



**Gap  
Leadership &  
Community  
Curriculum Guide**

# Introduction to this Document

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The goals of this guide are to provide a big picture view of the HMI Gap Leadership & Community curriculum and to give staff some of the tools for providing an experience that embodies the HMI Mission. This document endeavors to capture the HMI vibe, philosophy, and implementation of the community experience and articulates what our desired outcomes are and how we achieve them. Many topics in this guide are also discussed in the Gap How-To, which focuses on the systems and logistics to implement this curriculum operationally.

## HMI Mission Statement

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The High Mountain Institute engages students with the natural world. Our school boldly unites rigorous intellectual inquiry, experiential learning, wilderness expeditions, and shared responsibility in a strong community. Our students realize their potential – as leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens.

## HMI Core Values

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- Mentorship in and out of the classroom
- Transference of what students learn beyond HMI
- Place and community based education
- Process-based learning that teaches students *how* to think, not *what* to think, and conveys a passion for learning
- Integration of the natural world, intellectual engagement, and residential life

## HMI's Diversity Statement

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The High Mountain Institute believes that both diversity and inclusion are essential to growth and learning. We all achieve our potential when each person in the community feels a true sense of belonging, and has the confidence to express their full self.

At HMI, inclusiveness starts with an intentional and affirming community. Creating such a community is our priority. We connect deeply to each other through classes, wilderness expeditions, and shared responsibilities. We prioritize open communication and honest conflict resolution. These efforts inspire us to build trust, to value diverging perspectives, and to build communities greater than ourselves.

Historically, however, outdoor programs like HMI have attracted largely white and privileged populations. At times, this has made it challenging for all at our school to feel fully part of our community. We seek to address these challenges at HMI by increasing the diversity of our students, faculty, staff, trustees, and advisors; by creating classes and activities that explore and reflect students' identities; by expanding the cultural competence of faculty and staff; and by continually challenging the assumptions we hold.

We engage with this challenging work because we are committed to building an exceptional learning environment rooted in community—not just for some, but for all who seek to be inspired by the natural world.

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## Principles of the L&C Curriculum

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When Christopher and Molly Barnes founded the High Mountain Institute in 1995, they were looking to combine the intellectual rigor that exists in traditional academic schools with the personal growth and connections to the natural world that occur on wilderness expeditions. One of the links that ties those two worlds together is the existence of a strong community. Community can foster a safe learning environment that enables students to perform at the highest level and learn more about themselves intellectually, in the backcountry, and throughout their experiences through each segment of an HMI course. Thus, the leadership and community program at HMI is the third leg of a three-legged stool that includes an intentionally small and close-knit community, rigorous intellectual engagement, and outdoor adventure.

There were a few founding principles that guided the development of the HMI experience and that continue to be relevant to all the programs of the school. It is essential that HMI hold on to these principles that guided the original vision for the school as our programming continues to grow and evolve outside of a campus-based program. These founding principles are explained in more detail in the next few pages.

### **Transference**

It is important that students' experiences at HMI do not happen in a vacuum; rather, students should be able to transfer skills and lessons learned from one setting of their HMI experience to another and from HMI to the rest of their lives. We continue to think intentionally about how to give students the tools necessary to take what they learn in one environment and apply them to another. The learning that students gain while at HMI can be as simple as basic life skills such as cleaning, preparing meals, and time management and as profound as reflecting on and clarifying what inspires them, what they value in relationships, and what are the different pursuits that will help them lead a fulfilling life.

## **Engagement in Community**

In an effort to cultivate student engagement in making the community work, students are involved in all aspects of community life. It is intentional at HMI that we all clean the campus, or other spaces we stay, and cook meals. In addition to being transferable life skills, they create a culture in which everyone has ownership over the success of day-to-day life, and everyone has an opportunity to have a large impact on the community. Furthermore, students learn that tasks that may serve as punishment elsewhere (such as washing dishes or cleaning a bathroom) can be fun when it means that one is contributing to his or her community. We actively strive to make work fun.

