

# Trip Leader Training Grant Proposal Clarification

## **Implications relating to liability**

In outdoor recreation, participants and leaders voluntarily expose themselves to risks that they would not normally experience in a town or city environment. When we think about risk, we can consider the difference between perceived risk and actual risk. For example, rock climbing on top rope for the first time may cause a participant to perceive themselves to be at a high level of risk, when in reality if they were to fall they would quickly be caught by a rope and a belayer. Our goal at the outdoor center is to have an appropriate perceived risk for participants to challenge themselves and grow, while keeping the actual risk as low as possible.

Before the OC restructure began trip leaders were without a consistent activity policy, instruction and facilitation guidelines, and mostly ran trips based on their own personal experience. This meant that some years, depending on the coordinators and trip leaders involved, there was far more organization and emphasis on trainings than others. Trip leaders were sometimes hired without training or consistent evaluation of their skills, causing it to be convoluted for aspiring trip leaders to make their way into the OC and how to progress in forming their skill sets. Of course, this system worked for a lot of trip leaders and participants for many years and the experiences that came from it have provided the foundation for the vision that we have for the future of the OC.

Our goal has always been to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to experience and grow in a safe and welcoming environment. In order to do so, our first priority must be safety (both physical and emotional) for participants and trip leaders. The trip leader trainings we have outlined for the upcoming year will ensure that all trip leaders have a solid base in hard skills, facilitation skills, emergency and medical skills, and communication needed to provide those kinds of experiences.

Clarity in our standards through the trainings we plan to do means that trip leaders must plan trips far in advance and communicate with their co-leaders to create a cohesive leadership team to better serve participants' needs. Trip leaders will know exactly what policy to follow in the case of an emergency, but will also be better prepared for emergencies through planning (knowing the area, its hazards, and what skills they will need to be dialed on), and communication (having reliable co-leaders they can delegate tasks to, as well as trust between trip leaders), and experience (knowing how to run a trip smoothly, things to be careful of, being physically and emotionally able to respond to an emergency in their best capacity).

The trip leader trainings we plan to do in the upcoming years will greatly reduce liability to the outdoor center through increasing safety for both participants and leaders. Without these trainings, we may have to consider changing the types of excursions we are able to send out and reducing the opportunities that students at Western have to access the outdoors because we would be unable to train all trip leaders equally, and the trainings we could provide without funding would be limited.

## Consistency

We are keeping consistent in our standards in a couple of ways. There are documents that we plan on using, see Appendix B and C, to create requirements of Trip Leaders for certain positions in a trip and insure that the Trip Leaders have met these requirements.

Appendix B is one of our many Activity Policies, with this specific one being about Backpacking. In each Activity Policy, there are many sections that explain all technical aspects of the trip.

- Definitions explains any technical jargon one might encounter in that specific activity.
- Personnel Practices gives an appropriate ratio for the activity as well as the requirements for the three positions we offer on trips.
- Equipment Policies gives lists of required gear and who should be carrying that gear.
- Program Policies explains specific actions, itinerary, and field protocols that must be carried out.

All trips are constructed so that they fit to these policies and the activity can be led with these protocols. Before any Trip Leader is assigned to a trip Coordinators will check that they meet the requirements for the position they express interest in. This may seem like a lot for a Trip Leader to be qualified in, but our Trip Leader Trainings are designed around these policies and requirements. The Trip Leaders learn about all protocols during these trainings as well. Examining Personnel Practices will help explain further what these qualifications mean.

For a Trip Leader to be a Head Trip Leader on a Backpacking trip, there are certain requirements they must have fulfilled. The Trip Leader Training (TLT) Weekend 1, and Weekend 2 and New Hire Field Training. During the TLT Weekend 1, Trip Leaders learn the OC Excursion policies and procedures. In addition, they learn Intro to Group Facilitation, Community Guidelines, and various bonding activities such as Best Self, Peoples Styles, Fears and Hopes in a Hat, and participate in the Bonding Activity/Relay Race at Lakewood. During the TLT Weekend 2, Inclusive Communication, Lesson Planning, Campus Resources, Activities/Games/ Curriculum, and Vehicle Training are taught. Finally, lessons specific to leadership and Excursions/WOOT goals and ideals are taught during the New Hire Field Training. These three trainings are all required of first year Trip Leaders.

This explains the standards that the OC is working at, and gives Trip Leaders a clear idea of how to become qualified in such activity. The next document will be how Coordinators will keep track of these requirements and trainings for all Trip Leaders.

