

PROGRAM:

"I'm Going to College" Culminating Event

OBJECTIVES:

Provide comprehensive information about higher education to fifth and sixth graders. Encourage high educational and career aspirations, rigorous courses in middle and high school, and graduation from high school and college.

LOCATION:

Washington State University, Tri-Cities

DESCRIPTION:

The WSU GEAR UP program has teamed with NELA (Northwest Education Loan Association) to implement their "I'm Going to College" program with 5th and 6th grade GEAR UP students. In this program curriculum, students study different types of colleges and learn about the application process and financial aid possibilities. The program culminates in a visit to a college campus as described below.

At 9:45 a.m., 95 fifth grade students and 64 sixth grade students from the Warden School District arrived at WSU Tri-Cities, along with approximately 30 parents and staff members from the schools. WSU Tri-Cities staff members began handing out gift bags, T-Shirts and name badges.

From 10:00-10:20 there were welcoming speeches from Mr. Jaime Contreras, Director of Student Affairs at Washington State University, Tri-Cities, and Mr. JR Gomez, Coordinator of Latina-Latino Outreach at the university and an organizer of the event. Mr. Gomez also welcomed the students, and recognized six of the teachers as group leaders. The students were divided into six groups by color: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, and Grey. There were four activity sessions from 10:25-10:55, 11:00-11:30, 12:20-12:50, and 12:55-1:30, with lunch served between 11:35 and 12:15. Each group attended four class sessions, with six sessions occurring at one time. The program required organizing twenty-four separate teaching sessions.

For example, from 12:55-1:30 the Red Group attended the Horticulture class taught by Dr. Bondada; Ms. Tammy Almaguer taught "Show Me the Money!" to the Orange Group; the Yellow Group attended Dr. Allan Felsot's insects class; Mr. Gomez taught "Three Ways to Pay" to the Green Group; the Blue Group attended Dr. Lewis' Computer Science class; and Mr. Dale Ingram and Mr. Armando Merlin made a presentation about the science company LIGO to the Grey Group.

Mr. Gomez' "Three Ways to Pay," discussed methods for financing college, university, or technical school:

1. **Savings:** a.) Student savings, b.) Parental savings, c.) Washington State Guaranteed Education Program (GET), which lets students and parents pre-pay tuition in Washington State at today's rates.
2. **Need-based financial aid:** a.) Need-based grants and scholarships, which are not repaid, but applied directly to costs, b.) Students Loans (which are repaid), and c.) Work-Study--all determined by filling out FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
3. **Scholarships:** Money for tuition because of academic success, high test scores, athletics, participation in ROTC, background, parent's employer, or career interests.

Mr. Gomez and Ms. Almaguer's presentations formed the basis of the final session between 1:35 and 2:15, when all the groups met in the auditorium. In the final session Mr. Gomez summarized the event for students and directed the competition among groups for prizes, including attractive backpacks and book bags. All the groups left with a positive attitude and departed the university by 2:30 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES:

The NELA (Northwest Education Loan Association) guidelines for planning an event were followed:

2-3 Months Prior to the Event

- Introduce the program at schools and receive approval for implementation.
- School engagement letter signed by schools site coordinator and mailed to WSU Tri-Cities.
- Pre-Survey completed prior to introduction of workbook activities.
- Establish time frame with teachers to conduct activities.
- Coordinate event date with schools and WSU Tri-Cities.
- Secure transportation from schools to WSU Tri-Cities.
- Lesson Plans begin at schools.

1-2 Months Prior

- Provide an electronic list of students on an Excel Spreadsheet.
- Provide a list of volunteers/staff available for event day.
- Work through activities in the workbook.
- Document any in-kind support such as donations, dollars, time and effort from school on the forms provided.

Final Month

- Secure student permission slips from school.
- Secure and mail photo release forms to the event coordinator.
- Secure and mail teacher evaluation forms provided to the event coordinator.
- Receive name badges for the event from WSU Tri-Cities.
- Go over the day's itinerary with volunteers and staff at schools.

After the Event

- Complete post evaluation.
- Return any leftover instructional materials to the event coordinator.

One of the most important pre-event activities was to secure the involvement and cooperation of university teaching faculty to participate in the event and present hands-on teaching sessions that were appropriate for the children attending.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

Participants were surveyed at the end of the event and analysis of the surveys was used to improve the event in the future.

COSTS OR COST CONSIDERATIONS:

The cost of backpacks and workbook materials for both teachers and students are provided by NELA. The cost of meals will need to be covered for each student and chaperones. The partnership with NELA provides a significant cost-share contribution.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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RESOURCES:

Sample Agenda