

To: Addrienne Ausdenmoore and Potential Donors  
On Behalf Of: Ellie Timmins with Greg Dickerson  
Date: December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Subject: Proposal for a Life Design Camping Retreat at Camp Nuhop

## Executive Summary

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As you know, Life Design at BGSU is very young but incredibly successful. Within just three years, we have upgraded to the Radbill Center, grown our staff, have extended classes across several different colleges and programs, and have become well known across the university and the college world.

We are at a very exciting and pivotal point in our BGSU Life Design journey where we could expand and market Life Design further to reach and help students all across camps—bringing them more opportunities to grow and succeed. One of the areas that we could achieve this is through providing an out-of-the-classroom experience.

To extend opportunities to benefit students' learning experience and mental health and to aid them in their understanding and application of Life Design mindsets, I am proposing the continuation of outdoor-education camping retreats involving the partnership of Camp Nuhop and the Geoffrey H. Radbill Center for College and Life Design at Bowling Green State University. The retreat would occur at Camp Nuhop's location in Perrysville, Ohio during BGSU's fall break, and consist of at least 17 BGSU students and 3 Life Design coaches.

With this retreat, 15/17 students will note that the trip was beneficial to them in some capacity and 14/17 students will note that they have a better understanding of Life Design mindsets and how to apply them outside the classroom. This will be measured through a survey given to the students after they complete the trip, where they will also be able to write personal testimonies, if they so desire, on how the retreat specifically benefited them. The retreat will occur specifically from the dates of October 4, 2024, to October 7, 2024. The dates can be changed to accommodate a spring break retreat, but for the purposes of this proposal only fall break surrounding dates will be discussed.

Within this proposal, I will discuss why we have a great opportunity to help students with an outdoor-education trip, how the trip would work, what preparation for the trip would look like, what costs are involved, dates involved, expected benefits, my experience with this trip/ my qualifications, and some expected limitations.

## Rationale

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The classroom is very different from the real world. Although we have created and facilitated several scenarios and worksheets that help students apply their life to Life Design concepts, they are still limited in what they can apply because they only practice within the classroom or class assignments. Even if students understand the concepts and apply them within their lives while in college, they may only associate Life Design with academia and assignments, not understanding how to apply it elsewhere once they graduate and there missing out on future benefits.

Professors Sladjana Andjelkovic and Zoric Prnjat of Belgrad University note that within their study on outdoor education they found that "learning in the classroom is very different from learning in authentic natural and social environments", environments that students will be immersed in after they leave college.

Outdoor education “provides opportunities for using various learning strategies, enables integration of knowledge from different fields,” and allows us to connect with ourselves. Life Design is more than just academia but applies to our humanity. When we use Life Design concepts we discuss our emotions, our identity, and our relationships. These are things that can be hard to model and discuss fully in the classroom. Therefore, if we don’t want students to be limited within Life Design and its benefits, we must take it outdoors.

Andjelkovic and Prnjat further write that utilizing outdoor education “is increasingly becoming more significant. Integrated teaching is a contemporary model of teaching that helps students create experiential connections while building knowledge structures. It helps in observing a problem from multiple angles (viewpoints), in understanding the connections between natural and social factors in reality and makes experience of the world comprehensive, rather than fragmented [... S]tudents develop a holistic, comprehensive view of the world, which among other things, implies integrated use of knowledge of a variety of scientific disciplines when dealing with life problems” (Andjelkovic and Prnjat 2017).

Maximus Whitt, a student at BGSU who went on the first Radbill Center for College and Life Design Camp Nuhop trip, notes that going on the retreat was very beneficial for him. He writes, “[w]hen I first heard about the trip, I was on board immediately. It was exciting and rewarding to talk and learn about the people in the group [and Life Design ....] This camp allowed me to be more confident with myself and was an amazing mental health booster that I would recommend to anyone”.

Not only is outdoor education beneficial for students, but also for teachers and leaders. Thomas Pressely from the American Physiological Society writes, “many Tenure and Promotion Committees are finding that it is no longer sufficient to consider only lecture hours when evaluating a faculty member’s contributions to the teaching mission of an institution.” He further notes that “[t] There is becoming a higher need for administrators who have participated in a variety of learning activities, and schools frequently recruit for these positions from faculty with such exposure” (Pressely 2017).

