README Eagle Fraternity

From 2020 to 2024 I was a part of the SUNY Maritime Eagle Fraternity, a club for former scouts at maritime to continue doing what they may have been doing in the scouts prior to college: Hiking, Backpacking, Climbing, etc. Through the club, we went on backpacking and ski trips at least once a semester. From 2021 to 2023 I was the club treasurer, and in 2024 I was the club president.

For the club to operate, the main source of funding for this club was running a yearly event we called the Maritime Camporee. In my view, this event was the most valuable and rewarding thing we did in the club. The Maritime industry is an interesting and often forgotten field of work and study. Through the Maritime Camporee, we got to show scouts a world they may not have been aware of and could hopefully be examples for those younger than us who still might not know what they want to do after high school, or going further, provide examples of why what they are learning in school is so important.

These events were a massive undertaking every year. They would typically accommodate over 200 people, and was organized by the officers in the club. For this event, we would coordinate with various entities at the college, make a plan for the weekend event, coordinate volunteers, estimate our expenses and revenue for the event to make a budget, and do everything required for the event to begin. A large part of the challenge with this event is that even though this is an excellent recruiting opportunity for the college, the faculty we would have to coordinate with for the event have been historically disorganized and unreliable to collaborate with. We took every step and precaution we knew we could, informed everyone of the event periodically starting months before the event, and some surprise always comes up from the college.

In 2022, everything seemed to be set for the camporee. We had the scouts come and sleep over, and were into the beginning of the first day of the event. We were just coming back from breakfast ahead of the scouts to get ready for morning colors when contracted workers began working in the campsites we had set up to lay down new sod. Apparently, the night before, the college facilities department had scheduled for work to be done to replace the sod inside the fort where we had the scouts camping. This was negligence on the part of the college since we had informed the college event department, UPD, facilities department, and other entities independently. This event was on the calendar for months. That said, it did not matter who was at fault. The damage was done. We coordinated moving the campsite, and I had to remake the schedule to accommodate the delay, print out new schedules, and disseminate information to all of the troops before they were done. After this, the event went smoothly, but the whole event almost fell apart that morning.

In 2024, we decided to involve the college more due to interest expressed by faculty after the 2023 camporee, hoping there would be better communication. This was not the case. We had a published plan sent to every entity involved in the camporee, and found out only two days before the event that the portions of the event to be planned by the college had not been made, they did not have ample staffing. We found out that the training ship would not accommodate the time we had selected for the event, something we were not told and only found out for ourselves in talking to another professor who was not directly involved with the ship. Facing the crisis of potentially not having anything planned for a significant portion of our itinerary, being understaffed for running new events, and needing to completely remake large portions of the plan, we needed to fix things and fast. Fortunately, we were able to work a solution, and the event went very smoothly, but it involved a lot of in situ changes and shuffling people to run the stations we needed. We also faced other challenges. In the weeks leading up to the event, the food service Chartwells, had tried to raise prices they had quoted to us significantly, which would have put the club in significant debt. We were able to show through our email history the original price quote and keep the event on, but this and other very similar situations which popped up in this year and previous years has really shown the importance of getting agreements in writing, and saving all correspondence to avoid exploitation and confusion when planning events.