

Annual Grant Report: Qwest Foundation

High School to Higher Education “Lost in Transition” initiative

May 19, 2010

In May 2009, the Wyoming School-University Partnership received a generous gift of \$15,000 from the Qwest Foundation to ramp up our work on the High School to Higher Education Transitions initiative, dubbed “Lost in Transition.” One year into the grant cycle, we are happy to report over \$7,000 has been spent on five statewide, multi-level, and well-received events in Wyoming. Below you will find a brief synopsis of each event and next steps for the 2010-2011 school year. Please contact Audrey Kleinsasser, director of the Wyoming School-University Partnership, at 307-766-6358 or dakota@uwyo.edu with questions and feedback.

Mathematics and Statistics Articulation Meeting: February 19, 2010; Cheyenne

The fourth annual mathematics articulation meeting was attended by 47 participants from across the state, including 17 representing K-12 faculty and administration, 20 of the University of Wyoming, seven of Wyoming community colleges, and five from other agencies (Wyoming Department of Education, ACT). The agenda included a presentation by Joe Cruse, ACT, an in-depth panel discussion on “Designing Mathematical Experiences that Matter,” and small group table discussions facilitated by UW faculty. Thirty-two of the 35 evaluation forms indicated the participant would like to attend future meetings; the remaining three indicated they might; none indicated they had no interest in attending future meetings.

Life Sciences Site Swap Pilot: February 18-19, April 20, 2010; Laramie, Saratoga, Hanna

The Partnership facilitated its first ever site swap project between the University of Wyoming Life Sciences program and Carbon County School District #2. Carbon 2’s superintendent Bob Gates, Partnership member since 2008, suggested an in-depth visit looking at the many differences between high school and university settings and requirements. The first half of the swap (February 18-19) included ten Carbon 2 faculty and administrators attending an UW introductory biology lab meeting, lab, and lecture and offered multiple table-discussion opportunities between the high school and university faculty. The second half (April 20) involved four university faculty attending two biology classes at Saratoga Middle/High School and HEM Junior/Senior High (Hanna). In depth discussions on student success in and beyond high school and college constituted approximately half of the agenda for each swap. Two Carbon 2 faculty indicated this event was the most valuable professional development they’ve participated in during their tenure.

Institute for Reading and Writing Instruction: Developing Social Media Across the Curriculum: April 16, 2010; Sheridan

The third annual reading and writing institute was met with great enthusiasm, as the registration filled in record time and a waiting list was created. The 45 participants (34 representing K-12, six from University of Wyoming, four from community colleges, and two from other fields) discussed the positive impact social media, i.e., Facebook, blogs, wikis, can have on reluctant readers and writers. The morning agenda included seminars on the current state of reading and writing in Wyoming, the rise of social media, and examples of social media tools. The afternoon was dedicated to hands-on, group and computer based exploration of the tools discussed in the morning section. The overall rating of the institute was 9.2 out of 10; 27 of the 28 evaluation forms indicated the participant would like to attend another future meetings; only one indicated he or she might attend; none indicated they had no interest in attending future meetings. Following the event, the Partnership created a Wiggio account, an online social media tool which allows for collaborative discussion and work. One-half of the institute participants are active on this site. Additionally, the

Partnership distributed two mini-grants (\$250 each) to institute participants to implement social media-related projects in their classrooms.

Institute for World Languages Instruction: April 18-19, 2010; Casper

The world languages institute was the first statewide conference held for this content area, and was received by a group of 37 dedicated, deeply motivated participants from across the state. K-12 was represented by 18 participants, seven from University of Wyoming, five from community colleges, one from Wyoming Department of Education, and three from other fields. April 18th included a book discussion on Alfred Lubrano's *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams*; the 19th involved panel and table discussions, examination of student work, small-group discussions on consensus building and next steps, and conversation on student assessment and placement. The group agreed to meet again at the Wyoming Foreign Language Teachers Association meeting in October 2010 to continue this work.

5th Annual Life Sciences Summit: May 5, 2010; Casper

This group's momentum is obvious in the number of attendees, number of returning attendees, and quality of discussion during the summit. The event was attended by a total of 37 educators, including 16 k-12 faculty, 13 University of Wyoming faculty, four community college faculty, one Wyoming Department of Education representative, and three from other fields. The focus of this event was core versus Bloom's assessment, an examination of student work in biology and other life sciences, and discussion on how to help students cross the division between high school and college/university. The overall rating of the meeting was 8.9 out of 10; participants cited networking, understanding of larger-context issues, and understanding of parameters other educators and students work within as being the most valuable aspects of the summit. Twenty-nine of 30 evaluation forms indicated the participants would like to attend future meetings; one indicated he or she might; none indicated they had no interest in attending future meetings.

Next Steps: 2010-2011 School Year

- **Mathematics:** fall articulation meeting, tentatively set for October 2010.
- **Reading and Writing:** continued discussing social media in classrooms on Wiggin; annual institute scheduled for spring 2011.
- **World Languages:** continued discussion on student assessment and placement at October 2010 Wyoming Foreign Language Teachers Association meeting.
- **Life Sciences:** accepting requests for expanded site swap events in additional school districts; annual institute scheduled for spring 2011.
- **Social Sciences:** begin conversations with institutional (K-12 and higher education) leaders in this content to determine whether a meeting is valuable and feasible in the 2010-2010 school year.
- **General Partnership** statewide conference on education in Wyoming, touching on high school to higher education issues, scheduled for November 4-5, 2010.
- Continue creating opportunities for university graduate credit or Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board certificate renewal credit.