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**NNER SETTING ANNUAL REPORT
2009**

SETTING NAME WYOMING SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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Please use this template to enter the information from your setting. The report should be approximately 3 to 5 single-spaced pages and address the following topics. The changes in this format from previous annual reports reflect feedback from tripartite council and the governing council. This reflects the recommendation that this report reflect on work that advances equity as the NNER's central goal. In addition, settings may highlight an additional NNER goal area that is a priority for the setting, recognizing that each setting will focus on the NNER goals most critical to local context.

DESCRIBE SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES ACROSS THE SETTING ON WORK, INITIATIVES, AND ACTIONS RELATED TO THE NNER EQUITY SELF-STUDY.

Provide detailed information that will help colleagues learn from your successes as well as proffer suggestions or resources for the challenges listed.

Background on the Equity Self-Study

At its January 29, 2006 meeting, the NNER Governing Council elected to appoint an Equity Task Force of no fewer than 5 and no greater than 7 members to study the current state of progress toward more equitable practices throughout the NNER as a follow-up to the work of the 2003 Equity Study Group and its report adopted by the Governing Council in 2004. Governing Council members nominated individuals for this task force from each group of the tripartite council (school, college of education, arts & sciences), the governing council, the executive board and two members from the original 2003 Equity Report Task Force. The group developed an inquiry-based self-study process designed to:

- facilitate a process of formative self-assessment around equity, diversity, and moral stewardship for all
- facilitate greater collaboration among member settings in learning about and from each other's work;
- provide the NNER with data regarding work being done on equity across the Network, to know how to support and further such work

To facilitate the above, the group developed a continuum of practices and questions to guide the self-study process. Using these, each setting can respond to successes and challenges in this ongoing work toward improvements in these areas.

(The equity report from 2003 and the equity task force self-study are posted on the NNER web page: nnerpartnerships.org)

Successes related to advancing equity related to the NNER self-study process and/or other initiatives that advance equity within the setting:

Wyoming Successes:

1. Several years ago, the Department of Educational Studies took the lead developing what is now a well-established option for students, EDST 3000, *Teacher as Practitioner - Denver Urban* experience. Students registering for this six-credit hour section complete practicum experiences that link theory and philosophy to classroom practice in urban schools. External funding for three years enabled a similar theory-practice experience on the Wind River Reservation, EDST 2480, *Diversity and the Politics of Schooling*, a four-credit hour course. Rich readings and activities around diversity issues are core to the teacher education program. College of Education faculty established, agreed to, and continue to reflect on common assessments related to diversity.

2. UW has a well-established, generously endowed, and annual Shepard Symposium on Social Justice which invites local, regional, and national participation, including K-12 teachers. The 14th symposium is slated for April 7-10, 2010. Through an afternoon teacher tea established in 2008, more teachers are participating, though they are chiefly from the Laramie and Cheyenne schools. For several years, the Symposium has also featured events for junior and senior high students, e.g., a hiphop dance and a movie premiere of "Straight-laced." The Symposium has always been open to community participation and advertised in the local newspaper.
3. With support from the UW President's Office and leadership from AED scholar, Francisco Rios, UW launched a Social Justice Research Center in 2008. The center supports faculty and student research projects and has brought a range of social justice speakers and workshop leaders to campus, including Leticia Saucedo, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Jeff Duncan-Andrade, San Francisco State University; Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., Kenneth M. Orona and Louis "Panco" McFarland for the Chicano Studies Program Hispanic Heritage Month Lecture Series; Mary Romero, Arizona State University, and Sandy Grande, author of *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*. Professor William Ayers is slated to speak at UW April 5-6, 2010.
4. In 2008, College of Education faculty created an Advisory Council on Diversity as one result of Romney Associates Inc. conducting a diversity and multicultural assessment (2007). The council is one of the college's standing committees and has the following charge: develop a three-year diversity plan for the college and update the plan annually or as needed, advising the dean. The council is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of this diversity plan aligned with the goals of the college's academic plan. Assistant Professor Angela Jaime chairs this group, which includes faculty, a staff member, and a student.
5. Using its online registration system, the Partnership assisted Francisco Rios and the UW Social Justice Research Center in registering teachers statewide for K-12 Educator day at the annual National Association of Multicultural Education conference in Denver, October 31, 2009. The College of Education allocated \$5,000 to support the NAME conference, in particular, the registration and travel of teachers for the one-day event. From Wyoming, seven teachers registered, again, from Laramie and Cheyenne, but a severe snowstorm closed Wyoming-Colorado roads for three days, and the Wyoming teachers did not participate.

