



## ***Wisconsin Experts and Leaders Meeting with Students***

**Students & Leaders Network** is a 501c3 nonprofit committed to offering Wisconsin students a direct connection to real-world professionals from a spectrum of fields using existing Distance Learning/ITV systems and our web site ([StudentCareerInfo.com](http://StudentCareerInfo.com)) featuring archived sessions available for streaming to classrooms and public viewing. We want to provide educators with another tool for their students.

- Over 2,500 students participated in 81 sessions with 42 presenters in our inaugural year, 2010 – 2011.
- Evaluations showed 86% of students and 99% of educators “Strongly Agree/Agree” the sessions were valuable. 71% of evaluations were returned. It is the only program of this type in the country.

### **What We Do**

[Highly qualified professionals](#) from a variety of careers tell their stories to students during 30-minute live sessions. Speakers cover how they decided on their field, education, other training/jobs/life experiences, and general tips for the students. It’s interactive; the final 15 minutes are for student Q&A, a great opportunity for first-hand advice. It’s all done through your school’s Distance Learning/ITV system. And the best part is – ***IT’S ALL FREE!***

### **How it Works**

We send regular schedules of upcoming speakers through WADEN directors, who send them to you. A full speaker schedule is on our web site where you can sign up to receive direct emails of the speaker listings. We offer morning and afternoon presentations and each speaker is scheduled for two sessions back-to-back.

Signing up is easy. First, select the presenter you want. Then, check with your network director to see if your room/system is available at the time you want. With your network director’s contact information, and your own information, go online to enroll. It’s a simple form and you can sign up for one or more speakers/sessions.

### **Career Speaker Presentations ♦ 2011-2012 School Year**

Students & Leaders Network is currently developing a robust roster of wonderful career speakers for the upcoming school year. Some of the topics to expect this year include discussions on:

- green building/green businesses
- military careers
- aviation careers
- liberal arts career paths
- state law maker
- bio technology
- veterinarian/animal sciences
- IT/computer career paths
- culinary arts/restaurateur
- financial literacy
- medical careers
- arts careers

**Check Out Our Web Site!** [StudentCareerInfo.com](http://StudentCareerInfo.com) is your portal to get your class involved in career discussions, see what topics are scheduled, sign up to get notices direct, search our video library of past presentations and seek out resources for career planning.



### **Feedback, Speaker Ideas & Evaluations**

Your feedback and ideas for speakers are welcome. Also, when you participate in a live, interactive presentation, we ask that you and your students fill out simple evaluation forms mailed to you ahead of time. This very important feedback is valuable for us to improve our efforts and obtain funding for the program. Please help us out by filling out and returning the forms in the pre-paid envelopes provided. We had 71% of the evaluations returned last year!

### **Questions/Contact**

If you have any questions about our program, please feel free to email our program coordinator Andrea Novotny at [anovotny@studentsandleadersnetwork.com](mailto:anovotny@studentsandleadersnetwork.com) or call her at (608) 575-7739.



## Plain Talk: Videoconferencing gives students leg up on careers

DAVE ZWEIFEL | Cap Times editor emeritus | [dzweifel@madison.com](mailto:dzweifel@madison.com) | Posted: Monday, January 24, 2011 6:30 am

Early last month I sat in on a discussion UW-Madison School of Pharmacy Dean Jeanette Roberts was having with about 35 high school students who are considering becoming pharmacists.

She told the students what it's like being a pharmacist and what it takes to become one -- the classes they'll need to take, the grades they will need to achieve -- and then she answered their individual questions, the first being, of course, how much do pharmacists make?

What was interesting is that Roberts and the students were miles apart from each other. She was in a small sound and video studio operated by Access Wisconsin on International Lane near the Dane County Regional Airport and the kids were comfortably seated in their school libraries. Some were at desks in Mellen, some in Green Bay and Arcadia. Several were in the Adams Friendship High School library, a couple were listening and talking from Grantsburg High.

