



CENTER FOR PUBLIC DELIBERATION
www.cpd.colostate.edu

Annual Report, Fall 2009 – Summer 2010

prepared by

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CPD Graduate Assistant Kyle Jonas explains the process to participants during the Fall 2009 UniverCity Connections meeting held at the Lincoln Center in Fort Collins.

CPD Annual Report, 2009-2010

This report details the activities completed in the third year of the CSU Center for Public Deliberation (CPD). The reports for our first three years are also available online. For more information on the CPD, go to www.cpd.colostate.edu, or contact Martín Carcasson at mcarcas@colostate.edu or (970) 491-5628.

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Part I: CPD Highlights for 2009-2010

The CPD entered its fourth year by welcoming Dr. Leah Sprain as our new Assistant Director and moving into our first physical location in Eddy 210. The fall semester got off to a quick start, as the CPD students helped to run activities at the CSU Diversity Conference in September, as well as running multiple forums in Communication and Freshman Leadership courses. Two of our major projects in the fall involved working with the transit committee of UniverCity Connections (UCC) to help run the UCC Stakeholder Meeting entitled, “Getting There Should Be As Fun As Getting There,” as well as working with Ellyn Dickmann of the CSU College of Education on the In-Sync “Making School and Industry Links” Event. We also continued our work on the “Improving Higher Education” project that began in April 2009. A group of CPD students also hosted a series of recurring meetings—a study circle process—with fellow CSU students. We also convened and ran a Student Department Meeting for Communication Studies students to discuss the strengths of the department and their priorities for making improvements.

During the spring of 2010, CPD Director Martín Carcasson was on sabbatical, so the CPD ran on only partial capacity. Normally, a new group of students are trained every semester, joining a group of students that were trained the prior semester. This semester, there was no new class of students. Nonetheless, Assistant Director Spain and Graduate Assistant Mallorie Bruns directed a smaller group of CPD students who completed several important projects. CPD students facilitated three large public meetings for the Poudre School District to gather input on budget and school closing issues, ran the Arts Engagement Summit for Beet Street and the UCC Arts and Culture subcommittee, and ran forums at local high schools on wellness issues. Dr. Sprain and six CPD students also traveled to Alabama to attend Connect the Dots: A National Student Conference on Embedding the Democratic Practices of Deliberation, Public Dialogue, and Community Problem Solving and Action.

During the summer of 2010, Dr. Carcasson and several CPD students worked with Bryce Hach, director of Homeward 2020, an effort to end homelessness in Fort Collins by 2020, to design and assist with two meetings.

Throughout the year, the CPD also continued to work with the PSD Think Tank, United Way’s Pathways Past Poverty Project, and Concerned Larimer.

PART II: CPD BACKGROUND

The CSU Center for Public Deliberation officially began operations in August of 2006, under the direction of Martín Carcasson, then an assistant professor in the Department of Speech Communication (now Communication Studies). The official mission statement of the CPD is, “To promote the development of a vibrant deliberative democracy in Northern Colorado.”

Deliberation is an approach to politics in which citizens, not just experts or politicians, are deeply involved in public decision making. Working with trained facilitators who utilize a variety of deliberative techniques, citizens come together and consider relevant facts and values from multiple points of view; listen to one another in order to think critically about the various options before them and consider the underlying tensions and tough choices inherent to most public issues; and



CPD Director, Martín Carcasson , Ph.D.

ultimately seek to come to some conclusion for action in the form of a reasoned public judgment.

Working as an affiliate of the National Issues Forum network (www.nifi.org), part of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (www.ncdd.org) and the University Network for Collaborative Governance (<http://www.policyconsensus.org/uncg/index.html>), the CPD organizes and hosts many events in the local community, including public forums on national and local issues and various workshops tied to public participation, collaborative governance, and civic engagement. The CPD trains non-partisan facilitators and conveners focused on helping the local community come together and address critical issues more effectively. Deliberation requires safe places for citizens to come together, good and fair information to help structure the conversation, and skilled facilitators to guide the process. The CPD is dedicated to providing these three key ingredients to Northern Colorado.

The CPD has three primary goals:

To Enhance the Local Civic Culture

- Increase citizen participation in community problem solving
- Decrease the sense of polarization, cynicism, and frustration with politics
- Help develop a civic habit of relying on deliberation to address local concerns

To Expand Collaborative Decision-Making

- Promote interconnections between local government and citizens
- Expand and improve the role of the public in decision-making processes
- Help incorporate deliberative techniques in local institutions

To Improve Civic Education

- Study and improve methods of developing citizenship skills at all levels (K-12, higher education, citizen education)
- Promote the inclusion of deliberative concepts and activities in curricula

The tag line used on the front of the CPD pamphlet and website perhaps best captures the overall purpose of the CPD: *Dedicated to enhancing local democracy through improved public communication and community problem solving.*

