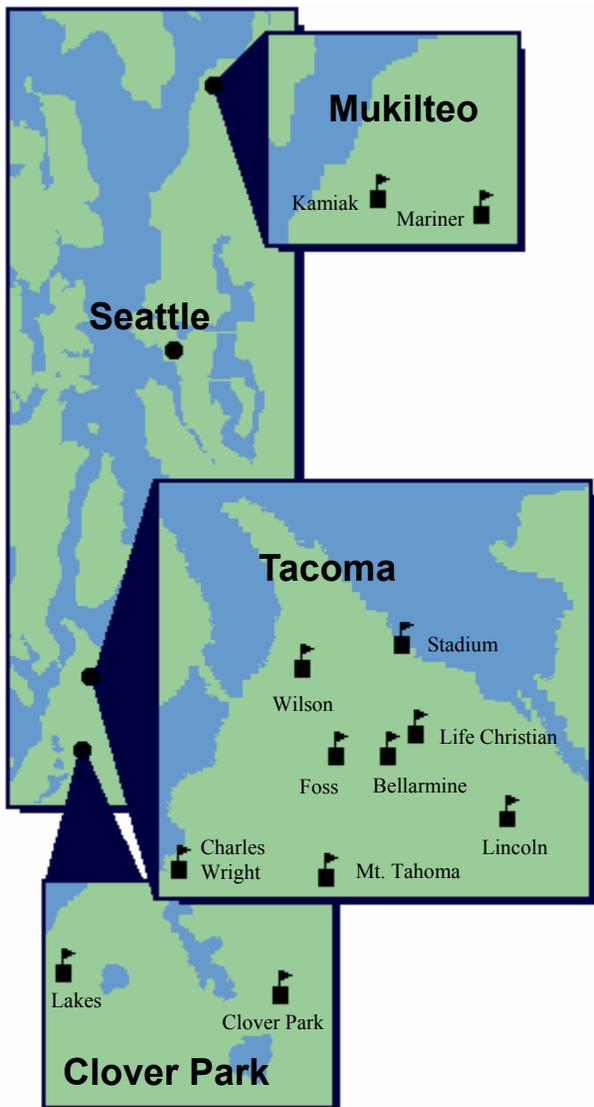




# Beyond High School

## The University of Washington Study Newsletter

Issue 3: January 2004



### Greetings from the University of Washington

When you completed a survey in the spring of your senior year (remember the movie pass!), you may not have realized that you were becoming a participant in a continuing University of Washington research project. Our new project name is the BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON STATE research project, or just BHS for short.

Leaving high school is the end of one stage of life and the beginning of another. The aim of our project is to examine the factors that lead to varied paths to early adult life, including continued schooling, employment, family formation, and other experiences.

The project began in the Tacoma Public Schools with the Class of 2000 and the Class of 2002. For the Class of 2003, we expanded the study to include the Clover Park School district (Clover Park and Lakes High Schools), the Mukilteo School district (Mariner and Kamiak High Schools) and three private high schools in the Tacoma area (Bellarmine, Charles Wright, and Life Christian).

Through this newsletter, we hope to stay in touch with you and to report on some interesting results from our studies. We also tell you a little bit about us – the UW Beyond High School research team. We have established a website for the project, where you can update your mail and email addresses. Directions are listed on the back of the newsletter.

Thanks very much for your cooperation with our project. We could not do our work without you.