They were all taking part in a new live interactive videoconferencing program called Students and Leaders Network that operates on existing, affordable networks that link schools and libraries so that they can take advantage of the brave new world of technology out there.

My longtime friend Al Zins, the local marketing communications guru who has helped promote the nonprofit SLN, arranged for me to witness the program and to say the least, I was impressed.

He explained that it was started last September, just as a new school year got under way, to answer pleas from educators in Wisconsin for high school student access to career information. Reduced school budgets have eliminated much of the funding for field trips and other programs that allow students to explore different career fields.

What better way, it was reasoned, to get folks like Roberts and others who are experts in their fields to talk directly with kids on their home turf? The information, so to speak, comes from the horse's mouth, not from a pamphlet or a guidance counselor. The costs are minimal for high-speed Web access, which allows even the smallest Wisconsin schools to take part.

From September through December, roughly the first semester of the 2010-11 school year, some 21 careers were presented by leaders in their field. They included everything from careers in the green energy movement to hotel management, from lawyering to welding. Some 1,338 students took part in the 38 half-hour sessions that were offered. A survey showed that both the educators and the students like the opportunity, plus students wound up requesting information on 200 more career fields.

Besides, all the sessions are digitally recorded and available to teachers, students, parents and the public on the website [www.studentcareerinfo.com](http://www.studentcareerinfo.com), and can be streamed into a classroom.

SLN hopes to continue the program with funding from foundations and others interested in this kind of educational opportunity for high schoolers. It does, of course, cost money to produce the programs and purchase time on the network.

From all indications, though, it's off to a good start. And it's fulfilling a need that will help our young people make good decisions on what they want to do with their lives.

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## Sample Educator Testimonials – Comments

### Nicolet Distance Education Network

The members of the Nicolet Distance Education Network welcome the opportunity to connect their students and staff to professional leaders in a variety of fields via the Students and Leaders Network utilizing the BadgerNetConverged Network (BCN). Living in rural northern Wisconsin the district staff and students do not have easy access to experts in a variety of fields that students may hold an interest in or to speakers to help supplement their curriculum.

Our participating teachers also appreciate the opportunity to provide the Students and Leaders Network with suggestions for future topics and they work to meet these needs.

We have had a variety of students and teachers participate in the programming from those teaching or enrolled in: Business Law, Accounting, Personal Finance, Careers class etc. You can easily search for programs here on their website:

<http://www.studentcareerinfo.com/PresentationSearch.aspx> .

You will also discover in your program search a video archive of those that have already taken place. Although, there is not the same interaction as participating in a live program it provides access after if there are conflicting schedules that do not allow participation in a live session.

### **Lynda S. Oleinik, Gifted Education - Advanced Placement Coordinator, Evansville High School**

“Students today are really trying to figure out what they want to do after high school. What do engineers, chefs, or accountants really do? Sources on the Internet give teens more information about careers these days with videos and fact sheets. But you never know what a student is going to ask or be wondering about. The Students and Leaders Network provides the unique opportunity for students to ask questions and get answers from real people in the field.”

### **J. Adam Zopp, Principal, Winter School District**

"Our elementary and middle schools utilize the virtual field trips provided by the Students and Leaders Network. For a rural school like the Winter School District this becomes an invaluable resource in helping to expose our students to a variety of different types of subject matter they may not otherwise get."

**Keith Schroeder, Library Media Specialist, Bay Port High School**

"Almost all of them have been great, interactive experiences with people in the field. Students had an opportunity to ask questions and get input on their possible career choice."

**Dan Doucette, Guidance Counselor, Northland Pines High School**

"I just got done registering for 3 more presentations and making a career presenter suggestion. This is a great and growing tool to access career presentations for our students. There have been many good ones already this year and I look forward to the ones coming in the next month!!"

