

Adventure Leadership and Programming
Academic Program Evaluation
February 5, 2018

Criteria 1

Impact and overall essentiality of the program; connection to mission/vision/ASU

The Adventure Leadership and Programming (ALP) minor was launched in 2011 to provide academic credit for the learning and experience students were receiving through the Adventure Program. At the time, such a design was at the forefront of the progressive movement within higher education. The recognition of holistic learning experiences was gaining traction and more universities were beginning to honor that learning taking place “outside the classroom.” Thus, the ALP minor serves as the curricular arm whilst Adventure Programs serves as the seamlessly aligned co-curricular counterpart. Under new leadership in 2013, the ALP courses were reviewed and curricular changes made increasing the credit hours, rigor, and quality of the program.

The ALP minor is a unique program for the following reasons:

- The ALP is a minor with no counterpart major
- No full-time faculty (all courses taught by adjuncts)
- Program design, curriculum development, administration, marketing, advising, recruiting and advocacy are done without contractual obligation or compensation
- The ALP is highly integrated with the Student Service’s Adventure Program providing the only Leadership Apprenticeship at ASU. This Apprenticeship is a prime example of an unofficial Learning Community already in action at ASU.
 - Peer to peer mentoring
 - Instructor mentoring
 - ASAP Coordinator mentoring
 - Program design centered on growth oriented feedback, learning through failures, and personal responsibility - developing character and competence
 - Most ALP Apprentices gain over 500 hours of direct leadership experience, mentoring, and outside the class trainings

ALP Mission

Adventure Leadership and Programming (ALP) exists to develop leaders who value the humanity of others, are willing to risk failure, and seek continual improvement so that they are capable of making a positive impact within their communities. Our graduates demonstrate and inspire responsible stewardship for the natural environment, teamwork, and a mindset of continual improvement.

Relevance

ALP courses are uniquely designed to demonstrate the ASU values of ethical leadership and responsible stewardship. The SLV includes about 1 million acres of public lands along with an office for every major land management agency. Additionally, there are dozens of local non-

profit agencies and programs housed or working in the SLV that engage in conservation, stewardship, and education. Outdoor recreation is growing in the SLV and numerous agencies have indicated that they want to hire ASU students for internships, engage them in volunteer efforts, and partner with ASU intentionally to achieve many of their own goals (Forest Service Plan). The city of Alamosa has identified outdoor recreation, specifically access to the Rio Grande River, as having a significant impact on the quality of life of the community. In a 2016 community survey, the highest reported priority for parks and recreation services in Alamosa was the river corridor. The city's master plan now includes a goal to increase outdoor recreation opportunities in Alamosa. The city has also identified outdoor recreation and education as target businesses to recruit in the future. Clearly, access to the natural environment and enhanced trails, signage, and paddle sports access to the river is important to the community.

Contributions

- Voted "Top Outdoor School" by Elevation Outdoors magazine in 2016. This recognition allowed the university to enhance its profile through narrative and advertising.
- Trained students to offer outdoor adventure programming to the SLV communities
- Education, stewardship, and internship partnerships with the BLM, NFS, GSDNP, Alpine Achievers Initiative, Rio Grande Farm Park, Rio Grande Watershed Conservation Education Initiative, and others.
- The ALP, Adventure Programs, and Adventure Sports as a whole have been leveraged as partners in recent grants bringing the SLV about 2 million dollars for outdoor recreation and education since 2016.

Alignment to the ASU 20/20 plan

Initiative 1.2 - Provide a responsive and professional education that fosters civic responsibility in a global culture

ALP courses provide students practical experiences and mentorship in environmental stewardship. Students participate in service projects within the SLV that connect them to place and the local, state, and federal agencies that manage and steward public lands. For example, Spring 2018, the ALP course *Intro to Adventure and Leadership* will engage students in service learning with the Bureau of Land Management and Volunteers Outdoors Colorado in trail restoration near Penitente Canyon.

Initiative 1.3 - Strategically strengthen and expand the University's undergraduate and graduate degree programs

Evolving the ALP minor into a major will expand the university's scope, attract and retain students that desire careers in the outdoor recreation industry, and align with the state's efforts to expand outdoor recreation opportunities and environmental stewardship (choosecolorado.com).

Initiative 2.2 - Recruit and support eligible transfer students

Currently in conversations with Colorado Mountain College about an articulation agreement for their Outdoor Recreation associate degree students. With a major at ASU, we can attract their

students desiring to further their education. In the Fall of 2016, two new ASU students were recruited by a current ALP student to transfer to ASU from KU to be part of the ALP.

