

PDP Communiqué

A Mutually Beneficial Relationship: Higher Education and PDP

Dr. Sue Faerman

Editor's Note: The following article is based on an interview with Dr. Sue Faerman, UAlbany professor and Collins Fellow, Department of Public Administration and Policy, and Dean for Undergraduate Studies. Dr. Faerman's academic focus is organizational behavior and managerial and leadership effectiveness.

Communiqué: From your experience in higher education, how is education changing?

Faerman: Higher education is responding to student demands for more practical, job-focused education. In the past, faculty taught to impart education for education's sake. Now, we are more aware of the need to strive for a new balance between inquiry and knowledge and practical applications. But change is so rapid that this is a delicate balance. The perspective in higher education needs to change so that an undergraduate degree is viewed as a "stop on the journey," where learning is a lifelong process. It used to be all you needed was a four-year degree and you could get a job. Now, jobs are changing quickly, so what you learn as an undergraduate will change in four years.

Communiqué: So employment trends and the economy influence the university?

Faerman: Certainly. In the '80's, business trends spurred a growth in MBA's, and "the business press became the popular press." The booming economy, and then the subsequent recession, have affected the job market and, as a result, educational needs.

Rapidly changing technology has generated a whole different constellation of teaching and expectations. In addition, there is a much greater focus on the outcomes of the educational process – for example, job placement. The question is what knowledge and skills will students have that they can use? The SUNY system is looking at curricula and making sure they are relevant to students' desired outcomes. For example, curricula are changing to incorporate more use of information technology. The workplace demands increasing levels of technical expertise – consequently students are required to use computers for research and presentations. As the world moves more quickly, higher education needs to pay more attention to how students learn.

Also, there's more accountability. You see it in professional organizations and higher education. Along these lines, there is broad concern in the higher education community about accreditation. SUNY, like other institutions, is asking the constituent universities and colleges to review their mission statements and strategic plans, and to think more about outcomes across the university.

Continued on page 4

From the Director Eugene Monaco — Page 2
Academic Partnerships Linda Krzykowski — Page 3

A Newsletter from the
**Professional
Development Program,
Rockefeller College**



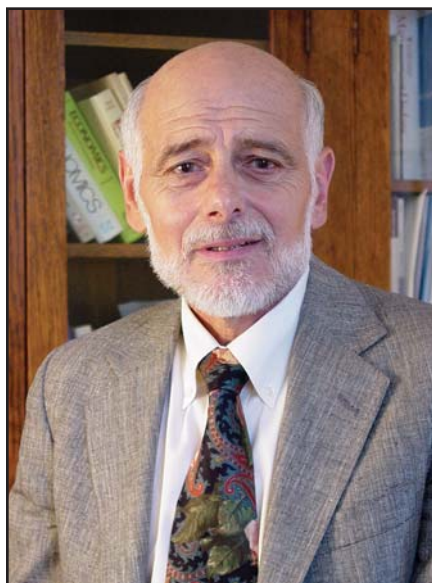
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State University of New York



Dr. Sue Faerman, UAlbany Dean for Undergraduate Studies

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GEORGE DOWSE

Eugene J. Monaco, Director and Public Service Professor

Embracing Change: Higher Education Adopts Lifelong Learning

Eugene J. Monaco,
Director, Professional Development Program

As the international community transforms into a global network, higher education struggles to determine how to be an effective contributor. Employers have become more vocal and have exerted pressure on universities to be responsive with their curricula to have greater workplace significance. They have also discovered that with core practices and rapidly changing processes, the need for people to engage in continuous or lifelong learning is important. Higher education is directly confronting the blurring and breakdown of established rules and boundaries as relentless, accelerating change becomes the norm.

In today's knowledge-based society, learning currency is not only a competitive edge — it is a necessity for success. The decreasing half-life of knowledge, the effects of globalization, and the profound impact of information technology force a fundamental rethinking of what we learn, how we learn, and why we learn. As have other major social institutions, higher education faces rising expectations from its customer base, which has driven a series of important curricular changes at colleges and universities. Curriculum is being assessed by new standards, which influence how knowledge and skills are taught across all levels of education. Accordingly, more and more attention is being paid to relevance, adaptability, and flexibility in preparing youth and adults of all ages to be successful participants and contributors in today's world.