**Cathy Hoffman, Science Teacher, Washburn High School**

"A few parents told me last week during Parent-Teacher Conferences how their children liked the speaker on Dentistry and were thinking about possibly looking into that career choice. So it must have made an impression if the students talked to their parents about the speaker. I am really glad we have this opportunity for our students-great program!"

**Educator Comments from Evaluations**

Great Presentation	Excellent
This is great for our students!	Speaker did a good job
They have all been excellent.	This was great.
Really great!	Helped students see the opportunities.
Great job!	Archived sessions excellent addition!
All sessions excellent!	He was a great presenter.
Knowledgeable – enjoyable presentation	Kelly was an excellent presenter.
Good examples.	Very well done.
The presentation was well done!	Answered student’s questions.
Excellent – referenced concepts covered in class.	
Presenter gave students information they wanted.	
My students enjoyed the presentation very much!	
Good discussion about how to prepare to be successful.	



June 6, 2011

## Summary of Activities: September 2010 - June 2011

Students & Leaders Network, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, serves as a bridge to identify and involve experts and leaders with the educational system by providing live, interactive videoconferencing and web site stored video discussions on topics that provide information and insight on careers and life challenges for students, teachers and parents.

Reduced education budgets have resulted in a strong desire by educators to have access to career information for students.

The effort began in the fall semester of 2010 and resulted in 43 careers presented by leaders in their fields and:

- 2,505 Students participating
- 81 Half hour sessions
- 102 Educators enrolled students in one or more presentations

Evaluations were mailed to educators prior to the presentations. Students and educators were asked to rate the presenters in 6 categories. The results from 1,773 evaluations (71% returned):

- 86% Strongly Agree/Agree
- 14% Disagree/Strongly Disagree

The response from educators was tremendously positive with 99% of evaluation responses being Strongly Agree or Agree.

Four open questions were asked, following are the most frequent responses.

What was the most helpful part of the presentation?

- Ability to ask questions
- Explanation of career

What suggestions do you have to improve the presentation?

- More explanation of topic
- More interaction

What other careers do you want to see presented?

- Students named over 200
- Business, Medical, Engineering, Trades most requested

Any additional comments.

- Thank you for the presentation
- Well done program.

## **Presentations**

All presenters were leaders in their fields, and subfields, with extensive experience. The general careers presented, vidoes available on web site, included:

Automobile Dealerships: Spectrum of Careers	Automotive Careers: Skills Needed
Careers in the Green Energy Movement	Management in Health Care and Research
Chiropractic in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	How to be Smart about Your Money
Architecture: You Can Change the World	Actuarial Careers for the Insurance Industry
Welding: Who Will Fix the Machines	Careers in Real Estate Development
Money Smarts to make Your Career Happen	Managing Worker Issues
Entrepreneurship as a Career Option	How Careers Evolve
Physical Therapy	Becoming a Pharmacist
Be a Finance Professional (2)	Hospitality and Hotels
Careers in Food	What do all Those Lawyers do? (2)
Credit Counselor: A career with a Big Reward	Law Enforcement (2)
Dentistry	Careers in Agriculture
Environmental Advocacy	Ophthalmology
Fishery Biologist	Financial Literacy/Careers (8)
Public Relations	Accounting (2)
Real Estate in a Challenging Economy	Surgical Technologist
Firefighter	Marketing Budget debate – careers in media
Nursing	Biofuel Developer
Dental Hygienist	Career in Chocolate

## **Web Page**

The web page went live on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. There have been over 2,000 unique visits to the site, an above average number. All of the presentations are digitally stored and can be accessed by students, educators, parents and the general public.

Educators can stream the presentations from the web page to their class, a service that is used.

The URL is: <http://www.studentcareerinfo.com/>

## **Summary**

The effort is filling a need defined by educators and has received very positive response from students and educators.

No fee for the program is very important to educators.

Unsolicited Educator comments included: “Thank you for the series” We are a small district and this is very helpful” “Our first experience, a really good program.”

Educator participation increased as awareness of the program increased.