In addition, the consequence for breaking rules at HMI has always been a separation from the community (whether that is a suspension or an expulsion). Since the community we create is one of the best parts of the students' experience, the consequence for negative actions is taking that away from the individual(s) who have broken a rule. We do not punish students with additional chores because doing chores is simply a part of what we all do to make the community work.

## **Challenge for Every Student**

HMI was founded with the belief that every student can be challenged and supported in some way. We work to recognize each student's strengths, whether they are intellectual, social, or skills based. We then look for ways that we can help students achieve a higher level of performance either by building on strengths or by challenging them to improve in another area. An essential goal of the leadership and community program is for students to leave HMI having experienced personal growth in some way. Sometimes the most important things we do are to notice and articulate the growth in the student in order to help him/her see the change so he/she can choose how to use that growth at home.

## **Safety, Fun, Learning**

One of the priorities for all of our programming is safety-fun-learning (A concept that Molly and Christopher Barnes learned from Deer Hill Expeditions). That is the order of importance for what we do everywhere but certainly in regards to residential life. The order is explained thus:

Students must feel safe, so we must strive to:

- Care for and be aware of each student's needs
- Effectively manage risks
- Proactively address physical and emotional safety concerns

Once students feel safe, they are able to have fun. They can...

- Develop shared experiences, stories, and jokes with each other and with the adults in the community
- Make all parts of HMI fun. Our definition of fun may blur the line between work and play. For example, doing dishes and contributing to the community can be fun.
- Create their own fun.
- Engage in scheduled and inclusive fun so that all members of the community are included.

Once students are having fun, they will learn more.

- If the students feel safe and are having fun, they will have stronger relationships with each other and with the faculty and will likely learn more. This is one of the things that make our whole school special.
- When "School" is fun, it is easier to capitalize on the many teachable moments.

- Students will be able to experience intellectual, physical, and personal development and will be able to learn the specific residential life skills outlined in this document

## **Progression**

The idea of having a progression for development of all the skills taught at HMI was an important part of the school's creation. We recognize that students need to first be taught the basics before they can operate on their own and take ownership and responsibility for many aspects of the school.

In our leadership and community program, there is an intentional progression of teaching and learning. When teaching a new skill, we begin by assuming that the students have never learned it before. We start by showing or modeling the skill, followed by doing the new skill together with the students, followed by letting them do it themselves, followed by giving them feedback on it, ultimately setting them free to do it completely on their own. For example, the first time we have students sort climbing equipment at the end of the day, a staff member should organize and tally the equipment with them. One of the students who does this on the first day should then mentor another group of students for the next gear sort with some help from the staff to make sure they properly count and reorganize the equipment. After a few days of gear sorting, students should be able to do this well without any supervision from staff.

This progression is important because our expectations for students are very different in the beginning versus the end of the semester. It would be unreasonable to expect a student to clean the kitchen perfectly before they know what to use, how to clean, and where things belong. Because of this learning progression, we are able to empower students to take true ownership for their experiences at HMI and to impart skills that are transferable to the rest of their lives.

## **Role Modeling**

The HMI faculty and staff are not only teachers, wilderness instructors, and advisors, but also role models for students. When thinking of yourself as a role model, aim to keep in mind the core value of teaching students how to think, not what to think. For example, we aim to role model the ability to make mistakes, admit to them, and work to correct them. We also aspire to integrate the same concepts of leadership and community into our work as colleagues and educators. In short, HMI staff are expected to “walk the talk” of our leadership and community curriculum to promote a strong community within the staff and for our students.

## **Opportunity for Failure**

In all areas of HMI, we strive to create an environment in which it is safe to make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, and work to improve. It is an important part of the learning process that students have a real opportunity to struggle and then succeed on their own. It gives them the confidence to try new things and the knowledge that they are competent without an adult always holding their hands. Related to this, it is essential that students can see a clear path to success. They must understand what is expected of them, even if they are not yet able to achieve it.

# Enduring Understandings

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The following points are the key learning outcomes of the Gap Leadership & Community Curriculum.

