

Research Up-To-Date

The Newsletter of the Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee

July-August 2008

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The Research Committee was created at the founding of the Urban Appalachian Council more than thirty years ago and has always informed the council through active research. To be notified of future research committee meetings, which are open to all, please contact msullivan@uacvoice.org or phone 251-0202.

CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME!

Please send your article, announcement, or website link to Roberta Campbell at campberm@muohio.edu. Also, feel free to forward this newsletter to interested parties.



From the Editor:

UAC and the Research Committee Move Forward

In this issue, I call your attention to the Urban Appalachian Council's new strategic planning process. As we move forward, UAC is making sure that the future is being met head on. The new plan states UAC's mission, vision, and assets as well as goals and objectives and the strategies for meeting them.

Debbie Zorn, the new Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Robert Ludke spearheaded this effort along with an able and dedicated planning team. They also note the particular role of the Research Committee in the process. One person of special significance in this process was our consultant, Mel Hensey. He made sure the planning team, and all of the stakeholders, stayed focused and that the process was especially smooth.

Another change, as Debbie Zorn moves over to chair the board, is that Robert Ludke has assumed the position of Chair of the Research Committee. Beginning with Louise Spiegel at the inception of the Council, this position of leadership has always been of special significance for UAC. While Debbie's shoes are hard to fill, we believe Bob is more than capable. As witness to Bob's vision, read the report of the special session of the Research Committee to consider his proposed Appalachian Health Center.

Research an Important Component of UAC's New Strategic Plan

By Debbie Zorn

This winter and spring the Urban Appalachian Council embarked on a strategic planning process that resulted in the development of a new strategic plan for the Council, including revised mission and vision statements, goals, and objectives. The Planning Team that included UAC staff and Board members as well as representatives from the community, was chaired by Debbie Zorn and Bob Ludke from the Research Committee. Mike Maloney from the Research Committee also participated on the Planning Team. Four community meetings were held to solicit stakeholder input to the plan.

One new feature of this strategic plan is an objective and related strategies that focus specifically on the important role of research in addressing UAC's mission and goals.

Objective: Enhance research capacity and expand the dissemination and utilization of findings to help achieve the UAC mission and goals

Strategies:

- Aggressively pursue the research and action agendas related to Appalachian identity, education, health, and economic security.
- Expand the membership of the Research Committee to enhance its capabilities to conduct and translate research
- Incorporate plans for disseminating research findings into the overall public relations and marketing plan
- Use the research findings to inform policy conversations and strengthen UAC programs

Cincinnati Health Department Looks at Health Disparities

By Intisar Khanani

On Saturday, August 23, the Cincinnati Health Department hosted a "Cincinnati Conversation" around health disparities. The Conversation's aim was twofold: to understand minority health needs from the perspective of the local community, and to develop a set of strategies that could be utilized to meet those needs.

Participants came from a variety of backgrounds, including academia, medical providers, social service agencies, community councils, community groups, and city services. The Conversation focused on four topic areas: services, resources, infrastructure and capacity building. Across these four areas, a wide range of needs and strategies were identified, including developing a council/clearinghouse to act as a coordination and collaboration point for services across the city (from food pantries to medical care), opening urgent care facilities for low-income individuals to reduce emergency room admissions and assure prompt care, and improving the consistency and quality of health education for adolescents.

A full report will be developed and made available in the coming weeks. The Conversation was sponsored by the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, with support from a variety of local organizations including Xavier University, the Community Action Agency, the Coffee Emporium, Bruegger's Bagels, Kroger and Bigg's.

Lee Studies Homeless Mothers

Rebecca Lee, one of the newest members of the Research Committee, recently received her Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati. Her dissertation was a qualitative ethno nursing study titled: Culture Care Meanings, Expressions, and Lifeways of African American Appalachian and European American Appalachian Mothers Caring for their Children in an Urban Homeless Shelter. She has recently accepted a tenure-track appointment within the UC College of Nursing. Before that, her most recent position was as an intern at the Health Foundation of Cincinnati.

