

**Wyoming School-University Partnership
Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 24, 2008
10:00 – 1:40 p.m.**

Present

Dave Barker, Trish Cook, Joel Dvorak, Judy Ellsworth, Paige Fenton-Hughes, Jean Hayek, Mike Hjetmanek, Mike Klopfenstein, Rick Luchsinger, Joy Mockelmann, Kevin Mitchell, Kay Persichitte, Audrey Shalinsky, and Ray Schulte.

Also Attending: Audrey Kleinsasser, Jenni Luckett, and Tara Reiter-Marolf, Partnership staff, and guests: Jennifer Grooms, Woods Learning Center, Casper; Francisco Rios (by conference call), UW; and Cammy Rowley, Casper College.

Introductions

Chair Trish Cook called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m., followed by introductions.

Review and Approve

Today's meeting agenda and the July 21, 2008 meeting minutes were approved. Mike Hejtmanek moved to approve with a second from Dave Barker.

Check In and NNER Grounding

Cammy Rowley and Jennifer Grooms joined the meeting. Cammy is completing a Ph.D. research study of K-8 children's social-emotional growth in the context of circle groups, in a school that prizes democratic practices. Jennifer is a teacher at Woods Learning Center where Cammy is doing her research. Cammy spoke about the presentation they gave at the 2008 Annual NNER Conference in Arlington, Texas. Their presentation focused on what democratic practices look like in certain settings, specifically focusing on K-8 multi-age circle groups at Woods Learning Center in Casper. Woods is also a League of Democratic Schools setting.

Cammy followed the circle groups for 16 weeks, interviewing, filming, and taking field notes. Then, she followed-up with the students by showing them clips of the tapes and asking clarifying questions. Students were given journals to take down their own thoughts and feelings. Cammy stated that the students, no matter what age, would participate in all activities however they could. For example, the older students explained big words to the younger students, and the younger students would join in when they could, being a part of the group whenever they knew how. Jennifer said that since there are new children every year, many of the issues teachers deal with year-to-year are the same. Some children think that a democratic society is about elections and voting, but such actions are really just tools of a democratic society. The circle groups are a way to teach the students how to live together and solve problems together.

Trish asked Cammy if she came across any surprise findings. Cammy said that she was surprised at how willing the older students were to be models for the younger students. The seventh and eighth graders participated in the activities even if the activities were aimed at younger students. Students were more willing to be leaders in a multi-age group.

Audrey Kleinsasser asked Cammy about research literature on bullying and how it is connected to what she observed at this school. Cammy stated that relationships are the main theme in the circle groups, and that literature on bullying states that it is hard to bully someone you know. Thus, there is a special connection within the circle groups, and the need to use power doesn't dominate.

NNER 2008 Annual Report

Trish Cook started this segment of the meeting by asking those who attended the 2008 NNER Annual Conference to share their experiences.

Judy Ellsworth shared first, stating that she had not been to the conference for 12 years and that there were many interesting sessions for teachers and administrators this year. The NNER is in a transition stage and many of the discussions were built around the transition. Discussions about hybrid educators (those who play multiple roles in K-12 settings and in higher education settings), and how to work with people to be comfortable in the classroom or in a university setting are one example. Judy also commented that it was nice to see a wide range of people at the conference, including younger people who are now participating.

Kay Persichitte shared next, stating that she had not been to the conference for three years. Kay appreciated the fact that there were classroom faculty, university faculty, and school administrators talking about the same issues and concerns for improving teaching and learning. Kay said that the NNER continues to struggle with moving forward with its mission for education in a democracy, and with actually seeing its contributions in the real world. She also said that this is clear in everything we do, even in Partnership meetings, and that it is not easy to explain to others why these things are valuable.

Jenni Lockett shared her experiences by saying that she had a unique perspective at the conference because her background is not in education, rather journalism. She said that many partnership groups gave presentations. She observed that promoting democracy is not going to be the same in every setting, but bringing in the community will help these specific groups serve their own populations. Jenni also stated that she gave a presentation with Audrey Kleinsasser at the conference about communicating the Partnership's mission and activities that was well-received.

Audrey also commented on the session that she and Jenni presented at the NNER meetings. The goal was to get the story out. Audrey also stated that the Partnership impact map is a useful tool. Most questions people ask pertain to the map. She thanked everyone for their efforts because the map really shows a statewide collaboration.

Trish Cook shared her experiences at the conference by drawing comparisons to other school-university partnerships in neighboring states. Colorado's is in transition right now. BYU's has great publications but is limited because it is centered around Provo. Trish made the point that the Wyoming School-University Partnership is unique because it covers twenty districts all over the state-wide. Trish also shared thoughts on some of the presentations she attended and felt it was a great conference overall. She encouraged everyone to attend future conferences, especially next year's 10th anniversary of In Praise of Education, in Bellevue, WA, October 15-17, 2009.

Audrey ended the NNER-related reports by stating that she appreciated everyone's reflections on the conference and was glad to hear good things about it. She reminded everyone that it is very expensive to attend, and because of that, she wants the conference to be worth people's time.

Audrey then drew everyone's attention to the NNER 2008 Annual Report template in the board packet. She explained that she will complete the report using the template. By the November meeting, the complete report will be available.

