

Summer Program Task Force Report

Hamilton College
Spring 2009

This committee was formed as a result of the Action Item from the strategic plan: "Consider the establishment of summer conferences and programs that reflect institutional priorities." Acting President Urgo asked me to develop a plan for an 'Adirondack Essentials' summer workshop.

The following is a summary of the work of the Summer Program Task Force, up to and including our third meeting on 6 April, 2009.

Committee; Maurice Isserman, Andrew Jillings (Chair), Onno Oerlemans, Danelle Parker, Sharon Rippey and Sharon Williams.

- ⇒ Following a thorough search for similar programmes at peer and other institutions, there appears to be little or nothing like our vision of this programme.
- ⇒ Our most likely client pool would initially be alumni, but would expand as advertising and word of mouth spread. Older alumni would be interested if the 'comforts of life' were maintained eg toilets.
- ⇒ We discussed using campus housing as a base for a weeklong workshop, with excursions into the Adirondacks, perhaps including an overnight. Skenandoah would be our most likely choice of accommodation, and Danelle worked on pricing for that option.
- ⇒ Another option floated is to be based entirely in the Adirondacks and to have trips go out from there. No obvious locations were available, based on our size or catering needs, so we are proceeding with a campus-based programme.
- ⇒ There is a strong feeling that this endeavour should not be underpriced; that it should be sustainable financially and with staff turnover. In order not to over-burden any particular faculty member, the subject matter can rotate over a number of years, eg worldwide adventure one year, an American concentration the next, the Adirondack philosophers camp of 1858 another.
- ⇒ We are particularly excited about a focus on the philosophers' camp on Follensby pond, although The Nature Conservancy currently cannot say when the area will be open. They are interested in a re-enactment and we are first on their list for this.
- ⇒ We searched for comparable faculty salaries and devised a tentative budget. See below.
- ⇒ The ratio of fun to content would need to be clearly established in all publicity and literature. Too much/little of either will detract from the desired experience. Our optimal number is one faculty to 12 participants, with a possible maximum of 15.

Tentative Programme

For whom Adults (alumni, professional writers, 'recreational' writers) who wish to live adventurously and write well.

By whom Initially Prof. Isserman and Andrew Jillings but likely that the faculty member will rotate to avoid burnout.

When Summer 2010, most likely mid- June

Where Four days on campus, three days in the field, including an overnight camping trip in the Adirondacks

Curriculum A selection of readings such as the journals of Lewis and Clark, Into Thin Air by Krakauer, Touching the Void by Simpson. Participants will be expected to use the adventures they have on the course as fuel for their own writing. There will be daily classes by the professor, time to write and discuss writing, mixed with long and short adventure trips.

Adventures? Initially we will use the low and high ropes courses on campus, then day trips to kayak/canoe in the Adirondacks, and finally an overnight trip in the High Peaks.

Cost Assuming 12 participants, \$1620.00 per person, inclusive.

Schedule

Day 1

Arrive by 3pm.
Registration
Dinner
Socialise in the pub.

Day 2

Orientation, books, goals.
Low ropes course adventure
Dinner

Day 3

Lecture on 'writing good'
Writing assignments
Dinner
Pack for trip

Day 4

Paddling trip (canoe or kayak)
Return to campus by dinner
Debrief in the pub

Day 5

Writing assignment
Lunch
Trip prep and depart for overnight
Overnight in the Adirondacks

Day 6

Move back to campus
De-issue gear
Dinner
Debrief in pub

Day 7

Writing assignments
Final meeting with faculty
Debrief programme
Banquet

Day 8

Pack
Depart

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Jillings
Director of Outdoor Leadership