



The Outdoor Action Program at Princeton University: A Twenty Year Perspective

1/12/98
Richard M. Curtis
Assistant Dean of Students
Director, Outdoor Action Program

Introduction

The Outdoor Action Program has been an important program for building community at Princeton for the past twenty years. Outdoor Action activities serve as powerful group bonding experiences that help students develop new friendships, learn leadership skills, increase interpersonal skills, develop concern for the environment, and learn lifelong wilderness skills. The overall success of the program can be seen through the yearly increases in participation and evaluations and studies of participants and leaders. This report documents the history and growth of the program since its founding in 1974.

Outdoor Action History

The Outdoor Action Program (OA) was begun as a pilot project in 1973 by members of the Dean of Students Office to address the issues of isolation experienced by students 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 group wilderness activity in August of 1973. That first trip brought eight entering students together with upperclass leaders. The program was an immediate success as a bonding experience for new Princetonians, an opportunity to meet upperclass students, and a chance to explore the wilderness. Student leaders with wilderness camping skills were recruited and backpacking equipment was purchased, so that the program could serve more students. The next trip, in 1974, had 100 participants. As this expansion was occurring, students and administrators involved in the program felt that Outdoor Action could provide outdoor experiences during the year as well. As a result, OA began offering trips and programs throughout the academic year for all students, faculty, and staff.

From that small beginning, the program has grown to the point that 530 members of the class of '97 (46.7%) participated in this year's Frosh Trip Program and over 40% of all currently enrolled undergraduates have participated in some form of Outdoor Action activity through trips, training programs, or on-campus events throughout the year. Currently there are 300 undergraduate and graduate students who are involved with the program as leaders. It is essential to examine need for such a program at Princeton and how the specific goals of the Outdoor Action Program address these needs. (For detailed information on the OA Frosh Trip Program see Appendix 1; for information on OA programs during the year see Appendix 2.)

Outdoor Action Program Goals

The original proposal for Outdoor Action, written in 1973, clearly articulates the need for such a program on the campus and the goals under which the program has operated for the past twenty years.

This proposal is prompted by a continuing need for new and innovative ways to facilitate interaction and increase communication among diverse members of the University community. The context of an Outdoor Action program encourages a person to open himself [herself] and share with others in a setting which is supportive of failure as well as success. Such a setting may be found in a classroom, on the athletic field, or perhaps in a dormitory room. But the kind of total involvement required of participants in a challenging outdoor adventure, which demands group cooperation and individual determination, is difficult to replicate in the academic setting of the campus.

I. Purpose

The University is a community. It is also many communities. The degree to which individuals feel a part of a community might be measured by the extent to which persons within it express and show concern for one another--sometimes at the expense of personal

comfort or pleasure. Another indication of community is the extent to which people do things together rather than merely talk, lecture, discuss, or study.

Students frequently identify a feeling of isolation on campus today. Individuals move from dormitory room to classroom to library with little social interaction along the way. Occasions are needed to challenge the “individualism” which students may or may not consciously pursue but which nevertheless characterizes so many students on campus today.

The Outdoor Action program will stimulate new relationships among members of the University community in a context removed from the routine and ritual of campus life. The program encourages self-discovery and personal growth as one interacts with the [outdoors] and with other people.

II. Specific Objectives

- A. To encourage personal growth and greater self-confidence through activities which make challenging demands upon the participants.
- B. To foster group interaction in a context which elicits trusts, requires compassion, provides support for each individual, and encourages mutual respect.
- C. To teach new skills and provoke new interests which will enhance the participants’ appreciation of the [outdoors].
- D. To increase awareness of the environment and stimulate ecological concern through encounter with the elements of nature in the [outdoors].
- E. To provide an occasion for recreation in an outdoor setting which requires total involvement of the person, in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of the University.

Over the past twenty years the Outdoor Action Program has been extremely effective in helping to facilitate this type of growth. The following quotations from participants in the program demonstrate the impact of Outdoor Action.

My Outdoor Action experience has been one of the most significant aspects of my two years at Princeton. I have been fairly active as a trip participant, trip leader, and other outdoor related seminars. All of these I have grown from in knowledge, skills, and I feel I have learned more about myself and grown as a person from my Outdoor Action experience.

- OA Leader

I thought the trip was a very positive experience. OA’s philosophy and function on the Princeton campus are, I think, vital to my and other student’s psychological well-being. There is a special harmony that physical exhaustion, deep thinking, and contact with the environment seem especially able to attain. Wonderful!

- OA participant

(For additional comments by participants and leaders, see Appendices 3 and 4.)

One of the major issues that is raised regarding student residential life at Princeton is fragmentation. The increase in size and diversity at Princeton has resulted in an increase in the number of students who feel isolated and unsupported. With the development of the residential college system, there is a greater separation than ever before between underclassmen and upperclassmen. Undergraduates and graduate students are isolated from each other, and students rarely meet with faculty or staff except in formal settings. Outdoor Action is an effective means of stimulating interaction between all of these populations. Incoming students meet upperclass leaders on their Frosh Trip, and trips throughout the year are a mixture of all classes, graduate students, and staff. In this way Outdoor Action provides valuable role modeling and

mentoring between different groups on campus. The Outdoor Action Program provides an excellent vehicle for integrating individuals into campus life. Participants put the matter in the following ways:

The trip introduced me to a lot of extroverts and other kinds of people whom I might normally not have met (being a rather introverted person myself). Being on the trip brought about a unique camaraderie between these diverse people, which was a very special beginning to the next 4 years. - Frosh Trip Participant

