

The Use of a Wilderness Adventure Based Expeditionary Program as an Alternative to
Traditional Means of Discipline for At Risk Students within the Judicial Process at
SUNY Cortland

by

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A Project

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Science in Recreation

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT CORTLAND

May 2008

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The purpose of this project was to develop a wilderness based expeditionary program that would be offered as an alternative to the traditional means of discipline for students that have violated the student code of conduct by participating in the high risk activities of drinking and drug use. An expedition was designed with the three programmatic goals of an increased sense of community, accountability and mutual accountability in mind. The expedition will consist of physical and mental challenges with addition personal and group activities designed to assist participants achieve their personal as well as programmatic goals. Evaluation of the expedition will be conducted by every participant through the completion of a reflection paper and the use of journal entries. The evaluation tools were be collected by the facilitator and reviewed by himself and the judicial affairs office of SUNY Cortland.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are warranted to a few people who helped me with the creation of this project. Thanks to Dr. Susan Wilson for her encouragement and support. A special thank you goes to Dale Anderson for his wisdom, insights and guidance. Very special thanks go to the Judicial Affairs office especially Nanette Pasquarello and Mike Pitaro for their tireless pursuit of participants.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Adventure education programs have been shown to have an impact in the lives of the participants. The use of adventure programs has a positive effect on a participant's self-esteem and self-confidence and improves interpersonal relationships (Goldenberg & McAvoy & Klenosky, 2005). Offered as an alternative to traditional means of discipline for students who have violated the code of conduct within a college or university setting, wilderness adventure- based expeditionary programs could provide new methodologies, challenges and positive outcomes. Wilderness adventure- based expeditionary programs exist in varying capacities based on populations served, adventures undertaken, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches used. Evaluation of the literature regarding the use of adventure programming with students has revealed multiple positive outcomes. Holman & McAvoy (2005) state that developing relationships with others, increased understanding of themselves, awareness and appreciation for the wilderness, having a new opportunity, and learning new skills were the primary outcomes reported by participants after their wilderness experience.

The values of adventure education for individuals are the challenges, growth and risk. The use of a wilderness adventure- based expeditionary program as a methodology to better understand the outcomes of the risky choices made by the participant may ultimately help the participants better understand the program objectives of personal responsibility, mutual accountability and an improved sense of community. The correlation between the aforementioned objectives will provide participants with the ability to develop empathic skills for future choices. Existing programs that use wilderness adventure based expeditionary programs as part of the judicial process can provide outcomes and insight into the potential of the program.

Creative approaches to wilderness adventure based programs in conjunction with the college Judicial Affairs office are currently providing alternative disciplinary programs to students at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland. This is a very unique opportunity and approach to provide participants with the positive, necessary lessons and skills that are beneficial to them personally and the community as a whole. Norbert (2005) noted an increase in a sense of community and personal responsibility in students who participated in the university's Evolution program which is Loyola College's expeditionary program for at risk students.

The use of a wilderness adventure model offers positive outcomes and alternatives to the traditional educational process of suspension for students who have violated the university code of conduct. McKenzie (2003) states that an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem are directly related to the relationship between the participant and the physical environment, the group, problem-solving tasks and mastery of these skills, which leads to new learning. Although difficult to prove, it has been hypothesized

by many leaders that knowledge and experiences gained on an expedition may be directly transferred to everyday life (Sibthorp & Banning, 2004). Another powerful aspect of a wilderness adventure model is giving participants a sense of involvement and empowerment. Sibthorp and Banning (2004) state that empowerment of a student in an educational setting is vital and three fold consisting of community empowerment, organizational empowerment and individual empowerment. By organizing the parameters of the expedition, this allows participants to recognize self actualization characteristics such as empowerment. This is a direct reflection of the long term goal of this project; gaining a strong sense of self and how the decisions you make affect your “community”. Empowerment of students is a powerful tool, because it is not a short term fix. Attaining this characteristic is a skill which places an individual in the position for long term success.

Within the research conducted in student development there exists a belief that a sense of community will improve the overall college experience. Tinto (1993) believed that becoming an integrated part of your colleges’ environment eases the transition between memberships in a past community (i.e. high school) into membership in the new community of college. Tinto (1993) places a strong emphasis on the importance of interaction between campus communities and the individual students that are members of them. Berger (1997) states that individuals who attained a strong sense of community are more likely to be connected with the larger social and support groups that exist in that community.

The goal of this project is to help those students that choose to participate achieve a greater sense of community and belonging to the larger order which is the SUNY

Cortland community while introducing them to the benefits that involvement in this larger community can provide. Although the idea of a community has been well documented when considering the workplace, neighborhoods, unions and religious organizations little empirical work exists on the effects that a sense of community can provide on college campuses (Berger, 1997). McCarthy (1990) found that students who lack a sense of community are more likely to experience higher degrees of physical and mental exhaustion (i.e. burnout) from a lack of a social support system. McCarthy (1990) also states that a sense of community is an important factor in helping undergraduate students adjust and cope with the pressures of college life. It is this author's belief that an important part of that sense of community is the establishment of a positive "support" group that will assist in the establishment and acceptance of the individual into the larger community. Poplin (1997) states that group solidarity is an essential part in the defining of a community and its member's sense of belonging to that community. Overall there exists much support that a sense of community can strongly enhance or improve the college experience of a student, especially as it pertains to the establishment of a strong and positive social support system. This projects aim is to assist participating students in the acquisition of the skills necessary to become an integral and positive part of the SUNY Cortland community.

Another aspect within the realm of student development is the idea of a social support system. This project is designed to help willing participants gain a better sense of self- esteem through the creation of a positive support system and to introduce them to alternative ways of relieving stress other than drugs or alcohol. Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie (2007) state that social support and self esteem are important

resources for adolescents undergoing their transition to a university or college setting. Major life events, such as the transition to a university or college are heightened times of vulnerability and emotional problems for the individuals undergoing the change (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). Adjusting socially is fundamental for all people, but it is particularly important for adolescents who are beginning the separation from their family while initiating the process of joining a new community at the university or college of their choice (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). The inability of a student to adjust socially to their new environment has been linked to some health factors mainly stress and fatigue which can lead to an increase dependence on drugs and alcohol to help students cope with their inability to identify with a positive support system (American College Health Association, 2006). It is one of the goals of this project to provide the means necessary for participants to feel empowered to develop healthy alternatives for the handling of increased levels of stress and fatigue in their lives that are associated with the process of joining a new community (i.e. college or university of their choice) other than the use of drugs or alcohol while also providing the skills and knowledge needed to attain a better social support system through the use of group dynamics in a wilderness setting.

While reviewing the literature on the effects of alcohol use on college students and the intervention programs currently being implemented by colleges and universities two outcomes became clear to this author 1) Alcohol use among college students has a very negative impact on their overall performance (Porter & Pryor, 2007). 2) Intervention programs are not truly connecting with the students they are designed to assist (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). After reviewing the college alcohol programs evaluations

from 1984- 1999 there is an indication that most of the traditional methods of prevention and information dissemination directed toward students did not demonstrate any effect on the use of alcohol or alcohol related negative consequences (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). Caldwell (2002) states that students who violate alcohol policies appear to engage in more high risk use of alcohol than their peers and are at greater risk of alcohol abuse. The review of the literature also provided some positive outcomes in programs that focus their intervention on personalized and motivational feedback (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). This project is designed with personalized and motivational feedback in mind. The evaluation processes that will be implemented (journal entries, reflection paper) are focused heavily on the two factors that the literature states will assist in achieving positive outcomes; those two factors as stated previously are personalized and motivational feedback. In addition to striving towards a better sense of community, mutual accountability and personal responsibility, participants will also focus on personalized and motivational feedback both from the personal and group levels. Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little (2007) provide a cynical but accurate conclusion to this discussion on alcohol use and programmatic intervention; they state that students need more than advice to “drink responsibly” or “drink moderately”. Without students being given a specific definition of the above statements students will be left to their own experiences and forced to compare “moderate” or “responsible” with their own experiences or that of their peer group. Since high risk drinking choices can be dangerous, pertinent information about low risk alternative choices is crucial.

Within the framework of a wilderness adventure based expeditionary program this project will attempt to explore the benefits of immersing students who have violated the

university student code of conduct in a wilderness setting. While in this setting, the participants will be presented with the physical and mental challenges associated with the activity of backpacking (such as carrying heavy loads over a substantial distance and dealing with the mental aspects of goal achievement both personally and for the group). These activities were deemed necessary to achieve the program objectives and to develop both the group/community and the individual. The participants will be provided with ample time and the environment to debrief those challenges both publicly and privately through the use of journal writings (participants will have time built into the daily schedule to reflect and achieve this part of the evaluation process). The emersion in these different situations will hopefully produce improvements within the participants as it relates to the program objectives of personal accountability, mutual accountability and community.