Thad Long, Coach and Faculty Member for the Radbill Center for College and Life Design notes that his time at Camp Nuhop also benefited him greatly. Thad writes, “[a]s a new Life Design Coach, the Camp Nuhop trip represented an opportunity to prototype future leader/student retreats in an outdoor setting, get to know Student Ambassadors, and share memories and collaboration opportunities with Greg [(Life Design Coach)]. The student participation and feedback, engaging camp staff, and wonderful facilities made it all worthwhile”.

Thus, we have a great opportunity to help students grow within their mental health, their careers, their identities, and more by applying Life Design to outdoor education. We have seen firsthand how students have been impacted by Life Design just by taking the 1910 course. We have heard testimonies from students in all career paths and in all seasons of life express how much Life Design has benefitted them. If we want to reach students further, providing outdoor-education experiences is the way to do so.

## Proposed Deliverable(s)

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Thus, I propose that the Geoffrey H. Radbill Center for College and Life Design hold a four-day, 20-person outdoor retreat at Camp Nuhop in Perrysville, Ohio during BGSU’s fall break. The trip would consist of various outdoor and hands-on activities facilitated by Camp Nuhop Staff engaging in the various Life Design mindsets and the Design Thinking Process. By partnering with Camp Nuhop, the following is what Camp Nuhop writes that they will accomplish during the retreat:

- The creation of an atmosphere where the students are able to foster team member relationships and connections through a high energy and creative experiential process.

- The provision of opportunities for the students to gain rapport and confidence in individual relationships in a highly engaging learning environment.
- Encouraging facilitation to help the students become aware of their strengths and passions.
- Group engagement with intentionally designed activities that connect to the six mindsets framework (Life Design) in turn fostering a kinesthetic imprint of the learning.

With this partnership with Camp Nuhop, students throughout the retreat will gain a better understanding of the Design Thinking Process and the Life Design mindsets. This will be accomplished through consistent application to Life Design in various environments across a widespread of engaging activities. With this trip, students will establish meaningful memories and tools to bring their deeper understanding of Life Design back to the classroom where they can easily facilitate the learning of fellow peers and be examples of Life Design in and outside of the classroom. What they learn and the tools they establish on the retreat are things they can use to benefit and help themselves for the rest of their lives.

## Plan of Action

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In order to make this retreat possible, there are many factors that must be considered. This includes the materials needed, how money is involved, how students will be included, and the curriculum of the retreat. Below are sections detailing each of these factors:

### Materials

As reflected in the **Budget** section of this proposal, we will need a contract with Camp Nuhop, rental vans (more than one depending on how many people go), and a budget for the trip. Camp Nuhop will provide all food, materials for activities, and bunking for the retreat so that students can experience the opportunities provided without further monetary concerns.

### Money

What students will pay for and how money will be collected and secured is discussed in the **Budget** section of this proposal. But as stated previously, the goal of this retreat is to allow students to be benefited from this retreat without having to worry about finances. There will be plenty of ways that donors and Radbill Staff can help students get access to this retreat and amazing program.

### Student Involvement

As you know, we at the Radbill Center want to incentivize this retreat heavily to get students involved. There are many ways we could achieve this. One way to incentivize this trip is through our new Life Design Scholars Community, an organization where students meet once a month to discuss the Life Design mindsets, collaborate with other students, and apply the mindsets to a variety of topics.

This retreat could be an opportunity offered to scholars if they attend a certain number of meetings, and/or if they are just a part of the community. To incentivize them to come, a reduced cost could be offered to them. Another way this trip could be incentivized to students is within the classes offered by Life Design. For example, if students have a B+ or above in the class, and/or are exhibiting enthusiastic involvement within the classroom, a Life Design Coach could recommend and offer the opportunity to go on the retreat to the student.

## Curriculum

Camp Nuhop has done an exceptional job of tailoring the Life Design mindsets, the Design Thinking Process, and their impacts to activities and challenges that they offer.