I loved the experience—the group awareness and bonding ultimately caused individual growth for every group member, I'm sure. The last night, when our group spent three or more hours discussing each individual, it was so spectacular to be able to view oneself through the mirrors held up by others. The group was helpful to me in that it lessened my fears about the social scene at Princeton—getting to know nine wonderfully interesting and caring people. - Frosh Trip Participant

The trip was a wonderful experience. My group was a conglomerate of very diverse people. Had we all not been thrown together in the wilderness for six days I probably wouldn't have met and become friends with most of them. Every member of my group contributed to the trip's greatness in a different way. I think it was a great way to begin Princeton because not only do you meet a bunch of people, but the trip also allowed me a lot of time to think and become in touch with myself. - Frosh Trip Participant

I think that I have gained the most from my chance to meet other people. The close environment of an OA trip allows one to really get to know someone. Especially people you would not meet otherwise in the social scene in Princeton.

OA's real success lies in the quality of its activities. OA programs promote friendship and understanding among races, socioeconomic groups, age groups and nationalities, in a way that no academic program could ever parallel, and in a way which social life on the Princeton campus rarely, if ever, provides. The values of social responsibility, of the quality of our environment, of leadership, sensitivity, humility and restraint in the face of adverse conditions and a plurality of views, are issues that surface on every OA trip, at every stage of its planning and its execution. In other words, outdoor recreation, as practiced by OA at Princeton, is part of what education is all about: the delicate and (self) knowledge all within the context of our physical and social environment. - Dimitri Gondicas - Director, Hellenic Studies

Along with this increased interaction, numerous OA participants report that they find Outdoor Action Programs to be extremely helpful in reducing the stress found within academic life at Princeton. Along with these important educational goals, OA also provides opportunities for the following: the learning of new skills and development of new interests that enhance the participants' appreciation of the wilderness, and an increase in awareness of the environment and ecological concern.

Outdoor Action and Personal Growth

There have been numerous studies performed by Outward Bound and other programs to quantify the change within individuals after participation in group wilderness activities. In 1977, a study to evaluate the impact of the Outdoor Action Frosh Trip Program was initiated with members of the entering class ('81). A psychological study was performed indicating quantifiable increases in levels of self-awareness, self-

assertion, acceptance of others, self-disclosure, and self-esteem within the population of individuals who participated in the OA Frosh Trip Program (see Appendix 10). Additional anecdotal information reveals that many participants have found Outdoor Action to offer a profound experience of personal growth. Numerous other participants report an increased sense of belonging and community. (See Appendices 3 and 4.)

The Outdoor Action Model

In the Outdoor Action Program, students in groups of 6-10 engage in multi-day wilderness activities with two experienced leaders. Using a thaw, shift, and refreeze model of personal growth, OA places individuals into a group setting where, faced with personal and group challenges in a supportive framework, the participants stretch themselves beyond their previously established limits. The wilderness setting does a great deal to enhance the potential for personal development (see Appendix 5 for description of a general OA wilderness program). The trips provide a simplified environment where the daily concerns are traveling, keeping warm, eating, sleeping, and enjoying the companionship of the other group members. The results of the program (as indicated in some of the participant responses) are many. Enhanced self-concept, development of communication skills, development of a sense of community among a diverse group, sharing of values and experiences, reduction of stress, are among the outcomes of participation in the Outdoor Action Program.

Impact of the Outdoor Action Program

- OA promotes friendship and positive social interaction between classes and throughout the University community. It is one of the few programs that can bring together students, graduate students, faculty and staff. This is especially important since fragmentation is a problem cited by both students and administrators.
- OA facilitates the development of personal growth through individual and group challenges in a supportive group environment.
- Participation in the program results in increased understanding of the dynamics of groups and the need for effective communication, sharing, and the interdependent nature of interpersonal interaction.
- OA activities facilitate the breaking down of stereotypes.
- Participants and leaders show improved communication and listening skills and group interaction skills.
- OA provides as an excellent format for the development of leadership and teaching skills. It is one of the few programs on campus that has a specific leadership development program.
- OA activities are effective methods for reduction of stress from academic pressure. OA also provides a healthy and non-alcohol oriented form of relaxation.
- OA provides a valuable educational experience that has influenced and directed the lives of many students both at Princeton and beyond.
- The OA Frosh Trip program has demonstrated its effectiveness in easing the transition of incoming students to college life and has helped to reduce the number of adjustment problems.
- OA provides an opportunity to participants to “test themselves” in a safe and supportive group structure. This provides a valuable resource for students who don’t perceive themselves as “athletes.”
- OA provides opportunities for students to become involved at various levels and to achieve personal satisfaction and enhanced self-esteem.
- OA promotes increased awareness and sensitivity to environmental issues.
- OA provides the opportunity for the learning of lifetime skills.
- OA brings students in touch with the Dean of Student Life Office and its goals. It provides the office with input from students about campus life.
- OA is a positive aspect of Princeton that attracts prospective students.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship is a fundamental value in all Outdoor Action activities. Students who experience living in and with the outdoors come to recognize the need for preservation of the wilderness. On every trip, leaders teach minimal impact camping, stressing how each person's actions can have a positive or negative effect on the environment. On many trips, groups perform special service projects such as trail clean-ups. With this new understanding of the environment, students grow more sensitive to issues of conservation on campus, including waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation. OA has made a difference in the number of Princeton students who choose to pursue both academic subjects relating to the environment and environmental careers.

