Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Inequality Initiative

March 11, 2015

Present: John Suarez, Dan Brown, Billie MacNabb, Barbara Henza, Kelsey Ryan, Julia Morog, Cyndi Guy, Adrienne Traub, Jackie Leaf, Gabe Recchio, Michael Pisa, Marie Walsh, Mark Thayer, Brian Tobin, Ann Burns-Thomas, Derrick Pratt, Anita Kuiken, Craig Little, Randi Storch, Sherry Tacktill, Richard Kendrick

Richard introduced a framework for processing information going forward:

ADP Economic Inequality Initiative

Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Inequality: What it is (evidence of growing inequality)</th>
<th>Consequences of Inequality</th>
<th>Causes of Inequality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education – in what ways can we educate ourselves and others?</td>
<td>Amelioration of symptoms of inequality</td>
<td>Addressing root causes of inequality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action – in what ways can we take action?</td>
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He reviewed the group’s brainstorming over the last two meetings in relation to ways we can educate ourselves and others about inequality and how we might address root causes.

Themes and issues that had come up in previous meetings:

- Need for campus-community collaboration
- Focus on issue of inequality (not just poverty)
- Identify relevant resources to fund our activities
- Need to decide how to discuss/frame project

Anne Burns-Thomas related how she is working with an ADP cross-disciplinary group that is developing an online course on inequality primarily aimed at 1st year students that would include a service-learning component.

Craig Little recommended that we stay away from using words such as “poverty” or “inequality” instead use “equal opportunity.” Also suggested, “pathway to equality” or “pathway to opportunity” as ways to frame the project.

Derrick raised a process consideration: Let’s determine what we are doing before we name it.

Other points that arose during discussion included:

How are we working collectively as a group of institutions involved in the Economic Inequality Initiative nationally? The national ADP Economic Inequality Initiative participants do not seem to all be on the same
page yet – would be helpful to identify a mutual activity or goal so all could be working together to make a significant impact. The only common goal right now seems to be an activity around the next election – bringing attention to the issue.

**Suggested goals:**

- Need to get information out to the community and build general public awareness about
- Structural change
- Help people to feel part of the community
- Education (a big piece of the agenda – still a lot of people who do not understand economic inequality)
- Advocacy (we provide services but are not necessarily involved politically)
- Policy change
- Address root causes inequality

**Suggestions for getting reaching these goals:**

- Deliberative dialog, education, then action
- Democracy Wall (virtual and/or actual)
- Deliberative Dialog in the community
- Use Cortland Standard to communicate
- Collaborate with existing groups/coalitions working on issues (hunger and homelessness)
- Piggyback on existing events
- Involve
  - local religious leaders
  - business
  - city government
  - media
  - service organizations
  - schools (include high school students)
  - service clubs (Rotary, Elks etc.)
  - law enforcement
  - unions
- Include a wide-range of political perspectives and income levels
  - How do you bring people who are affected to the table?

**Recommendations – those present agreed to the following as next steps:**

- Create a list of possible events that we can piggy-back on to educate the community throughout the year
- Develop a list of all organizations doing work in this area and develop a more formal coalition of representation for the organizations already doing this work without excluding individual involvement
• Each organization share the data and resources they have relating to inequality and present to the group on data that they have pertaining to inequality
• Pursue the idea of Democracy Walls to spark community interest in the project
• Pursue a series of Deliberative Dialogues on the issue of inequality to begin the process of educating ourselves and the community on the issue
• Create a long-term calendar of events related to the project