

## **UWired Seattle Schools Partnership**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The University of Washington (UW) Office of Educational Partnerships and Learning Technologies places University students in Seattle Public Schools (SPS) to provide network support and consulting, to create opportunities for University students to develop their technology and consulting skills, and to help teachers incorporate technology into curricula. During the 2000-2001 inaugural academic year, 21 UW students were assigned to 22 schools including elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In May, SPS representatives whose schools had participated in the UWired program were asked to complete a survey. The survey consisted of three fixed response questions, 16 Likert items, and six open-ended questions that addressed program outcomes, their goals for participation, and recommendations for program improvements. 22 school representatives were faxed a request letter and survey. Follow up phone calls were made shortly thereafter to insure that the faxes were received and to ask representatives to return them. Means were tabulated for Likert items and responses to open-ended questions were grouped according to useful categories of response.

At the end of the school year, UW students who had participated in the program were asked to complete an online survey. The survey consisted of seven open-ended questions designed to obtain their perspectives on the outcomes of the program, their goals for participation, and recommendations to improve the program. At the end of May, all 21 UW students were emailed and asked to complete the online survey. Two student emails were returned as "unknown." Students were sent a reminder and second request for their participation one month after the initial request. Responses to open-ended questions were grouped according to useful categories of response.

## FINDINGS

### School Representatives

Seventeen of the 22 school representatives who received the request to complete the faxed survey did so, a 77% response rate. The responses for each question have been summarized on a modified version of the questionnaire. Means and percentages were tabulated for each response item.

#### [School Representative Responses](#)

##### Needs

- A number of respondents (88.2%) agreed that their school was in need of network and desktop support, with a large number responding (93.4%) that school staff were in need of enhanced technology skills training.

##### Performance

- Overall, school representatives were positive about the UWired program with 82.4% reporting that the UWired student met the school goals.
- The majority of school representatives (76.5%) also felt that the UWired student fulfilled the schools' expectations, with a large number in agreement that the UWired student made a positive contribution at their school (88.2%).
- Responses for the availability of UWired administration when necessary were mixed, with 53% in agreement, but 47.1% not sure. Similarly, 75% of respondents agreed with the statement that the UWired administration was outstanding, with 43.8% of respondents noting that they were "not sure."

##### Outcomes

- While 71.4% of respondents agreed that the UWired student helped them integrate technology into their curriculum, 21.4% disagreed with this statement.
- Highest ratings in this section were received by the statement "Support like this program provides is exactly what our school needs," with 85.7% in agreement.

##### Open-ended responses

- Most of the school representatives (82.4%) felt that their identified technology needs were well met by the UWired student at their school.
- Where indicated, the majority of additional UWired student training recommendations recognized by the school representatives were in the areas of troubleshooting skills (29.4%) and district processes (23.5%).
- Also included in the additional comments section was that while 41.2% of those who responded indicated that the UWired program is great, 17.6% indicated a need for increased monitoring for

professionalism, and 11.8% felt that the UWired students lacked the skills needed for the program.

## **Students**

Ten of the 19 students who received the request to participate in the online survey responded to the open-ended questions, a 53% response rate. The responses for each question are included in chart format. The open-ended response format allowed students to indicate multiple preferences. Therefore, totals may not add up to 100%.

### Student Responses

#### **Personal and professional goals**

- Half of the respondents (50%) indicated a desire to gain real world experience through their UWired work and another 50% indicated a desire to learn more about technology.
- 80% of respondents felt that the program met their goals.

#### **Program strengths and weaknesses**

- A number of respondents noted that they liked their school and staff (40%), some appreciated the program's flexible schedule (40%), and 30% liked the training and assistance they received at UW.
- Half of respondents (50%) were disappointed by the district bureaucracy and 20% indicated a need for a longer time commitment.

#### **Additional technology needs and assistance**

- While 40% of respondents indicated that UWired could not have provided more assistance, half of the respondents (50%) indicated that they had equipment and software needs and felt that UWired should assist schools with choosing equipment.
- Other suggestions were made in the areas of teacher and staff training (20%), providing a full-time technology coordinator (20%), and having meetings to share ideas and discuss issues (20%).

#### **Maintaining program enthusiasm**

- Half (50%) of respondents indicated a desire for further preparation and training, 40% pointed out problematic management issues, and 20% indicated that problematic areas within the district needed to be attended to in order for the program to continue to thrive.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The UWired Community Technology Partnerships: Seattle Public Schools Program received positive feedback from both school representatives and UW student participants. Most school representatives responded that the UWired student was meeting the school's goals and expectations for the program. As well, most of the students who responded indicated that the UWired program was meeting their personal and professional goals.
- School representatives gave slightly lower ratings to the UWired program administration and the availability of the administration when needed. This may point to the need for increased communication between the UWired program administration and school representatives.
- Students responded negatively to the bureaucratic structures of the Seattle Public Schools and school representatives indicated the need for student awareness of district processes and additional oversight for professionalism. These two findings may prove mutually beneficial if students are provided with additional training in district operations and history, they may better understand how to exercise professionalism within the schools and feel less negative toward bureaucratic structures.
- Finally, half of the UWired student respondents indicated a desire for further preparation and training. They have also expressed a need for the UWired program to assist schools with equipment and software selection and purchasing.