Populations & Participation

While, Outdoor Action has, from its inception, been open to all members of the University, it has primarily served undergraduates. Outdoor Action provides an excellent opportunity for underclass and upperclass students and for students across colleges to interact. The number of participants has grown phenomenally over the past ten years. Approximately 45% of all currently enrolled undergraduates (over 2,000 students) have been involved in some Outdoor Action activity during their four years at Princeton. Over the past five years, participation in Outdoor Action has averaged 1,696 students annually. Recently, a greater number of graduate students have been taking part in the program both as participants and as leaders. OA has offered several all graduate student programs that have been extremely successful. There is a small and growing participation by staff and faculty.

A summary of the events and participation levels from September 1981 through June of 1993 is shown in below in Table 1. This includes all OA activities, trips, training programs, workshops, and presentations. A detailed breakdown of OA activities by type of activity and by population is shown in the tables in Appendix 2.

Outdoor Action Activities September 1981 - June, 1993				
Number of Events	Number of Days	Number of Participants	Number of Leaders	Total Participants
1,014	1,790	13, 976	2,613	16,473

Table 1

Outdoor programs also categorize participation levels based on population*days (the numbers of people who participated in an activity multiplied by the number of days of the activity) and population*hours. These figures are used to include participation in activities that are less than a full day such as workshops and presentations. In the past ten years OA has accumulated over one million hours of participation (see Table 2).

Outdoor Action Population*Days & Population*Hours Summary						
Participant Days	Leader Days	Total Days	Activity Hours	Participant Hours	Leader Hours	Total Hours
38,152	9,789	47,792	34,599	846,078	215,715	1,059,496

Table 2

Outdoor Action Activities

Frosh Trip Program: The Frosh Trip has been an essential activity of Outdoor Action since OA's inception. It was the success of the Frosh Trip Program that led to expansion of the OA Program through the rest of the year. In addition to the general goals of all Outdoor Action trips, the goals of the Frosh Trip Program are the following:

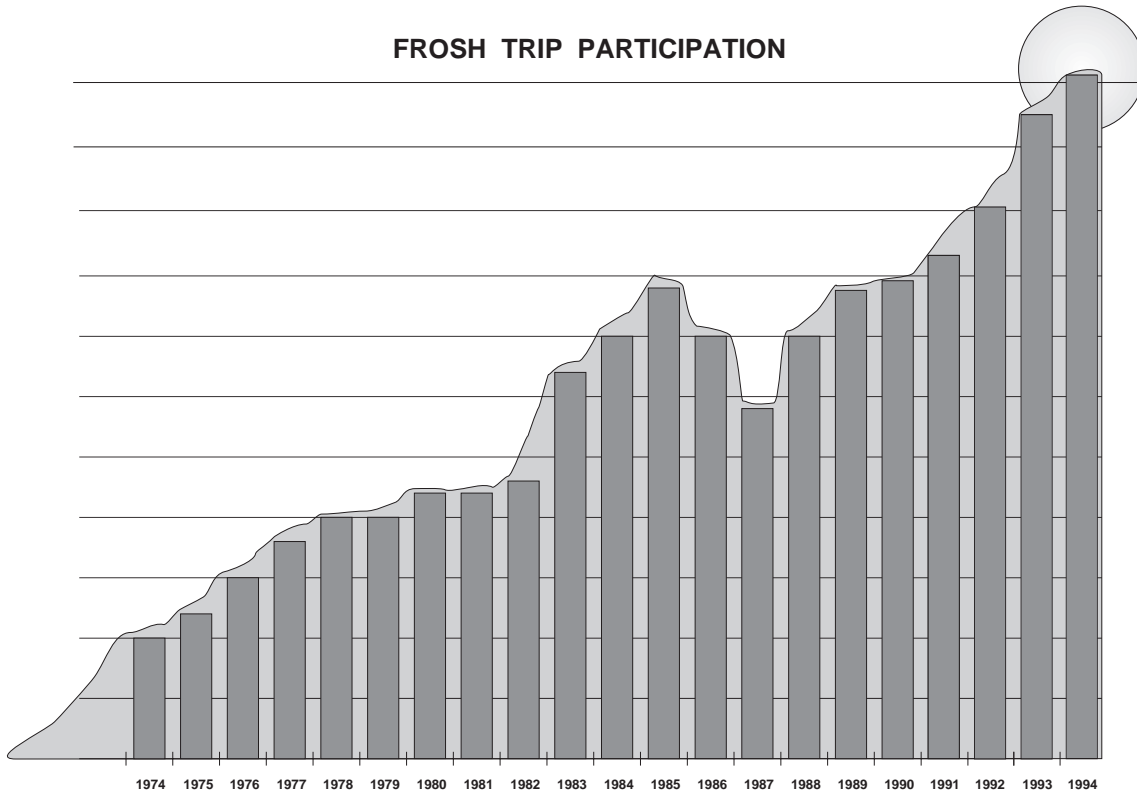
- To provide a transition experience from home and high school to college life.
- To ease this transition through the development of positive relationships with peers.
- To provide information about life on the campus to incoming students.
- To provide incoming students with personal challenges in a 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.
- To encourage students to take on leadership roles within a group setting.
- To encourage acceptance of others including those different from oneself and to respect the values of others.
- To develop trust in others.
- To decrease fragmentation on campus by introducing incoming students to other frosh from different residential colleges and geographic areas.
- 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 develop a positive connection with Princeton University.

