



Professional and Organizational Development
Network in Higher Education

April 18, 2007

To Our POD Colleagues and Friends,

We are all struggling to understand what happened at Virginia Tech and how to support our friends, families and colleagues there. While this terrible event happened in Blacksburg, Virginia, it affects us all and could just as easily have happened on our own campuses. To our colleagues at Virginia Tech, we hope that there is solace in knowing that we are thinking of you now and that we are ready to lend support as the many challenges from your deep heartache emerge.

We understand that the most pressing need now is ameliorating the immediate aftermath of this misfortune. Already some of our POD members have reached out with resources offering practical suggestions on how to talk with students about an event like this. In the next 48 hours there will be further resources available on the homepage of the POD website (www.podnetwork.org). Please avail yourselves of these helpful documents and add to them as new ones emerge from your own institutions.

Ultimately, we live in an increasingly small world and in academia we are even more closely connected than we realize. Personal relationships and communication across campus, with colleagues at other institutions and internationally are so important right now. In the months ahead, we will look for opportunities to think and talk together about how faculty developers can help frame and guide our collective response to the massacre at Virginia Tech and other tragedies that may affect us. As Nikki Giovanni said so eloquently in her remarks at the Virginia Tech vigil on Tuesday, April 17, 2007, no one deserves tragedy – not here, not anywhere. POD members around the world understand the importance of stronger and deeper communities as the right answer to preventing such violence.

On behalf of the members of the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD), I extend deepest sympathies to the students, faculty, staff and parents of Virginia Tech, and the greater Blacksburg community.

Dr. Mathew L. Ouellett,
President