

# COE Course Evaluation Fall 2023

*Prepared by Sylvie Froncek 12/6/2023 with support from Cornell University Department of Data Science and Statistics*

This online Cornell Outdoor Education Course Evaluation was administered using Qualtrics. The responses were collected from September 9th, 2023 to December 4th, 2023.

There were 54 course offerings listed on the evaluation, and of those courses, only ~37 took place in the Fall of 2023. (*For example, there was an Outdoor Leadership class that was canceled due to low registration.*)

The majority of the instructors who taught classes this semester were asked to show a QR code to their students on the last day of class so that they could complete the online evaluation. I say “the majority of instructors” because I don’t know that every community instructor got this information or how the new evaluation system was shared with instructors.

The responses below include 31 courses.

A typical COE Course has 10 students on average.

This data includes 357 responses from students who were enrolled in the following PE classes during the Fall 2023 Semester. (34 people started the survey but didn’t complete it so their information is not included) This is about 50% of the students who were enrolled:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Rock Climbing (199 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PE 1640- Basic Rock Climbing 82</li><li>• PE 1641- Basic Rock Climbing- Closing the Adventure Gap 13</li><li>• PE 1642- Women's Basic Rock Climbing 14</li><li>• PE 1646- Intermediate Rock Climbing 25</li><li>• PE 1647- Sport Lead Climbing 14</li><li>• PE 1650- Rock Climbing Technique and Training 6</li><li>• PE 1651- Introduction to Outdoor Rock Climbing 11</li><li>• PE 1653- Shawangunks Rock Climbing 9</li><li>• PE 1656- Introduction to Anchor Building 4</li><li>• OADI- Basic Rock Climbing 7</li><li>• Wellness- Rock Climbing 16</li><li>• Wellness- Rock Climbing 27</li></ul> | <b>Paddling (27 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PE 1670- Adirondack Canoe Camping 7</li><li>• PE 1683- 1000 Island Sea Kayak 8</li><li>• PE 1675 Stand Up Paddle Boarding 6</li><li>• PE 1681- Whitewater Kayaking 6</li></ul> |
| <b>Biking (15 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PE 1664- Mountain Biking 8</li><li>• PE 1666- Bike Touring 4</li><li>• PE 1668- Recreational Biking 3</li></ul>   | <b>Hiking/Backpacking (18 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PE 1611- Fall Break Backpacking Trip 1</li><li>• PE 1610- Backpacking in the Finger Lakes 6</li><li>• PE 1605- Day Hiking 2</li></ul>                                |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1606- Outdoor Birding Basics 9</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Circus (9 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1600- Introduction to Aerials 9</li> </ul>                                      | <b>Tree Climbing (9 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1657- Tree Climbing 9</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Caving (18 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1630- Caving 18</li> </ul>   | <b>Trail Running (4 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1608- Trail Running 4</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Yoga and Tai Chi (27 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1700- Outdoor Tai Chi 8</li> <li>PE 1702- Outdoor Yoga 19</li> </ul> | <b>Wilderness First Aid (27 responses)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PE 1620- Wilderness Advanced First Aid 1</li> <li>PE 1625- Wilderness First Aid 26</li> </ul> |

## Who takes COE classes?

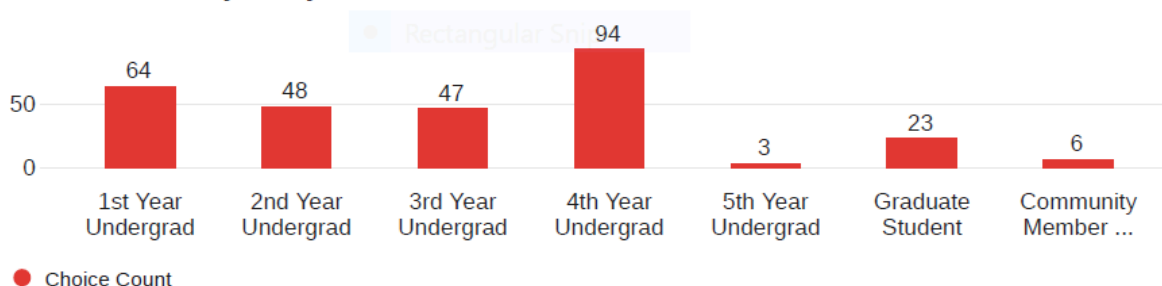
This data is from the full group of 285 respondents however this question was optional.

