

# ACA Research Agenda (2006-2011)

(Updated 10/4/06)

Preamble (Accountability to disseminate results and to collaborate with the rest of the Intellectual Team in delivery of products and services)

Overall Mission of ACA Research

- Help camps evaluate and enhance program quality
- Help camps determine and improve their place in the camp market
- Contribute to the understanding of youth development and the value of the camp experience
- Provide the research infrastructure to enlarge and enhance research about camps

HELP CAMPS EVALUATE AND ENHANCE PROGRAM QUALITY				
Rank	Goal	Strategies	Status/Timeline	Responsible (CARE, Staff, Other)
5	Identify elements of a quality camp experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>• Conduct research on related constructs (quality, satisfaction, etc.) to identify a stronger research base for accreditation standards</li> <li>• Collaborate with High Scope to develop a camp-appropriate Youth Program Quality Assessment tool</li> <li>• Collaborate with Accreditation Team initiatives around quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact established 9/06</li> <li>• Ongoing discussions</li> </ul>	
	Provide a research link between elements and ACA accreditation standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	Address emerging societal issues that may impact the camp experience or the camp community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>• Identify an “emerging issues” working group of the ACA CARE committee to identify emerging issues, to make ACA aware of these issues, and to identify recommendations for responding to these issues (e.g., obesity, cultural competence, etc.) (Needs to be broader than CARE.)</li> <li>• Research camp policies as they are developed to deal with emerging issues</li> <li>• Collaborate with Sections to determine issues of significance for members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular staff contact with section execs</li> </ul>	
	Continue the Program Improvement Process (PIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>• Benchmarks – publish results. Disseminate.</li> <li>• PIPs – Publish results. Disseminate. CM articles.</li> <li>• Best practices - develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published 9/06</li> <li>• Published 9/06</li> <li>• Articles</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish means to broaden the impact of this effort with camps beyond the first 20.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several camps in contin. process.</li> <li>More to be done.</li> </ul>	
6	Develop evaluation tools and assess successful implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li></li> </ul>		
	Conduct longitudinal analysis of the camp experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Explore the value of camp from the adult perspective</li> </ul>		
	Enhance the internal capacity of ACA members to conduct camp evaluation and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Research existing web-based survey development systems and determine if an existing system can be purchased or if a new system needs to be developed</li> <li>Develop battery of research-based, easy-to-use- outcomes evaluation tools that can be accessed by camps</li> <li>Develop or customize a survey development and data-entry system available to ACA (free) and non-ACA members (fee)</li> <li>Pilot the system with selected camps</li> <li>Implement the system</li> <li>Develop web-based tutorials and training modules available to ACA (free) and non-ACA members (fee) in the areas of (a) survey design, (b) evaluation process, (c) conducting interviews, (d) conducting focus groups, (e) etc.</li> <li>Develop youth development measurement tool to help camps improve their programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding found.</li> <li>Tool purchased 9/06.</li> <li>Tools developed 7/06</li> <li>Done 8/06</li> <li>Done 8/06</li> </ul>	

## HELP CAMPS DETERMINE AND IMPROVE THEIR PLACE IN THE CAMP MARKET

Rank	Goal	Strategies	Status/Timeline	Responsible (CARE, Staff, Other)
	Research demographic trends to better respond to the changing camping market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Explore the impact of changing demographics on camper enrollment, retention, etc. Link to the diversity initiatives of ACA</li> <li>Continue to collect geo-mapping data</li> <li>Explore why youth are/are not attending camp and why parents are/are not sending their children to camp</li> <li>Collaborate with TRU Teen Research to provide current market data to members</li> <li>Establish a system of data collection (with statement of compliance??) that would provide stronger enrollment data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment studies 05/06</li> <li>All surveys get informat.</li> <li>Possible TRU Teen project in '07</li> </ul>	
	Develop a research plan for camp marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Appoint committee member with market research expertise</li> <li>Develop plan for research and education on marketing in conjunction with educational arm of ACA</li> </ul>	<b>BIG NEED</b>	