Sincerely,

Charles Hirschman  
UW Professor of Sociology and BHS Project Director

### Test Your “Beyond High School IQ”

1. What percentage of students who said they were going to go to college actually went?
2. Who ranked their health higher, male or female high school seniors?
3. Compared to the national average of adolescents, do Beyond High School seniors smoke more or less?
4. About one quarter of the high school seniors we interviewed speak another language at home. What is the most commonly spoken second-language among seniors?
5. When do most students expect to have their first child?
  - a. age 22 or 23
  - b. age 24 or 25
  - c. age 26 to 30
  - d. older than age 30

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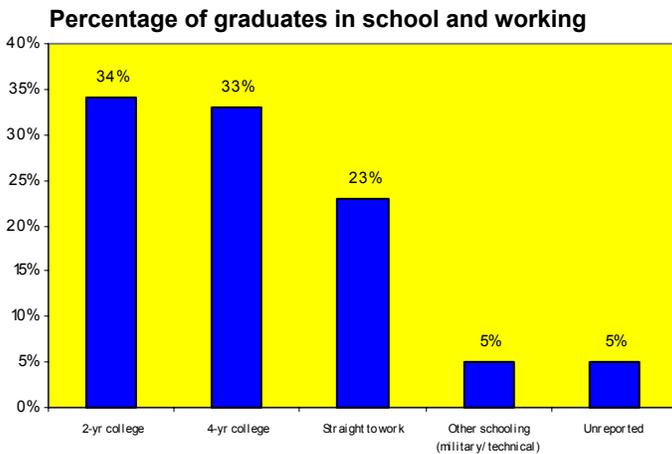
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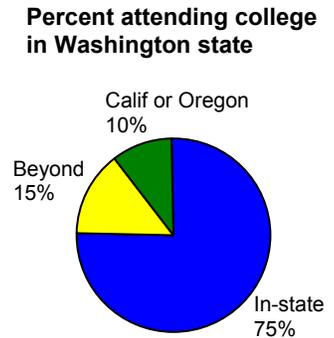
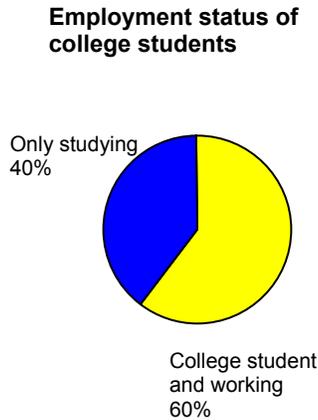
# Results from the classes of 2000 and 2002 Follow-Up Surveys

We re-interviewed the Classes of 2000 and 2002 seniors in the year following high school graduation. Here are some findings about the career and educational decisions recent graduates made.

## What are seniors doing after graduation?



Out of the graduates interviewed in the follow-up survey, 34% reported that they attend a two-year college, 33% attend a four-year college, and 23% are working (and not in college). 5% are in training: apprenticeships, technical school, or military, and 5% did not report their activities.



## Occupations among non-college bound high school graduates

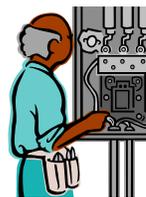
23% of the seniors we interviewed entered directly into the job market, without continuing on in school. Most of them (about 93%) work in the service sector. For example:



4% are teaching,



53% are in sales and services occupations,



16% are in labor and crafts occupations,



and 20% are in secretarial and administrative positions.

Some of the more unique professions listed were gym teachers, fixing helicopters, dog groomers, sonar technicians, fire controllers, glass blowers, combat engineers, and girl's basketball coaches.

## Future follow-up surveys

Those of you who graduated last spring have yet to participate in the follow-up survey. Sometime in early Spring, 2004, you can expect to hear from one of the friendly voices of the BHS team to ask you a short list of "follow-up" questions to find out about what you're doing now that you've graduated. The phone survey only takes about 5 minutes.

We hope to re-interview all of you periodically from time to time in the coming years. We will let you know our plans through this annual newsletter. If we are successful, the Beyond High School project will yield important results about the careers of our respondents and their place in American society.