Higher education has come to recognize that lifelong learning is essential to the learning experience. Those of us in continuing education represent an invaluable resource for helping to install our well-established practices into the post-secondary learning environment. What we are witnessing is a retooling of traditional curricula to reflect the competencies, skills, and knowledge needed by current and future students not just for workplace success, but to live as

ethical citizens who contribute to the advancement of the wider society.

In an interview with Dr. Sue Faerman, UAlbany Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and in an article by Linda Krzykowski, Assistant Dean of UAlbany's School of Business, this issue of the *Communiqué* looks at the implications of the changes around us for higher education. Faerman discusses the factors influencing the educational experience and what can be learned from the professional development community. The Krzykowski article looks at the need for boundary-spanning relationships between higher education and employers. Common to both is an emphasis on integrating the principles of lifelong learning into academic programs.

The continuing education and working communities bring great value to the discussion of relevance and adaptation in higher education and to shaping the emerging academic culture. The debate about pedagogy and higher educational purpose and process might most productively occur at the intersection of professional development and higher education. I think that both Faerman and Krzykowski would agree about the promise and possibility that exist in such partnerships.

As a result, we are experiencing a more robust and dynamic curriculum which is now more than ever reflective of the new business-education-workplace relationship. The linking of education, work, and training to improve competitiveness is indispensable. Therefore, curriculum is being molded for training, development, and teaching to provide practical knowledge and skills to complement its theoretical foundation. We need to continuously evaluate the quality, scope, and outcomes we are aiming to achieve to move knowledge forward. The questions we should be constantly asking are what we want learners to know and what do we want them to be able to do. It is vital for us not to lose this perspective.

Did You Know?

- One scenario for the future of higher education has universities providing only the bare essentials with an expectation that what is taught will be functional — that is, each individual should be educated to hold a job in a society. — *Future of Higher Education*, National Education Association, 2004
- The State of California has suggested a change in high school curriculum, calling for a “continuum of education in California aligned with the state's workforce needs.” High schools would be asked to decrease college preparatory course work, and emphasize practical work skills. Community colleges and universities would also add courses based on “the state's labor force needs or projections of future trends.” — *California Performance Review*, August 2004
- Following its first undergraduate curriculum review in 30 years, Harvard University concludes that students urgently need knowledge of a wider range of subjects, deeper understanding of the principles of science, and a far greater grasp of international affairs. It recommends significant reforms of the undergraduate curriculum to ensure greater international knowledge and experience and stronger foreign language skills for graduates who will be “globally competent.” — Harvard University, April 2004

Academic Partnerships: How Higher Education Benefits the Capital Region

Linda Krzykowski

The Capital Region is blessed to have a large number of colleges and universities. While the economic impact of these institutions is readily apparent to the travel and tourism industries — restaurants and pubs see business fall-off when the students leave; hotels look forward to graduation and new student orientation, reunions, and parents' weekends — the impact of students is experienced in many other positive ways by area businesses.

First, this region benefits from the highly educated workforce that our colleges and universities generate. Many students come from this area and remain, while others choose to stay here to begin their careers. As a result, local companies have the opportunity to hire the best and the brightest of each year's graduating class.

In addition, many companies look to partner with schools of higher education in interesting and innovative ways. Some organizations with projects that have been on the "back burner" benefit by employing students who are seeking employment in their field of study over the June — August timeframe. For example, master's of business administration (MBA) students have a four-year undergraduate degree, probably some work experience, and 50% of their graduate business curriculum completed. Successful student-managed projects can include: developing an information system or drafting human resource policies; product positioning analysis; research on expansion into new markets; or a benchmarking study.



Linda Krzykowski is the Assistant Dean at the University at Albany's School of Business. You can contact her at L.Krzykowski@albany.edu

Partnerships with graduate programs benefit students, faculty, and organizations. One form of partnership — internship — is important to students and local businesses alike. It provides an opportunity for students to get real-world experience while allowing organizations some flexibility in their workforce. Well-matched internships help to define business objectives and deliverables and provide an opportunity for students to contribute to the success of the business. Students gain experience in a mentoring environment, a chance to learn about the expectations and practices in their intended field, and the opportunity to build their resumes for future employment success. They enter the

workforce as well-trained new hires when they finish their studies, while businesses complete backlogged projects.

But, internships are only one way for companies to partner with local colleges or universities. Other ways include both more formal, long-standing relationships and short-term class projects. Business schools often look for interesting, current challenges that executives bring to the classroom, which students can review as "living case studies." "Field project" programs are usually longer in duration, but also defined in scope, for which consultants would traditionally be retained. In addition, faculty-driven research opens new avenues for products, services, and whole industries, as we are seeing firsthand here in Tech Valley.

