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Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices; Methods for Making Challenging Outdoor Experiences More Inclusive

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WINTER TRAVEL FOR COLD WEATHER NOVICES:

METHODS FOR MAKING CHALLENGING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES MORE INCLUSIVE

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Abstract

Cold Weather for Winter Novices is a weeklong experiential education trip developed for students, between the ages of 17 and 21, from the Armand Hammer United World College of the American West (UWC-USA), an international boarding school in Montezuma, New Mexico. This trip is an opportunity to examine multicultural perspectives of adventure and wilderness. Specifically, the research question focuses on if the concepts of adventure and wilderness present inherent hurdles for diverse populations.

This program was developed trough a detailed literature review and needs assessment that involved both outdoor education professionals and potential students. The literature review looked at the physiological and educational benefits of spending time in nature and the unique impact of adventurous outdoor experiences. Additionally, best practices and the challenges faced by outdoor education organizations who are working toward increasing diversity was examined. Five professionals already engaged in this line of work were interviewed for this project. Also, input was used from potential student participants, who represented six different countries. The curriculum and trip vision was particularly shaped taking into account the students prior wilderness experiences and interests. The research methodology was qualitative and included on-line surveys for the students and interviews for the professionals.

This project yielded several notable conclusions. Outdoor education organization must immediately begin or continue work on appealing to diverse audiences. Many preexisting notions of wilderness and numerous common practices serve as hurdles to expanding the demographics of outdoor users. Yet, the importance of taking these steps cannot be diminished, given the extensive research that shows the benefits for all demographics of any time spent in the outdoors.

Introduction

For those uninitiated, many outdoor activities have cultural, financial, and occasionally experiential hurdles that can serve as barriers to entry. Numerous terms are bandied about when referring to outdoor activities, such as outdoor, adventure, wilderness, or experiential education. These experiences may include backpacking, hiking, cross-country skiing, climbing, and fishing. A key feature of this type of recreation is self-propelled travel, or non-motorized travel. Another aspect would be the lack of modern conveniences such as showers, cell phone signals, and electricity. There are countless reasons why western society in general values the idea of roughing it every once in a while and those will be explored late in this paper. Yet access to these experiences is not equal amongst different socio economic or ethnic group, genders, and of course physical abilities. The cultural hurdles come from the dominant users of the outdoors either consciously or unconsciously, given their preconceived notions of how people should experience the outdoors. Additionally, some hurdles may even come from communities for those groups of people who are typically underrepresented in the outdoors. "Backpacking is a "white" thing", is a common refrain that can influence who considers outdoor activities. This issue is exacerbated by financial hurdles that typically fall along ethnic lines. Finally, most outdoor activities require a scaffolded set of experiences that help build skills that allow users to advance to different challenges. And once again, the predominate users have easier access to these opportunities.

Yet, there are numerous arguments for expanding access and use of the outdoors for populations typically underrepresented in outdoor recreation. For both health and psychological reasons, the outdoors and time spent in nature have shown to offer significant benefits. Researchers at the University of Michigan who studied the impact of nature on people found that

participants' memory performance increased after spending just one hour in nature (Louv, 2012). Additionally, a study in England that followed 20,000 people over a two-year period found that those who spent around two hours per week outside reported better health and an increase in their sense of well being than those who did not (Sheikh, 2019).

Outdoor experiences can also be a catalyst for character development. For most people who do not spend the majority of their time working and/or living outside, the outdoors provides a unique experience that can be cultivated for learning. For instance, Dewey argued that the methodological use of experience (Dewey, 1959; Warren, 2005) helps to illuminate the social structures of society and one's own place in that environment, and points to conditions that could bring about social transformation.

Historically, there has been a perceived link between outdoor recreation and conservation. Many outdoor organizations adhere to a philosophy often attributed to Jacques Cousteau, which states, "you can't save what you don't love, and you can't love what you don't know" (Brianna, 2016). It is anticipated that global climate change will present challenges for all of humanity. Therefore, it is critical to provide transformational experiences in the outdoors to inspire the next generation of environmentally minded citizens to take drastic steps to improve the projected environmental conditions that the world may experience.

Despite the apparent obvious benefits of spending time in the outdoors, there is not a universally shared sense of belonging in nature for all people. Many people who recreate in the outdoors, specifically in wilderness areas, maintain a view that nature is a place that should not be defined by the human experience and should simultaneously exist in an almost timeless vacuum. Cronon (1995) writes that, "in virtually all of its manifestations, wilderness represents a flight from history. Seen as the original garden, it is a place outside of time, from which human

beings had to be ejected before the fallen world of history could properly begin" (p. 78). Following this logic, someone's experience in nature should be unaffected by race, class, gender, or sexual orientation (i.e. the human experience). Yet, troubling as it may seem for the average outdoor enthusiast, this sanitized and fantastical view of nature is one of the reasons that wilderness has often been characterized as a "white" place.

Therefore, one of the first steps in increasing the diversity of people who spend time outdoors is to examine the characteristics of wilderness and outdoor education as a traditionally white place and, more importantly, highlight the direct experiences of people who are typically underrepresented in the outdoors to learn how they define their own experiences in contrast to the dominant narrative. The next step is examine best practices through the experiences of outdoor education providers who are on the forefront of working with diverse populations.

The Wilderness Program, a component of the Experiential Education department at the Armand Hammer United World College of the American West (UWC-USA), is an ideal place to examine cutting-edge outdoor education programming for international and diverse populations. UWC-USA is a two-year International Baccalaureate residential boarding school located in Montezuma, New Mexico. UWC-USA is one of 16 UWC schools around the world, and its' mission is to "make education a force to unite people, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future" (UWC-USA, 2018). The UWC-USA campus educates 240 students from over 80 countries and about 80 percent are on some form of financial aid. The Wilderness Program offers numerous courses throughout the year, including backpacking, snowshoeing, climbing, wilderness medicine, and day hikes. The program has about 1800 program days in the wilderness each year. Serving as the Co-Director of the Wilderness program, I have steered and shaped the program over the last five years to maximize student outcomes, and we routinely hear

from students that their experiences through this program are among their most valued during their time at UWC-USA. Some of our success can be attributed to our long tenure in the field of outdoor education. For the last 18 years I have both worked in the field and in administrative roles using various courses including backpacking, sea kayaking, and winter camping to provide transformational experiences for countless students. These past experiences helped shape the wilderness program at UWC-USA. Through backpacking and climbing experiences, students learn leadership and communication skills and develop an appreciation of nature. The longest trip that the Wilderness Program offers is a 14-day backpacking trip, with an average of 40 students participating each year. While that experience offers a unique set of perceived challenges, partially due to its length, it takes place in June and therefore, weather does not present an existential threat. For this capstone project, I developed a new weeklong course titled, "Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices." that can take place during UWC-USA's spring break trips program. This trip will be an unique opportunity to look at both the actual and perceived barriers for youth interested in pursuing outdoor recreation experiences in an extremely harsh environment: the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range in late winter. The weeklong program will serve several purposes. It will be an opportunity to examine best practices when providing an outdoor experience for diverse populations that have little or no experience in that outdoor discipline. Additionally, it is an opportunity to learn how those students experience this foreign element though interviews and self-assessment. The design and curriculum of this weeklong trip was informed by a detailed literature review, interviews with other outfitters offering similar experiences, and by input from potential student participants.

The inspiration for this trip was derived from my passion for backcountry skiing and winter camping and thinking about the building blocks required for someone to progress into

those activities. Also, I was motivated by the perceived audacity at spending a week traveling and camping in the snow. I hope that the development of this experience helps inspire the participants of this trip to dream big and consider seemingly outlandish wilderness experiences in the future.

Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices is designed for future Project Weeks at UWC-USA. Project Week is an experiential education program based partially on some unique characteristics of UWC-USA. As most of the students are not from the United States and the school is remotely located, it is not possible to have a traditional school break with campus closure. Therefore, the school offers between 10 and 15 different trips, with themes such as intensive dance training, wilderness experiences, and border ethnographies. Most of the trips are free of charge for the students and thus operate on very tight budgets.

The setting for this course is the Rio Grand National Forest that lies just north of the border between New Mexico and Colorado. With average elevations of 10,000 feet, a cold snowy winter environment will likely be present, even in late March. The group will be comprised of 10 to 2 students. In addition to a full overview of winter travel skills, including extensive self-care and expedition behavior, the curriculum includes an introduction to avalanche awareness (beacon use, rescue, and snow science). Reflection is also a key aspect of this course. Given the harsh environment and the aggressive risk management that will need to take place to ensure safety, this course will offer the opportunity for students to reflect on their reaction to adventure. Through journaling and facilitated discussions, the trip leaders will support the students' transference of this experience. An ideal outdoor education experience should have "powerful and direct impacts on the lived experience of participants" (Rose, 2012, p. 151). The national and regional diversity of the students from UWC-USA who will participate on this trip

present an opportunity for everyone involved to learn multiple perspectives on adventure and how different individuals experience nature and challenges in harsh environments.

Theoretical Framework

Trips such as these have inherent value, as they are opportunities for students to fully experience their lives on planet earth, utilizing their physical abilities, emotional reactions, and rational thought processes through important decision-making. At the same time, it can be argued that this trip would contribute to their development as human beings. Specifically, Arnett's (2007) theory of emerging adulthood was used as a framework to examine if these students were accelerating out of adolescence through this one peak experience. Arnett coined the term emerging adulthood, which typically occurs between 18 to 25 years of age, as a contrast to both adolescence and the more traditional understanding of adulthood; which is considered to begin at 18 years of age. Students are grappling internally with how they feel, their identity, and how others view them during adolescence, while those in emerging adulthood look outward beyond their immediate community and begin to consider their influence on the world. According to Arnett (2004), the characteristics of emerging adulthood are exploration of identity, a sense of instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and sensing possibilities.

This project focused on the characteristics of the age of possibilities (Arnett, 2004) and self-esteem (Arnett, 2007). The age of possibilities signifies that a young person is cognizant that their future may unfold in a presently unknown direction. While this uncertainty may bring about fear, it simultaneously yields excitement and inspiration at the sheer possibilities of life. As the students on this course had little or no experience in harsh winter environments, the connection between Arnett's (2004) theory and this project provided an experience of transformation from inability to competence in a unknown environment, thus highlighting

possibilities and increases in their self-esteem. According to Arnett (2007), as youth achieve significant accomplishments, their self-doubt decreases and self-esteem rises. This theoretical framework was used to help guide the interview questions, the group discussion, the reflective questions, and the final survey.

Literature Review

Rationale

There is a lot of research that has highlighted how the outdoors is beneficial for maintaining and even improving quality of life. Yet there are critics who would point to some underlying issues in the dominant narrative of outdoor education and the concept of wilderness in general. Therefore, it is vital to examine these critiques, highlight the barriers to the outdoors for certain demographics, and examine the notion of decolonizing the outdoors, especially when considering working with diverse populations. Moving beyond the traditional understanding of wilderness, it is also helpful to look at other perspectives, particularly multicultural and global views of the outdoors.