Experiential approaches to learning such as wilderness adventure based expeditionary programs create a positive, challenging and supportive environment for students to learn valuable skills needed for personal, communal and mutual growth (Norbert, 2005). As students continue to partake in high risk activities (such as drinking and drug usage) that violate the university student code of conduct, one wonders if participation in a wilderness adventure based expeditionary program will result in an increase of personal responsibility and mutual accountability. Is the use of adventure based programming in the wilderness an effective tool and methodology to help participants achieve programmatic and personal goals? The potential benefits of the program may include but are not limited to a greater sense of community, a better

overview of the consequences of their actions, improvement in their academics and a greater sense of self or personal empowerment.

Statement of the Problem/Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project was to design an effective wilderness adventure- based program in conjunction with Judicial Affairs office at SUNY Cortland to determine if this program is a positive alternative to traditional means of discipline. The program will be offered as an alternative for students on disciplinary probation who have violated the code of conduct at the University and are at risk for facing suspension if they continue to violate the student code of conduct. The primary goal is to provide an atmosphere in the wilderness through the use of adventure where students can learn the skills of personal responsibility, mutual accountability and community living. Another goal of the project is to provide the students with a skill set that includes a better sense of self-worth and self reliance. Literature has shown that alternatives to the traditional disciplinary action (suspension) for at risk students are warranted. Alternative approaches that utilize personalized and motivational feedback (such as this projects use of journal entries, reflection paper, physical challenges and the establishment of a group) have seen success when instituted.

Project Objectives

This project was developed with guidelines and objectives that view the participants as part of a community and as individuals.

Objectives for Program Participants

Upon completion of the project, participants will be able to:

Objective 1: Gain a deeper connection with oneself through a better understanding of the decisions that were made and how they affected their lives and those who support them.

Objective 2: Demonstrate a better understanding of personal accountability and how their actions have a strong bearing on their future and the greater community.

Objective 3: Gain a better understanding of personal identity through the use of adventurous challenges both physical and mental, interactions in a group setting, journal writing and facilitated discussions.

Objective 4: Students will have an opportunity to experience what it means to be part of a community. Through the use of wilderness programming and adventure activities the students will uncover and discuss what their choices can and do to impact a community and nature.

Objective 5: Students will learn and discuss who and what in their lives can be used for personal support including what is available to them at SUNY Cortland.

Objectives Addressed for the Overall Project

Objective 1: To demonstrate need for proposed project based on current body of knowledge.

Objective 2: To identify best practices in current adventure education programs.

Objective 3: To develop curriculum based on best practice.

Objective 4: To develop a wilderness adventure- based field experience to be implemented in conjunction with a university judicial process.

Delimitations

This project is delimited by the target population of students that have violated the student code of conduct established by SUNY Cortland and as identified by the Judicial Affairs office. The project is based on a similar successful program that is currently being offered to students at Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland. The project is focused upon the participants (students) developing skills that lead to a better understanding of personal and mutual accountability in a community setting. A group setting which facilitates interactions plus journal writing will also be necessary to aid in the acquisition of skills for participants. The completion of reflection papers will be a required component of the program used to gauge if programmatic goals were met. The programmatic goals are delimited by how effectively participants actively involve themselves in the group setting and how open-minded they are to the journal writing and reflection paper.

Limitations

This project will be limited by its funding. It is the vision of this facilitator that the cost will be inferred by the participant, which might deter possible participants from partaking in the program (total cost to be inferred by the participant will include the

rental of equipment, deemed necessary by the facilitator for the participant to successfully handle environmental challenges and the activity of backpacking). This factor limits the accessibility of the program by possibly excluding individuals of lower socio-economic class. Other factors that limit the project are the population chosen for the project; which is only those students that have violated the student code of conduct at a public college in New York (SUNY Cortland). The inclusion of only students that have violated the code of conduct at SUNY Cortland limits the ability to transfer outcomes to the broader population.

Definitions of Terms

1. *Wilderness-A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain ..."*
 - The Wilderness Act, September 3, 1964

2. *Adventure Education-The planned use of adventuresome activities, real-life activities or put in a learning context, providing goal directed challenges that must be solved by the individual or as a group. These take place in an outdoor or wilderness setting and use cooperative small group living and activity participation, trained facilitators, and specific pre-planned educational or developmental goals which all lead to participant learning (Baldwin, Persing, Magnuson, 2004).*

3. Community- A network of individuals who co-exist in a common area (Americans for the Arts, n.d.). A successful community includes trust and cooperation. “A healthy community is a network of mutual support with a fundamental respect for the integrity of each individual. An atmosphere of trust and cooperation provides a sense of identity and belonging” (Friesem, 1994, p. 34).
4. Experiential Learning- Is a concrete experience followed by observations and reflections which help with the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations that lead into testing the implications of the concepts and newly formed solutions (Kolb, 1984).
5. Empowerment- To allow an individual to develop intrapersonal skills (characteristics) such as self –esteem, self-worth, self-reliance.
6. Personal Responsibility- Accepting responsibility for results personally created.
7. Mutual Accountability- Responsibility and liability for each other on an equitable basis.
8. Self-Worth- Personal appraisal of one self as intrinsically positive or negative in value or worth.

9. Self- Reliance- Dependency on oneself or one's own abilities and resources to accomplish goals and objectives.
10. Consequences- Something that logically or naturally follow from an action or condition.
11. Risk-The uncertainty and chance of something occurring that will have an impact upon the achievement of goals and objectives measured in terms of consequences and likelihood.
12. Empathy- A sense of a shared experience; understanding another person's feelings by remembering or imagining being in a similar situation.
13. Adventure- An activity that is comprised of risky, dangerous and uncertain experiences that are undertaken at least in part for the sake of physical or emotional excitement.
14. Expedition- A journey undertaken by an organized group of individuals with a specific purpose to explore unknown territory or goals.

Conclusion

When introducing the idea of a wilderness adventure-based model to the judicial process at SUNY Cortland many aspects were reviewed and different avenues pursued while trying to create the framework upon which the project would be built. The framework of the project consisted of objectives that were addressed from both the participant and programmatic angles, limitations and delimitations which were investigated and meaningful terms that were defined. This framework will now be utilized as a guide that will assist in the identification of prudent literature that should be reviewed to provide more depth and scope to the project.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To assist in the development of a wilderness adventure based program that will be offered as an alternative to at risk students in danger a future suspension it is necessary to investigate several resources and areas to provide depth and scope to the project. The reviewed materials are organized into five categories as follows: 1) Student Development 2) Community Development 3) Expedition Development and Implementation 4) Outcomes that provide some rationale for the utilization of a wilderness adventure based program to assist at risk students 5) The use of reflection papers and journaling as evaluation tools. The investigation of these five areas will assist in the creation of the corresponding that adventure based program that will be offered by the judicial affairs department at SUNY Cortland.

Student Development

While exploring the literature within the realm of student development a few key concepts kept emerging that would aid students in their development and achievement of goals they are: empowerment, support system and the group. Through the utilization of these three concepts in an adventure-based setting hopefully students will learn the

necessary skills to make more positive choices than the use of drugs and alcohol to help them cope or adjust. It is a better understanding of these three concepts and how they are intertwined that will assist students/participants be successful in this program and achieve long term success.

In a wilderdom.com article by Jim Neill (2006) states the objective behind the Outward Bound model is to create a series of intense, mini-life experiences, concerning young people's self-belief and the capacity to cope with life. Hahn's (founder of outward bound) philosophy revolved around the importance of helping students to discover their true capabilities. The adventure programming component of his model would propel them into real life experiences that would allow students to find their greater capabilities. An article by McKiernan (1995) states that the expedition phase put the students in a situation where their environment provides them with immediate consequences for their actions; even small details become important in light of the consequences.

The use of a wilderness adventure model within a judicial affairs department offers positive outcomes and alternatives to the traditional educational process of suspension for students who have violated the university code of conduct. McKenzie (2003) states that an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem are directly related to the relationship between the participant and the physical environment, the group, problem-solving tasks and mastery of these skills, which leads to new learning. Although difficult to prove, it has been hypothesized by many leaders that knowledge and experiences gained on an expedition may be directly transferred to everyday life. Another powerful aspect of a wilderness adventure model is giving participants a sense of involvement and empowerment. Sibthorp and Banning (2004) state that empowerment of a student in an

educational setting is vital and three fold consisting of community empowerment, organizational empowerment and individual empowerment. By organizing the parameters of the expedition, this allows participants to recognize self actualization characteristics such as empowerment. This is a direct reflection of the long term goal of this project; gaining a strong sense of “self” and how the decisions you make affect your “community”. Empowerment of students is a powerful tool, because it is not a short term fix. Attaining this characteristic is a skill which places an individual in the position for long term success.

