

“ 13 SUCCESS STORIES”
COALITION OF LIFELONG LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS (COLLO)
Dr. Drew W. Allbritten (November, 2004)
Executive Director, Council for Exceptional Children
(Former Executive Director, AAACE, 1991-98)
(Past President, COLLO, 1994-95)

Introduction: Prior to COLLO, there was the Coalition of Adult Education Organizations (CAEO) established in 1969. In 1995, CAEO became COLLO in order to become more inclusive of all the organizations involved in adult learning. Over time, there has been a history of significant accomplishments. I would like to mention thirteen (13). Perhaps others can be added by those involved. For the purposes of this document, I will reference COLLO even though some success stories occurred before 1995.

- (1) **“Tech Prep”** - In 1988, COLLO representatives collaborated with the Joint Commission of Community Colleges (AACC) and its Trustees (ACCT) to work with the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor to create the original “Tech Prep” legislation for the nation’s community colleges. COLLO then met with Members of Congress to assist in ensuring its passage into law. “Tech Prep” still exists today.
- (2) **NCOL Collaboration** – In 1992, since one of the major subsets of adult learning is adult basic education, efforts were made for COLLO to effectively collaborate with the National Coalition for Literacy (NCOL). Each coalition ensured that members of the other coalition served in leadership capacities. As a result, the continuum of adult learning was strengthened, and COLLO became more of a force in adult basic education.
- (3) **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)** – In 1993, COLLO supported the G.H.W. Bush Administration’s effort to focus on literacy efforts, and helped in the creation of NIFL. COLLO members assisted in the development of its organizational framework, and worked with the White House to have COLLO members be part of the newly established NIFL Board. Of the nine original board members, five were practitioners from COLLO organizations. NIFL still exists today.
- (4) **Federal Literacy Programs** – In 1994, while the Congressional leadership was attempting to eliminate the 14 federal literacy programs, COLLO created a grassroots network to fight against this effort. COLLO raised nearly \$150,000 from companies that sold literacy-based materials, hired a lobbyist, and met with key Congressional members and staff. As a result, all 14 literacy programs were saved and received a 38% (\$100M) increase in federal funds. All those literacy programs still exist today.

- (5) **Archives** – In 1994, representatives from Syracuse University (SU) asked COLLO and its member organizations to utilize their E.S. Bird Library as a repository for the adult learning archives. After meeting with several other potential site officials, COLLO decided that since the Adult Learning Clearinghouse was already located at SU that would be an excellent location. COLLO organizations were invited to send any archival materials to SU so that researchers for years to come would have the benefit of a central source.
- (6) **Work Keys** – In 1995, ACT was having difficulty in the development and implementation of its Work Keys program, and asked COLLO to assist them. COLLO members served on a 9-member ACT Advisory Committee and assisted in the development of job profiling, employee skills assessment, and company needs assessment. COLLO helped develop and/or improve eight of its criterion-referenced assessment areas. Today, Work Keys remains one of the current viable options for testing adults in their transition to work.
- (7) **School-to-Work** – In 1996, the Clinton Administration, Secretary Reich (DOL) and Secretary Riley (DOE) wanted to place a greater federal effort on the transition to work. They created an advisory committee of stakeholders in which many were COLLO members. That Advisory Committee assisted in the development of legislation and regulations of the federal “School-to-Work” initiative. Since its initiation, there has been mixed reviews on its effectiveness at the state level. Although the specific program no longer exists at the federal level, elements have been incorporated into the DOL “One-Stop” program.
- (8) **Troy State University** – In 1997, Auburn University (AU) and Alabama A&M (AAM) were under a court order to integrate its respective student populations. They were to appear before a federal court for violating the original court order. Together, they devised a solution...to eliminate Troy State University (TSU) and have its majority students become students of AAM and its minority students become students of AU. COLLO was asked to testify in Birmingham (AL) on behalf of TSU. Since COLLO testimony focused upon TSU’s fully integrated staff and student population, the federal judge ruled against the AU and AAM remedy. TSU was saved and it’s currently operating to serve adult learners.
- (9) **Adult Learning Hall of Fame** – In 1997, one COLLO member was interviewing several of the early leaders within the adult learning field. Realizing that the early legacy of the profession could disappear, an initiative was started to establish an International Adult Learning Hall of Fame. COLLO was involved in its development, its fundraising efforts, its site determination, and its inaugural inductee ceremony. In 1998, the first inductees were celebrated in Atlanta (GA) and the Hall of Fame is now located in the White Building at the University of Oklahoma.

- (10) **Galaxy II Conference** – In 1998, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the first Galaxy conference in 1969, COLLO asked its member organizations to combine their annual meetings and conferences. Seven national organizations combined their conferences to meet in San Antonio in 1999 to discuss the implications of past, present, and future of adult learning. Galaxy I created CAEO, the predecessor organization to COLLO.
- (11) **Endorsements** – due to the success of COLLO initiatives, organizational endorsements were sought from COLLO to support a variety of adult learning efforts (i.e., ERIC Clearinghouses, Pell Grant levels, Adult Literacy Volunteer Training, migrant education, English language deficiency initiatives, Workplace Literacy Partnerships, technology literacy efforts, rural education, federal grants and contracts, etc.). Having a COLLO recommendation or letter of support was critical.
- (12) **Partnerships** - COLLO members were also asked to serve as members of other coalitions, such as the National Coalition for Technology in Education and Training (NCTET), the Federal Interagency Council on Education (FICE), and the Committee for Educational Funding (CEF). Moreover, COLLO was a significant player in the meetings and conferences of the USDOE's Office of Vocational and Adult Education. COLLO members were also utilized in the review of federal contract and grant proposals.
- (13) **Advocacy** – Over the years, COLLO members were actively involved in the passage and/or reauthorization of the Adult Education Act, Higher Education Act, Vocational Education Act, and Homeless Assistance Act, along with its plethora of legislative amendments. COLLO was also involved in the federal regulatory development process.

Conclusion: this represents only a few COLLO success stories, and I know these to be true since I was a participant in each. Should you wish additional clarification, please let me know. I can be reached by telephone at (703) 264-9409 or by email at drewa@cec.sped.org. Thank you.