- Leadership can take many forms, and effective leadership requires an ability to adapt to context, desired outcomes, and group's composition and needs
- Leadership and community skills can be taught, practiced, and learned
- Creating a close-knit community of shared responsibility is hard work and very rewarding
- Kindness, clear communication, and conflict resolution are worth the effort
- Interaction and engagement with people different from ourselves is a rich source of learning
- Life is full of risks; we should mindfully balance the costs (physical or emotional harm) and benefits (learning new skills, inter/intrapersonal growth, connection to the natural world, and others) of our actions
- Self-confidence is gained by overcoming struggle and gaining new skills

## HMI Gap Essential Questions

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These are the essential questions that guide our Gap-specific leadership and community curriculum and that we ask students to consider throughout their experience with Gap.

- What does it mean to become an "adult"?
- What makes a good leader? What are my strengths as a leader, and where can I work to develop my leadership?
- What are my passions in life; how can I shape my life by and through the things that inspire me most?
- What are my beliefs about the world? How can understanding my beliefs help me understand others who are different from me?
- How do my values and choices empower me to live the life I envision for myself and to effect change in the world?
- How does challenging oneself in new environments help us learn more about ourselves, grow as a leader, and lead a rich and meaningful life?
- What can pursuing outdoor adventures in a small, intentional community, teach us about being part of other communities?

## Rules

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### Major School Rules

The following actions are not permitted during HMI Gap:

- **Plagiarizing, cheating, or lying**
- **Stealing**
- **Willful destruction of property**
- **Use or possession of alcohol or drugs**
- **Harassment, bullying, hateful or negative speech of any kind**
- **Being in never-known locations**

- **Sexual activity, specifically intercourse**
- **Use or possession of tobacco products**

These eight rules articulate the behaviors that are totally unacceptable at HMI. They set the hard boundary of what it means to be part of HMI. For additional perspective on the why and how of these rules, please refer to the Gap How-To. We discuss the rules and what they mean on the first full day of Gap (the Director of Gap will lead this discussion) and explain to students the rationale of the rules and try to give them the clearest idea possible of what kinds of behaviors do and don't break these rules.

There are several themes in how we frame the rules to students:

- At HMI, we are willing to take risks, and we encourage our students to take risks. We are still very thoughtful about the kinds of risks we take. We are willing to take risks that are inherently connected to the mission of our program, and we do our best to set students up to face these risks well and learn. The behaviors prohibited in the rules involve certain kinds of risks as well, but these are not the kinds of risks we're willing to take at HMI.
- Similarly, we want to provide a safe place to challenge ourselves. The behaviors prohibited by these rules all jeopardize that safe space and tend to get in the way of people being able to learn their best.
- The nature of our program demands a high level of trust and sound judgment from our students, and these rules provide the most basic framework for students to demonstrate their trustworthiness and prudence.

Through our discussion and implementation of the rules, we strive to teach students how to:

- Make one's own fun without drugs/alcohol
- Succeed in a structured environment
- Look after peers – to be a sibling's keeper
- Foster an inclusive community
- Have a sense of responsibility to a larger community

## Community Expectations

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We want each student to learn how to be a great participant in the HMI community. For this reason, we hold a Community Meeting on the first day of Gap during which we discuss community expectations to guide our behaviors throughout Gap. Please refer to the sample plan for this meeting in the "Recommended Lesson Plans" at the end of this document.

Collectively, these expectations include:

- The HMI Mission and Core Values
- The HMI Diversity Statement
- The Community Practices:
  - Be respectful of people, places, and things
  - Role model integrity
  - Apply Leave No Trace principles to all that you do
  - Participate fully

Part of the learning experience for the students is for them to think for themselves about their impact, both positive and negative, on the people around them. This is part of the HMI mission

to promote independent thinking and to become more deliberate in the quality of connections they make with the people they meet and places they go.

Our discussion of Community Expectations will help guide student choices and represents what we, and they, hope people will choose to do at HMI. For example, we may use these principles as a way to frame a conversation with an individual student about changing his/her behavior. The goal is to help the student make better choices that will ultimately help create a better community overall.