The Frosh Trip Program is a 6-day wilderness experience for entering students before Orientation Week. Each group is made up of ten entering students and two OA leaders. The group spends six intensive days together, backpacking, canoeing, backpacking and canoeing, or backpacking and rock climbing. The nature of group travel in the wilderness presents challenges that require cooperation and effective group interaction. OA leaders model and facilitate an open and supportive group environment. The result is a cohesive unit that provides stability for the incoming students. These students begin Princeton with less anxiety and disorientation than those who do not participate in the trip. They begin the year with some friendships already formed which they can rely on in the first stressful weeks of a totally new environment. These students also gain a perspective on Princeton from the upperclass students who are their leaders. The students who participate show quantifiable signs of personal growth (see Appendices 3, 4, 10) and demonstrate less adjustment and roommate problems. Over the past twenty years the Frosh Trip Program has grown from 100 participants (8.8% of the class of '78) to 530 (46% of the class of '97). Table 3 documents the growth of the Frosh Trip Program.

Outdoor Action Frosh Trip Program Summary				
Year	Participants	Leaders	% of Class	% Increase From Previous Year
1974	100	15	8.8%	
1975	120	25	10.5%	20.0%
1976	150	30	13.6%	25.0%
1977	180	36	15.8%	20.0%
1978	200	40	17.5%	11.1%
1979	200	40	17.7%	0.0%
1980	220	44	18.6%	10.0%
1981	220	44	19.6%	0.0%
1982	230	45	20.2%	4.5%
1983	320	70	28.1%	39.1%
1984	350	80	30.6%	9.4%
1985	390	90	33.7%	11.4%
1986	350	80	31.1%	-10.3%
1987	290	80	25.6%	-17.1%
1988	350	105	30.9%	20.7%
1989	388	105	33.9%	10.9%
1990	396	110	33.7%	2.1%
1991	430	106	38.2%	8.6%
1992	456	119	40.1%	6.0%
1993	530	130	46.7%	16.2%
TOTAL =	5340	1264		

Table 3

FROSH TRIP PARTICIPATION



Trips: During the year OA runs a variety of trips ranging from one day activities over weekends to multi-day trips over fall break, intersession, and spring break. These trips all have a multidimensional focus that includes bringing the group into effective interaction, facilitating personal growth through individual and group challenge, development of new skills for living in a wilderness setting, and learning about the environment. Activities include backpacking, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, winter camping, and natural history field trips. The summary of trip participation is presented in Table 4. (For details by activity and population see Appendix 2 - OA Activity Summary 1981 - 1993).

Outdoor Action Trips Summary				
Year	Trip Days	Participants	Leaders	Total
1981 - 1982	110	401	107	508
1982 - 1983	89	381	82	463
1983 - 1984	105	456	121	577
1984 - 1985	106	601	152	753
1985 - 1986	129	741	170	911
1986 - 1987	134	683	166	849
1987 - 1988	138	624	179	803
1988 - 1989	132	886	209	1,095
1989 - 1990	134	832	198	1,030
1990 - 1991	158	760	207	967
1991 - 1992	147	842	241	1,083
1992 - 1993	148	831	213	1,044
TOTAL =	1,530	8,038	2,045	10,083

Table 4

Training Programs: Along with the Leader Training Program there are numerous training programs and events throughout the year designed to teach appropriate skills for outdoor activities. The training events range from an evening to several days and include such subjects as Animal Tracking and Nature Observation, for Outdoorspersons, Wilderness Photography, Outdoor Injury Assessment, River Safety, Situational Leadership, River Rescue and others. Training Programs tend to be of a longer duration, lasting over a period of weeks. Training Programs have been offered in Bike Touring, Rock Climbing, Beginners Canoeing, Beginners Kayaking, and Intermediate Kayaking. These programs are designed to teach the fundamental skills necessary for safe enjoyment of the particular outdoor activity. They also provide an excellent opportunity for OA leaders to further develop their teaching style and techniques. Intermediate level courses serve to train leaders at a higher skill level so that they can teach basic level courses to participants. The summary of training activities is presented in Table 5.

Outdoor Action Training Programs Summary				
Year	Events	Participants	Leaders	Total
1981 - 1982	5	unknown	2	unknown
1982 - 1983	15	158	25	183
1983 - 1984	26	280	40	320
1984 - 1985	27	242	45	287
1985 - 1986	19	136	22	158
1986 - 1987	24	175	27	202
1987 - 1988	12	75	14	89
1988 - 1989	6	30	14	44
1989 - 1990	13	99	22	121
1990 - 1991	16	100	20	120
1991 - 1992	11	59	20	79
1992 - 1993	29	335	48	383
TOTAL =	203	1,689	299	1,988

Table 5

Films, slide series and speakers: Outdoor Action brings speakers, films and seminar programs to the campus that focus on wilderness activities and environmental issues. All of these programs provide both an educational component and an opportunity for social interaction among a diverse group of students, graduate students, faculty, and staff. Programs have included Wilderness Photography, Women Rock Climbers, the American China Everest Expedition, and the Climb for the Cure. The summary of these activities is presented in Table 6.