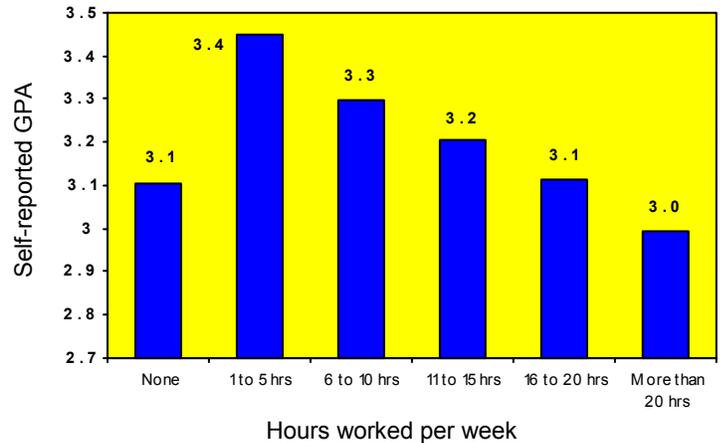
# Results from the senior surveys of 2000 - 2003

## A little work goes a long way!

Contrary to what we might expect, high school seniors with jobs actually do a bit better in school than those not working. However, this is true only to a point. Those who work only a few hours have higher grades than those who work a lot.

Similarly, we find that students who participate in extracurricular activities have higher GPA's than those who don't—3.2 and 2.9 respectively.

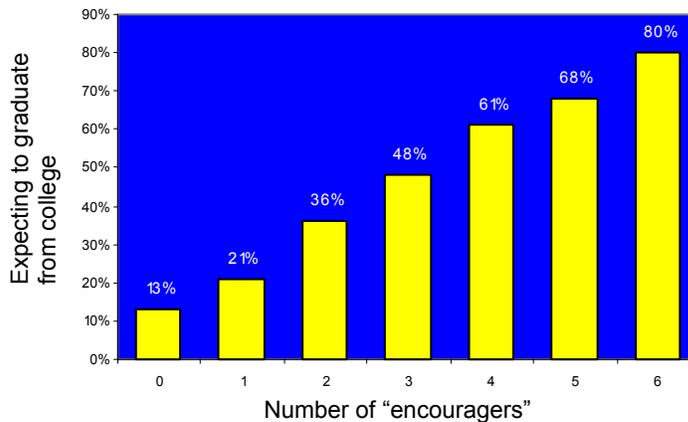
Mean GPA by hours spent working each week



## Encouragement - An important ingredient behind college expectations

Percentage of high school seniors expecting to finish (graduate from) college by the number of encouraging family members, friends, and teachers

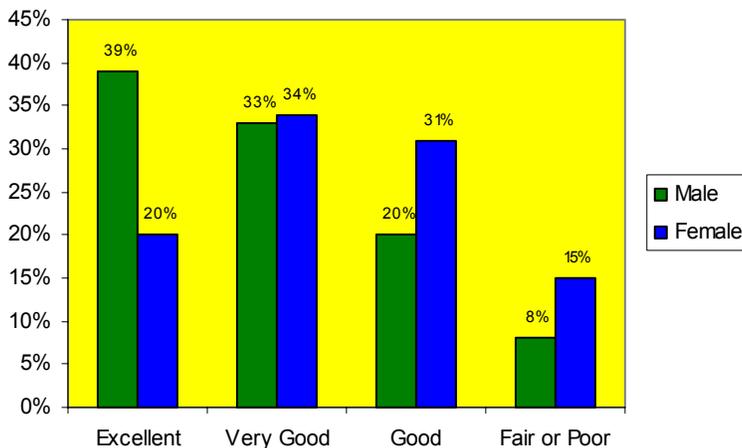
In the senior survey, we asked students what their father (mother, siblings, friends, favorite teacher, other respected adult) thought was the most important thing for them to do after high school. We also asked seniors whether they expected to graduate from college.



This chart shows a very positive relationship between encouragement and expectations of going to college. Only about 1 in 10 students with no encouragement expect to graduate from college. But 8 out of 10 students with six "encouragers" expect to graduate from college.

## Health and well-being

Self-reported health, classes of 2000 & 2002



Most high school seniors rate their health to be good, very good, or excellent. Only a handful report their health to be fair or poor. Men are somewhat more likely than women to rate their health as excellent.

