious goals is going to require a significant amount of new resources for OA and is part of the University's commitment to build an endowment for OA through the Aspire Campaign.



Frosh Group VA71

## Kevin Callaghan '83 Fund Supports Leader Training Scholarships

Kevin Callaghan '83 made a major endowment gift to Outdoor Action in 2000 to provide financial aid for freshmen to participate in the Frosh Trip. This fund provided full scholarships for numerous freshmen participants. With the University's shift to provide full financial aid to all incoming financial aid students coming to Princeton, Kevin has expanded his deed of gift to support Leader Training and other scholarships for students to participate in OA. With the increase in the numbers of students training to become OA Leaders (120 last year), the Kevin Callaghan endowment is extremely important in ensuring that the Leader Training Program remains accessible to all students. One of our long-term is to be able to completely fund the Leader Training Program from endowed funds.

Year	Aid Recipients	Aid Awarded
2006 - 2007	23	\$3,616
2007 - 2008	40	\$7,284
2008 - 2009	46	\$9,443
2009 - 2010	71	\$13,952



# Students Reflect on OA

## Sascha Brown '14

- freshman from Decatur, GA

When I first started on the trip it was light and I was thinking 'Oh, this is fine, this will be fun, this will be easy.' Then the next day when we had to do seven or ten miles I was thinking, 'Wow, this is kind of what Princeton is about. They are going to challenge you to go just a little farther than you thought was possible, but you can definitely do it.'

## Josh Franklin '11

- OA Leader and HEART Wilderness First Aid Coordinator from Mendham, NJ

Frosh Trip [when I was a freshmen] was not at all what I expected. I kind of expected to meet some people, have a good time...But my leaders were really thoughtful, intelligent people and I thought a lot about what life was going to be like at Princeton. To have a week-long experience that goes that deep is something really incredible and I wanted to be a part of that for incoming freshmen because my time at Princeton would have been very different had I not had that opportunity right at the beginning.

## Sam Borchard '11

- Leader Trainer & Frosh Trip Coordinator from Southborough, MA

OA does a really good job of training you to lead freshmen. You get trained in wilderness first aid, and there's a lot of leadership and group dynamics which was even more useful in my life outside of OA. How to monitor group dynamics and how to frame the experience for your freshmen who are timid and a little scared being in a new situation and a new school with a lot of people they don't know. By the end of the trip they are really excited to be here.

## Ben Oseroff '11

- Leader Trainer from Buffalo, NY

Becoming an OA Leader you become part of a community of leaders. OA has the opportunity now as part of Campus Life to really play a bigger role on campus. I am looking forward

to seeing the new areas that OA gets into—sustainability, working with varsity sports teams on leadership and facilitating group dynamics, and community service. OA Leaders are really a great resource and I am very excited that OA is now a part of Campus Life.

## Henry Chai '14

- freshman from Bangor, ME

I would recommend to all incoming freshmen that they go on an OA trip. It's great to have a pretty solid base already when you show up on your first day of orientation and have friends that you can talk to about the new environment that you are all in. I think OA really solidified that friendship right there. It's a special connection that you get from spending a week in the woods with people.

## Katy Lankester '08 alumna

- a Leader Trainer and a HEART Wilderness First Aid Instructor. After graduation she spent a year as a Program Development Manager for the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation based in Hanoi, Vietnam through Princeton in Asia. Katy remained in Vietnam for another year designing and building the first mobile medic program in the country.

I wouldn't say that I think about OA every single day...maybe just every other day. (And no, it's not just the 3 p.m. GORP cravings.) Usually it's because I'm tapping into the one, the only, the 'Leader Radar.'

'Leader Radar' is the OA Leader's secret weapon. It helps us keep our group happy, healthy, and positive. By using it, we can gauge what people need in order to succeed. As Leaders, we learn to see who needs what to meet which challenge. Who needs to have 2 more or 2 fewer kilos of weight? To be the head or back of the group? We take them out of their comfort zone and then help them meet the challenges they find there.

Outdoor Action will take any Princeton student and train him or her to be an outdoor trip leader. It is an organization fundamentally dedicated to the idea that leadership can be learned through practice and self-awareness, and that leadership will manifest itself differently in each individual. As a Leader Trainer, I learned to trust the people whom I was training—seeing my trainees grow from novice leaders to experienced leaders, and watching them bloom into their leadership skill sets. Even the most insensitive, non-outdoorsy jokesters would, by the end, have learned to balance humor and judgment, wisecracks and sensitivity, bear bags and stove protocols. Trusting people to take responsibility and leadership is a key management skill that I find rarely in the working world, and which I hope to carry with me as I mentor people during my career.