- 282 respondents were Cornell Students
- 10 respondents were not Cornell Students

## What is your year or affiliation?

A large percentage of the students taking classes with us in Fall 2023 were 4th year undergraduates and 1st year undergraduates. This is generally the distribution that we see in courses. We didn't collect data on whether or not students had taken a COE or PE class prior to this, but it would be interesting to know if there are people who have taken multiple PE classes and if that is skewing the "prior outdoor experience" level reported.

Q42 - What is your year or affiliation?

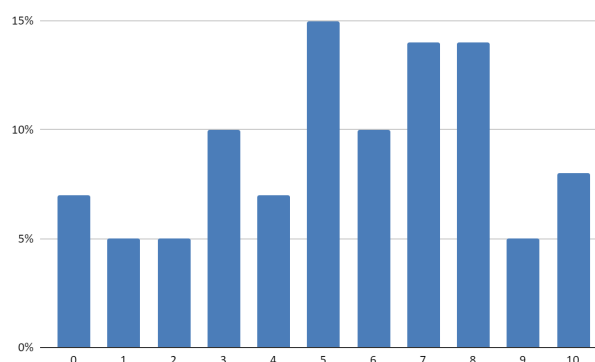


1st Year Undergrad- 64 respondents  
 2nd Year Undergrad- 48 respondents  
 3rd Year Undergrad- 47 respondents  
 4th Year Undergrad- 94 respondents  
 5th Year Undergrad- 3 respondents  
 Community Member (staff, faculty, local resident)-6 respondents  
 Graduate Students- 23 respondents

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## What was your prior outdoor experience?

We had 320 respondents who answered this question. This was a multiple-choice question with one answer allowed. A “0” was explained as “no prior outdoor experience” and “10” was explained as “lots of prior outdoor experience.” About 14% of students reported a prior outdoor experience of 5, 7 or 8. The lowest reported answer was 1, 2, 9 and 10 with about 5% to 8%. The full results are in the table below. Compared to the Spring 2023 Evaluation (see table below), fewer students had very little outdoor experience in Fall 2023.



| Rating | Count | FA'23 Percentage | SP'23 Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| 0      | 21    | 7%               | Not reported     |
| 1      | 15    | 5%               | 14.11%           |
| 2      | 16    | 5%               | 9.20%            |
| 3      | 32    | 10%              | 10.74%           |
| 4      | 23    | 7%               | 7.67%            |
| 5      | 47    | 15%              | 14.42%           |
| 6      | 33    | 10%              | 11.35%           |
| 7      | 44    | 14%              | 14.42%           |
| 8      | 45    | 14%              | 10.12%           |
| 9      | 17    | 5%               | 3.07%            |
| 10     | 27    | 8%               | 4.91%            |

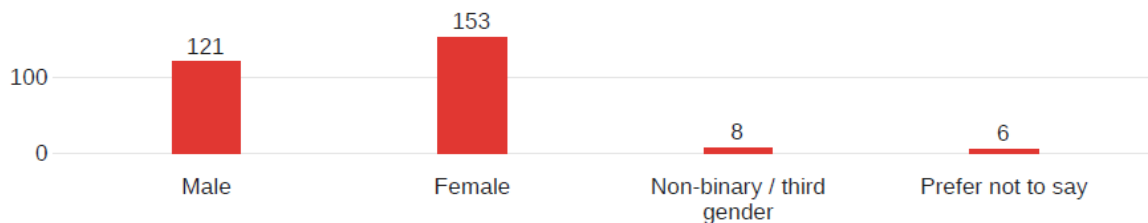
I also calculated the average outdoor experience for each undergraduate group.

|               |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1st Year- 5.5 | 2nd Year- 5.5 | 3rd Year- 5.7 | 4th Year- 5.2 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|

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## What is your gender identity?