Another aspect within the realm of student development is the idea of a social support system. This project is designed to help willing participants gain a better sense of self- esteem through the creation of a positive support system and to introduce them to alternative ways of relieving stress other than drugs or alcohol. Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie (2007) state that social support and self esteem are important resources for adolescents undergoing their transition to a university or college setting. Major life events, such as the transition to a university or college are heightened times of vulnerability and emotional problems for the individuals undergoing a change (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). Adjusting socially is fundamental for all people, but it is particularly important for adolescents who are beginning the separation from their family while initiating the process of joining a new community at the university or college of their choice (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). The inability of a student to adjust socially to their new environment has been linked to some health factors mainly stress and fatigue which can lead to an increase dependence on drugs and alcohol to help students cope with their inability to identify with a positive

support system (American College Health Association, 2006). It is one of the goals of this project to provide the means necessary for participants to feel empowered to develop healthy alternatives for the handling of increased levels of stress and fatigue in their lives that are associated with the process of joining a new community (i.e. college or university of their choice) other than the use of drugs or alcohol while also providing the skills and knowledge needed to attain a better social support system through the use of group dynamics in a wilderness setting.

While reviewing the literature on the effects of alcohol use on college students and the intervention programs currently being implemented by colleges and universities two outcomes became clear to this author 1) Alcohol use among college students has a very negative impact on their overall performance (Porter & Pryor, 2007). 2) Intervention programs are not truly connecting with the students they are designed to assist (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). After reviewing the college alcohol programs evaluations from 1984- 1999 there is an indication that most of the traditional methods of prevention and information dissemination directed toward students did not demonstrate any effect on the use of alcohol or alcohol related negative consequences (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). Caldwell (2002) states that students who violate alcohol policies appear to engage in more high risk use of alcohol than their peers and are at greater risk of alcohol abuse. The review of the literature also provided some positive outcomes in programs that focus their intervention on personalized and motivational feedback (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). Loyola University is an example of an institute of higher education that is using wilderness expeditions that focus their interventions on personalized and motivational feedback as a part of their judicial process. Loyola

University calls their program, “Evolution”. Evolution provides an atmosphere for students to grow deeper with oneself and others in a supportive atmosphere (Norbert, 2005). The program was established for individuals who have seriously violated Community Standards, have ended up in the judicial process, and are now at risk of losing their student status (Norbert, 2005). The goals of the Evolution program are mutual accountability, community living and personal responsibility.

This project was designed with personalized and motivational feedback in mind. In addition to striving towards a better sense of community, mutual and personal accountability, participants will also focus on personalized and motivational feedback both from the personal and group levels. Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little (2007) provide a cynical but accurate conclusion to this discussion on alcohol use and programmatic intervention; they state that students need more advice than telling them to “drink responsibly” or “drink moderately”. Without students being given a specific definition or demonstration of the above statements students will be left to their own devices forcing them to compare the terms “moderate” or “responsible” with their own experiences or that of their peer group. Since high risk drinking choices can be dangerous, pertinent information about low risk alternative choices is crucial.

With student development in mind and within the framework of a wilderness adventure based program this project will attempt to explore the benefits of immersing students who have violated the university student code of conduct in a wilderness setting. While in this setting, the participants will be presented with the physical and mental challenges associated with the activity of backpacking (such as carrying heavy loads over a substantial distance and dealing with the mental aspects of goal achievement both

personally and for the group). Recent studies help validate and support the benefits to college students when they have the opportunity to be involved in a wilderness adventure experience. Outcalt & Faris (2001) suggest that the way to increase self-knowledge in students is through reflection and active participation. The same study also states that service to your community; environment has been shown to translate in immediate college outcomes, such as commitment academic development and life skills (Outcalt & Faris, 2001). Berman & Davis-Berman, (2000). State that participants become more internal in their locus of control, receive better grades and have more positive self-concepts after the completion of an adventure program. It has also been found that the use of adventure programs with college students helps to facilitate the emotional and physical development of students (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2000). Adventure orientation programs have also been documented as showing increased retention rates of college students and as having positive impacts on interpersonal skills and relationships (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2000). The wilderness adventure experience covers many different elements that are beneficial to the success and development of college/university students. The different elements are challenges, friendship, and sense of community, the ability to ask questions and to have them answered. The final element is the ability to see and feel success in the wilderness adventure-based setting and to transfer that success into everyday life. It has been theorized that emersion in these different situations will produce improvements within the participants as it relates to the program objectives of personal responsibility, mutual accountability and community.

Community Development

Within the research conducted in student development there exists a belief that a sense of community will improve the overall college experience. Tinto (1993) believed that becoming an integrated part of your colleges' environment eases the transition between memberships in a past community (i.e. high school) into membership in the new community of college. Tinto (1993) places a strong emphasis on the importance of interaction between campus communities and the individual students that are members of them. Berger (1997) states that individuals who attained a strong sense of community are more likely to be connected with the larger social and support groups that exist in that community. One of the goals of this project is to help those students that choose to participate achieve a greater sense of community and belonging to the larger order which is the SUNY Cortland community while introducing them to the benefits of involvement in this larger community can provide them. McCarthy (1990) found that students who lack a sense of community are more likely to experience higher degrees of physical and mental exhaustion (i.e. burnout) from a lack of a social support system. McCarthy (1990) also states that a sense of community is an important factor in helping undergraduate students adjust and cope with the pressures of college life. It has been hypothesized that an important tool which assists in the achievement of a greater sense of community is the establishment of a positive "support" group. This support group will assist in the establishment and acceptance of the individual into the larger community. Poplin (1997) states that group solidarity is an essential part in the defining of a community and its member's sense of belonging to that community. Overall there exists some support that a

sense of community can strongly enhance or improve the college experience of a student, especially as it pertains to the establishment of a strong and positive social support system. In a presentation and subsequent follow up article from Loyola University an increase in a sense of community and personal accountability was indicated by the college students who participated in the Evolution program (Norbert, 2005). An article from McKiernan (1995) provides responses from participants when they are asked to describe “community”: 1) that you’re in this together; 2) you need to support each other to bring your group through this course! – 3) You need each other. (Baldwin & Persing & Magnuson 2004) state that adventure education is conceptually theorized as one form of experiential education characterized by: The planned use of adventuresome activities, real-life activity or learning context, goal directed challenges that must be solved individually or as a group, in an outdoor or wilderness setting, cooperative small group living and activity participation which leads to achievement of goals and participant learning. These results are a few examples of the healthy and positive environment that a wilderness expedition based program can provide for participants. This projects aim is to assist participating students in the acquisition of the skills necessary to become an integral and positive part of the SUNY Cortland community.

Expedition Development and Implementation

McKiernan (1995) states that expeditions are journeys undertaken by tightly organized groups for a specific purpose, often in the accompaniment of an expert guide. Though they may vary in length, they have a beginning, a middle and end. They immerse

people right from the start, travel light, and go somewhere. Expedition members must depend upon one another to fulfill their mission because they are traveling through uncharted territory to new destinations. They must prepare for the journey, develop goals in order so that their actions have clear, recognizable consequences, and celebrated achievements. The plan and design of this project will be placed in the responsibility of the facilitator. Cederquist (1997) notes the importance of having the facilitator's responsibilities to include, hazard management, finances, research of area, route finding, transportation, and food. Cantwell & Daniel (2002) state that the creation of an appropriate course based on thorough and careful review of the make-up of the students is vital. The facilitator will also lead the group to contribute to each of these areas of the trip as it will empower participants to have a sense of trip ownership. Cederquist (1997) states that successful expeditions may prove to be powerful, life-changing experiences yet on the contrary a failed expedition may be destructive to participant's physical and psychological well-being. Many facilitators agree that the planning phase is critical to the success of the program. The first step in this program implementation was to setup collaboration with the University Judicial Affairs Department to identify eligible participants.

Cederquist (1997) discusses another critical step in this process is the pre-trip meeting involving the participants. Cederquist (1997) in his article "*Effective Expedition Planning*" states that hosting a meeting with participants to develop goals and plans for the trip is essential. The goals that are developed in the meeting will focus on interactions among group members, their wilderness experiences and on specific objectives. Cederquist (1997) also suggests having individuals write out expectations or discuss them

verbally which will create a clearer picture of group goals and create a sense of trip ownership.