The following topics are addressed to further situate this project: The physiological benefits of nature and importance in relation to character building, the barriers for certain demographics to experience the outdoors, and the best practices employed by progressive outdoor education organizations in successfully working with diverse populations.

The physiological benefits of nature and importance in relation to character building

In the last 50 years, numerous researchers and writers have documented the value of time spent in nature. According to Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1989), who were doing research as far back as the 1970s, nature both calms and focuses the mind and even allows participants to detect patterns that would otherwise be missed (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Louv, 2012). There has

also been recent research on human physiology and the effect of time spent in nature. Bratman (2012), a graduate student at Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources at Stanford University, looked at various research studies that have been done in this field. Particularly, one study was conducted in Japan analyzing the impact on salivary cortisol concentration, diastolic blood pressure, and pulse rate (all a factor in the sensation of stress) and comparing the impact of spending just 15 minutes in a forest versus city settings. Not surprisingly, the participants' stress level was statistically lowered in the forest setting (Ottosoon and Grahn, 2008).

Additionally, outdoor adventure education is valuable for what it offers in terms of moral development and knowledge acquisition that can be directly linked to the ideal characteristics of a thriving democracy (Warren, 2005). This sentiment is echoed by Rose and Paisley (2012), who argue that "unfamiliar environmental settings enable participants to gain different perspectives on more familiar everyday environments" (p. 146). In essence these outdoor experiences provide the necessary space and contrast to give participants a Meta view of their regular life. Or, taking a more somewhat more critical view, Brown and Beams (297) note that adventurous experiences in the outdoors are a salve to the banalities of everyday life and allow participants to "escape from the anxieties of modern existence" (p. 297).

Cuthbertson, Heine, and Whitson (1997) studied nomadic and mobile indigenous groups, and found that they developed a holistic sense of place and saw the interconnectedness of numerous environments. In their studies, they found that when traveling through foreign and difficult environments, people experience a sense of freedom and lightness (Cuthbertson, Heine, & Whitson, 1997; Stacker, Potter, & Irwin, 2017). Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) found that skilled white-water paddlers increased the number of different rivers they could navigate due to

their abilities. They simultaneously gained a deep level of respect for the areas they accessed, as it was matched with an enormous level of effort and dedication (Bricker & Kerstetter; Mullins, 2014).

Spending extended periods of time in the outdoors also allows users to tap into a national mythology of wilderness and therefore experience something that is bigger than themselves. In the United States there is a mystique about these places where users can experience the sublime and get a taste of the frontier (Cronon, 1995). Two hundred years ago, no one would have thought to recreate in the wilderness. Cronon (1995) noted that since that time, many in the West have developed a romantic view of the wilderness that borders on the sacred, as articled by such thinkers as John Muir and Thoreau. Additionally, visits there are temporary given the lack of infrastructure in wilderness, and like many things of scarcity, our limited time in those places increases the utility users have. Also, due to the frontier mythology that is especially present in the American West, where many of the great parks and pristine wilderness areas exist, users can almost role play and pretend that they are the early explorers who gazed upon these apparently untouched lands for the first time. Adventurous experiences in wilderness have episodic characteristics unlike the monotony of routine lives, with a defined start, middle, and end which can "evoke high levels of emotional intensity and a sense of the extraordinary for participants" (Brown & Beams, 2017, p. 296). Most users in the United States already have preconceived notions about wilderness. This capstone is of particular value, as the students will likely come from different continents and many will not be familiar with this aforementioned mythology. Therefore, their perspectives of adventure and travel may be of unique value.

Barriers to Entry

Outdoor education can be considered a branch of experiential education that specifically uses the outdoors (nature, or wilderness) as the setting for learning (Rose & Cachelin, 2014). Inherent in outdoor education is a particular notion of nature as a place that is characteristically opposite to that of society. Common terms used by outdoor educators such as "frontcountry" (i.e. an urban setting) and "backcountry" (i.e. the wilderness) help to maintain this dichotomy. In this vein, the natural world should be unaffected by its human visitors and exist in an almost timeless vacuum. Cronon (1995) writes, "Wilderness is the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom in which we can recover the true selves we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives" (p. 79). It is in these quasi-sacred places that outdoor users have profound and impactful experiences. Those experiences then lead the users to promote conservation efforts and support stipulations that minimize other users' impact on wilderness areas and maintain its pristine nature.

The rules that govern appropriate use of wilderness areas, specifically, the Leave No Trace principles, maintain the dichotomy of nature and society and can be alienating to many people (Rose & Cachelin, 2014). These principles are a set of ethics that have been widely adopted by outdoor organizations and land management agencies to promote minimum impact camping. "The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace" (n.d.) assumes that human impact on wilderness and natural areas should be minimized and that those areas are in need of protection if they are to be enjoyed by current and future generations. Specifically, the principles are:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find

- Minimize campfire impact
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other users (n.d.)

While these principles seem innocuous at first glance and are ubiquitous throughout public lands in the United States, at times they have the impact of making more seasoned users the gatekeepers of these lands and enforcing them on newer, more typically diverse populations. For instance, the seventh principal, "be considerate of other users," implies that there is a specific manner in which one should experience the nature, more akin to a library than a city park. The prevalence of the Leave No Trace principles also highlights a more macro issue. According to Moskowitz and Ottey (2014), "through the omission of basic ecological principles and limitations in scope, LNT breeds an inaccurate, disconnected worldview. The idea that humans can leave no trace on our environment is born out of a culture entirely disconnect from its surroundings" (p. 2). The conservation of nature that the principles purport to protect, leaves out the actual environment that most human find themselves living in. It is also worth noting the resources required to both survive in the outdoors and transport oneself to those places. The hypocrisy of flying across the globe only to make sure one "leaves only footprints" should not be lost on the even the most ardent outdoor enthusiasts (REI, n.d.).

The characteristics of nature, as previously described, were developed by white men in the early part of the 20th century. It is possible that this separating of nature and society along with the frontier myth are some of the many cultural barriers that inhibit more diversity in populations that are engaged in outdoor recreation. For instance, in looking at different groups' preferred activities in nature, Oh and Ditton (2009) summarizing West (1989) found that "African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans are more likely to use group or family-oriented

urban recreation facilities while Anglo-American are more likely to participate in individualistic outdoor recreation activities" (p. 56). It can be argued that the homogeneity of those recreating in the wilderness is part of the cultural history associated with those places and again the perception that wilderness is a "white" place.

Conservation and outdoor recreation are commonly understood and portrayed as occurring in this primarily "White" place. Therefore, it is not that surprising that the demographics of users of the outdoors are skewed towards white people. One issue that some marginalized populations have with outdoor recreation has to do with the notion of challenge and transference in the outdoors. In a study conducted in 2012, Rose and Paisley (2012) interviewed a student of color at the conclusion of a 20-day adventurous outdoor education experience. The students stated, "Why would I scare myself on some ridiculous rock climb up a mountain in the middle of nowhere. I get that every day at home, and I hate it. I work hard to avoid those things, not to look for them" (p. 137). To pursue adventure in the outdoors is primarily appealing to people who do not already have enough challenge in their day-to-day lives, and therefore need to create manufactured challenges to feel more alive. Given the systemic racism, classism, and sexism that exists in the United States, and the challenges those issue present for marginalized populations, it is not surprising that those groups are underrepresented in activities commonly understood as having value because they are risky. Those with the most privilege more often seek out seemingly dangerous activities in the outdoors as they do not typically face the daily challenges in their regular lives as compared to marginalized population (Rose & Paisley, 2012, p. 144).

Best Practices

Rose and Cachelin (2014) argue that outfitters and programs would do well to incorporate more social justice and actual sustainability into their programming to better appeal to diverse populations. Demystifying the outdoors and making clearer connection between the outdoors and society could also benefit those who have little experience engaging in outdoor recreation. While the traditional and utopian view of wilderness was prevalent for many years, it is now impossible to ignore the aforementioned critiques. And yet, backcountry trips can be considered an ideal place to tackle omnipresent social issues given the intense group experience that exists in the wilderness (Warren, 2005). Instructors interested in engaged with social justice and the outdoors would do well to deeply examine current practices and highlights those activities and customs that maintain the structural status quo. For instance, while the conventional thought is that wilderness experiences allow more freedom from the constraints of society, there is a lot of participant control that innocuously takes place. Rose and Prisley (2012) point to "circles for discussion, the offer of 'challenge by choice,' full value contracts, or environmental behavioral guidelines such as 'Leave no Trace'" (p. 144) as commonplace practices that a leader use to shape a group's experience. In working with populations already affected by structural racism, it is vital that instructors, who are likely to be people with privilege, look for avenues of empowerment for participants. How can those in charge, "promote transformation, self-reliance, and critical thinking in our students making use of structures of power?" (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011, p. 161). One positive practice would be to explicitly link the challenges faced in the outdoors to real life situations. Therefore, if done well, empowerment and even emancipation are possible through these experiences (Warren, 2005).

Additionally, the image of wilderness being survived by a solitary figure or band of brothers working together to overcome the inherent challenges can be off-putting to many people, given that image's reliance on masculinity and individualism. Staker and colleagues (2017) argue for a different perspective on outdoor experiences, instead calling for them to be a place where relationships are deepened and in recognizing the long human history of a particular outdoor area, may create a more welcoming and less alienating environment. Brown and Beames (2017) argue for a reimagining of adventure education highlighting that if we want students to learn through challenges, instructors must also be open to the "uncertainty of the process, and sit alongside our students as they grapple with issues that have a strong relevance to their lives" (p. 302).

Research Methodology

In addition to the literature review, the development of this trip was supported through qualitative research with two distinct groups. The first group consisted of outdoor professionals who organize, direct, or lead adventurous expeditions and outdoor experiences. They were contacted and interviewed between February and March of 2020. The interviewees work primarily with secondary level and college-aged students and the conversations focused on best practices and unique opportunities while offering these types of courses to diverse populations. Professionals from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), Chadwick International, JUMP! Foundation, Outdoor Outreach, and Osprey were interviewed (Appendix: A). Prior to recording these conversations, those individuals were informed of the nature of this project and their consent to share their information was confirmed.

Additionally, 11 current students at UWC-USA were recruited for a version of Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices that was scheduled for March 2020. Due to the impact of

COVID-19, that course had to be cancelled. Yet, those students were still able to take part in the development of the course in part through an online survey that took place in early February (Appendix: B).

