



“Funding for Back 2 Bellingham events”

Proposed Motion: *The AS Board vote in favor of bestowing a one-time grant, in the sum of \$4620, to the Challenge Program to fund the purchase of 2 portable low-ropes elements.*

Sponsor: *AS VP for Business and Operations // Morgan Burke*

Persons of Contact: *Challenge Program Coordinator // Jonathan Mayfield*

Date: March 15, 2014

Attached Documents

Whale Watch Element Description
Slackline Element Description

Background & Context

Back 2 Bellingham is one of the largest on-campus events at WWU. The event is a joint effort by the WWU Alumni Association and New Student Service/ Family Outreach. Over the course of the Back 2 Bellingham weekend (May 16-18, 2014) over one thousand families are expected to visit Western. These families represent the parents of many current and prospective students as well as many WWU alumni. Additional, approximately 800 high school students are expected to visit Western and a part of a student outreach program. Back 2 Bellingham programming includes over 20 bands, a zipline through campus, performances in Red Square, a variety of departmental reunions and open houses, and much, much more.

This year, the Challenge Program has been asked to join the Back 2 Bellingham Planning Committee. Historically, the Challenge Program has had a minimal role in Back 2 Bellingham, usually hosting 6-10 people at the Lakewood Ropes Course. This year, the Challenge Program has been invited to have a much more active role in the event weekend. The Back 2 Bellingham Planning Committee has allocated the Comm Lawn for the Challenge Program to host activities.

Summary of Proposal

In the spirit of the space that the Back 2 Bellingham Planning Committee has provided for the Challenge Program, this proposal is focused on the needs of the Challenge Program to put on a quality event on the Back 2 Bellingham weekend.

For Back to Bellingham on May 17, 2014, the Challenge Program would like to display our program by providing several engaging experiences for all attendees of Back 2 Bellingham. The goal for these programs is to provide the Western Community as whole an opportunity to experience firsthand the mission of the Challenge Program. By having a visible presence at Back 2 Bellingham, the Challenge Program will be able to reach a greater part of the Western community and increase the program's positive impact.

Saturday, May 17, 2014 -- 10a-3p

Our goal for the Saturday event is to provide Back 2 Bellingham participants with a chance to experience the many opportunities offered through the Challenge Program. We aim to do this by creating a temporary hands-on low ropes experience on the Comm lawn. Trained facilitators will guide participants through a series of challenge elements including a 50 foot slackline and an element called the Whale Watch, the Challenge Program's first element to be fully accessible for participants with visual and mobility impairments. By providing these experiential learning opportunities to the Back 2 Bellingham participants, the Challenge Program will gain public visibility and further develop our positive relationship with the Western Community.

We are seeking funding for the purchase of the equipment and supplies necessary to implement the on-campus low ropes experience including the development of two new elements. The first element we are seeking to develop is the Whale Watch. The Whale Watch (pictured below) is an element in which one or more people attempt to balance a platform of wood on the fulcrum below it using their own body weight. Popular in many challenge course programs, this element teaches teamwork and positive communication. Our Whale Watch is unique in the fact that it will be accessible to those with mobility impairments, visual/hearing impairments, and developmental disabilities.

In order to make the Whale Watch fully accessible, we have collaborated with the Disability Resource Center and the Disability Outreach Center. Both have provided insight into how to create an element which will be welcoming, fun, and comfortable for all guests. Based on our collaborations, we will incorporate the following modifications:

- ADA compliant pitch on the platform and the ramps*
- hand rails around one edge of the platform.*
- grip tape on platform surface to increase stability*
- coat the edges of the platform in neon yellow paint to increase visibility.*

In order to ensure the element is comfortable and safe for those with varying degrees of disabilities, the Disability Outreach Center is putting us in contact with students willing to test our element throughout the building process. This testing will be done in an overly cautious setting after participants have signed liability waiver forms provided by the Challenge program.

The second element we hope to develop for the Back 2 Bellingham event is the temporary installation of a 50 foot slackline on the Comm lawn. This element is designed to provide participants the opportunity to individually challenge themselves while developing balance skills. Participants will interact with the element under the direct supervision of a trained facilitator and crash pads will be provided to minimize risk. In addition to guests engaging with the element, skilled slackliners will be giving demonstrations and performing tricks each hour.