McKenzie (2003) discusses the theory/model developed by Walsh and Gollins of the Outward Bound process in which the relationship between the learners and the physical environment, the group, problem-solving tasks, state of adaptive dissonance, mastery of competence which eventually leads to new learning and can be measured in increased self-efficacy and self-esteem. Cassidy (2001) states that humans must be given the opportunity to explore personally meaningful concepts that come from their own history, context and feelings for true learning to occur; Cassidy calls this narrative theory. This theory states that experiential learning occurs when individuals engage in a concrete activity, reflect upon that activity and develop a new understanding that can be transferred to other situations (Cassidy, 2001). Narrative theory focuses on the need to cover more than just the logistics in a briefing session; participants need to have the opportunity to recall relevant past knowledge and define what is pertinent to the upcoming event (Cassidy, 2001). This theory also mentions that during the debriefing stage, each personal narrative should be followed through and connected to the life stories of the participants if the experience is to be significant, memorable and ultimately transforming (Cassidy 2001).

Cassidy (2001) also states that to uncover a true and lasting meaning of an experiential event, the facilitator must help participants explore personally relevant concepts that are formed from their personal history, context and feelings.

***Outcomes That Provide the Rationale for the Utilization of a Wilderness Adventure
Based Program to Assist At-Risk Students***

Another valuable section of the material reviewed pertained to the outcomes generated by adventure based programs. In a time when programs are “weighed” more heavily on what is stated by participants after the completion of the experience than the theories and motivations put into creating them this section has proved to be very important.

McAvoy (1998) examines the idea of self-efficacy and how that can affect adventure programs. McAvoy (1998) defines self-efficacy as: “being a person’s beliefs about their ability to execute control over their own level of functioning”. McAvoy (1998) elaborates on to state the events that affect the student’s lives and the efficacy that the individual develops can be derived from past failures and accomplishments. McKiernan (1995) states that all students must be assured a fair measure of success in learning in order to nurture the confidence and capacity to take risks and rise to increasingly difficult challenges. In the conclusion of (Goldenberg & McAvoy & Klenosky, 2005) study it is stated that adventure education programs make an immediate impact in the lives of the participants. Holman & McAvoy (2005) in a study of an integrated wilderness experience for 193 participants stated that the primary outcomes of their experiences were: developing relationships with others, increased understanding of themselves, awareness and appreciation for nature and the wilderness, and having a new opportunity and learning new skills. Holman & McAvoy (2005) also state that many participants noted higher levels of motivation and increased self-confidence in their

abilities, which they directly attributed to the wilderness trip experience. Holman & McAvoy (2005) also state that participants expressed that the primary values of the outcomes from their experience were: transferring the benefits of the trip to enhance aspects of home life, self-awareness, achieving a personal goal and having warm relationships with others. In a subsequent study the outcomes of college students between the ages of 18-19 are examined. The students answered the question, "What aspects of the Outward Bound experience have you found the most useful now that you are back at home?" One of the participants answers, "I take things that come before me as I would a mountain. It can be done and the rewards of strength in character and soul are endless". Another participant states "Climbing mountains is the same as climbing life. I know I can do it, by trying more than one path sometimes, but I know I can do it" (McAvoy, 1998). In an article written by Russell (2005) it is stated that the working alliance between participants and their peer group has been shown to be a predictor of outcomes. Adventure programs have a positive effect on participant's self-esteem, self-confidence and better interpersonal relationships (Goldenberg & McAvoy & Klenosky, 2005). In a study of participants in a North Carolina Outward Bound experience were the participants ranged in age from 14-66 with the majority being between 14-18 years of age; physical fitness, relationships with others, self-confidence, self-reliance, teamwork/cooperation and personal growth/challenges were the outcomes listed with the most frequency (Goldenberg & McAvoy & Klenosky, 2005). McKenzie (2003) explores the means by which students learn at Outward Bound Western Canada. McKenzie (2003) discovered that twenty- nine different course components were mentioned by the participants as having influenced course outcomes such as course activities, physical

environment, instructors and the group. McKenzie (2003) cites that the biggest impacts on the outcomes of self-concept, motivation and interpersonal skills were achieving individual success, learning new skills and problem solving as a group. Of the twenty-nine components stated as having influence McKenzie places the components in five groups: 1) Qualities of course activities 2) specific course activities 3) the physical environment 4) instructors and 5) the group. McKenzie (2003) states that participants in a wilderness adventure-based program cited backpacking, the solo experience and the use of “group” as having the greatest influence on their personal outcome. The aspect of the physical environment that was cited by participants as having the greatest impact on their personal outcomes was the wilderness setting. This study also discovered that the solo experience and the wilderness setting in particular play an important role in student courses by providing time for reflection and increasing students’ self-awareness and self-concept through the unfamiliar environment of the wilderness (McKenzie, 2003).

Stremba (1989) points out that some of the benefits received by college students while experiencing an adventure pursuit (in this case backpacking) as being: the ability to meet others of common interests in the outdoors, and thereby developing a peer support group, and the ability to apply increased self- confidence to meeting the academic and social demands of college. Experiencing an intensive outdoor pursuit helps college/university students feel more a part of the broader college/university community which is one of the key factors in retention of students (Stremba, 1989). It was also pointed out that it was easier for students to realize academic successes as a result of the personal and social successes of the wilderness adventure experience (Stremba, 1989). The wilderness adventure experience provides elements that are beneficial to the success and

development of college/university students. Those elements include, but are not limited to, personal challenges, friendship, sense of community, the ability to ask questions and have them answered, and the opportunity to experience successes. When transferred outside the wilderness setting these elements also result in academic successes. The immersion in these different situations will also hopefully produce improvements within the participants as it relates to the program objectives of personal accountability, mutual accountability and community.

Use of Reflection Papers and Journaling as Evaluation Tools

When discussing the idea of how to evaluate this project many different aspects and ideas were considered; the use of reflection papers and journal entries was decided upon to be the best fit based on the importance and emphasis that project places upon personal reflection and growth for the participant to achieve a positive outcome. Stremba (1989) states that for students to derive a more lasting and transferable meaning from their experiences more intentional goal setting, reflection, discussion and debriefing must occur. Neglecting the addition of a reflection experience i.e. journal writing or reflection papers allow for participants to take away from a wilderness experience only one aspect (that the experience was fun or they made a new friend) and fails to allow the participants to experience the more sustained effect that including personal and group reflection time bring to an wilderness adventure. The value of talking and writing about an adventure experience can be broken down into three parts. Stremba (1989) breaks down the experience as follows 1) he reminds us that talking about an outdoor adventure

experience before, during and after experiencing it can have many benefits. 2) Reflection and discussion about self, relationships with other group members and about the adventure experience enriches the whole experience and makes it more holistic. 3) Finally reflection provides the participant with the tools necessary to take the experience back home with them and apply what they learned to their everyday life.

The use of adventure activities in a program provides people with the opportunity to discover that they can take risks and do more than they thought not only in a wilderness setting but also in a school or work environment. It is through these adventure experiences facilitators believe individuals grow and push their personal comfort zones; it is through reflection (journaling and discussion) that participants achieve the ability to transfer that growth and newly expanded comfort zones to their everyday lives. Reflection time is also what assists participants in achieving their personal and programmatic goals (Stremba, 1989). Journaling is the most effective tool for participants to keep track of their feelings, experiences, insights and changes to their everyday lives (Stremba, 1989). Hubbs & Brand (2005) state the purpose of journaling is for self-reflection and personal development. The use of reflective journaling during an adventure or wilderness experience can help students progress through Kolb's (1984) four stages of experiential learning which are 1) concrete experience 2) reflective observation 3) abstract conceptualization 4) active experimentation (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). As participants progressively work through the four stages they would in stage one and two respectively begin with a description of and subsequent reflection of a specific experience. In stage three, the participant may explore explanations or question the meaning of the experience. In the final stage, the participant concludes his/her journal

entry by applying new meanings, interpretations or understanding to the experience (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). It is through these experiences, subsequent reflections and transference of what was learned by the participants into their everyday lives where intrapersonal and interpersonal growth takes place; thusly allowing the participant to achieve their goals. Hubbs & Brand (2005) believe journaling as a learning strategy, provides opportunities for participants to mull over ideas, uncover inner secrets, piece together their life's unconnected threads thusly creating a fertile ground for significant learning. Journaling at its core is practicing the art of reflection and it is through this practice of reflection that the learning of new material and essential transformative learning take place.

Bennion & Olsen (2002) noticed that by inserting into their hikes points of discussion, journal writing and talking helped students focus on the experience they were having. In other words a solid program must have not only outdoor experiences and process centered writings, but it also should have a philosophical and pedagogical focus that brings the two disciplines together. Writing and reflection help students interpret summarize and analyze complex information but more importantly meditative writing helps participants/students explore themselves (Bennion & Olsen, 2002). Growth occurs when students discuss their feelings about what they have accomplished; record in a journal initial responses to their experiences and finally use those feeling to form a personal narrative or goals.

