

**NNER SETTING ANNUAL REPORT  
2006 – 2007**

**SETTING NAME** WYOMING SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

**SETTING CONTACT(S)** AUDREY KLEINSASSER, DIRECTOR

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS TOWARD:**

***Findings across the setting related to the NNER self-study on equity.***

Given the broad membership of the partnership, our report takes a different format. To date, we have not conducted a statewide study. In this section, we will report on related activities and accomplishments.

***Diversity & Multicultural Assessment, Romney Associates, Inc.***

The College of Education engaged Romney Associates Inc. to conduct a diversity and multicultural assessment. Over a period of several years, the consultants visited Laramie. Based on those onsite visits and the examination of a variety of documents, the consultants delivered a report February 28, 2007. The college leadership council discussed and responded to the report during spring and early summer, along with the faculty. Romney Associates Inc. returned to Laramie in August 2007 for a half-day workshop with the leadership council followed by a day-long faculty retreat. The consultants submitted specific recommendations under the categories of college leadership and diversity; recruiting, hiring, retaining, and mentoring a diverse faculty; collegueship – faculty to faculty relationships; climate for dialogue on diversity; curriculum and diversity; and faculty-student interaction. The full report will be available online at [www.ed.uwyo.edu](http://www.ed.uwyo.edu).

***Shepard Symposium on Social Justice, co-sponsor***

This annual event, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year involves faculty K-16, the UW community, and the civic community. It occurred March 25-28, 2007. The NNER's Michelli Award for Social Justice awarded to the symposium was acknowledged from the podium and on the program cover.

***Engaging the community to advance educational renewal***

**The Big Read: Wyoming Reads My Antonia.**

The Governing Board allocated \$2,000 for ten, \$200 mini-grants for Big Read initiatives to county libraries in ten Partnership districts: Albany, Campbell, Converse, Fremont, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, Sweetwater, Sheridan, and Uinta. The mini-grants were posted during the summer with projects beginning mid-September and occurring over the next several months. Activities included all variety of discussion groups, including teachers using the book in regular classes, videos and historical re-enactments, and kolachi making events. Audrey Kleinsasser and Ray Schulte are slated to co-lead a discussion at the Goshen County Public Library November 18.

***Current local initiatives that advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy in addition to what is described in the two areas listed above.***

**Diversity, Curriculum, Equity, and Democracy**

As part of the Wyoming Teacher Education Program's preparation for a February 2008 NCATE site visit, a variety of assessments about standards are in preparation. They include standards for democracy and social justice and developing competent and democratic professionals. One broad program outcome specifically addresses democratic perspectives:

- a) confidence in the ability of ALL to learn and a passion for making it happen;
- b) empathy, understanding and advocacy for others, including cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds different from their own;
- c) an understanding that democratic responsibilities require active participation; and
- d) a desire to collaborate with others.

## **Wyoming Teacher Education Program Survey Results**

The program has commissioned an external survey agency to collect survey data from student teachers and mentor teachers over the last several years. One section of the survey relates to issues of diversity, curriculum, equity, and democracy. Results from Spring, 2007 from the Mentor Teachers are provided below. The percentages reflect how well respondents believe the goal was met. The survey included 141 mentor teacher responses and 114 preservice teacher responses.

*Category: Modeled and mentored a professional disposition of access to quality teaching for ALL children in the classroom by ...*

- A. Understanding how due process promotes equal protection for students with diverse needs in schools. Mentor teachers, 85.8%; Preservice Teachers, 88.6%
- B. Understanding how social class, race, gender, or disability can affect student performance. Mentor teachers, 92.2%; Preservice Teachers, 94.7%
- C. Articulating a strong rationale for pedagogical decisions and selecting strategies that effectively address the diverse needs of learners. Mentor Teachers, 87.2%; Preservice teachers, 88.6%
- D. Helping the preservice teacher understand the diverse needs of learners in order to promote equitable and inclusive practices in the classroom. Mentor teachers, 92.2%; Preservice Teachers, 90.4%

## **Concurrent Majors**

Largely through the efforts of Kay Persichitte, Director of Teacher Education and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences (first, Janet Constantinides; then, Audrey Shalinsky) the Wyoming Teacher Education program developed 19 concurrent majors to meet certification requirements for ‘highly qualified’ teachers. The collaborations occurred with the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Agriculture. We are one of the few teacher education programs in the country with this distinction. All of the concurrent majors are at the secondary level.

## **High School to Higher Education Transitions**

We co-sponsored events in two disciplines, the life sciences and English/language arts.

### **Life Sciences**

A second annual summit occurred February 23, 2007 in Douglas, Wyoming. Approximately 40 public school, community college, and university science and life science faculty attended. Participants brought examples of student work for sharing, in the context of the Wyoming science standards. Evaluations of the meeting were excellent and produced several follow-up meetings. One involved life science faculty from the Cheyenne schools who drove to Laramie to meet with members of the Biology Executive Committee. The UW director of Life Sciences has also used his work in this collaboration with the Partnership to create a general biology consortium involving institutions across the U.S. to examine the way biology is taught and how to do it better. The institutions include the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Georgia State University, Michigan State University, the University

of Massachusetts-Amherst, the University of Texas-Austin, the University of Michigan, and San Diego State University. The group, along with directors from other universities, plans to meet regularly, create materials for dissemination, and possibly collaborate around grant writing. They are also interested in collaborating on a study of the effectiveness of AP biology courses and students' later success in college.

