Dr. John Anderson tells Kitsy Barnes’ biological field studies class that no ideas are too strange to consider for their Wyoming School-University Partnership project. Anderson visited with the class Wednesday to get them started in the program.

**WHS class chosen for UW pilot project**

By Susan Lockhart  
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WORLAND — Kitsy Barnes’ biological field studies class at Worland High School was recently selected as one of three classes from across the state to serve in a pilot program at the University of Wyoming called Wyoming School-University Partnership (WSUP).  
Dr. John Anderson, a political science professor for UW, is coordinating the WSUP projects in Worland, Pinedale and Torrington. He was in Worland Wednesday to meet with the biology students to begin the process of picking a project.

“A part of what we want to do is to use the University of Wyoming to do something big,” Anderson told the Worland students. “What we’ve really been asking students to do is to think of something they want to do to make their community better. We think this is like an early college experience for you.”

Anderson said WSUP would give the students some one-on-one contact with professors at UW who will be mentoring them.

“Once we decide what you want to do, we’ll be bringing in a biology professor, an atmospheric science professor, a wildlife professor, depending on what you choose to do.”

Anderson asked the students to pick a project they have “passion” for.

“This is going to take work and you need to have some passion for it,” he said.

“There are no bad ideas, nothing is too strange for us to consider. But I want you to think of something that, in 10 years you’ll be proud of what you did here. Think of something that makes a big-time difference, not a small one. So like, I think recycling is a great idea, but the big idea would be that it was the best recycling program in Wyoming. Think big like that.”

The students kicked around project ideas from water quality improvement to composting to energy conservation for their project.

As the class period ended, Anderson asked the students to keep working with Barnes to pick a project, hopefully by the end of December, so they can begin focusing on how to achieve their
goals. The WSUP initiative is to engage students as citizens in their community, according to Anderson. He hopes the students will take leadership roles by identifying a community improvement project, then working with the community to implement it. Barnes said she sees the project as a way to give her students a taste of what college life is going to be like. The initiative offers an early college experience through the engagement of college and university professors who will meet with the classes to provide help and expertise. Later in the project, students will also have opportunities to visit the University of Wyoming and to present their work at several conferences. According to Anderson, “Students get to learn that college professors are real people who actually like to laugh.” While learning that professors are people, students will also learn what it is like to work with someone who has been immersed in learning a subject and has deep insights about it. Anderson said he envisions WSUP running for 18 to 24 months before the projects are completed, adding that those projects may develop other project ideas for future students. The students, he said, will finish their WSUP project by reporting their findings to an appropriate group such as UW professors, the Wyoming Game & Fish, or wherever the project has an application. After the biology students decide on a project, Anderson asked them to make a video of their project and goals which will be posted on the initiative website www.uwyo.edu/wsup.