To summarize the relevance of utilizing journaling and reflection papers to evaluate an outdoor adventure experience might be as simple as stating that an outdoor experience gives students/participants something deeply felt to write about. It is that

simple but it is also important to connect all the piece of the puzzle to fully show the relevance of journals and reflection papers. The essential pieces of an outdoor experience are 1) the experience 2) time to reflect on the experience 3) time to process the knowledge learned for the experience 4) the transference of that knowledge to everyday life. Considering these four essential pieces a better summary to the relevance and necessity of journaling and reflection papers to evaluate an outdoor adventure experience might be to only participate in the activity without discussing the related learning involves the body but ignores the psyche, writing bridges the inner and the outer world and connects the paths of action and reflection. Thus students/participants who utilize the skill of reflective journaling gain an ability to connect their internal processes with their external realities i.e. transference.

These activities were deemed necessary to achieve the program objectives and to develop the individual as well as the community. The participants will be provided with ample time and the environment to debrief those challenges both publicly and privately though the use of journal writings (participants will have time built into the daily schedule to reflect and achieve this part of the evaluation process).

***Barriers to Using Wilderness Expeditions as Part of a College/University Judicial
Process***

Some suggestions of barriers to the use of wilderness expeditions in the College/University Judicial Process are cost and insurance coverage. The fear of unknown, the worry over the safety of the participants and willingness of students to

participate are also barriers facilitators faced when attempting to implement this program. Due to the lack of literary evidence these can only be offered as suggestions of barriers.

Summary and Need for Project

The need for the project is to offer an alternative to suspension for students that have committed offenses against the Judicial Code of SUNY Cortland. Another example of need for the program is for students to develop a sense of personal responsibility for their actions and how they have effected more than just themselves with the choices that they have made. The program also allows for growth in the areas community, reliability, and self- actualization. Klein (1997) provides some support to the areas of personal growth by stating: “Once the students begin to accept responsibility for their actions and learning, they begin to see possibilities that never existed before. They then begin to see how working together they can achieve more than they ever thought possible”. Herdman (1997) also provides support to the idea of personal growth through the use of “group” by stating: “observations have shown that successful programs are often determined by the intangible chemistry of relationships”. The participants then explored the idea of “group” through a backpacking trip where the students had to wrestle with what it meant to work together (Herdman, 1997). The need for this project might best be summed up by stating successful expeditions may prove to be powerful, life-changing experiences as long as you take along good judgment and common sense on every expedition which can be developed and improved through practice within the group (Cederquist, 1997).

In summary the literature reviewed displays the support for the implementation of a wilderness adventure- based component to judicial process at SUNY Cortland although there has been limited research found that specifically mentions this program. Wilderness Programs are mentioned extensively in many other facets of outdoor/adventure based education but none specifically mentioned the implementation of these facets to a University/College Judicial Process. Support for the implementation of the program was found within the realms of literature that dealt with the outcomes of an adventure based experience and within the framework that supports the structure of the program. There is also the successful example of Loyola College's "Evolution" program that already facilitates a program that involves the implementation of wilderness programming in their judicial process.

Chapter 3

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project is to develop a wilderness adventure- based component to the judicial process at SUNY Cortland that will assist students in achieving the goals and objectives of a better sense of community, mutual accountability and personal responsibility. The program will be offered to freshman and sophomores that have violated the student code of conduct through the use of drugs or alcohol and are in danger of being suspended from the college. This program utilized the activity of backpacking as the main platform to achieve the desired goals and objectives. The participants are also offered opportunities to achieve the goals and objectives through the use of nightly debriefings, journaling and reflection papers. The backpacking component of the project will be four days in length consisting of fourteen miles. While on the trip participants will also complete a “solo” experience and participate in a “shipwreck” group activity. The implementation of the program will be carried out by a staff of three that will be trained in various team building and adventure- based initiatives. The ratio of staff to participants will be roughly three to one with a group size of eight participants to stay within the minimal impact standards of the Catskill Park.

The Judicial Affairs Office of SUNY Cortland is the main participating agency and they will be responsible for the identification of participants and initial explanation of

the projects goals, objectives and activities. A relationship with the attorney that represents SUNY Cortland was also fostered through the Judicial Affairs Office. The attorneys' role is to evaluate the release form and participant waiver form to make sure that they contain liability clauses and do not place responsibility for injuries or damages resulting from injuries on the college or state of New York. When considering future implementation of this project experience and familiarity with the language, design of waiver and release forms will expedite this part of the program development.

Background of Participating Agency

The mission statement of the participating agency is to be responsible for developing and administering a Code of Student Conduct that supports the College's values, goals, and priorities. The program strives to create an environment that fosters personal integrity and promotes justice, equality, and diversity on campus. Utilizing an educational philosophy, the program informs students of their responsibilities as members of the community, involves students, faculty and staff in administering the judicial process, and assists all members of the campus community to live and learn in an environment that is orderly, peaceful, and supportive of individual growth and development (Judicial Affairs, 2007). The participating agency has a strict stance and sanctions for students with regards to alcohol and drug violations. The three strike policy that has been adopted by the agency allows for this project to be offered to students that have violated the code of conduct and are still within the parameters of the first and second violation. The three strike policy was designed by the Judicial Affairs Office with

distinct and progressive sanctions that increase in severity as a student progresses through the judicial process toward his/her third strike. A first violation carries with it a sanction of at least of one year residence hall probation, a mandatory alcohol 101 computer program and the completion of a two page reflection paper on their experience in the program. A second strike carries with it at least one year of disciplinary probation, thirty hours community service, a mandatory substance education class and in some cases counseling assessment. A third strike carries with it at least suspension from all residence halls or suspension from the college effective immediately for a minimum of one semester; deferred suspension for four months followed by two years of disciplinary probation; counseling assessment and a five page research paper on alcohol.

Target Population

The population of students will be chosen as a joint venture between the facilitator and the Judicial Affairs office of SUNY Cortland. Students found in violation of the student code of conduct through the use of alcohol or drugs may be recommended for participation in this program as an alternative to other judicial recommendations such as community services. Students found in violation will then go through several steps of referral before being fully admitted into the program. These steps consist of 1) A student in their Freshman or Sophomore year is sanctioned 2) The student is found responsible for accused actions 3) A student is then assigned to complete a developmental assessment 4) A student must be willing to admit responsibility for violation and willing to learn from their consequences 5) Upon completion of the assessment a student may either be

recommended or not to participate in the program. A group consisting of eight students will be the target number to be included in the initial group.

Procedures for Project Completion

The project will be conducted as follows:

1. Completion of a literature review to compile valuable background knowledge in the use of wilderness adventure programs at the university level and the models and theories behind them.
2. A partnership will be established between this facilitator the Judicial Affairs Office of SUNY Cortland and the Recreation Parks and Leisure Studies Department. Through this partnership participants will be chosen, logistics of the program will be worked out and alternative funding options will be explored.
3. The program is designed with the following components: 1) Establishment of a group; to gain this group the population parameters will be narrowed to have the program geared more toward freshman and sophomores that have been found responsible for violating the student code of conduct. 2) The size of the initial mix gender group will consist of eight total participants 3) The individuals that were chosen to participate in the program participated in a one- on- one interview session with the facilitator of the group to go over programmatic and individuals' goals. 4) Logistics of the trip: groups will consist of one professionally trained staff to every three participants. The staff involved in the program was trained in group facilitation, route finding and various adventure based initiatives. 5) Funding for the trip will be

inferred by the participant. If financial assistance is needed grant opportunities may be pursued.

4. The ideas behind program implementation will be designed to benefit freshman and sophomores. Staff participating in the program will be trained in various capacities of team building and adventure based initiatives. Finalizing the field locations and activities of the expedition will be based on group dynamics and time of the year. Actual undertaking of the expedition will consist of several variables such as a review of the programmatic goals, expectations and rules with participants and the possible outcomes with the staff.

Role of the Project Agency

The agency will be responsible for the identification of participants and the initial explanation of the project's goal and objectives to prospective participants. This agency also tracks the recidivism rate of the students that participate in this project. Finally this agency will assist in establishing communication with the attorney that represents SUNY Cortland.

Needs Assessment

Experiential approaches to learning such as wilderness adventure based expeditionary programs create positive, challenging and supportive environments for students to learn valuable skills needed for personal, communal and mutual growth

(Norbert, 2005). This project will be beneficial to participants by providing them with tools and experiences that will assist in the development of skills that will be necessary to achieve a better sense of community, accountability and personal responsibility. This project is designed to empower the participants by immersing them in an environment (Catskill Park) that is physically and mentally demanding and one that provides and requires instant feedback of both the positive and negative nature. Within this environment, the participants will also be participating in multiple “group” activities that will require them to interact with fellow group members to accomplish the “groups” desired goal. Berger (1997) states that individuals who attain a strong sense of community are more likely to be connected with the larger social and support groups that exist in that community. By working together and achieving different goals the individual participants will become more comfortable with each other and realize the benefits of a community.

