

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK 2010 (New Participant)

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” ~Anne Frank

MISSION:

Alternative Spring Break (ASB) is a unique opportunity for students to dedicate their spring break to doing community service. ASB often immerses students in communities they are unfamiliar with to do work they have never done before. *This makes for an intense cultural, educational and personal experience.* The philosophy driving ASB is that it is not enough to simply provide service but that one must seriously examine why that service is necessary in the first place. Of course, ASB is not all work and no play. Having fun and forming friendships are major parts of ASB. Pre-trip meetings, fundraising efforts, service and reflection bring students close together and provide daily opportunities to get to know new people and have a good time.

THE VALUE OF ASB LIES IN ITS ABILITY TO:

- Expand students' worldviews
- Deepen students' sense of civic responsibility
- Encourage students to embrace and celebrate diversity
- Challenge students to break down the stereotypes they unconsciously cling to
- Put students in an environment where they are working with others who may be very different from themselves
- Help students connect what they are learning in the classroom to the world at large

In addition to community service, **reflection** is another essential element. Reflection activities facilitate how students process the experiences they are having. Reflection is the primary catalyst used to help students connect what they are doing during ASB to the bigger picture. By providing time for students to ask themselves such questions as, *“Why am I doing community service? Why does this matter? How is this trip affecting me?”*, students are able to think more deeply about the underlying issues present in the service they are providing.

TRIP INFORMATION (PLEASE REVIEW THE WEBSITES CAREFULLY):

This year we will be running three trips, which **will leave on Saturday, March 13th and return on Saturday, March 20th**. These trips are run by Team Leaders who were selected based upon their experience, leadership ability and enthusiasm for the program. One faculty/staff Learning Partner will also attend each trip. Please contact the appropriate Team Leader with any questions that are specific to a particular trip.

- **Appalachian South Folk Life Center** (Pipestem, WV): This trip, lead by Danielle Castellano (dc283123@wnec.edu), will focus on assisting with home repair for senior citizens and those who have physical disabilities. Participants could assist with such projects as roofing, painting or putting up sheet rock. Participants will also learn about Appalachian culture. Visit www.folklifecenter.org for more information.
- **Camp Vacamas** (West Milford, NJ): This trip, led by Abby Mastriano (am274926@wnec.edu), will focus on children and youth. Participants will assist with cleaning up and prepping the summer camp, and tutoring children in Newark and New York City. Visit www.vacamas.org for more information.
- **Shawnee National Forest** (Murphysboro, IL): This trip, led by Chris Nuhfer (cn286314@wnec.edu) will focus on issues surrounding environmental restoration and preservation. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in species and plant removal, work with archeologists, and assist with trail maintenance. Visit www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee/ for more information.

****ASB IS AN ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE EXPERIENCE****

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of this program and maintain the safety, security, well-being and respect for the participants, teams, and communities we are serving, alcohol and drug use is NOT permitted on Alternative Spring Break, even if you are 21 years of age or older. Participants will be sent home, at their own expense, should they choose to not respect this aspect of the program, and will face judicial sanctions upon their return to Western New England College. Please consider this prior to completing this application.

NUTS & BOLTS

APPLICATION & REFERENCE INFORMATION:

Space is limited for this program and a maximum of **24** students will be selected. In addition to one Team Leader and one College Learning Partner per trip, the trips can accommodate **8** students. As a result, you will need to fill out an application, provided in this packet, and have a recommendation form submitted. The recommendation form must be completed by a high school teacher, professor, supervisor, staff member at Western New England College, or student leader at the College (i.e. PA, RA, FSA). **Friends or family members cannot serve as a reference.**

Read the application carefully and be thoughtful in your responses when completing it. **THE APPLICATION IS DUE ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2009 BY 4:30PM.** All applications must be turned in to Rose Gage in the Volunteer Connection Center (Campus Center, room 249B). *Late applications will only be considered space permitting.*

Rose Gage and the Team Leaders will review all applications. You will be notified by **Monday, November 23rd** regarding your status. If you have any questions regarding the application or the overall program, please contact Rose Gage at rgage@wnec.edu or at 413-782-1638.

IF ACCEPTED:

If you are selected to participate in the ASB program you will be expected to meet the following commitments:

- 1) All ASB participants must pay an initial **non-refundable** registration fee of \$100 that will go towards the overall cost of the trip. **Make checks payable to Western New England College.** This money is due to Rose Gage by **Monday, November 30, 2009.** Students who do not pay their registration fee by this date may lose their spot to those students who have been put on a waiting list. If you are unable to pay the registration fee by this date due to financial circumstances, please contact Rose.
- 2) The cost for each ASB trip varies according to the destination of each experience. The program is designed to assist students in covering the cost through fundraisers. You must be prepared to participate in both team and personal fundraisers. More information on trip costs will be available upon acceptance into the program.
- 3) A mandatory **ASB Orientation** is scheduled for **Saturday, January 23, 2010 from 11:00am to 4:00pm.** All students selected for ASB must participate in this orientation, **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The orientation is a critical time for us to build group dynamics and begin preparing for the experience.
- 4) You are expected to attend all **group meetings.** These meetings are designed to build team unity, teach participants about the issue they will be working with, along with the part of the country they will be working in, and discuss trip logistics, to name a few topics.
- 5) You are expected to attend a **pre-service project**, which will be organized by the Team Leader(s) of each trip. This experience will further educate you about the issue you will be exploring during ASB.