Appalachian Behavioral Health Issues

New Research done under the auspices of the Appalachian Regional Commission indicates that eastern Kentucky and West Virginia have the highest rates of depression and prescription drug abuse in the Appalachian region. The research is titled "An Analysis of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disparities and Access to Treatment Services in the Appalachian Region", is found at <http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=3279>

Down Home, Downtown at MUH

Here's an opportunity to share short stories and tall tales "straight from the holler." Each month, a guest emcee joins down home musicians and audience members, each contributing jokes, songs, thoughts, and memories to a lively, warm-hearted, and open discussion of the rich legacy of Appalachia. The program takes place at the Miami Hamilton Downtown Center for Civic Engagement at 221 High Street on the first Monday of each month (except September when the program will take place on September 8). For more information call 513-785-3000

Research Notes

June 6 2008 (From the Research Committee: Robert Ludke, Chair)

Introductions, Announcements, and Research Updates:

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. Bonnie Kroger gave an update on the Cincinnati 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 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.

The role of the Research Committee:

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 was included in the meeting agenda. (See Research an Important Component of UAC’s New Strategic Plan).

Special Session of the Research Committee, August 15, 2008

The Committee met to review and discuss the concept of a Center for Appalachian Health Research led by Robert Ludke. The proposal is to house the Center at the University of Cincinnati’s Department of Public Health Services. The Urban Appalachian Council will collaborate with UC in this project. The Center will focus on the research and improvement of health among Appalachians in the greater Cincinnati area. It will emphasize community-based participatory research. UAC will provide specific understanding and expertise on the target population.

Dr. Robert Ludke, has led the development of the Center’s concept and is proposed as its director. An Advisory Committee will advise the director. Faculty at the Center will come from UC. The Center will seek an endowment. Bob has already met with Dwight Tillery, Director of the Center for Closing the Health Gap. He has expressed support for the project, but would like to get input from his board.. The Appalachian Center is not a competitor for CCHG. There may also be opportunities for Fellowships for outside researchers at the Center. The Research Committee will help set the Center’s agenda. The Committee discussed different ways of involving the community and membership of UAC.

Miscellaneous:

Rebecca Lee successfully defended her dissertation and earned her Ph.D. Maureen Dillon announced that the Census Bureau is establishing an office in Cincinnati for the 2010 Census. Kay Russ announced that Lindsey-Wilson College is developing a research journal and is looking for articles.

The next meeting of the Research Committee will be at 10 am September 12, 2008 at the Health Foundation, Conference Room C. There will be a presentation on health disparities among African-Americans and Urban Appalachians in the city.

Additional Links:

Center for the Study of Gender and Ethnicity in Appalachia

<http://www.marshall.edu/csega/index.asp>

The Appalachian Connection (newspaper)

<http://www.uacvoice.org/AppalachianConnection/apdec06.pdf>

East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

<http://www.etsu.edu/cass>

The University of Kentucky Appalachian Center

<http://www.research.uky.edu/Appalcenter/index.html>

Berea College Appalachian Center

<http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/>

The Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University

<http://www1.appstate.edu/dept/appstudies/>

Appalachian Studies Association

<http://AppalachianStudies.org/>

Social Areas Report of Cincinnati

<http://www.socialareasofcincinnati.org/>

Appalachian Women's Alliance

<http://www.appalachianwomen.org>

Appalachian Studies at Miami University-Hamilton

<http://www.ham.muohio.edu/appalachian/index.htm>

Oral History of Appalachia Program, Marshall University

<http://www.marshall.edu/sociology/Oralhist/ohap.html>

Appalachian Regional Commission

<http://www.arc.gov/index.jsp>

Highlander Research and Education Center

<http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

Friends of Appalachia

<http://friendsofappalachia.org>

“Regional Study and the Liberal Arts”, Summer Institute for University and
College Teachers

<http://www.ferrum.edu/NEH/>



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