For the course itself the intended methodology for capturing the students' experience would have been through observations, interviews, group discussions, and student journals (some being optional to share). Additionally, each student would have participated in a recorded interview on the fifth day of the trip, which would be analyzed after the course (Appendix: C). Questions would have explored how the students were processing the challenging environment and its impact on their assessment of their own ability to care for themselves and more importantly how such an experience could be transferred to their real life. Throughout the course, there would also be daily evening meetings to discuss logistics, group appreciations, highlight any challenges that were affecting the group, and most importantly tackle topics such as multicultural perspectives on adventure and wilderness (Appendix: D). The individual interviews and the journal prompts would serve as an opportunity for less verbose students to prepare their thoughts. Finally, after the course, there would be an online survey (Appendix: E) and a post trip group discussion facilitated by a non-wilderness faculty member.

Needs Assessment

Outdoor Education Professionals

The development and execution of Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices is important to the profession of outdoor education for several reasons. While most of the participants of outdoor education providers are rather homogenous in ethnicity and economic class, there is recognition amongst providers regarding the importance of diversifying. Some organizations are on the forefront of this movement and anyone with expertise is already in high demand. The

changes that are required for outdoor education providers are not exactly straightforward and it is possible to learn some key lessons through conversations with forward thinking practitioners.

Therefore, it was vital in the development of this weeklong course and capstone project to identify and interview professionals already working in this capacity. Email and social media platforms were used to contact eight different professionals in the field of outdoor education, who would primarily be defined as directors or program managers. It was also important to identify professionals both in the United States and internationally. Of the eight that were identified, five responded. The interviews were conducted over a three-week period from the middle of February through early March 2020. They were conducted over cell phone or Skype, and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Three of those interviewed operate in the United States and two in Southeast Asia, however, one of interviewees from the United States, spoke about his extensive experiences in East Africa.

The interviews were conducted at a time when the literature review was mostly complete and that helped shaped the emphasis on certain questions (Appendix: A). The interviews mostly followed the established outline yet the tone was more conversational as there already existed professional connections between the researcher and the interviewees. In comparing their respective programs, the researcher and interviewees had the opportunity to build upon each other's experiences and yielded mutually beneficial observations. One way to synthesize the interviews is through the following themes: the importance of diversity in outdoor education; the value of adventure; best practices in recruitment, curriculum, instructor training and program delivery; and finally, the existing hurdles. To protect the identity of the all the interviewees, pseudonyms are used.

The importance of diversity in outdoor education

Spending time in nature either in a local park or on an extended expedition has benefits for almost all people. In conversations with these professionals, it is clear that when outdoor experiences are tailored appropriately, their impact can be profound. For instance, Edward, a Senior Director of Programs at a San Diego based non-profit spoke of the transformational power of the outdoors to help students develop resilience (Edward, personal communication, February 25, 2020). From outdoor climbing trips to Joshua Tree, California to beginner surfing lesson in San Diego, Edward spoke of the importance of providing novel experiences in the outdoors, that forces students to step outside of their comfort zone, and as long as they are supported by committed mentors, students will use those experiences to better manage the challenges in their daily lives. Another Director of Programs, Simon, works in Thailand curating outdoor experiences for elite independent schools and universities throughout Southeast Asia. He shared that many students, while being extremely academically advanced, were challenged by working collaboratively on unique problems and tasks (Simon, personal communication, March 3, 2020). However, through outdoor-based trips that focus on authentic cultural interactions and adventure, these students learn resilience, global mindedness and develop an environmental awareness. While classroom learning is often seen as a vital step in preparing students for the 21st century workplace, of equal importance is providing opportunities for students to work collaboratively, have authentic leadership opportunities, and have space to develop a Meta cognition of their lives. All these skills are possible through both short-term and extended outdoor experiences.

The value of adventure

Of particular interest for this project are organizations that focus on adventure and extended outdoor experiences. For instance, James, who works as the Diversity and Inclusion Manager at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), highlighted both the benefits and drawbacks of the typical courses that their organization provides (James, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Going on a 30-day wilderness expedition is a form of escapism for participants and while James sees the benefits of such opportunities for students to get a real perspective on their lives, i.e. being removed from their day to day experiences, the sheer length of a standard NOLS course is a hurdle for those who cannot afford the price, cannot take that amount of time away from their home, or are uncomfortable with the prospect of being an outsider for such a duration.

three of those interviewed spoke of the importance of adventurous and thrilling outdoor sports versus more traditional and slow-paced activities such as backpacking. For instance, Steve, who directs a wilderness program in Songdo, South Korea, for primarily local secondary students, shared that his program had originally tried to replicate the types of programming often offered in the United States, i.e. backpacking (Steve, personal communication, February 25, 2020). Steve reported that youth in South Korea simply do not got backpacking and many locals were openly questioning their presence in remote outdoor areas. However, when his program incorporated activities perceived as more fun and adventurous, such as mountain biking and river kayaking, the student buy-in increased significantly and the cultural hurdles decreased dramatically. Likewise, for Edward (from San Diego), offering adventurous and seemingly extreme activities such as surfing, biking, and rock climbing, is an excellent way to recruit students who have little experience in the outdoors given the perceived thrill factor.

Best Practices

For those organizations that recognize the importance in looking at programming, instructor preparedness, and philosophical changes to appeal to diverse audiences, there is a treasure trove of information that can be gleaned from speaking with program directors and instructors already engaged in this work. For instance, James spoke of the importance in reframing the goals of a trip (James, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Summiting peaks has long been a quintessential aspect of wilderness expeditions, however for some groups the process of reaching the summit is just as important and instructors would do well to put as much or ever more emphasis on building relationship through a trip. Likewise, Edward notes that students can only have transformational experiences in nature if they are guided by caring and dedicated leaders who are committed to building supportive relationships with students (Edward, personal communication, February 25, 2020). These close relationships may be a challenge for some instructors who are used to a more distant leader-student relationship. A common practice at many outdoor education organizations has been for instructors to set their tents up a great distance from students, in order to get some space and possibly let the students learn on their own.

Several interviewees spoke of the importance of instructor training. Simon stresses to his instructors to be respectful of their students' experience level (Simon, personal communication, March 3, 2020). While an instructor may view sleeping in a tent and cooking on a backpacking stove in a park as a pretty tame experience, for students' uninitiated, it could be a considerable challenge that should be respected. Also, both directors who operated in Southeast Asia highlighted the need to be able to speak the students' language and pronounce local names correctly. Taken more figuratively, this advice was echoed by three of the directors offering programming for diverse population in the USA. For instance, Lenny worked as a program

director for NOLS at a remote base in Utah and would sometimes help orient scholarship students, who were exclusively people of color, to the courses he managed. Being African American, he had the sense that when those scholarship students met him, despite being surrounding by predominantly White faces in what is understood to be a white place, i.e. the wilderness, they were comforted knowing that they were not alone (Lenny, personal communication, February 25, 2020).

Existing Hurdles

Despite the benefits of spending time in nature and participating on adventurous experiences in the outdoors, there are some notable hurdles that were brought to light from these interviews. For some students there are pressures from family and one's community that may slow or stop students' exploration of the outdoors as defined in this paper. James spoke of his own family's apprehension as he began to explore the outdoors (James, personal communication, February 25, 2020). He told me of many conversations where they would tell him, "going outdoor is just not something that we do." When pressed, James' family could not explain why. He received the same blanket statements from his community, as well, "that's a White thing," was a common refrain he heard. It was not until he began to pursue a career in outdoor education that he began to explore the roots of his family's and community's concerns. "We are from Chicago, far from the south, however, when I began to dig deeper, the culture of slavery was still embedded in my family's and community's narrative about the outdoors and it being an unsafe space for a black person. Yeah, that's a long time ago, but that narrative can last for generations." (James, personal communication, February 25, 2020).

James also spoke of the difficulties that NOLS has had in adjusting its' programming to reach more diverse audiences (James, personal communication, February 25, 2020). These

challenges, for established outdoor education organizations, were echoed by Lenny (Lenny, personal communication, February 25, 2020). They both spoke of the rigidity at NOLS and how those scholarship students had to assimilate to the NOLS way, versus NOLS figuring out how better accommodate for different expectations. For Lenny, this rigidity was crystallized when he had the opportunity to work in East Africa and Patagonia. In both of those places, local instructors did not feel as pressured to deliver the entire curriculum. "In Kenya, we would get to camp and the locals would sit down and brew tea and talk…sometimes for hours. The students and U.S. instructors were so antsy, "what's next, what are we learning this evening." When I look back, I think NOLS should hike half as far and spend more time just being in nature." (Lenny, personal communication, February 25, 2020). When asked if the pressure to validate what we do in outdoor education is derived from a capitalist way of thinking and the need to serve as a resume builder for participants. "Oh, yeah," Lenny replied, "Can't let them sit around and do nothing." (Lenny, personal communication, February 25, 2020). Ironically, it is precisely because of the track record that outdoor education organizations have in character development that Simon is so successful in Southeast Asia. The schools and families that send their students through their program, would unlikely be interested in a program that "does nothing but just sit around in the outdoors."

In addition to community skepticism, there is also the issue of the wider community of outdoor recreation users. Edward spoke of numerous occasions when his group was camping at a national park, and other users would ask, "What group are you, and why are you here?" (Edward, personal communication, February 25, 2020). A group of young people of color in a national park is still the exception versus the norm and there is an assumed manner in which one is supposed to act in those places, more library than city park. Edward also spoke of the tension

between increasing access and conservation. Many conservation groups are working to minimize impact, which typically is accomplished by reducing use or at least limiting it. It is only those groups well versed in leave no trace that find themselves in the good graces of land managers, and other gate keepers of outdoor spaces.

Clearly the information gleaned from these interviews provides a vital framework in the development of any course, particularly one that is geared toward a diverse audience. While conclusions will be address later in this paper, the impact on the Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices trip is highlighted in the program section.

Students' Perspective

The unique level of diversity that exists at UWC-USA, as compared to many other schools that are engaged in outdoor education, provides an outstanding opportunity to employ and evaluate cutting edge practices. As stated previously, this course was originally scheduled for March 2020. During the trip's introduction, which took place at a school assembly in mid-January, Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices was presented, including the role that this capstone would have throughout the duration of the trip. While students would not be pressured into having their reflections shared, it was vital that they were aware that this process would take place. If students, or their families, chose to opt out of the capstone, they would still be able to fully participate; only their responses would not be shared or recorded. Of the 11 students, one chose not to participate. Yet, it is clear that their involvement in the trip itself would have an impact on the capstone project as they would still be still part of group discussions, interviews, and even if those were not shared, it would likely impacted the other participants. To make this student comfortable, we had planned ongoing communication to ensure that they ideally did not feel pressure or impacted by their decision to abstain from participating. One step that was taken

so that students and their families did not feel pressure to participate in the research component of this trip is detailed in the timeline below. The selection of the participants for this trip occurred in mid January, prior to the distribution of the invitation letters and letters of consent, which were distributed in early February. The groups for all the Project Week trips were developed primarily on the student's ranking of trips, country of origin, grade, gender, and dorm. Of the 13 trips offered, the final roster of students had ranked this trip between one and three.

