



### **“Outdoor Center Mentorship Program”**

**Proposed Motions:** Approve the OC Mentorship Program as a two year grant at \$6,000 per year.

**Sponsor:** Vice President for Business & Operations

**Persons of Contact:** VP Business & Operations, OC Excursions Coordinator, OC Manager

**Date:** May 2013

#### **Background**

Outdoor Center Excursions are the highest risk activity in the AS. Extensive trip leader trainings and qualifications are needed to ensure the highest level of safety for students on trips. As a result, staff development is not the place to budget conservatively.

We also feel having a diverse pool of trip leaders is important. If all trip leaders were expected to obtain expensive, highly technical training on their own, I can all but guarantee the unfortunate trend of white males accounting for the vast majority of trip leads will continue.

Currently, our trip leaders receive training in three ways: medical training from Remote Medical International, skills training from Outdoor Center trip leader training weekends, and optional personal development/training from sources outside the scope of the Outdoor Center (such as paying for their own American Alpine Institute Course.)

Head trip leaders are required to obtain a Wilderness First Responder certification, which costs \$695. Assistant Trip Leaders are required to obtain a Wilderness First Aid certification, which costs \$175. Apprentice trip leaders are required to obtain a CPR certification, which are typically under \$50 depending on the organization. We are able to offer partial scholarships for a limited number of trip leaders. Due to the high cost of medical training, we make an effort to ensure that all other trainings are free of cost.

Historically, all skills workshops have been taught over trip leader training weekends. We are forced to teach a multitude of necessary skills in very little time, leaving the weekends cramped and not as effective as they could be. We have received frequent feedback from both trainees and head trip leaders that there is simply not enough time to teach and practice the full range of skills needed to lead trips like mountaineering, rock climbing, and kayaking.

We typically offer two training weekends per quarter, each for different areas. On average, training weekends cost between \$600 and \$900 dollars each. This money covers head trip leader pay, as well as travel costs. The two head trip leaders in charge of a training weekend are compensated for time spent developing a training curriculum/itinerary, assistance with planning, and time in the field (approximately 48 hours). On average, they each receive \$300- a modest sum for expended hours and energy. Adding more training weekends is not an option, as all other weekends are filled with regular excursions.

#### **Summary of Proposal**

In order to we would like to spend \$1500 per quarter on a mentorship program. This would allow inexperienced trip leaders to pair up with head trip leaders, who would teach them skills over a period of several less formal trips during the quarter. In the field, head trip leaders would take a "masters skill sheet" to check off skills their mentee has learned. Once the mentee has been checked off on all necessary skills to assist on a trip, they could then attend a trip leader training. Our training weekends would then be used as a time to assess the skills new trip leaders have learned, and make sure new leaders are fully qualified to lead trips. The training weekends could also be used to teach more advanced skills not covered in mentorships.

We have spent extensive time developing a pilot program, and are confident that this is the best way to give produce, competent trip leaders. I have attached a spreadsheet breaking down additional costs.

#### **Fiscally & Rationale**

At \$1,500 per quarter for 4 quarters this pilot would cost \$6,000 per year. It is recommended as a grant for two years, which aligns with the SPAC process for the Outdoor Center Excursions.