

President's Address  
Virginia S. Lee  
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On January 1, 1889 during a solar eclipse, Wovoka, a Paiute prophet, later renamed Jack Wilson, who just happens to be buried down the road from here in Schurz, Nevada, the largest and perhaps only town on today's Walker River Reservation, home of the Agai-Ticutta or Trout-eaters, had a vision: he stood before God in Heaven and saw a beautiful land filled with wild game and many of his ancestors engaged in their favorite pastimes. God instructed Wovoka to return home to tell his people that they must love each other, not fight, and live in peace with the whites. God then gave him what later became known as the Ghost Dance and commanded him to take it back to his people. Jack preached that if his people performed the five-day dance in proper intervals, the dancers would secure the happiness of their people and hasten the reunion of the living and deceased.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the traditional way of life of the Paiute Indians, the Indians indigenous to this area, was under siege, the new was eclipsing the old. European domination was all but complete; the railroad had made significant inroads into native lands; and the disruption of the Paiute traditional way of life was well underway.

In the passage we see the weaving of old and new in several ways: the vision occurs on the boundary of the old and the new year; Wovoka becomes Jack Wilson—in fact photographs show him in a shirt, trousers, jacket and black hat, not in traditional native dress; the Paiute prophet stands before a Christian God in Heaven; the ancient circle dance, representing the sun's heavenly path across the sky, becomes the Ghost Dance, an instrument for peace, reconciliation and a new social order; and the living are reunited with the deceased.

The desire to preserve the old in the face of the new, to preserve our sense of identity while responding to the demands of the present and an uncertain future is probably universal—whether for each of us as individuals or the communities of which we are a part.

Certainly this is true of POD. We—the Executive Committee, the Core Committee and I—have been thinking hard about these questions:

How do we honor and preserve what has come before while responding to the challenges of what lies ahead? What is our vision of the new POD? A new POD that preserves the spirit of POD, the intention of the founders, but responds to the challenges in our midst and of what lies ahead?

[ASK those who have been coming for twenty years or more TO STAND UP; then newcomers.]

To any people, origin stories are important and so they are for POD:

For the newcomers, POD began approximately 33 years ago when Bill Bergquist (Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges)(CASC) and Bert Biles (Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, Kansas State University) organized a T-group at the CASC workshop on faculty

development at the College of Mount Saint Joseph (Cincinnati, Ohio) in 1976. At the same conference, Jack Lindquist held a plenary calling for the creation of a formal organization dedicated to professional and organizational development in higher education. Interest in the organization was high enough that about 20 people at the meeting contributed dues for it immediately.

POD was formally created two months later in March 1976 at the annual meeting of the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). Joan North was appointed POD's first coordinator (now President), the Core Committee (i.e., POD's Board) was created, and members agreed to sponsor an annual workshop or conference.

In the 1970s faculty development was beginning to invent itself as a distinctive area of practice including the vehicles for its own advancement—a research literature, organizations, conferences, publishing outlets. As Bill Bergquist himself noted in his book *The Four Cultures of the Academy*, faculty development was inherently countercultural, a direct response to the perceived inadequacies of the dominant culture in research universities and liberal arts colleges.

Coming out of that tradition and the spirit of human growth and development and social activism of the 60s, POD has always been inherently countercultural. While working within the dominant culture of the academy, a culture still characterized forty years later by specialization, competition, objective ways of knowing, and a widespread malaise characterized by hollowness of purpose and aridity of spirit, faculty development and, by association, POD, has always emphasized community, collegiality, cooperation, support and nurturance, relationships, and engagement. And increasingly over the years we've been able to justify the power of these broad areas of practice with a growing body of scholarship.

The spirit and core values of POD persist in certain rituals we carry on today: the POD nod until very recently used to indicate assent in Core Committee meetings represents our commitment to shared leadership, consensual decision making, and collegiality—a hallmark of POD conferences; the original Bright Ideas (now called Innovations) Award—innovation, importance of individual contribution, sharing, recognition (when our work often didn't get much recognition)—and the Bright Idea or Innovations Award Lamp, which has to be seen to be believed; and the Saturday night dance—fun loving. Another fixture of POD conferences for many years was a regular Talent Show and the Readers' Theater, Linc Fisch's baby, both a delightful brew of creativity, spontaneity, whimsy, oddity, particularity and imperfection. So human and so ineffably POD.