Q43 - What is your gender identity?



According to Cornell University Profile: Class of 2023<sup>1</sup>, 55% of students are women and 45% are men. This data does not account for non-binary students.

According to the Fall 2023 COE Course Evaluation, 53% of students who attend our PE classes are female, 42% are male, and 3% identify as non-binary.

**The gender of students in COE PE courses is representative of the Cornell University student population.**

Female- 153 of 288 respondents

Male- 121 of 288 respondents

Non-Binary - 8 of 288 respondents

Prefer not to say- 6 of 288 respondents

Of the total respondents, 1 identified as disabled, and 2 identified as queer and cis-female

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## What is your race/ethnicity/background?

This was a multiple-choice question where students could select more than one response. This was an optional question and 274 people responded. You will find more specific class and course area demographics in another section.

Ideally, the demographic distribution in COE classes matches that of the University as a whole. The Fall 2023 COE Course Evaluation data is displayed in the table below, alongside the demographic information from the Cornell Registrar, and the average from the Cornell University's Class of 2023-2026 profiles. COE's Evaluation data is self-reported.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Profile2019-Freshmen.pdf>

According to this evaluation, students' racial and ethnic representation in COE PE courses does not match that of the Cornell University student body. COE classes see an over-representation of Asian and White students while Black/African American and Hispanic students are underrepresented. With that said, the Office of the Registrar further divides student demographics to include a Hispanic/white category. If we include the Office of the Registrar's two categories of Hispanic students, the total is 11%, which matches the reported total from the COE Evaluation. The Office of the Registrar doesn't have a mixed race category, but there is a grouping of all students with a race/ethnicity that is under 1% of the Cornell population.

|                                  | <b>COE Race/Ethnicity Distribution</b>                            | <b>COE Race/Ethnicity Distribution from Registrar from Fall 2023</b> | <b>Class of 2023-2026 Race/Ethnicity from Cornell University<sup>234</sup><br/><sup>5</sup>(Institution reported data)</b> |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Alaska Native or Native American | >1%   | None reported  | .04% (double check)  |
| Asian                            | 34%   | 34%  | 21.77%   |
| Black/African American           | 3%  | 5%   | 9.75%  |
| Hispanic or Latino               | 11%   | 3%   | 17.63%   |
| Middle Eastern                   | Recorded under multi-racial                                       | Data not collected   | Data not collected   |
| Mixed Race                       | 8% (includes any student with 2 or more racial/ethnic identities) |  | 5.25%  |
|                                  |   | 5% Asian/white   |  |
|                                  |   | 2% Black/White   |  |
|                                  |   | 8% Hispanic/white  |  |
| Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian | 1%  | None reported  | About .2%  |
| White/Caucasian                  | 40%   | 35%  | 32.95%   |
| N/A                              | This data was collected in the mixed race category                | 8% (this includes any people of mixed race that were not included    | This data may be reflected in the mixed race category  |

<sup>2</sup> <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Profile2019-Freshmen.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Profile2020\_first-year.pdf

<sup>4</sup>chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Profile2021-first-year.pdf

<sup>5</sup> <https://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/university-factbook/freshman-profile-archives/profile-of-the-class-of-2026>

|  |  |                                |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
|  |  | in the Mixed Race group above) |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|

**The results of the Fall 2023 COE Course Evaluation are below.**

American Indian- 1  
Asian- 113  
Black/African American- 11  
White/Caucasian- 134  
Hispanic- 38  
Asian/Pacific Islander - 2  
Multi-Racial- 27  
International- 5

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**How did you hear about this COE Course?**

Students were asked how they learned about the COE Course they took. Students were able to select multiple responses. From 320 respondents we had 536 selections reported. The majority of students heard about the course on Cornell Course Roster. The Course Roster lists classes by course number and COE courses have higher numbers than most of the other PE classes, so COE classes are listed last in the Course Roster under PE Courses.

We put up about 4 posters to advertise our classes for the Fall semester and those were on display in Bartels Hall and in the OADI building.