While these new elements are being developed specifically for the Back 2 Bellingham event, their usefulness and impact will serve the Challenge Program for many years to come. Each new element will be integrated into the Challenge Program's on campus programming, providing new opportunities and options to the groups we serve. The Whale Watch element in particular will make the Challenge Program accessible to many who have been unable to participate in programs in the past. The addition of these new elements will help us to better reach the WWU and Bellingham community.

Sunday, May 18, 2014 -- 10a-1p

In addition to the on campus event on Saturday, we will be offering Back 2 Bellingham participants the opportunity to experience the Challenge Program's high ropes course at the Lakewood facility on Sunday. Our course will be open from 10am-1pm to facilitate groups and individuals who wish to challenge themselves on our three high ropes elements. Participants will be able to pre-register for a time slot through the WWU box office or sign up the day of at the Lakewood facility. The cost per person will be set at \$10 to help offset the cost of facilitators. There will be four time slots with maximum total of 60 participants over the course of the day. Participants will be met at the course by a team of trained facilitators who will take them through three high ropes elements: the Vertical Playpen, Trapeze Jump, and Giant Swing. This experience will give Back 2 Bellingham participants an opportunity to explore a different aspect of the Challenge Program's offerings as well as experience WWU's beautiful Lakewood Campus.

Event Marketing

*We believe it is important to present a positive image of the Challenge Program to all of the Back 2 Bellingham visitors and the Bellingham community as a whole. **Back 2 Bellingham is one of the Challenge Programs most significant opportunities to showcase its abilities to the WWU community.** It is our hope to increase the visibility and impact of the Challenge Program through our Back 2 Bellingham event. In order to make our events successful, we are seeking to develop new promotional materials. These materials would include posters, buttons, and an ad in the Back 2 Bellingham guide.*

To market our event in advance of Back to Bellingham we will advertise on the Back to Bellingham and AS Calendars. We will also be placing posters and flyers on campus and in the community. Additionally we are working with the AS communications office to draft a press release about inclusive low-ropes elements. On the weekend of the event, we will be placing a ½ page ad in the Back 2 Bellingham event guide. In addition, we will create buttons with an inclusion awareness slogan alongside the Challenge Program and Associated Students logo. One of our goals is to highlight the importance of inclusive and accessible programming for all.

Fiscal Impacts

The total request of funding is \$4620. This funding would come to the Challenge Program as a one-time AS Grant. The fiscal impact of this proposal can be broken into four categories: the Whale Watch Element, the Slackline Element, Marketing Materials, and Facilitation Costs.

Whale Watch Element

*(for more details, see attached document "Whale Watch Element Description")
TOTAL = \$1797*

Slackline Element

*(for more details, see attached document "Slackline Element Description")
TOTAL = \$1226*

Marketing Materials

1000 custom 1" buttons = \$350

100 11x17 posters = \$75

½ page ad in Back 2 Bellingham event guide = 250

TOTAL = \$675

Facilitation

Saturday: 6 facilitators x 11 per hour x 7 hours = \$462

Sunday: 4 facilitators x 11 per hour x 7 hours = \$462

TOTAL = \$922

Rationale

This proposal presents an excellent opportunity for the Challenge Program to increase its impact on campus. By enabling the Challenge Program to create the Whale Watch element, it would provide a forum for the Challenge Program to embrace all types on inclusion and accessibility. This even will allow the Challenge Program to begin a shift in programming that will truly be able to embrace the entire Western community. By investing in the on-campus programming, the Challenge Program will be able to add a new dimensionality to programming on the WWU campus. It is important to move toward a solution to the fact that all of the low ropes (and high ropes course) activities at Lakewood are entirely un-accessible to anyone with a mobility impairment. The Challenge Program is excited to have the opportunity engage in a fresh type of programming. In addition to all of the benefits for the Challenge Program, the Back 2 Bellingham events will also improve the impact of the Associated Students. As a part of the AS, the Challenge Program hopes to have the opportunity to represent the AS in a positive way at Back 2 Bellingham.