Challenges related to advancing equity:

1. **Distance:** While the UW Laramie campus is rich with opportunities to hear and interact with leaders in multicultural education and social justice issues, the same opportunities are greatly limited statewide, for both community college and K-12 faculty and administrators. Onsite or distance opportunities for K-12 faculty focus chiefly on coursework related to master's degrees and undergraduate and graduate ESL certification and a graduate-level, Teachers of American Indian Children certificate developed by Tim Rush and Angela Jaime. The partnership has been stepping up efforts around social media and online opportunities so partners in sites away from the Laramie campus can participate. One example is a UW campus talk by writing scholar Kathleen Yancey that will be taped November 12 and shared via WyoCast. Then, a follow-up discussion

November 13 will occur using eLearning's Elluminate, a real-time web conferencing tool.

2. ***Under-representation of minority populations, statewide and university:*** the state of Wyoming and its single four-year university face a major challenge to recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff of color. One exception would be the Shoshoni and Arapahoe populations on the Wind River Reservation, served by Fremont County school districts, three of which are Partnership districts. The university created an associate vice president level position for diversity, naming Nell Russell to the role. One of Russell's immediate initiatives was to restructure what had been called the President's Advisory Council on Minorities and Women's Affairs to the Strategic Diversity Initiatives Committee. The university-level committee has plans to launch a student and faculty exchange program with historically black colleges and universities.
3. ***Communication and collaboration:*** a number of activities and initiatives are underway, organized, but communication and collaboration might improve and be coordinated better. This may or may not be a role for the Partnership, but it is worth further examination in order to maximize effects, energy, and momentum.

DESCRIBE SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO ONE OF THE NNER GOALS LISTED BELOW.

Provide detailed information that will help colleagues learn from your successes as well as proffer suggestions or resources for the challenges listed.

- Research related to advancing the Agenda for Education in a Democracy
- Influencing policy at local, state, and/or national level
- Collaborative work with other organizations and/or within the setting that advance the NNER mission locally
- Engaging with the community to advance educational renewal

Collaborative Work with Other Organizations and Engaging with the Community to advance Educational Renewal

Successes:

1. ***2009 NNER Conference Scholarship Program:*** A year before the 2009 NNER annual conference and 10th year anniversary of In Praise of Education, the Partnership Governing Board allocated \$20,000 (one-half from FY 2008; one-half from FY 2009) to create conference scholarships for Wyoming presenters. Over the course of nearly a year, through process that started with an application process, 29 educators representing K-12, education, and arts and sciences participated and ultimately presented at the Bellevue meetings (nearly 45 Wyoming educators participated or attended the conference). In accepting the scholarships that supported registration, travel, and lodging, recipients also agreed to present in other local, statewide, regional, and national venues. The Partnership is about to finalize a winter conference (January or February 2010) during which Wyoming's NNER conference presenters would reprise their sessions for a statewide

audience. In this way, connections to the NNER and the Agenda for Education in a Democracy are maintained as is some momentum for Partnership work.

