Risk Management Review of University of Maryland, Campus Recreation Services - Outdoor Recreation Program

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Preface

At the request of the Outdoor Recreation Program at the University of Maryland (UMD-ORP), Adventure Incorporated conducted a two-day review and assessment of UMD-ORP Risk Management Documentation. The review only included the information that was sent to Adventure Incorporated as stipulated by the Adventure Incorporated Risk Management Self Assessment Form. Adventure Incorporated was then requested to conduct a two day onsite risk management review. The review was not conducted as a response to any situation or crisis, but rather as an attempt to further improve and refine an already excellent program.

Structure of the Documentation Review

In the following report Adventure Inc. evaluated UMD-ORP in eight specific areas:

Areas of Focus

1. Risk Management Oversight
   - Financial
   - Legal
   - Program Management

2. Client Relations
   - Pre-Program
   - During Program
   - Post Program

3. Program Activity Management
   - Program Preparation
   - Program Delivery
   - Program Evaluation

4. Program Environment
   - Physical
   - Cultural
   - Legal & Political

5. Staff Management
   - Staff Screening
   - Staff Training
   - Staff Management

6. Operations/Logistics
   - Property Management
   - Equipment Management
   - Scheduling

7. Crisis Response
   - Pre-Crisis
   - Crisis Response
   - Post Crisis

8. Program Evaluation and Development
   - Internal Reviews
   - External Reviews
   - Program Development
Introduction

Primary Focus of the Review

The University of Maryland Outdoor Recreation Program (UMD-ORP) oversees four separate recreation/adventure education programs. They are:

- The Equipment Rental and Bike Shop
- The Climbing Wall
- The Challenge Course
- The Adventure Trip Program

It was clear from the beginning of the review that both the ropes course and climbing wall were well built, inspected and run. As a result the primary focus of this review was on the Adventure Trip program and, in some specific cases, the Rental Program.

Primary Strengths

- Officially opened in March of 1998, the Outdoor Recreation Program has done an exceptional job at creating a professional risk management culture among their student staff. Often one of the greatest challenges that programs such as O.R.P. face, is getting young staff members to give and receive feedback. Without prompting from the Consultants the students spoke eloquently about the importance of communication among staff, even concerning those issues that can be seen as “sensitive”.

- The Outdoor Recreation Center and the Adventure Complex is a clear example of the attention that the University gives to the Outdoor Recreation Program. In terms of organization, quality and condition of equipment, and facility management the O.R.P. outperforms almost any other program the consultants have visited.

- The program limits the range of activities that it provides in order to focus their energies on providing a few programs with the highest possible quality.
Primary Challenges

➤ Due to its relative youth, the Outdoor Education Program lacks consistency in its systems and documentation.

➤ The Terrapin Trail Club is an old and respected university outing club that may be unintentionally misleading its constituents. As a result it is important that the University of Maryland consider the role that the Terrapin Trail Club plays in its community.

➤ The rental of technical outdoor equipment to unskilled students creates an ethical dilemma that may not be consistent with the educational mission of the university.