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OVERVIEW

The first Pre-Employment and Career Exploration (PACE) Teen Conference was held May 6, 2006 on the Washington State University Vancouver campus. The program was co-sponsored by the WSU Vancouver/WSU Extension Center for Youth Workforce Preparation and Educational Service District 112 Youth Workforce Programs. Additional community support was provided by Clark College, Cowlitz Bank, Firstenburg Community Center, Fort Vancouver Regional Library, Jim Parsley Community Center, PO Soul Entertainment, USDA Forest Service, Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation, Westside Pizza.

Conference proceedings focused on: (1) *preparing for summer employment*; (2) *exploring potential careers*, *planning for post-high school education and training*. The areas of focus were addressed through 60-minute Interest Sessions, large group activities, Job Fair, meetings with WSU Vancouver Student Services Staff.

PARTICIPANTS

One hundred eight (108) teens attended the conference. Of these, 80 completed conference evaluations. Based on the evaluations completed:

- 40% were male; 60% were female
- 69% were White; 6% Black; 5% Ukrainian; 4% Mexican; 3% Native American; 1% Asian; 12% Other.
- Age ranged from 12 yrs (1) to 20 yrs (1). Average age was 16.24 yrs.
- Twenty-three (23) middle/high schools were represented.
- Counties of residence were: Clark, Cowlitz, Thurston.

EVALUATION

Teen participants provided the following evaluation /assessment of the conference:

- The level of difficulty of the sessions was:
very easy: 37%; somewhat easy: 28%; about right: 33%; somewhat hard: 2%; very hard: 0%.
- The learning environment was (rooms, Equipment, seating, etc.):
excellent: 46%; very good: 38%; good: 11%; fair: 5%; poor: 0%.

Teens ranked the following on a scale of 1 -5 with 5 being "Strongly Agree"

- This conference helped me feel more confident about being successful in the work world: **4.23**
- This conference increased my awareness of job/career options: **4.44**
- This conference helped better prepare me to make job/career decisions: **4.23**
- I plan to use ideas, materials and/or skills from today's conference: **4.28**
- I would recommend this conference to a friend: **4.34**

Comments

- "I was gonna take welding but now I'm gonna take Mechanical Engineering."
- "I liked College 101 best, it definitely helped me be more aware of what to expect."
- "I think we should get sessions like this, about college, into our schools."
- "Should teach this at high school!"
- "I felt that I learned more about what college would be like..."
- "Thank you for all your time. It is greatly appreciated!"
- "Thanks for providing this opportunity for me. Please provide this again next year."
- "THANK YOU"