The data shows that 12 students only heard about the course on the COE website while 98 people only heard about the course on the Course Roster and 27 people only heard about the class on the PE website. Just like Spring 2023 semester, the PE website is not up to date and it does not match our current course listings. In addition, some courses are categorized differently from the course list on the COE page. For example, on the PE website, under the "Backpacking" category the class list includes Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Introduction to Circus Arts but does not include Intro to Camping or Fall Break Backpacking Trip. In addition, none of the PE website classes include information from the COE website about how to prepare for the class or how to dress.

The results are below:

- Word of Mouth - 118
- Cornell Course Roster -200
- Cornell Student Center- 49
- COE Website- 64
- PE Website- 89
- Poster- 6
- Social Media- 10

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### What are ways that we can make this course more accessible to a more diverse audience?

In response to the hypothesis that our classes were not reflecting the Cornell University demographic distribution in regards to gender, race/ethnicity, ability, year and financial aid needs, we requested feedback from students on how to diversify our classes and make them more accessible.

The relevant responses are listed below and broken up by theme. Some answers were discarded because they didn't respond to the question.

| Marketing   | Cost  | Course structure  |
|---|---|---|
| Promote more  | Maybe make the course fee less expensive? I don't know if it's possible though. | Better time frames and collating more with Oadi maybe more times for this class |
| Maybe marketing it to the Gender Equity Resource Center?                | Make it cheaper if possible that fee was a lil harsh on my wallet.              |   |
| Advertise it more   |   |   |
| advertising it more, especially for OADI students or first-gen students |   |   |

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### How would you rate this course overall?

Students were asked to rate the course on a scale from 0-10 with 10 being the highest rating and 0 being the lowest.

The average rating is 9.19

The results are as follows:

- *No one reported 0/10, 1/10, 2/10 or 3/10*
- 1% reported 4/10
- 1% reported 5/10
- 11% reported 6/10
- 5% reported 7/10
- 17% reported 8/10
- 19% reported 9/10
- 56% reported 10/10

Of the lowest ratings, here are some relevant comments:

- The weather sucked and I really would have appreciated more preparation for it (Sea Kayaking)
- Make it so that students can be dropped off at North Campus after class, or somewhere more centralized on central campus (Outdoor Yoga)
- Building in more free time. There was not really any time to stop and enjoy the nature. (ADK Canoe Camping)
- I would suggest less time taught teaching or consolidating the teaching portion of the course more to allow more time for free climbing. There were times where I felt like the lesson portion went on for too long and I didn't have as much time as I wanted to apply the skills (Intermediate Rock Climbing)

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**Which topics did you learn about or experience in this course?**

A list of skills and expected experiences were compiled from the COE Mission Statement, The COE DEI statement and the Cornell University Core Values. The relevant phrasing from these statements is in bold below.



## The COE Mission Statement:

Cornell Outdoor Education develops **teamwork, leadership, and growth through outdoor experience.**

We do so by:

- **Teaching outdoor skills** and judgment for lifelong recreation and fitness
- Promoting **environmental responsibility** through **personal connection to the natural world**
- Empowering individuals and groups to **move beyond their limitations**
- Igniting a passion for experiential learning
- **Enhancing initiative, self-reliance, and compassion for others**

Cornell Outdoor Education (COE) serves the broad membership of the Cornell community: students and student instructors, faculty and staff, alumni and friends, local community and outside groups. We enhance academic performance and success in the workplace by **developing leadership, teamwork and personal achievement** through experience-based education in the outdoor environment at Cornell University and around the world. COE programs place participants into hands-on learning situations that promote honest and constructive assessment of individual and group performance, provide natural and immediate consequences to actions, and promote personal growth. Our programs encourage participants to gain a sense of perspective in their own lives, and build support networks that develop meaningful lifelong friendships. Finally, we include fun with learning. By integrating these experiences into the rich academic curriculum and physical setting of our University, Cornell Outdoor Education plays a unique and vitally important role in developing the Leaders of the 21st Century.<sup>6</sup>

