

“Organizing trips is a huge logistical puzzle.”

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

>>> CHRIS O'CONNELL '13, Director, First-Year Trips



Got any new trips for this year?

We have a new ropes course trip, and we'll provide more advanced skill instruction for the mountain biking trips, which were added last year. We've also got a new hiking trip in the Presidentials.

What qualified you for this job?

By the time I was applying to be director, I had seen trips from many different angles: as a trip leader, a member of H-Croo and working on the directorate, where I got a full sense of all the logistics and realized how much room for creativity there is in the program's design.

Does the work help with your career goals?

I'm pretty sure I want to pursue a career in higher education policy. In my role as director, exposure to multiple facets of the College has given me an inside look at how they all fit together.

You don't do this job alone, do you?

Trips is an enormous enterprise. I lead an 18-person directorate. We're all students, and everyone except me and the assistant director does it on a volunteer basis.

How much time do you spend in your office?

An embarrassing amount—like, 50 to 60 hours a week.

Lots of students want to be trip leaders, don't they?

For 2013 the program received 780 leader applications. It's a lot to read. We selected 284 leaders.

How did you develop your love of the outdoors?

Backpacking and exploring the Georgia woods. In my role as director I can combine my outdoorsy high school self with all the other interests I've cultivated at Dartmouth.

What's your worst nightmare?

I have many. My biggest fear is a trip encountering a situation that is unsafe, but all leaders take a risk management seminar, everyone is trained in CPR and wilderness first aid, and we have EMTs on call throughout the program. —Svati Narula '13