Outdoor Action Workshops & Presentations Summary				
Year	Programs	Participants	Leaders	Total
1981 - 1982	6	60	1	61
1982 - 1983	14	457	4	461
1983 - 1984	7	300	0	300
1984 - 1985	9	298	0	298
1985 - 1986	5	181	0	181
1986 - 1987	8	170	4	174
1987 - 1988	29	282	31	313
1988 - 1989	50	505	54	559
1989 - 1990	43	488	45	533
1990 - 1991	45	353	44	397
1991 - 1992	51	482	65	547
1992 - 1993	25	473	21	494
TOTAL =	498	5,664	476	4,318

Table 6

Outdoor Action Leader Training Program

Outdoor Action is one of the few programs on campus that focuses specifically on leadership development. OA trips are led by students who have completed an extensive program in outdoor leadership. The Leader Training Program provides for an ongoing source of leaders to maintain the program. Many students enter this program based on their positive experiences on the Frosh Trip or other OA trips. The Leader Training Program is also an end in itself for OA. This program provides students with effective training and experience in interacting, facilitating, and leading others. This leadership experience is valuable tool for personal development. It teaches students important skills they need for other leadership roles on campus and for their lives after Princeton. Leaders have expressed the positive aspects of being an OA leader in the following ways:

My first experience at Princeton University was an Outdoor Action Freshman Trip. I can see now, more than a year later, that it was one of my most valuable experiences at the University. Outdoor Action did far more than introduce me to ten of my future classmates. It has provided the opportunity for me to interact with fellow students outside of the academic environment. Encountering the beauty and challenges of nature with an OA group provides for an intense and meaningful sense of camaraderie that is difficult to find during the pressures of classes.

OA breaks down all of the barriers at Princeton. It allows people to break out of the social structures that divides and inhibits a lot of people. Because you eat, sleep, stink and struggle together, no one feels left out of the group experience. There is transference back on campus as well...I am still good friends with all the people I have met on this trip. There is almost a spiritual bond between OA people that I haven't found anywhere else at Princeton.

If I had to name the experiences that have affected me the most and have been the catalyst for personal change, OA would claim the majority. I have gained self confidence and a teaching ability through my leader training. I love OA! Princeton is enriched tremendously by having such a diverse & challenging program.

Outdoor Action has identified the following goals for the Leader Training Program:

- Teaching students the necessary wilderness, safety, first aid, and emergency skills to safely lead other students in a multi-day wilderness setting.
- Teaching students to be effective peer leaders by training them in effective teaching, listening and communication, and group facilitation skills.
- Encouraging students to develop sound judgment.

Working with a group is valuable beyond Outdoor Action and many OA Leaders find that sharing the wilderness with their peers is one of the most special parts of their time at Princeton. Leaders go on to fill a variety of other leadership roles on the campus including RA's and MAA's, peer counselors, student organization leaders, team captains, etc. Many leaders use their skills to work in outdoor education during the summer and after Princeton, and OA leaders have been instructors at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and at Outward Bound Schools across the country. Students consistently report that the OA leadership experience has been invaluable (see Appendix 4 - Leader Survey).

The Leader Training Program has been evaluated and improved over the past twenty years and provides student leaders with high quality training in wilderness skills, first aid and emergency care, and group dynamics. Each year more than 100 students participate in the Leader Training Program. The OA Leader's Manual, a 250-page book now in its third edition, is used as a reference by outdoor programs across the country.

One of the unique aspects of the Leader Training Program is that it is open to anyone interested in leading OA trips or developing their outdoor leadership skills. Other programs select applicants first and then train them. By having a more open structure, many more students can benefit from the leadership development experience. The requirements for Basic Wilderness Leader are the following:

Leader Training Course - The OA Leader Training Course is a 5-week course that meets weekly for instructional workshops and trip preparation. The course culminates in a 5-day backpacking trip that brings together all the skills participants have been learning. Participants help plan all aspects of the trip, including route, food, and equipment and each participant is required to research and teach classes on particular outdoor topics.

Wilderness First Aid Course - The HEART Wilderness First Aid Course is an intensive course that covers patient examination and evaluation, body systems and anatomy, wound care and splinting, environmental emergencies, and backcountry medicine all with a strong wilderness emphasis (16 hours) .

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) - This course teaches the skills of artificial respiration, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation and obstructed airway management for adults. Certification must be renewed yearly (4 hours).

Group Skills Workshop - This workshop is designed to give participants' hands on experience with the dynamics of leadership including listening and communication skills, models of leadership, dealing with conflict, and methods for effectively facilitating personal growth through outdoor education (12 hours).

Safety Management Workshop - This seminar is designed to make OA leaders familiar with the causes of accidents in the wilderness and how effective pre-planning can prevent accidents and reduce risk. (2 hours).

Outdoor Action Leadership Project

In 1993, Outdoor Action developed the Leadership Project to offer the OA group experience to a broader group of students on the Princeton campus. Utilizing the OA Team Building Course, leaders facilitate small groups through a series of team challenge activities. These activities mirror, in a few hours, many of the issues student experience in a multi-day trip. Enhanced interpersonal skills and self-esteem, the breaking down of stereotypes, and the development of a more effective group structure are the goals of the experience. Participating groups have included Resident Advisor and Minority Affairs Advisor groups, peer counselors, student organizations, athletic teams, and University departments. By focusing on the common interest of leadership skills, we bring students from different parts of the campus together, not only to learn, but also to share their experiences, ideas, values, and cultures. This community-building aspect is another important goal of the Leadership Project.

Outdoor Action Resources

Equipment & Equipment Room: The OA Program has purchased an extensive array of outdoor equipment over the last twenty years. Currently OA has an equipment inventory valued at \$200,000. When not in use for OA trips, equipment is available for rental by any member of the University community. Outdoor Action has four rooms (3,000 square feet of space) for storage of equipment in the basement of 48 University Place. The Equipment Room is staffed by undergraduates and is open two evenings a week. Students and staff take advantage of this rental service to participate in their own outdoor activities (see Appendix 7 for general listing of equipment).

Library: OA has an extensive library of over 450 titles covering such subjects as backpacking, bike touring and repair, canoeing, caving, climbing, cross-country skiing, mountaineering, wilderness first aid, and wilderness survival. There are also numerous guidebooks to wilderness areas, as well as reference manuals on a wide variety of outdoor sports. OA also has subscriptions to a number of outdoor activity magazines. An extensive collection of outdoor activity instructional videotapes and expedition videotapes are also available. All of these materials are available to the University community.

