9TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH CONFERENCE

A Note from Sarena D. Seifer, conference chair . . .

Partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions as a strategy for social justice are gaining recognition and momentum. Service-learning, community-based participatory research and broad-based coalitions are among the methods these partnerships pursue to accomplish their goals. Increasingly, community-campus partnerships are being recommended by national bodies and pursued by funding agencies for achieving a wide range of significant outcomes, from eliminating health disparities to revitalizing urban and rural economies to preparing graduates for lifelong civic engagement.

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health's 9th conference, "Walking the Talk: Achieving the Promise of Authentic Partnerships," took a critical look at these partnerships in all of their iterations and asked key questions about where we are now, where we are going and where we need to be:

- How do we fully realize authentic partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions?

- How do we balance power and share resources among partners?

- How do we build community and campus capacity to engage each other as partners?

- How do we create healthier communities through partnerships?

- How do we translate "principles" and "best practices" into widespread, expected practice?

The conference, held May 31-June 3, 2006 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, sought to create a vision for the future of community-campus partnerships as a strategy for social justice. A

diverse group of nearly 500 CCPH members from 40 states, D.C., Canada, Australia, Germany, Ghana, India, The Netherlands, Nigeria and South Africa participated in 4 days of skill building, networking and agenda setting. Generous funding from the WK Kellogg Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, Northwest Health Foundation and Wellesley Institute helped to significantly boost community participation at the conference. Discussions at the conference informed the CCPH board's 2006 revisions to the widely cited and used "Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships," first released in 1998, reflecting the evolution in our understanding of what authentic partnerships entail (available at http://depts.washington.edu/principles.html#principles).

The four papers that follow are based on presentations given at the conference, selected because they address critical issues of significance to community-higher education partnerships, present unique perspectives on these issues, and cover topics of broad interest to *JHEOE* readers. We are grateful to Journal Editor Mel Hill for supporting this theme section of this issue.

Two papers present the perspectives of academic institutions that are striving for authenticity and equity in their relationships with community partners. In "Engaging a University in Self-Assessment and Strategic Planning to Build Partnership Capacity: The UCSF Experience," authors Naomi Wortis, Ellen Goldstein, Roberto Ariel Vargas and Kevin Grumbach describe the self-assessment and strategic planning process undertaken by a research-oriented health sciences campus seeking to become an engaged institution. And, in "How to Avoid Stumbling While 'Walking the Talk'": Supporting the Promise of Authentic Partnerships," Terri Shelton and James Frabutt examine the university structures and policies that frequently pose barriers to authentic partnerships offer practical strategies for navigating "the system" while staying true to their vision and values.

Two articles are co-authored by community-academic partner pairs who bring years of experience in community-based participatory research to their proposals for shared decision making, shared power and mutual benefits in community-university partnerships. In "The Community Impact Statement: A Prenuptial Agreement for Community-Campus Partnerships," Susan Ann Gust and Catherine Jordan make a compelling case for developing a "community impact statement" before the work of a partnership can begin, not unlike an environmental impact statement for a real estate development or a prenuptial agreement before a marriage. And in "Community-University Research Partnerships: Devising a

Model for Ethical Engagement," Linda Silka and Paulette Renault-Caragianes discuss how to ask and answer the very real questions that arise in the course of doing community-based participatory research: Who decides which problems are worthy of study? Who decides how the research will be conducted? Who owns the data once they are collected? Who determines how and in what forms the data will be disseminated and used?

Taken together, these four papers offer sophisticated and nuanced responses to the challenges and opportunities that frequently arise in community-university partnerships. They compel each of us to dig deeper in our work to tackle issues that cut at the core of what it takes to go beyond the rhetoric to actually achieve authentic partnerships: legacies of past transgressions, imbalances of power, privilege and resources, overt and covert racism, perceived illegitimacy of community knowledge. Our communities and institutions will surely benefit if we respond to their call to action.

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