The organizational structure of the CPD during the Fall 2009-Summer 2010 included Director Martín Carcasson, Assistant Director Leah Sprain, graduate assistant Mallorie Bruns, an advisory board, and a group of student associates. The current advisory board includes:

Karrin Anderson, CSU Department of Communication Studies
Jen Johnson, Assistant Director, CSU Student Leadership and Civic Engagement office
Ellen Laubhan, Director of Communications, Poudre School District
Michael Liggett, PSD Think Tank., Fort Collins Library Board
Brad MacDonald, CSU Department of Political Science
John Meyer, President of Fort Collins Church Network and Pastor of Summitview Church
Robert Moore, Executive Editor, *Fort Collins Coloradoan*
Ginny Sawyer, Neighborhood Administrator, City of Fort Collins
Linda Mahan, Larimer County League of Women Voters
William Timpson, CSU Department of Education
Deni LaRue, Larimer County Community Information Manager
Pete Seel, CSU Department of Journalism and Technical Communication
Jessica Thompson, CSU College of Natural Resources

CPD student associates are CSU undergraduates that are chosen for the program from an application process. Student associates (SAs) typically make a two semester commitment, but a one semester program is available for graduating seniors. Student associates receive 3 hours of SPCM 408 (Applied Deliberative Techniques) credit their first semester and at least one hour of SPCM 486 Practicum credit for their second semester with the CPD. Approximately 10-15 new students are selected to begin their work with the CPD each semester, and they join around returning students who completed their first semester of the program in a prior semester.

Student associates are trained to be impartial researchers, conveners, facilitators, and reporters of public discussion, and are involved in all aspects of CPD projects.



Fall 2009 Center for Public Deliberation Student Associates

Front row, left to right: Dan Weiner, Darrie Burrage, Amy Wetherbee, Chelsea Suchomel, John Wilcoxon, Mallorie Bruns (graduate assistant)

Middle row: Jack Becker, Stephanie Johnson, Mary Warren, Alex Hernandez, June Reedy, Shannon Singlevich

Back row: Kevin Hollinshead, Nathan Fiedler, Behnam Bakhtiary, Addison Welsh, Sabrina Slagowski, Abby Kershaw, Sara Murphy, Korri Aiken, Heather Bailey

On a sad note, the CPD lost one of its student associates during the summer of 2010, when Mary Warren, a Journalism and Technical Communication major who graduated in May of 2010 and was preparing to join the Peace Corps, was tragically killed in an automobile accident between Fort Collins and Denver. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Mary's friends and family.

PART III: FALL 2009- SUMMER 2010 ACTIVITIES

This section details the primary activities of the CPD during its fourth year. It is organized in four sections: Major events, ongoing projects, CPD research, and additional activities by Director Martín Carcasson and Assistant Director Leah Sprain.

1. MAJOR EVENTS

CSU Diversity Dialogues - The CPD was asked to design and facilitate two “Diversity Dialogues” sessions during the 2009 CSU Diversity Conference. The dialogues in the past have simply involved guest speakers “dialoguing” on key issues, but conference organizers asked the CPD to design an event that would have the participants much more engaged in the dialogues. The dialogues were highlighted in all the conference publicity, and the two events attracted over 50 participants, including students, community members, and CSU faculty and staff. The first day of dialogues were designed to have the participants discuss their experiences with diversity issues and what key topics need to be addressed, and the second day was focused on more practical steps for individuals and the campus to consider to move forward. All the information was captured, and a report was completed by CPD graduate assistant Mallorie Bruns.

UniverCity Connections Stakeholder Meeting – Getting There Should Be As Fun As Getting There - UniverCity Connections (UCC) is a collaborative effort between the downtown Fort Collins, CSU, and advocates for the Poudre River to develop innovative projects for the area that joins the three entities. The effort has been ongoing for 3 years and involves many key community leaders. The CPD was asked to design, facilitate, and report on the annual UCC stakeholder meeting, a large meeting that typically attracts roughly 150 participants. CPD students and staff met with UCC leaders to plan the meeting, and the meeting itself was held on October 29th at the Lincoln Center. The Fort Collins City Manager Darin Atteberry and CSU President Tony Frank began the meeting with addresses, and then the students ran small group discussions concerning potential transportation projects for Old Town and CSU. A report was completed and provided to the UCC Transit committee.



CPD Student Associate John Wilcoxon facilitates the discussion during the “Getting There Should Be as Fun as Being There” meeting



During the “Getting There Should Be as Fun as Being There” meeting, participants brainstormed new ideas and then ranked those ideas on a “Four-Square” sheet.



