

Urban Appalachian Council
Research Committee
June 6, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Present: John Bryant, Intisar Khanani, Bonnie Kroger, Maureen Dillon, Bob Ludke (Chair), Ann McCracken, Maureen Sullivan, Debbie Zorn

Bob Ludke opened the meeting at 10:10 and invited everyone to introduce themselves to our guest, Ms. Khanani, from the city health department. He also invited updates from committee members on any research or Task Force related activity since the last meeting.

The Ohio Public Private Collaborative Commission had offered RFP's for some available TANF funds, but the funds had to be disbursed more quickly than we could assure with confidence, so the opportunity was not pursued. (New year starts in July.) There is also some tie-in with the Governor's faith-based initiative(s).

The Education Task Force had a meeting June 12 with Middletown on promoting cultural awareness and employment competency; they reviewed a program, available online, called "Did you know?" which contains individual profiles/bios, mostly of African Americans.

Maureen Dillon mentioned that her educational service sorority, Delta Psi, an affiliate of Delta Kappa Gamma, will be doing a project during the next school year to support the work of the Lower Price Hill Community School. [Perhaps this would be a PR/story opportunity.]

Bonnie Kroger gave an update on the Cinti State Drop-out Recovery program; a meeting was held at Xavier; our data on 700 GED students will be useful and instrumental.

John Bryant discussed his involvement with "Life Skills" training for 16 to 19 year olds to assure GED/diploma/and vocational certifications.

Ann McCracken mentioned State OPED/FDHC (sp?) data on drop-outs which will be used to influence policy.

There was some discussion on what is known about "spikes" in dropouts and suspensions, and a known pattern of absenteeism, behavior incidents, and a failure to demonstrate academic improvement in 6th through 9th grades.

Ann McCracken shared a New York Times article (June 5) on a study being conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Dartmouth's Atlas Project...data being collected in the Cincinnati area and specific neighborhoods/communities.

Bob Ludke mentioned that a health disparities survey is currently being conducted within the City of Cincinnati and will contain questions regarding information being provided to persons who know themselves to have specific conditions or diseases, like cardio-

vascular disease, diabetes, etc. The telephone survey component is being conducted among 1500 people in 21 census tracts in lower socio-economic Appalachian and African American neighborhoods; the survey contains 122 questions and is being conducted by Cooper Research. The point-of-contact interview component has been completed, with Lower Price Hill being one participating neighborhood thanks to the UAC. Bob offered to arrange for a presentation to the Research Committee at the next Research Committee meeting in September when the data have been compiled and analyzed.

Discussion then ensued on the implications of all this activity and data, and how to better “stitch them together”(Debbie); the importance of having a clear and succinct strategy from which to source a total messaging strategy in order to influence policy (Ann); and how to measure to what extent research is actually moving ahead and affecting change. John stated that much has been known for years of the relationships between various phenomena, conditions and behaviors. What difference has it made?

John went on to observe that we should ask ourselves how effectively we’ve used our research and research strengths to advance the UAC mission. Debbie and Maureen S suggested that we should use our AmeriCorps experience as leverage; they are recruiting now.

There next came a discussion proposed Objective and Strategies for Research as it relates to the UAC Strategic Planning Process which were included in the meeting agenda. The first strategy was revised/restated, dropping the reference to the 2007 conference. New wording was proposed:

- aggressively pursue the research and advocacy agendas emanating from the mission and goals of UAC

The second strategy was revised as:

- expand membership of the Research Committee to enhance its research capabilities, especially in translating the same into advocacy

The third was revised as:

- incorporate plans for disseminating research findings into the overall public relations, marketing, policy and advocacy conversations with others, and develop systems to adapt, utilize, and convert research knowledge to action, and develop measures of effectiveness [to be used as we proceed?]

The next Research Committee meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday, September 12 in Room C at the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati. Results of the City of Cincinnati Health Disparities Study will be presented at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Dillon, June 19, 2008