While most other outdoor education programs are somewhat homogenous in terms of ethnicity and nationality, the students who were selected for Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices were more diverse. Additionally, their previous wilderness experiences and interests were taken into account when planning curriculum and other aspects of the trip. The findings below are based on a pre trip online survey that was administered in mid February (Appendix: B). Ten of the eleven students selected for this trip, filled out the survey.

The ten students, who responded to the survey, represent six different countries and five different continents: Bangladesh, Burkino Faso, China, Great Britain, Panama, and the United States. Their ages range between 16 to 21. In terms of gender identification, six stated male, two female, one preferred not to answer, and one identified as gender non-binary. Prior to their time at UWC, 80 percent had not previously camped. And while everyone had been on at least one multi-day backpacking trip during their time at UWC, only 50 percent stated that they felt comfortable going on a backpacking trip without an Instructor. More importantly, 90 percent had some, a little, or no snow experience. Almost all the students commented that they were either comfortable or excited to have discussion on multicultural perspectives of wilderness and adventure. Additionally, they highlighted three skills in particular that they were excited to learn about: Avalanche awareness, snow camping, and backpacking through a snowy environment.

Not surprisingly, almost everyone's greatest concern/fear was being cold. The findings from the pre-trip survey were an essential component of the program development detailed below.

Wilderness Travel for Cold Weather Novices

Program Description

Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices is weeklong winter backpacking trip for UWC-USA students with little or no snow travel experience. Ten to 12 students and two instructors will travel to the Rio Grand National Forest, which is located just north of the border between New Mexico and Colorado. The snowy winter environment that is expected to be present during the trip will provide an excellent opportunity to push students outside their comfort zone and provide a natural incentive to master self-care in a harsh environment. Also, those conditions may cause group conflict, which when facilitated effectively can be used for teachable moments centered on community and communication. The challenging environment should also be harnessed to develop leadership skills. Given the information from the student survey, the curriculum will also focus heavily on avalanche awareness, snow safety skills, and snow shelter construction. While participants will either be sleeping in winter tents or snow shelters, every night there will be access to a Yurt; a canvas walled structure with a wood burning stove and some other amenities. The yurt will serve as a place for students to warm up, make meals, and meet as a group. Over the seven-day trip, there will be three moving days, in which the group will navigate from the trailhead to the two different yurts. The other days will be focused on curriculum, described in detail below.

Trip Development

Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices was proposed to the Dean of Students at UWC-USA in October 2019. Given the track record of the wilderness department in running successful project week trips, the program focus of this specific trip, and the school's need for dynamic and engaging offerings, Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices was approved. The curriculum and program focus was significantly influenced by the literature review and needs assessment. The course area was scouted in early February by one of the wilderness program co-directors to mitigate risk. They evaluated trailhead parking, terrain, snowpack depth, potential impact of other users, and suitability of the Yurts.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to explore their own relationship with adventure and wilderness while traveling in a challenging winter environment. At the same time, this trip is an opportunity to look at best practices in offering programming and curriculum to diverse audiences and to make changes to conventional techniques in favor of more up to date practices.

Program Goals and Objectives

The following specific steps will be taken to accomplish the aforementioned goals:

1. Trip preparation. While many outdoor education trips have episodic characteristics, with a defined start and end, Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices is designed to provide a link between the pre-trip experience of the students, the actual trip itself, and the post trip transference to the students daily lives. The students will have many opportunities to shape aspects of the trip, thereby ensuring that they are full participants rather than guided clients.

2. Nuanced “leader(s) of the day” progression. One tool that will be employed on the trip is having leader(s) of the day. This practice is common on many outdoor education trips. Typically, the student leader(s) of the day are responsible for time management, navigation, group oversight, and facilitating the group meetings. Rather than have a standardized approach, on this trip students will be allowed to either lead on their own or with a partner. Additionally, on one of the first days there will be a group discussion facilitated by the instructors on multicultural perspectives of leadership. The goal from that discussion is that there should not be an overemphasis on the traditional approach of leadership that is often employed in outdoor education that primarily values efficiency and directive communication over other more multicultural approaches.
3. Focus on skills. Another avenue to empower students and have them develop a sense of ownership of their experience is through the development of activity specific skills. This course will provide a clear progression of avalanche awareness and snow travel skills. Throughout the course, the instructors will be constantly evaluating the students’ skill level in snow travel, winter camping, wilderness cooking, and various other areas. When appropriate provide each student with more space to perform these tasks on their own. Using various techniques, such as hands on instruction, explicit role modeling, coaching, and daily check ins, the instructors will aim for students to be supported and challenged at the levels they state to be most appropriate. While some students use failure and natural consequences as learning tools, others prefer to build upon a series of successes. Therefore the instructors will be mindful of these preferences and make adjustments accordingly.

4. Multiple avenues to reflect and share. Given the varied backgrounds, personalities, and experiences at UWC-USA, it is clear that students will have different comfort levels in regards to sharing their observations and reflections to the group. Using different avenues of reflection will give all the students the opportunity to be a part of the shared process of creating the experience of the trip. Journals, group discussion, interviews, and silent reflective hiking time, will all be used to prompt students to think about their experience. Ideally, each student can then identify which technique is most helpful for them to formulate their thoughts and emotions into something that can be shared to the group.

Participant Goals and Objectives

Students who successfully complete this program will be able to:

1. Winter camping skills. Students will learn how to set up a winter tent and how to build a snow shelter.
2. Winter travel skills. Students will learn aggressive self-care in a harsh environment and specifically how to avoid frostbite, immersion foot, and hypothermia.
3. Avalanche awareness. Students will be able to recognize the interplay between terrain, snowpack, weather, and human decision-making as they relate to human triggered avalanches. Students will perform a multi-burial beacon retrieval test in an area no greater than 100 square meters.
4. Leadership skills: Students will have the opportunity to practice leadership skills in a harsh environment and be able to identify their own unique preference in leading others.
5. Interpretation of adventure and wilderness. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on and share their perspectives of adventure and wilderness.

6. Community and communication: Students will have the opportunity to experience and reflect on how they are impacted by others while traveling in a harsh environment and living in close quarters.

Participants/ Marketing /Recruitment and Admissions

Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices is only open to current UWC-USA students and will run during project week, which is typically in late March. The 10 to 12 participants will be a combination of first and second year students. During an assembly in mid January, the various trip leaders will present their specific project week trips to the entire student body. Immediately after the presentations, students will be sent an online trip selection survey and they will rank the trips that are offered. Typically they will be placed on one of their top four choices, out of 12 to 15 offerings. Trip placements are primarily done based on the student's ranking of trips, country of origin, grade, gender, and dorm. See Appendix: F for the specific recruitment for Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices.

Curriculum

The curriculum design is intended to be noticeably different for the participants as compared to a traditional UWC-USA backpacking trip. The curriculum is not envisioned as starting on the first day of the trip, but rather from the first moment that the students learn of this opportunity. Prior to the students' trip selection, they are recruited via a presentation to the entire school, during the Project week presentations in early January (Appendix: F). In that presentation, the various aspects of the trip are highlighted, the focus on a unique and new wilderness offering- a weeklong snowshoeing trip and the opportunity to explore multicultural perspectives of the outdoors.

After the students are selected there will be several pre-trip meetings to try on winter clothing, plan unique meals, and test equipment. The purpose of these sessions are to have students see the importance of preparation prior to undertaking a trip with a higher level of risk exposure. Additionally, there is the goal bringing a more multicultural lens to eating on a wilderness trip, so that the group is not simply consuming "White" backpacking food, but instead are introduced to unique and culturally specific meals. Finally, through the preparation session on day one, which comprised of pulling, identifying, and testing equipment, it is hoped that all the participants realize a shared sense of ownership for the trip and everyone recognizes that full support is required for the team to be successful. For a detailed timeline of the trip, see Appendix: G.

While a trip typically has a number of routine practices, some new methods are being introduced that can be described as less rooted in western conceptions of wilderness and leadership for this specific experience. For instance, the plan does not include requiring the students to set up their tents immediately upon arriving to camp on the second moving day. Typically in outdoor education, it is standard practice to get chores complete before relaxing. However, from the interviews with other outdoor education directors, it is clear that the typical focus on efficiency and completing tasks in a particular order can be unpleasant for different audiences. Therefore, the students will be given the opportunity to decide when to set their tents up, as long as weather or other factors dictate that this task should be done immediately. Another adjustment included sharing the reflection questions that will be used during the first evening meeting in advance to all the students, so that they can reflect with the aid of their journals. In light of the critiques of experiential education by Bowdridge and Blenkinsop (2011) and how many techniques can be seen as reinforcing traditional power dynamics, this change is

intended to give everyone the opportunity to shape their responses so that students for whom English is a second language are not put at a disadvantage to native English speakers and for those whom reflective sharing "on the spot" comes more naturally. Finally, on the fourth night of the trip, using a portable battery-operated speaker, everyone will be given the opportunity to play about 10 minutes of their own music for the group, while we are cooking, eating, and cleaning dinner. The use of technology, like a speaker paired with a phone, is very often shunned on outdoor education trips. However, the view that technology does not belong in the outdoors is a western notion that regards nature as a sacred place and that in most cases connections to modernity and convenience should be avoided. Yet, it is unclear if listening to music on a speaker in the wilderness significantly detracts from the experience and it may even allow student to make connections between wild places and their home.

Finally, the post trip plan includes having a faculty member at UWC-USA who is generally unfamiliar with the wilderness program facilitate the end of trip discussion for the post course debrief. It is hypothesized that such a person can obtain more candid answers and interpretations from the students and they may highlight different aspects as compared to the two instructors. Their findings and the impact of the aforementioned steps to de-westernize the outdoor experiences will be very helpful for this project.

Staffing Plan

The staffing plan consisted of two trip leaders; one being the author of this project and the other being an Instructor with experience at UWC-USA, expertise in winter camping, and an openness to experimenting with different and non-traditional curriculum delivery methods. The contracted instructor was selected through a hiring survey that highlighted the specific skills required for this course and signed a trip leader contract that detailed their responsibilities during

the program (Appendix: H). While ideally the other instructor would have been either a person or color or from outside the United States, unfortunately, both were cis-gendered, White males, trained in Western centric approaches to outdoor education. Yet, the hope is that through a thorough level of self-analysis, both instructors would be very aware of their preexisting biases and would work diligently to provide an open experience for the students to ensure they could mostly define their own interpretation of adventure in the outdoors. In the future, the program directors will make a greater effort to increase the diversity of the instructors who are hired for this and other courses.