2. **Expectations Gap:** The Partnership has provided statewide leadership for a series of summits, institutes, and colloquia under the broad umbrella of secondary to postsecondary transitions. A democratic, simultaneous renewal approach distinguishes these events: a) participants meet at a neutral site to symbolize a level playing field; b) planners involve secondary and postsecondary in a way that values all voices, not just a powerful university voice. In 2008 - 2009, the Partnership collaborated with UW, community colleges and school districts to sponsor three statewide meetings around reading and writing (n= 126); the 4th annual life sciences summit (n=26); and the third annual math articulation (n=56). The meetings are guided by the principles of simultaneous educational renewal. The life science summits are characterized by participants across levels bringing examples of student work to share and discuss. Skilled facilitators have created a meeting culture that promotes understanding and dialogue, while discouraging finger-pointing and blaming.
3. **Collaboration with Wyoming P-16 Education Council:** Working with the Wyoming P-16 Education Council, the Partnership guided completion of five course comparison charts that map onto the state's Hathaway Success Curriculum and scholarship program (mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages, writing). Printable versions are available online at www.uwyo.edu/wsup. Audrey Kleinsasser is a member of the Council.
4. **Qwest Foundation Gift:** In May, 2009, the Partnership received a \$15,000 Qwest Foundation gift to continue and deepen transition work. To date, six College of Arts & Sciences departments have signed on to create proposals tapping into the Qwest gift, using a democratic, simultaneous renewal approach: English, history, life sciences, languages, mathematics, and political science.
5. **Colorado-Nebraska-Wyoming Regional Leadership Associates Program: 2010-2012:** In July, a planning group representing the Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming Partnerships received a nod from the NNER Governing Council to develop a regional leadership associates program, contingent on using the meetings to recruit new NNER members, namely Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas. The Governing Council allocated \$4,000 to support implementation. Going forward will depend, in part, on capacities of the Colorado and Nebraska Partnerships to provide matching funds.

Challenges:

1. **Building-level Engagement:** During the 2009-2010 school year, the Partnership aims to increase League of Democratic School sites from three to nine. The Partnership hired Jennifer Grooms to coordinate Wyoming League efforts. Plans are already underway for teachers at Woods Learning Center in Casper to host the 2010 Rocky Mountain regional meeting, March 25-26.
2. **Executive Committee SWOT Exercise:** The executive committee of the governing board met for a retreat, May 18, in Guernsey, Wyoming. The group developed a SWOT to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. **Weaknesses** included district membership numbers under 50%; inability to put AED philosophy into classroom practice; reliance on key personalities for leadership; lack of sustainability; structure may

not have depth (lack of buy-in from building-level principals); membership is dues driven; Partnership work represents a minority and a silent voice compared to the dominant narratives of testing and accountability. *Threats* included finances, support, history, geographic distances, and competing agendas.

Along with weaknesses and strengths, the committee identified the following *strengths*: participant diversity, tripartite representation, simultaneous renewal strategies in place; Agenda for Education in a Democracy as a foundation; the high school to higher education transitions initiative; the people and their commitment; membership growth over the last few years; increased and improved communication, including email, meeting preparation, and board packets; NNER connection; and multiple opportunities for growth and professional development. *Opportunities* included people, commitment, and professional development options; ways to apply the Agenda for Education in a Democracy to strengthen schools in a testing and accountability environment; chances to subvert the dominant testing and accountability narrative; opportunity to ask, What is the purpose of public education?; expand transitions initiative to complete Hathaway Success curriculum; involve other UW colleges; expand membership and conversation; examine structure, the system; do a better job explaining benefits of Partnership membership to nonmember districts.

OTHER SETTING INFORMATION:

(Provide any additional information including celebrations, acknowledgements, awards, accomplishments, challenges at the setting, changes in personnel, etc. that provide additional background.)

The Partnership is composed of 20 school districts, all seven Wyoming community colleges, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Wyoming Education Association, and the UW College of Arts & Sciences and College of Education. Membership represents 74% of Wyoming's Pk-12 student population, 42% of Wyoming school districts, and all of Wyoming postsecondary education. The Governing Board is composed of xx members and meets four to five times yearly, usually in a central location such as Casper. In between meetings, the director updates and consults with the executive committee on some actions and expenses.