



Student intern, Colin Hower rock climbing.

The Garrett
College
Adventuresports
Institute does
not offer your
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Facing page: Andy Hershey, Associate Professor, demonstrates rock climbing at Fork Run Recreation Area.

In fact, the institute probably doesn't offer your father or brother's college curriculum. Earning credits for completing courses that may be your passion just doesn't seem to fit into the traditional view of higher education. The Adventuresports Institute (ASI) of Garrett College in McHenry, Maryland has been changing the conventional view of college curricula, and is a place where educational programming meets the unique needs of students and a growing adventure recreation outdoor industry.

The idea to create an academic program utilizing natural resources of the Tri State region was fostered in a setting much like the ones ASI students currently experience. Mike Logsdon, a physics instructor at Garrett College and part time whitewater guide, was directing a party of beginners through rapids on the Cheat River when an inspirational thought occurred. "Around 1984, we were shooting through the rapids when the thought came to me that the college should teach whitewater skills through an academic program. The interest in outdoor activities and extreme sports was growing at the time. There was an obvious need for trained guides and adventure recreation business owners to meet the growing demand."



skiing/snowboarding, Wilderness First Responder-Advanced First Aid, rescue, and leave no trace education.

Students' skills become more proficient, and they gain leadership qualities under the guidance of certified instructors, a process that culminates in unique "final exams" that may be held in white-water flumes or wilderness areas.



The inspirational moment evolved into a draft proposal for a two year degree program of study that mixed traditional academics with outdoor programming. Outdoor professionals offered critiques of Mike's initial proposal that became known as Adventuresports. Mike helped to guide the curriculum through the state certification process in 1992 and later became Executive Director of ASI.

What differentiates the Adventuresports college program from traditional ones is the emphasis placed on experiencing the outdoors. "We offer more hands-on experiences than most four year programs and that helps our students become proficient in adventure recreation outdoor activities," stated Mike. The diverse set of courses include training in whitewater paddling, cold weather and outdoor back country living skills, rock/ice climbing, mountain biking, ropes/challenge courses,

Top left: Andy Hershey and Chad Smith put on safety harnesses in preparation for rock climbing.

Above: Student, Garrett Werner, ice climbing at a nearby ice formation. *Photo courtesy Adventuresports Institute.*

Right facing page: Scott Richardson, Adventuresports Institute Program Director, mountain biking.



choose among the following options: business/retail, coaching, education, environmental, multi-media, and therapeutic. Students must also complete the general education courses required by Garrett College in order to receive a two year associate's and applied science degree.

Scott Richardson, ASI staff member and TAY Coordinator, oversees the campus retail shop that is stocked with essential equipment. "Some of our students want a work experience that will prepare them for retailing and outfitter businesses, so we assign them to the campus store for three hours a day, five days a week. Other students may want to work with our Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program where they mentor 8th grade Garrett County Public School students using adventure recreation experiences as a backdrop for personal growth. Each semester we also hire a student to service mountain bikes. Our internships and work experiences are always an extension of what is learned in the classroom and directed to the needs of the outdoor industry; they are also a big part of planning and delivering activities."

While Garrett students have the advantage of a four distinct season environment and a diverse regional geology, they also are challenged by events around the country. As Mike stated, "We couldn't deliver our program if we stayed exclusively in our region. Our students may elect to participate in programs and events in Florida and other states.

Adventuresports instructors are knowledgeable and skilled in their content areas but also reach out to recognized experts. As faculty member Andy Hershey explained, "We have some of the best instructors in the country work with our students. This keeps us current and provides for a low student-to-teacher ratio in the field."

The course work is augmented by additional track options that allow students' work experiences necessary for future employment opportunities. Students may



To get the best training and experiences, we have a variety of offerings and locations for our students.” A recent example of an ASI competitive event was the Mid-Atlantic “Tough Mudder Adventure Challenge” held in Gerrardstown, West Virginia, where students successfully completed the 10 mile course. Typical examples of out-of-state activities that are embedded into course work are directed by faculty member Andy Hershey who instructs climbing courses that challenge students’ skills in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York and Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. Similar activities are directed by other faculty and staff.



Acquiring technical skills is an obvious requirement for ASI students, but according to Mike, it is not the only

goal. “The most important message that we convey to our students is to learn good judgment and manage risks. We really emphasize risk management in our classrooms and off site.”

At ASI, risk management is governed by the definition of “adventure sports.” In recent years, the popularity of extreme sports has created the perception that “adventure” and “extreme” is synonymous. As Scott explained, “There are activities we do not participate in because they pose an increased risk to our students. For ASI students, adventure sports means: human powered, the challenges come from nature, there is a degree of elevated risk, and there is problem solving. Insurance costs also are a consideration when deciding which activities should be included. Adventuresports instructors stress that risks



Facing page (top left): Scott Richardson fitting Abigail Friend, TAY Program participant, with a required safety vest for kayaking.

Facing page (top right): Mike Malfaro, adjunct professor and TAY Coordinator of Field Activities, Shaun Dixon, and Sarah Fowler, mentor/instructor (left to right) pumping up duck boats in preparation for a reservoir float with TAY Program participants.

Facing page (bottom) and this page (below): TAY Program participants begin their float trip on the Savage River Reservoir.

