

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Academic Affairs

**NO:** AAC 20-04

**COMMITTEE DATE:** October 15, 2019

**BOARD DATE:** October 22, 2019

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**APPLICATION OF GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO AWARD THE  
ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE IN ADVENTURE EDUCATION**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the application of the **Greenfield Community College** to award the **Associate in Science in Adventure Education**

Upon graduating the first class for this program, the College shall submit to the Board a status report addressing its success in reaching program goals as stated in the application and in the areas of enrollment, curriculum, faculty resources, and program effectiveness.

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by AAC 10/15/2019; adopted by BHE 10/22/2019.

**Authority:** Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b)

**Contact:** Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**October 2019**  
**Greenfield Community College**  
**Associate in Science in Adventure Education**

**INTENT AND MISSION**

Greenfield Community College (GCC) provides essential pathways to careers as well as lifelong reskilling and learning programs. It is the only institution of higher education in rural Franklin County. GCC holds that its' most significant priorities are to expand options for student success, provide accessible resources to pathways for advanced education or employment, be adaptive and responsive to emerging circumstances, and apply principles of sustainability in all pursuits. GCC is committed to strengthening the community through teaching and learning in both classroom-based and experiential pedagogies. GCC rests on a 108-acre, rural campus, which provides opportunities for outdoor recreation for students and for the broader community. GCC further notes that, within a 60-mile radius, there are countless natural classrooms available, such as hiking trails, rivers, ponds, mountains, and valleys in which students will be expected to learn and practice their outdoor education skills.

The proposed Associate in Science in Adventure Education (AS/ ADE) is expected to both prepare students for immediate employment in the field of outdoor recreation and to serve as a transfer pathway for students pursuing bachelor's degrees in the field of outdoor leadership and education. GCC also expects that the proposed program will undergo periodic review and updates in accordance with transfer/community needs. Additionally, the themes of leadership and environmental responsibility, at the core of the AS/ADE program, are central to GCC's commitment to value-based, ecologically conscious education. The proposed AS/ADE program has 4 primary goals: meet the needs of GCC students with a degree program that leads to full-time employment; meet the needs of GCC students who intend to further their education and degree attainment; meet the needs of first-generation college students at the beginning of learning about outdoor industries; and meet the needs of graduates of the existing Outdoor Leadership Certificate program (OLP) who wish to complete an associate degree.

The proposed program has obtained all necessary governance approvals on campus and was unanimously approved by the Greenfield Community College Board of Trustees on August 28, 2019. The required letter of intent was circulated on February 8, 2019. No comments were received.

**NEED AND DEMAND**

*National and State Labor Market Outlook*

GCC reports that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for recreation workers will grow by 9% between 2016 and 2026. GCC also reports that the labor outlook in the outdoor industry in New England is strong. It is home to 510 accredited summer camps, approximately 107 ski areas, over a dozen whitewater rafting companies, several coastal kayaking tour operators, and several climbing gyms and canopy tour operations. In addition, many outdoor equipment retailers such as Eastern Mountain Sports, REI, LL Bean, and International Mountain Equipment offer guided hikes, backpacking trips, paddling trips, and technical climbing ascents. GCC also cites that the Appalachian Mountain Club offers guided outdoor experiences on a year-round basis. Challenge course companies such as High 5 in Vermont and Project Adventure in Massachusetts offer team-building programs throughout the region. New England is also home to two Outward Bound Schools with the Thompson Island Outward Bound school in Massachusetts and Hurricane Island Outward Bound school in Maine.

GCC finds that all these organizations require a labor pool of people with professional training in the diverse outdoor skills, group management skills, risk management and safety skills that OLP currently provides and which the proposed AS/ADE degree will further extend and develop.

Massachusetts has long been at the center of the development of the Adventure Education field with the Appalachian Mountain Club and Project Adventure, Inc. both having their national headquarters based in Massachusetts. Many public and private schools in Massachusetts include adventure education as components of their physical education curriculum, requiring qualified teachers that are trained in the safe management and instruction of climbing walls and challenge courses. GCC finds that as urban populations discover nearby opportunities for outdoor recreation, many of the ski areas and outdoor industries of central and western Massachusetts are expanding their offerings to include zip-lines, mountain biking trails, music festivals, mountain coasters, and other multi-season activities to attract and accommodate a growing tourism industry. In response to requests made by local employers (Berkshire East Adventure Resort, Zoar Outdoor, etc.) GCC proposes to provide students with the skills necessary to be able to respond to growing demands and find year-round, 4-season employment. GCC also finds that the existing OLP program is a reliable source for regional employers who are looking for qualified employees to work at their ski areas, rafting companies, climbing gyms, summer camps and other recreational programs and sites.

