STARS Evaluation: Measuring Our Success

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Introduction
Evaluation is an important part of any project. It is when you take a step back and judge how well your project is going. For STARS this means measuring how well the different activities and programs are performing. The process of evaluating helps to steer everything in the right direction to improve the overall effectiveness of the STARS Alliance. Without an honest evaluation, no one would ever know how well the Alliance is doing, or if it is any closer to reaching its goals.

Background
The STARS Evaluation Team aims to record and analyze the performance of various activities undertaken by the SLCs at different Alliance schools. At each school, 1 or 2 designated Evaluation Assistants work with the project coordinators to collect activity reports throughout each semester, and report back to the school’s academic liaison, and in turn to the central team.

Reporting
In order to get a comprehensive picture of the kind of impact STARS is having, we collect both quantitative as well as qualitative information. During the fall semester,
• We ensured that each project activity was reported in a common online form, to help analyze the demographics of both SLC students involved and people who are impacted
• We interviewed a SLC student about the importance of computing as well as the effect of STARS on their life and career

Evaluation
NCSU STARS SLC carries out different projects in the hopes of raising the diversity in computing. Some of the projects include:
• SPARCS & Citizen Schools Outreach which are aimed at Middle Schoolers. They hope to get the kids to view computing as a possible career for them. The kids are introduced to computing ideas such as searching, programming, and problem solving.
• Nursing Home Service Outreach aims at showing the elderly in the Nursing Home basic computer skills that will help them to have more contact with their family and loved ones.
• City-wide Wireless Networking aims to bring wireless internet access to Raleigh. They are currently looking at mesh networking as a cost effective and self healing network model to implement over a wide area such as the City of Raleigh.

Conclusions
Overall conclusions we could draw:
• STARS outreach projects have impacted a large number of school students, undergraduates and elderly persons by helping them with computing
• SLC students feel that being in STARS has definitely had a positive effect on their careers

Future Work
During the spring semester we plan to conduct another interview, continue with the activity reports, and make a promotional video to show what the STARS Student Leadership Corps is doing at NC State.