Armory Facilities: As Outdoor Action has expanded, new facilities have been developed on campus. A permanent indoor rock-climbing facility, the Climbing Wall, was completed in 1983 and has been used extensively as an instructional and practice site. In 1989 an addition to the Climbing Wall was constructed. The Armory and adjacent buildings are also the storage area for the program's canoeing and kayaking equipment. Lake Carnegie and Stony Brook are primary sites for training courses in canoeing and kayaking.

Team Building Course: Adjacent to Jadwin Gym, this outdoor team challenge course was completed in February 1993 with a grant from the Cleveland Dodge Foundation. The course consists of ten team challenge stations linked by a series of trails through the woods.

Outdoor Action Services

In addition to trips, training programs, and equipment rental, Outdoor Action provides a variety of services to the University community.

OA Newsletter: The Outdoor Action Program publishes a newsletter twice each semester throughout the academic year. The Newsletter provides general information about the program as well as information on specific upcoming activities. The Newsletter currently has a circulation of 2400 to students, faculty, staff, University offices and departments (see Appendix 9 for sample). A separate Leader Newsletter (circulation

350) is also published 2-3 times each semester. OA news and information is also available electronically through the Gopher server on the University mainframe.

Career Counseling: Every year a number of students express interest in pursuing careers in outdoor and/or environmentally related fields. Many of these students develop this interest as a result of their involvement with the Outdoor Action Program. Due to the non-traditional nature of these job interests, students have turned to the Outdoor Action Program (specifically the Program Director) for information on careers in these areas. The OA Program sponsors an annual Outdoor/Environmental Careers Workshop for students. Job newsletters and career counseling are another valuable service.

Summer Job/Activity Counseling: The Program Director also provides information for students interested in outdoor summer jobs, internships, and activities. This service is also utilized by students taking time off from Princeton.

Interdepartmental Interaction

Outdoor Action is a truly eclectic program. Currently OA is interacting with a number of areas within the University. OA offers contract trips for specific groups on campus including such groups as the Graduate College and the Center for Jewish Life. OA activities have been used by residential colleges, the Athletic Department, academic departments, and student organizations. OA serves as an adjunct to Career Services to providing career counseling for outdoor and environmentally related fields. OA has worked with the Alumni Council to offer outdoor-based educational programming to alumni.

Program Budget

The budget of the OA program can be divided into four general areas: General Operating Budget, Trips, and Frosh Trip.

General Operating Budget: The overall budget for the Outdoor Action Program is approximately \$165,000 each year. This includes University budget allocations, staff FTE's, and student fees. Outdoor Action receives an annual operating budget of \$16,000 from the University. Currently, only 25% of the program's budget comes from University allocations. The overall operating budget is shown in Table 7.

Trips: Trip fees are set to cover food, transportation, and equipment rental costs. The fees are inexpensive to allow participation by students with diverse financial situations. For example, a five-day wilderness trip costs \$60.00 per person.

Income & Expenses: The program's revenue during the year comes from trip fees and equipment rental. This amounts to approximately \$125,000 per year. Thus, almost 75% of the program's budget comes from student fees.

Frosh Trip: Income and expenditures for the Frosh Trip vary from year to year depending on the number of participants. The current fee for the trip is \$175.00 per person. When balanced against costs, there is a net surplus each year that varies from \$5,000-\$10,000. This money is used for long term equipment purchases. (See Appendix 1 for Frosh Trip Budget).

Outdoor Action Program Operating Budget		
Total Operating Budget = \$167,579.00		
Salary		Percent of Budget
Program Director salary	50% FTE	\$20,000.00
Secretary	25% FTE	\$8,000.00
Total =		\$28,000.00
<i>16.7%</i>		
University Allocations		
Operating Budget		\$11,000.00
Van Budget		\$5,000.00
Total =		\$16,000.00
<i>9.5%</i>		
Earned Income		
Frosh Trip Fees		\$91,675.00
Trip Fees		\$21,904.00
Van Rental		\$10,000.00
Total =		\$123,579.00
<i>73.7%</i>		
Allocations + Earned Income = \$139,579.00		
Expenses		
Frosh Trip Expenses		(\$88,786.00)
Trip Expenses		(\$16,889.00)
Operating Expenses		(\$15,600.00)
Van Amortization		(\$10,856.00)
Van Expenses		(\$3,750.00)
Total =		(\$135,881.00)
Income - Expenses = \$3,698.00		

Table 7

Financial Needs: As costs rise, a disproportionate amount of the cost of the program is being absorbed by increasing fees to students. Currently, our ability to offer financial aid for students is limited. In order for the program to continue its range of services, be open to all students, and expand its clientele, additional funds are needed. Our long term goal is to increase the percentage of University allocation (through line funding and alumni contributions) to at least 50%. Funds will be used to provide financial aid to participants, expand program opportunities, and provide equipment for participants. Equipment remains an important issue in that many students do not have the necessary equipment to participate and cannot afford to purchase it. Part of maintaining the program's accessibility to students from all financial backgrounds is our ability to provide proper equipment. Currently we can only provide some of the necessary items. In the long term we would like to be able to provide most of the items students need. The only source of funds for equipment purchases is the surplus from the Frosh Trip Program which is not reliable and also places the burden of equipment purchase on the incoming class.

