



"Proposal for targeted Veteran overnight kayak excursion"

Proposed Motions: *"Approval for Veteran targeted overnight kayak excursion"*

Sponsor: *VP for Diversity, Cristina Rodriguez*

Persons of Contact: *Matthew Swisher, Veterans Outreach Center Coordinator*

Date: *October 20, 2014*

Attached Document

There are no supplementary documents for this proposal

Background & Context

This proposal is being brought to the board due to the fact that the Veteran Outreach Center is working toward strengthening the veteran community at Western Washington University. As one of the smallest communities on campus, the veteran community is often isolated from fellow students and from each other. The VOC has worked with the Veteran Service office, Western Veteran Community and other veteran support organizations in the community of Bellingham to raise awareness of veterans and connect them with one another. Historically, programs conducted by the VOC have been non-targeted to encourage members of the community, regardless of veteran status, to attend in order to promote understanding of veterans; but recently the VOC has changed some of its traditional methods of community building by focusing directly on the individual experience of veterans and strengthening the community from its very foundation. The VOC will attempt to build a stronger rapport among veterans by conducting a targeted outdoor excursion that will focus on bringing the veteran community together. As this will be a new event conducted by the VOC, its success or failure will determine the need for future board proposals.

Summary of Proposal

The Veteran Outreach Center, in conjunction with the Outdoor Center, is proposing an overnight kayak excursion, taking place on November 22nd -23rd, where veterans, under the supervision of guides, will kayak to Lummi Island to camp overnight. The experience will bring together 6-9 veterans of any age to a safe space outside of a traditional or monotonous setting and into an environment where they can truly express themselves as individuals. The goal of this excursion will be to connect this smaller group of veterans who can then take the experience and reach out to others in the community. Due to a limited amount of space and the intended goal of the event, the need for targeting the Veteran Community will better the chances of success in accomplishing the task of community building. Raising awareness of veterans, the ROP and the AS as part of the missions laid out for the VOC, the funds provided from the office itself will be better spent if the event is targeted towards those within the Veteran community. The success or failure of this event will determine expanding like events past a targeted community in the future. The possibility of poor weather could lessen the chances of the success of the excursion and hinder the opportunity for future events similar in nature.

Fiscally

The VOC will propose approximately \$180 of the money allotted for the development of programs from the VOC budget in order to lower the expense for participation in the overnight kayak excursion. The Outdoor Center will provide funding to cover the larger expenses of the excursion. Participants will be responsible to provide their own meals (lunch, snacks, and breakfast) and will donate \$5-\$10 for a community dinner.

Rationale

The success of this proposed event will strengthen and even create new relationships in a community who come from a culture of building confidence in oneself and those around them. This event will provide short and long-term benefits by broadening the experiences of the participants and provide them a chance to escape both mentally and physically from the stress of everyday life.