This community meeting should also address general community norms – actual behaviors that should or shouldn't be part of the Gap community. These should grow directly from the community expectations that the group develops, and again, they should ultimately be student-driven. Some particular topics that are worthy to address are:

- Use of technology
- Language
- Organization/cleanliness
- Individual responsibilities/chores/systems to get things done

Some considerations for how we uphold Community Expectations:

- Responding to poor community behavior first from a personal perspective and giving the student direct, verbal feedback.
- Exercising discretion in our use of consequences by thinking strategically rather than exclusively punitively (e.g. a student who is late to morning meeting might need help planning his morning routine; he also might need to do an extra, \*special\* responsibility to "give back" to the community). Staff should feel empowered to develop swift and logical consequences for students not upholding these expectations.
- Considering ways to facilitate individual and group ownership for problems (e.g. facilitating a group VOEmP)
- Employing principles of restorative justice by helping students understand how their behavior is impacting others and creating a plan to address that impact and rebuild trust

## **The Major School Rules and Community Expectations**

The development of a strong community includes having students uphold the Major School Rules and enforcing them when they are being broken. When students are not upholding the Community Expectations, the person who notices a concern should follow the principles articulated in the previous section. We do not have a list of consequences for potential breaches of these expectations in part because we believe that the interaction should be both personal and specific to the given situation rather than simply pointing to a list of what you cannot do and what the consequence is. Furthermore, staff may consider involving the larger student group to ensure students are taking an active role in guiding their own community to greatness and holding one another accountable.

When the Major School Rules are in question, the staff member should bring it to the attention of the Director of Gap right away.

We have found that when we engage in conversations with students about Community Expectations and hold them to high standards, they are less likely to slip up on the bigger things like the Major School Rules. We often follow the mantra, "start hard; finish easy" so that we don't find ourselves in conversation about the little things late in the semester.

Please see the Gap How-To for further considerations about holding students accountable to the Major School Rules and Community Expectations.

## HMI's Leave No Trace Expectations

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HMI adheres to a Leave No Trace ethic in natural outdoor settings as well as within our own community and when interacting with other human communities. Very much at the core of Gap's "civic adventure" model is that we take an active role in stewarding the places we get to enjoy through travel and outdoor activities. This concept – minimizing our negative impact and working to have a positive one – applies to any situation: from how we act when stopping into a gas station or local market to rebuilding trails to the base of a cliff and even to how we interact with each other in camp.

The seven LNT principles are:

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impact.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

Please also refer to the WPG and the Gap How-To for further considerations on how we teach and implement LNT Principles at HMI.

Some further considerations in regards to our LNT Ethic:

- Asking students to consider the difference between minimizing impact as a visitor and managing impact as a steward
- Acknowledging that a clear system of social/political values is at play in the LNT ethic and focusing on developing students' own views and values rather than telling them what they should believe
- Considering the different cultural dimensions of an LNT Ethic and encouraging students' openness to different perspectives, especially when abroad
- Extending the LNT Ethic and discussion to non-environmental topics (e.g. human communities)

## Daily Life

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### Life Maintenance

About once a week (or as possible based on backcountry expedition schedules), students should be given a substantial portion of a day to do "life maintenance." This includes taking a shower, doing laundry, shopping for food, and having free time in town to relax and explore. Please see the Gap How-To for details on the logistics of this.

### Play

It is an expectation of staff to encourage and promote "playing" during free time. In the beginning of the program, that means initiating games and fun activities and encouraging

students to join. Throughout the course, it means encouraging students to continue to play even through busy times. It is our belief that the more everyone plays together, the more cohesive and successful the community will be.

This may also take the form of more informal time when staff can invite students to join them for various fun activities. This could be things like an evening bouldering session, a sunset hike, or morning yoga. We encourage staff to think about the fun, rejuvenating elements they have in their own lives, and as appropriate, inspire students to cultivate similar passions for themselves.

