
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Urban and metropolitan universities continue to be seen as leaders in exploring the civic mission of higher education, and in modeling effective university-community partnerships. Many of you are already familiar with the Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) grant program supported by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD), and some of you have been successful in winning COPC grants. The program was first piloted in 1992, and has since awarded more than 90 grants to a diverse array of institutions, many being urban and metropolitan. Most are two- or three-year grants of up to \$400,000.

HUD's objectives in supporting the COPC program are boldly intended to produce sweeping changes across universities and colleges by inspiring them to play an active and visible role in community revitalization – and to do so *with* the community instead of *to* the community. The program recognizes that both universities and communities have assets that can be marshaled for the public good, and that through mutually beneficial partnerships communities will be strengthened – partnerships that enable university students, faculty, and neighborhood organizations to work together to revitalize the economy, generate jobs, and rebuild cities. The funds are meant to help colleges and universities engage in technical assistance, training, and applied research that strengthens the efforts of community-based groups and local governments.

Recognizing that higher education could play a crucial role in community building, HUD established the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in 1994 to encourage and expand the efforts of colleges and universities that are striving to make a difference in their communities. OUP sees itself not just as a funding agent, but as a catalyst and broker. In addition to COPC, the office manages a number of other programs that not only offer resources, but also promote dialogue between campus and community through various conferences focused on community partnerships. The OUP staff actively seek to link universities more strongly to HUD's mainstream programs and to build networks between higher education and other national and local partners and resources. Through these strategies HUD hopes to enhance university commitment to community-based scholarship and to harness the immense energy, expertise, and resources of our academic communities toward the revitalization of urban communities. The COPC program, for example, attracted considerable attention across higher education institutions, and the grant process is extremely competitive. HUD staff have done an excellent job of leading an application and selection process that is designed to ensure that grant awards go to true partnerships – programs where communities and universities have collaborated effectively in designing a project and where there is evidence of a project's potential for expansion and sustainability. The rigorous review of proposals makes COPC very competitive. This year, 115 colleges and universities competed; 16 new COPC grants were awarded.

Clearly, HUD leaders think of the program as primarily addressing the role of universities in urban regions, and thus recognize the distinctive characteristics of urban and metropolitan universities. Secretary Cuomo stated, "The Office of University Partnerships helps universities and community colleges fulfill their urban mission."

Because a primary goal of HUD in creating OUP is to change higher education to increase campus commitment to community partnerships and the scholarship of civic engagement, they have assigned the director of OUP to be a liaison between HUD and the postsecondary community. Each year since 1994, HUD has invited a different representative from the higher education community to serve as the director of OUP. Each person comes to HUD with different strengths, different networks of relationships in higher education and the community, and a unique agenda to advance the transformation of higher education.

The first four directors were:

Marcia Marker Feld, University of Rhode Island

Mary Ellen Mazy, Wright State University

David Cox, University of Memphis

Victor Rubin, University of California, Berkeley

All of these talented individuals have had a dramatic and positive effect on OUP through the application of their unique skills and relationships toward the promotion of civic engagement and partnerships that strengthen both campus and community. They have been real forces for progress in the civic engagement movement and I have learned a great deal from them. I am happy to say that I have accepted HUD's invitation to serve as the Director of the Office of University Partnerships during 2000-01. I am pleased to have this opportunity to explore the nature of university-community partnerships from a new perspective, and to follow my four predecessors in using this position to encourage institutions to articulate and fulfill their civic mission. I look forward to learning more about federal programs that support our urban and metropolitan institutions, and hope to use my tenure to raise the visibility of the Coalition in Washington, especially during this transitional year.