Initiative 2.4 - Provide all students practical and hands-on experience supporting their learning and professional development

ALP courses are experientially based and provide significant levels of hands-on practical learning. For example, the ALP Expedition is a 6 credit hour course that on average provides each student with 238 contact hours with instructors immersed in an experiential learning environment. Additionally, ALP students may apply to be part of the ALP Apprenticeship which is the co-curricular leadership development program giving them additional mentoring, practice, and continuing education beyond the classroom. ALP students lead their peers in experiential learning through the ASAP trips program, climbing wall, and in facilitating challenge course programs for other ASU students in other ASU leadership development programs such as Housing and New Student Orientation.

Initiative 5.5 - Draw upon the natural resources and extensive outdoor recreation options of the San Luis Valley to provide experiential learning opportunities for campus, community, and regional visitors

The ALP is the only ASU academic program to specifically designed to significantly contribute to this initiative. By design, the ALP provides the academic courses training students to become capable leaders for the Adventure Program. ALP students impact thousands of lives each year through its partnership with the Adventure Program by leading local school groups, the Boys and Girls Club, Scout Troops, and many other organizations through challenge course programs and outdoor recreation activities. Throughout the summer, these students support a variety of local programs such as trail building projects with the BLM, Weekends on the Rio, and outdoor adventure camps. ALP students have served as interns for the Great Sand Dunes NP providing education and experiences to local youth and to visitors of the SLV. ALP students contribute to trail development and stewardship assisting our local land management agencies in attaining their goals.

In summary, the ALP has a variety of significant contributions to the quality of the student experience and the impact of ASU within the community. Though a very small program, with no operating budget and only adjunct instructors, it has a large impact. Leveraging and growing the ALP can be a strategic effort for the university moving forward.

Criteria 2

Quality of the program outcomes

Since the programs inception in 2011, 13 students have graduated from ASU and completed the ALP minor. Currently, 100% are employed.

- 7 initially attained jobs in the outdoor industry
- 1 attained a teaching position
- 3 are in graduate school

Graduation Trends of Similar Programs

Program	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adventure Education						12	11
Ecosystem Science and Sustainability					11	28	42
Environment and Sustainability			19	37	14	25	22
Environment and Natural Resources Economics	0	13	0	0	10	0	0
Environmental and Sustainability Studies				17	20	19	16
Environmental Studies	193	210	255	244	222	222	197
Environmental Science	22	39	37	30	46	36	34
Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology	50	44	66	68	72	80	81
Geography and Environmental Studies	64	61	62	73	82	68	60
Natural Resource Management	31	62	58	54	65	58	63
Recreation and Outdoor Education	34	27	30	28	30	28	20
Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality	27	33	28	42	48	38	45

Criteria 4 - Degrees Awarded (zero full-time faculty)

ALP Cohorts	Began the ALP minor	Currently Degree Seeking	Completed ALP Minor	Completed Undergraduate Degree at ASU	Persistence Rate	SCH
2018	6	6	IP	IP	100%	7
2017	5	5	IP	IP	100%	73
2016	4	3	1	1	100%	52
2015	6	6	4	IP	100%	101
2014	7	1	2	3	69%	70
2013	4	1	2	3	75%	48
2012	11	0	4	8	72%	125
2011	8	0	4	6	75%	87

Service to Campus

One adjunct faculty serves as the de facto program coordinator without remuneration or contractual obligations. As this adjunct is a full-time faculty for another program, their service to the university is recorded in another report.

Service to Community

The ALP Minor provides the training for ASU students to be capable of leading outdoor recreation and leadership development programs for the SLV.

- The Wilderness First Aid course is open to the public and each year 4-8 local citizens partake in this course primarily as part of their training for serving on our local Search and Rescue teams.
- On average, ALP students provide direct leadership for over a 1,000 local children and adults each year.

The adjunct faculty serving as the program coordinator has contributed the following to the local community:

- Board of Directors - San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
- Board of Directors - Rio Grande Farm Park
- Grant Contributor and Reviewers - GOCO Inspire 2016 which secured \$935,000 for outdoor recreation and education in the SLV
- Grant Writer - GOCO RIO 2017, Colorado Health Foundation, and Conservation Connection Initiative grants which secured \$1.02 million for outdoor recreation and education in the SLV. ASU, specifically, Adventure Programs benefited from these grants by \$115,122.
- Assistance in the coordination of Volunteer Outdoor Colorado projects in the SLV

Criteria 5

Criteria 6: Faculty and Program Strengths and Accomplishments

Faculty Credentials

- Two adjuncts are former board members for the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education which is the major national professional association
- One adjunct is the House Minority Leader in the House of Representative for the State of Idaho
- One adjunct is a co-editor and contributing author for the textbook Outdoor Programming Administration: Principles and Practices
- One adjunct is a contributing author for the textbook Outdoor Programming Administration: Principles and Practices
- Each adjunct is professionally certified in one or more disciplines of practice

- Three adjuncts have served as program directors for outdoor recreation programs two of which served at large universities

Quality of Program

- Curriculum designed to industry standards for each discipline
- Three of the eight courses provide professional and nationally recognized certification
- In 2016, recognized as “Top Adventure School” by Elevation Outdoors