Frosh Farming Group OF121



Watch student reflections: [www.princeton.edu/~oa/video/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/video/)



Frosh Group B122 bikes along the C&O Canal

## Josh Miner Award

This year's Josh Miner '43 Experiential Education award was presented at Reunions to Jim Garrett '65 and Janet Smith Dickerson, Vice President for Campus Life. The award is given annually to *"a graduate of Princeton University or University staff member who has provided outstanding leadership in the fields of experiential or outdoor education."*



Janet Smith Dickerson and Jim Garrett '65

Jim Garrett '65 began his long association with Outward Bound in 1964 at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School, where, over the years, he served as a sea course instructor (1965-74), then as a member of the Program and Safety Committee of the Board of Trustees and of the Corporation (1993-2004). He currently serves Outward Bound USA as the Director of the National Service Initiative. He is also the team leader for Outward Bound USA's Instructor Judgment Training Curriculum Project. He is a member of the Board of Advisors of Outward Bound USA, the Board of the Baltimore-Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound Center (BCBOBC), and serves as chair of the BCBOBC Program and Safety Committee.

Janet Dickerson served as the first Vice President for Campus Life from July 2000–July 2010. Janet has devoted a career of nearly 40 years to students at four U.S. colleges and universities. During her time at Princeton, she was an ardent supporter of the Outdoor Action Program helping to expand financial aid for student participants, encouraging the development of the Leader Training Program, and overseeing the transition of Outdoor Action into the University under the Vice President for Campus Life Office. Over the past ten years Janet has been instrumental in expanding the learning experience of students outside the classroom at Princeton, supporting initiatives and programs such as the Frist Campus Center, the Sustained Dialog inter-racial communications program, the Pace Center for Civic Engagement, and the Religious Life Office. Additional information on this year's Miner Award winners is available at [www.princeton.edu/~oa/alumni/miner.shtml](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/alumni/miner.shtml).

## In Memoriam

**Marc Simon '80** passed away this April 2010 after a long battle with cancer. Marc was a great friend with whom many of us shared adventures in the outdoors. While at Princeton he was active as an OA Leader and as a member of the Ultimate Frisbee team. After graduation Marc moved to France where he was instrumental in developing architectural restoration programs for La Sabranque in Provence, France. As a stone mason he was known throughout Europe as an expert in medieval restoration techniques. He also founded a successful Web Development company.

## Notes from the Trailhead

**Send us your latest stories on the enclosed membership form.**

**John Lord '44** reports, "at 87, age has caught up with me. Some call it arthritis, but I can still make it to the mailbox! I'm thrilled that OA is achieving so much with so many students."

**Marvin Swartz '63** led hikes for 2 weeks in the White Mountains, NH for the Appalachian Mountain Club and educational trips to Eastern Europe and Israel.

**Ron Munger '79** continues his work for the Nature Conservancy in the Western US. His spouse, **Julie Mott '85**, is teaching in Palo Alto and looking forward to building an outdoor adventure strand into the 9th grade orientation at her school. Their children Kathy (10) and Polly (7) are enthusiastic campers and they all went rafting in Utah this summer.

**Una Smith '86** says "Now that my kids are in school some hours during the week, I am finding more time for activities. Still cannot go far in a 3-hour window on school days, but I am doing more orienteering, trail work, and search and rescue. Our first mounted Search and Rescue standard has been published!"

**Claire Kaufman '88** is enjoying introducing her 7 year old son to hiking and camping through Cub Scouts which he began this year.

**Claire Brown '94 & David Kahn '94** took their son Benjamin on his first ski trip in March, "but no Telemark skiing for him quite yet!"

**Katy Teeter '95** enjoys the winter sports opportunities and her new job as a biology professor at Northern Michigan University.

**Julian Marshall '96** and wife Jessica welcomed twins, Abe and Louisa, in January '09. He continues to work as assistant professor of environmental engineering at the University of Minnesota and as faculty advisor to Engineers Without Borders. "Glad to see OA is going strong!"

**Eric Ross '98** traveled to Tanzania last year to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro with his wife.

**Katie Baum '01** has been working as a field instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) since 2003, has been the NOLS Alaska Program Supervisor since 2007, and Program Director for NOLS Alaska since January 2010. She traveled to Chilean Patagonia for a mountaineering courses and the Brooks Range and Alaska National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. "Wouldn't be doing any of this if not for OA."

**Emily Lammers '06** traveled to Denali National Park in Alaska this summer for a backcountry camping trip. "The highlight was seeing three grizzly bears a quarter mile away when we crawled out of our tent one morning!"

For more Notes from the Trailhead, visit:  
[www.princeton.edu/~oa/alumni/trails/trailhead.shtml](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/alumni/trails/trailhead.shtml)