



Professional and Organizational Development
Network in Higher Education

Multicultural Organizational Development Institute Report Spring 2009



Event: Multicultural Organizational Development Institute
Co-sponsored by POD and the AAC&U
January 20-21, 2009

Sponsoring POD committee: Professional Development Committee

Organizers: Matt Ouellett and Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens

Faculty:

**Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Dean of the College of Professional Studies
at Johnson C. Smith University**
**Linda Marchesani, co-planner, Director of Workplace Learning and
Development at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst**
**Matt Ouellett, organizer and planner, Director of the Center for
Teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst**
**Christine Stanley, Professor of Higher Education Administration and
Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs in the College of
Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University**
**Frank Tuitt, Assistant Professor and Director of the Higher Education
Program in the Morgridge College of Education at the
University of Denver**

Additional support provided by
Hoag Holmgren, Executive Director of POD
Virginia Lee, POD President

Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, Chair, POD Professional Development Committee

Overview

In January of 2009, Matt Ouellett, together with a small, distinguished expert faculty (Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Linda Marchesani, Christine Stanley, and Frank Tuitt), designed and offered what we hope will be the first in a series of such organizational development institutes. Jointly sponsored by POD and the AAC&U and hosted before the AAC&U Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington January 20 – 21st, 2009, this day- and-a-half pre-conference Multicultural Organizational Development Institute (MCOI) drew 30 participants from around the country and received strong positive reviews.

This institute represented a key part of a larger collaboration with the AAC&U (POD members also presented a preconference and concurrent workshop session), brokered by POD President Virginia Lee.

Planning

During the fall of 2008, Virginia Lee, Hoag Holmgren and Matt Ouellett worked with colleagues at AAC&U to define the parameters and mutual responsibilities of the institute. Beginning in October, Matt invited a number of colleagues who had expressed an interest in participating in the development of the institute to confirm their availability. Once the team was determined, he convened a number of meetings among the institute faculty on Elluminate. Ahead of time and behind the scenes, he wrote and edited the publicity materials for POD and AAC&U (print and web-based) and developed the budget for the institute in conjunction with Hoag and Virginia. Out of the faculty meetings on-line, learning outcome goals and a schedule for the institute were determined.

Planning specific modules happened in on-line meetings as well as off-line, with regularly revised drafts of the materials circulated to all members of the planning group for feedback.

The institute focused on two key models: Inclusive Excellence (coming out of the AAC&U literature) and multicultural organizational development (emerging from Organizational Development disciplinary specialty). Together, we identified how each of these models can be useful in identifying stages that organizations move through as they become more socially diverse and just. We also explored how these concepts scaffold organizational planning, assessment, implementation and evaluation of multicultural change plans in higher education.

General Description

Institute participants were invited to explore how to promote the interpersonal and systemic dynamics essential to institutional change efforts that adopt a comprehensive, proactive, systemic planning, assessment, and evaluation process. Participants talked about how they might adapt these frameworks to the unique needs of their own campus-based efforts to accurately assess their organization's current status, to plan and implement realistic change goals, and to evaluate and monitor results. Finally, participants and presenters shared resource materials for envisioning, directing and sustaining long-term systemic change efforts related to diversity in higher education.

Institute Flow of Events

On day one of the institute, participants engaged in guided exploration of two complementary approaches: Bailey W. Jackson's "Multicultural Organizational Development" and the Damon A. Williams' "Inclusive Excellence." The personal, institutional, and political came together from the start, as the opening of this institute coincided exactly with the historical presidential inauguration of Barack Obama. After watching the ceremony together, participants were led by Frank Tuitt in a reflection activity that set the tone for a powerful interweaving of theory and practice, personal and political/institutional. Throughout the day, faculty members led participants through an understanding of the two major models, interspersing direct presentation with table activities in which participants assessed their home institutions through the lenses of MCOB and IE.

Day two was a half-day session. During the morning session on the second day, faculty members provided case studies and concrete examples from their own home institutions. Finally, participants were invited to close the experience with reflection and planning about how to realize and implement the goals. Institute faculty made themselves available to participants for further consultation during and after the last part of the morning's final session.

Assessment

Virginia Lee hosted and facilitated a debriefing session for the available institute organizers right after the conclusion of the second day's session. In this meeting, we discussed the strengths and challenges of the event, the experience of working with AAC&U (both quite positive) and made note of points useful for further consideration. We also agreed at that time we would ask the members of the Professional Development

Committee to collaborate with us on the development and application of a web-based evaluation survey.

Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, Chair, POD Professional Development Committee, and the members of the PDC committee collaborated on the development of the on-line survey, using Survey Monkey software, distributed it to attendees, sent one reminder to complete the survey in the 2-week window, and aggregated the results. (We received a total of 14 returns from 30 participants for a return rate of 47%).

Evaluation Comments

1. What did you find most valuable?

Far and away, participants found the new models, structures and questions for planning systems-based comprehensive approaches and the assessment tools to be most valuable. Additionally, they greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk with others interested in this topic (especially in the context of the interactive exercises and table-based discussions). And, finally, participants were very happy with the quality of the presentations and the expertise of the presenters.

2. What did you find least helpful, positive, useful, etc?

Most participants reported “nothing” to this question. However, a few participants from community colleges felt the institute did not adequately address their issues (e.g., the panel discussion on Day Two would have been improved by a representative from a community college).

3. Do you believe that what you learned will have an impact on your practice? If so, how?

Participants responded with a resounding, unanimous “Yes!” to this question.

For example, participants said, “I felt empowered / motivated to go back and move forward with this work,” and “I’ll be better able to play a constructive role in OD on my campus.” Additionally, respondents said that they would take ideas back to initiate discussions on campus, use the institute resource materials (i.e., the frameworks and Assessment tool / inventory) to help with plans already in progress.

As a pilot for a larger, more comprehensive survey of the POD membership, the PDC also asked such questions in this survey we as:

- *What suggestions do you have for future iterations of this institute?*
- *If you are a faculty developer: To what degree are you involved in larger change initiatives on your campus? How much are you being asked to reach beyond traditional roles into organizational roles?*
- *If you are a faculty developer: What would help you feel more prepared to engage in 1) multicultural work? 2) organizational development?*

The results to these last questions will be addressed by the Professional Development Committee under separate cover and in the context of a fuller survey of the POD membership. However, a preliminary review of the pilot results gathered from this survey does indicate that participants would welcome additional opportunities to both learn about and talk to colleagues about both diversity and organizational development issues.

Documentation

As part of a pilot project sponsored by the ECRC, the Professional Development Committee has established a wiki for conducting collaborative work and for documentation purposes. The MCODI is being thoroughly documented there. While this site is currently only available to committee members in the pilot phase, we anticipate that it may grow into a resource for a larger portion of the membership at some point in the future.

Future plans

As part of its long-term strategic plan, the Professional Development Committee has committed to helping launch additional organizational development institutes—perhaps again in conjunction with the AAC&U Conference—ideally on an annual basis. Committee members Therese Huston and Dan Wheeler have indicated that they are interested in shepherding this project for the next iteration of the institute.

Thanks

This institute could not have happened, much less been the success it was, without the generosity of the participating faculty who not only paid for their own travel and lodging but also committed to “being there” at what was a profound historical moment in their lives (one even passed up an opportunity to attend Barack Obama’s inauguration and an inaugural ball in order to participate as a faculty member).

The Professional Development Committee wishes to express gratitude to
 Phyllis Worthy Dawkins
 Linda Marchesani

Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens

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Christine Stanley

Frank Tuitt

for committing their financial resources, their time, and their expertise to this institute.