	Establish systematic data-gathering on operational aspects of camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Develop routine survey on annual topics such as salaries, budget ratios, camp programs and operations</li> <li>Establish regular data gathering on enrollment trends including numbers and ethnic diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgets in '05. Salaries in '06. Programs slated for '07.</li> <li>Ethnic diversity added to most surveys</li> </ul>	
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**CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND THE VALUE OF THE CAMP EXPERIENCE**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Status/Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible</b> (CARE, Staff, Other)
	Explore process and context questions that emerge from ACA research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Identify qualitative research projects to investigate some of our quantitative findings</li> <li>Conduct case studies and ethnographic research where appropriate to better understand special cases and specific research questions appropriate for these methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High Scope '06/07</li> </ul>	
	Strengthen relationships with other related youth development, camping, and research entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Identify related groups</li> <li>Identify framework for involvement and collaboration</li> <li>Communicate with other related ACA committees</li> <li>Develop a plan for engagement and communication</li> <li>Continue active participation with the National collaboration for Youth's Research forum.</li> <li>Participate in other youth development forums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Collaboration of Youth Research Group</li> <li>Joint meeting NEC '06</li> </ul>	
4	Publish results of ACA research in camp and non-camp/related youth development publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		
7	Present results of ACA research in camp and non-camp/related youth development conferences and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		
New Projects Rank 1	Study developmentally appropriate leadership at camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		
New Projects Rank 5	Explore the impact of camp participation on families (impact on adults, siblings; transference to family settings; etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		
New Projects	Conduct a national study of family attitudes towards camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>True Teen?</li> </ul>	

Rank 2				
New Projects Rank 4	Study the impact of camp participation on the development on environmentally sensitivity attitudes and behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		
New Projects Rank 3	Study the role of camp participation (and related physical activity) in combating the problems associated with childhood obesity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> </ul>		

**PROVIDE A RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENLARGE AND ENHANCE RESEARCH ABOUT CAMPS**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Status/Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible (CARE, Staff, Other)</b>
	Coordinate university level camp-related evaluation and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Develop a process and a structure engaging students and academics into camp-related research</li> <li>Encourage other researchers to get involved in ACA research</li> <li>Develop e-mail group of interested researchers</li> <li>Provide other researchers with access to ACA data</li> <li>Develop an endowment to provide funding for outstanding student research</li> <li>Conduct a “camp research summit” in cooperation with an existing conference</li> <li>Develop online research summary or journal</li> <li>Link with students around their research and connect up students interested in research</li> <li>Link ACA research needs with student interests by providing students with a web site that lists possible camp research topics</li> </ul>		
	Develop an ACA historic repository of camp research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a system for the collection and management of camp-related studies, evaluation reports, etc.</li> <li>Hire someone to digitize all camp research and evaluation resources</li> <li>Hire someone to manage the system</li> <li>Create an on-line searchable database of camp-related research and evaluation</li> <li>Collaborate with University Libraries to coordinate resources</li> </ul>		
2	Integrate research into ACA committee work and into the Association broadly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>Communicate ACA CARE initiatives</li> <li>Communicate the “levels of involvement” (see columns at right)</li> <li>Identify opportunities for regular communication and involvement</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the visibility of ACA research at national conferences</li> <li>• Enhance the visibility of ACA research at section meetings and events</li> <li>• Develop education and program tools from research results</li> <li>• Enhance the presence of research in Camping Magazine</li> </ul>		
1,3	Enhance the marketing, visibility, and dissemination of ACA research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding to support this goal</li> <li>• Write filler articles in outside journals like Parent magazines, etc</li> <li>• Develop a resource list of speakers</li> <li>• Seek and enhance collaborative dissemination of ACA research results in external publications – both juried and non-juried.</li> <li>• Conduct a “camp research summit” in cooperation with an existing conference</li> </ul>		