Harkening back to Wovoka's vision of ancestors engaged in their favorite pastimes, I think of Don Wulff, the eternal cowboy, yodeling, and his appearance in many POD Talent Shows over the years. I also think of Bob Diamond playing tennis on Elysian fields. This recalls a very personal memory for me. At the 1997 annual conference at the Greenleaf Golf & Tennis Resort in Orlando, FL, Bob, Dan Wheeler, Joan North, and I, all avid tennis players, rented a grass tennis court: the first time any of us had ever played on grass and for me, to date, the last time. I also think of Leora Baron in one of her favorite Las Vegas restaurants, talking, laughing and enjoying good food in the company of friends and family.

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW BOB, DON AND LEORA ALL PASSED AWAY THIS YEAR. PLEASE JOIN ME IN HONORING THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS OF BOB, DON, and LEORA TO POD, THEIR CAMPUSES, AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WITH A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

The passing of Bob, Don and Leora this year is yet another reminder that we are at a critical point in our evolution as an organization: we can so clearly feel the tension between the old and the new. Since POD's founding in the 1970s, teaching and learning have moved more centrally into the higher education agenda, and the field of educational development has become far more complex. Sub-fields such as the scholarship of teaching and learning and assessment and accountability have sprung up and quickly become more sophisticated. High-end technologies have opened up an array of platforms for learning. And issues such as globalization and the growing diversity of college students are changing the very nature of higher education.

While we observe the closing of isolated centers with dismay and sorrow for the long-standing POD members who lead them, we also celebrate the emergence of many, many new centers over recent years. And for older centers, more and more is being asked of them on their campuses.

Today, POD has grown to an organization of about 1,800 practitioners of faculty development professionals in colleges and universities. Despite worldwide financial turmoil, we are on solid financial footing: gone are the days when we lived hand to mouth from conference to conference; today we actually have assets to manage. In the past several years, thanks to the efforts of Stephanie Nickerson, Donna Ellis, and Hoag Holmgren in particular we have made significant progress in investing POD assets, segregating funds earmarked for specific purposes, and establishing clear guidelines for the management of each fund

For POD, these challenges, the challenges of the new teaching and learning agenda in higher ed, represent both an opportunity and an obligation to respond.

But how can we do all this and still preserve the essence of POD? How do we honor and preserve what has come before while responding to the challenges of what lies ahead? What is our vision of the new POD? A new POD that preserves the spirit of POD, the intention of the founders but responds to the challenges in our midst and of what lies ahead.

When I think of a new POD, I think of a POD that does even better what it has traditionally done well including cooperation, collegiality, and shared leadership. I also think of

- A POD able to advocate more forcefully for the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning through faculty and organizational development and support the work of educational developers;
- A POD with a leadership model capable of maintaining and sustaining a clear collective intention, sustaining important work of the organization, and entering into and sustaining productive working relationships with other organizations that share aspects of our mission, and

- A POD with resources adequate to support and sustain important work of the organization including larger projects that require sustained intellectual effort and the coordination of the efforts of many individuals over a period of time

What steps are we taking to get there?

For a number of years now POD has had a strategic planning process, and we have a 2007/2012 strategic plan in place now. This year we also tried something new: on behalf of an ad hoc long-range planning committee, I asked our committee chairs to develop a five-year plan with budget requests that align their activities to the goals, objectives and strategies from the strategic plan assigned to them. From those requests we are in the process of establishing priorities and building a five-year budget that anticipates revenue needs through 2012 and the organizational requirements of those priorities.

Parker Palmer defined community as “a rich and complex network of relationships in which we must both speak and listen, make claims on others, and make ourselves accountable.” I think it is also a good description of POD as a network with origins in a T-group. Like a T-group, POD is all about process: how we speak and listen to one another, how we make claims on one another responsibly and gently, and how we hold ourselves accountable to what we value most deeply and hold dear.