### **Cleaning/Organization**

Promoting an ethic of cleanliness and organization serves the community on both a practical and educational level. Practically, despite being in the outdoors so much of the time, we still have a lot of equipment and limited space, and it is very easy for this stuff to get dirty and cluttered. Educationally, it promotes students' good self-care, sense of personal responsibility, and self-reliance. Please see the Gap How-To ("HMI's Leave No Trace Expectations") for guidelines on the systems that will help students be successful in this.

### **Additional Activities**

Throughout Gap, there are various opportunities for valuable and/or fun activities that are not directly connected to the course content. These could include dinner nights (in which the whole course goes out or collaborates for a special dinner), movies, holiday celebrations (a few standing traditions are Halloween Bowling and Patagonian Thanksgiving/Asado), and others. As long as the schedule permits, we encourage staff and students to seek valuable opportunities for these kinds of experiences. When thinking about potential activities, staff should consider:

- Relevance – How does the activity connect to HMI? How will this activity deepen the students' experience or strengthen the course community?
- Interest – To what extent is this driven by student interest? How many of the students are interested? Is this a whole-group activity or elective?
- Cost – Has the Director of Gap approved any expenses involved in this activity?
- Logistics – What other resources will you need (vehicle, space, equipment)? Are these available?

### **Health and Wellness**

#### AMX

Morning exercise, or "AMX," helps students develop a routine of healthy habits for the future. It is important for staff to balance the generally high levels of exertion required for much of Gap programming with appropriate AMX activities. Staff should strive to facilitate some kind of AMX (or "PMX," if necessary) at least 4 days a week.

Some suggested activities for AMX:

- Running, generally light, 25-60 minutes (see the Gap How-To for more considerations for running)
- Yoga/meditation
- Structured stretching
- Fitness circuits (aka "Slay the Weakness" or "High Mountain Fitness"; ask the Director of Gap for suggestions; these should generally be geared toward whole-body conditioning and balancing the muscle groups most-used during climbing and backpacking)

## Nutrition

For many Gap students, this may be the first time they are planning, buying, and preparing their own food. Thus, it is imperative that we provide helpful guidance for how to plan meals, what to buy, and what is nutritious food. The WPG outlines a basic nutrition class, which we teach on the first expedition and serves as the starting point for this conversation. Once students begin planning their rations (after the Wilderness Expedition), we provide each tent group with a food-planning sheet. Staff should make sure that students have completed this sheet before going to the store to shop. As part of this first ration-planning time, we should begin with a whole-group discussion about what makes a nutritious diet. While it can be helpful to solicit ideas from students, we should make sure to emphasize the following concepts:

- Consuming more accessible energy (i.e. starches and sugars) during higher periods of activity
- Consuming foods with higher amounts of quality protein and oils with more micro-nutrients (e.g. vegetables) in the morning and evening for recovery
- Generally eating higher amounts of quality protein (eggs, lean meats/fish, yogurt/cheese)
- Generally limiting sugar intake
- Preparing food that is durable and transportable

Gap staff should strive to find "teachable moments" in regards to eating to take care of our bodies. This could happen in the grocery stores as students are shopping and talking about the nutritional value of ingredients or by guiding students to make good snacking choices during a day's activities. Staff should emphasize reasonable eating habits while noting that the unique demands of the high levels of activity that students do on HMI Gap.

## General Self-care

The experience of being on Gap is both thrilling and challenging. Students are living in harsh environments most of the time, learning new skills frequently, and doing all this in a small group of people. The Gap experience is generally much more intense than most of "normal life." For these reasons, Gap staff should emphasize the importance of self-care, both physically and emotionally. What follows are more specific considerations for helping students have excellent self-care.

