

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

**Responses to "A Ropes Course for WCU," by Chris Gunn and April Lewandowski,
12/1/98**

Chris Gunn and April Lewandowski make an excellent case for a ropes course at WCU. The funding could come from many sources, but I wonder if the SGA would be interested in a university-wide referendum to see whether or not students would want to allocate a portion of student fees to build and maintain the course. If such a vote is possible, we might get a sense of how interested students are in this project. And if they vote for it, students would have a direct investment in the course, a sense of ownership. I hope they go for it.

Brian Railsback, Acting Dean, Honors College

I endorse Chris' advocacy for a Ropes Course at WCU! It's about time we capitalized on our location and brought the outdoor experience to the classroom.

June Wytock, Counseling and Psychological Services

April Lewandowski and Chris Gunn's proposal for a high ropes course struck me at first as interesting but hardly something a four-year university like WCU should get excited about. After all, if students want such an experience, let them sign up for Outward Bound or go into ROTC: they can certainly get plenty of high ropes in both places.

But on rereading, I realized some telling figures: if WCU is presently spending \$7,000 to send students off-campus to get high-ropes experiences and if we could indeed build such a facility here for under \$43,000, it seems like in 6 years the project could pay for itself (even if we weren't charging others in our area to use it). The wild cards would include cost of maintenance and supervision as well as where to put it.

Apart from financial feasibility, however, I can appreciate the potential value of such an experience, having done an 8-week rock-climbing course at Colorado College when I was 17--an experience so challenging and so exhilarating that I'll benefit from it as long as I live. From what Gunn and Lewandowski tell us, the high-ropes facility at WCU could provide students with similarly exciting reasons to stay in Cullowhee some extra weekends (which just might increase that school identity and spirit which have been fostered by the computer initiative and recent sports victories--such as the football win over ASU).

I strongly favor starting an immediate feasibility study with the goal of setting up such a facility if money can be found and a location can be decided on. Congratulations to both Chris Gunn and April Lewandowski for presenting this proposal so clearly.

Steve Eberly, English