Project Background

Field trips and field courses provide an unparalleled learning opportunity for university students, especially in the sciences of forestry, geography, ecology, anthropology, and geology. Field experiences provide students with hands-on training, expose students to real-world scenarios, and allow students to observe pristine environments. Overnight field courses provide these learning opportunities and facilitate students’ connection to nature and a sense of community.

Faculty Risk Management Survey

In order to understand the risk management practices and protocols in place on university field courses, I distributed a short anonymous online survey about field management practices on overnight courses to community college and university faculty. I distributed the survey on listservs for ecologists, geologists, and anthropologists. I gave the survey in 2013 (n=16) and 2015 (n=36). Most of the respondents were ecologists, geologists, and anthropologists.

Online Risk Management Training

The majority of college faculty who teach field courses do not have an outdoor education background. I designed RM101: Introduction to Risk Management in response to a request from colleagues for a brief risk management training that would highlight their blind spots and help them plan to manage risk. It introduces a framework and that faculty and administrators can use to weigh the risk of course activities against the learning outcomes for the class. The training also provides written planning materials and sample emergency response forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Subject</th>
<th>Course Environment</th>
<th>Course Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Forested Environment</td>
<td>1 night 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Rivers/Lakes</td>
<td>2-3 nights 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Env. Science</td>
<td>Mountain Environments</td>
<td>4-7 nights 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Coastal Ecosystems</td>
<td>7-14 nights 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Deserts</td>
<td>14+ nights 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>Urban Areas</td>
<td>Other 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents could select more than one answer for the course subject area.

Survey Results

**Do you carry field communication devices on overnight courses?**

- Yes 13%
- No 87%

**Do you have someone who is trained in wilderness medicine on course?**

- Yes 44%
- No 56%

**Do you have someone on call while you are in the field?**

- Yes 33%
- No 67%

**Do you carry an emergency evacuation plan with you in the field?**

- Yes 81%
- No 19%

**Does your institution have an emergency response plan for a serious field incident?**

- Yes 41%
- No 59%

**Do you feel that the training, policies, and protocols on your courses are adequate?**

- Adequate 67%
- Not adequate 33%

**Are faculty members asked to disclose the risks on their courses in syllabi or marketing materials?**

- Yes 73%
- No 27%

Check it out – for free!

RM101 combines video lectures, whiteboard animations, scenarios, short quizzes, and online discussions to illustrate basic principles of field risk management. The training is in the testing phase right now; the full release will be in mid-November. If you’d like to get a preview of RM101 please take a card below and use the free coupon code to register at http://educate-wild.teachable.com. You can register now and have access to all of the current and future content in the course.

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