Within the whole group:

- Upholding the Major School Rules and Community Expectations
- Emphasizing and expecting good hygiene
- Communicating clear plans and striving to stick to them
- Utilizing defined systems for transitions and camp organization
- Using the effective communication to address group concerns
  - Debriefs
  - SBI Feedback
  - VOEMP
- Striving for transparency and student input with decisions

Within a tent group:

- Facilitating a quality tent group briefing:
  - Peeves, needs, and quirks
  - Camp systems
  - Food planning

- Structuring effective mid-section check-ins and generally accountability

Between staff and student:

- Checking that the student's basic needs (safety, nourishment, sleep, emotional well-being) are met
- Providing time and support to organize personal equipment
- Coaching students to find solitude
- Helping a student articulate goals, needs, and wishes
- Expecting student to use daily journaling with specifics

### Extra-course Community

While much of Gap should be focused on building a vibrant community within the course, it is an important life skill for students to know how to maintain strong connections to family and friends outside of the course. During the Community Expectations discussions, this concept should be addressed and given clear parameters, but staff should support and coach students to stay in touch with other important people in their lives. This includes calling/writing home during free time, taking care of personal responsibilities (e.g. college enrollment paperwork), and taking time to update others on what they've been doing (this could be via social media or other venues).

### **Down Time**

There is limited free time during HMI Gap; the schedule is generally quite full – and by design. Staff should be cautious with providing much unstructured free time with students. Still, it is important that we are deliberate to schedule "down time" throughout the course to give students a chance to pause and recharge. This is different than structured reflection time (e.g. time for a journaling assignment or solo). There is a place for students to simply have some time with nothing to do. This can often take place for a late morning start or an extra-long time for dinner. We also encourage students to use good systems in their tent groups to give others a chance to relax. Staff should avoid giving students more than a few hours of unstructured time.

## **Community Meeting**

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Regularly throughout HMI Gap, we hold Community Meetings. The aim of Community Meeting is to be a platform to explore and address community-related topics and issues. Some of the specific themes that should run throughout Community Meetings are:

- How to foster a strong community
- Brave space norms and expectations
- Accepting individual responsibility for the community
- Awareness of individual impact on the community
- The value in taking a moment to pause and reflect
- How to engage in challenging discussions

It is critical that we establish a tone of respect and safety to speak candidly during Community Meetings, often described as a *brave space*. It is important to have at least one structured and scheduled time about each week for a formal community meeting and then add other times as needed. An important distinction between Community Meetings and other curriculum-based classes/topics is that Community Meeting should fundamentally be focused on the unique course community and prioritize personal reflection, perspective-sharing, and connection within the group.

Gap staff should share the responsibility for planning and running each Community Meeting with students. This is a great way to encourage student independence. As with nearly every aspect of Gap, staff should provide a progression of student ownership of these discussions, and even when students are leading these conversations, staff should be very involved in the planning and should participate equal to the students in the meeting itself.

Community Meeting can be organized in various ways as well, including open discussion, games and activities, reflective writing and sharing, and/or "Circle." While there are some topics in the Leadership & Community curriculum that are most commonly/effective addressed in a Community Meeting (these are noted in the "Topics and Progression" section below), it is ultimately up to staff, in collaboration with students, to decide what the group needs most and how to meet that need through Community Meeting and may incorporate curricular topics as appropriate.

## Engaging with Local Communities

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### Overview

Throughout the semester, there are many opportunities for students to be involved in the local communities where HMI Gap travels. It is important that students have a broader sense of their surroundings than just the limited space of the HMI program. In addition to the learning about place facilitated through the Environmental Studies curriculum, there are other ways that students learn about the local community. The following are the skills and lessons we hope to teach through engagement in the local community:

- How to have low-impact and positive interactions within a larger community (Leadville, Moab, Chile Chico, etc)
- How to give back to a local community
- How to interact with diverse communities

### Town Time

At various points during HMI Gap, students have the chance to explore the local community in a more unstructured manner. This serves as one of the times when students have the opportunity to engage with the community and gain a greater connection to the place they are visiting. Refer to the Gap How-To for specific guidelines and expectations for town time.

### Learning Service

HMI Gap focuses on the intersection of adventure and conservation, and at this intersection, we ask students to consider what it means to work to serve the local human and non-human community. In other words, the aim is not simply to have students "volunteer;" rather, we hope they will examine how the work they do addresses a specific need in the place.