This is a particularly exciting time to serve at OUP because an evaluation of the first five years of the COPC program will be completed and disseminated this year. COPC possesses a large, multi-year body of data about university and community experiences. This is a unique opportunity to explore a very large number of cases across a diverse array of institutions – large/small, public/private, research/comprehensive/community – and explore key questions about how these partnerships work. Although more and more institutions are expanding their community engagement efforts, much remains to be learned about how effective partnerships work, how to sustain relationships and efforts, and how to evaluate outcomes and quality, just to suggest a few urgent issues for research. The evaluation of the large body of data generated through the COPC program may lead to new understandings that will further expand higher education's commitment to community engagement.

Drawing on the COPC evaluation and other sources, I hope to engage many of you in discussions about the future directions of COPC and the HUD Office of University Partnerships as 2001 ushers in a new administration in Washington. Also, the academic acceptance of the role of engagement is growing and there is interest in finding ways to enhance both descriptive and analytical measures so that the work of engagement can be valued and reflected in various ranking and evaluation schemes. Through a collaborative exploration of our current understanding of how university-community partnerships work, we can shape a strategic agenda for OUP for the coming years that will continue to build the identity of urban and metropolitan universities as engaged institutions. This should prove to be an exciting year!

At the same time I accepted the invitation to serve as the next Director of Office of University Partnerships, I also accepted an appointment as a Senior Scholar at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Because the HUD position is a "visiting" position, I will be "loaned" by IUPUI, and plan to return there at the end of my HUD experience. I will also continue to serve as the Executive Editor of *Metropolitan Universities*, and in that role I want to share with you some other changes that have occurred recently regarding journal production.

For many years, Towson leadership and staff served the journal well and with true dedication in support of the production and business functions. You may not have realized that while I served as Executive Editor and coordinated the development of journal content, the publishing staff at Towson were responsible for graphic work, preparation of copy for the printer, subscriptions,

mailing lists, accounts management, and circulation. In recent months, retirement and the chance to pursue a graduate degree led to the departure of both journal staff members at Towson, and heartfelt thanks and good wishes go with them in their new adventures. Their steadfast attention to the journal contributed greatly to its development. Towson President Hoke Smith has been involved since the formative years of the journal; much of its success and reputation can be traced to his thoughtful attention and support, which he continues to offer. Special thanks also to Judith Stoffer for working with the final issue produced at Towson, and for arranging the graceful transition of journal business to its new home.

With the departure of journal staff at Towson, a new home for production was needed. Effective with this issue, the day-to-day business operations of the journal will be managed at IUPUI. Production and business services will be housed in the University College under the direction of Scott Evenbeck, Dean, and Harriett Bennett, Assistant Dean. Harriett and her team have high expectations for the journal and its future, and are excited about taking on this important endeavor. All early signs suggest that the IUPUI team is doing a great job of building on the traditions of excellence and quality set by our colleagues at Towson. They are quickly moving to not only adopt and sustain the journal's regular operations, but to propose changes that symbolize this transition to a new era for the journal. They are currently developing a formal marketing plan to enhance readership while also extending the reputation and visibility of Metropolitan Universities within the higher education community.

As a first element of that marketing strategy, they have created a new cover and format for the journal. The award-winning staff at University College conducted focus groups to assess the previous cover and format, and to test ideas for a new design. The outcome is a new look that will commemorate this major transition in the journal's history. This change is the first redesign of the journal since its inception, and reflects evolving publishing and graphic styles. I have been impressed by the time and energy the staff have invested in thinking creatively about ways they can advance the Coalition through the journal.

Thus, our thanks and congratulations during this time of transition go to colleagues at both Towson and IUPUI who together represent past, present, and future excellence. We are fortunate to have such strong and enthusiastic partners in serving the needs of subscribers and in making the journal attractive and accessible to readers. When we all gather in St. Louis on March 25-26, 2001, I hope you will take the opportunity to extend your best wishes to those from Towson and IUPUI who are attending the Coalition meeting, and I know the staff will welcome your comments and suggestions. In the meantime, the inside front cover provides new contact information for myself and for the management team at IUPUI. If you wish to reach me at HUD in Washington, DC this year, here is my contact information:

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