Logistics

Pre-Trip Preparations

UWC-USA students who are selected for Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices will be heavily involved in the pre-trip preparations. These sessions are vitally important so that students develop a sense of ownership of the experience and prepare them for the risk management practices that they will have to employ to stay safe in the expected harsh conditions. In the preceding weeks prior to the trip they will help with meal planning, testing gear, packing, and reflecting on their expectations of the trip as well as the concepts of adventure and wilderness. On the day prior to the trip departure, they will meet with both instructors for a detailed trip orientation, practice setting up the tents in their specific tents groups, pack their backpacks, and get fitted for snow shoes. Use of avalanche beacons and other winter specific equipment will also be introduced.

Trip Details

The trip will take place in the Rio Grand Nation Forest, on the border of New Mexico and Colorado. The group will leave campus early in the morning in one school mini bus with storage

capabilities, and the drive will take approximately three to four hours. The two Yurts that will be the staging area for this trip are each approximately four miles from the trailhead and three miles from each other. Both Yurts sleep six people and therefore, most participants and instructors will be sleeping in either winter tents or snow shelters just next to the Yurts. The Yurts have wood burning stoves for heat, tables, a full kitchen and other amenities. The group will be cooking all their own meals for the duration of the trip. On the seventh day, the group will hike back to the trailhead and return to campus to clean, fix, and stow all the equipment and fill out a post trip survey (Appendix: E)

Post-Trip Details

On the day following the trip's conclusion, the students will participate in a post trip discussion with a faculty member not associated with the wilderness department. That faculty member will then share their findings with the two instructors and the other wilderness program co-director. About a week after the trip, students will also be invited to an informal dinner and discussion at the co-directors' on campus home. At this event, there will be a conversation centered on their transference from the trip. Ideally, they will make the connection between their reaction to what had been unknown to them prior to the trip, i.e. winter camping in a harsh winter environment, and potential unknowns that lie ahead in their lives. The conversation will shed light on these characteristics that Arnett (2004) described as the age of possibilities. Approximately one month after the conclusion of project week, the co-directors of wilderness program will meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the outcomes of Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices and the other project week trips.

Health and Safety /Crisis Management Plan

Given that this trip was under the purview of the UWC-USA wilderness program, the risk management plan adhered to pre-existing policies and guidelines. (Appendix: I and Appendix: J**)**. Yet, traveling through a cold winter environment presents several unique challenges above and beyond a typical backpacking trip. Care would be taken to ensure that every student had a pair of insulated boots and instructors would role model looking for signs of emerging frostbite every day. Eventually, this step would be incorporated into the leadership responsibilities of the students. Additionally, the instructors would thoroughly teach students about the hazards related to steep terrain, even on short slopes, as it relates to avalanche conditions as well the dangers of tree wells, where someone could fall in and be stuck upside down. Proper hydration and adequate food consumption is of even greater importance in a winter environment and Instructors would keep a log to track that data daily. Finally, given the claustrophobic nature of a yurt and the harsh environment present traveling through a cold snowy environment, the instructors would have daily check ins with the students to make sure that everyone's mental health was being monitored and students' emotional needs were being supported.

Budget and Budget Notes

The budget for this trip was part of the Wilderness Program budget at UWC-USA. While there was additional safety equipment that was purchased for this course, those items would be incorporated into the standard winter camping trips that are offered throughout the typical program season. Most project week trips aim for a budget of $323 per participant to cover food, housing, and other fees. Fuel, contract labor, and permits *are not* included in the aforementioned budget. Therefore, the overall cost of most project week trips typically exceed $323 per

participant. The budget for these project week trips are part of student tuition and students mostly do not have any out of pocket expenses. See Appendix: K for trip specific budget details.

Evaluation Plan

There are four components of the evaluation plan. The first component would be ongoing evaluations by the trip leaders during the course itself. Every day, the two instructors would have an evening meeting and discuss the days' events, looking for opportunities for professional development and steps to enhance the curriculum delivery and examine their interpretations of the students' experiences.

The second evaluation tool would be an interview with each student on day five of the course (Appendix: C). This interview would be an opportunity to examine curriculum outcomes, highlight individual student's interpretation of the trip, and look for unique perspectives on wilderness and adventure.

After the course the student would fill out a generic UWC-USA Project Week trip survey that is used by the experiential education department to examine the effectiveness of all Project Week trips (Appendix: E).

Finally, the students would participate in a group debrief of their experience by a faculty member who is not substantially familiar with the wilderness program.

Conclusion/Implications

The development of Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices produced numerous important conclusions for the outdoor education industry and is an outstanding opportunity for future students at UWC-USA.

The literature review and needs assessment highlighted the importance and challenges of diversifying outdoor education. For instance providers would do well to examine if their current

practices reinforce overly western centric notions of leadership, efficiency, and achievement. While a common perception of wilderness travel is that of a solitary explorer, it seems clear that diverse audiences are generally more interested in wilderness travel as a means to deepen relationships with others. Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices achieves this goal by the connections that will be formed through the experience of sharing close quarters in a backcountry yurt, sheltered from the harsh environment just outside.

Another important step in developing ownership of an experience from a student group is including them in many aspects of the planning process and curriculum components. Additionally, it is important to demystify upcoming experiences and provide opportunities for students to develop realistic expectations. Going into the outdoors for an extended period of time is already a significant challenge for many people, especially those with limited prior experience. Therefore, clearly outlining expectations and activities could help decrease apprehensions that a trip would be too far outside ones' comfort zone. People want to know that they are going to be ok, and if a program is using up-to-date risk management procedures, there is no reason for participants to assume that their survival is at stake. Clearly, one should not minimize actual risks, but those same risks should not be celebrated as the main reason for going out into the wilderness. Similarly, instructors and program directors should teach and transfer the skills required for any outdoor activities in a thorough and culturally appropriate manner. In that way, it is more likely that students feel empowered and are not as reliant on their leaders throughout a trip.

This project would not have been possible without the work that has already by done by others on the forefront of the outdoor education industry. Yet, this capstone project is perfectly situated to contribute to this movement. UWC-USA with its inherent national diversity provides

a unique opportunity to learn from participants about their experience in the outdoors and in particular in harsh environments. My hope is that there are lessons from this exercise that can be of benefit to the outdoor education industry as a whole and through our continued work at UWC-USA we can help advance the progress toward greater diversification.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions (Professionals)

Can you verify your title, number of years that you have served in your current position, and any certifications/trainings that you have obtained/attended that are essential for your role?

Tell me about your program and its operational philosophy. Are there overarching goals that frame all of your programming?

How does your program support different ways for students to engage in nature; i.e. trips with different levels of difficulty and focus?

Is adventure and traveling through harsh environments an important aspect of your program?

What changes have you made to your curriculum and programming to appeal to a diverse demographic of students/participants, if any?

Have you explored the topic of decolonizing the outdoors? I.e. addressing the issue of wilderness and how it creates a somewhat problematic dichotomy between civilization and nature that is based on a western-centric notion.

What specifically have you done to support students with little outdoor experience thrive in your program?

What steps have you taken to enhance the programming delivered by your instructors?

Any other thoughts?

Appendix B: Pre-trip Online Survey Questions

1. What is your age? (Blank)
2. What is your gender? (Non-binary, female, male, other)
3. What is your region? (Africa, Caribbean/Latin America, North America, Europe, Pacific, Middle East)
4. What is your sponsoring national committee? (Blank)
5. How many total days have you spent camping in the wilderness at UWC-USA?
    a. Less than a week
    b. Between 1-2 weeks
    c. More than 2 weeks
6. How many days have you spent camping in the wilderness prior to UWC-USA?
    a. Less than a week
    b. Between 1-2 weeks
    c. More than 2 weeks
7. What is your level of skill in wilderness travel (Choose one)
    a. Complete novice/ Zero experience
    b. I feel comfortable camping at a campground
    c. I feel comfortable backpacking for a few days with an instructor or group with a higher level of experience than me
    d. I feel comfortable backpacking for a few days with a group of peers of equal experience
    e. I feel comfortable leading a group of peers who have little or no experience with wilderness travel
8. Please comment on the above question? (Blank)
9. What is your experience level with cold snowy environment (Choose one)
    a. Little or no experience
    b. I have spent some time in the snow (for instance, sledding, snowshoeing, skiing/snowboarding, or general play)
    c. I have considerable experience in the snow (i.e. I am an intermediate skier/snowboarder, have been snowshoeing several times, or have spent a some time in these environments)
    d. I have a lot of experience in the snow (i.e. I am an expert skier/snowboarder, I have snow shoed many times, I grew up playing in the snow, I have been winter camping on numerous occasions)
10. Please comment on the above question? (Blank)
11. Please select three components of the trip that you are most excited about?
    a. Snowshoeing
    b. Staying in the Yurt
    c. Snow camping
    d. Multi-day travel through winter environment
    e. Spending time reflecting in a winter environment

    f. Spending time with the group
    g. Avalanche/snow safety skills
    h. Exploring different cultural perspectives on adventure and wilderness
12. This trip will involve more time in reflection and in group discussion than the average project week/wilderness trip. We will cover topics such as multi-cultural perspectives of wilderness and nature, and your personal experience as you process the inherent challenges of winter travel. How do you feel about engaging in this level of reflection? (Blank)
13. And, how do you feel knowing that some of your reflections and observations may be shared in a graduate paper/presentation? (Blank)
14. What concerns do you have about the trip/experience? (Blank)
15. What is your current excitement level for this trip? (1-Low, 5-High)

Appendix C: Individual Guided Interview Questions

The interviews will be conducted on either day 4 or 5 of the trip:

What has been the highlight of your trip so far?
What challenges have you faced?
What have you learned about yourself that you did not know previously?
Prior to this trip how much experience did you have in snowy winter environments?
What was your initial expectation of traveling and camping in this kind of winter environment?
How does your life prior to this trip shape your experience of it?
Does this trip allow you think differently about your future? How?
How would an adventure like this one be viewed by your family, local community, and country in general?
How can we better support and encourage those without any experience in these kinds of environments to participate on a trip like this one?
Any other thoughts?

Appendix D: Group Discussion Topics

As a group, we will meet nightly to discuss logistics, team appreciations, highlight any challenges that are affecting the group, and most importantly tackle topics such as multicultural perspectives on adventure and wilderness.

The following are a set of potential group discussion topics (in no particular order).

-What do you like about being outdoors? What do you dislike? Is it important for you to go on adventures such as this one?
-How is wilderness and nature perceived in your culture?
-Have you experienced any barriers to spending time outdoors? If you have, how do you overcome them? Did anyone help you overcome them?
-What have you learned about the outdoors from your peers on this trip?
-What can we as outdoor education providers do in order to diversify outdoor education?
-How do trips such as these affect your outlook of your future?