Gap students participate in multiple and long-term conservation service projects relevant to outdoor recreation. These could include trail-building, organizing volunteer events, wildlife monitoring, impact surveys, among many others. These projects change from program to program as we strive to partner with local organizations so that we are working on projects that have measurable value to the local community. The Environmental Studies helps contextualize the problem the project is meant to address and why the work our students do is valuable.

The following are the outcomes we aim to cultivate through community service opportunities:

- The fun and reward that comes from giving back

- Empathy and openness to diverse perspectives
- An ethic of responsible use/travel
- Assiduousness
- Professionalism
- Exploration of potential careers in the conservation field

## Reflection

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Throughout Gap, we aim to offer opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences in different ways. It is our hope that through reflection, students will be able to more easily pinpoint what they have learned or gained from their experience and work to engrain those lessons more deeply in their memories.

The following are the lessons and skills that we teach through reflection opportunities:

- Reflecting on experiences is a valuable way to gain self-awareness and perspective.
- Public reflection can bring people closer and create a cohesive community
- How to laugh at oneself
- How to create effective reflective opportunities for oneself
- How to learn from mistakes

### Circle

The WPG offers greater details about Circle, and its place and function within the Leadership & Community Curriculum is worth outlining here. On the first night of Gap, we hold our “First Circle,” during which we introduce Circle and how it works and then have students participate in their first Circle. The topic for this Circle is typically short (e.g. “Three words about how you feel right now.”) We do Circle every night during the first Wilderness Expedition and then consistently throughout the rest of the program.

Circle serves several important functions: helping students develop connections with each other and with the staff, giving students a structured and consistent time for shared reflection on their experiences, and developing a community where it is safe to speak one's mind.

Circle is introduced on the very first night of Gap and might need to be reviewed on the first nights of the Wilderness Expedition. The only rules of circle are that each person speak from the heart and listen with respect.

It can be tempting to offer circle topics to stimulate circle conversations. These should be used sparingly as some of the best circles come out of allowing students to take the conversation in their own direction. This can require patience on the part of the staff as it may take a couple of circles for things to get rolling.

### Solo

Solo is the longest amount of designated individual reflection time that we provide for students during the semester. We try to facilitate an uninterrupted period of 24-36 hours for Gap students' Solo. On Gap, Solo is done in the field in an appropriate location within the last 5 days of the program.

During the Solo briefing, staff should introduce Full Circle (see below) to the students so that they may spend their time reflecting productively. Students should also read “Stillness” by Scott

Russell Sanders before Solo. We encourage students not to bring music or books with them on Solo so that they truly spend the time reflecting on their experience.

Please review the Solo section in the WPG for considerations on setting Solo up for students.

## Full Circle

Full Circle is our graduation ceremony on the final full day of HMI Gap. Every student reads their Full Circle, a written reflection on their experience during HMI Gap. Students are introduced to Full Circle before going on Solo so that they may use their time to write. After Solo, the student's current advisor will listen to the student to the read their Full Circle. The advisor can help the student develop their ideas and deliver the reading with more eloquence. If there is anything inappropriate in the Full Circle, the advisor can help the student cut it.

These are some guidelines we give students on their Full Circles:

- This is not an essay on "how did HMI work for me"; you don't need a thesis. You don't need topic sentences. You don't need cheesy metaphors.
- This is not an Oscar speech. It's great to mention people or groups that have been really meaningful to you here, but don't do a laundry list of, "I'd like to thank..."
- Avoid focusing too much on events and experiences that aren't directly connected to HMI. On that same note, avoid talking too much about the first day at the airport.
- Avoid inside jokes, profanity, and telling us about the rules that you broke.
- Full Circle is not a therapy session. Please do not recount childhood traumas, sob stories, or other melodrama.
- This is not the space to give the constructive feedback that you've been waiting to give HMI, the staff, your peers, or an individual.

# Topics and Progression

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The following is the recommended progression of topics within the Leadership HMI Gap Leadership & Community Curriculum. While staff should use their judgment about the exact timing and relevance of a given topic, our expectation is that get to work with all of these topics in one way or another. This list includes classes from the Wilderness Program Guide, and further information about these classes can be found there. Each of these topics has listed objectives and the typical timing of the class or discussion.