Common entry-level positions that OLP graduates and AS/ ADE graduates are expected to qualify for include camp counselor, wilderness instructor, canoeing instructor, coastal kayak instructor, canopy tour guide, ski touring instructor, outdoor skills instructor, backcountry guide, rock climbing specialist, backcountry logistician and support, climbing wall instructor, challenge course facilitator, outdoor equipment specialist. A recent GCC search of outdoor/adventure education jobs on Outdoored.com indicated about 30 jobs in the region. The National Outdoor Leadership Schools maintain a job bank database with more than 2,000 employers from across the country. The existing Outdoor Leadership certificate program at GCC has been offered for many years and as a result, GCC has significant connections with regional and national employers. The graduates of the certificate program have found employment as program coordinators in higher education, counselors in summer programs, technical instructors for rock climbing facilities, and outdoor adventure businesses in specialties including kayaking and challenge courses. Recently the role of information technology has increased in the industry providing accessibility in remote backcountry locations through cellular technology. Websites providing real-time data regarding weather, river levels, avalanche danger, trail conditions, and topographic maps are increasing and satellite technology to text and talk emergency communication and GPS navigation have increased as well. It is expected the GCC students are prepared to use these technologies and be trained to prepare emergency action plans within the programs field courses and expeditions.

### *Student Demand*

The proposed AS / ADE program is designed to target students in Franklin and Hampshire counties. Articulation agreements with several colleges and universities with bachelor's level programs are planned once approval from BHE is obtained. GCC's informal assessment via the outdoor leadership certificate has shown student interest in adventure education as well as students who value outdoor education as career enhancement goal. Examples included students interested in completing the proposed program and transferring to a 4-year degree that combines adventure education, with a counseling or substance abuse treatment qualification. Students also express interest in a business degree, planning to be employed by or own an outdoor adventure-based business. GCC's existing outdoor leadership certificate draws students from across the state and beyond and this consistent interest coupled with Mass Transfer appeal is viewed as ample evidence of student demand.

## **OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM**

The Coordinator of the Outdoor Leadership Program at GCC began development of the proposed program during the summer of 2018. This included an exploration of current 4-year programs in outdoor education and adventure degree offerings within the MA public college and university system as well as related programs at several private universities. Based on that process, as well as on feedback from the Outdoor Leadership Program's Advisory Board, the curriculum was assembled with transferability / MassTransfer as a major priority. The proposed program represents OLP certificate courses, placed within the framework of a liberal arts foundation that is advantageous for transfer. The resulting program is essentially a repackaging of existing courses. Each of these courses is reported to have years of academic and enrollment success.

The proposed AS /ADE program is planned to be administered by the OLP within the division of Business & Information Technology, Professional Studies, and Social Sciences. The OLP Coordinator will oversee the program, provide administrative assistance, participate in recruitment, and advise students. The Coordinator will also serve as the program contact and primary advisor for ADE majors. The Coordinator will receive administrative assistance through the office of the divisional dean. Any changes to the curriculum, program review, and assessments will follow existing committee structures and processes.

### *Duplication*

GCC reports that in the New England region, Washington County Community College in Calais Maine (WCCC) is the only other college that offers an associate's degree in outdoor leadership. Several other colleges and universities offer 4-year degrees involving outdoor leadership including Westfield State University in Maine, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State College in New Hampshire, Northern Vermont University, Salem State University in Massachusetts, and Unity College in Maine. The program that is most like the GCC certificate and proposal offers a 33-credit certificate and a 64-credit Associate's degree in Adventure Recreation and Tourism at WCCC.