Appendix E: Project Week Post Trip Survey

1. Which trip were you on: (Short answer)

2. a. The mission of UWC is to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. On PW the mission is experienced/ the mission is lived/ the missions became practical versus theoretical (Scale: 1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

b. Please comment on the above question (Short Answer)

3. a. I worked collaboratively with my classmates on the PW trip (Scale: 1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

b. Please comment on the above question (Short Answer)

4. a. I fulfilled at least 3 of the Ex Ed learning outcomes (Scale: 1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

b. Please comment on the above question (Short Answer)

5. a. I had a great time on my PW trip (Scale: 1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

b. Please comment on the above question (Short Answer)

6 a. My trip leaders were great (Scale: 1- Strongly disagree, 5- Strongly agree)

b. Please comment on the above question (Short Answer)

7. Food, any comments (Short Answer)

8. Housing, any comments (Short Answer)

9. Preparations, any comments (Short Answer)

10. Other comments, (Short Answer)

Appendix F: Recruitment Flier

-A slide that part of a recruitment pitch to the entire school

Be part of cutting-edge research!

I will be using this trip as the backdrop for my Masters in International Education graduate program final project from the School for International Training (SIT)

I am exploring the cultural barriers of outdoor education and specifically how to make adventurous wilderness trips more inclusive

Participation in the research component of this trip will include:

Allowing some of your reflections, observations, and information gathered from interviews, group discussions, and pre/post trip surveys to be included in my capstone paper and presentation

You are NOT required to participate and your willingness to participate will NOT impact your selection for this trip

If you are willing to participate, you will be ask to sign a consent form and if you are under 18 years old, have your parent's/guardian's consent as well.

If you (and your parents/guardians) agree to participate, you can withdraw at any time without penalty

Please contact me directly if you have further questions

Appendix G: Trip Timeline

- Saturday March 21, 1:00-5:00 P.M.: Trip Orientation, packing, and introduction to avalanche awareness
- Sunday March 22: Day 1
    - 7:00 A.M.: Trip Departure
    - 11:00 A.M.: Arrival to trailhead; route and safety overview
    - 12:00 P.M.: Hike Begins
    - 4:00 P.M.: Arrive at Yurt and set up camp
- Day 2: (Non moving day) Introduction to avalanche awareness
- Day 3: Backpack to the second Yurt and mound up snow for snow shelters
- Day 4: (Non moving day) Avalanche rescue skills and dig into snow shelters
- Day 5: Fun Day: sledding, winter Olympics, and day hike to summit for end of trip reflection and individual interviews
- Day 6: Early start, hike to trailhead and return to campus for de-issue and post trip surveys
- Sunday March 28th 1:00 P.M.: Post trip debrief with the students (facilitated by faculty member not associated with the wilderness department)

Appendix H: Trip Leader and Assistant Trip Leader Qualifications and Policies

UWC-USA Southwest Studies / Project Week 2019-2020
Trip Leader and Assistant Trip Leader Qualifications and Policies

Experiential Learning is a core component of UWC-USA, and our Southwest Studies and Project Week trips are essential pieces of our overall program, typically staffed by UWC-USA employees.

Experiential education takes place outside the classroom, involves extended student contact time, and uses the experience of service, wilderness travel, art, or an event as a vehicle for learning and personal growth. Reflection is a key component of experiential education.

QUALIFICATIONS

All trip leaders must have training in basic life support and CPR/AED use (within the last two years). If you will be driving a school vehicle, you must have taken a defensive driver training (within the last two years). It is recommended to have current certification from a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR) course if you will be in remote areas (please speak with the Ex Ed team separately about these trainings).

The primary role of the trip leader is to serve as mentor and overall logistics coordinator for their trip.

In addition, Trip Leaders should bring:

- Experience leading or supporting multi-day experiential education trips.
- Experience assessing, managing, and mitigating hazards and preventing injury and incident during multi-day trips.
- Skills in managing conflict and challenging situations for learning and development for all participants
- Experience working with diverse student populations; aware and sensitive to the multicultural nature of UWC student groups.
- Strong communication skills and group awareness; able to coach leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills with students.
- Practices to support student reflection on and after the trip
- Strong planning and administrative skills; including, but not limited to:
    - Clear communication with SWS/PW management team regarding needs and issues as they arise
    - Clear communication with organizations/individuals with whom you will work/meet
    - Advanced planning for housing, vehicles use, and notable events
    - Budgeting, accurate accounting, tracking expenses
- Professional conduct and communication to represent UWC in an appropriate manner

Assistant Trip Leader

UWC-USA is committed to supporting the professional development of its faculty and staff. As participation on a SWS/PW trip is an expectation of full time faculty and strongly encouraged for all other employees, the school supports trip leaders without the above experience to join a SWS/PW trip as an Assistant trip leader.

RESPONSIBILITIES

For UWC SWS/PW trips, Trip Leaders and/or Assistant Trip Leaders will:

Prior to the trip

- Submit all required paperwork (trip proposal, budgeting, etc) by posted deadlines
- Attend all meetings (follow this link to see all the meeting dates)
- Communicate clearly with students and hosts/partners on trip vision, goals, expectations, and logistics (including but not limited to packing time, departure, return)
- Oversee and manage gear check out process

During the trip

- Work closely with students to provide instruction and to facilitate the group's interaction
- Fully participate in the activities of the trip while finding unique opportunities for students to have leadership experiences and opportunities for facilitation.
- Coach students, and intervene when necessary, in matters of judgment, risk management, and safety
- Serve as the responsible adult, and the trip authority, in matters of safety, minimum impact, and group dynamics.

After the trip

- Oversee and manage the de-issue; ensure equipment is returned in working order and cleaned
- Assist with the post trip presentation and assist students with identifying material for their ExEd portfolios
- Submit any final paperwork and receipts
- Participate in post trip debrief with the Ex Ed team

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Trip Leaders will refrain from using alcohol or recreational drugs while working a trip for UWC.

Trip Leaders will sleep separately from students, i.e. not share hotel rooms, cabins, or tents (unless there is a medical or safety matter that necessitates otherwise). The exception to this rule is when a group is sleeping in a gym, classroom, outdoor space. In those cases, it is acceptable for the leaders to sleep in the same area as the students. Students will know where to find Trip Leaders at night.

During their trip, leaders may become familiar with confidential student medical information. They will take reasonable precautions to keep confidential all information deemed confidential, and will not disclose this information to others, other than on a need-to-know basis to those

directly involved in that student's medical care. All leaders must sign the UWC Confidentiality Notice and return to Human Resources if they have not done so already.

UWC-USA is supportive of trip leaders bringing their children as long as their presence does not adversely affect the outcomes of the trip. Generally speaking, for trip leaders with young children, i.e. those not yet of school age, UWC-USA will contract them at half of the standard pay, given the understanding that those adults will need to spend approximately half of their time on the trip managing their children. Generally speaking, Trip Leaders with older children, i.e. those of school age, can be contracted at the standard rate. If there are additional costs associated with bringing children, such as lodging, entrance fees, etc, the Trip Leader is expected to cover those expenses. This policy is a guideline of how to determine pay for Trip Leaders wishing to bring their children, and UWC-USA does not guarantee that children will automatically be allowed on a trip. Therefore, given the range of trips that are offered during SWS/PW, the SWS/PW trip directors will evaluate trip leader's request to bring their children on a case by case basis.

Driving is an essential aspect of leading a SWS/PW trip. Trip Leaders are expected to complete pre and post trip vehicle reports and to return the vehicle in the same condition as it was issued (i.e. clean out trash, fill the gas tank, etc). If you cannot or do not feel comfortable driving students in a mini bus, you should

1. Lead a trip with less than 4 hours of driving a day
2. Ensure your fellow trip leaders are 100% comfortable managing all the driving (UWC-USA driving policy states that no one can drive more than 8 hours in a day). (Fristedt, 2019)

Appendix I: Health and Safety /Crisis Management Plan

*** UWC WILDERNESS EMERGENCY & EVACUATION GUIDELINES ***

Review Emergency Procedures with Students Early On Trip:
It is important that we prepare our students for the (unlikely) possibility that instructors could become indisposed and the group would have to take responsibility for the safety and risk management of the group. This conversation should include:
Instructor folder with UWC Wilderness emergency and evacuation guidelines and EAP: what it looks like, general description of contents (including emergency numbers), and its location during trip / Location of car keys during trip (students will not drive under any circumstance, but may need to assist other school employee in finding them)
Location of satellite phone, PLB, or cell phone during trip and the potential for no coverage; location of closest form of communication
Location of medical information about participants; any additional med info about instructors
What kind of situation would warrant student activation of emergency procedures
First aid kit: what it looks like, general description of contents, and its location during trip
Location of map(s) during trip and overall review of general area of travel
Review "Staying Found" philosophy; review guidelines for splitting the group in an emergency (min. of 4 people in "runner" party, no actual running, no travel after dark, etc)

SAFETY / PREVENTION:

- **Kitchens:** Field instructors should be present when students have stoves lit---please ensure that they have ample water in the kitchen in case of a fire, and that they are practicing good stove safety (stove is on flat ground, control-valve is toward them, they are sitting far enough from stove, etc) and kitchen safety (rest of group is at a safe distance, no throwing food across or walking through kitchen, etc).
- **Bear Hangs:** Field instructors should be present for bear hangs until they've assured themselves students are practicing appropriate bear-hang-safety: throwing with throw-duffels only (dirt, not rocks, inside), not rocks or water bottles, no carabiners attached while throwing; **no tree-climbing if rope is stuck**, use long branch to get rope down or "fish" it down the other side; ensure no one is standing under tree or branch when food bags are being pulled up! If your team has rat-sacks instead of a hang, please try to hang them off the ground to keep insects out.
- **Bodies of water/wading**: Wading, not swimming is allowed. Students should stay in no-more-than waist-deep calm water (no current), near the shore, and should have shoes on at all times. It is ok to submerge completely, however students should not find themselves in water that is over their waist when standing. They should always be with an instructor or faculty member. No diving.
    - Instructors must first evaluate the wading site for safety. If spotters are necessary to swim, it probably not an appropriate area.
    - In the Colorado river, explain the best way to 'swim' to safety if caught in a current: on your back on the surface of the water, feet on the surface, pointing downstream, and hands and arms paddling you to a safe shoreline.
- **Bouldering:** The Wilderness Co-Directors and/or designated staff must approve outdoor bouldering sites. Students will be instructed on bouldering, falling, and spotting techniques prior to a bouldering activity. Any student who is bouldering will have a spotter. Bouldering activities will not exceed safe spotting limits. Climber's feet will not go above the spotters shoulders and a bouldering/crash pad must be used.
- **Cliffs:** Mandate edge awareness. It is important to stay two body lengths away from the edge of any cliff or steep drop offs
- **Fires**: On certain trips with appropriate weather and terrain, LNT fires only may be taught & practiced with students. An adult must be present at all times when fire is lit. Please be absolutely thorough in your teaching of fire safety, careful assessment of appropriate conditions, and extinguishing of fire. Have water immediately available while fire is lit.
- **Please do not hike after dark**, even in an emergency. Try to stabilize the situation overnight, and travel at first light. (A possible exception to this, using your judgment, might be if you are on a very, very clear trail, have strong headlamps or full moon, and are travelling with self-sufficient gear, to try to carry out an urgent medical evac. However, as a general rule, evacs should be carried out during daylight hours.)
- **Lightning**: When you hear thunder move to safer terrain (evenly spaced trees, deep depressions) and avoid

high risk areas (peaks, singular tall trees, shallow caves, bodies of water, wide open areas). When lightning is close by get into lightning position with members of your group spread 30 ft apart from each other. You can use the 'flash bang' system to approximate the distance of a thunderstorm, *however this system can be inaccurate so do not base your decisions only on this count*. The flash of light from lightning travels fast enough that is virtually instantaneous. The sound travels a mile every five seconds, so *ideally* you count the number of seconds between the *obvious flash* and the *obvious bang*, and divide by five to determine how many miles away the storm is. *Do not stake your life on the reliability of this system*.