We look forward to receiving and reviewing your application!!

Rose Gage
Assistant Director of LBC (Community Involvement)
Volunteer Connection Center

Danielle Castellano
Team Leader

Abby Mastriano
Team Leader

Chris Nuhfer
Team Leader

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK 2010

NEW PARTICIPANT APPLICATION

Detach pages 3- 4 and submit to Rose Gage in the Campus Center, room 249B, NO LATER than **Friday, November 6, 2009 at 4:30p.m.** **Please print clearly or type.** Illegible applications will be returned.

Name (as it appears on your driver's license):

Box #

Local Phone:

If you live off campus provide your local address:

Permanent Address:

Date of Birth:

Year at WNEC (circle): FR SO JR SR

E-Mail Address you use most frequently:

Major:

T-shirt size: S M L XL 2X 3X

Do you have a meal plan (include number)?

How did you learn about ASB (information session, email, flyer, etc.)? _____

Please answer the questions listed on the following two pages. If you need additional space, attach any extra paper you use to this application. Take your time, be honest, be creative, and try to be concise.

1. Briefly describe why you want to participate in the ASB program.
2. How do you define "community" and what does it mean to you?
3. How do you define culture? How would you describe your cultural heritage? What experiences have you had with other cultures?
4. Please describe any group experience you have had and what you have gained from it. Please describe how you communicate in a group setting?
5. What special skills or experience can you bring to an ASB team? (i.e. fluency in another language, first aid, CPR, etc.)

6. Do you have any special needs (i.e. dietary, medical, etc.)?
7. What ideas do you have for fundraising? Please explain how important fundraising efforts are for your ability to afford this trip?
8. Please share anything else about yourself that would enhance your candidacy for ASB.
9. Are you willing and able to comply with our Drug & Alcohol policy?

THE THREE QUESTIONS BELOW ARE POSSIBLE ASB SCENARIOS. DESCRIBE HOW YOU WOULD RESPOND IN EACH OF THESE SITUATIONS? IF YOU NEED EXTRA ROOM, TYPE UP YOUR RESPONSES.

1. Your group has been in the community for three days and seems to be getting the cold shoulder from almost everyone you come in contact with, except your sponsors. You come to find out that the volunteer group that was here last month left after two days and made some nasty comments about how uneducated and culturally isolated the community is. What could your team do to overcome the community's stereotypes about your group?
2. How would you work with a team member who is not meshing with the group? How would you communicate your concerns to this individual and assist the team leader with creating community? What is challenging about confronting this type of situation and why is it important to do so in a timely fashion?
3. A team member wants to sneak out to have "just one drink". They're complaining that there's not much to do and don't think it would make a difference to go out for a few hours. How do you handle the situation? What is your commitment to the group vs. this one individual?

NEXT TO EACH ISSUE / TRIP INDICATE YOUR PREFERENCE USING 1, 2, 3.

<i>Children & Youth</i>	<i>Home Repair / Appalachian Culture</i>	<i>Environmental Preservation</i>
<i>Camp Vacamas</i> _____	<i>Appalachian South Folk Life Center</i> _____	<i>Shawnee National Forest</i> _____
New Milford, NJ	Pipestem, WV	Murphysboro, IL

Please explain why you selected this particular issue as your top choice and describe any experience you have had with this topic or passion you have for this issue.

If we are unable to accommodate your first and second choice, are you still interested in attending ASB? If not, please explain why.

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GRANT APPLICATION

The Alternative Spring Break grant fund provides assistance to students who may not otherwise have the ability to participate in this program due to financial constraints. Please submit the following information, along with your participant application. You will be informed by *Monday, November 23rd* as to whether or not you will receive a grant. Rose Gage and Dr. Adina Elfant will review the grant applications.

CRITERIA:

Participants must:

- Demonstrate financial need
- Demonstrate that they will engage in fundraising efforts
- Demonstrate a commitment to community service

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Grants are awarded for only a percentage of the total cost of the trip. Individuals will not receive an award for the full amount. Grant amounts will also vary according to the cost of each trip. Final grant amounts are contingent upon participation in pre-trip activities and fundraisers.

Name:

Box #

Local Phone:

If you live off campus provide your local address:

Date of Birth:

Year at WNEC (circle): FR SO JR SR

E-Mail Address you use most frequently:

Student ID #:

Major:

Which trip would you like to attend?

Have you ever participated in an ASB experience at Western New England College before? If so, where did you go?

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

- What kind of financial aid do you receive from Western New England College?
- Do you receive scholarships, loans or federal work study?
- How much are you able to pay toward the cost of the trip?
- What is your source for this funding?