Appendix C is an Outdoor Resume of one of the Coordinators. While the entries may be different between Trip Leaders, all use the same template for their Outdoor Resumes. This has categories for Certifications that a Trip Leader Possesses and all activities that they might engage in where their experience will be relevant to trip leading. In addition, the document helps keep track of all Excursions and trainings that they may have participated in. This is something that is continuously worked on during employment at the OC and possibly after they have left as well. Coordinators have access to these documents along with each Trip Leader and will look at this when checking to make sure a Trip Leader meets requirements for the position they express interest for.

To support trip leaders in gaining personal hours in the field, we are currently also working on a mentorship program that will help trip leaders gain access to transportation, gear, and informal

instruction through the resources that we already have at the OC to reduce personal costs. The mentorship program will depend heavily on senior trip leaders to step up and help new trip leaders get out and practice skills on weekends, and also on new trip leaders to reach out and be self-motivated in their learning. Although this could be seen as an extra unpaid time commitment, inherently these experiences will be fun and valuable to trip leaders personally.

**Benefits of outdoor rec for participants**

Outdoor recreation has become a popular topic of study for its mental and physical health benefits over the last few years. A popular term in the literature is “nature deficit disorder,” which leads to “diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses” in children especially. As children grow older with this “disorder,” they develop many of the physical and mental health issues that are so often talked about in the media, such as ADHD, anxiety, depression, obesity, heart disease, etc.

The reason that nature deficit disorder is so prevalent has to do with accessibility to green spaces and parks, addiction to technology, and of course privilege and oppression. The Outdoor Center aims to subvert these barriers by providing all students with affordable resources to get into the outdoors. Trips provide students with a way to spend their leisure time de-stressing from school, forming relationships, growing in confidence, trying new activities, and altogether having fun in a genuine way. With these experiences, we hope that students will be empowered to get outside on their own to further benefit physically and mentally from the settings that we as trip leaders have found to be life changing.

For a more detailed explanation of our outcomes and how we support them see the table below:

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>How WOOT/Excursions Supports These Outcomes</b>
<b>1. Increase students' confidence and self-awareness</b>	Students participate in new and challenging activities that give them opportunities to see their own potential and capabilities. Through reflection opportunities and guided activities, students learn more about themselves and set personal and academic goals. Trip leaders help provide an emotionally and physically safe learning environment with a challenge-by-choice philosophy and provide leadership and learning opportunities for students.
<b>2. Develop meaningful relationships with peers and build a supportive community</b>	Outdoor activities inherently challenge people to work together and form supportive groups. Students build meaningful relationships with their peers and feel a sense of belonging as they work together to complete camp chores and help each other overcome new challenges. Trip leaders help students build community through team building initiatives, group exercises, group debriefs, and rituals.
<b>3. Cultivate interpersonal communication and leadership skills</b>	Students engage with others on trips in meaningful ways during leadership exercises in decision-making, goal setting and effective conflict resolution. These activities provide an opportunity for students to work through challenges, and teach and learn from one another. Trip leaders support students by demonstrating healthy communication and

	leadership skills, and by allowing opportunities for students to step into a leadership role.
<b>4. <i>Acquire environmental and cultural awareness of their surroundings</i></b>	Excursions and WOOT provide students with the opportunity to explore many new and remote parts of Washington State. Through experiences in the wilderness and practicing Leave No Trace principles, students gain an awareness and respect of the environment they are surrounded by. Trip leaders support student learning through lessons about LNT, local ecology, and indigenous histories to create awareness and respect for the people, flora, and fauna of the PNW.
<b>5. <i>Gain a greater feeling of place in WWU culture</i></b>	Students have the opportunity to meet and work with peers in a different setting to create a unique community that extends beyond the bounds of a trip. Students and trip leaders share knowledge and advice about campus resources and ways to get involved in school and around town. Trip leaders help to support a positive atmosphere around school and are supportive to students who express struggles or concerns.
<b>6. <i>Develop the technical skills in a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities</i></b>	Trip leaders demonstrate and teach knowledge and ability needed to lead trips in a variety of outdoor activities. At minimum, participants learn the basics of backcountry living and gain awareness of the skill sets needed for each specific activity. Safety, judgement and decision making, and Leave No Trace principles are emphasized and taught by trip leaders throughout the trip.

See: <http://www.rff.org/files/sharepoint/WorkImages/Download/RFF-DP-09-21.pdf>

## **How would reducing trip leader cert/training costs would increase accessibility for trip leaders**

Previously, skill acquisition was all dependent on the Trip Leaders themselves. We only offered a few scholarships for medical certifications and AIARE training, which we require trip leaders to have before they are allowed to lead trips. In the past, these certifications were only offered to those “in the know”. You would have to make connections among the OC and prove that you hold skills that would be enhanced with these certs, and often that style excluded people who weren’t well known in the OC, causing the OC to be an exclusive environment accessible only to those who had the privilege of previously having outdoor experience.