Another benefit of higher education in our region is the part-time educational opportunities for the current workforce. Whether taking a course on a topic relevant to the organization, or working toward a degree, employees who are challenging themselves academically are also going to rise to industry challenges. Employers can and should encourage employees through tuition reimbursement programs, or by providing visibility to those working overtime to further their education.

We have a tremendous higher education industry here in the Capital Region that is working hard to educate thousands of students. But, the academic partnerships established with these institutions also offer many opportunities to help this area grow and prosper.

BUSINESS

...faculty-driven
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ACADEMIA

Communiqué: What other changes have implications for the teaching/learning process?

Faerman: Students' attention spans are shorter as their lives are more complex. What you might call "fully wired" individuals are now in college. Therefore, curriculum needs to be more interactive to keep their attention. As opposed to just lectures, faculty need to use real-life examples and encourage outside class experiences. Many faculty use web sites or online course management tools — like WebCT at UAlbany — to communicate with students, post syllabi, and encourage ongoing discussions. I use material from news and popular media to generate questions and discussion, continue dialog online, and weave in class discussion over time to create an ongoing process.

Communiqué: How do we make education current or relevant?

Faerman: Being engaged in activities like community service, service learning, and internships fosters an awareness of the larger community. Linkages between the classroom and the community only enhance learning — for faculty and students alike. Emerging technology helps me think about how I'm teaching and communicating with students.

Faculty frequently turn to current events for relevant examples to help students better understand concepts. For example, a philosophy professor may use news stories to illustrate different philosophical arguments. There are many examples in the field of applied biotechnology and research, where real-life stories create an

opportunity to explore ethics. Turning to film and popular culture as well as making use of multimedia are also effective ways to engage students in meaningful ways.

Communiqué: What can higher education learn from the field of continuing education and professional development?

Faerman: Continuing education organizations have a notable tradition of performance-based learning approaches. Providing education for mid-career professionals necessarily requires an approach that puts a high premium on workplace relevance. PDP has a long and distinguished record of linking the intellectual resources of the university with real-world learning needs in a way that is hands-on, applied, and readily accessible.

PDP has long focused on teaching adults. Students are adults, so PDP and similar organizations can help faculty understand what motivates adults and how they learn best. This involves moving away from pedagogy (teaching children) to andragogy (teaching adults).

Similarly, PDP can help faculty think about different modes of learning and learning styles. This is needed more than ever before as the student population becomes increasingly diverse. For example, due to medical advances, there are many more students with disabilities who are now able to go to college.

Communiqué: What does PDP bring to higher education partnerships? What suggestions do you have for working together?

Faerman: PDP has a long history of successfully working with widely diverse audiences and has the ability to effectively utilize methods to address different learning styles. PDP has effectively been in the forefront of education for years — experience that can be instructive to the more traditional education-in-transition we are faced with today.

PDP is directly connected with the real-world at individual, organizational, political, and policy levels. Higher education could only benefit from a greater focus on the real-world. A partnership would be beneficial for both sides — PDP could benefit from new research with faculty; and faculty could benefit from more exposure to the practical environment. There's a new term being used now that addresses this — "pracademics." It means practitioners with scholarly pursuits. The emerging workplace and society as well need more pracademics. A collaborative approach might just be the way to get there.

Other benefits of partnership could include PDP offering more support for students through workshops and academic services.

In the final analysis, PDP can help people realize that organizational communication is happening in our daily lives. Our everyday lives are our organizations and PDP is the ideal place to cultivate the collaboration that would make teaching more relevant and applicable.



Virtual Classroom Offerings Grow

In October of 2002, the Computer Training Services (CTS) unit launched its first course, *Introduction to Active Directory*, using the “virtual classroom” training methodology via LearnLinc software. The course was designed to assist local district system administrators in managing the network based Windows 2000. Since the successful launch of this course, CTS recognized the potential of using this training method for specific topics in short, targeted sessions. As a result, four additional courses were developed in 2003, providing training on specific functions of Microsoft applications, including Word and Excel,

as well as the State Child Care Facility System.

Currently, CTS offers eight courses for LearnLinc delivery. In the first-half of 2004, attendance in CTS-provided LearnLinc classes doubled the number of total attendees in 2003. This increase is expected to continue with the rapid deployment of Outlook 2003 in local districts. By the end of September 2004, three new virtual courses will be available to assist district staff in training the new Outlook. CTS expects to offer courses on a daily basis, tripling the 2003 number of attendees by the end of the year.



