

Steering Committee

Brianna Turner '23
Ariel Silverman '22/23
Maggie Schultz '22
Janet Liu '23
Idabelle Patterson '22
Carlos Robles '21
Serena Wurmser '23
Emily Quigley, Director



First-Year Outdoor Program

Harvard College
1 Oxford St.
University Hall
Ground Floor, South
Cambridge, MA 02138

fop@fas.harvard.edu
<https://fop.fas.harvard.edu/>

Dear FOP Leader Applicant,

Thank you again for your interest in the First-Year Outdoor Program. The majority of information about FOP can be found on our [website](#). Please be sure to have read our [application information](#) page thoroughly before submitting your application. If you have application questions, please drop by the Zoppice (FOP Zoom Office) during our Steering Committee Office Hour times. The zoom link is [here](#) and the meeting ID is 640 425 6267.

This year, Steering Committee '21 has chosen to focus on the following strategic priorities:

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We want to **expand the FOP community** to include identities that aren't typically represented in the outdoors. We want to **prioritize equal opportunities** and access for everyone, while providing intentional spaces for various identities and communities within FOP.
- **Community:** We want to **strengthen and maintain communities** and safe spaces amongst leaders and FOPpers, while projecting our values and norms within and beyond the FOP community. We want to continually work creatively to promote solutions that benefit FOP no matter what the circumstances may be this year.
- **Education:** We want to **maintain leader training**, regardless of the circumstances, while expanding it to include more areas such as decolonization training and education around land use. We want to increase training based around accessibility, such as cabin trip-specific training. We would like to investigate how we can expand education and outreach beyond the FOP community and the standard FOP timeline.
- **Flexibility/Adaptability:** We recognize the unique challenges of this year, and we want to **be as adaptive as possible** by preparing for as many circumstances as we can in a way that would promote fun, engaging, and realistic possibilities for FOP.
- **Stewardship:** We want to **acknowledge the history of the lands** that we utilize and enjoy while simultaneously recognizing the interconnectedness of where we are and our relationships to the Earth and each other. We want to use our platform to educate about how to become better, more responsible and conscious stewards to the environment, even indoors.

FOP leaders take on a serious responsibility guiding a group of 8 to 12 first-year students and must have the capacity to learn both outdoors and interpersonal skills. As shown by our leaders during FOP 2020, a

level of flexibility and creativity are also welcome traits. Applicants must be able to learn and demonstrate the following skills by the end of training:

- Communicate and work effectively with co-leader(s)
- Discuss views on the Harvard experience with an open-minded perspective
- Navigate potential conflicts between group members while maintaining group safety and balancing individual and group needs
- Engage with difference in a thoughtful and respectful manner
- Demonstrate comfort and confidence with technical skills necessary for backcountry travel
- Effectively handle emergency and unexpected situations

We wanted to take a moment to emphasize that there is uncertainty with regards to how FOP 2021 will take shape. (Please know that should you become a leader, there is still the opportunity to lead outdoor trips in future years!) Whether it be virtual trips or in the outdoors, we are confident that both leaders and FOPers will leave the experience with more joy, more laughs, and more memories!

We look forward to reading your application!

- FOP Steering Committee 2021

FOP 2021 Leader Application

FOP applications will be collected via online submission at <https://fop.fas.harvard.edu/application>. Please use the following document to think about your response. Once you have composed your answers, you should copy and paste them into a template available for download on our website.

Part One: Figuring Out (Your) Personality

Please answer 4 of the 5 following questions. Due to the large volume of applications we receive and to maintain fairness during a busy time of the semester, we kindly ask you to limit each response to no more than 150 words. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be specific in your answers and illustrate using concrete examples. Please note that whatever question you do not answer in the written application will be asked to you during an interview, should you be invited to do so.

Question #1: Introduce Yourself!

This is the space for you to tell us all about you! A treasured processing activity on FOP is five minute autos, where a person spends five minutes sharing as much of their life as they desire. Treat this space as if it were your five minute auto. What do you want us to know about you? Some thoughts: Tell us about an aspect of your life that you consider a fundamental part of your identity. If you had to pick one person in the world to describe you, who would it be, and how would they describe you? Discuss a community that you're a part of and why it's important to you.

