



May 2009

**Dear Member of the Class of 2013:**

**Congratulations, you are now part of the Princeton community! Before classes start, want to meet other freshmen, learn about Princeton, get to know upperclassmen, have a truly unique orientation experience, and have incredibly fun adventures in the outdoors? Go on the Outdoor Action Frosh Trip!**

The Outdoor Action Frosh Trip is Princeton's oldest and largest preorientation program for freshmen that will introduce you to new friends and allow you to learn about Princeton before Orientation Week. Every year, over half the incoming freshmen class spends six days hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, working on trail service projects, or participating in other outdoor activities. Last year, 686 members (over 55 percent) of the Class of 2012 participated in the trip. We offer trips for all levels of experience and physical ability, so there's a trip for everyone. This year we anticipate applications from more than 700 members of your class. With so many students participating you'll get to meet a wonderful cross-section of the incredible diversity of the Class of 2013.

The enclosed brochure has information, photos, and quotes from student participants, and you can find even more details on the OA Web site at [www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft). This is the 36<sup>th</sup> year of our program and during that time more than 14,840 Princeton students have participated in the Frosh Trip, more than any other preorientation program at Princeton. This year, trips will run from **Sunday, September 6, through Friday, September 11**. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to start your college experience and the hundreds of Outdoor Action leaders here at Princeton hope you will join us.

**No Previous Experience Required:** Outdoor Action Trips are open to all freshmen. Most students who participate have never been hiking or camping before. Even if you don't have any previous outdoor experience, there are trips that you'll enjoy and it's a great chance to try something new. Of course, if you have previous outdoor experience, you'll feel right at home on the Frosh Trip.

**Outdoor Action Leaders:** OA Leaders are some of the most energetic and engaged students at Princeton. You'll learn an incredible amount about the Princeton experience from these student leaders who cover the full spectrum of academic and extracurricular interests on campus. Your leaders have extensive training in outdoor skills and can teach you all the things you need to know to be comfortable in the outdoors. After your trip, we hope you'll consider becoming an OA Leader—one of the most fun extracurricular activities at Princeton. Profiles highlighting the diverse group of OA Leaders are online at [www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/leaders/leaderbios.shtml](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/leaders/leaderbios.shtml).

**Trip Activities & Sustainability:** The enclosed brochure describes the various trip activities that we offer. Read it carefully and decide what type of trip you would prefer. Trips take place across the mid-Atlantic and New England states from Vermont to Virginia. Sustainability is an important goal for Princeton University and Outdoor Action and is incorporated into all OA trips. You'll learn a lot about Princeton's sustainability initiatives during your trip. For more information on the OA Sustainability Initiative, visit: [www.princeton.edu/~oa/sustainability/index.shtml](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/sustainability/index.shtml).

We take a number of things into account when assigning people to trips including your trip preferences, the trip activity level you request, your physical condition, as well as any special needs you have so we can find a trip that you'll be comfortable with. We'll do our best to place you in your first choice trip, but keep in mind that certain types of trips have a limited enrollment, so please indicate several preferences. If you have any special needs that will impact the type of trip you can participate please indicate this on your application. We accept participants to the program by the date of your application (Web signup or mail-in postmark), but we don't assign people to specific types of trips (backpacking, canoeing, outdoor adventure, etc.) until all applications are in. You'll receive a detailed letter in mid-July informing you what general type of trip you will be on and what equipment you'll need to bring. You will find out your exact trip location when you arrive on campus in September.

**Cost, Financial Aid & Payment:** The cost of the trip is \$545, which covers all trip expenses (food, transportation, personal & group equipment, etc.). Princeton University is committed to making sure that the Frosh Trip Program is available to all members of the Class of 2013. Therefore, **if you are receiving need-based University scholarship funds, your cost for the Outdoor Action trip is fully subsidized.** The trip fee is covered by funding from the financial aid program and the generous support of the Kevin Callaghan '83 Fund. You don't need to do anything to request aid; we will confirm everyone's eligibility with the Financial Aid Office. All students will be billed for the trip on August 1. It will show up on your University bill as Outdoor Action. If you are eligible for financial aid you will receive a credit of \$545 applied to your University bill from the Financial Aid Office to cover your trip fee. If you are unsure whether or not you qualify as a need-based aid recipient, please check with the Financial Aid Office by calling 609-258-3330 or emailing faoffice@princeton.edu.