Despite the vibrancy of volunteerism in POD, our committee structure is vulnerable to change—change in leadership, change in committee membership, change in focus. So the new long-range planning process is one way of strengthening continuity and accountability to a vision of a new POD. And as our new President Elect, Mike Theall is continuing a study of our committee structure that Leora Baron initiated before she died.

Another example of doing better what POD has typically done well is the way we bring new members into committees, the Core Committee and the Executive Committee. We are trying to do a better job of that, a better job of mentoring, a better job of strengthening relationships among the members of the Executive Committee, and making the transitions between President Elect, President, and Past President more seamless in service to POD. Past President Matt Ouellett, particularly, has helped us see how important these relationships are and explore ways of nurturing them more intentionally and productively.

Under Julie-Ann McFann’s leadership, as Chair of the Membership Committee we will soon conduct the first membership survey in 13 years. As I noted earlier, POD membership has grown significantly during that time along with the teaching and learning agenda in higher education. We need to reassess your needs and see if we’re doing all we can to meet those needs as the largest professional organization dedicated to faculty, instructional and organizational development in North America. I want to also note that more than 30 POD members responded to Julie-Ann’s recent call over the POD listserve for additional members for her committee, a real testimony to the health of volunteerism in POD. I would encourage all of you to seek out membership in POD committees as a way of serving POD.

Also the Diversity Committee led by Frank Tuitt and the Small College Committee led by Carolyn Oxenford are investigating ways of welcoming more members of underrepresented and underserved groups of all kinds and more small colleges into POD, promoting their visibility, and extending the services we offer them as members.

As a joint effort of our Core, Electronic Resources and Communication, Professional Development and Membership Committees, we are exploring ways to expand the professional development opportunities we offer to members and the platforms in which we do so. For the past 14 years we have co-hosted the biannual International Institute of Faculty Development . Collaborating with the Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching and Learning directed by Leslie Cafarelli we will do so again in 2009 in St Paul, MN.

This year we added two additional professional development opportunities for POD members: an experimental symposium, *Uncovering the Heart in Higher Education*, a sequel to the February 2007 conference by the same name, co-sponsored by POD, the California Institute of Integral Studies, and the Fetzer Institute, and held last week at the Fetzer Institute's beautiful conference center, the Seasons. It was an extraordinary opportunity to join a group of college presidents, deans of religious life, faculty of philosophy and religion, and researchers including Sandy and Lena Astin to probe more deeply into the hollowness of meaning and purpose and aridity of spirit at the core of the academy today and what we as faculty developers can do to address it.

And as part of a new venture with AAC&U, POD will hold a multicultural organizational development institute immediately before AAC&U's January 2009 annual conference led by Core member and Chair of the PD Committee Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, Past President Matt Ouellett; Christine Stanley, Chair of POD's Diversity Committee Frank Tuitt, Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, and Linda Marchesani, Manager of Workplace Learning & Development at U-Mass/Amherst.

The joint committee I mentioned earlier will also explore other professional development opportunities and platforms including online platforms as a way of extending the professional development we offer to you as members and wikis as a way of using technology to enhance collegiality as a core value of POD.

Finally we are investigating ways of expanding POD's traditional revenue base of membership dues, conference registration, and income from publications. At Tuesday's Core Meeting we broached the delicate topic of corporate sponsorship of facets of our conference, and last year we considered the feasibility of establishing a gifting program for POD. It is very feasible: I hope within the next several months as our thinking about various projects of benefit to you as members—like online professional development opportunities—clarifies, we'll be in a better position to establishing a strong case for support that we can communicate clearly to you as members. From time to time we have also pursued grants on behalf of POD: for example, last week's symposium was supported by a small grant from the Fetzer Institute, and Dee Fink has been working for quite some time trying to secure funding from the Lumina Foundation for a national teaching and learning project.

In all of these ways we are trying to make POD continually new again,

- Holding close our traditional commitment to human growth and development and social activism
- Holding dear our core values of community, collegiality, innovation, humor and fun
- Holding ourselves accountable to a fresh and powerful vision of a new POD, a forceful advocate for the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning through faculty and organizational development; and
- responding with hospitality to the possibilities of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the new teaching and learning agenda.