Site Assessment/Site Development

The site for the expedition portion of the project is located in the Catskill Park of New York. This site was chosen based upon the proximity to SUNY Cortland, the wilderness like atmosphere the Catskill Park possesses and the likelihood of favorable weather when compared to other possible locations throughout New York. The specific route that the expedition undertook was based upon the participants’ abilities and experiences as they pertained to the activity of backpacking and time spent in a wilderness like environment. Specific criteria were used in the identification of a site for

the “solo” experience. The site was chosen based upon it’s proximity to water, the availability of easily traversed terrain to allow participants to spread out and separate from other group members and allow the facilitator the ability to quickly and easily check in with participants. Finally the site was chosen based upon it’s proximity to a lean-to to allow for a “rendezvous” point for the group to reconvene after their experience is finished.

Funding Sources

The funding for the project will be incurred by the participants as part of the criteria that was established by the facilitator and the Judicial Affairs Office for participation in the project. Payment for a sanctioned activity is not standard operating procedure for the Judicial Affairs Office; but in this circumstance payment for participation was deemed prudent on the basis of students being held accountable for their actions and off set of the cost.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the project was achieved through the use of reflection papers and journaling. The use of journaling on a daily basis provided the participants the ability to track their progress on personal and programmatic goals and provided them with a basis to write their reflection papers which are the second piece of the evaluation process. The reflection papers provide the participants with the opportunity to assess their overall

experience. With the use of the journals that they kept, participants were able to reflect back upon how they achieved their personal as well as the programmatic goals (better sense of community, mutual accountability and personal responsibility) that were established in the pre-trip meeting. The final part of the evaluation process is a “check-in” with the participants a month after the completion of the expedition to see if the experience has allow for any transference of the programmatic goals back into their everyday life as a college student.

The overall evaluation process will focus on the achievement of personal and programmatic goals by the participants. The evaluation process will also focus on whether or not participants achieve some transference of skills and lessons learned on the expedition back into their everyday college life. The evaluation process will be completed by both the lead facilitator and the judicial affairs office. A subsequent follow-up evaluation will also be completed by the lead facilitator one month after participants have completed the expedition and reflection papers.

The goal of this project it to develop a wilderness adventure- based expeditionary component to the judicial process at SUNY Cortland that will assist students in achieving the programmatic goals and objectives of a increased sense of community, mutual accountability and personal responsibility. After reviewing the methods and procedures that have been described in the above sections and are needed to institute this project a solid framework and program design has been laid out that should assist in the creation and success of this project.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to develop a wilderness adventure –based program component to be offered as an alternative to traditional means of discipline for students that have violated the student code of conduct at SUNY Cortland through the use of drugs or alcohol. The goal is for this program to become an effective part of the judicial process at SUNY Cortland that will assist students in achieving three programmatic goals: (1) a better sense of community; (2) accountability to themselves and the greater community and; (3) personal responsibility.

Creation of the Project

The creation of this project started with a review of the literature that is relative to wilderness adventure-based programming. The relative literature was divided into five categories and expanded upon. Those five categories are as follows: 1) Student Development 2) Community Development 3) Expedition and Development and Implementation 4) Outcomes that provide some rationale for the utilization of a wilderness adventure based program to assist at risk students 5) The use of reflection papers and journaling as evaluation tools.

After reviewing the literature within these five aspects much support was found to support the creation of a wilderness adventure-based expeditionary component within the judicial affairs office SUNY Cortland. The literature within the realms of student development and community development highlighted the benefits that an “alternative” program could have on student populations specifically when the program focused on individual and motivation feedback. That focus on individual and motivational feedback was also highlighted within the realm of literature based on the use of reflection papers and journaling as evaluation tools. Overall the review of literature demonstrated a need for the implementation and design of an “alternative” program for at- risk students that focuses on interaction of the individual and the community plus the benefits that each have to offer the other.

The literature was then utilized in the establishment of a proposal that provided the framework, needs and benefits of this project to the participants and the larger SUNY Cortland community. The completed proposal, waiver and release forms were then presented to the Judicial Affairs Office (JAO), Vice President of Student Affairs and the attorneys that represent SUNY Cortland for review and consideration.

After receiving approval the facilitator and the JAO reviewed the criteria for eligibility into the program. Three aspects that made up the criteria are as follows: 1) Students must be in their freshman or sophomore year at SUNY Cortland 2) Student may not have exceeded their second strike in the three strike policy laid out by the JAO 3) Students must have violated the drug or alcohol policy of the student code of conduct. The interviewing of potential participants was the responsibility of the director and assistant director of the Judicial Affairs Office. In the interviews potential participants

(students) were presented with the opportunity to participate in this program in lieu of the traditional means of discipline such as community service. If the students chose to participate they were also informed of the programmatic goals of the project, trip itinerary, and cost that they would incur.

Once students have decided that they would like to participate in the project their next step is to setup a one on one meeting with the facilitator of the expedition. In this meeting the facilitator and the participant will discuss four aspects of the experience. Those four aspects are 1) explanation of the programmatic goals and how they will be implemented into the framework of the expedition 2) The participant will establish reasonably attainable personal goals with the assistance of the facilitator 3) The facilitator will also discuss with the participant the payment that is required to cover such expenses as food and fuel. 4) A list of necessary equipment for the expedition will be distributed and explained to the participant by the facilitator (see appendix # Equipment List). After the completion of this one on one meeting with the facilitator the participant (student) will be informed of the date for the mandatory pre-trip meeting (two days prior to the departure date of the expedition) and given the instructions to maintain contact with the facilitator so that together they can spot and solve potential issues that may arise.

Once completing the one on one interview with the participants the facilitators' next task will be to design a trip plan (see appendix # Trip Plan) that is best suited to the needs and abilities of the participants. In this case a route in the Catskill Park was deemed to be the best fit. This location was decided upon because it provided the wilderness-like environment best suited to facilitate the multiple activities and experiences of the trip plan; needed to accomplish both the programmatic (an increase sense of community,

accountability and personal responsibility) and personal goals of the project and the participants. The multiple activities and experiences of the trip plan needed to accomplish programmatic and personal goals are as follows 1) backpacking and the mental and physical challenges it provides 2) SOLO experience 3) Use of “group” activities such as chore and cook groups 4) debriefings which would occur in a group setting (nightly) as well as individually (journaling).

The pre-trip meeting is the next aspect that the facilitator needs to accomplish. This meeting should occur at least two days before the anticipated departure date of the expedition. This provides the facilitator and the participants with the opportunity to trouble shoot any issues that may arise concerning the multiple aspects of the trip. The meeting will consist of the participants (maximum of eight) and the necessary number of facilitators that will be needed to achieve the established 3 (participants) to 1 (facilitator) ratio set aside in the procedures for this project. The agenda of the meeting will consist of another review of the four aspects covered in the one on one meeting that was held prior to the pre-trip meeting and an overview of eight different topics pertaining to the expedition. Those topics include: 1) Introductions and ice breaker activities 2) Review of the trip plan 3) Question and Answer session 4) Double checking of equipment 5) Division of food and necessary supplies 6) Proper packing techniques of backpacks 7) Discussion of Leave No Trace (LNT) principles 8) Safety briefing covering: travel in the vans to and from destination, proper use and storage of stoves, inclement weather, lost group member and finally the multiple and proper uses for fire. Upon completion of the pre-trip meeting the facilitator should allow themselves some time to answer any

additional questions that the participants might have, review the questions that were asked during the meeting and process the information that was shared within the group.

The undertaking of the expedition will be the next task for the facilitator to complete. For this expedition a four day route that circumnavigates and summits Hunter Mountain in the Catskill Park was chosen. The expedition will take place over spring break to maximize the amount of time that can be spent in the field and minimize the amount of time that participants (students) will be missing class. A break down of the daily trip itinerary is as follows:

Day 1

- 7:30 AM: Meet at Park Center: Load vans and discuss travel plans
- 8:30 AM: Travel to the Catskill Park (built in time for rest stops)
- 12:00 PM: Arrive at trailhead: Daily Briefing lunch and discussion of the day's plan i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, interesting sights along the trail, anticipated time till our next break (journal writing) and safety briefing
- 1:30 PM: Depart trailhead (distance to be determined)
- 5:00 PM: Arrive at the campsite (begin setup of the site)
- 6:00 PM: Reconvene as a group (discuss chore groups and begin preparation of the meal)
- 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Dinner and cleanup
- 8:00 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined).