The skills needed by trip leaders include the technical skills to facilitate instruction of the activity being led, and relational skills to promote group bonding and personal growth. Trip leaders in the past have to acquire these skills on their own. This means learning skills where one often holds the safety of another’s life in their own hands on their own by finding mentors who may or may not be qualified. The alternative is to take costly classes to learn these skills, or to have come into University already have learned these skills through privilege that they have. In addition, one must find funding for equipment, transportation, and conduct their own research.

All this happens after being a student, and maybe working to support yourself. Reducing the overhead costs of skill acquisition is a huge reduction of barriers toward those pursuing outdoor leadership, and would open up opportunities to benefit from outdoor leadership to a far greater range of Western students.

To support trip leaders in gaining personal hours in the field, we are currently also working on a mentorship program that will help trip leaders gain access to transportation, gear, and informal instruction through the resources that we already have at the OC to reduce personal costs. The mentorship program will depend heavily on senior trip leaders to step up and help new trip leaders get out and practice skills on weekends, and also on new trip leaders to reach out and be self-motivated in their learning. Although this could be seen as an extra unpaid time commitment, inherently these experiences will be fun and valuable to trip leaders personally.

### **Example costs:**

Wilderness First Aid (WFA), required by the OC for assistant trip leaders: \$240

Wilderness First Responder (WFR), required by the OC for head trip leaders: \$650-\$800

AIARE Level 1, required by the OC for TL’s leading winter trips: \$395

Raft Guide Training, required by the state for all raft guides: \$500

## Explicitly how to increase diversity in trip leaders

Outdoor recreation is and has historically been accessible to very few people for a variety of reasons. As we expressed above, the financial barriers preventing people from becoming outdoor leaders can be huge. These financial barriers are often related to the systemic oppression of many groups of people. As well, the attitude of outdoor recreation is typically white, cis-, able-bodied, financially stable, heterosexual and male-dominated, making it intimidating or at times impossible for people with other identities to become involved and benefit from these experiences which have proven to improve mental and physical health, self-confidence, and communication skills.

In order to break down these barriers and increase accessibility to outdoor activities for potential trip leaders, which we believe will also create spaces for more participants to feel comfortable in our programs, we have a number of ideas that we will implement.

Firstly, to reach out directly to those with financial needs, we plan to advertise our trip leader positions before the hiring process begins this March. In these advertisements we will be transparent about what is needed to apply to become a trip leader, and advertise that we only expect commitment, not experience and certifications. With this our goal is to educate those with financial need that the Outdoor Center is a place of opportunity, not exclusivity. In order to specifically target those with financial need, we have been considering reserving TL spots for Pell eligible students, but could use further guidance on ways to ensure that the opportunity is accessible to everybody. This spring we began to implement this new hiring process by doing a standard application and interview, and saw a huge increase in the number of female trip leaders that were hired.

We are also looking to revise our hiring structure to directly increase diversity. Currently, we are getting advice from other departments currently undertaking the same task on how the Outdoor Center should do the same. Some concrete ideas we have as of now are collaborating with the Ethnic Student Center to do a trip with people who are interested and introduce the opportunities that we're now offering and what the Outdoor Center does in general. We are already planning on collaborating with the Disability Resource Center as well in the spring to do a trip that uses adaptive equipment. With these introductions to the Outdoor Center, we plan to advertise Outdoor Center positions through a presentation and ask for interest among students involved in the ESC and DRS.

Among our current and future trip leaders we will also begin doing trainings to increase awareness around different types of privilege and how to be sensitive to life experiences of different people. The format for these trainings is still in discussion, but so far we have done a training on racism and white privilege through Leadership Advantage and plan on doing more classroom-session required trainings mixed in with our spring weekend trainings. We have also considered doing quarterly required attendance of an event on campus that relates to diversity and inclusion, but we are still discussing ways to do that without tokenizing groups. Many of our training trips for different skill sets will also begin to include conversations around the campfire on different topics relating to creating safe spaces for different people.

These trainings will create a foundation to support new trip leaders coming into the Outdoor Center so that no matter where they come from they will be seen as a valuable part of the community. The trainings that we have designed will not only teach trip leaders the skills to lead participants in the outdoors, but also create a foundation to support staff so that when we welcome and hire trip leaders

from different backgrounds they will all have equal opportunities and feel comfortable in learning about and leading trips. Through increasing diversity and awareness in trip leaders, we will hopefully see a greater range of participants coming into the OC and becoming involved.

