

AS Assessment Process  
Proposed Recommendations



2015 Associated Students

Outdoor Center  
Challenge Program

AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee

## *Introduction:*

Outdoor Center Challenge Program presented to the AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The currently approved statement of purpose for the Challenge Program is:

*The Challenge Program offers a series of experiential activities aimed at providing groups with the opportunity for developing relationships, leadership skills, and cooperation. The Challenge Program builds these skills by presenting groups with challenging activities aimed at requiring participants to work together to reach a goal. The activities are meant to provide a fun and safe environment to explore issues of interactive group problem solving as well as personal growth through supportive challenge. The Challenge Program effectively builds groups into strong, cohesive teams that are able to accomplish complex tasks and rely on each other for support and help.*

## *Program/Services Provided:*

Date	Event	Venue	Attendance	Goals and Objectives
9/29/2012	Women in Computing Science	Lakewood	14	Bonding, Communication, problem solving, fun
10/13/2012	Comm 318	Lakewood	5	EDGE Training
10/17/2012	Industrial Design Class	Lakewood	13	Group cohesion, teamwork, bonding, fun
10/28/2012	Reslife RHA	Lakewood	18	Teambuilding, bonding, leadership
11/30/2012	AS Lock-In	WWU	21	Teambuilding, communication, energize
4/8/2013	Ethnic Student Center	WWU	40-70	Teamwork, building unity, solving issues
4/25/2013	Women's Center	WWU	~50	N/A
7/11/2013	Rugby	Lakewood	31	Teambuilding, Communication, group dynamics
8/12/2013	Resident Directors	Lakewood	5	Facilitator training
9/15/2013	Viking Launch	WWU	90-100	Introducing new Freshman and students to Western
9/12/2014	AS Personnel Office	WWU	90	Building relationships
9/18/2014	Viking Union	Lakewood	50	Teambuilding and meeting new people
9/20/2014	ESC	Lakewood	30	Learning about the course and what it has to offer
9/21/2014	Academic Advising Center	Lakewood	14	Teambuilding, group dynamic, communication
9/22/2014	TEDx WWU	Lakewood	25	Building a robust team dynamic
4/11/2015	WOOT	Lakewood	30	Bonding, team building, fun
5/30/2015	WWU LEADS	Lakewood	5	Teamwork, communication, leadership
6/1/2015	Service Learners	Lakewood	15	Have fun, communication, teamwork
9/23/2015	Alumni Student Group	WWU	12	Getting to know each other, communication
10/23/2015	WWU Women's Basketball Team	Lakewood	12	Teambuilding communication

*SW/COT Chart:*

		<b>Section 7: SCOT Analysis</b>	
		<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Harmful</b>
<b>AS</b>	<b>Internal</b>	(S) Strengths	(C) Challenges
		Staff developmental opportunities for learning, improving, and progressing (trainings, office hour opportunities, experience)	Not enough committed staff
		Strong support system from knowledgeable supervisors (Stephen, Fred). Course manager (Jeff Davis). Facilitators able assist with coordinating	Not enough people know about our services (marketing issue)
		Two facilities (Lakewood, WWU). Five committed facilitators. Large revenue.	Facilitators not being on the "same page" regarding course work and best practices
		Serves WWU staff, faculty, students, and alumni: Building great partnerships internally. Serves community: Building great partnerships externally	Past struggles include keeping up on the paperwork and organization. Some crucial files are difficult to find due to unorganization
		Potentially can provide services for all and have the funds and resources to	Participants might notice lack of confidence in facilitating abilities
<b>External</b>	<b>External</b>	(O) Opportunities	(T) Threats
		More high/low ropes technical/skill training opportunities	Competing challenge courses within the area could hurt our revenue/participant rates
		Trainings to better serving wider range of people	Lack of communication between past and new coordinators
		participating in national conferences for networking opportunities	Elements become redundant or boring to returning participants
		Building more relationships within WWU more specifically AS	Weather (can impede courses due to wet environment) Potential covered area.
		Building a new element to better serve participants	

### *Areas for Improvements/ Recommendations:*

The following are the Structure and Program Advisory committee's recommendations for strategic goals over the next four years:

1. Explore the possibilities to fund and build a covered area at Lakewood for programs and trainings

The Challenge Program currently has two main venues. We run programs out at Lakewood and on campus. Typically, more programs are run out of Lakewood because the challenge course is there, there is more space, and opportunity for a variety of initiatives. When the weather does not permit for outside programs the other option is for them to be held at WWU which overall is very limiting for the group's experience.

We are proposing that a covered area be made for the Challenge Program so more programs can be held at our "home base". Not only will the covered space provide shelter for activities and debriefing, but also a space where participants can eat lunch and put their belongings. This would prevent any scheduling conflict the Challenge Program would have with any other groups needing to use the Lakewood Lounge.

This idea is being expanded upon and needs further discussion with the Viking Union side. Lakewood is financially supported by the Viking Union Facilities Budget and this area is continuing to be assessed by both Lakewood and Outdoor Center administrators.

We still would like to explore this option but there are several other stakeholders involved and we do not feel that this is the appropriate time to make any decisions in regards to converting the existing volleyball area into a covered space solely for the Challenge Program given this is a prime space for the users of the Lakewood Boating Facility as well.

*2. Explore the possibilities to build and fund a new high element for the course*

The Challenge Program currently has 10 elements, 7 lows and 3 highs. These elements have been in use for about 10 years, if not longer. It would benefit our participants and our program to have another high element, especially for those groups who come out to the course annually or even a few times a year. This would be a **one-time** cost that will add new initiatives and a different experience for participants when using the challenge course.