Quality of Resources

- The ALP itself retains zero facilities or resources
- Currently, all resources for offering the courses is dependent upon Adventure Programs and Adventure Sports. The quality of the equipment and facilities of these two Student Service programs is conducive to delivering quality educational experiences.
- For the future, to be fair, it is best that the ALP compensate Adventure Programs for the use of equipment to assist with depreciation, replacement, and maintenance.
- The surrounding natural resources such as wilderness areas, rivers, trails, and technical terrain are exceptional for program delivery

Criteria 7: Future of the Program

Over the years, several of the ALP students indicated that if ASU had a major in the ALP they would have done it. In fact, one of the 2017 recruits for the Mountain Bike Team, after a conversation with one of the adjunct faculty who has been working to develop a major, indicated that such a major is exactly what he desires. Additionally, one current ASU senior has created an Interdisciplinary degree to include Adventure Leadership as one of her areas of concentration.

Bearing the preceding criteria in mind, it should be evident that ASU has an opportunity that it has yet to realize. Investing in the development of a major focusing on outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship is an excellent and timely fit for ASU.

Proposal:

A new major in Environmental Leadership housed within Earth Sciences has been drafted through strategic alignment of existing courses and minimal new courses. Over the past three years, preliminary program design and course development has been undertaken to be ready for the right opportunity. Potential degree plans have been drafted in collaboration with Biology, Earth Sciences, and the ALP.

- Adventure Recreation Emphasis
 - Expands upon the ALP minor
- Conservation Education Emphasis
 - Unique emphasis unlike any in the state

Justification:

- No Colorado institution combines outdoor adventure education curriculum within an Earth Science or Environmental Science program
- Due to our geography, the SLV is uniquely perfect for such a degree
 - 1 million acres of public lands
 - Diverse ecosystems (alpine desert, wetlands, 4th largest watershed in the nation, agriculture, etc)
 - Each federal and state land management agency has lands and offices within the SLV
 - Current partnerships already exist between ASU and the BLM, NFS, and GSDNP for our students to secure paid internships, volunteer projects, and other opportunities for out-of-the-class learning
 - Numerous local non-profit organizations focus on some aspect of conservation, stewardship, outdoor education, or outdoor recreation some of which already are engaging ALP students and other ASU interested ASU students
- Students who value the outdoors thrive in the SLV and at ASU
 - Two current ALP students transferred to ASU because of the ALP minor and the opportunities in and near the SLV
 - One current senior who planned to transfer was “re-recruited” to complete the ALP if additional outdoor training could be added to her degree. This student created an Interdisciplinary degree to emphasize Adventure Leadership and additional course work was created (Independent Study) to advance her skills.
- Low Risk Investment with Potential High Return
 - Little financial investment to begin the program (operational)
- Seamlessly aligns with the ASU 20/20

Strategy:

- Degree plans are primarily a reconfiguration of existing courses
- Core curriculum emphasizes the human interaction with the environment thus distinguishing it from existing programs
- Additional courses are minimal
- With appropriate course rotation, faculty loads should be within the appropriate margins

Initial Costs:

- \$10,000 Operating Budget for transportation, food, and equipment
 - Currently, ALP students must pay out of pocket a total of approximately \$1,200 in course fees to cover associated expenses for operating ALP courses. The course fees are a significant barrier to the current program’s success as many students have simply not been able to afford to take the courses. Adding an operating budget to subsidize the cost would assist in recruiting and retaining additional students.
 - An operating budget would also provide remuneration for the use of Adventure Program’s equipment thus mutually benefiting the quality of each program.
- Faculty
 - No additional increase in faculty necessary to initiate the new major

- Recommend one full-time position by year three
- Adjunct compensation should remain close to current allotment for the first two years as course rotation can allow for distribution of compensation. Current average cost for adjunct compensation is \$24,000 per year

Articulation Agreements:

- Colorado Mountain College - Currently in conversation with their Associate of Arts Outdoor Leadership program coordinator
- Red Rocks Community College - Has learned about our program through a former student and has also expressed interest

Grants:

As mentioned above, nearly 2 million in outdoor recreation and education grant funds have been secured for the SLV in the last two years alone. Grant opportunities are abundant within the SLV for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. Our current partners have years of conservation, stewardship, and educational work in their plans and ASU is fit to be a strong collaborator.

SLV K-12:

Within the non-profit community in the SLV there is a concentrated effort to connect K-12 with natural resource management. Numerous grants have been secured and others are currently being pursued to support inside and outside the classroom experiences. These curricular and co-curricular experiences are in direct partnership with state and federal land management agencies. Several of these agencies have inquired about ASU students qualified to assist with outdoor education programming.

Proposal Summary:

With a small investment, ASU can initiate a relevant and impactful program ideally suited for the San Luis Valley and the state of Colorado.