# Appendix A

## Fall Quarter Trip Leader Training Schedule

Rock Climbing	Oct. 21-23	Bottom site rock climbing management, anchor building, belay techniques, lead climbing and repelling (optional 12 people max)
Sea Kayak I	Nov. 12-13	Train TLs in the basics of boat terminology, become proficient in rescue techniques, chart reading, weather forecasting, route planning and paddle techniques (Optional 12 people max)
Level I AIARE	Dec. 6, 8 10-11	Certified AIARE Level 1 Avalanche Training (Required for all staff leading winter trips, average 12 people)
Diversity Training	Undetermined	Undetermined

# Appendix B

## Backpacking Policy

### WWU Outdoor Center (Backpacking)

Revised 07/08/2016

#### DEFINITIONS

*Definitions of technical terms found in document*

#### PERSONNEL PRACTICES (Staff to Participant Ratio- 1:3)

*Head Trip Leaders:* To lead a hiking trip for the Outdoor Center, a Trip Leader must have completed the OC's: TLT Weekend 1, TLT Weekend 2, and New Hire Field Training. Additionally, Trip Leaders have documented experience in the activity in which they are guiding as well as possess a WFR.

*Assistant Trip Leaders:* Assistant Trip Leaders must have *TLT Weekend 1, TLT Weekend 2, New Hire Field Training, and* documented experience Backpacking

*Trip Apprentice:* Volunteers may be exempt from the above requirements only if there are at least two leaders who meet the above requirements.

#### EQUIPMENT POLICIES

##### General Group Equipment

- Cell Phone
- Stove Kit
- Utensil Kit
- Map Set
- Compass
- Extra clothing in case of emergency
- Bear Hang Kit
- Shelter
- Hand Washing Kit
- Dish Washing Kit

Safety Equipment required for all participants and Trip Leaders

Full Layering System

Additional Equipment required for Trip Leaders only

- First Aid kit
- Repair Kit
- Delorome
- Bear Spray

PROGRAM POLICIES

1. Pre-Trip Meeting
2. Day prior to trip, there must be a Travel Plan Devised and turned into the Excursions Coordinator:
  - a. Route
  - b. Weather Forecast
  - c. Trail Conditions
3. Trip participants will be briefed daily on:
  - a. Route info
  - b. Daily activities
  - c. Where medical kit is located
  - d. Method of check-ins
4. On trail the group will travel together in single file with an instructor designated to lead and sweep positions.
5. If group breaks for any reason, an instructor will accompany both groups and designate lead and sweep positions for both.
6. Clear communication system will be developed for check-ins
7. First Aid and rescue equipment are available and accessible at all times
8. Staff is aware of and follows all policies related to emergencies. (e.g., policies found in Risk Management and Site Specific Risk Management plans)
  - a. River Crossings
  - b. Swimming
  - c. Animal Encounters
  - d. Missing Person
9. Route awareness
10. Hiking in the dark is avoided

# Appendix C

## Tatsu Ota Outdoor Resume

### Outdoor Center Excursions

Type	Trip Title	Location	Dates	Total Days	Role	Notes
Snowshoe	SOS Snowshoe	Bagley Lakes	2/6/2016	1	ATL	
Backcountry Skiing	Backcountry Skiing	Mt Baker Backcountry	1/30/2016	1	ATL	
Mountaineering	Mt Baker Mountaineering Course	Mt Baker	7/25/15-7/26/15	2	ATL	
Rock Climbing	Climb and Yoga	Leavenworth	5/2/15-5/3/15	2	ATL	
Snowshoe	IB Snowshoe	Heather Meadows	1/25/2015	1	ATL	
Hike	IB Hike	Baker Lake	4/26/2015	1	ATL	
Rock Climbing	Climb and Yoga	Leavenworth	5/7/16-5/8/16	2	ATL	
Rock Climbing	Trip Leader Training	Vantage	10/25/15-10/26/15	2	Trainee	

