Dear Candidate,

This letter will hopefully provide you with a better understanding of the position for which you are applying and better prepare you for your upcoming interview process. We are currently seeking motivated individuals to join our trip staff that have a passion for the outdoors, enjoy learning new skills, and have a genuine desire to teach others. Let me briefly explain what it means to be a trip leader with Outdoor Adventures. And it all starts with our mission:

To Engage Individuals and Groups in Adventure Experiences for Escape, Education & Enjoyment

Trip Staff
Outdoor Adventures’ trip program is primarily student led, and student driven. This means that students are empowered and trained to plan and lead our student and community trips which have included activities and destinations in the past such as backpacking in the Grand Canyon, bike touring in the Black Hills, rock climbing in Arkansas, paddling in Nebraska, and trekking in Australia. Our trip leaders guide trips year round including spring break, fall break, and weekends in between. Trip leaders not only lead trips, but teach 1 credit academic classes (Backpacking, Climbing, etc), instruct clinics (ie Kayaking), and facilitate groups on our Challenge Course.

Rest assured, we do not expect you to come in with a ton of experience and there will be ample training and development opportunities made available. A trip leader’s success depends on their ability to be detail oriented, professional, organized, and pro-active with their own development. Trip staff are seen as leaders within Outdoor Adventures and are often the most experienced in the breadth of programs that we offer (ie, trips, bike shop, rentals, climbing wall, academic classes, and challenge course). In short, trip leaders do it all!

Trip Staff Expectations

2 Year Commitment
Becoming an outdoor leader takes time. There is a great deal of training and experience that must take place in order to be an effective member of trip staff. Therefore, we ask that you are able to commit to a minimum term of 2 years as a member of trip staff.

Outdoor Leadership Seminar (OLS)
OLS is Outdoor Adventures’ annual weeklong trip leader training. Attending this training is required as it provides the core of your training as a member of trip staff. OLS can also be viewed as your 3rd interview as you must successfully pass OLS to be hired for a position on trip staff. This training will be mentally, physically, and emotionally challenging, but we believe it will be one of the most educational and inspiring experiences of your college career! On OLS, you will teach lessons, give and receive feedback, and lead your peers during a leadership day in the backcountry. The dates of this year’s OLS are (Summer 2012) and will be a backpacking trip in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. This training will cost applicants $150 and will include most food, all group gear, and transportation. You just need to provide meals to and from the activity site, personal clothing and footwear, some of which you may need to purchase. There will be three mandatory pre-trip meetings for this year’s OLS. The dates of these meetings dates and times will be April 4th, 2012 6p-9p, April 18th, 2012 6p-9p and August 5th, 2012 1p-4p

Challenge Course Instructor Training (CCIT)
Developing soft skills and being able to facilitate a group experience is an integral skill set of a trip leader. Therefore, our trip leaders are also trained to work as Challenge Course facilitators. Our challenge course programs consist of “low ropes” games and initiatives as well as a “high ropes” course. We work with both UNL and community groups to provide unique experiences that focus on issues such as teambuilding, fun!!,
communication, balance, problem solving, and trust. Required Challenge Course Instructor Training for next spring will take place (TBA). Training will take place at the UNL Challenge Course just outside of Lincoln. Training costs and food is covered by Outdoor Adventures.

Wilderness First Responder
Wilderness First Responder training is an 80 hour medical curriculum designed specifically to provide you with the tools to make critical medical and evacuation decisions in remote locations. This course is provided by the Wilderness Medicine Training Center and leads to a nationally recognized certification. This course includes certification for 2 years. New trip staff hires are expected to become certified as Wilderness First Responders (WFR’s) within 1 year of their hire date. Trip Staff pays approximately half of the tuition for their WFR and Outdoor Adventures covers the rest. Likely dates for this course will be January 2013.

Precision Driver Training
Precision Driver Training is the required training for trip leaders to drive participants in University vehicles and to tow trailers. This training takes places in Oklahoma City (TBA). Travel, food, and lodging is covered by Outdoor Adventures.

Site Management Trainings (SMT’s)
Following OLS, Trip Staff will have the opportunity to choose their areas of specialization. For example, some trip leaders try to do it all; bike tours, backpacking, rock climbing, & canoeing. However this is an extreme time commitment and most leaders choose 1-2 areas of focus. For each activity area, staff attends a 3-4 day-long Site Management Training (SMT). These trainings provide staff with the foundational skills necessary to lead and instruct these trips. Outdoor Adventures covers the cost of most food and transportation for these trainings. Dates TBA.

Trip Staff Meetings
Trip Staff meets regularly (biweekly to monthly) in order to discuss current and pertinent topics, drink coffee, and provide face time with trip staff as a whole. Attendance at these meetings is expected of trip staff.

Work Hours and Shifts
Again, trip staff is indeed a commitment! Beyond trip and challenge course duties, you will receive regularly scheduled work hours at the climbing wall, equipment rental center, and bike shop. Trip Staff will also take, assistant instruct, or instruct 1 academic class per semester. Of course you will be able to indicate your preferences and we work around your academic schedule. Most trip leaders work about 5-15 hours of regularly scheduled work hours per week.

Summer 2012
We prefer Trip Staff work at Outdoor Adventures for the first summer of employment. This is to help new staff become proficient in all program areas, and receive ongoing training and experience. During the summer, you can expect to receive 20-40 hours of work at Outdoor Adventures, some of which will be working with contracted summer camp groups. After working the first summer, trip staff is welcome to work outside of Outdoor Adventures for the summer as long as it is directly related to personal/professional development related to Outdoor Adventures or your chosen career field. Many staff will work as raft guides, wilderness therapy field instructors, camp counselors, or find internships.

As you can see, being a member of trip staff is indeed a time commitment and the expectations are intentionally high. We strive for a culture of integrity, where staff hold each other accountable, and support each other in growing as leaders and individuals. And this takes time. It is not uncommon for trip leaders to have a heavy course load of classes, be leading a Spring Break backpacking trip to Utah, be teaching a climbing academic class and leading the trip, work regularly scheduled hours at the climbing wall and equipment rental/bike shop, and also have a full social life and other outside commitments! While the investment on your part is huge and it takes skill and motivation to find balance, I am confident that if chosen for this position, your experience at Outdoor Adventures will be unforgettable and will be a strong and positive influence on your life long after you graduate from UNL.
The Interview/Hiring Process and Trip Staff Development Model

I’m looking forward to the interview process and getting to know you better and learning about your personal goals! There will be 2 interviews each lasting about 45 minutes to an hour. The first interview will be with student staff and the second interview will be with OA Administrative Staff. After these 2 interviews, we will contact you within a week with an answer. If hired, you will be a full Outdoor Adventures employee; however acceptance onto trip staff is dependent on performance during OLS (third interview).

Below is a visual chart of the OA Hiring Process and Trip Staff Development Model:
After the Interview

After your second interview, we plan to contact you within one week with an answer. If hired, you will begin with several training opportunities to get up to speed in the Equipment Rental Center and Climbing Wall before receiving regular work shifts.

Thanks again and see you soon! I hope this letter finds you well and provides you with some answers to questions you may have. Feel free to contact me with any further questions.

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“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” – John Muir