**Trip Dates & Arrival:** This year the trips will run from **Sunday, September 6, through Friday, September 11. You will need to arrive on campus on Saturday, September 5. Check-in for Outdoor Action is in Dillon Gym at 3:00 p.m. You will be able to pick up your room key and move into your dorm room on Saturday, September 5.** The University Housing Office will be open from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Saturday for you to sign your housing contract and pick up your room key. (There may be a few rooms that will not be available due to summer housing or construction projects. We will have specific information on any rooms which may be affected in July.) At 3:00 p.m. you check in at Dillon Gym, meet your leaders and the other members of your group, and get any equipment you need. That evening will be spent getting to know your group and packing up for your departure on Sunday morning.

Any students who will not be able to arrive by 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, such as students flying in from the West Coast, students coming from overseas, or students who observe the Jewish Sabbath should call the OA office to make special arrival arrangements. The trip ends on Friday, September 11. Groups typically return to campus between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Friday and you'll be back in time for Orientation Week. The dates of the trip typically conflict with fall varsity sports teams. If you are a fall varsity sport athlete, you should check with your coach about when you are required to arrive on campus for fall training.

**Physical Condition:** OA trips are fun and active. We offer trips at various physical activity levels so we can provide an experience that is comfortable for everyone. Most of our trips involve hiking, so to determine the level of physical activity for each trip we look at many factors including how many miles a day of hiking and how flat or hilly the area is. The Base Camp & Outdoor Adventure, Base Camp & Community Service, and Sustainable Farming trips stay in one place the entire week and are less strenuous. Your answers about your physical condition will help us place you on a trip that will be at the right level for you, and please indicate what level of trip you would be most comfortable with.

**Students with Differing Abilities:** Outdoor Action can often accommodate students with differing abilities such as hearing impairments, visual impairments, or mobility limitations. In the past students with conditions such as diabetes, profound deafness and mild cerebral palsy have participated. Please contact OA Director, Rick Curtis, at 609-258-6230 to discuss your particular needs and trip possibilities.

**International Students:** We encourage all international students to participate in the Frosh Trip. It is a great way to see different parts of the U.S., learn about Princeton and share your culture with other members of your class. The optional international student preorientation program takes place before the Frosh Trip so you can participate in both programs. Last year 80 percent of the students from thirty-seven countries who participated in the international student preorientation program chose to participate in Outdoor Action. We are making a special effort to ensure that we can meet the needs of all international students so please contact us if you have any questions.

**Religious Observance:** The University Chapel will be open early Sunday morning, the day trips depart. There will be Catholic Mass on campus on Saturday evening, September 5. For Muslim students, Iftar will be held on campus Saturday evening, September 5, and those observing Ramadan are typically placed in low-activity base camp trips during the week. Observant Jewish students are placed on trips that are close to Princeton so that we can return you to campus before sundown on Friday, September 11. If you need to return before sundown, please check

the box on the application for Observant Student and we will place you on an appropriate trip. Trips will typically return to campus by 5:00 p.m.

**What You Need to Bring:** There is very little equipment you will need other than personal clothing and lightweight hiking boots. You will also need a synthetic-fill sleeping bag with a nylon shell (please no cotton sleeping bags) and, since most of our trips involve backpacking, an internal or external frame backpack. If possible, please borrow these items from a friend or relative since we have hundreds of students who need equipment. If you do not have either a sleeping bag or a backpack, indicate that on your application and Outdoor Action can provide them for you. In July we will send you a detailed equipment list and instructions on how to prepare for your trip. If you want to get an early start on equipment, you can review last year's equipment list on the OA Frosh Trip Web Site ([www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/)).

**Food on the Trip – Vegetarians & Students who keep Kosher or Halaal:** OA's basic menu uses a limited amount of meat (tuna and chicken for some meals). While meals are prepared as a group they are easily tailored for vegetarians. Most of the food products on OA are kosher and the menu will meet the needs of many students keeping kosher or Halaal. If you are vegan, keep strictly kosher and require kosher pots or have other special dietary needs such as food allergies, please include detailed information in your application with your specific needs or contact the OA office so that we can speak with you about your particular needs. Details about the OA menu will be available online at [www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/) after July 15.

**Information for Parents:** More than any other preorientation program, Outdoor Action focuses on helping new students learn about college and become part of the diverse campus that is Princeton. Outdoor Action leaders complete one of the most extensive outdoor skills training programs for college outdoor leaders including certification in Wilderness First Aid, leadership, group dynamics, team building, and diversity skills to provide the best possible orientation experience for new students. Research conducted to evaluate Outdoor Action and similar programs has found that outdoor orientation programs, with their unique small group environment, are the most effective means for building strong social networks for new students. This is one reason why Princeton considers OA such an important program. University President Shirley Tilghman says of the Outdoor Action Program: "Outdoor Action has a long history of training Princeton students in leadership and outdoor education skills that encourage strong bonds within our entering classes and, indeed, serve them well throughout their lives."