### Rock Climbing Experience

Rock Climbing Experience														
Date	Route	Area	State	Sport	Trad	Difficulty	Grade	# of Pitches	Followed	Led	Trip Leader	Personal Trip	Participant	Comments
9/10/2014	East Face	Chair Peak	WA		X	5.6	2	4	2	2		X		Messed up on rap route
9/27/2015	SE Buttress	Cutthroat Peak	WA		X	5.8	2	5	2	3		X		Tired!
2/22/2015	Grand Wall	The Chief	B.C.		X	5.11	2	11	1	10		X		Fell on Sword pitch, but came back and sent it!
6/22/2014	Davis-Holland	Upper Town Wall	WA		X	5.10c	2	3	2	1		X		Led crux
7/25/2014	South Face	The Tooth	WA		X	5.4	2	4	2	2		X		In hiking boots.
9/13/14	Beckey Route	Liberty Bell	WA		X	5.6	2	3	2	1		X		
3/24/2015	Spaghetti Western	Pistol Whipped	UT		X	5.11	1	1	0	1		X		OS
3/28/2015	Way Rambo	Way Rambo	UT		X	5.12-	1	1	0	1		X		
5/9/2015	Sunset Strip	The Dihedrals	B.C.	X	X	5.10+	2	12	6	6		X		
6/15/2015-6/16/15	Direct North Ridge w/ Gendarme	Mt. Stuart	WA		X	5.9	5	20	10	10		X		
8/6/2015	Milk Road	Tantalus Wall	B.C.	X	X	5.10c C0	2	9	3	6		X		os

# Appendix D

## Cost Breakdown

<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	
<b>Year 1 (2016-2017)</b>	
<b>Total Days</b>	40.25
<b>Total Trip Leader Pay for Required Trainings</b>	\$ 11,600.00
<b>Total Certification Costs Covered by WWU</b>	\$ 7,720.00
<b>Total Meal Costs</b>	\$ 3,020.00
<b>Total Instructor Pay</b>	\$ 6,390.00
<b>Total Transportation Costs</b>	\$ 876.00
<b>Total Cost of Training</b>	\$ 29,606.00
<b>Total Cost of Training per Trip Leader Trained</b>	\$ 2,538.62

<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	
<b>Year 2 (2017-2018)</b>	
<b>Total Days</b>	61.25
<b>Total Trip Leader Pay for Required Trainings</b>	\$ 11,600.00
<b>Total Certification Costs Covered by WWU</b>	\$ 11,290.00
<b>Total Meal Costs</b>	\$ 3,980.00
<b>Total Instructor Pay</b>	\$ 9,990.00
<b>Total Transportation Costs</b>	\$ 1,304.00
<b>Total Cost of Training</b>	\$ 38,164.00
<b>Total Cost of Training per Trip Leader Trained</b>	\$ 3,464.12

<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	
<b>Year 3 (2018-2019)</b>	
<b>Total Days</b>	62.25
<b>Total Trip Leader Pay for Required Trainings</b>	\$ 11,600.00
<b>Total Certification Costs Covered by WWU</b>	\$ 11,290.00
<b>Total Meal Costs</b>	\$ 3,980.00
<b>Total Instructor Pay</b>	\$ 10,350.00
<b>Total Transportation Costs</b>	\$ 1,314.00
<b>Total Cost of Training</b>	\$ 38,534.00
<b>Total Cost of Training per Trip Leader Trained</b>	\$ 3,492.68

<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	
<b>Full Three Years (2016-2019)</b>	
<b>Total Days</b>	163.75
<b>Total Trip Leader Pay for Required Trainings</b>	\$ 34,800.00
<b>Total Certification Costs Covered by WWU</b>	\$ 30,300.00
<b>Total Meal Costs</b>	\$ 10,980.00
<b>Total Instructor Pay</b>	\$ 26,730.00
<b>Total Transportation Costs</b>	\$ 3,494.00
<b>Total Cost of Training</b>	\$ 106,304.00
<b>Total Cost of Training per Trip Leader Trained</b>	\$ 9,495.42

Outdoor Center Excursions

Cost Breakdown by Fiscal Year	Number of People	Total Days	Total Hours	Trip Leader Pay for Required Trainings	Certification Cost Covered by WWU
FY16 Totals	117	15.25	124	\$ 11,600.00	\$ 1,120.00
FY17 Totals	195	44.25	356	\$ 11,600.00	\$ 7,720.00
FY18 Totals	238	61.25	492	\$ 11,600.00	\$ 11,290.00

Meals Covered By WWU	Average Meal Cost (\$5.00/Meal)	Number of Instructors	Instructor Pay (\$120.00/Day)	Total Transportation Costs (\$0.43*200 miles+\$5/person)	Training Total	Training Cost Per Trip Leader Trained
31	\$ 1,700.00	9	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 292.00	\$ 17,862.00	\$ 1,309.95
60	\$ 3,440.00	21	\$ 7,830.00	\$ 1,012.00	\$ 31,602.00	\$ 2,704.78
69	\$ 3,980.00	28	\$ 9,990.00	\$ 1,168.00	\$ 38,028.00	\$ 3,450.52