## Excerpt from the COE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement:

Lastly, for COE, inclusion means **building a culture of belonging** that intentionally embraces differences and actively invites the contribution and participation of all people. We believe that developing respect, **compassion**, and dignity for ourselves and towards others is central to the COE experience and fundamental in achieving our organizational mission of '**developing teamwork, leadership, and personal growth**'. To this aim, COE provides the tools, resources, and a safe space for people to explore nature, define their own adventure, and benefit from outdoor experiences.<sup>7</sup>

The full Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement can be found at:

<https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/DEI>

Cornell University Core Values include purposeful discovery, free and open inquiry and expression, a **community of belonging**, exploration across boundaries, changing livings through public engagement, **respect for the natural environment**.<sup>8</sup>

The full explanation of Cornell University's Core Values can be found at:

<https://president.cornell.edu/initiatives/university-core-values/>

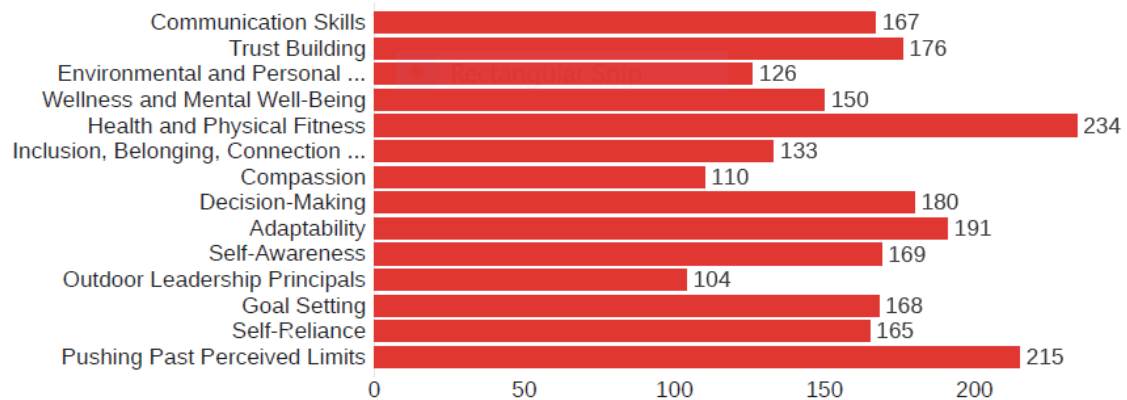
<sup>6</sup> <https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/mission>

<sup>7</sup> <https://scl.cornell.edu/coe/about/DEI>

<sup>8</sup> <https://president.cornell.edu/initiatives/university-core-values/>

### Q33 - What topics did you learn about or experience in this course? (please check all that apply)

320 Responses



The list of topics that were included on the COE Course Evaluation are listed below:

|   |
|---|
| Communication Skills                      |
| Trust Building                            |
| Environmental and Personal Responsibility |
| Health, Wellness and Mental Well-Being    |
| Inclusion & Belonging                     |
| Compassion                                |
| Connection to Others                      |
| Community Building                        |
| Goal Setting                              |
| Self-Awareness                            |
| Self-Reliance                             |
| Outdoor Leadership Principles             |
| Pushing Past Perceived Limits             |
| Adaptability                              |
| Decision-making                           |

**The most commonly reported topic that students learned about during their PE class included:**

- Health and Physical Fitness and Pushing Past Perceived Limits

**The next most commonly reported topics were:**

- Adaptability, Decision-Making and Trust Building

**The topics that were least reported included:**

- Outdoor Leadership Principles
  - Environmental and Personal Responsibility
  - Compassion
  - Inclusion and Belonging
- 

**What were the best things about this course?**

This is an open-ended question with a text box. Students referenced specific elements of the course they took. A keyword search was done to find words that were in the COE mission statement and DEI statement. Those included words like compassion, belonging, respect, environment, leadership, growth, healthy, etc. Of the words that occur most commonly in COE literature, here are the ones that showed up in the response:

Of the 327 responses, these are the words that were most commonly referenced:

- New- 27 references
- Fun- 46 references
- Friends- 3 references
- Community- 3 references
- Nature- 8 references
- Instructors - 84 references

These are some of the best quotes from the evaluation:

- “Everyone was so friendly and encouraging throughout the semester. When faced with challenges or fears, all of the instructors made sure to support me and even gave me a little boost when needed. I made so many new friends and did something that used to absolutely terrify me. I wouldn’t have been able to face my fear of heights and belaying without the help from the staff and the rest of the class. It was a really healthy environment and I never felt excluded or left out if I was behind.”
  - “I loved being able to learn new skills and figure out my own abilities. I also really enjoyed growing as a climber and getting to know more people.”
  - “Ability to take things at your own pace and challenge yourself when you want. Great energy in the room and the instructor was always conscious of everyone’s mood and what we needed for the day.”
-

## Student Instructors

From the Fall 2023 evaluation, we had 61 people express an interest in becoming an instructor for COE.

### The areas of interest were as follows:

Rock Climbing- 37

Caving- 7

Paddling- 1

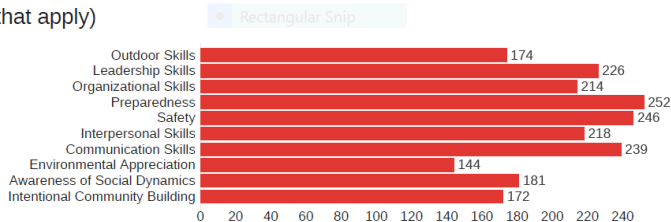
Cycling- 4

Backpacking or hiking- 12

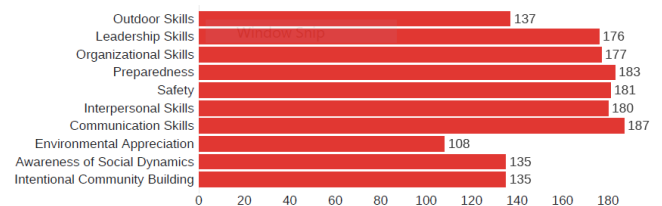
Tree Climbing- 4

## Student Instructor Skills Assessment

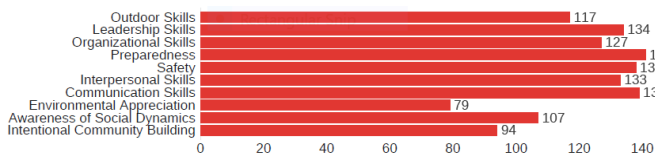
Instructor 1-D - In what skills did this instructor excel? (please check all that apply)



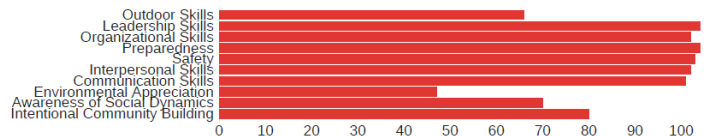
Instructor 2-D - In what skills did this instructor excel? (please check all that apply)



Instructor 3-D - In what skills did this instructor excel? (please check all that apply)



Instructor 4-D - In what skills did this instructor excel? (please check all that apply)



We examined the responses that students gave to their instructors in Fall 2023 regarding the skills that they excelled at. With this data set, students could list out their instructors in any order, so it might be that a certain instructor was represented in the “Instructor 1” and “Instructor 3” spots. With that said, every response is from the unique perspective of the student.

### The skills that instructors excelled at the most were:

- Communication Skills
- Preparedness
- Safety
- Leadership

**The skills that instructors excelled at the least were:**

- Environmental Appreciation
- Outdoor Skills
- Intentional Community Building
- Awareness of Social Dynamics

**When looking at the Student Instructor skills by class, the data looks different. These are some outliers that offset the overall data:**

- In Circus Classes, Environmental Appreciation and Outdoor Skills are rarely listed because these are indoor classes
- In Yoga and Tai Chi courses Outdoor Skills are rarely listed because this class doesn't involve skills that specifically relate to the outdoors
- Interestingly, despite many of our Rock Climbing Courses being indoors, a high number of students recognize Outdoor Skills as a skill that their instructor excelled in. This is likely because they see how indoor climbing can transfer to the outside world. With that said, Environmental Appreciation scores low in Rock Climbing Courses, due to many of them being indoors.