

WORKSHOP TOPIC:

Achieving Harmony In the World of Social Work Education: Creating Transformative University-Community Partnerships

WORKSHOP SPEAKER:

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the necessary ingredients for developing the transforming leadership of a community practitioner based field consortium.
2. Describe the ways in which social work education is enhanced by university-community collaborations.
3. Describe the ways in which social work practice is enhanced by university-community collaborations.

ABSTRACT:

Developing university-community collaborations can result in the transformation of both educational and service delivery models. Participants will learn how to create and sustain a community practitioner driven collaboration that has taken on a life of its own in the provision of leadership to social work education.

This specific collaborative model evolved as a result of participation in the Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education. The original task was to utilize an academic/community partnership to design a rotation model of field placement. An unanticipated benefit of this work was a change in the way academic and community partners related to each other. The collaboration led to increased community leadership far beyond that envisioned in the original project. The community based consortium assumed increased responsibility for the MSW gerontology program. Consortium members developed strategies for recruiting students to the gerontology concentration,

engaged with faculty in developing curriculum models for infusing aging content and began teaching both single classes and entire courses within the gerontology curriculum.

This field based approach to university collaboration demonstrates the potential of field education to “advance innovation and change in both education and practice arenas” as discussed in Lager & Robbins (2004). More specifically, it is a clear response to the call by Reisch and Jarman-Rhodes (2000) for social work to revisit the community-academy relationship, develop field-centered education, and forge educational links to community based practice, thus resurrecting the strength of the social work tradition. The future of social work education lies not in separating ourselves from practice reality but rather in embracing the challenges inherent in it. Nurturing the leadership potential of those in the practice community that meet these challenges everyday yields tremendous benefits for the educational environment.

Following a process of team development, steps in partnership formation that will be presented include rationale and goals for the partnership; membership identification; common ground; logistics; task forces and sub grouping; leadership development; sustaining performance; and affecting transformation.

ABSTRACT REFERENCES:

Lager, P. & Robbins, V. (2004). Field education: exploring the future, expanding the vision. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 40(1), 3-11.

Reisch, M. & Jarman-Rhode, L. (2000). The future of social work in the United States: implications for field education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36, 201-214.