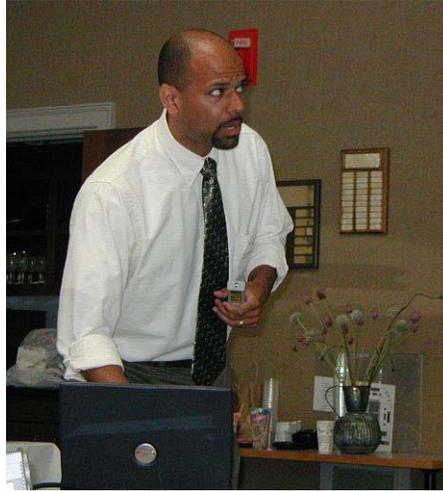
Because most high school students are generally healthy, self-ranked health status may reflect a general sense of well-being.

# Research findings unveiled at BHS conference

## Summer 2003 Beyond High School Conference



In July, 2003, we conducted a conference in which researchers presented and discussed some of their work. Participants came from many different research institutions across the country.



Aman Emeka, a UW graduate student, presented a study about characteristics of students who apply for college scholarships.



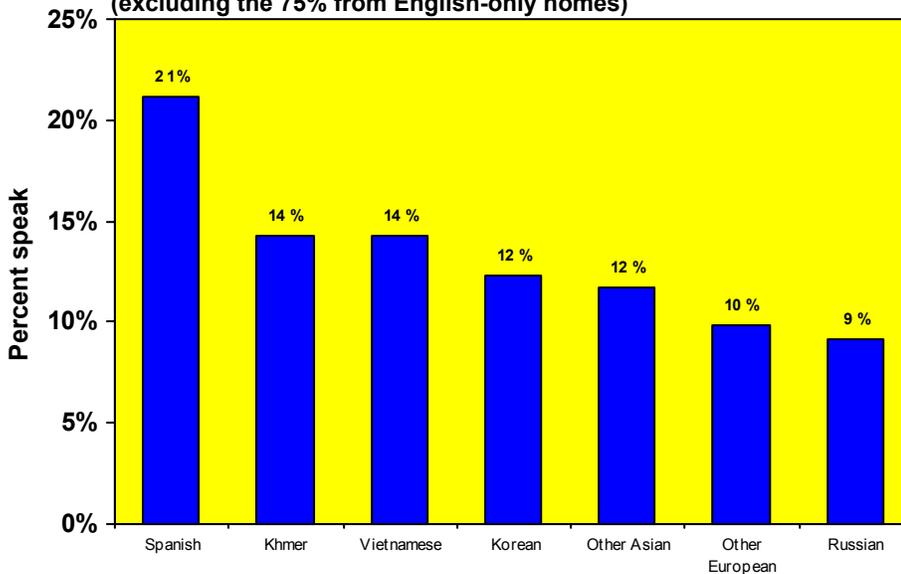
Other researchers discussed college aspirations, factors influencing health, youth employment, and the role of encouragement in students' lives.

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## One in four high school seniors speak another language at home

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天

Language spoken by seniors from "other language" homes (excluding the 75% from English-only homes)



Western Washington students come from a diversity of backgrounds. One in every four students in the 2000 and 2002 senior surveys spoke a language other than English at home.

Among the 25% of seniors who speak a second language at home, Spanish was the most commonly spoken language, followed closely by Khmer and Vietnamese. Sign language was one of the languages listed.

Among those seniors from "other language" homes, 85% preferred to speak English.

### PROMISE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

All of the individual survey responses in our study are treated as strictly confidential. Names and all identifying information are removed from the data files. Our research is focused on averages and overall patterns, not individual responses. We do try to keep up to date contact information (addresses, telephone number, email address) for each respondent so that we can conduct surveys in future years. This contact information is kept in locked cabinets separate from all our other data files.