Alumni Programs

Since 1985, Outdoor Action has offered special trips each year for alumni and their families. The purpose of these programs is to bring together alumni from different classes in an exploration of the wilderness combined with an educational program. Special Alumni Programs also provide for interaction between alumni and current Princeton students. Alumni trips have included Backpacking in Yellowstone, Sea Kayaking the Maine Coast, Whitewater Rafting on the Snake River, Sailing & Oceanography in the Caribbean, and Trekking in Nepal. Outdoor Action also offers programs during Alumni Day and Reunions. Programs are developed by the Program Director and the Board of the Friends of Outdoor Action, an alumni membership support group. These trips and programs are designed to raise additional revenue for the OA program on campus. They also provide an ongoing connection with alumni to encourage annual support of the program through donations to the Friends of Outdoor Action (see Friends of Outdoor Action below).

Program Director

The growth and development of the OA program over the years is directly related to the ongoing presence of a Program Director. The Director's responsibilities can be divided into the following general areas:

1. **Complete Programming for the Frosh Trip:** The Frosh Trip is a mammoth project, all aspects of which are planned and supervised by the program director. Planning for the trip begins in earnest in March with recruitment of leaders for the upcoming September's trip. In May, letters describing the program and applications are prepared and mailed to all entering freshmen. From June through August there are extensive preparations to be done which include trip planning, transportation logistics, menu planning and food purchase, applicant screening, leader assignment, and a multitude of details. Preparation for the trip requires more than full-time work for several weeks. During the trip the director is responsible for overseeing the entire program and handling any problems or emergencies.
2. **Scheduling of Activities:** The director is responsible for scheduling all program activities including trips, training programs, training events, and presentation events. This includes arranging for rooms, equipment, transportation, and staff for the programs.
3. **Trip Planning and Logistics:** Trips are planned by the director by activity and location. Leaders with appropriate training must be obtained and instructed on what to plan for on the trip. Trip participants sign up and must be screened in some instances. Transportation and equipment arrangements are made. Trip fees are collected and money for food and transportation costs is distributed to the leaders. While the trip is in progress the director is responsible for handling any problems or emergency situations that might develop.
4. **Development of Activities and Training Programs:** Development of a new activity involves detailed investigation by the director into the skills needed for safe participation in the activity, equipment needed, and locations for the activity. Then training programs for leaders must be initiated. The development of new training events and programs involves research and curriculum development by the director and frequently the actual teaching responsibility.
5. **Training, Evaluations, and Supervision of Leaders:** The director oversees the training of leaders to make sure that each person has the requisite skills and abilities to lead trips. The position involves direct teaching of leaders in such areas as Group Dynamics, Safety Management, Emergency Procedures, and in a variety of specific wilderness skills such as River Rescue, Winter Camping, and Kayaking. Throughout the training process, the director evaluates the progress of each leader and

makes the decision on when that person is qualified to lead. Once a person has become a leader they are supervised in their handling of their trip responsibilities.

6. **Teaching:** In the responsibilities above, the issue of teaching is mentioned several times. It is a responsibility of sufficient importance in the director's position to mention separately. A great deal of time is spent teaching specific skills and topics to leaders and program participants. This teaching can be divided into actual teaching time and the pre-teaching research and curriculum development time.
7. **Budget and Financial Planning:** The director oversees the program's University accounts handling all income and expenditures. A checking account is also maintained at the United Jersey Bank to facilitate quick access to petty cash for trips. Long-term budget planning is handled by the director. General budget range is \$30,000 - \$40,000. Within this budget, the director is responsible for overseeing all program equipment. When old equipment must be replaced or new activity equipment purchased, the director is responsible for researching equipment to obtain high quality equipment at a reduced price.
8. **Supervision of Facilities and Staff:** The director is responsible for supervising the students who staff the Equipment Room and the Climbing Wall and for making improvements in the services of these facilities.
9. **Newsletter and Publicity:** The director is responsible for writing the newsletters and for supervising its distribution. The director's responsibilities also include arranging publicity for program events in other campus publications.
10. **Career Counseling:** On an individual or small group basis, the program director provides career information and counseling for students interested in outdoor or environmentally related fields.
11. **Consultation with other Programs:** The director also provides consultation services to programs outside of the University.
12. **Work with Alumni:** The director works with the Friends of OA board on the annual Friends membership drive to raise financial support for the program. The director also develops several outdoor activities each year for alumni which are designed to encourage alumni support and raise funds for the program. The director supervises grant proposals and solicitations to foundations and alumni donors.

Program Director Job Description

1. **Outdoor Skills:** Must have extensive backpacking and wilderness camping skills, must have at least general knowledge and some experience in bike touring, rock climbing, whitewater canoeing and kayaking, cross-country skiing, and winter camping.
2. **First Aid and Safety Skills:** Must have CPR and a minimum of Wilderness First Responder, Wilderness EMT is preferred. Must have specific knowledge of safety management for outdoor programs. Must have knowledge of emergency and evacuation procedures. Should have some knowledge of river rescue and cliff rescue, and general search and rescue techniques.
3. **Group Interaction Skills:** Must be an effective teacher, work well with diverse groups of people, have excellent communication and listening skills, have knowledge of group dynamics and their application to outdoor programming.
4. **Commitment to outdoor/experimental education as a valuable growth experience.**

5. Excellent Organizer: Must have excellent logistic and planning skills, be able to coordinate numerous programs and events.
6. Energy and enthusiasm and willingness to commit extensive time to the program.
7. Knowledge of outdoor equipment.
8. Extensive knowledge of computer systems including word-processing, spreadsheets, and databases.