Question #2: Leadership and Adaptation

There is a possibility that FOP 2021 will be another summer of virtual trips. How would you adapt your leadership and collaboration style to accommodate a virtual format? How would you address the fact that your FOPers would be physically separated and likely not in an outdoor setting (i.e. outside of the zooms, their home life is impacted by geographic location, internet connections, siblings/relatives/friends, pets, etc)? How would you approach conflict (with your co, amongst your FOPers, etc)?

Question #3: On Inclusion

As stated in our strategic priorities, FOP is actively and constantly working toward making our trips and community as inclusive as possible, though we recognize that we still have significant room for growth and programmatic development. What does the idea of inclusion mean to you in the context of helping incoming first-years make their transition to college life? What steps would you take to create an inclusive space on your trip? Please try to be specific and concrete.

Question #4: Why FOP?

A major aspect of FOP centers around helping FOPers and FOP leaders foster deeper relationships with the outdoors. Nevertheless, there are many aspects to FOP that extend well beyond the outdoors in terms of personal development, interpersonal relationships, environmental awareness, and much more. What drew you to apply to FOP? In this please include some discussion about either your current relationship with the outdoors, or the relationship with the outdoors you hope to grow as a leader.

Question #5: Transition to Harvard

As a FOP leader, you play a major role in the transition into college for FOPpers. You may be one of the first current Harvard college students with which these incoming freshmen will form a relationship. The advice you have and your ability to share your own perspective on the transition to Harvard can be particularly valuable to your FOPpers. Please reflect upon your own transition to college, potentially

discussing any major fears, struggles, lessons, or surprises you came upon in your transition to Harvard. How would this inform any advice you give to your FOPpers? Please be as specific as possible.

Part Two: Scenarios

For the following two questions, imagine you are leading the FOP trips described in the scenarios below, where one is set in a wilderness trip and the other is a virtual trip. Given the uncertainty around the form that FOP trips will take this year, we ask for applicants to be able to envision themselves in both scenarios. For virtual trips in particular, the scenario is based off of the 2020 virtual FOP format, but doesn't necessarily imply that 2021 virtual trips would look the same.

For each scenario, after reading the scenario please list two of your concerns, elaborating about why they are concerns for you, and how you would react to them. There are no right or wrong answers, but you should try to pick the two concerns that you feel are the most pressing. Please note that the situations described below are not necessarily reflective of an actual FOP trip, and any resemblance to previous trips is purely coincidental. (Please answer both, 200 word limit each)

Question #6: Wilderness Scenario

You have just finished your third day of hiking on your 7 day trip with your 8 FOPpers and your co-leader Vikram. The day took longer than you expected due to some unexpected rain conditions, and now the sun is beginning to set as you arrive at camp.

Two of your FOPpers, Jess and Pablo, began the trip as very quiet and reserved. Now they have begun to bond with each other, and almost exclusively talk to each other. They've bonded over similar upbringings in the south, and shared music taste. Your co Vikram made a brief comment to you earlier in the day that he's glad they're finally talking.

A nonbinary FOPper of yours, Ben from Southern California, seems to be very liked by most everyone. They are a goofy figure within the group and seem to crack a joke whenever they get the chance. However, they have injured themselves many times throughout the trip. Ben will run down any inclines they see because they say it's one of their favorite parts of hiking. You have had to stop 4 times this day alone to treat their bruises and cuts from their falling. Your co Vikram has treated Ben all 4 times, and seems to be becoming less and less responsive whenever Ben tries to talk to him.

Three of your FOPpers, Yujin, Gustavo, and Holly, have become good friends very quickly. They are all from the greater Boston area. However, it has become more clear that their experience with the Boston area was quite different. Gustavo grew up in a less affluent neighborhood, went to public schools, and couldn't talk about frequenting the upscale restaurants Yujin and Holly often enjoyed in the area. Gustavo has since started to talk less with them and the rest of the group.