Many parents ask whether it is better for them to arrive on campus to help with move in, Saturday, September 5, or Saturday, September 12. It depends on what date is best for you. Students can move their belongings into their dorm room on Saturday, September 5, but won't sleep in their room that night (it's too hard to wake everyone up for the early bus departure on Sunday morning) so the whole group will sleep in one of their leaders' rooms. The Housing Office encourages people to wait until all the roommates are on campus before setting up the room. So some parents opt to come on September 5, others on September 12, and others both weekends.

During the trip Outdoor Action has Support Teams staying in a motel nearby each trip area to respond to any problems. Trip leaders are trained in emergency procedures and each trip carries a cell phone or satellite phone although phone coverage is not always available. OA operates a Communications Center on campus throughout the trip to keep track of groups during the week and to respond to any problems. Additional information for parents is available at [www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/parents/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/parents/).

**Application Forms:** The fastest and most secure way to apply is to submit your application online at <https://oa2.princeton.edu/applications/ft/frosh> starting on June 2. It gives you an instant registration date for your application and an email confirmation that your application has been received. We encourage you to apply online since it helps us handle all the applications that come in. If you don't have Internet access, please complete both Part A and Part B of the enclosed application forms and mail them back to us before June 30.

The application provides us with information about your trip preferences, physical condition (to help us place you in an appropriate trip), health history, and any special needs. If you need an additional application, you can download a PDF format version from the OA Web site. **Space on the trip is limited and enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications are processed based on your Web sign-up date or postmark date. Due to the popularity of the program, we suggest you submit your application as soon as possible. Often, the trip**

**fills before the application deadline (June 30). If you wait until the last minute to apply, there may not be a space for you. If you need to make early airline reservations to secure a good fare, make sure that your application is sent in time to guarantee you a space.** If enrollment is filled, we will notify you and place you on our waiting list.

A detailed information packet will be mailed to you in mid-July, with specific information on what items to bring, where and when to arrive, how to get your room key, and other important information. This second letter is your confirmation for participating in the program. **If you do not receive this second letter by July 15, please call us to confirm that we received your application.** There have been occasions (especially with students who live outside of the U.S.) when there was a problem with the mail and we never received the original application (another good reason to apply online). We can't hold a space for you if we do not receive an application. You can also check on the Web site on July 1 to confirm that you are on the list of participants ([www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/](http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/)).

**Health Forms & Immunizations:** To approve participation of applicants, the University Health Services Office requires that all Outdoor Action Program participants complete and return the health history forms that were included in your matriculation packet to University Health Services by June 30. **We are not permitted to take people without medical clearance from Health Services.** You must **have all the required University immunizations completed before the program begins on September 5.** It is *recommended* that you have had a Tetanus booster shot within the last five years. You are *required* to get a Tetanus booster if you have not had one within ten years. If you have not had a booster within that time, please arrange to get one and include that information on your medical history form. The Hepatitis B vaccine is given in three doses over six months. As long as you have started the series, you can participate. You may request an immunization exemption for religious reasons by checking the box on the application form.

**Please be sure to note the following:**

- (1) **Submit your application online at <https://oa2.princeton.edu/applications/ft/frosh/> or, if you don't have Internet access, fill out both Part A and Part B of the application completely and mail it in. Have the following information ready:**
  - **Health Insurance Provider, policy/subscriber number, and group number**
  - **Date of last medical examination**
  - **Family physician name and phone number**
  - **Date of last Tetanus booster shot**
- (2) **Your signature and that of your parent or guardian is required on the Web or the paper application.**
- (3) **All applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Application deadline is June 30. The program often fills before that date.**
- (4) **Make sure you complete your University medical forms.**

We hope that you will join us in September! If you have questions about the program, please feel free to contact one of the Frosh Trip Program Coordinators, Sam Borchard '10, Laura Kergosien '10, Mary Reid Munford '10, Doug Sprankling '10, at [oatrip@princeton.edu](mailto:oatrip@princeton.edu), or the Outdoor Action Administrative Assistant Jennifer Bornkamp at 609-258-6230. We look forward to seeing you in the fall. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Sam Borchard '10 Frosh Trip Coordinator	Laura Kergosien '10 Frosh Trip Coordinator	Mary Reid Munford '10 Frosh Trip Coordinator	Doug Sprankling '10 Frosh Trip Coordinator
Jennifer Bornkamp Administrative Assistant	Eric Cielinski Program Coordinator	Rick Curtis '79 Director	

**Submit your application online at <https://oa2.princeton.edu/applications/ft/frosh>**

**or mail your application to: Outdoor Action Program, 350 Alexander Street**

**Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08540**