Review and Approve Bill Payment

Jean Hayek moved to accept and pay August and September Partnership bills, with a second by Judy Ellsworth. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Membership, 2008-2009

Audrey Kleinsasser distributed an updated copy of the Partnership members and dues. Two new districts joined the Partnership this year, Fremont #1 and Carbon #2. Audrey stated that the community college payment changed to \$500 each. She also stated that there are different dues for different organizations: the Wyoming Department of Education pays \$4,500 per year, and UW Arts and Sciences College pays \$2,000. The Wyoming Education Association pays \$2,000 as well, and unless the Partnership has grants, all operating expenses come from these dues. Trish Cook asked if the board felt that the Partnership is at an appropriate dues level. Mike Hjetmanek stated that he did not think the dues should be raised for next year. Audrey reported that dues have been raised every year for the past three years. Audrey Shalinsky said that UW Arts and Sciences dues could be raised by \$500 per year, to \$2,500. Jean Hayek said that in all fairness, the Wyoming Education Association should pay that same amount, \$2,500. Audrey explained that the College of Education pays for nine months of her salary, half of Tara Reiter-Marolf's salary, and office space for the Partnership. Kay Persichitte reported that the Partnership has been allocated a small support budget for travel which also came from the College of Education. Audrey stated that the Partnership is using this money for travel, and would like to cover registration costs for Partnership representatives attending the Seattle conference.

Trish stated that this would be a good time to talk about the 2009 NNER conference in Bellevue, WA. Audrey shared that the call for proposals is already out, an email will be sent to everyone, and that Carl Glickman and other prominent educational leaders will be at the conference, participating in a panel discussion. Glickman's new book is entitled, *Those Who Dared: Five Visionaries Who Changed American Education*.

Trish moved on to the October 19-20 P-16 Education Strand flyer in the board packet. Audrey said that emails including flyers have been sent out, and that this conference is part of the 2008 UW Fall Forum on Assessment. The focus of the Partnership working dinner from 5:30-8:30 on Sunday, October 19, will be around P-16 work. Audrey distributed comparison posters for math, world languages, and writing that the P-16 Council had printed. Audrey stated that these posters need to be in the hands of teachers in order for students to see them. This is why she purposefully invited 30 community college and high school faculty to the dinner/forum. Ray Schulte asked who should specifically be involved in the October 19 dinner. Audrey replied by saying, reading specialists, instructional facilitators, and classroom teachers. Audrey reminded the group that Sunday night's lodging for the P-16 Strand will be covered by the Partnership, as well as most meals, and UW and PTSB credit have been built in. She encouraged board members to tell their faculty about the P-16 Strand, and that a group of two or three from a district would be terrific.

Trish drew members' attention to the Wyoming P-16 Education Council membership list and asked Audrey to elaborate. Audrey began by saying that the list of members and their different agencies are referenced on this document. She said that the P-16 Council was started in the Fall of 2007.

Mike Hjetmanek pointed out that there were no active administrators in the council, and that there are only two representatives for K-12. Paige Fenton-Hughes also pointed out that there were no elementary teachers represented on the council, only two high school teachers. Audrey said that she would take these comments back to the P-16 Council at the group's next meeting. Trish asked what the goals of the P-16 Council are. Audrey shared that the main goal is to increase the high school graduation rate in Wyoming, and the comparison posters are one way of doing this. Kay Persichitte asked what or who is advancing the P-16 Council. Audrey said that national pressure and an effort to get educators at all levels to talk to one another is an impetus. She also stated that P-16 education councils are active in over half of the states.

LUNCH

Trish Cook began a new feature of the meeting that she titled, "Good Things to Share." The idea behind this is to share things or ideas that not everyone would normally be able to hear. Trish showed a series of DVD clips. Next meeting, Ray Schulte will lead this segment.

Francisco Rios, AED Scholar and Director,

Francisco Rios of the UW Social Justice Research Center; joined the meeting by conference call. Introductions were made around the table per Francisco's request. Francisco explained that UW has given the center a \$100,000 per year allocation for social justice research, through the gift of an anonymous donor. The center was started in May 2007, and Francisco became the director in August 2007. Francisco said that he envisions the center as a support to those who are doing the work of social justice. Trish Cook asked if he sees a connection with rural districts in Wyoming. Francisco stated that those answers will be clearer as the year continues, but they do want to provide support to communities and schools, wherever they may be. Joy Mockelmann asked Francisco about community strife that is happening in plants where people are unable to pray, and if this center would be able to help with that kind of situation. Francisco said that the center will need to increase the number of people who are working with them, but that this is an example of something the center hopes to address.

Francisco also described a workshop that the Social Justice Research Center is sponsoring for November 6-7, 2008. Jeff Duncan-Andrade from Oakland, CA will be coming to Laramie to speak and work with teachers. The workshop is for teachers who might have an interest in helping students document life in school and community.

Updates: Partnership Initiatives and Related Projects

Audrey Kleinsasser distributed The Creation of the Future 3 booklet to the board, a UW strategic planning document that references the College of Education and the Partnership.

Evaluation of today's meeting and Adjournment

Meeting evaluations were distributed and completed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:40.