Each day of the trip, Camp Nuhop will elaborate on a Life Design mindset, allowing students to expand their knowledge, recognize their capabilities, and apply Life Design to their lives. Below is a curriculum that has been written by Camp Nuhop staff:

### **Collaborating: Team Communication**

Nuhop's team communication exercise is a challenging pursuit. This exercise offers an opportunity for individuals to work together in small groups to accomplish common goals and objectives as a team.

Through a careful selection of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, teams must function within a set of defined rules and expectations to execute a simple task of constructing a replica of a premade sculpture. Nuhop Facilitators will guide participants through this task as well as a review that will help participants develop relationships and explore personal and group interactions.

### **Challenging: High Ropes Course**

The High Ropes Course Experience takes your team to new heights as they ascend to the top of our forty-foot-tall, high ropes course. Each element is carefully designed to encourage participants to take risks towards personal and team growth. Organization Development sessions that integrate the High Ropes Course enable teams to see individuals in a new light. Participants are taught the basic skills and language required to facilitate one another through physical challenges situated forty feet in the air. During The High Ropes Course Experience participants traverse across rope bridges, hanging swings and missing link walkways. Team members have the opportunity to test their personal limits while engaging in a positive group experience.

All of our challenge course activities follow the philosophy of "Challenge by Choice" which allows participants to choose their level of participation during the event.

The High Ropes Course can be added to the curriculum of existing programs, or it may be used to achieve the outcomes of team development, leadership, and trust during a stand-alone event.

### **Challenging: Giant Swing**

Fly forty-five feet in the air as you engage in The Giant Swing Experience! This Organization Development challenge course encourages peak performance at the individual and team level. Once team members are suited up in their harness and helmets, they are taught the simple commands and skills required to assist their colleagues in meeting their personal goals. The goal of The Giant Swing is to have the team pull individuals up to 45 feet in the air. Once the swinging participant is ready to fly, they release their tether and swing out over the hillside.

### **Embracing Process: Small Group Team Challenges**

With the focus of the Life Design Framework, the Nuhop team would select a progression of exercises that focus on multiple learning modalities while engaging in an experiential process both in and outdoors. Each learning module would have a front load, a description of the tasks at hand, an application and engagement section, and end with reflective practice.

### **Sharing your Story: The Moth**

Using the Moth card game, this session would focus on an iterative process for participants to participate in a mock story slam. Using the Moth model, the team would guide the participants through a series of actions to guide them to the presentation of their story.

### **Reframing: The Solo**

Using the experiential framework of the Solo, participants would engage in an overnight experience in the woods, on a solo. A time of reflective practice where participants would camp on their own in the Ohio Woodlands. Each participant would engage in a journaling and reflective process in this experience.

### **Taking Action: Character Cards**

Utilizing a set of 15 cards the team will play a competitive game of memory. On each set of 15 cards is a list of character qualities and Life Design concepts. The focus is to compete to see which team can complete their memory game board first. The words selected are selected intentionally to focus on the program's curriculum. As the words are being flashed during the exercise teams are being primed to have conversations post the exercise.

Teams are asked to select a word that resonates with them from the list of 15 words and these words are then discussed in small groups. Teams are then asked to come to consensus on the top three words that are most essential to success moving forward. Then there would be time spent in personal reflection in regards to the words and goal setting applied to actionable steps in life.

### **Taking Action: Transference**

The last component of the experiential programming would focus on group review of the learning objectives and outcomes from the multiple day experience.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that the plan of action for this retreat is still being prototyped and has the ability to be molded into whatever we want it to be. Camp Nuhop is very flexible and is more than willing to help us create the best retreat possible to benefit and provide opportunities to all.

## **Budget**

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The costs for this trip will be paid by the Radbill Center for College and Life Design. Students would pay Life Design their estimated amount per person in order to make payment possible. Below is a breakdown of the monetary costs for this trip, based on Camp Nuhop and Enterprise estimates:

### **Camp Nuhop Prices**

The following are the prices for a Camp Nuhop trip:

- Amount per person: \$250.00
- Amount for a 20- person group: \$5,000

A deposit of 50% of the total cost would be due to Camp Nuhop September 8<sup>th</sup>. The full total cost would be due within 10 days after the trip has occurred. All meals and snacks for participants would be covered within these prices.

