**How to Propose an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) Trip**

**McKeen Center for the Common Good, Bowdoin College**

Getting a proposal together requires some thoughtfulness and time. **You can do it!**

Here are the parts you’ll need to assemble:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yourself</th>
<th>Your Co-Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel a commitment to a social issue(s) and a desire to engage and educate your peers? Do you value self-reflection, humility, and building an understanding of the complexities of issues and communities? Do you have time next year to honor the ASB leader commitment?</td>
<td>Who on campus has a personality and/or knowledge that is complementary to yours; you trust to follow through; and is someone you can communicate and collaborate effectively with?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Issue &amp; Location</th>
<th>Community Partner(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What cause, or community, are you best situated to educate peers about? For 2022-23, all trips must be within the USA. The McKeen Center may also take COVID into account when choosing trips.</td>
<td>What organizations are working on your issue? Where might you be able to sleep and eat? You need to reach out now to start developing relationships and assembling plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Faculty Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much would your plan cost? Break the expenses down piece-by-piece and keep it under $1000 per person.</td>
<td>Don’t ask anyone to be your advisor yet! Do research faculty on campus, to identify who has relevant expertise to advise your trip. Staff may also be appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternative Break Proposal Guide

About the ASB Program. The McKeen Center’s Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trips provide a unique opportunity for students to enhance their knowledge of significant social issues by learning from community organizations doing direct work and advocacy. Through extended preparation, community immersion, and reflection, we hope that each ASB participant develops their identity as someone invested in meaningful community building and social change, centering equity and inclusion.

Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trips have historically taken place at the local, national, and international levels during both the winter and spring. For 2022-23 they will be limited to trips within the USA only, and during the first week of spring break only (Sat 3/11 - Sat 3/18, 2023).

Trip Proposal Process. This document details the qualifications for, and responsibilities of, leading a trip; the format of a proposal and steps for assembling one; the criteria used by our committee when evaluating proposals. Applicants are strongly advised to meet with Monica Bouyea (mbouyea@bowdoin.edu) and Sarah Seames (sseames@bowdoin.edu) AND also to attend an information session on Monday, April 11th from 4:30-5:30 pm at the McKeen Center prior to submitting your trip proposal.

The application forms are online here, and all application materials are due on Sunday, May 1st at 11:59 pm. Part 1 (Individual Form) is to be completed individually by each co-leader, and Part 2 (Trip Proposal) is to be submitted by co-leaders working together. McKeen Center staff and past trip leaders are available for in-person Q&A and support in developing proposals.

Trip Leader Responsibilities. Alternative Spring Break leaders must commit to the following:

- Leader seminar – Mondays from 7-8:30 pm, Fall Semester
  The ASB Leader Seminar is mandatory for all ASB leaders. It prepares leaders to 1) organize and lead their trips, and, 2) help student participants examine the political, social, cultural, and economic aspects of their service and the communities in which they will be living. Through this training, leaders develop their own seminar, which they lead for their trip participants throughout the spring semester. The leader seminar will be held every week (except holidays) throughout the fall semester. Trip leaders cannot have any other commitments at this time, including classes, employment, or club meetings.

- Trip Planning
  Leaders are responsible for planning all aspects of the Alternative Spring Break trip, including recruiting participants, making lodging arrangements, coordinating with the host site, and leading the actual trip. After setting a budget and associated trip fee, leaders are responsible for maintaining that budget throughout the planning process.

- Pre-Trip Seminar
  Leaders will plan and facilitate a weekly seminar for their trip participants prior to their trip, with a total of 7-8 meetings. Through these meetings, leaders will educate their groups about the issues they will be addressing and the area in which they will be working in order to prepare the group for their experience. Co-leaders will be responsible for developing a syllabus and facilitating all discussions and activities. In planning their seminar, co-leaders will consult a faculty advisor who can offer personal expertise on the social issues or communities the trip will be connected to.

- Post-Trip Activities
  Leaders will attend and help ensure participant attendance at Perspectives, a community reflection event which takes place in early April. In addition, trip leaders are responsible for wrapping up logistical
• **Trip Expenses and Travel Expectations**
  Leaders receive a discount of $100 off their trip fees and are eligible for the same need-based grant (based on level of financial aid received through the College) as other participants, up to 80% off the trip fee. At the conclusion of ASB trips, leaders are required to remain with their group at least until the group has arrived at their departure gate for the final leg of travel, and preferably through the end of the final leg of travel (back to Boston or Portland).

**Leader Qualifications**
- Rising sophomores, juniors, or seniors with significant community engagement and leadership experience.
- Demonstrated commitment to the social issues they plan to explore. Student leaders who have direct or lived experience with the social issues and/or communities they build their proposals around are encouraged to apply.
- Demonstrate that they will work well together as a co-leader pair, communicate effectively, and divide responsibilities equitably.
- Highly organized, thoughtful, and comfortable leading others, sometimes in stressful situations.
- Willingness and experience with exploring issues related to equity and inclusion, including racism, and a commitment to incorporating relevant educational opportunities and community partners in the context of their trip.
- Have the capacity to prioritize the work that goes into leading an ASB trip and maintain ongoing communication with the McKeen Center throughout the year.