## **ACADEMIC AND RELATED MATTERS**

### *Admission*

GCC maintains an open admissions policy for most programs and serves all who seek to learn. First year students will be expected to apply to the college and complete an application to the proposed program. A meeting with the OLP Coordinator will be part of the application and will include the applicant's discussion of their interest. The Program Coordinator also discusses the unique physical and time demands that participation in the OLP/AE courses requires. Reasonable accommodations are determined through a deliberative process that takes into consideration the technical standards of the program, the needs of the students, and whether any essential requirements of the program are being altered. The OLP certificate program has been inclusive with four students with deafness, a veteran with a disability that required a service dog, and numerous students with learning disabilities and mental health diagnoses. As examples, under the direction of the Office of Disability Services, sign language interpreters were hired and testing accommodations and assignment extensions are examples of accommodations. Students are expected to attend the OLP courses as scheduled. Most courses involve a full-day (e.g. 9am – 4pm) commitment and many involve multi-day (5 – 10-days) overnight wilderness expeditions. Students who have responsibility for children and families must arrange for child-care. It is planned that the program may also be completed part-time, such that students may choose to minimize disruption to their other roles and obligations.

Transfer students are expected to apply through the same process, including a review of transcripts to determine courses that may satisfy transfer requirements. Transcripts are reviewed and assessed by a GCC transcript evaluator and any prerequisite or program requirements that have been met at another institutions are accepted and the student is given credit. Regarding general education courses, or those that would exempt a student from engaging in traditional placement assessment, the transcript evaluator has sole discretion. Regarding courses that fulfill required courses for OLP, the OLP program coordinator is expected to be the determinant of transfer credits in partnership with the transcript evaluator.

GCC plans that early college and dual enrollment opportunities will be made available as dual enrollment students are currently admitted into OLP courses if the student meets pre-requisites and is at least 18 years of age for the expedition-based courses that involve overnight stays. Five courses in the proposed curriculum require student to test out of developmental English (OLP 111, 112, 116, 120, and 143). Several of the upper level courses have OLP 111: Introduction to Outdoor Adventure Skills, as a prerequisite, for example - OLP 143, 210, and 230.

### **Program Enrollment Projection**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
New Full Time	4	5	8	10
Continuing Full Time	0	4	5	8
New Part-Time	4	4	5	8
Continuing Part-Time	0	3	7	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>

### *Curriculum (Attachment A)*

The proposed Adventure Education program will not involve any sort of licensure as the state of Massachusetts does not require licensing for backcountry guides. However, the program will include all the outdoor skills certification courses that are already included in the college's Outdoor Leadership Program (OLP) certificate program. This includes nationally recognized certifications in specific skills areas including Wilderness First Responder (through the National Outdoor Leadership School), River Canoeing Instructor (through the American Canoe Association), Coastal Kayaking Instructor (through the American Canoe Association), Rock Climbing Instructor (through the Professional Climbing Instructors Association), and Challenge Course Facilitator (through the Association for Challenge Course Technology).

OLP has been accredited by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) since the mid-1990's and GCC's accreditation was renewed for another 3-year period beginning in May 2019. When the college hosted the AEE visiting team as part of the scheduled accreditation renewal process in October of 2018, the team was made aware of work to develop an option for an

associate's degree program in adventure education that would stack on the long-existing OLP certificate and the team was in full support of the effort. GCC anticipates that current accreditation will include the proposed Adventure Education degree program once approved, and that it will be part of the next accreditation review in the fall of 2022.

*Internships or Field Studies*

The proposed program does not include internships or field studies. It is expected that faculty and students may design teaching-assistant opportunities for second-year students within the program and under the guidance of OLP faculty. This is not a credit bearing opportunity and GCC plans that if a course enrollment exceeds ~10, second-year students will be paid for acting as teaching assistants. In the existing OLP certificate program this is driven by instructor-student ratio standards set by the outdoor education field.

*Affiliations and Partnerships*

The existing OLP has two external advisory committees, an Advisory Board and Risk Management Board. The OLP Advisory Board meets 3 times a year to discuss all aspects of the OLP program including marketing, staffing, curriculum, industry trends, equipment, and vision. The OLP Risk Management Board meet 2 times a year to discuss the management of risk in all OLP courses and activities, including reports on all OLP accidents, near misses, injuries, operating procedures, industry standards, and liability issues. Contact details for both boards, which draw from industry professionals, were included in the full proposal. The proposed program aligns with GCC's institutional priorities of student success and access by providing a direct road map for transfer through the Mass Transfer agreement. As well, articulation with several private and public universities are planned to be finalized once the proposed program has obtained BHE approval. Preliminary discussions for articulation agreements have taken place with representatives of Westfield State University, Prescott College, College of the Sierras, and Northern Vermont University.

**RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

*Fiscal (Attachment B)*

*Faculty and Administration (Attachment C)*

No additional faculty/staff positions are planned to deliver the proposed program. Instead, the program is expected to utilize existing faculty and staff.

*Facilities, Library and Information Technologies*

GCC plans that the proposed AS/ADE program will utilize existing resources and equipment, with sufficient facility and equipment infrastructure to implement the proposed AS/ADE program. Library and information technology support will be provided to students through the Nahman-Watson Library. Financial aid, learning and socioemotional support, will be provided to students through GCC's Testing Center, Advising Center, and Wellness Center.

**PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for Achievement</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Provide students with	Job Placement rates	Maintain long-standing positive relationships with	This data is evaluated by the ADE Program

marketable skills		local employers as well as the advisory board	Coordinator every spring following graduation
Prepare ADE graduates to transfer to a 4-year institution	Number of ADE graduates that transfer to a 4-year institution	ADE Program Coordinator will directly reach out to each program graduate and record post-graduation plans	<b>1-yr:</b> This data will be collected while meeting with students during fall/spring advising each year and/or graduation week
ADE students are successful at transfer institution	Number of full-time ADE students that graduate from transfer institution within 3 years (5 years for part-time students)	Graduates will be tracked via the National Student Clearinghouse	<b>5-yr:</b> This data will be evaluated during the 5-yr ADE program report
Meet needs of contingent workers in industry	Create new certifications and trainings for workers currently in the field	Develop courses on mountain biking, rafting, outdoor emergency care	<b>2 years</b>

## EXTERNAL REVIEW AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The proposed program was reviewed by Scott Jordan, Ph.D. coordinator of the Outdoor Recreation Leadership and Management baccalaureate program at Northern Michigan University and Frederick Medrick, Ph.D., Professor, Director and Chair of the doctoral program in sustainability education at Prescott College in Prescott Arizona. The team found the proposal to be thorough and carefully considered, and a very timely program supported by the history and resources of the college. They underscored the value of Adventure Education as an academic program and recognized its economic value as well. The reviewers noted that that the proposed provides an incentive for students to consider a future career in adventure education, which in an era of climate change, provides an academic program that can have an immediate and substantial impact on public awareness and the need for action to preserve natural resources. Drs. Jordan and Medrick recommended a more intentional and explicit emphasis on climate issues in the program. They also identified one of the strengths of the program is in providing a focus for the local population to learn through courses or engage in outdoor recreation opportunities as an introduction or recruitment into a direction and source of employment in an area that is rich with career options from public education to the recreational and commercial activities.

The team found that GCC has full capacity to support the proposed program with a long history of offering outdoor education programming and resources to students and the general public. The college has proposed a sequence of courses that will prepare students for the proposed degree or fit into similar degree programs. They found the course syllabi to be sufficiently

detailed and comparable to course offerings at other institutions with adventure education programs and degrees. The reviewers underscored that GCC has the faculty to teach courses and lead the field training essential to this field. They noted that other areas in the field not included in this proposal, such as therapeutic applications, are widely practiced in programs near GCC and around the state, suggesting this as an area for further development.

The college responded in appreciation of the review team report and recommendations. GCC underscored that the proposed curriculum is credit-heavy, with little room to add courses. Students are exposed to the therapeutic component of the adventure industry through an annual Outdoor Careers Panel Day. Invited representatives from a wide range of outdoor-related industries in the region, including those with therapeutic applications participate. Through panel discussions, presentations, and conversations with industry leaders, students are exposed to a range of therapeutically oriented work settings. Responding to the recommendation for more intentional focus on climate change GCC developed and has introduced to students a “Green Compass” tool, that measures the impact of a range of activities on the natural world. Such activities are framed as “Green Debt” that must be balanced with “Green Deeds” or service projects.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff thoroughly reviewed all documentation submitted by **Greenfield Community College** and external reviewers. Staff recommendation is for approval of the proposed **Associate in Science in Adventure Education** program.



