

Campus Community Coalition

Summary of Activities

February-May 2006

Neighborhoods Engaging with Students (NEST) Project
Increasing student integration in and accountability to the neighborhoods in which they live.

Neighborhood Mediation Program

A program in which students and long term neighbors are trained in conflict resolution and mediation, and then work together to prevent and resolve neighborhood conflicts.

Over 100 people were trained in conflict resolution and mediation through this program, a partnership between the Coalition and the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center. A core group of participants are preparing to use their new skills to prevent and address neighborhood conflicts. Some people who completed the “Neighborhood Conflict Management” training are serving as neighborhood conflict managers, acting as resources and promoting mediation as an approach to resolve neighborhood conflicts. Twenty one people completed the 40-hour intensive “Basic Mediation” training, and many are pursuing the exam and practicum to become certified mediators.

The Coalition and the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center are actively promoting the use of conflict resolution and mediation as a way for students and neighbors to address conflicts. Posters, referral cards, and KUGS public service announcements are the primary strategies for spring; the program will be promoted more extensively again in the fall.

Neighborhood Service-Learning Projects

An initiative to increase student involvement in neighborhoods through WWU courses, neighborhood association projects, and other campus and community activities.

- Similar to fall and winter quarters, students in Dr. Werder’s course “Civil Discourse as Learning Interaction” are participating in a series of neighborhood meetings and projects as a way to experience dialog across differences. Their focus is to engage in dialog with neighbors in an effort to find common ground.
- The Coalition was a partner in organizing the Earth Day event on April 22. One hundred and sixty students did restoration work with community members in parks and on trails in the York, Sehome, and Happy Valley neighborhoods, as well as the Sehome Arboretum. Other groups collaborating on the event were the neighborhood associations, Bellingham Parks and Recreation, and WWU’s New Student Services, Residence Life, the Center for Service Learning; and Learning, Environment, Action, Discovery (LEAD).

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Neighborhood Community Service Alternative

A pilot project testing the feasibility and efficacy of the City Attorney's Office requiring people who are charged with Minor in Possession of alcohol (MIP) to complete 2 hours of neighborhood service as part of the required 16 hours community service.

People who received MIP citations and who both live in AND were cited in Happy Valley or York neighborhoods were required to complete at least two hours of community service with the neighborhood association.

Thirteen people completed service with the Happy Valley Neighborhood Association during the pilot project (September 2005-March 2006); one person completed service with the York Neighborhood Association during an earlier phase of the project. Participants planted trees, worked on trails, and cleared a community garden site in Happy Valley, with each participant completing an average of 10.25 hours of neighborhood service.

Feedback from both participants and the neighborhood association was positive, and the program has been expanded to include people with MIPs who live in Happy Valley and York, regardless of where their citation was issued.

Off-Campus WWU: A Student Road Map to Neighborhood Living

A website for students moving into Bellingham's neighborhoods, including information on renting, laws and ordinances related to neighborhood living, hosting safe and legal parties, and being a good neighbor.

The final review process of the Off-Campus WWU website resulted in several changes which required additional development time. Off-Campus WWU is now "live", and promotions are underway, since spring is a time when many students are making plans to move off campus and securing fall rentals. Promotions will continue over the summer and be intensified in the fall.

Check out the website at www.OffCampusWWU.com.

Other NEST Activities

- **Let's Talk Forum – "WWU Student: Community Member or Just Passing Through?"**

Organized by the WWU Communications Department and the Coalition, this forum has provided a venue each quarter to discuss the issues facing students and long-term residents living together in Bellingham's neighborhoods. The spring forum drew about 80 people, including community members and officers from the Bellingham Police Department. Participants continue to express their appreciation for the opportunity for student and long-term residents to explore these issues together.

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- **NEST plans for fall 2006**

The Neighborhood Service Work Group met in April to discuss ways to further increase student involvement in the York, Sehome and Happy Valley neighborhoods next year.

In addition to the continuation of the primary NEST projects, plans for fall include distributing the Coalition's "Think Locally – Act Neighborly" doorknockers and the Neighborhoods table at the Associated Students Info Fair.

Several new ways to bring students and long-term neighbors together are also being explored:

- Having block parties and other neighborhood social events.
- Highlighting neighborhood issues and events in the Western Front.
- Enhancing the role of student representatives on neighborhood association boards.
- Organizing neighborhood-based Let's Talk Forums.

Enforcement

Increasing enforcement of underage drinking laws and publicity of enforcement.

Planning is underway for fall enforcement and enforcement education. Education will focus on enhancing student awareness regarding being good neighbors, keeping parties small, safe, and legal, and possible alcohol-related citations and their consequences.

Planned strategies include:

- Distributing "Think Locally – Act Neighborly" doorknockers in York, Sehome, and Happy Valley.
- Placing ads in the Western Front regarding alcohol-related citations and their consequences.
- Holding a Let's Talk Forum with students and law enforcement personnel.
- Promoting the Off-Campus WWU website.

LateNight@WWU

Increasing availability of and student participation in late night activities on campus.

The LateNight@WWU Work Group met in May to plan the implementation and promotion of WWU's Late Night events for fall 2006. Once again, the Wade King Student Recreation Center, New Student Services, Associated Students, Residence Life, Bookstore, Athletics Department, Facilities, and Dining Services will collaborate to provide late night activities during the first several weeks of fall quarter. Based on the "lessons learned" from last year, the events will offer a greater variety of activities and more low-cost food options.

The Coalition also continues to collaborate with Dining Services and the Associated Students to work toward establishing a consistent schedule for extended hours at the Underground Coffeehouse and late night movies, in addition to the fall "line-up."