

PDP Communiqué

Academic Institutions Refueling Economic Recovery

Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor,
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The way in which academic institutions have addressed their civic engagement responsibility has been uneven over time. Today this engagement has taken on new meaning due to the intense interest for academic institutions to act as economic resources to their communities to address the effects brought about by the current recession. The natural effect of this has been a more conscious realization that higher education needs to be an ongoing player in local economies for generating resources, jobs, and ideas to assist with the recovery efforts across the country.

Institutions of higher education are embracing this role in various ways giving new meaning to civic engagement. For example, Northern Illinois University, Rockford College, Rock Valley College, and the University of Illinois formed the **Higher Education Alliance** for the Rock River Region to strengthen its regional economy by providing training, research, and technology transfer, by identifying the needs of business and industry in the region. The **Indiana Innovation Alliance** was established by Indiana University and Purdue University to accomplish the same goals. In Idaho, the University of Idaho is partnering with the state government to stimulate and sustain economic development. In Massachusetts, the Berkshire Compact for Learning has spurred partnership efforts among the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Berkshire Community College and their local governments and organizations to join efforts in addressing current and future economic conditions that are having regional impact. Similar examples of higher education supporting regional economic development are emerging all across the country.

Civic engagement efforts of higher education have not always correlated directly to economic development. Historically these efforts referred to the ways in which an academic institution demonstrated the practical applications of its teaching and research to the interests and needs of society. Public service and service to the community by higher education was measured over time in a variety of ways including faculty and administration participation on local, state and federal boards, commissions, civic organizations, social agencies, and other community organizations, the impact on local employment, monetary contributions, and student volunteer projects, among them. These examples helped stimulate thinking central to regional systemic revitalization.

These activities also served to test concepts and processes in real-world settings, thereby adding value to the work done by universities in meeting emerging needs for communities. The underlying premise was that making research understandable, and most of all usable, in professional and applied

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A Newsletter from the
**Professional
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Child Welfare Workforce Improvement: Developing Supervisor Teams

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A Federal Children's Bureau grant to address the workforce crisis in Child Welfare agencies in New York State was awarded to the Social Work Education Consortium, School of Social Welfare, University at Albany, SUNY in 2003. The grant work was an organizational intervention using a design team intervention. This participatory approach required an agency-wide team consisting of caseworkers, supervisors and managers to identify and address workforce issues operating within the agency.



Nancy Claiborne, Ph.D.

As the design team work advanced, a number of agencies requested additional consultation to support and enhance the work. Typical of public child welfare agencies, supervisors deeply identify with their individual units and support each other informally. Also, decision-making tends to be hierarchal, in which there is no consistent mechanism for information to flow from line workers to administrative levels. As a result, supervisors operate with limited support, often feeling powerless to address problematic decisions that negatively impact their line workers. The consultation focus was to 1) build a supervisor team; 2) develop skills for this team to implement decisions from the design team; and 3) build a proactive middle-management team that identified issues and made recommendations to top leadership.

Sometimes it takes an outside observer to effect change and bring new ideas.

The consultant engaged participants in team building, information and training, feedback and participatory decision making by utilizing a task-centered, solution-focused approach. Topics, frequency and length of consultations were open-ended and decided by the group members. The consultation can be described in three phases. The initial phase

The design team work allowed supervisors to interact in a more positive way with both subordinates and supervisors.

Embracing Participative Systems to Promote Positive Outcomes in Child Welfare

It is often said that success for individuals involved in the child welfare system begins within the system itself. The School of Social Welfare and Schoharie County Department of Social Services worked collaboratively to promote more productive interactions within the organization.

The desired outcomes of this participative approach were to build better lines of communication within the child welfare unit and also with other units to operationally allow workers with shared cases to work together more effectively. Commissioner Paul Brady described the involvement of the School of Social Welfare as looking for ways to assist the County in clearly defining expectations for staff and get away from "how we (Schoharie County) always did things". The text boxes below are some of the thoughts provided by Commissioner Brady.

established the relationship, format and the boundaries of the consultation; identified issues of concern by the group members; and developed trust among all members and with the consultant. The consultant provided group skill training in: every member's participation in discussions, active listening and using inquiry communication; developing techniques and communication for controlling individuals dominating discussions/decision making; and using techniques for voting when consensus cannot be achieved. Feedback was initially provided by the consultant who positioned it within inquiry-based communication. As participants became more skilled, feedback and inquiry became a shared group process.

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There was a good working relationship with the university that expanded to continuing education opportunities for some staff who are completing degrees or taking credit courses.

Did You Know?

OASAS Certified Education and Training Providers will offer free tuition for unemployed New Yorkers to enter the addictions workforce, now one of the nation's top 10 growing occupations.

<http://readme.readmedia.com/Stimulus-Funds-to-New-York-City-Offer-Job-Training-for-In-Demand-Addictions-Professionals/989304>

Key findings in ASTD's recently released 2009 State of the Industry Report show that employee learning and development withstood the challenges of the difficult economy in 2008 with U.S. organizations spending \$134.07 billion in 2008, or an average of \$1,068 per employee.