## Attachment A: Curriculum

<b>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 7)</b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
OLP 111	Introduction to Outdoor Adventure Skills	4
OLP 112	Wilderness Orientation Expedition for Outdoor Leaders	4
OLP 116 or OLP 150	Teambuilding, Group-Development, and Fieldwork Fundamentals of Technical Rock Climbing	3
OLP 120	Wilderness Medical Preparedness and Rescue	2
OLP 143	Backcountry Travel Instructor I	3
OLP 210	Wilderness First Responder	4
OLP 216	Wilderness-Based Adventure Planning and Fieldwork	3
	<b>Subtotal Required Credits</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Program Elective Courses (Total # courses required = 2)</b>		
Two 200-Level OLP Electives from the following:	OLP 201; OLP 230; OLP 231; OLP 234; OLP 238; OLP 239	3-4
	<b>Sub Total Elective Credits</b>	<b>6-8</b>
<b>Distribution of General Education Requirements (Total # courses required=11)</b> Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		<b># of Gen Ed Credits</b>
<i>Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages (5 courses)</i> College Writing 1, ENG 101, 103, or 105 (3 credits) College Writing 2: ENG 112, 114, or 116 (3 credits) Any 9 credits of courses from the list of Humanities and Fine Arts General Education Electives*		15
<i>Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning (1 course)</i> Any one course coded MAT other than developmental courses		3-4
<i>Natural or Physical Sciences (2 courses)</i> BIO 104, Natural History and any 4-credit course coded BIO, CHE, GEO, PHY, SCI or EGR 105		8
<i>Behavioral and Social Sciences (3 courses)</i> Two from the following: ANT 104, ECO 101 or 102, EVS 101, POL 101, PSY 101 or SOC 101 And one 3-credit course from the list of Behavioral and Social Science General Education Electives*		9
<b>Sub Total General Education Credits</b>		<b>35-36</b>
<b>Curriculum Summary</b>		
Total number of courses required for the degree		20
Total credit hours required for degree		64-66
*General Education Electives and Course Descriptions can be found at <a href="#">GCC Online Course Catalog</a>		

**Attachment B: Budget**

<b>One Time/ Start Up Costs</b>		<b>Annual Expenses</b>			
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
	<b>Cost Categories</b>				
\$0	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Staff	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	General Administrative Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Facilities/Space/Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Field & Clinical Resources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$	Marketing	\$750	\$750	\$500	\$500
\$0	Other (Specify)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>\$0</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$500</b>

<b>One Time/Start-Up Support</b>		<b>Annual Income</b>			
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
	<b>Revenue Sources</b>				
\$0	Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Tuition	\$2,600	\$5,252	\$8,190	\$10,608
\$0	Fees	\$20,588	\$41,578	\$64,840	\$84,326
\$0	OLP Fees	\$10,580	\$10,930	\$25,585	\$18,360
\$0	Reallocated Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	Other (specify)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>\$0</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$33,768</b>	<b>\$57,760</b>	<b>\$98,615</b>	<b>\$113,294</b>

**ATTACHMENT C: FACULTY**

Summary of Faculty Who Will Teach in Proposed Program							
Name of faculty member (Name, Degree and Field, Title)	Check if Tenured	(C) indicates core course. (OL) any course currently taught online	Number of sections	Division of College of Employment	Full- or Part-time in Program	Full- or part-time in other department or program (Please specify)	Sites where individual will teach program courses
Richard Adamczyk <sup>1</sup>  Certificate in Outdoor Leadership  Professional Climbing Guide  Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	• OLP 230: Rock Climbing Instructor	(1)	Continuing Education	Part-time	Part-time	• Main Campus and Field
Brent Arsenault, MS  Education  Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	• OLP 112: Wilderness Orientation for Outdoor Leaders (C)	(1)	Continuing Education	Part-time	Part-time	• Main Campus and Field
Greg Gaskin, BCS  NS Microsoft Certified Systems Engineering  NB Recreation Management  Leave No Trace Master Educator  Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician  Instructor	<input type="checkbox"/>	• OLP 210: Wilderness First Responder (C)	(1)	Continuing Education	Part-time	Part-time	• Main Campus and Field

<sup>1</sup> +multiple professional certifications in Outdoor Leadership included on Adamczyk resume in full proposal



