

NNER Setting Annual Report October 2005

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Setting highlights on progress toward, and gaps or challenges facing the setting in addressing, the NNER Goals.

Promoting and conducting comprehensive research related to the Agenda for Education in Democracy

The **Georgia Center for Educational Renewal** (GCER), under the leadership of Dr. Charles Reavis has conducted significant literature searches during this year as a foundation for initiatives proposed for this academic year. This year the Center has completed two projects that address the AED. The first project is an extensive literature review of “Effective Schools Practices in Raising Achievement of Minority Males” that is featured in the Center’s May “Research you Can Use Now” series. This literature review is available at the GCER website for use by faculty and partnerships. The second project completed this year, The Lincoln Education Services project, was a collaborative effort with the GCER and Lincoln Education Services to develop a ten-part computer-based series on research-validated teaching practices, designed to be used by Lincoln instructors who are strong on craft skills but weak on pedagogical skills.

Our **Professional Development District**, the partnership work of Georgia Southern College of Education and Screven County Schools Continues to conduct action research around newly implemented strategies addressing the achievement gap as it relates to students living in poverty and minority cultures. This work will be presented at the 2005 NNER Conference.

Influencing policy

The State of Georgia and the Federal Government continue to legislate and mandate significant changes in teacher preparation rules and programs. During this reporting year the College of Education faculty, in collaboration with our Arts and Sciences and school

partners, have represented us on statewide committees addressing such tasks as developing a statewide preprofessional core experience and developing new statewide tests for basic skills and teaching content areas. Our deans, many faculty, and school partners continue to hold offices in state and national educator preparation organizations where there is ongoing opportunity to impact state and national policy making. Finally, our COE Dean, Cindi Chance, regularly invites our state and national legislators to participate in our College of Education partnership events so that this work has high visibility.

Collaboration with other organizations

Campus Cross-College Collaboration – was evident as our Campus American Democracy Project and the GCER joint to sponsor *A Day with Dr. Nick Michelli*. Nick was the first in a series of speakers invited to help us expand the awareness and campus-wide conversation about the theory and practice of civic engagement. Dr. Michelli addressed an audience consisting of undergraduate and graduate students, teachers and school leaders from Georgia Southern’s partner schools, university faculty and administrators, as well as interested individuals from the community. The topic of his address was “Educating Educators for Democracy and Social Justice” He also took time to facilitate a discussion with our ADP Committee and our NNER Tripartite members, regarding joint goals and future activities.

Another campus-wide initiative facilitated by the College of Education in an effort to give equal voice to all three members of the Tripartite was the reorganization of our **Teacher Education Council**. This work was completed this year and the outcome is a governance structure that facilitates all voices being a part of the decision-making process around educator preparation curriculum and policy.

School/Community Partnering – is the centerpiece of our “Partnering for Portal” work, a “Building Networks of Responsibility to Educate America’s Youths” grant. The focus of this work is to build a sustainable network within the Portal community through collaborations with the community’s schools, government officials, churches, social services, and business leaders. Community and School stakeholders have been given multiple opportunities to voice their vision and participate in setting and working on goals toward that vision. As with all new habits of thinking and conducting business, this has been a very slowly developing work; however we are beginning to see results in the community. “The Partnering for Portal” work was presented at the “Building Networks” meeting last June and will be presented at the 2005 NNER Conference.

Our **PRISM** grant work is another example of Tripartite work in which schools, communities and university (College of Education, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and College of Science and Technology) are working together to improve science and mathematics instruction/learning for all learners.

The NNER statement on equity

Two of the previously mentioned initiatives, **Partnering for Portal** and the **Professional Development District**, continue to focus on the Agenda theme of equity of access for learners. Additionally, a new initiative has begun in one of our Partnerships, **Bulloch County Schools**, through the support of NNER grant funds for a new project to support principals of “teacher-preparing (partnership) schools”. The opportunity through the Teacher Preparing Schools Leadership Program to have teacher leaders and principals involved at the national level with a focus on enhancing leadership skills to better meet the challenges in high-needs communities has stirred great interest in Bulloch County. Two principals have made application to the Principal Leader Program. Bulloch County hopes to have someone selected to participate who will return and share their learning with other Bulloch County principals as well as the faculty who work in the Bulloch County Partnerships. Finally, the GCER has written and submitted a proposal for grant funding through the Schultz Foundation to develop a **computer-based video series on teaching for improved achievement among minority males**.

Reflection on gaps in our work and challenges we face in addressing them.

The greatest challenge facing our setting is unifying our work under our NNER setting umbrella. During this year we have made two steps toward meeting the challenge. First, we brought Nick Michelli to campus to address the big picture AED and meet with a joint group including our American Democracy Project Committee and our Tripartite members. This was followed a few months later by a day with Ann Foster in which our Tripartite members, our Deans, our Provost, and additional interested individuals met to discuss how we could meaningfully capture under one umbrella all AED related work currently occurring on campus and in our partnerships. We set out the steps toward this goal and the work is underway.

General Reflections on work related to the four part mission.

Through the activities mentioned in the previous section we working to reset our Agenda focus. As we achieve our goal of unifying our work campus-wide and with our partnerships, we will be able to address the topics mentioned in last year’s report” (1) our existing partnerships policies and activities; (2) a plan to influence education policy; (3) a leadership/support structure for the work of our setting; and (4) a plan to encourage and support more faculty and public school involvement, in the face of decreasing budgets and decreasing numbers of faculty.

Major Initiatives	Contact Persons	
Georgia Center for Educational Renewal	Dr. Charles Reavis careavis@georgiasouthern.edu	
Professional Development District	Ms. Pat Parsons pparsons@georgiasouthern.edu	
PRISM/NSF	Dr. Fred Rich frich@georgiasouthern.edu	Dr. Jennie Rakestraw jrakestraw@georgiasouthern.edu
Developing Networks “Partnering for Portal”	Dr. Greg Chamblee gchamblee@georgiasouthern.edu	
Leadership Training for principals of teacher-preparing schools	Ms. Dianne Bath dbath@bulloch.k12.ga.us	