Day 2

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of the days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, SOLO experience locations)
- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: SOLO experience: participants will be given designated locations where they will spend the next six hours in personal reflection utilizing this time how they see fit within guidelines (they will be visited once by a trip leader during the experience)
- 5:00 PM: Reconvene as a group at our campsite: debriefing the SOLO experience
- 6:00 PM -7:00 PM: Dinner and cleanup
- 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM Group activities (To be determined)
- 8:15 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined)

Day 3

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of the days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, introduction student leaders (students that will lead the group through the days with supervision from the trip leaders), anticipated time till our next break.

- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Travel along trail (includes time for lunch, journaling and rest breaks)
- 4:15 PM - 4:45 PM: Arrive at the campsite (begin setup and meal prep)
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM: Meal prep, dinner and cleanup
- 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM: Personal time (journaling, ideas for post trip reflection paper)
- 7:00 – 8:00 PM: Group activities (To be determined)
- 8:15 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined)

Day 4

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail)
- 10:00 AM -12:00 PM: Travel trail back to vans
- 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Load vans and eat lunch
- 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM: Travel back to Cortland
- 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM: Unpack vans clean and store gear
- 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM: Debriefing

The main activities of the expedition (backpacking, SOLO, group activities) were chosen for the specific purpose of emersion (learning by doing); by immersing the participants in as many environments as possible that demonstrate the benefits of a

community and the need to accomplish your personal goals the participants on the expedition will begin to see the purpose of each activity individually but more importantly they will begin to see the need to master both aspects in equal parts to gain maximum benefits. The expectations for each individual at the campsite or on the trail will be defined by what their job is at that moment. While traveling on the trail if a participant has been chosen as the “leader of the day” than he or she is responsible for assisting the facilitators in making sure that the campsite is clean before departing, the group knows and understands the topography of the trail ahead, this individual will also be either the “lead” or “sweep” position in line for the purpose of group management. At the campsite individual expectations will be defined according to the group they have assigned themselves. Participants will either be responsible for the setup of the campsite or the cooking of food; after the assigned jobs have been accomplished each participant will have personal time to utilize as they see fit.

Immediately following the completion of the expedition and the successful cleanup and reissuing of gear the facilitators’ next task is to lead the group through a final debriefing. This activity is necessary to allow for the sharing of experiences and ideas amongst participants and facilitators but most importantly this activity provides closure to the experience for all of those involved. This debriefing will consist of an open question and answer session over seen by the lead facilitator. The questions that will be asked were chosen to spur discussion about the accomplishment of goals, growth and development as individuals as well as in a group setting. The questions that will be used in the group debrief session are as follows: 1) How did you succeed in the accomplishment of your personal goals as well as the programmatic goals? 2) A simple

solution is often the best solution to a problem; any examples for the trip? 3) What was your biggest challenge on the trip? How did you conquer that challenge? 4) We encouraged growth and leadership within each other on this trip; how did you grow? How will you transfer that growth back to your everyday life? 5) Its Okay to have fun; what did you have the most fun doing? 6) Parting Shots (provide an opportunity for the individuals in the group to say whatever they want to one another).

After the completion of the group debriefing the participants from the expedition will have one week to complete a reflection paper. The reflection paper will be submitted to both the lead facilitator and the Judicial Affairs Office of SUNY Cortland.

These papers will then be reviewed by the lead facilitator to determine if the participants have achieved the programmatic goals of the project. This will be done by reviewing each individual paper and looking for examples of where and when the participants felt that they achieved or experienced a sense of community, mutual accountability or personal responsibility.

One month after the reflection papers are submitted the lead facilitator is responsible for checking in with the Judicial Affairs Office to see if there have been any incidents of recidivism amongst the participants of the project. It will also be the responsibility of the lead facilitator to have another one on one session with each participant to see if any transference has occurred from the lessons learned and goals accomplished on the expedition back into their everyday lives.

In conclusion, the program design that has been discussed in the above sections provides the foundation for this project to become an effective and positive part of the judicial process. The potential outcomes from the project could also assist in providing a

solid platform that would allow this project to become an important addition to the judicial process at SUNY Cortland. Some sample outcomes that could provide insight are 1) how participants achieved personal growth/development and goal achievement on the expedition 2) the debriefing sessions could also provide some valuable outcomes from the participants point of view as it pertains to the effectiveness of the program and provide suggestions toward the improvement of the overall program or how it is facilitated. Through the challenges, risks and growth that the participants in this project will be exposed to, they will have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their own personal situation as well as how and where they fit into the greater community of SUNY Cortland.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Procedures

This project consists of many aspects that fall under the umbrella of procedures; the first of those aspects pertain to the activities that will be undertaken in the project. There are six activities that will take place during the expedition portion of the project. The six activities are as follows: 1) backpacking 2) SOLO experience 3) various group activities such as shipwreck 4) nightly debriefings 5) journaling 6) reflection papers. All of the activities have designated purposes for their inclusion into the project that have been discussed in previous chapters. The second aspect pertains to the participating agency of the project which in this case is the Judicial Affairs Office at SUNY Cortland. The agency will be responsible for the identification of participants and the initial explanation of the project's goal and objectives to prospective participants. This agency also tracks the recidivism rate of the students that participate in this project. Finally this agency will assist in establishing communication with the attorney that represents SUNY Cortland. The third aspect pertains to the target population which for this project is freshmen and sophomores that have violated the student code of conduct at SUNY Cortland through the use of alcohol or drugs. These students may also not have exceeded

their second strike in the three strike policy established by the Judicial Affairs Office.

The fourth aspect is the procedures used to complete the project; a brief description of that procedure is as follows: 1) a review of literature pertinent and valuable background knowledge pertaining to wilderness adventure-based programs, communities, student development and the use of journals and reflection papers as evaluation tools 2) establish a partnership with the Judicial Affairs Office for the purpose of identifying participants and creating participation criteria 3) establish of a group consisting of eight students who fit the participation requirements 4) a one on one meeting will take place involving the lead facilitator and the student participant to review programmatic goals and establish personal goals 5) project is designed to benefit freshman and sophomores and to have a three to one ratio of participant to staff 6) staff participating on the expedition will all have experience in various adventure-based activities and group facilitation 7) expedition will take place in the Catskill Park consisting of a four day backpacking experience that will circumnavigate and summit Hunter mountain. The fifth aspect highlights the funding of the project; this project will be funded by the participants as a way to hold them accountable for their actions and to offset cost. The procedure of having participants incur the cost of the trip is in line with the precedent established by the Judicial Affairs Office. The sixth and final aspect pertains to the evaluation plan of the project; this project will utilize journaling and reflection papers as their main evaluation tools. The reflection papers will be reviewed by the lead facilitator and the Judicial Affairs Office for the purpose of completion of the sanctioned activity and to evaluate how participants achieved the programmatic goals of the project.

Project Outcome

Unfortunately this project was not implemented so only projected outcomes can be offered. The first of which is that the use of “group” activities will increase participants sense of community. Poplin (1997) states that group solidarity is an essential part in the defining of a community and its member’s sense of belonging to that community. Berger (1997) states the individuals who attained a strong sense of community are more likely to be connected with the larger social and support groups that exist in the community. The second outcome is that participants will gain an increased sense of accountability and personal responsibility through the mental and physical challenges of backpacking. Norbert (2005) states that experiential approaches to learning, such as wilderness adventure based expeditionary programs, create a positive, challenging, and supportive environment for students. This environment assists participants with attaining the increased sense of accountability and personal responsibility that is needed for personal, communal and mutual growth.

Conclusions

Based upon the proposed outcomes and within the limitations of this project specific activities were chosen that would accomplish the programmatic goals of the project and the personal goals of the participants. The proposed outcomes of the project are as follows: 1) participants will achieve an increased sense of community through the use of “group” activities 2) participants will achieve an increased sense of personal

responsibility and accountability through the mental and physical challenges that the activity of backpacking present 3) SOLO experience will be cited by the participants as the most beneficial experience in helping them accomplish their personal goals.

The specific activities that were chosen were done with programmatic and personal goals in mind. The activities and why they were chosen are as follows: 1) SOLO experience was chosen because it places the participant in an environment of reflection and solitude. It is in this solitude and reflective state that the participant can reflect upon what negative activities placed them in their current situation and devise a plan through lesson learned that will help them in achieving the personal goals that they established for themselves during the pre-trip meeting 2) “group “ activities such as talent shows, shipwreck, cook groups and chore groups were chosen to allow individual group members to become comfortable and familiar with each other but also to allow participants to experience first hand the benefits and support that community living can provide 3) backpacking was chosen for the physically and mentally challenging positions that it places participants. It is through the participation in one of these physical or mental challenges that the individuals involved will learn lesson that will help them to achieve an increase sense of accountability and personal responsibility 4) debriefings were chosen to assist the participants in achieving transference of the lessons that they learn on the expedition back into their everyday life.

