

Posse retreat: 'awesome!'

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When 50 Brandeis students boarded a bus last Friday heading for Camp Burgess in Sandwich, Mass., most of them had no idea what they were embarking upon.

What they experienced was a weekend full of workshops, sharing and thinking about school spirit at Brandeis.

The retreat was the first annual Posse Plus Retreat, which was created to address issues pertinent to improving Brandeis life.

"It was inspiring and spirit building and all-around wonderful," Professor Jane Hale (COML) said. Hale attended the entire weekend.

The weekend was sponsored by the Posse Foundation, a New York based group created to address the problem of minority dropouts at the university level.

The leaders of the weekend were the 10 "Posse" students in the freshman class, as well as several staff members from the Posse Foundation and Brandeis administrators.

"The weekend was more than a success," Posse member Sophia Moon, '02 said. "It was just awesome," she added.

The Foundation works with the University to select a group of students who will attend Brandeis as a "posse." The group goes through training in the areas of academics and leadership before arriving at school. The Brandeis posse is also specially trained to deal with issues pertaining to social and cultural diversity.

According to Posse member Natalee Graham '02, the purpose of the group is to "diversify Brandeis and make it a more open minded campus."

"This is a group that requires to special talent or abilities, just someone who cares about Brandeis," Graham said.

"The level of energy and school spirit were really impressive," Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Irving Epstein said. Epstein attended part of the workshop on Saturday.

"I learned more than I expected to," Ashika Jain '02 said. Jain was invited to the retreat by a Posse member.

The Posse group meets on a weekly basis, as well as eating dinner together every Sunday in the Boulevard. After returning from the retreat, most of the new Posse Plus members from the retreat joined the regular group, some bringing even more students to participate.

"This was what Posse is all about," Moon said. "It was extraordinary."

The group plans to continue to meet at 6pm on Sundays, and members welcome anyone interested in finding out more about its function.