During Fall 2007, we have scheduled three regional science summits bringing teachers across the three levels together to examine student work: Worland, October 26; Evanston, November 9; and Gillette, December 4. These towns are in Partnership school districts located a great distance from the university, in the northwest, southwest, and northeast corners.

### **English/Language Arts:**

#### **Dinner and a Book, Casper, March 5, 2006, Casper Petroleum Club**

Approximately 25 English and language arts faculty from public schools, community colleges, and the university met for dinner and informal conversations around Cathy Small's *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. Follow-ups to this meeting include an October 18-19 fall Partnership conference in Laramie featuring the author. Online registration is open for an April 18-19, 2008 Wyoming Writing Colloquium that would include the UW Department of English, the Wyoming Writing Project, UW LeARN, and the Partnership. We have budgeted for a maximum of 60 participants (40 have registered already) in teams, or as individuals. The colloquium focuses on writing across-the-curriculum and will include stipends for project development.

#### **Leaders for Teaching Preparing Schools**

Our site has one district, Fremont #14, Wyoming Indian, participating in this NNER initiative. Three principals completed the year-long study: Pam Fredericks, Owen St. Clair, and Philip Garhart. Scott Morrow received a scholarship to attend the Summer 2007 meetings.

#### **League of Democratic Schools**

We have two elementary schools that participate, Woods Learning Center in Casper and UW Prep School in Laramie.

Cammy Rowley, a Ph.D. candidate and Casper College instructor is conducting an ethnographic study at Woods during the 2007-2008 school year. She is investigating young children's social emotional learnings and democratic teaching practices in schools.

#### **Summer 2007 Symposium**

The setting supported the participation of four educators to attend the July 16-20 symposium in Seattle: Christine Bolender, Natrona County School District #1; Anne LaPlante, Natrona County School District #1; Robert Mayes, UW Science & Math Teaching Center; and Brian Recht, Superintendent, Albany County School District #1.

#### **UW campus-based seminars.**

The Partnership hosted four lunch-time seminars, three of them featuring original research by UW faculty.

- a) "A View from the Porch." (ethnographic study of a partner school site). Audrey Kleinsasser, Jane Nelson, Jim Rose, Audrey Shalinsky. November 15, 2006.
- b) "Retrospective Insight: Reflections on the Specialist's Role in Developing an Arapaho Language Assessment Protocol." Pam Innes, UW Department of Anthropology, December 4, 2006.
- c) "Is it Possible for University Faculty to Become Authentic Boundary Spanners?: Perceptions from the Field." Debra Parkinson and Kate Welsh, January 17, 2007.
- d) A discussion of selections from the *Federalist Papers*, Brent Pickett, UW Casper College Center. April 23, 2007.

**GAPS OR CHALLENGES FACED IN:**

*Findings across the setting related to the NNER equity self-study on equity.*

As a setting, we are discussing the possibility of conducting an equity self-study and what that would mean in a statewide school-university partnership.

*Engaging the community to advance educational renewal.*

Current local initiatives that advance the Agenda for Education in a Democracy in addition to what is described in the two areas listed above:

**OTHER SETTING INFORMATION:**

(Provide any additional information, highlights of current initiatives, challenges at the setting, changes in personnel, etc., not included above.)

**Executive Board**

Jim Lowham	Superintendent, Natrona #1, (Chair)
Trish Cook	Curriculum Director, Converse #1 (Chair-Elect)
Ray Schulte	Superintendent, Goshen #1 (Past Chair)
Pat McClurg	Dean, College of Education, UW
Audrey Shalinsky	Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, UW

Membership reflects approximately 75% of the K-12 students in Wyoming, 35% of the school districts, and 100% of higher education.

Albany #1, Campbell #1, Converse #1, Fremont #14, Fremont #25, Goshen #1, Hot Springs #1, Laramie #1, Natrona #1, Niobrara #1, Platte #2, Sheridan #2, Sublette #1, Sweetwater #1, Sweetwater #2, Uinta #1, Washakie #1

Wyoming Community College Commission  
 Wyoming Department of Education  
 Wyoming Education Association  
 University of Wyoming, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Education

Dues Structure, 2006-2007 (adopted April 2006)

\$2,000	individual school district
\$2,000	College of Arts & Sciences; Community College Commission, Wyoming Education Association
\$4,500	Wyoming Department of Education

The College of Education supports the executive director's salary (nine-months) and .5 of the office associate's salary. It also provides office space for the Partnership. The Partnership supplements the director's salary with two additional months' pay. Starting August 6, 2007, the Partnership is providing the other 50% of the office associate's salary, making the position fulltime for the first time.

**Policy Issues**

K-16 curriculum articulation; a newly formed Wyoming P-16 council  
(members include Jim Lowham and Audrey Kleinsasser)

Mentor Teachers and Partner School Concentrated Field Sites

Albany #1, Natrona #1, Sheridan #2, Fremont # 14 and #25, Sweetwater #1 and #2

**Agenda for Education in a Democracy Scholars**

In July, 2007, Audrey Kleinsasser and Francisco Rios were named AED scholars.

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*The report went through multiple drafts. The director created a first draft which the executive committee read and reacted to. We then shared the draft at the annual meeting in West Virginia, October 3-5. The next draft went to the governing board during its October 18, 2007 meeting. Most comments focused on the NNER self-study on equity section. The final draft is based on input solicited from all of the partners.*