

**Career Academy Conversation
California Partnership Academy Conference
Orange County Hyatt Regency Hotel
Monday, March 1, 2010**

Thirty-two people attended the *Career Academy Conversation* meeting, representing 18 organizations. The agenda was organized around the four main topics addressed in the November meeting in Philadelphia: academy national recognition and support, curricula, workplace learning, and quality & credentialing.

National Recognition and Support

Charlie Dayton, CASN's Coordinator, provided background from the previous meeting and the work of the task force established on this topic. It has developed a set of principles (**Rob Ivry**), held a meeting with Glenn Cummings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Vocational & Adult Education in the US Department of Education (**JD Hoye, Kim Green, and Susan Katzman**), and developed a brief description of a possible initiative that might be part of a reauthorized *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA - **Steve DeWitt**). In a related effort, the Alliance for Excellent Education has organized a briefing in Washington DC on March 5th on Linked Learning to bring information to D.C. on what is going on in CA under this initiative.

Discussion ranged over the various initiatives underway at the federal level that might provide a vehicle for extending awareness of and support for career academies. Ideas included: a) the reauthorization of ESEA; b) the Race to the Top state competition; c) the Investment in Innovation competition for LEAs, with proposals due in early May; and d) the final round of Small Learning Community grants available this summer. There is also the tried and true method of contacting one's own representatives in Congress, letting them know of successful academies, and/or obtaining local media coverage which members of Congress often track.

There was also discussion of the situation in California. Here career academies are better known, in part because of the 500 annual California Partnership Academy (CPA) grants, and also because of a bill supporting Multiple Pathways/ Linked Learning programs. In other efforts, LEED is launching a 6-county 35-district initiative to build networks of academies in the Sacramento region, described by **Linda Christopher, LEED's Education Director**. In another innovation, PG&E is sponsoring five career academies in cooperation with the California Department of Education (CDE), as described by **Andrea Gooden, PG&E's Program Manager for Community Relations**.

Discussion also touched on documents that would be useful in providing information and evidence of effectiveness. One such paper is **Betsy Brand's** summary presented at the Philadelphia conference, *High School Career Academies: A 40-Year Proven Model for Improving College and Career Readiness*. A second is CASN's more extensive summary of the history and research evidence related to career academies. This was recently updated by **David Stern**, and now goes under the title of *Career Academies: A Proven Strategy to Prepare High School Students for College and Careers*. Both are available at CASN's newly updated website (<http://casn.berkeley.edu>).

Academy Curricula

Discussion at the NCAC Philadelphia conference reflected a leading problem in this arena, namely that there are many good curricular resources from several of the organizations represented in the Conversation, but they aren't widely known in the field. A task force was thus established on this topic, led by **Penni Hudis from ConnectEd and Erin Fender from CASN**, also involving two other members who were at the meeting, **Ilene Kantrov of EDC and David Ross of the Buck Institute for Education (BIE)**. This task force has held several conference calls and drafted an "upload tool" for the curriculum database. The fields for this were shared with the group for perusal and feedback. Another conference call was planned by the task force in mid-March to share feedback and refine this tool.

CASN now has a searchable curriculum database on its expanded website containing green curriculum resources, completed as part of its contract with CDE. This provides a system that can be used to expand the contents of the database to cover other career fields as well. The task force welcomes input and ideas related to this, is seeking leads to curriculum that should be part of the database, and invites other attendees to add a link to this database on their websites (casn.berkeley.edu).

Workplace Learning

NAF has led the development of *Preparing Youth for Life: The Gold Standards for High School Internships*, and **Deanna Hanson, NAF's California Director**, provided copies hot off the press to attendees. These were developed collaboratively in a process much like the National Standards of Practice (NSOP), and like them encompass ten standards. The document is available on NAF's website (www.naf.org), and soon will be on CASN's. These standards will eventually cover not just internships, but field trips, job shadowing, and other forms of work-based learning.

Mary Visher from MDRC's Oakland office provided an update of its project in this vein, funded by the US Department of Education, to strengthen workplace learning linked to classroom activities in four academies and measure related student performance. This project involves both college and career awareness and will run through 2012, at which time the findings will be shared on MDRC's website. A discussion ensued concerning the difficulty of finding instruments that can assess college and career readiness. Suggestions ranged from use of ACT's Work Keys to instruments that BIE and MPR have, to several efforts to develop new tools, including those by Eileen Warren, and Andy Rothstein of NAF in cooperation with WestEd.

Academy Quality

Karen Shores of CDE began this discussion by describing how CPAs are evaluated via their annual reports, aligned to the CA Ed Code. Because CDE staff hasn't been able to travel this year it has been difficult to visit academies and to check on quality and provide support. As one response, Karen has developed an Academy Assessment and Recognition tool based on the Career Academy National Standards of Practice (NSOP), using a rubric/ format developed by ACTE. Her plan is to select about five Mentor Academies that would like to be evaluated via a self-assessment process using this tool. They might then be invited to be a Lighthouse Academy for two years, serving as a place for others to visit and a source of technical assistance.

Arlene La Plante of ConnectEd CA reported on its work in developing the “Linked Learning Pathway Certification Criteria”. These were developed via a collaborative process that included NAF, CDE, CASN, NCAC, and representatives from its district initiative. The purpose is to validate the quality of pathway implementation. The hope is to work with partner organizations that certify pathways so that sites can avoid multiple reviews and be certified by “the field” via one such review. The underlying purpose is not to punish sites but to identify needed technical assistance and professional development if problems are found.

Connect Ed staff emphasized the importance of collaboration in the use of this new instrument. NAF and CASN representatives agreed that the process and product were high quality and reflect their input. In addition, the criteria were cross-walked with the NCAC rubric, developed in 2005 around the NSOP, and like that rubric, have 38 elements. They include a glossary of terms, and could be tweaked for particular pathways and/or academies. ConnectEd is exploring integrating these into Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation reviews. Partner organizations are invited to include them on their own websites.

Other Topics

Kathy Hughes provided an update of the Institute for Education and the Economy’s (IEE, Columbia University) work on dual enrollments. Dual enrollments entail high school students enrolling in a college course and receiving both high school and college credit, not just articulation between a high school program and a college one. The project involves eight sites in California, where policies and procedures often vary. Efforts include student recruitment and support and teacher/ administrator professional development, as well as assessment of outcomes.

Charlie Dayton explained that CASN’s national directory of academies is being updated. It now has all the new CPAs included, and hopes to soon have NAF’s updated directory as well. Considerable work is still needed to add all the new, unaffiliated academies launched over the past few years.

Deanna Hanson (NAF) announced that its Board of Directors recently moved to establish a Health Science pathway. Efforts are beginning to identify curriculum for this, in cooperation with ConnectEd. The plan is to begin a pilot group in the fall of 2011, probably in California. Applications are still being accepted for the Year of Planning for Fall 2010 in their other fields, the process by which NAF adds new sites.

Sandy Middlesteadt and Susan Tidyman are working on “Career Academies at the Capitol” in Sacramento in May to bring students there to talk about their experience in an academy. This is an approach that has been used successfully in Florida to spread information about academies to decision makers.

Susan Tidyman provided a brief report on NCAC’s continuing reviews and trainings on the National Standards of Practice. She also issued an invitation to NCAC’s annual conference in November in Austin, TX. Presentations can be submitted via the website (www.ncacinc.com).

Next Meeting. The next Career Academy Conversation will take place at the NAF annual conference, July 10-12, in Philadelphia.