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Stephanie Pleasure, one of Computer Training Services LearnLinc instructors.

ITU Creates New e-Learning Module for DOH

PDP’s Instructional Technologies Unit (ITU) continually seeks opportunities to demonstrate its work to current and potential partners. Sometimes the results are surprising.

Last spring ITU demonstrated web-based training courses for the Department of Health (DOH) Community Health Division staff. Last to be showcased was an interactive learning module created for the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. The Center, or C-POP, as it is called, promotes the application of research methods to the study of crime problems in local communities. In 2002, ITU designed the C-POP web site (<http://www.pop-center.org/>) and then embarked on conversion of a guide written on a specific crime problem, *Street Prostitution*. The written guide describes social and environmental factors that foster prostitution and possible policing responses. ITU instructional designers used it as a springboard to develop a scenario-based module that challenges learners to research the causes of street prostitution in fictional Central City and develop a solution plan. Along the way, subjects are interviewed, records and maps examined, and possible solutions “discov-

ered.” A meeting with the City Council reveals how well the learner has researched the problem. Ultimately, the plan is submitted to the Mayor, who either commends or sanctions the learner’s efforts.

DOH was impressed not only with the way the course was executed, but how well it corresponds to the process involved in researching and applying

interventions to public health challenges. Discussion began almost immediately on contracting with PDP to design and develop a similar course. ITU staff are now partnering with a team of experts on community health to develop a new course that will use the approach developed for *Street Prostitution* to teach *Evidence-Based Public Health*.

The screenshot shows a web-based e-learning interface. At the top, it says "Center for Problem-Oriented Policing" and "Street Prostitution". The main heading is "What social, health and substance abuse treatment services are available to assist prostitutes?". Below this, there is a list of resources with small images and text: "Browse resource book of the local chapter of the United Way" (Cost 2 | Citizen Satisfaction 0) and "Interview Rev. F. Powell, Pastor, First Church, Barton Street" (Cost 2 | Citizen Satisfaction 2). On the right side, there is a "ANALYZE PROBLEM" section with a progress bar for "Budget Spent" at 49% and "Citizen Satisfaction" at 4. Below this are buttons for "Analyze", "Review Findings", and "Create My Plan". At the bottom right, there are "HINTS" that state "Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem." Navigation links include "Go Back", "Choose another question", and "Return to 'Analyze' page".

The 14th Annual Youth Event and Speak Out

PDP's 14th Annual Youth Event and Speak Out was held on August 18 at Herkimer County Community College. This year's logo was created by Chris, a 16-year-old youth from Binghamton. The event which had over 400 in attendance opened with a plenary session celebrating youth talents and leadership. Ten workshops covering topics from career planning to home repair were all presented by youth for youth. Over 70 youth took part in the afternoon "Speak Out" session, speaking before their peers and others in the audience, and to a panel of decision makers about their experience in foster care. Issues identified at the Speak Out have been noted and will be followed-up on by regional Youth Leadership Teams.

Over the past year, a group of youth leaders involved with Youth In Progress worked closely with PDP and OCFS to revise the "Handbook for Youth in Foster Care." A copy of the newly revised handbook was distributed to all youth and adults attending the Youth Event, and is in the process of being circulated statewide.



PDP Funding Updates

- The University at Albany Division for Research, Office for Sponsored Programs Report of Award Activity shows that during the period July 1, 2003 — June 30, 2004, PDP was awarded \$14,379,702 from project sponsors.
- PDP has been awarded a contract from the NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) to develop training on CD-ROM to provide probation officers with an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence. This will be the fourth course that PDP will produce for the division.

In 2000, PDP worked with DPCA staff to create Fundamentals of Probation Practice. In 2003, the working relationship continued with the development of two courses on Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) — one for probation officers and one for repeat DWI offenders. DPCA is a state agency that monitors, guides, and directs over 250 community corrections programs, including probation departments. Funding for the courses came from multiple sources, including cooperative efforts between DPCA, the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Governor's Traffic Safety Institute.

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Eugene J. Monaco
Director

Kary Jablonka
Editor

Christine Moore
Associate Editor

George Dowse
Graphic Designer

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UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

Professional Development Program
Rockefeller College
Richardson Hall 301
135 Western Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

(518) 442-5700; fax: 442-5768
www.pdp.albany.edu

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