**Developing a Trip Proposal.** Your proposal needs to include each of the following components. Leaders typically build their proposals in this order:

1. **Identify a co-leader**
   - Each ASB trip is led by two students, so please apply in pairs.
   - Reflect on your leadership style. Are you assertive, active, and decisive? Do you prioritize the relationships and needs of your group members? Are you idea-oriented, detailed-oriented, or a little bit of both? Thinking through your leadership style will enable you to identify a co-leader who best complements you.

2. **Identify a social issue(s) and location**
   - No trips outside the USA will be considered for 2022-23.
   - Below is a list of some potential focal issues. Topics in bold have been addressed in past Bowdoin AB trips:

   | Ableism & Disabilities | Environment (incl. preservation, sustainability, water rights) | Media Literacy |
   | Age & Ageism | Food & Hunger (food access, food justice, agriculture) | Military & Veterans |
   | Animal Welfare | Health (HIV/AIDS, mental health, addiction, public health) | Race & Racism |
   | Arts | Historic & Cultural Preservation | Religious Pluralism & Tolerance |
   | Civil Discourse | Housing & Homelessness | Violence Prevention (gang/domestic/sexual) |
   | Community Organizing | Human Trafficking | Technology Access and Equity |
   | Criminal Justice & Prison Reform | Immigration & Refugee Resettlement | Workers’ Rights |
   | Disaster Recovery & Rebuilding | Indigenous Sovereignty | Youth Development |
   | Education | LGBTQ & Gender Equity |

3. **Reach out to community partner organizations**
   - You may reach out to as few as one, or as many as six or seven community partner organizations whose
mission addresses your target issue(s).

- It’s possible you may not hear back from community partners right away. Let them know that if you don’t hear back, you will follow-up soon. Trying both email and phone contact can be helpful.
- At this stage in the application process, community partner organizations do not need to commit to the Alternative Break trip. However, the organizations should demonstrate a tentative willingness to accommodate a group of volunteers (usually 12 people, but you may propose a smaller trip size), for a few hours or days during the dates of the trip.
- Include positive email reply from Community Partner organization in your trip proposal (see sample proposal below for an example of appropriate style for correspondence).
- You do NOT need to assemble a prospective trip itinerary for your proposal.

4. Reach out to housing partner (if separate from the community engagement partner)
   - You may need to research multiple potential housing partners. These typically include community centers or religious institutions. Google maps is good for this, or contact area colleges for leads.
   - Include housing possibilities in your trip application. Attempt to get a cost estimate for the housing you have identified.

5. Identify potential faculty advisors
   - Identify at least two whose research makes them a suitable advisor for your trip. Make sure they’ll be on campus next year! Do not contact faculty at this stage.

6. Draft a budget for the trip
   - If your proposal is similar to a past trip, the McKeen Center can furnish a past budget for you to use as a basis for your budget proposal.
   - Suggested limit for budget is $1000 per person.
Alternative Spring Break Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Below are the criteria and guiding questions used by the Alternative Spring Breaks committee to evaluate ASB applications. Proposals are ranked from one (needs significant improvement) to five (exceeds expectations) on each of the twelve factors.

Leaders

Community Engagement Experience – Do the trip leaders have prior experience in community engagement activities at Bowdoin and/or other places? Do they have an understanding of and appreciation for the complexities of issues and communities?

Leadership Experience – Have the applicants held leadership roles before? Have they had any similar experiences involving leading a group of people in service or in experiential education?

Commitment to/Passion for Issue – Do the applicants articulate why they personally are invested in this issue/trip? Have they worked on this issue before?

Follow-Through/Accountability/Organizational Skills – Do the applicants have experience with this type of responsibility? Have they demonstrated an aptitude for dealing with details and logistics?

Identities/Experiences/Skills/Talents to Contribute – How will these students’ identities, experiences, talents or skills contribute to their proposed trip and the ASB program as a whole?

ASB Experience – Is at least one of the leaders a past ASB participant or leader? Do the leaders have other similar experiences to ASB?

Trip Proposal

Partner Organization(s) – Have the applicants had contact with the prospective partner organization(s)? Are the mission and goals of the organization described well? Does the organization appear to have the capacity to host a group of students for a week of service?

Focal Issue – Is the issue that this organization works on clearly defined, or unclear/vague? Do applicants have a clear understanding of the issue?

Community Engagement and Learning Activities – Is there a plan for meaningful ways to engage directly with the community, through educational opportunities and/or direct service? Is work that participants might do clearly described, and appropriate for participants?

Location – Does the applicant have an understanding of or connection to this location? Have either of the leaders been there before? Do they have plans for how they would travel to and around this place? Is this location a fitting place for this topic to be explored by these leaders?

Feasibility – Is the overall trip proposal a realistic endeavor? Would the logistics of organizing such a trip be too much work? Would Bowdoin students be interested in going on this trip?

Budget – Is the budget well written and easy to understand? Is it accurate? Is the trip cost-appropriate? The trip application specifies that domestic trips must be under $1000.