



The Coalition Of Lifelong Learning Organizations

Coalition of Lifelong Learning Organization's Annual Meeting
1 Dupont Circle, 8th floor Conference Room, Washington, DC
October 1, 2012

Attendees: Lisa Blonder (U.S. Dept of State/Office of UNESCO Affairs), Barbara Board (Virginia Tech), Patricia Book (American Council on Education), Marcie Boucouvalas (Virginia Tech/National Capital Region), Marcie Foster (CLASP), Budd Hall (UNESCO), Renae Harrison (COABE), Milan Hayward (Northern Virginia Community College), Thomas Kowalik (SUNY Continuing Education Collaborative), Mary Beth Lakin (American Council on Education (ACE), Patricia Lynott (Alpha Sigma Lambda), Lennox McLendon (National Council of State Directors of Adult Education), Henry Merrill (American Association for Adult & Continuing Education), Angela Neilan (VA Dept of Environmental Quality), Kathy Peno (University of RI), Steve Steurer (Correctional Education Association), Johan Uvin (Vocational and Adult Education), Judy Wertheim (CAEL)

Meeting Notes

Marcie Boucouvalas, President, welcomed meeting participants. She introduced Bud Hall as guest speaker. She then asked people in attendance to introduce themselves and indicate their affiliation. She also expanded the introductions of Dr. Barbara Board and Milan Hayward who were speakers at last year's meeting.

Barbara Board provided a brief review of last meeting's presentation on the topic on collaboration and provided a status report of her work in establishing successful collaborations. In the context of collaborations she introduced the topic of innovation which was to serve as the transition to our keynote speaker Dr. Bud Hall.

Dr. Bud Hall, UNESCO Chair of Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education and Professor, University of Victoria in British Columbia addressed the topic of innovation in our field. His primary focus dealt with three questions, i. e., (1) Why is innovation important and becoming a topic of discussion? (2) Is innovation defined differently today than throughout earlier history? (3) To provide an overview and insights from his role as UNESCO chair. Bud began his presentation by talking about the goal of UNESCO and its focus on capacity building and community-based, engaged research. He discussed various forms of innovation in Canada and explained the term as meaning primarily, "social innovation" within that country's context. Innovation primarily in this context is about accelerating social change and policy development as well as boundary crossing. Informing this innovation is some key terminology, i. e., knowledge democracy," "democratization of learning/education," and "knowledge society." He mentioned that there could be no social justice until cognitive and knowledge justice was achieved. He reminded all participants that knowledge is presented in many forms, that knowledge justice broadens and recognizes diversity of knowledge, and that knowledge is a strategic process/goal to organize and empower people. In the context of his presentation innovation is intended to expand the base of knowledge and service for ordinary people. He mentioned that not all innovation is necessarily good. Innovation has to be placed in the broader context to determine who is doing the innovating and what is being innovated and for whom.

Following Bud's presentation, a lively discussion was held on the concept of innovation and its meaning

to our lifelong learning organizations. We explored various best practices in innovation as well as obstacles to innovation in lifelong learning organizations.

The afternoon session began with Dr. Lennox McClendon, chair elect, introducing Dr. Johan Uvin, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Johan discussed several different topics and three key points including the following: (1) He wanted to highlight the urgency about innovation in adult education today, (2) he wanted to describe the work OVAE has done particularly in K-12 and higher education, (3) and he wanted to address the OVAE approach to innovation. In the context of innovation of adult education and mentioning its urgency he pointed to a presentation he had heard earlier by Secretary Duncan in which the Secretary addressed many higher education innovators that they must continue to innovate or die, it's a survival issue for their institutions. Key drivers of this need to innovate include student access, the need to drive down costs, and the need to increase degree completions. He reported on the 2010 McKinsey jobs report indicating that in the best case scenario there will be over 6 million unemployed by 2020 unless we are able to increase the education and learning level of all US citizens.

Johan addressed an overview of OVAE activities in the area of innovation to build policies and programs to help youth and adults get into college or obtain certificates. He mentioned resources to support State reform. He talked about assistance provided in the community college space and that OVAE recognized the Office held that responsibility yet no money has been allocated to fulfill this responsibility. OVAE is partnering with the Department of Labor for funds to support projects. Johan reported that \$8 million to support career training has been earmarked for community colleges affiliates. He reminded everyone of the Race To The Top, K-12 and the early learning challenge grants. Johan also highlighted the innovation projects being made and undertaken in the K-12 space.

In context of the OVAE approach to innovation, Johan mentioned that they are focusing on the development and scaling of products, processes, strategies, approaches that significantly improve upon the status quo, e.g., I3- Investing In Innovation. Development grants are available to support program concepts to explore and approach a strategy as long as some empirical evidence of the promise of this program was available. Under validation grants, OVAE is looking for moderate evidence of success and under scaling grants OVAE is looking for high validity and evidence of success before funding is possible. He reported that there are several federal policies supporting innovations such as national activities funding NAF, to support innovation, state leadership activities, competitive funding, flexibility request for waivers and prizes. He also discussed federal policies that hinder innovation, such as, statutory guidelines of various funding programs -- they dictate who can apply, who may be served, and what the money can be spent on.

Following Johan's presentation, participants spent considerable time discussing various aspects of adult education within the context of lifelong learning organizations. Much of the discussion followed the question of "how do we position ourselves to prepare for the postselection environment?" The Mondale bill of the 1970s was mentioned and Lennox McClendon indicated he was beginning to draft an updated version with focus on resources and investments for the 21st century. Lisa Blonder asked questions about national and international accreditation and recognition of degrees or international standards. Much conversation revolved around accreditation, competency-based learning and the definition of adult education versus lifelong learning. Mary Beth Lakin suggested that we might be able to build upon the "Know How To Go" campaign ACE used previously centered on middle school students. She suggested this might be converted to develop a campaign for adult education.

Several suggestions were brainstormed for additional topics and to begin to position lifelong learning in adult education organizations after the elections. These included:

- Clearly defining lifelong learning and/or adult education
- Incorporating more COLLO involvement with the business sector and States, in addition to current work with the federal government
- Developing a campaign to broaden awareness about adult education issues
- Using a Mondale like bill to encourage bully pulpit legislation that would address issues such as credit hour, competencies, and accreditation.

Lennon McLendon asked participants for suggestions for the next COLLO meeting. He would like to schedule a meeting in April to follow up the conversation held during today's meeting. The topic of accreditation and competency-based learning seemed to emerge as two important topics participants wish to pursue. It was decided that the topic for the day would be "competency-based learning." This topic would include assessment of prior learning, accreditation, national standards, financial aid, and what is college-level learning? As part of the content for the day event perhaps another way of framing the competency-based learning context is to (1) identify driving forces (2) identify restraining forces (3) determine what else participants need to know about competency based learning (4) to explore who else we should ask to speak at the meeting (5) to identify who is actually doing this work and (6) Department of Labor Competency pyramid. Potential speakers suggested included: accreditation agency representatives, European and Canadian adult education experts, a representative from the western governors group, two and four year college representatives, someone from Lumina foundation.

At the end of the meeting formal leadership and presidency of COLLO transitioned from Marcie Boucouvalas to Lennox McLendon.