Topic	Objective	Timing
Clean Slate, Community Expectations, and Personal Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the structure and tone of Community Meeting</li> <li>• Embrace the opportunity to build a totally new community and develop a set of expectations that will guide individuals' behavior to contribute to a healthy and high functioning course community</li> <li>• To transform the expectations each person has for the program and themselves into specific intentions that will guide how they engage with the experience</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> full day of program, as a Community Meeting
Leadership & Community Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce students to the L&amp;C Curriculum and Essential Questions</li> <li>• To reflect on these Essential Questions</li> <li>• To preview the arc of the L&amp;C curriculum: foundation, exploration and reflection, ownership</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> 3 days of program
Leadership Elements	See WPG	Week 1
SMART Goals	See WPG, and notes below	Week 1

Leader of the Day	See WPG, and notes below for advanced teaching	Week 1
Leadership Roles	See WPG	Week 1
Standard EB Class	See WPG	Week 1
Decision-Making Styles	See WPG	Weeks 1-2
Intro to Communication	See WPG	Weeks 1-2
SBI Feedback	See WPG	Weeks 1-2
VOEmPing	See WPG	Weeks 1-2
Leadership Grid	See WPG	Weeks 2-3
*Mindfulness Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a series of practices to help individuals more fully engage with their immediate experience</li> </ul>	Begin in Week 2-3 and continue throughout
LOD Review – Front-country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review the LOD responsibilities and help students consider new ways to demonstrate leadership in a front-country setting</li> </ul>	Weeks 2-3
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider the habits of resilience and to help students cultivate those habits</li> </ul>	Weeks 3-4
Stages of Group Development	See WPG	Weeks 3-4
Developing Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reflect on and develop a personal sense of purpose</li> </ul>	Weeks 3-5, as a Community Meeting
Leadership Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To build students' self-awareness about their leadership through the 5 practices</li> <li>To facilitate students' development of a more robust leadership through cultivating all 5 practices</li> </ul>	Weeks 4-8
Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide students a structured time to reflect on their goals, fears, and experience of becoming an adult</li> </ul>	Weeks 5-6
*Privileged Leadership (Leadership Grid 201)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To examine how cultural, social, and personal dimensions of identity intersect with leadership and privilege certain leadership styles</li> </ul>	Weeks 6-7
Personal Mission Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help students develop and write a working set of core values and a draft mission statement</li> <li>To help students develop a clearer direction and sense of purpose as they move into college and adulthood</li> <li>To provide students with a framework and clarity to confront difficult decisions about their futures</li> </ul>	Weeks 7-10, typically as Community Meetings
*Purposeful Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a specific plan to incorporate a personal mission statement into a student's leadership for the final weeks of the course and future communities</li> </ul>	Weeks 9-10, possibly as a Community Meeting
Moving On Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide some concepts that will help students make the transition to life after HMI Gap</li> <li>To facilitate students' exploring ways to transfer their experience with HMI Gap to future experiences</li> </ul>	Weeks 11-12, typically as short discussions and/or Community Meetings
The following are optional classes that may be included based on available time and staff discretion on their value for the students		
Decision-Making: Heuristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage students to consider the challenges of making decisions in complex situation when there aren't obvious or satisfying solutions</li> <li>To introduce students to common decision-making mistakes or "traps"</li> <li>To emphasize intentional decision-making</li> </ul>	As appropriate, likely weeks 4-8
Errors of Perception (alternative class to Heuristics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To raise students' awareness of tendencies to perceive a situation in limited ways</li> <li>To motivate students to use effective decision-making strategies</li> </ul>	As appropriate, likely weeks 4-8
*Perspectives on Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider the nature of risk-taking</li> <li>To develop internal criteria for acceptable risks</li> </ul>	Weeks 8-10
Career Compass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help students reflect on their own values and disposition and how that may guide them toward different academic and career pursuits</li> </ul>	As appropriate, likely in weeks 9-12 (after Mission Statements)