## Enterprise Rental Prices

The following is an estimation price to rent a minivan from Enterprise (Bowling Green, Ohio):

- Amount per day: \$100.00
- Estimated price for four days: \$430.00

## Gas Prices

Gas would also be a cost to be considered. Below is an estimation of costs:

- $(240 \text{ miles (roundtrip)} / 22 \text{ MPG (average miles per gallon of a 2023 minivan)}) \times 3.15 = \$ 35$

## Estimated Total for Entire Trip= \$ 5,865

We desire this trip and its opportunities to be as accessible as possible to all students no matter their financial background so that any student could go on this trip if they so choose. To make this possible, for this trip the Radbill Center could cover 40% of the costs using an Experiential Learning Fund. With this fund the Radbill Center would allow donors and the general public to contribute financially so that students can experience the opportunities of this retreat.

If, after this reduced cost, students are still struggling to afford the trip, further fundraising could be completed if the Radbill Center so chooses.

## Timetable

All planning, budgeting, and communication of and for this retreat will be the responsibility of the Radbill Center for College and Life Design. The Radbill Center will work collaboratively with Camp Nuhop to establish a plan of curriculum. Below is an example timetable of when each step of retreat and its preparation process will be completed if the trip were to be held during BGSU's fall break:

| Task to be Completed           | Time to Complete It (If Applicable) | Due Date (If Applicable) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Scheduling with Camp Nuhop     | 1 day                               | 5/31/2024                |
| Completion of Budget           | 6/1-7/1/2024                        | 7/1/2024                 |
| Registration for Travel Vans   | 9/1-9/10/2024                       | 9/10/2024                |
| Notifying Students and Staff   | 8/21/2024-9/5/2024                  |                          |
| Collection of Student Payments | 8/21/2024-9/5/2024                  | 9/5/2024                 |
| 50% Deposit to Camp Nuhop      | 9/5/2024-9/8/2024                   | 9/8/2024                 |
| The Retreat Itself             | 10/4/2024-10/7/2024                 |                          |
| Paying Camp Nuhop Completely   | 10/7/2024-10/17/2024                | 10/17/2024               |



Note that an additional timetable may need to be created in the process of completing the budget depending on the needs and availability of donors and Life Design Administrative Staff.

## Expected Results/Benefits

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We have seen through the testimonies of student Maximus Whitt and Life Coach Thad Long that the first Life Design Outdoor Retreat with Camp Nuhop was extremely beneficial. In the next section, I will also discuss how the trip was extremely to me as a Life Design Student Ambassador and as a student of BGSU. Thus, we can expect similar results if we continue to provide this trip in the future.

To further measure and discuss the benefits of this retreat to the students, the Radbill Center could create a Google survey provided to students who participated in the retreat. Students would have the option to fill it out and be able to rate and discuss their experience. Questions asked could include:

- On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the least to 5 being the most) how much has this trip benefited you in some capacity (mentally, emotionally, academically)?
- On a scale of 1 to 5, how much has this trip helped you understand the Design Thinking Process and the Life Design mindsets?
- How has this trip allowed you to apply the mindsets to everyday life? Please write a few sentences below.
- What would you want to see from this trip in the future?

If we want to reach and help the most students now and, in the future, it is incredibly important to get student feedback. Students will feel more than obliged to complete a survey because of how benefited they felt by the trip and how much they enjoyed it. The energy and the passion about Life Design expressed by fellow peers, Camp Nuhop staff, and the Life Design Coaches will motivate students to share their stories about this experience. With this survey we can expect that 15/17 students will note that the trip was beneficial to them in some capacity and 14/17 students will note that they have a better understanding of Life Design mindsets and how to apply them outside the classroom.

Not only so, but students will develop meaningful memories and connections on this trip that will last a lifetime and allow them to reflect positively on their time at BGSU. This opportunity is once in a lifetime and students will be able to recognize and treasure that fact.

