

## Students prepare for 21-day expedition

By Chloe McGee  
Staff Writer

A group of 11 Brevard College students led by wilderness leadership and experiential education (WLEE) professor John Buford make up the crew of what is commonly referred to as the “Immersion Semester”—a WLEE course that involves rigorous planning and countless hours in the field.

“It’s the capstone of the WLEE degree,” Sydney Shaw, a senior WLEE major, explained.

In preparation for a student planned and student led 21-day wilderness expedition the team participates in a number of activities, including rock climbing, whitewater kayaking and canoeing, sea kayaking on the coast, mountain biking and backpacking.

However, their preparations extend past the physical requirements or as Shaw defines them, “hard skills.” Soft skill, personal attributes and

methods that ensure effective communication, such as leadership, followership, conflict resolution and behavior management are equally important aspects of the immersion curriculum.

The students practice these skills throughout the semester, but this is only a dress rehearsal for what is to come.

The 21-day back country excursion is when the students’ endurance and competence is really put to the test. The trip shows how their planning and prerequisite tasks are condensed and applied in the field.

“Everything we did up until the 21-day was crucial to our success, especially the soft skills—problem solving, group dynamics, expedition planning and critical thinking,” Shannon Kerr, a former participant of the immersion semester, said.

Teamwork is a fundamental component of

the WLEE program. For optimal performance on their trip, it is critical for all members to be proficient in both expedition behavior and technique. Each group is only as strong as its weakest link.

“It’s up to the individual to be prepared, and it can negatively affect the group if someone isn’t,” Shaw said. “But part of good teamwork is to help others beforehand to prevent this from happening in the field.”

The group is scheduled to embark on their extended trip at the end of this month. The location has yet to be determined, but will be decided upon by the students. In the meantime, they are preparing mentally and physically for a demanding adventure—an opportunity to learn and practice skills which are essential to wilderness education.

## Rover project underway

By Carmen Boone  
Arts & Life Editor

The rovers are robots, tools that can be controlled from the classroom by remote sensing.

Originally, they were designed to give students an opportunity to explore Pisgah National Forest. However, the main goal now is to use them to get students excited about science and to keep them engaged.

“We really wanted to give our students a sort of experience with technology that just didn’t exist on this campus before,” said Mike Castelaz, physics professor and leader of the rover program. “Here, you have an opportunity really to take something and go and explore something that maybe no one’s ever seen before.”

In addition to Castelaz, a core group was involved with the rover project. Dr. Jennifer Frick-Ruppert, professor of biology and Math and Science Division chair, did the administrative paperwork. Dr. Maureen Drinkard, assistant professor of environmental studies, was in



Science students send commands to the rover on the Brevard College campus. The rover program was funded by a National Science Foundation grant.

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## Fall Break reminders

As everyone is in the throws of midterms, many people are counting down the days until Fall Break. Here is some important information to prepare for the break.

Fall Break begins Saturday, Oct. 13 and runs through Sunday, Oct. 21. No classes will meet during this week.

Myers Dining Hall will close on Friday, Oct. 12 following dinner at 7 p.m. It will reopen on Thursday, Oct. 18 through Sunday, Oct. 21 for brunch and dinner. Brunch will be held from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. while dinner will be served from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Regular meal times begin again on Oct. 22 at 7 a.m.

Coltrane Underground will close Thursday, Oct. 11 at 11 p.m. It is scheduled to reopen Monday, Oct. 22 at 11 a.m.

Students are reminded to keep an eye on their Brevard College email for any further updates regarding Fall Break.

— Julie Carter