OA Leadership in College Programming

Outdoor Action has been a pioneering program for Universities across the country. OA has one of the largest Frosh Trip Programs in the United states based on the number of participant*days. Outdoor Action also has one of the largest groups of trained student leaders. The OA Leader Training Program has been developed extensively over the past ten years and is used as a model for similar programs across the country. OA has been instrumental in the development of similar programs at Harvard, Yale, Brown, Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford, and other schools. In the spring of 1990, Outdoor Action sponsored the first Ivy League Outdoor Orientation Program Conference, bringing leaders from different schools together to share outdoor leadership skills. Since then, the conference has been held by a different Ivy League school each year to develop leadership among college students. The OA Program Director has given numerous presentations and workshops about the OA program at conferences around the country. Numerous schools and organizations have solicited input from Outdoor Action about how to develop their program (see Appendix 8).

Friends of Outdoor Action

In 1985, the OA Alumni Advisory Committee was initiated to help chart future directions for the program. The University officially recognized the group as the Friends of Outdoor Action in 1988. Since its recognition, the friends have raised money to support the program through yearly membership dues and have coordinated the development of alumni outdoor programs. Membership dues help provide additional resources to support Outdoor Action activities on campus such as leader training and trip scholarships. An annual membership mailing is sent out to all OA leaders and previous friends.

The Friends of Outdoor Action is managed by an Executive Board. This group meets three times each year to discuss the growth and development of the program. There are five sub-committees of the board which focus on particular issues.

- **Capital Campaign:** works on capital fund raising for Outdoor Action
- **Membership:** works to increasing the base of annual support from Friends of OA Members
- **Campus Program:** provides support and direct for the development of OA activities on campus
- **Alumni Programs:** develops OA activities for alumni
- **Nominating:** nominates new members for the board

The current board members are:

Whitney Azoy '62
 Lawrie Balfour '87
 J. Anderson Brown '69
 Kate Winton Burns '83
 Elizabeth Cutler *84
 John Danielson '58
 Kate Delhagen '84

Warren Elmer '42
Warren Elmer '69
Lisa Fernandez '83
John Gager, Faculty
James Garrett '65
David Hahn-Baker '81
John Lord '44
James Merritt '66
Edward Seliga '75
Alexander Ward '75 *78
Richard Weiss '79
John Page Williams '65
David Wilson '53 *68

Climbing to New Heights Campaign

To maintain the Outdoor Action Program as one of the premiere University outdoor education programs, The Friends of Outdoor Action initiated the Climbing to New Heights Campaign. The campaign will provide an endowment for the program with funds dedicated for scholarships, leadership development, environmental education, and equipment. The goal of the campaign is to raise one million dollars in endowment over the next five years.

Future Program Development

In looking back over the past twenty years there has been a phenomenal amount of growth within the program, and Outdoor Action continues to grow through the development of new activities, services, and educational programs. The projected development of OA over the next ten years is to take the excellent base already established and expand the populations served by the program, including more graduate students, faculty, and staff. This expansion will make Outdoor Action truly a University-wide program with educational benefits for all involved. In this setting, the previously discussed goals of the program will be operating in a situation where students, faculty, and staff can interact and share their knowledge and experiences in an informal way. The educational benefits to all involved are obvious. The Outdoor Action Program can be a vehicle for developing a sense of “total community” into Princeton.

The specific tasks that need to be undertaken over the next five years that include the following:

- Expansion of educational and training programs.
- Expansion of cooperative programming with other programs/offices/departments within the University.
- Increasing the diversity of participation within the program.
- Expansion of outdoor leadership skills training.
- Development of on-campus leadership development programs.
- Development of community service programs with an outdoor component.
- Development of outdoor and environmental career initiatives for undergraduates.
- Expansion of the responsibilities of leaders in generating program directions.
- Interaction with programs outside the University.
- Acquisition of new equipment for the program.

Future Needs

Outdoor Action's greatest need for maintaining program excellence is additional administrative support. We have developed a proposal for an Internship Program whose position would be filled by a graduating OA Leader for a one-year term. This ensures that the intern has the highest level of outdoor and interpersonal skills and is most familiar with the program. The Internship would provide an excellent training experience for a leader interested in pursuing outdoor/environmental education, teaching, or educational administration as a career. The responsibilities would include: assisting in the Leader Training Courses and Workshops, supervising leaders for trip planning and preparation, leading trips, researching new areas for trips, managing the OA Equipment Room and student workers, developing special training courses for leaders, and developing special trips and programs for identified on-campus populations. The Internship position would provide the necessary personnel for OA to grow through the nineties.

Outdoor Action currently occupies a small basement storage space on campus that is not large enough to adequately hold all the equipment currently owned and will not be sufficient for new equipment purchases. OA needs a new facility of 4,000 to 6,000 square feet that would provide room for equipment storage, classroom, library, and trip preparation.

A Paddling Center on Lake Carnegie has also been proposed. A small facility would provide storage for canoes, kayaks, trailers, and related equipment. This facility would be open for students, faculty, and staff to sign out boats and provide a facility for us to teach regular classes.

Appendix 1 - Frosh Trip
Appendix 2 - Trip Summary 1981 - 1993
Appendix 3 - Quotes
Appendix 4 - Leader Quotes and Leader Survey
Appendix 5 - General trip description (and budget)
Appendix 6 - General equipment inventory
Appendix 7 - General equipment inventory
Appendix 8 - Consultation to other Programs
Appendix 9 - Sample Newsletters
Appendix 10 - OA Study

Appendix 11 - Climbing to New Heights Campaign Brochure
Appendix 12 - General OA Brochure