- **River Crossings:** Instructors will physically assess and supervise all potentially hazardous river/stream crossings (water moving faster than a walking pace, above the knee, or with a dangerous runout).
    - Wading through water is preferable to crossing on slippery rocks or logs. Safety, not comfort should dictate decision making.
    - Backpack waist belt and sternum straps should be unfastened during a river crossing, except when doing so poses a hazard (i.e. the student is more likely to fall in the river due to low stability and decreased balance from an unfastened waist belt).
    - Station spotters downstream of the crossing site on shore, in shallow water, or an eddy that can provide assistance to someone who falls in and is being swept downstream
    - Always remember You do not HAVE to cross any river
- **Scrambling:** Ratios, terrain, and group size, and instructor experience will be considered in deciding whether or not to engage in scrambling with a group. Scrambling will be a managed activity, students will be informed of hazards and risks prior to participating in the activity. Students will be taught proper movement on rock, proper spotting techniques and when necessary where to put hands and feet.
- **Solo:** Solo sites must be scouted before student placement to ensure there are no hazards. All students will be shown the location of the instructor camp prior to going on solo. While on solo students are required to wear a whistle at all times and be instructed in how to contact staff or other students without leaving their solo site. Instructors should *visually* check on students three times in a 24 hour period. Students may not enter water over their knees, build fires, or boulder while on solo.
- **Tenting:**
    - Field instructors will tent separately from students (unless there is a medical or safety matter that necessitates tenting together), but camp close enough to be within easy verbal communication of students if needed.
    - Students can tent in mixed gender tents.

  Student Tent briefing:

  As instructors we want to role model what it will look like to live in a tent. Even though students are used to living in close proximity, it is important to model tent living. i.e. privacy, communication, and organization. These questions are a way to get the conversation started BEFORE students move into their tents:

  Questions to consider when sharing a tent:

  - How will we decide where everyone sleeps?
  - Cleanliness: shoes inside or out? Dirty clothes and socks?
  - Tent set-up and take down rotation. How does this relate to who is cooking breakfast?
  - Changing clothes. How will we do this?
  - Sexualized topics, jokes, or actions. Specifically mentioning masturbation in the tent as unacceptable.
  - Respecting quiet time: whispering okay or agreed upon quiet hours?
  - If I go poop in the middle of the night, can I have a buddy?

  As instructors you can do a role play/mock scenario of how to move into a tent which models for students how awkward it can feel to have conversations about the living space and showing what clear communication looks like from the beginning.

  On course: In one on one check-in's make sure to ask whether they are comfortable in their tent group, what have they been doing in the tent (this should be a casual question i.e. "Whose been winning at cards? Have ya'll been able to share stories?" in order to get a better understanding of the culture they are forming in their tent group.

On 14 day the course is long enough to switch tent groups. At UWC students have given a preference for wanting to be in mixed or single gender tent groups-- you can build tent groups as instructors or have students build tent groups keeping preferences in mind.

- **Travel on 3rd Class Terrain**: Instructors will directly supervise student travel on technical routes (3rd class and above). Third class terrain is defined as steeper terrain, occasionally needing hands for balance and where a fall would likely not cause significant injury. **Travel in 4th class terrain is not permitted on backpacking trips.**
- **Small group travel:** On certain trips (primarily leadership), there is an option to travel in small groups. In these circumstances, the students must hike with an instructor and be self sufficient. A self sufficient hiking group has at least one kitchen set up (stove, fuel, pot), shelter capacity for the size of the group, foot kit, first aid kit, bear hang, and food. If one or both of the hiking groups do make the intended 'x', the following should occur. For a group that made it to the 'x', they should contact the on call person that evening. They should plan on staying at the 'x', until 12:00 pm the following day, at which point they should contact the on-call person and prepare to search for the 'missing group'. *In many circumstances, groups do not rendezvous due to miscommunication during the route planning. Therefore, Instructors and students should be very clear as to the intended 'x' and make sure the three points of topographical reference and UTM match.*

CALLING THE On-call/AOD

- **If you have to call On-call/AOD or for help**, you should immediately state the level of the emergency. Have the following info ready: Your name; "This IS a (green, yellow, red) emergency;" the name & location of the trip, patient's name and age, and have a paper and pen to take notes on.

Level	Description	Level	Description	Level	Description
Green	An incident that does not require an immediate response or that can be self evacuated, or an incident that needs consultation from on-call. For example, but not limited to;	Yellow	Serious but non-life or limb threatening injury, illness, behavioral incident, or vehicle collision that requires an immediate and timely response. Additional resources (SAR/EMS/ USFS/ NPS) may be utilized to transport to definitive medical care. Notification to AOD, who will reach out to SLT. For example, but not limited to;	Red	Critical, time-sensitive situations that require immediate response, and notification to the UWC President and Board President. For example, but not limited to;
	Injury/ Illness: that requires more than basic first aid and/or results in a visit to a medical facility		**Injury/ Illness:** Admission to a hospital		**Injury/Illness:** Life or limb threatening or Fatality
	Behavioral/ Motivational: That significantly affects the subject's or group's experience, may result in evacuation or early departure		**Lost/Alone:** Any student missing for 1 hour. self-sufficient team (with instructor) doesn't show up by noon the next day		**Lost/Alone:** Any student missing for 4 hours or if outside agencies are notified to help search (police, Search & Rescue)
	Vehicles: Minor vehicle damage (i.e. backing into a stump) or a citation for a moving violation		**Environmental:** Severe weather such as a flash flood or the smell or sight of wildfire		**Environmental:** Extreme weather resulting in a significant injury or assisted evacuation
	Itinerary Change: A change from the submitted itinerary (i.e. a new campsite or if lodging is changing)		**Vehicles:** Incident with significant damage to a UWC vehicle but minimal personal injury, a vehicle incident resulting in insurance claim, or involving multiple vehicles.		**Vehicles:** Incident with significant damage to a UWC vehicle and significant personal injury.
			Behavioral: Harassment; Verbal in nature- sexual, racial, gender.		**Behavioral:** Assault; Physical in nature- sexual, racial, gender. Credible threatening behavior. Activities that may be criminal in nature.
			Trip Leader Injury/illness: Injury or illness that makes the trip leader unable to safely lead the group.		**Other:** Any credible expressed threat of legal action, or any investigation of UWC. Any incident that involves the potential for legal action, media attention, and/or public relations issues.

- **Considerations for evacuation:** Condition of the patient / distance to the road / difficulty of terrain / strength, stamina, and level of experience of the group / size of group / emotional condition of group / your ability to communicate with outside support / accessible landing or loading zones for heli. / Is the evacuation route safe? Is the patient's condition likely to worsen over time? Can an evacuation be conducted in a manner that is safe for the patient (improvised litter, or single-person carry) and will not cause further harm?

- **The ideal minimum size for an evacuation or "runner" party is four people.** One adult should always be a member of the runner party. No injured and immobile person should ever be left alone on trail. Runner teams must be equipped to be self-sufficient for emergency camping/bivouac. Runner/messenger team should carry: copy of SOAP note and list of team members present at emergency site, map (marked with UTM's of patient/team) & compass, and first aid and drug kits, in addition to self-sufficient gear and food & water. Leave written, detailed route plan with members at emergency site, including UTM's of destination.

- **Using satellite phones:** Extend antenna and rotate until it clicks into place. Hold phone so that antenna is oriented vertically to the sky. Turn on phone by pressing power button, and wait until it says "Registered" on screen. *To dial*: You may have to press and hold the "0" key until a + symbol appears. Some models require that you enter a phone number as **"+" - 1 - 10-digit number**. Press "OK" or the green key to dial the number. *Troubleshooting*: If your phone is not turning on, try removing the antenna (for models with removable antenna) and/or battery and then replacing it. If there is significant lag time, an echo, or static, try hanging up and re-dialing. Keep in mind that sat. phones need a clear view of the sky to work. In an area where the sky is obscured (e.g. by dense tree cover, steep canyon walls, heavy cloud cover), you may need to relocate to complete your call.

- **PLB's:** PLB (personal locator beacons) are registered with the contact info of UWC Administration (currently Jonathan, Rachel, Anders). These beacons send an SOS-signal via satellite which eventually makes its way, via NOAA, to local Search & Rescue. Misuse of these beacons is considered a federal offense. These beacons should be used in situations that are considered "**life or limb**" situations (i.e., there is a serious threat to someone's life or to the survival of a limb) on UWC wilderness trips. They should not be used for situations such as athletic injuries or even a simple fracture (such as to an ankle), unless there is compromised CSM to the limb below the injury (thus making it a "limb-threatening" situation).

- **Near Misses:** Please document any significant safety-related incident where injury was avoided. Document: Subject's name, age, gender; date and time; nature of incident, extent of any injuries; persons in charge at site, and others present; description of activity-type, location, weather, temperature, terrain, etc; what happened/your actions after the near-miss occurred.

IN AN EMERGENCY:

- **Seeking medical care**: Call AOD (UWC Admin. On Duty) or UWC health clinic for Consent to Treat forms (they'll fax). Students are insured by one of three ways: school insurance (primarily international students); family medical insurance (most US students, some international students); or Medicaid (some US students)—the Health Office on campus should be able to fax the student's health insurance information to the hospital or clinic. Call the UWC AOD (or, 8-3, call UWC health clinic: 505.454.4264) to have student proof of insurance faxed to you. Do not give the hospital your name---give United World College, and have them bill UWC, Attn: Health Clinic, PO Box 248, Montezuma, NM 87731. (If you have to pay on the spot, try calling Rachel/Anders Fristedt---they can put it on their productivity card: Rachel, 541.604.4484, Anders, 505.946.7075)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR HELICOPTER EVACUATIONS: Please remember that when you call a helicopter into action, you are putting at risk the entire flight crew, as well as utilizing scarce emergency resources---call for heli assistance only when truly necessary. Additionally, mobilizing a helicopter can take hours…are you in a place where you could carry the patient to the trailhead in less time?

