

2018 Associated Students

Outdoor Center Equipment and Bike Shop

AS Office of Assessment



Introduction' .

The Outdoor Center Equipment and Bike shop presented to Management Council on March 12, 2018. The currently approved statement of purpose for the Outdoor Center is:

The Associated Students' Outdoor Center provides a variety of outdoor related opportunities and activities for all students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Emphasis is placed on developing and refining skills, responsible environmental practices, fostering diversity, enriching the academic experience, and promoting life-long learning. Resources include a knowledgeable staff, equipment rentals, the bike shop, excursions, educational resources, and instructional clinics.

Program/Services Provided' .

- Foster a hands on learning environment by instructing customers on bike maintenance and repair.
- Provide resources, tools, and space for bike repairs and maintenance.
- Stock common bike parts for customer purchase and allow for special order sales if specific parts are not stocked.
- Access for students, staff, and alumni to rent a wide variety of recreational equipment at affordable prices.
- Host instructional clinics on bike maintenance.
- Serve the student body as a resource for learning about outdoor recreation in the area.
- Instruct customers on how to safely and properly use outdoor gear.

SW/COT Chart'

SCOT Analysis	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide a variety of resources for WWU Students, staff, and to members of the community. • A unique aspect of the WWU outdoor center is we are a student run facility that supports the needs of the student body as a whole. • We provide rentals and bike maintenance at an accessible, low rate. • Provide educational opportunities through bike clinics and gear information sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient training of employees with regards to gear maintenance, use of gear and information. • Maintaining gear for future use • Lack of organization within the equipment and bike shop. • Limited hours to complete job description and requirements • Missing the proper system to be efficient and organized within the OC • Rough transitions between coordinators • Processes not being adequately passed down
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource center-in the past was a place to plan trips and get information • Funding to keep innovating and progressing the resources available at the OC. • Partnership with other on campus groups to allow for rentals • Innovating more ways for people to be involved with the outdoor center without having to pay or be employed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor administrative support • Poor interaction with the student body as a whole. • Working with other offices and communities within the University.

Areas for Improvements/Recommendations:

The following are the validated recommendations for strategic goals over the next four years:

1. Update current POS and reservations system

One of the main functions of the Equipment and Bike shop is to provide easy and accessible rentals for students. While providing rentals and resources it is a priority of the outdoor center to provide exceptional customer service. Our current front desk system prevents our staff from providing optimal and

efficient customer service. In its present state, the system consists of two separate operating systems, our point of sale and our reservations system. There is also a backup paper system and a backup tagging system to remedy any miscommunication between the original two. This makes it a challenge to track equipment locations as it requires cross referencing across four different systems. This disorganization has led to numerous items being misplaced, which is both a financial loss and an overall loss to the student body as the items can no longer be rented out. The lack of efficiency results in long wait times for customers, confusion, and mistakes.

The current POS and reservations system was built in-house by VU Tech Services and therefore costs nothing to operate, yet this is also the reason that it lacks sophistication. Prior to its creation, the head of IT for the AS worked with the Outdoor Center to find a suitable third party software at a suitable cost, but was unsuccessful. The costs of a new third party software were too steep. Current costs associated with a new system include upfront costs for the hardware and installation, then a flat monthly cost that increases per user. Our current head of IT, Jeremy McAllister gives a rough max estimate of these costs to be \$15,000 the first year, then \$5,000 for subsequent years.

Possible Solutions

Due to the current complexity of the system and the time frame from which she was suggested, the Outdoor Center Bike and Equipment Shop Coordinator was unable to accurately determine the financial losses resulting from the current system and the total amount of customers the system serves per quarter. To accurately gauge these values, ongoing tracking must be conducted from the beginning of the quarter to the end. We recommend that this assessment be conducted in the following years in order to justify the addition of a new POS and Reservations system. Jeremy McAllister has looked into potential new systems and has referred a system called Ezrentout to the OC. Ezrentout has monthly costs ranging from \$50 to \$225, plus \$20 per additional user¹. At first glance this system appears to have a low costs compared to the industry and appears to have all the features desired by the OC. We recommend further assessment of its costs and features, maybe

¹ www.Ezrentout.com/pricing

through its free trial offer, to be conducted by the OC before justifying its purchase.

2. Designate one bike shop technician as a contact

Currently the equipment and bike shop coordinator is responsible for ordering parts for the bike shop. This can be challenging for the coordinator, as the coordinator typically does not spend much time in the bike shop. At times there can be communication errors between the bike shop staff and the coordinator in regards to shop needs. We recommend that the next Equipment & Bike Shop Coordinator designate one bike shop technician as a primary contact with the rest of the with bike tech staff to reduce confusion.

3. Create a standardized training for incoming front desk and bike tech staff

This year the equipment and bike shop coordinator worked on creating standardized training systems for bike techs, rental and resource staff, and equipment techs. Although this framework helped in creating some guidelines for the training of new employees, the training could use further development, particularly with the bike tech training. To further the development of standardized training we recommend to:

- Outsource training to professional services for bike tech training, or collaborate with a local bike shop for training assistance.

- Work with AS Personnel office, Human Resources, and LEADS to implement customer service and leadership trainings.

4. Implement Diversity and Inclusion Trainings for OC staff

Currently there is no required diversity and inclusion training for OC equipment and bike shop staff. These staff members interact with students from all across campus, and it is important for them to have an understanding of how to create an inclusive and welcoming space for all. We recommend requiring bike shop staff to attend AS trainings or work with the LEADS program or other groups on campus to organize alternative trainings.

5. Create a yearly evaluation protocol for senior staff

In the outdoor center hourly staff are given the opportunity to stay on working at the outdoor center for as long as they would like. Currently the job description does not specify how long the term of these positions are. An evaluation process would help to maintain a staff that is dedicated, hardworking, and passionate about working at the outdoor center. It would

provide a platform for employees to reflect on their work experience at the Outdoor Center and develop skills if needed.

6. Increase outreach for hiring

Due to the unpredictable nature of position openings, publicity about new positions has in the past been somewhat overlooked. People who come into the outdoor center may learn about the positions, but new position openings do not tend to reach the western community at large. This could be improved by anticipating position openings more in advance, and by working with the Marketing Coordinator, and more importantly the personnel office, to ensure the word gets out about the position openings that happen during the middle of the year.

7. Create a winter gear clothing closet for the OC Equipment shop

Currently the Outdoor Center rents a variety of winter related gear such as snowboards, skis, and snowshoes, but do not provide any options for attaining winter clothing associated with these activities. For many individuals renting out gear it is their first time participating in these activities, and they do not own appropriate winter clothing. Creating an outdoor gear closet would make these activities more accessible for those who may be trying them for the first time. This gear closet would be filled with clothing that is donated to the OC, and given to individuals in need at no charge.

8. Ski and snowboard helmets

Currently the Outdoor Center does not rent ski and snowboard helmets. It is our policy to rent out bike helmets and locks any time a bike is rented out in order to encourage bicycle safety. It would also be beneficial and sensible to apply this same policy to our ski and snowboard rentals. I propose we make purchasing ski and snowboard helmets a priority for next year, given the budget allows.

9. Create a community space at the Outdoor Center

The outdoor center is a place where people come not only to rent gear, but also to meet people to go outside with. Creating a space where people could come to meet others with similar interests, without any financial obligations, would help increase accessibility to outdoor activities and expand western's outdoor community.

