

**PROGRAM:**

Lessons Learned in Early Outreach on a College Campus

**OBJECTIVES:**

“Early outreach especially benefits *first generation* to help *get them on the highway to higher education.*”

Early outreach is also dedicated to “help families and improve lives”. Washington State University (WSU) wants to motivate, inspire and provide direction to students and their families as early as possible.

It has been a challenge to find students who meet college entrance requirements; therefore, early outreach is an invaluable admissions support tool.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Early imprints are important. The earlier students have an opportunity to visit a college campus, the better. If students are able to visit a variety of college campuses, that is all the better.

Washington State University (WSU) is a dynamic college campus that has a long history in providing a quality education along with individualized student support. WSU is dedicated to this level of service from beginning to end: campus visits and student recruitment, student admissions, student retention and successful college graduates.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THREE QUALITY EXPERIENCES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS:
<b>7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade</b> – An opportunity to introduce the academic requirements necessary to get to college (“planting that academic seed”), while having fun experiencing campus for the first time (dedicated to inspire and motivate);
<b>9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade</b> – Help students begin academic exploration. This includes Hispanic Youth Exploring Science & Engineering (HYSE) and Future Scientists & Engineers (FSE) 3-day summer camps.
<b>Junior year in high school</b> – Provide a strategic review with students and help them determine what they want to study. Students should not wait until their senior year in high school to figure-out what they want to study after high school graduation. How can one “shop for a college” and know what <b>will be</b> a good fit?
<b>10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students</b> – Three student led conferences are provided annually on WSU Pullman campus: Shaping High School Asian Pacific Islanders for the Next Generation ( <b>SHAPING</b> ), Children of Aztlan Sharing a Higher Education ( <b>CASHE</b> ), and Visionaries Inspiring Black Empowered Students ( <b>VIBES</b> ). Each conference has a cultural focus; however, registration is open to any and all students. High school students spend two nights and three days on campus. During the conferences, high school students are provided the information and the tools necessary to get to college. These conferences also provide them an opportunity to know whether the college can be a good fit, while providing them the opportunity to see that they can belong on this college campus.

Quality is imperative – that first visit may be the only visit. Those who coordinate campus experiences for middle and high school students must remember that each part of the itinerary must have a positive impact on the visiting students—each hour must be a successful experience.

When coordinating early outreach events, the day must work with the special needs of adolescents. This age-group does have challenging behavior, which requires a smaller adult/student ratio. Some of the special needs include:

- The need of going to the restroom frequently
- The need of seeking attention
- The easily frustration when faced with complex concepts

Introducing students to the day’s activities and purpose, before the event, will help this age-group have a focus and limit problems. At this time, WSU Pullman does not provide event preparation/orientation materials. However, it hopes to tap into materials developed by WSU Early Outreach at WSU Tri-Cities, which include: 1) Why go to college? 2) What does a major mean? 3) There is an income differential, depending on how much college one taps into.

It is vital that itineraries are created that will satisfy an adolescent’s needs. The activities offered provide interactive experiences and satisfy this age group’s inquisitive energy.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
Grizzly Program–Middle school students are fascinated with these animals. Program staff taps into the students’ intrigue and then introduce the college degrees that compliment this program.
Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Program–Program staff are able to build around the investigator mystique that tends to draw interest with this field of study, which, in turn, feeds into the students’ curiosity. Once they capture the students’ attention, then staff introduce the students to the academics involved in this area of study.
Raptor Program–Introducing middle school students to these giant birds and how these winged creatures benefit ecosystems is an opportunity for program staff to introduce the combination of class work and volunteer work that is involved when being a part of this unique program.
Meet WSU Athletes–A lot of middle school students aspire to be a successful athlete or look up to successful athletes. Middle school campus visits often times include a photo opportunity with some WSU athletes. First, the athletes provide an honest testimonial and include the following elements in their message: a) it can happen, b) don’t take shortcuts, however, c) you must practice, practice, practice (not only as an athlete but academically), e) we are students first, athletes second (you have to be <i>on the highway to education</i> to be able to play sports and get athletic scholarships).
Robotic Program & Chemistry–Professors and/or graduate students with big personalities catch students’ attention by blowing things up or demonstrating futuristic gadgets. Once they catch the students’ attention, they then introduce career options.
Multi-cultural center–This provides an opportunity for students to experience campus diversity and see that they can live on this campus and belong.
First Generation Student Panel with diverse representation. If necessary, two panels present information–Providing middle school students the opportunity to see diversity is vital. Panel members are prepared to answer “What would I have done differently?” Panel members are also asked to focus on personal college-going details, as opposed to admissions information. Panel members also remind guest students that what they’re doing now is important -- go to school every day and ask for help.
Cheese Factory & Ice Cream–Touring the factory is always a crowd pleaser and an ice cream treat is a fantastic way to conclude the day.

It is important that the guest students leave with *WOW moments/memories* and the thought that this college can be a home for them.

Guest students also take home the following items to share with family and friends:

- Campus Map,
- Materials about their chosen area of study or major, and
- Student Support Services information.

Through the years, WSU has learned to limit visitor capacity to 120 guest students (excluding some special events, such as *Future Cougar Day*). Exceeding this capacity decreases quality and puts undue stress on WSU faculty and staff.

WSU Community Development and Outreach is currently working on a family component. Early outreach must include a family component, because college success is more readily achieved when college preparation and planning involves family. It is anticipated that family outreach/parent outreach will include the following components: campus safety, college finance planning, transportation needs for college, and college food. Parent tours will also include a lecture *sit-in*.

WSU is also currently working with WSU students to produce a video featuring information that parents have said they are interested in learning about.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

It would be very helpful if groups who are interested in visiting WSU Pullman call the Community Development and Outreach Office two to three months prior to their targeted date of the tour. It is also important to be prepared to be flexible with the tour date. The Community Development and Outreach Office must coordinate tours around numerous WSU activities and programs.

When the Community Development and Outreach Office receive an inquiry for a campus visit, they ask the following questions:

1. Who's coming? Which includes the following information:
  - a. Program Expectations/Criteria
  - b. Gender
  - c. Age
  - d. Ethnicity
2. What is the purpose of the campus visit?
3. What do they want to see?
4. Size of group?

## PREPARATION ACTIVITIES:

WSU Community Development and Outreach has five staff dedicated to match-up resources for meaningful visits. Also, at the beginning of each school year, two Student Leader Volunteer Managers are hired as Work Study students. The Student Leader Volunteer Managers share the responsibility of working with fifty Student Leader Volunteers. Some of the WSU Student Leaders have been involved with GEAR UP, ETS or AVID.

Safety is imperative. Therefore, WSU provides staff an annual training in August. This day-and-a-half training includes: a) how to maintain visual control of a group, b) safety planning, and c) first aide. Also, all staff and volunteers must have background checks.

WSU's Community Development and Outreach Team also work with faculty to help them prepare age appropriate information and how to include the *fun factor*.

## COSTS OR COST CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1) Community Development and Outreach Staff
- 2) Student Volunteer Managers
- 3) Staff Training
- 4) Supplies
- 5) Meals (usually paid for by partners)
- 6) Transportation (partner expense)

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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