# Something about us: the UW Project Team



Since we are asking about you, you might wonder who we are. The UW Beyond High School research team has grown into a busy staff of 21 people, including four professors, a project coordinator, a computer programmer, eight graduate researchers, and seven undergraduate research assistants. See BHS staff box on the last page for individual names. If you can match names with pictures, you can win a free movie pass. See <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs> for details.

## ✘ Mukilteo father and son team together on BHS Project ✘

One of the topics of interest to us in this project is the connection between high school seniors and their parents. To this end, we ask parents to fill out a short survey about their own career path and about their aspirations for their kids' future education and work life. It turns out that we have a father-son combination working on our project. Below is a 'close-up' of who they are and what they think of working together.

### Gunnar Almgren

#### Cascade High - Class of 1970

Gunnar Almgren is an associate professor in the School of Social Work at the UW, and he's the co-investigator of the BHS project. In addition to teaching graduate courses, he conducts research on health care policy and health outcomes. I asked him what it is like to work with his son, and he said "It's delightful. What's fun is that we're now in the same learning environment, thinking together about the larger questions."



Gunnar explained that he and Garth actually worked together years ago, when Gunnar was a PhD student. Just an 8 year-old at that time, Garth would help his dad with data entry and library book retrieval. Now he and his son are "both learning the same things,

and that's just wonderful."

I asked Gunnar what he likes about working on the project. "There are a lot of teachers in my family – my wife, sister, and uncles, and so it's very satisfying to be involved in the K-12 education world, aside from thinking the issues are very important."

### Garth Almgren

#### Kamiak High - Class of 1999

Garth Almgren has been working part time with the BHS project since the summer of 2002. He fit into the research environment very naturally, since he spent part of his early years helping his dad out. Today, on the BHS project, Garth focuses on data coding and conducting phone interviews for follow-up surveys. He also participates in our weekly team meetings with his father and other project staff and professors.



Garth said that he enjoys working with his dad. "It's nice to be able to commute together and have someone to discuss the project with." He also identified a perk that comes with having a father who's a professor. "Sometimes my dad will call me up and invite me to the faculty club for lunch."

In terms of his own aspirations, Garth wants to specialize in network security for a forensics lab. He has one year left at Cascadia Community College before he'll obtain his Associate of Applied Sciences in Network Technology degree. Garth envisions eventually doing network security either in his own business or with a law enforcement agency.

Quiz responses from cover page: (1) 78% of seniors who planned to go to college were enrolled in college one year later. Furthermore, 14% of seniors who did *not* plan to be in college were. (2) Males - see graph on pg. 3 for details. (3) Less. 12% of BHS seniors reported smoking regularly, compared to 25% of seniors nationally. (4) Spanish. It is spoken by one in five of the seniors who reported speaking a second language at home. (5) C - most seniors think they'll have their first child between age 26 and 30.

# Stay in touch with your classmates & help us stay in touch with you!

One of the most important aspects of our work is to try to keep up to date contact information for each of you. This is not an easy task since young people tend to move around a lot. We have established a website where you can log in and report your contact information – address, phone, and email address. Simply go to <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs> and log in to complete the form. **For all of you who give permission to share your email address, we will make available a list of names and email addresses to other members of your class.** You will be asked to log in with your email address and a password (your high school mascot).



<http://depts.washington.edu/uwbhs>

## The Beyond Health Project Team

**Professors:** Charles Hirschman, Gunnar Almgren, Jerald Herting, Stewart Tolnay **Project Staff:** Cara Biddlecom, Patricia Glynn, Julie Miller **Graduate Research Assistants:** Karen Brooks, Amon Emeka, Rosanna Lee, Maya Magarati, Liz Mogford, Nikolas Pharris-Ciurej, Zacharias Russell, Irina Voloshin **Undergraduate Research Assistants:** Garth Almgren, Oluwatope Fashola, Duc Ngo, Catherine Ramey, Gioia Rizzo, Richard Wang

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