Helicopter services will request the following information – have it available before you call for assistance:

- Number of patients
- Height, weight, medical status (stable/unstable), and ability to sit up or lie down
- Lat/Long, UTM's (NAD 27 Conus), altitude of landing zone
- Weather conditions, including wind speed and direction

- Geographical description of landing zone and distance from observable landmarks

Helicopters can be grounded by high winds, low visibility, precipitation, and temperatures below -20F. Have an alternate evac plan ready in case a helicopter cannot reach you.

Directions:

- Select a landing zone that is ideally 100' (30 m) in diameter or larger. Clear away all loose objects/debris from landing zone.
- Mark your location with **tightly anchored**, brightly colored items. Failure to secure items can cause them to be sucked into the rotor and cause the helicopter to crash.
- Have someone stand in bright clothes, visibly nearby your landing zone, to point at the area once the helicopter is overhead. Stand with back to the wind, using arms forward to direct pilot to LZ.
- Have only ONE person directing your landing zone---everyone else should be well out of the way, to avoid injury from rotor wash, standing in a circle around patient with backs facing out.
- Patient's gear is a low priority—heli may not have space to carry it. Be prepared to send only vital items with patient.
- Keep in mind that pilot may choose a different LZ after flying over the terrain; be prepared to move patient to the heli.

Safety Precautions:

- Approach the helicopter ONLY when/if the pilot motions you to do so.
- Stand an approach only where the pilot can see you. DO NOT walk in front of a helicopter or approach it from uphill.
- Stay in a low crouch whenever you are around the rotors. Do not walk around the tail---tail rotor is invisible when running.
- Be careful on snow that you don't slide toward helicopter accidentally.
- Clear ALL loose debris from the LZ, and ENSURE that all markers of area are very tightly secured.

SEARCH CONSIDERATIONS IN THE EVENT OF A LOST PERSON:

Start immediately, with a quick search in the immediate area, using the people available, for a period of one hour. After one hour: search is a yellow emergency. The longer a person is lost the farther away they may have traveled. Have a group representative stay at the designated meeting point/camp. Document areas searched and any clues found. Collect information (SWEET):

- Subject information (who, health and fitness, state of mind)
- Weather (present and anticipated)
- Experience (in the environment you are in)
- Equipment (what might they have with them? What are they wearing? Color? Shape?)
- Time and point Last Seen

IN THE EVENT OF A GREEN LEVEL INCIDENT:

If parents/guardians will be notified please use the 'communication sandwich' practice to ensure parents are informed and their questions/concerns alleviated ; 'Communication sandwich' = 1. Student talks to parent 2. Trip leader talks to parent, 3. Student talks to parent again

IN THE EVENT OF A YELLOW/RED LEVEL INCIDENT:

Priorities in case of Emergency: First, seek out medical care as soon as possible. Second, assess the condition of the remainder of the student group and their well-being. Third, notify the school by calling the Administrator on Duty (AOD) as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the AOD to: contact parents/guardians of patient; decide who else to notify; communicate with the news media; decide if a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing is warranted.

In the event of a fatality: Ensure the safety of the remainder of the group. Organize and assign specific jobs and responsibilities. Do not allow stress to progress to panic. Keep the team together.

- Do not disturb the body or the surroundings, except to check if the subject is alive. Only the coroner or medical officer can authorize removal of the body, and police will need to make a careful examination of the area.
- For the benefit of the team, it is wise to cover the body with a ground cloth or tarp.

- Despite the presence of fear or shock, it is important to document the events leading up to the fatality, descriptions of terrain and weather, and photographs of the body, terrain, hazards, etc.
- **DO NOT NOTIFY** friends or relatives of the deceased, nor release their name to the media or public. These are the responsibilities of the college spokesperson.

In the field: A simple, voluntary debriefing can help manage the emotions of an event and connect people with support. Do not force group members to participate. Set clear ground-rules: avoid blame; focus on listening and validating what group members are feeling, and encourage empathy and open listening. Often starting by describing the big picture of the story can help fill gaps in different members' understanding of what happened.

External Communication Protocol:
Do not speak with members of the press. Instead, say "I have no comments at this time. Please contact Carl Martin, telephone **(701-429-0045 cell)** for more information as it becomes available." You can also take their contact information and give it to the designated UWC-USA communications contact. DO NOT assume that any conversations you have with them are "off the record".

Incident Documentation:
If an incident should occur where there is a significant injury resulting in loss of field time, a near miss that could have resulted in a significant injury resulting in loss of field time, or a fatality, use the "UWC-USA Incident Report Form". Fill it out completely and DO NOT give it to anyone except your supervisor. Document: Subject's name, age, gender; date and time; nature of incident, extent of any injuries; persons in charge at site, and others present; description of activity-type, location, weather, temperature, terrain, etc; what happened/your actions after the near-miss occurred.

Emotional Support:
UWC-USA instructors are encouraged to utilize the any of the above contact personnel for any reason they may need emotional support or reassurance. In simple cases, this may take the form of receiving a comforting word on their difficult decision to evacuate a participant with a sprained ankle. In more complex cases, this may take the form of receiving help with arranging a crisis counselor for a group that has had a serious physical or emotional trauma. (Armand Hammer United World College of the American West, 2020)

Appendix J: Winter specific curriculum/risk management

Snowshoe Use
Your stride should be wider than it is for hiking in order to avoid stepping on the insides of your snowshoe frames
As you ascend hills, you use your toe or instep crampons for traction. Always place your feet firmly on snow, poles in front of you.
On descents, keep your poles planted in front of you, knees bent and relaxed, and your body weight slightly back. Walk smoothly and plant your heel first when you walk.
Traversing: Push the uphill side of each snowshoe into the slope to create a shelf as you move along. Keep your weight on the uphill snowshoe.
Pole adjustment: To set your pole length for flat terrain, flip your pole upside-down and grab the pole just under the basket. Adjust the length until your elbow is at a right angle.

How to get up when you fall
You'll need to slip your hands out of the pole straps (if you have them)
Shift around until your head is uphill, your feet are straight downhill and you're facing the slope with your knees pulled up close to your chest.
Your goal is to press off the slope until you're upright on your knees; then you can shift your weight onto your snowshoes and stand all the way up.

Quinzee Building

Prep: It may be best to explain the process of building a Quinzee in two steps (The mounding- on the first evening and then the excavation process- the second day)

Mounding the Quinzhee

For a three person Quinzhee you'll need the mound to be about 9 ft in diameter (or the length of two long ski poles). For a four person Quinzhee add about a foot to that.

Place a probe in the center of the circle as a reference point and target for the snow while mounding.

SAFETY: Make sure students are aware of their shovels so they don't hit each other and teach proper lifting and throwing techniques.

Have students walk around the circle several times to help harden the snow at the base of the walls.

Have everyone who wants to sleep in a Quinzhee help (those making dinner can be relieved at some point)

Once the mound is 75% complete, have someone stand on top to work harden the snow and those on the outside occasionally stab the snow with their shovels

When the mound is 95% complete, have everyone smooth the surface of the mound

Before heading into the Yurt, make sure students account for their clothing, shovels, poles, etc

Excavating the Quinzhee (Day two)

Prep: Explain the steps of excavating the Quinzhee inside the Yurt, layering for the "mole", and proper shoveling technique. Keep the fire going so students can warm up during the process.

Choose a Quinzhee to demo each step of the process. Typically, you'll demo a step and then students will work on their respective Quinzhees. Then when you are onto the next step, bring the students back to the Quinzhee you are primarily working on and explain that step.

Door- Should be just big the height of someone kneeling. Dig in around 16" and have someone moving the snow out of the moles way. Once the mole has excavated the door about 16", begin to dig up.

Walls- Should be about 16" thick. You can stab a bunch of ski poles around the entire mound for reference as students are excavating.

SAFETY: Make sure students are digging up and not just in to prevent collapsing Quinzhees.

As the mole continues to excavate, have the other students aggressively moving the snow out of the way, perhaps even building a wall around the Quinzhee.

As soon as possible the mole should be standing and excavating, to prevent collapsing Quinzhees.

The interior walls are made by first digging out chunks of snow and then shaving the walls to get a smooth surface.

Once the Quinzhee is about 80% excavated, the remaining snow that you are shaving off the walls can be used to build the floor, which should ideally be just above the height of the door for heat trapping. Push out the probe and make a small vent (2-4", depending on temperatures, colder = smaller), somewhere in the ceiling of the Quinzhee.

When the Quinzhee is 95% complete have the students carefully smooth out the floor and let it harden for about an hour before 'moving in'.

Make sure they locate all clothing and equipment before returning to the Yurt.

Before bed hand out some kind of sugary/fatty treat in case anyone gets cold during the evening. Hand out Tea Lights (optional). And make sure that if anyone is really cold, they feel comfortable retreating to the Yurt.

Yurt Intro & Housekeeping Talk - when group first arrives at the Yurt

Shoes off at the door and placed near entrance inside, so snow doesn't get tracked into the Yurt
Choose a hook to hang personal clothes and keep them organized
Once clothing is dry, put it away
No more than two people on the top bunk
Smokey cooking should be done outside

Appendix K: Trip Specific Budget Details

Winter Travel for Cold Weather Novices- Budget				
Expense	**Description/Notes**	**Cost**	**Quantity**	**Total**
Housing				
Flat Yurt	Backcountry Housing	$108.28/night	2 (nights)	$216.56
Trujillo Yurt	Backcountry housing	$91.22/night	3 (nights)	$273.65
Equipment				
Avalanche Transceivers	Safety Equipment	$190	14 (transceivers)	$2660.00
Avalanche Probes	Safety Equipment	$38.34	9 (probes)	$345.06
Winter Hiking Boots	Safety Equipment	$100 (average price)	11 (pairs)	$1100.00
Food				
Groceries	Purchased through Sodexo/ Bulkfoods.com/ Wal-Mart/ Trader Joes	$9*(person *days)	13 (people) * 7 (days)	$819.00
Transportation				
UWC-USA School 14 passenger mini bus	Transportation	NA	NA	NA
Fuel	Round trip = 250 miles, 10 mpg	~$2.50 (per gallon)	25 (gallons)	$62.50
Parking at trailhead	Free with Yurt booking	NA	NA	NA
Staffing				
Instructor	Pre-trip preparation, actual course, post-trip de-issue and wrap up	$150	9 (days)	$1350.00
Course Area Scouting Expenses				
Scouting	Food, Housing, Fuel, Misc	$350		$350.00
Total Expense				$7086.77
Indirect Costs	10%			$708.67
Total Budget				$7795.45
Per Student Price	11 Students			$708.68