Above: Mike Malfaro instructs Nathaniel Langford and all students in the proper use of a kayak paddle.



associated with the adventure recreation industry may be minimized by exercising good judgment.”

Classrooms at ASI are equipped with HD video and state of the art sound systems. Off site activities are recorded and later critiqued by peers and instructors in the instructional setting. Mountain bike riding techniques, canoe maneuvering, and other skills are not only discussed but also compiled by students into an online portfolio that is made available to potential employers.

Terry Peterson, ASI faculty member, is responsible for classroom instruction that focuses on adventure sports theory. “Students are required to research experiential activities from a leadership and group dynamics perspective. In addition to the research component, we also include experiential strategies in classroom settings. Students are required to facilitate activities that take into account risk management and other components of adventure sports. The activities are subject to peer reviews and instructor assessments. ASI classes are not based on a lecture format.” The core classes are also aligned with certification programs and four year academic institutions in mind, so that students are presented with options following completion of ASI studies.

Adventuresports attracts many non-traditional students as indicated by the average age of graduates. Scott fit neatly into the program’s niche for outdoors training. “This is my second career. I worked in health care and



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became a non-traditional student because I saw ASI as a great avenue to change careers. I was 37 years old when I came into the program.” Doug Carty, 2001 alumni, was also influenced to attend ASI after a stint at Arizona State. “I loved the coursework at ASI. My certification later allowed me to start an outdoor program at Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire. I am truly appreciative of my time at GC.”

Terry believes the success of ASI programming is due to its depth and breadth of certification programs and opportunities in the field.



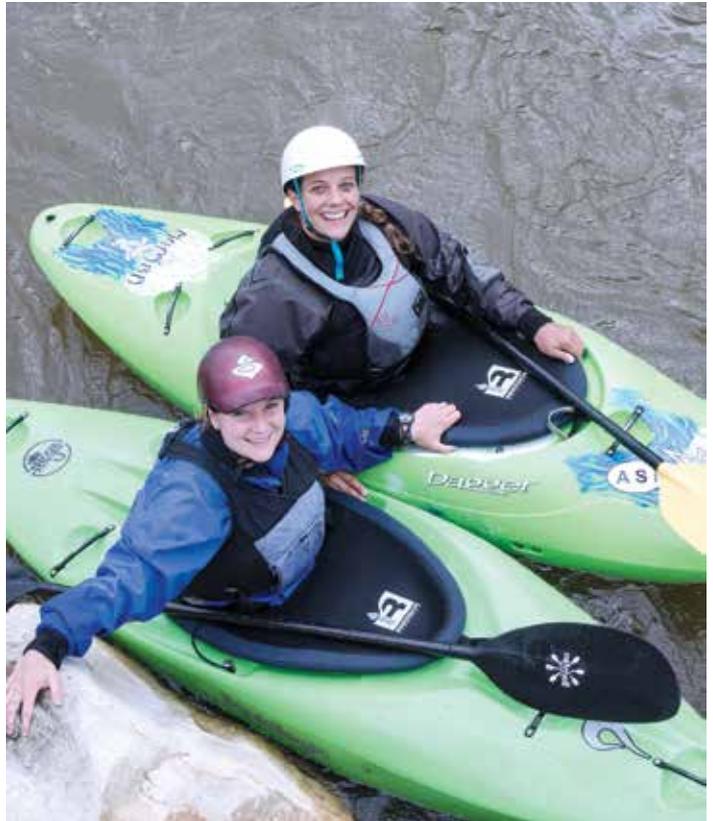
Facing page (both photos): Terry Peterson, Associate Professor of Adventuresports, demonstrates proper whitewater kayaking technique at Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI).

Above: Student, Colin Hower, in challenging whitewater.

“We receive feedback from our graduates who have transferred to other schools that they were well prepared for four year programs and employment.”

Andy Hershey noted, “Our program provides students with skills and knowledge relating to the outdoors. We also stress risk management, leadership, and group dynamics that give students a picture of the outdoor industry as a whole. When our students graduate, they are well informed about what is going on in the field.”

An examination of ASI alumni reveals that hundreds of graduates now work in the outdoors and adventure recreational fields across the country and globe. It is also noted that while many graduates accept employment immediately after college, others choose to enroll at Frostburg State University where an articulation agreement between the two institutions ensures a smooth transition to a bachelor’s degree in recreation program of study. While the course work at both schools may not always be traditional, it is one that would make grandfather happy!



Top: Kristen Yant (front) and Meredith Eibl, a student at Adventuresports Institute at Garrett College, paddle the ASCI course together.

Photos above: Kristen and Meredith, along with Colin Hower, learn the Eskimo roll technique.



Top inset: Everyone rafting at ASCI must take a safety orientation before starting.

Inset above and photo at right: Guided whitewater rafting at ASCI is fun and can be enjoyed by all (weight requirements must be met).



Michael Logsdon, Executive Director and Professor of Adventuresports Institute of Garrett College and Acting Executive Director, Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI), was instrumental in developing the program at Garrett College in 1992. He helped guide the curriculum through the state certification process and later became Executive Director of the program.

For more information on the Adventuresports Institute, see www.adventuresportsi.org or call 301-387-3330. Also see Garrett College website at www.garrettcollege.edu. Garrett College is located at 687 Mosser Road, McHenry, MD 21541; 1-866-554-2773 or 301-387-3000.