

Outreach Contributes to Youth Education

One of the overarching goals developed during the strategic planning process is focusing on communities and their needs, especially in areas related to health, education, energy and the environment, and economic development. Last month's issue featured an update on the economic and workforce development strategic theme. This month's issue is an update on the K-12 education theme.

The Purpose of the education theme is to tap into Penn State's substantial faculty expertise and interest in K-12 education. Led by Wayne Smutz, associate vice president for Academic Outreach, the theme connects faculty and the academic colleges with Outreach units to address key education issues and opportunities in Pennsylvania, the U.S., and the world.



Penn State student intern with Isaac Sheppard students, Urban Teaching Collaboration 2006-07

The Vision is to engage expertise from a variety of academic disciplines, school district representatives, and state government representatives to develop new and creative student- and activity-centered approaches to K-12 issues. The goal is to help schools meet academic standards, address specific challenges, and develop students' higher-order thinking skills. Another objective is to build collaborative relationships between school districts, academia, and government based on mutual understanding and respect.

At the end of March, school district personnel, faculty, and staff will meet to discuss project proposals and opportunities for collaboration with Penn State. Depending on the number of project proposals, an advisory panel may be established to help determine project resources and priorities. Once the

projects are identified, faculty from multiple colleges will collaborate to develop solutions. Project examples from this past year include:

Urban Teaching and Collaboration: Fostering Systemic Educational Change in an Urban School.

Ten Penn State students interned at Isaac Sheppard Elementary School, an urban K-4 Philadelphia school in a Puerto Rican community, to teach English-as-a-second-language. One intern requested that friends and family donate sports equipment to the school instead of purchasing birthday presents for her. A van loaded with soccer, baseball, and other sports equipment was donated to the school for recess. Despite being challenged with learning to teach and speak Spanish, the interns made as big an impact on the school's students and teachers as the school did on them. Each applied to teach in the Philadelphia inner city school system following their internship. This project also provided laptop computers for every fourth grade student and computer learning classes for parents to enable them to assist their children with homework. In the near future, the project will expand to focus on behavior issues and family literacy.

iKeep Safe Internet Safety Training. In response to a lack of information and prevention strategies, this project created a course for continuing education instructors to educate parents and teachers about cyber-bullies and the importance of internet safety for young children. A train-the-trainer

program and a seminar were co-sponsored and presented by DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) America.

Penn State Center for Creativity & Problem Solving. This project resulted in a video collection of stories about creativity for educators to use to generate discussions on creativity with children. A number of creative people were asked questions such as what is creativity, and what challenges and rewards are there for creative children inside and outside of the classroom?

Improving the Academic Achievement of Minority Adolescents. Penn State Berks provided consulting and staff development services in science education and technology integration for the Gateway School for Technology and the Reading Area High School. They worked closely with elementary education directors to improve science education at elementary schools. This project also created summer camp scholarships and helped teachers better meet the needs of students and parents whose first language is not English. In the near future, the project will expand to focus on reading skills and a science education certificate that could contribute to a master's degree at Penn State Great Valley.

These are just a fraction of the education outreach and research projects that we've been involved with since 2005 through thematic initiative funding, and only a snapshot of our immense work with youth, high school students, traditional and non-traditional students in higher education, teachers, schools, and communities. Our work in K-12 education is expanding will complement the work we're already doing in areas such as Public Broadcasting's programming and Educational Services; Continuing Education's involvement in dual enrollment and Shaver's Creek programs; and a number of Extension's programs. I look forward to sharing the work of another Strategic Theme next month.

Craig

405 Old Main
University Park, PA
insideoutreach@outreach.psu.edu
(814) 865-7581

Strategic Theme Group Members: Annette Fetterolf, program manager, Statewide Continuing & Distance Education; Babs Bengtson, director, Educational Services in PSPB; Kathy Brautigam, director for Bureau of Educational Technology at Pennsylvania Department of Education; Ed Donovan, director for Outreach POD; Jonathan Mathews, assistant professor in College of Earth & Mineral Sciences; Karen Pollack, associate director for World Campus; Kyle Peck, associate dean for College of Education; and Paul Begley, professor in College of Education