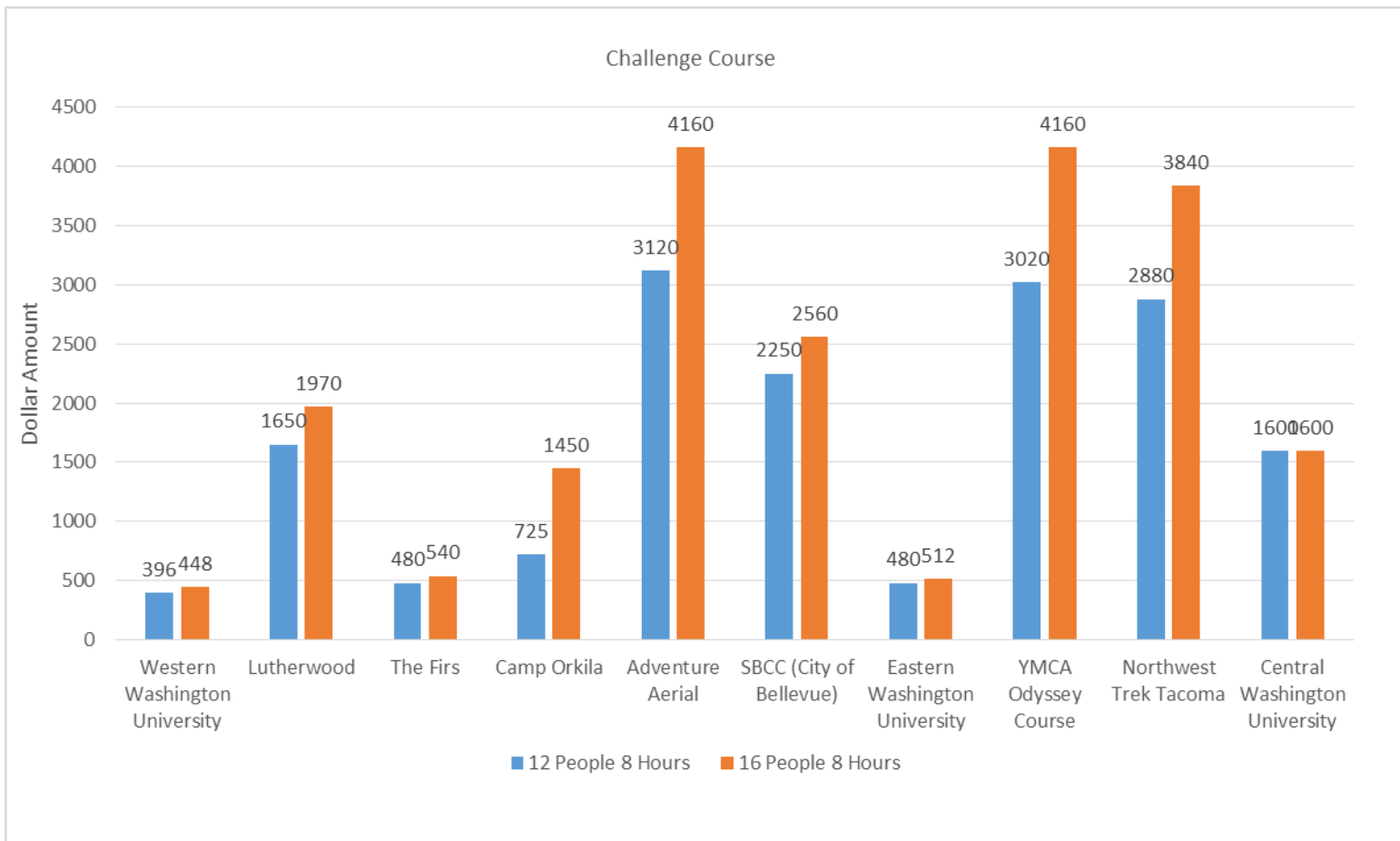
For example, the Giant's Ladder would be a great new element to add to our high elements. It allows multiple people to go up at the same time similarly to one of our current elements, the Vertical Playpen. The main advantage of this of this element is that it cannot be completed without teamwork, which also makes it unique for a high element. Teamwork is a very common theme for groups when coming out to the challenge course. Providing a high element will allow groups to work on teamwork in a more dynamic setting rather compared to the low elements.

The Challenge Program is also considering boosting up prices for the use of the course. When comparing our prices to other challenge courses in the area, we charge substantially less, making us one of the cheapest in the region. See attached document.

The new high element could potentially cost anywhere from \$2,000-\$10,000 depending on what the element is and where the element will be placed upon the assessment of a certified ACCT vendor. This would be a one-time cost that could possibly be funded from the Associated Student reserves or the Viking Union facilities budget since the Lakewood property receives its primary funding from the VU.

3. Exploring different venues of challenge course accessibility

Currently, the Challenge Program is looking for different avenues towards being more accessible and inclusive to all populations. The challenge course is currently rather inaccessible to those who are disAbled or have other physical limitations. The Challenge Program finds it necessary to do further research on how the Challenge program can incorporate new or current elements and initiatives that enable anyone to participate and enjoy despite what their physical condition might be. Regarding accessibility, the reconstruction of the pathway and ground to and at



the challenge course is necessary as well.

The Challenge Program would like to see more diversity within the groups they serve. The Challenge Program is a service available to everyone and in order to reflect that through our services, it is important that we as facilitators and staff are culturally competent of all populations. We need to use correct and appropriate discourse ensuring everyone feels that the Challenge Program is a safe environment for them. This would be best accomplished by diversity trainings and education within the Challenge Program.