Fatima, a female-identifying FOPper from Chicago, came into the trip quite nervous about hiking, having never done it before. She has been consistently at the tail end of the group, and you can hear her panting quite frequently throughout the trip. The rain today seemed to make her pretty worried about slipping, and she has slowed down even more, falling further behind the rest of the group. A male-identifying FOPper, Jacob from Switzerland, is a very experienced hiker and he has made jokes to Fatima about how slow she is, which she seems to laugh off.

As you settle down for camp you note that everyone is grossed out by how wet their clothes are, and, for many, the inside of their packs. You now begin to think about how you will split up the tasks that need to get done before everyone can head to bed. This includes cooking dinner, setting up tarps, getting clean

water, placing items in a bear bag, and processing activities before going to sleep (processing is a reflection activity/game, commonly done every night before sleep during a FOP trip).

You also think about what problems you want to discuss during your check-in with Vikram. You're not sure if it will be raining again, but if it does, it may put you well behind your scheduled route. You wonder how to best prepare everyone and yourself to ensure everyone gains the most from the remainder of the FOP trip.

Question #7: Virtual Scenario

You have just finished your second virtual FOP meeting of your two week, six-session virtual FOP trip with your six FOPpers and your co-leader Sahana. You are leading a Food Sustainability trip, meaning that your trip interweaves themes of Food Sustainability with social activities, processing activities and games to provide an educational bonding experience for your FOPpers.

Thus far, you have done two mini-lessons with discussion on Food Sustainability, some trivia, a few icebreakers, and have led two different processing activities. The first processing activity was rose-bud-thorn, in which FOPpers say one positive in their life currently (rose), one thing they're looking forward to (bud), and one negative in their life (thorn). The second was an activity in which each FOPper talks to the group about one person in their life who is particularly important to them.

One of your FOPpers, Marco from Bolivia, has shown up about 30 minutes late to these first two meetings, apologizing that he keeps forgetting. However, when he is present, he is quite engaged with both the Food Sustainability material and the processing activities. He has even been willing to be particularly vulnerable in sharing during the second processing activity.

Another FOPper, Adaliyah from Milwaukee, has been one of the most vocal and engaged FOPpers. They want to study environmental science and are quick to participate whenever discussing Food Sustainability material. They are always the first to speak up, but there aren't many FOPpers who follow up after they speak. The majority of questions you pose are answered by Adaliyah.

A nonbinary FOPper, Jen from New Orleans, hasn't spoken up much throughout the trip thus far. During processing activities, they have given relatively brief responses and don't speak up much during the Food Sustainability focused activities. As far you can see, they are always paying attention, but you're unsure about whether or not they are enjoying the trip thus far.

Another FOPper, Karl from West Virginia, has been quite friendly and reasonably engaged. Unfortunately, Karl's internet connection can be spotty, and will drop off the Zoom call for minutes at a time. Despite this, it is clear Karl wants to keep engaging and meeting the other FOPpers, but is often cut off by a spotty internet connection on Karl's end.

Another FOPper, Zeno from Boston, isn't particularly engaged during Food Sustainability focused activities, but has been good about participating in the more social activities or processing. One thing you have noted is that Zeno often Zooms in from different parts of his house. Zeno will often excitedly show items in his house, such as his grand piano and his massive pool outside. Some of the other FOPpers will very excitedly ask him about those items, often seeming quite astounded by them.

A female FOPper, Gloria from Los Angeles, is a particularly social FOPper. She has very much helped spark organic conversation within the Zoom space by asking people lots of questions during periods of downtime. However, whenever people start talking about Zeno's house, you have noted that she tends to

become much quieter and engages less. Still, you are unsure if she is made uncomfortable by those discussions.

As you plan each subsequent session, you have had difficulty consistently getting through to Sahana. She will often not respond to your texts until right before each meeting, making communication significantly slower. She has apologized for not seeing messages until exactly then.

Now you look to your next session. You would really like your FOPpers to have fun and gain as much from this experience as possible. You consider how to best prepare, plan, and give four more sessions of your Food Sustainability virtu-FOP trip.