Discussion and Implications

This project has the potential to benefit many participants and it is for that reason this discussion needs to occur. Two questions come to mind when discussing the potential implications of this project. 1) The implementation of this project will provide what benefits to the primary stakeholders? 2) What benefits will this project provide to the Judicial Affairs Office (JAO) of SUNY Cortland? The answer to these questions comes down to experience, empowerment and need. Utilizing the judicial stats provided monthly by SUNY Cortland JAO as an example, alcohol and drug related violations are routinely at or near the top of the list of violations to the student code of conduct. This fact overall demonstrates 1) the student population is abusing alcohol and drugs 2) there is a demonstrated need for an alternative program to supplement the traditional means of discipline that are offered to students that violate the drug or alcohol policy of the student code of conduct.

This project will benefit the primary stakeholders through its design and framework. The project is designed to involve and educate participants through the equal usage of physical and mental challenges with the achieved outcome being that they gain a more “holistic” first hand experience. In stark contrast, the more traditional model experienced by students at SUNY Cortland focuses more on the cognitive/educational aspects and less on direct physical involvement. The difference in the approaches between these two programs serves as justification for the use of an alternative method (this project) within the judicial process. The process of separating the physical and

mental aspects seems to be the preferred means of discipline in the college judicial process (alcohol 101 video, reflection paper).

By empowering students to take an active role in as many aspects of this project as possible it is believed that they will also learn the importance of taking an active role in all aspect of their lives thusly reinforcing the programmatic goals of personal responsibility, mutual accountability and community living.

This project will also benefit the Judicial Affairs Office of SUNY Cortland by providing it with a functional alternative to the traditional means of discipline that are already implemented.

Recommendations

For the implementation of the project it is this author's belief that the project would be best served as becoming a permanent fixture of the judicial process at SUNY Cortland. By focusing more on personal, motivational feedback and active involvement in a community this project offers a unique opportunity for students/participants to be challenged, educated and actively involved. This project could serve as an effective and more engaging alternative to the traditional three strike policy which typically includes elements such as an Alcohol 101 movie, reduction of privileges and a meeting with a counselor.

In conclusion this project overall provides a very unique and exciting opportunity for the individuals that choose to participate. Those unique and exciting opportunities manifest themselves through the use of adventure programming in a wilderness

environment. This provides the participants with new challenges that they are forced to face head on with the assistance of fellow group members and the facilitators. By empowering the students/participants to take these new challenges head on they are also learning and attaining a new set of skills that will not only assist them in achieving a greater sense of community, accountability and personal responsibility but will also assist them in their everyday life. Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie (2007) state that social support and self esteem are important resources for adolescents undergoing their transition to a university or college setting. The participants in this project will also benefit from the establishment of a new and positive “support group” that will assist them with perhaps the most difficult aspects of the project: 1) achieving transference of the ideas and skills learned on the expedition into their everyday lives and 2) not slipping back into the pattern of negative behavior that made their participation in this project necessary in the first place.

The literature that was reviewed has demonstrated strong benefits that could be attained by participants with the inclusion of this project into a judicial process on a college campus. After reviewing the college alcohol programs evaluations from 1984-1999 there is an indication that most of the traditional methods of prevention and information dissemination directed toward students did not demonstrate any effect on the use of alcohol or alcohol related negative consequences (Oswalt, Shutt, English, & Little, 2007). This project distinguishes itself from “typical drug and alcohol programs” by including mental and physical challenges plus personalized and motivational feedback. This project was also designed to relate to participants on an individual basis as well as

demonstrate to the participants that they are part of something bigger i.e. a group or community.

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Appendix #1

TRIP PLAN

Day 1

- 7:30 AM: Meet at Park Center: Load vans and discuss travel plans
- 8:30 AM: Travel to the Catskill Park (built in time for rest stops)
- 12:00 PM: Arrive at trailhead: Daily Briefing lunch and discussion of the day's plan i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, interesting sights along the trail, anticipated time till our next break (journal writing) and safety briefing
- 1:30 PM: Depart trailhead (distance to be determined)
- 5:00 PM: Arrive at the campsite (begin setup of the site)
- 6:00 PM: Reconvene as a group (discuss chore groups and begin preparation of the meal)
- 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Dinner and cleanup
- 8:00 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined).

Day 2

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of the days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, SOLO experience locations
- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: SOLO experience: participants will be given designated locations where they will spend the next six hours in personal reflection

utilizing this time how they see fit within guidelines (they will be visited once by a trip leader during the experience)

- 5:00 PM: Reconvene as a group at our campsite: debriefing the SOLO experience
- 6:00 PM -7:00 PM: Dinner and cleanup
- 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM Group activities (To be determined)
- 8:15 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined)

Day 3

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of the days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail, introduction student leaders (students that will lead the group through the days with supervision from the trip leaders), anticipated time till our next break.
- 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Travel along trail (includes time for lunch, journaling and rest breaks)
- 4:15 PM - 4:45 PM: Arrive at the campsite (begin setup and meal prep)
- 5:00 - 6:30 PM: Meal prep, dinner and cleanup
- 6:30 PM – 7:00 PM: Personal time (journaling, ideas for post trip reflection paper)
- 7:00 – 8:00 PM: Group activities (To be determined)
- 8:15 PM: Nightly debriefing and wrap up (topic to be determined)

Day 4

- 7:30 AM – 8:00AM: Wakeup and personal time
- 8:15 AM – 9:15 AM: Meal prep and breakfast
- 9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Daily briefing (discussion of days plans i.e. distance to travel, topography of the trail)
- 10:00 AM -12:00 PM: Travel trail back to vans
- 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Load vans and eat lunch
- 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM: Travel back to Cortland
- 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM: Unpack vans clean and store gear
- 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM: Debriefing

Appendix 2

LIST OF EQUIPMENT

<u>List of Equipment</u>	(Try to avoid bringing cotton materials)	<u>Prices</u>
1 warm winter hat.....	N/A	participant should own
2 pairs of hiking socks (wool or synthetic blends).....	\$20	at (EMS for 2 pack of socks)
3 pairs of undergarments (underwear and t-shirts).....	N/A	Participant should own
1 pair of synthetic base-layer (polypropylene, under armor)...	\$30	thermal polypropylene shirt and pants (Wal-Mart)
1 pair of winter gloves.....	N/A	Participant should own
2 fleeces or wool sweaters.....		
2 pairs of pants (preferably synthetic material; no jeans).....		
1 pair of boots.....	various prices	from \$70-200
1 pair of camp shoes (sneakers).....	N/A	participants should own
1 backpack (preferably at least 3200 cu. Inches).....	Free rental	EMS (Ithaca)
1 sleeping bag (at least rated for 15 degrees).....	Free rental	EMS (Ithaca)
1 sleeping pad.....	Free rental	EMS (Ithaca)
1 rain coat and warm jacket.....	N/A	Participant should own
2 water bottles.....	Nalgene bottle	\$6-8 (EMS)
Van Rental (280 miles).....	\$ 12	per participant (with 8 participants)
Food.....	\$ 20	per participant

- Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS) has offered free rentals of sleeping bags, backpacks and sleeping pads for anyone participating in the project.
- EMS has also offered 30% off any gear that is needed to participate in the project
- Price of van and food may increase depending on the number of participants.
- Pants may be sweatpants or fleece if cover by snow or rain pants.
- Rec. Department also has some gear available for participants to use (please have participants contact me for information).

Appendix 4

PARTICIPANT WAIVER OF LIABILITY/RELEASE FORM MASTERS PROJECT EXPEDITION

Name _____ C# _____

As a participant in this expedition and its various activities, I will assume the primary responsibility for my safety. I recognize that my safety and the safety of others may be jeopardized as a result of unforeseen circumstances or accidental actions of my self or others. I hereby agree and understand to do my best to avoid and prevent accidents or illness to myself and others. I also recognize that if injuries or illness should occur to my self or others I will be obligated to assist in aid, treatment, rescue, and/or recovery.

I will not hold SUNY Cortland, the State University, the State of New York, my trip leaders, or instructors responsible for risks, hazards, or actions beyond their control.

The equipment and supplies that I will be using are under my direct control. I will be responsible for the care and return of all borrowed or rented equipment and supplies.

I am physically ready and adequately prepared to participate in the activity described below. I have no physical or emotional conditions which could restrict my participation.

I have informed the instructors and group leaders of any medical or physical conditions which may influence or detract from my performance during the experience.

This experience will take place in a wilderness like environment; the experience will involve backpacking and team building activities in a remote wilderness- like area while carrying everything that you will need for the experience with you in your backpack. The weather conditions and topography (terrain) of the area be challenging. Participants will be expected to adapt and cope with challenging situations which they will be prepared for as they change and new obstacles become apparent.

Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Emergency Contact _____