<http://www.astd.org/content/research/stateOfIndustry.htm>

Child Welfare Workforce Improvement: Developing Supervisor Teams

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The second phase involved the group learning to function as a collective, managing differences and conflict, and becoming empowered. This team building process was ongoing as participants developed trust of each other and became proficient in communication and implementation skills. In the final phase, members functioned as a team with a common language, worked efficiently, and developed implementation plans for team decisions and made recommendations to top leadership. **PDP**

News and Views

Peter Connell Presents at National Conference

During the Association of Continuing Higher Education's (ACHE) Annual Conference in Philadelphia, held November 16 and 17, 2009, Peter Connell (PDP) presented on "How Continuing Education is Transforming Public Service." The presentation highlighted the Professional Development Program's Case Processing Review (CPR) Training for Supervisors, delivered to NYS Temporary Assistance and Food Stamp Program staff, focusing on the transformative power of continuing education, strategies for enhancing partnerships with state agencies that facilitate performance improvement, and innovative methods for reaching the workforce with training and other professional development activities. **PDP**



Peter Connell

Angela DiBiase Accepted to 2011 Leadership Academy

Angela DiBiase has been accepted to participate in the 2011 Leadership Academy for Middle Managers.

Offered through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, the Leadership Academy is a national training program for a select group of middle managers who work in public and tribal child welfare systems and in private agencies that are contracted by the State to provide case management services that are traditionally provided by the public child welfare system. **PDP**

Distinguished CPE Leadership Award Presented to Richard Iannello

At the November 19, 2009 Rockefeller College Alumni Reception and Awards Ceremony, PDP presented its annual Distinguished Continuing Professional Education Leadership Award of Excellence to Richard Iannello, Executive Director of the Albany Guardian Society. Mr. Iannello has spent his professional career as a leader, an advocate, a collaborator, as well as a promoter of advancing continuing professional education. First in the fields of long term health care and home care and now as a champion supporting services for seniors. **PDP**



Richard Iannello

PDP Presents at INCASE Conference

Eugene Monaco and Edward Perka presented a workshop at the International Coalition for Addiction Studies Education (INCASE) Biennial Conference 2009, in Jersey City, NJ, at the end of October. The workshop, entitled "Guiding Addiction Professionals through Culture Change: Building Motivation and Competency for Integrating Tobacco-Use Interventions Into Chemical Dependence Services," described PDP's two year Tobacco Interventions Project and the development of tobacco specific training. The workshop drove home the message that it is essential that addiction education includes the message that tobacco treatment and recovery is consistent with, and a critical part of, high quality alcohol and other drug treatment. **PDP**

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settings would appreciably enhance outcomes. Today, a major value added by universities is their important role as economic engines for community growth and development.

It is interesting to see how the current approach has developed. Throughout the 1980's and early 1990's the practice of civic engagement was led by Ernest Boyer, a leading thinker and doer in education and an expert in the field. Boyer began to advocate for a "New American College" — one which would be extremely entrepreneurial, innovative, and outcome-based with an array of public service programs led by faculty with student involvement. Above all, Boyer's New American College would be responsive to the needs of society focused on strategic, systemic, and collaborative initiatives which would produce economic development opportunities for communities. Under this model the institutions would take special pride in their capacity to connect thought to action and theory to practice. This approach would result in improved "town-and- gown" relationships and, by actively engaging students, would augment their learning experience while adding significant vitality to the community. A synergy would result by bringing these diverse groups together.

Addressing participative systems in their work, *Organization Science* (6, 6), 1995, McCaffrey, Faerman, and Hart confirmed the compelling reasons for private and public organizations to embrace participative systems showing that academics and practitioners endorsed participative methods because they offer solutions to real problems. In today's climate the need for participative systems has never been greater. Participative systems emphasize how social, political, and economic circumstances make cooperation and collaboration more likely in context such as our current state of affairs. Combining the notion of participative systems, while advancing the New American College concept is a step closer to reality in New York State.

Since assuming the position of Chancellor, State University of New York, Nancy Zimpher has seized the opportunity to lead further thinking in this direction. She has consistently stressed the need for economic development, economic revitalization, and quality of life issues as a major driver for the SUNY system to participate in local communities' economic recovery. She has further stressed the Return on Investment (ROI) model for SUNY and relabeled it as the Return on Economic Investment (ROEI) that SUNY generates statewide. Investing in SUNY makes good economic sense since it will have a multiplier effect in talent dividends for its constituents. Effective partnerships and collaboration hold the key to realizing the New American College. We are at a major crossroad with the opportunity for higher education institutions to lead the new economy instead of just responding to its forces. Chancellor Zimpher certainly understands this and has forged a new bold course of action for the State University, a vision that behooves us to strategically and promptly embrace her efforts. **PDP**



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