## Qualifications

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I, the author of this proposal, Ellie Timmins, had the privilege to go on the first-ever Life Design Outdoor Retreat with Camp Nuhop. I have been part of the Life Design at BGSU program since 2020, when Life Design was first being introduced to BGSU.

I have seen firsthand how influential the Life Design mindsets and Design Thinking can be in one's life. With Life Design I have been able to define my career brand and develop/discover my hard and soft skills. I have learned how to define what I want to do for a career and have been able to deeply define who I am as a person with Life Design.

I have also been a student ambassador for five months, where I help teach Life Design in the classroom. Despite all this experience, after going through this past Life Design Outdoor Retreat, I feel that I personally understand the Design Thinking Process on a much deeper level than I ever could have thought. This experience is something that I will be able to take with me as I graduate college, go onto graduate school, and carry out my life.

Before going on this trip, I had no idea that there was more to learn about how to use Life Design. In the classroom we work hard to practice the mindsets and Design Thinking Process by utilizing a lot of different tools and going through scenarios.

But the Life Design Outdoor Retreat with Camp Nuhop gave me the ability to practically apply Life Design to my actions and thought processes using hands-on and collaborative activities. After the trip it was easier for me to define the Design Thinking Process and mindsets and really understand how they work.

Without this experience, my knowledge of Life Design probably would have been much harder for me to apply once I got out into the workforce. It probably would have stayed limited to what I learned and did at BGSU and nothing more. I can say with confidence that the Life Design Outdoor Retreat with Camp Nuhop was a great experience that everyone should participate in.

## Limitations

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With any idea and prototype there will be limitations. For this proposal, one of the limitations is that despite the benefits expressed about this trip students still may be hesitant to go. This is because of two factors: time and money. First, if the trip is offered during Fall or Spring break, students may not want to go on the retreat because they want to go home or do other things. Second, even with decreased costs due to the usage of Radbill Center funds, the cost still may be too much for students or in their eyes the trip may not be worth the money.

We saw these limitations with the first retreat. All 19 Student Ambassadors, all 11 Life Design Coaches, and a few 1910 students were notified about the trip. Yet, only two Student Ambassadors, one 1910 student, and two Life Design Coaches attended the first retreat.

These small numbers were in part because of these limitations, but also because the trip had never been done before and no one could 100% define the benefits or the experience. Now that we know the benefits of the trip and that it is an incredible opportunity, we can more clearly express the benefits to others. We also now have personal testimonies, footage, and photos from the first retreat that the Radbill Center can display to students to express how fun and beneficial the trip is.

Thus, although there are limitations, they can easily be overcome. The more this retreat is provided and held, the less these limitations will be a concern as more and more students express the benefits of this trip.

## Conclusion

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In conclusion, we as members of the Geoffrey H. Radbill Center for College and Life Design and we as people who desire to benefit students in their academic and personal journeys have a great opportunity with this trip. We have the opportunity to show students their potential and guide them along their journey at BGSU.

By partnering with Camp Nuhop for four days during BGSU's fall break, we will be able to touch the lives of students and help them emotionally and mentally with this retreat. Students will be able to have a better understanding of who they are as people, how they can apply what they learned about Life Design to their lives and leave the retreat with developed Life Design tools that they will use to succeed for the rest of their lives.



Not only so, but students will come back from the retreat sharing their memories, learned lessons, and experiences that will help and encourage their fellow peers along their own college journeys.

Not only so, but this trip will allow the Geoffrey H. Radbill Center for College and Life Design to be a model for Life Design programs around the nation and the world on how to hold an outdoor education retreat so that more students can be positively impacted.

If you approve of this proposal please email me, the author, at [ltimmin@bgsu.edu](mailto:ltimmin@bgsu.edu).

If you are a perspective donor who desires to help students with their success and college/life journeys by providing funds for the possibility of this retreat, please email Adrienne Ausdenmoore, Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of the Geoffrey H. Radbill Center for College and Life Design at [aausden@bgsu.edu](mailto:aausden@bgsu.edu).