Ascent: Outdoor Pre-orientation

August 16–21, 2018
$375.00

Included in price: four on campus meals; Ascent group reading and gift; five days of backcountry food, permits and equipment; six days of guided activity; transportation for duration of trip.

Trip Overview

Offered by the Office of Experiential Education, these student-led wilderness programs provide incoming first-years the opportunity to connect through a novel, shared experience. Though it has evolved in the twenty three years since inception, Ascent continues to be a favorite tradition at Gettysburg—and for good reason. Students enter their program surrounded by new faces, but return to campus five days later with meaningful friendships, a strong support network, and an understanding of what they can accomplish at Gettysburg College.

Depending on the experience you select, we will spend our five days together learning to maneuver kayaks, practicing climbing and belaying, hiking scenic trails, and exploring our region, but the core experience is the same. Every trip is small, personal, and self-contained, and all trips participate in our This I Believe initiative. Students will camp in tents, cook their own food on camp stoves, and practice backcountry hygiene—only the Multisport trip has access to basic bathroom facilities. All trips are led by upper-class students trained in wilderness medicine and leave no trace ethics, as well as group management and facilitation. These trips were created to help you start your Gettysburg career on the right foot and they are open to all.

General Schedule:

Wednesday, August 15
- Move into your residence hall (no planned Ascent activities)

Thursday, August 16
- Ascent registration opens 9:00 am
- Family welcome luncheon from 11:00-12:30
- Farewell to families following lunch
- Workshops on campus and group Ascent dinner

Friday, August 17
- Breakfast in Gettysburg’s dining hall
- Depart from campus and start your adventure!

Saturday-Monday, August 18-20
- Eat, sleep, hike/climb/kayak/cave, repeat.

Tuesday, August 21
- Return to campus, sort gear and take a long-awaited shower
- Celebratory BBQ with all pre-orientation groups on campus

Wednesday, August 22
- Gettysburg College First Year orientation begins
Climbing, Backpacking, Kayaking, Multisport
August 16-21, 2018

Climb/ Kayak/ Hike: Average time spent hiking or paddling daily will range from 4-6 hours. For climbing, all routes will use top rope anchors, and routes range from 5.5 (beginner) to 5.11 (experienced) so there’s something for all levels of climbers. Climbing and belay instruction, paddling instruction, and backcountry living lessons will be provided as appropriate, and participants will choose their own level of challenge.

Group Size: These trips consist of two GRAB staff members from the Office of Experiential Education and 6-8 first year participants.

Accommodations: You will move into your residence hall on Wednesday, and can either spend the night in your room or with your parents. You will sleep in your new residence hall on Thursday after your family leaves campus. You will spend the next four nights in a tent with your group mates.

Meals: Before trips depart, all participants will enjoy a family reception luncheon on Thursday, a group dinner on Thursday night, and breakfast in Gettysburg College’s dining hall Friday morning. Meals for the duration of the trip will be prepared by participants on backcountry stoves. Once groups return from the field there will be a celebration barbecue on campus for all Ascent participants.

Weather: The weather can be variable during this time of year, so we plan for a range of temperatures. Expect highs in the 80s, lows in the 60s, and possibly hotter days or cooler nights. Please bring the recommended clothing in order to layer and protect yourself from the elements in all conditions. A specific packing list will be made available shortly.

Physical Preparations: The best way to prepare for this trip is to stay active. Jogging, sports, or walking 3-5 miles a few times a week will all increase your enjoyment once in the field.

Communication & Emergencies: Our trip locations often have cell service, but some sections may be spotty. The staff will carry a cell phone in the event of an emergency, however we will not completely rely on the service, and the group needs to know they may be without communication at times. We develop contingencies and have specific information for emergencies, but we are also aware that based on location and access it may take time to contact or reach definitive medical care, should the need arise. Although participants are permitted to carry phones, most choose to leave technology behind to more fully immerse themselves in the experience.

Health and Medical & Release of Liability: Each participant is asked to fill out a Health and Medical form for this trip. We request that you are truthful with your medical information and speak with your GRAB staff facilitator about any concerns or pre-existing conditions. In addition, we want to inform you that you will be asked to sign our indemnity form, and that you are aware that all Gettysburg College policies and procedures apply to this trip.

Medical Kit and Medicine: It is our top priority to mitigate risk on these experiences, but we need your assistance to inform us about your background, so we can properly prepare together. While in the field, we carry a medical and trauma kit. The medical kit has basic bandaging and wound care items, whereas our trauma kit has basic splinting and medicines such as aspirin, anti-diarrheal, epinephrine, Benadryl. We ask that you have with you your prescription medicine that you need on a daily/weekly basis, and that you transport it in its original container/bottle with your name and dosage. It is your responsibility to manage your own medication. For those with strong allergies that require medication, it is very important that you bring extra epinephrine or necessary medication in the event that yours becomes lost or broken.