Westminster Outdoor Program
Student Trip Leader Training Process

Objectives
- To provide students with the opportunity to identify and reach their individual outdoor leadership goals within the Student-Led Outdoor Trips (SLOT) program
- To promote student leadership of outdoor trips which aligns with Westminster’s College-wide Learning Goals
- To further facilitate the mission of the college, which seeks to “emphasize practical experience as well as theoretical knowledge.”

Process
The following steps are required for students to lead Westminster Outdoor Program trips. At each step, program directors may make other recommendations based on students’ individual situations, skills, and experience. Students will also reflect upon and document their process and will be guided by the directors.

Leading trips for the Outdoor Program is not a job. Sometimes you get paid, but it couldn't be considered a dependable source of income! People who get involved with leading trips need to be willing to volunteer, work hard, and learn. It may take some people a couple years before they're ready to lead trips and it may take others their entire college career or longer. While we do have a trip leader process in place with objective steps, gaining leadership, experience, and judgment is an inherently subjective process.

1. **Attend** at least three extended (3-day or more) trip as a participant. Program directors may recommend that you participate more trips depending on previous experience and competencies.

2. Set up a **meeting** with an outdoor program director to discuss your goals.

3. Initiate outdoor leadership **portfolio** which includes:
   - Leadership goals and steps toward achievement (skill types, roles, etc.)
   - Leadership Development Log - including previous relevant experience (resume), trainings, feedback & evaluations, and reflection journal addressing progress & growth.

4. **Volunteer** – Our program couldn’t run without people (staff and students alike) putting in a little extra time at tables, on trips, and in the office. It shows commitment and looks great on your portfolio or resume.

5. **Shadow** – Communicate with program directors which trips you’re interested in shadowing – they’ll let you know which trips might work for you. Register for the trip as a participant and be a part of the pre- and post-trip discussions and preparations. During the trip, take on minimal leadership responsibilities but observe and absorb as much as
possible.

6. **Apprentice** – Participate as an apprentice (see roles & responsibilities below.) The number of times one might apprentice depends on each individual’s growth and will vary.

7. **Assist** – Assist the trip leader & mentor apprentices and shadows (see roles & responsibilities below). A program director must observe in the field to provide further recommendations. The number of times one might assist depends on each individual’s growth and will vary.

8. **Lead** – Fully lead a trip (see roles & responsibilities below). Directors may be present as “shadows.”

9. At any time during the process, aspiring leaders are encouraged to acquire the following minimum training. **Trip Leaders are required to have the following** by the time they lead their first trip:

   - **Trip Leader Training Course** (for-credit course geared toward training students to lead Westminster trips). Students may also participate in this program without credit –**OR--** Equivalent leadership training with an approved outdoor program.
   - **Wilderness First Responder & CPR** (80 hour certification - WFR Certifications are considered invalid if CPR certification has lapsed)
   - **Van driving certification**
   - **Skills-based certification may be required** such as Single Pitch Instructor, Avalanche Safety, or Swift Water Rescue.

**Leader Team Roles & Responsibilities**

- **All Trip Leaders and Assistant Leaders are required to:**
  - Know and uphold college wide policies
  - Know and implement emergency and incident procedures
  - Be familiar with first aid kit contents and their use
  - Be familiar with curriculum and skills for your particular trip type
  - Understand that if it is necessary to evacuate a participant, you may need to escort that participant out of the field and not re-join the trip
  - Maintain frequent and effective communication with other leaders
  - Support a safe learning environment both physically and emotionally
  - Support the goals of the program, trip, students, and co-leaders
  - Implement group management skills including conflict resolution, group inclusiveness, etc.
  - Actively manage inherent risks
  - Role model outstanding outdoor skills, self-care, professionalism and respect
• Drive vehicles with students as passengers (if over 21) when necessary and adhere to college van policies
• Positively represent Westminster as an ambassador for the school

• In addition, Trip leaders are required to:
  o Create and maintain overall vision for the trip including necessary logistical planning, progression, basic itinerary, and curriculum with input from other trip leaders
  o Coordinate and facilitate pre-trip meetings
  o Delegate appropriate responsibilities to co-leaders
  o Facilitate conversations with co-leaders about roles specific to each leader’s strengths and experience
  o Ensure that all paperwork is complete and returned to program directors (logs, incident reports, etc)
  o Ensure that all equipment is accounted for, operable (or repairs needed are reported), clean, dry, and returned to the appropriate place.
  o Have the “final say” on any risk management, emergency situations, or participant issues. The trip leader may rely heavily on co-leaders to make decisions. All leaders need to be a part of those decisions and should support each other in making them.

• Apprentices are required to:
  o Take initiative – see what needs to be done and do it
  o Accept tasks that the trip leader and assistant trip leader may delegate (should be appropriate for comfort and skill level)
  o Actively participate in group management
  o Take appropriate opportunities to practice leadership skills

Leader Team Composition
• All trip leaders and assistant leaders must have current CPR certifications (WFR Certifications are considered invalid if CPR certification has lapsed)
• On each trip traveling into the “wilderness context” (Wilderness Medicine Institute defines wilderness context as “time from the onset of the illness/injury to definitive care is more than 1 hour”), and on all overnight outdoor trips, there is at least 1 leader with a current Wilderness First Responder (WFR) certification
• Basic First Aid is the minimum First Aid requirement for any other leader, either as an assistant or on trips not traveling into the wilderness context
• On every overnight outdoor trip there is at least 1 leader and 1 assistant leader. There may also be an apprentice or other staff to help with specific aspects of the trip.
• A ratio of 1 leader to every 5 participants is maintained.