

Association of Washington Cities
Municipal Achievement Awards Nomination

Nominee: City of Sumner

Project: **SUMNER UNIVERSITY**

Project Goal:

Provide an interesting and entertaining opportunity for city officials and the public to learn about their city and community and to participate in shaping the future.

Project Background:

In 1994 when the City adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan and Vision Statement, the City's Planning Commission expressed concern about the degree to which other boards and commissions were aware of the vision. Simultaneously, the staff to the various boards were reviewing training on legal issues, roles and responsibilities, and City finances. Rather than provide multiple training programs for the City's boards (The City of 8,100 has between 8 and 10 advisory boards and commissions at any one time), the staff proposed a consolidated training program.

In order to have some fun with the concept, and recall the City's heritage as the original home of Whitworth College, the City proposed Sumner University. The program was first taught in 1995 in two evenings. Members of boards and commissions, elected officials, and staff were invited. About 30 students attended classes including: *"How the City Pays for Things"*, *"The Comprehensive Plan"*, and *"Legal Pit-Falls"*. Faculty were recruited from City staff, volunteer consultants, and Municipal Research and Services Center. Copies of recent curriculums are attached.

In the 1997 school year, the City introduced a multiple-track curriculum where students could select from different tracks. This was done to accommodate the returning students who had participated in the prior year. In addition to the programs for "freshman" students (funding, legal issues, Comprehensive Plan); new classes included *"Community Policing"* and *"Welcome to Our Web Site"*. This second year also introduced a participatory program called *"Building the Community We Want,"* where all of the students, lead by staff facilitators, discussed the successes and opportunities to continue to build community.

The 1998 school year (held in January of this year), expanded the program to three evenings. It was also the first time the University was actively marketed to the general public. The first night was for freshman students and addressed the preliminary issues of City funding, new development (public and private), and the Comprehensive Plan. The second and third nights addressed *"What's new in the Fire Department?"* *"Look at Our Web Site Now"*, and *"Effective Staff, Board and Council Relations."* The final night included a panel discussion about the effects of



technology on a small City. Speakers included the Sumner School Superintendent, and technology experts from the City of Seattle and Western Washington University.

Each student is provided a textbook at the start of the University session. The text includes background material for the speakers and also general material that may be useful to the student's activities as advisors or citizens. Upon completion, each student receives a diploma. A copy of a textbook is attached.

The expansion of the enrollment this year was exciting. In addition to City officials, students included members of the public, officials and staff from other jurisdictions, and high school students. The City has initiated discussions with the cable television staff to offer "extended learning" opportunities in 1999.

Program Costs:

The program is managed by the Community Development Department with help from faculty throughout the City and community. Direct costs are estimated at:

Advertising:	\$200 (City newsletter, flyers, local newspaper advertisement)
Staff Time:	\$1000
Materials:	\$40 (coffee, cookies, diplomas, textbooks)
Speakers:	\$300 (Consultant costs and mileage/meal reimbursement-varies by year)

Space for Sumner University is provided by the Sumner School District at no charge.

Program Benefits:

- Coordinated understanding of City policies and goals between elected and appointed officials;
- Networking amongst City officials;
- Opportunity for general public to understand City government and local issues;
- Opportunity to gather ideas from officials and the public;
- Group discussions on key community issues;
- Training new and prospective advisors, councilmembers, and staff;
- Opportunity to present issues that are not commonly discussed (fire services, telecommunications, etc.); and
- Have fun learning.

Attachments:

Textbook
Recruiting article from City newsletter
Prior Course Outlines
Diploma



SUMNER UNIVERSITY 1998/CURRICULUM

	Day 1 Freshman Track January 15	Day 2 Sophomore Track I January 21	Day 3 Sophomore Track II January 22
6:00	City Organization (Doan)	Welcome (Mayor Skinner)	Roles of Boards and Commissions
6:15		Sumner Fire Department (Fowler)	(Tovar)
6:30	How we pay for things (Wilson)		
6:45		What's New in Development and	
7:00		Projects? (Shoemaker and Torrico)	Break
7:15	Break		Summer Talks: The role of
7:30	Comp. Plan and New Urbanism		technology in our future (Panel)
7:45	(Grueter and Phillips)		
8:00		Break	
8:15		Welcome to the City's web page	
8:30		(Johnson and Doan)	
8:45		Building a community school	
		(Witbeck and Doan)	

SUMNER UNIVERSITY 1996/97

SCHEDULE

Day 1-Tr. A	Introduction to the City/planning, legal pitfalls, and organization (John Doan and a guest)	Community Policing (Ben Reisz)
Day 1-Tr. B	1997 City Budget (Mike Wilson)	Status of the Sumner School District History of Sumner (Mary Elizabeth Ryan)
Day 2-Tr. A	Group Dynamics	All students are invited to Track B
Day 2-Tr. B	Capital Projects (Les MacDonald and Al Torrico)	Building the Community we want (John Doan, Mike Wilson, Lisa Grueter)

February 19th and 20th