CPD Student Associate Benham Bakhtiary places material on the wall for the gallery walk during the “Getting There Should Be as Fun as Being There” meeting

In-Sync “Making School and Industry Links” Event

The CPD was asked to develop and run a process at the In-Sync event in Longmont, CO on November 3, 2009. The all-day event brought together representations from Northern Colorado and Denver Metro in the areas of K-12 education, community colleges, higher education, workforce centers, and numerous industries to discuss how they could collaborate more effectively. Over 150 participants attended. The CPD ran a two-part process during the event to have the participants identify key barriers to collaboration and key action steps to overcoming those barriers. An electronic keypad process was also utilized to gather data.



Ellyn Dickmann addresses the participants at the In-Sync “Making School and Industry Links” event.

PSD budget/school closing forums (February 2010)– Due to significant budget cuts and stagnant enrollments, the Poudre School District is faced with possibility of closing some underutilized schools in order to increase efficiencies and balance the budget. Drs. Carcasson and Sprain worked with PSD Director of Communications Ellen Laubhan to design a process to help the community learn about and work through these issues in a productive way. CPD students then ran three large public meetings for the district to get feedback on budget issues and whether they should close schools. Utilizing a “National Issues Forum” framework, the material presented the community with three broad options to consider:

- A. Continue PSD’s current model of providing small schools with additional funds, using the small school funding factor. Find other areas to make budget cuts.
- B. Close some small schools and combine students into larger schools.
- C. Find additional ways to raise funds to support all students across all schools

After a presentation of data by the district outlining the overall situation , participants were split into small groups facilitated by CPD students. For an hour, each small group walked through each of the approaches, discussing the advantages and disadvantages to each. At the end of the meeting, participants reconvened in a large group for a final keypad process that identified where support lied concerning the key arguments for the various approaches. About 300 citizens attended over the 3 meetings.

Connect the Dots: A National Student Conference on Embedding the Democratic Practices of Deliberation, Public Dialogue, and Community Problem Solving and Action:

Six CPD students (CSU undergraduates) and Assistant Director Leah Sprain attended Connect the Dots: A National Student Conference on Embedding the Democratic Practices of Deliberation, Public Dialogue, and Community Problem Solving and Action in Montevallo, AL in March. They attended numerous panels and discussions on how to improve the work of the CPD. Students learned about other projects on dialogue and deliberation and networked with students, scholars, and practitioners from across the country. A group of students presented about their project on “Improving Higher Education.” Another group of students assisted Dr. Sprain with a presentation about passionate impartiality in deliberative planning.

Fort Collins Arts Engagement Summit (April 29th) – The Arts and Culture Subcommittee of the UniverCity Connection and Beet Street, an organization dedicated to developing Fort Collins into a nationally recognized arts and culture center and destination, had been working together to develop strategies for connecting the Arts and Culture community and growing audiences and support for the arts in Fort Collins. They asked the CPD to help run a large event to present a set of goals they had developed to the community, in order to gather feedback and develop task teams to focus in some of those goals. The eight goals were: Dedicated Funding, Collaborative Programming, Professional Development, Public Advocacy, Facilities/Infrastructure, Marketing Coordination, Education and Participation, and Quality of Life for Artists and Creatives. After a presentation by Beet Street, participants completed an initial keypad process to react to the goals in terms of establishing overall priorities, level of difficulty, and their particular level of interest. Participants then self-selected specific tables that were dedicated to individual goals. At those tables, CPD students facilitated a discussion about that goal and captured the discussion. Toward the end of the meeting, a final keypad process was completed, and participants were asked to complete cards with asking for additional comments and ideas, as well as which goals they would be willing to commit to serve on a task team moving forward. All the information was provided to Beet Street and the Arts and Culture subcommittee. About 120 attended a meeting held at the Lincoln Center.

PSD Wellness forums (April) – CPD students ran forums in two different high schools working with the PSD wellness coordinator to discuss issues related to student eating habits and obesity issues. The students talked through their opinions about food options on their campuses and connected these conversations to broader issues of healthy eating and wellness.

CSU Diversity forum (May) – CPD students designed and ran a forum focused on diversity issues entitled, “Will You Go Out to Dinner With Me?” They worked with CSU VP of the Division of Student Affairs, Blanche Hughes and pulled participants from several campus organizations such as RAs, orientation leaders, ASCSU members, Key communities, etc. This forum was a pilot process. Students hope to refine the process and potentially run it with a larger group.

Homeward 2020 Homelessness Initiative brainstorming sessions (June and July) –At two separate large meetings in June and July, participants engaged material develop by Homeward 2020 Executive Director Bryce Hach concerning the development of a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Fort Collins. CPD director Martín Carcasson worked closely with Bryce to design both events, and CPD students helped facilitate the discussions during the June event. About 85 attended each meeting, and Bryce is utilizing the information gathered to complete the 10 Year Plan.

2. ONGOING PROJECTS

Pathways Past Poverty Community Mobilization Project (www.pathwayspastpoverty.org)

The CPD, in partnership with the United Way of Larimer County, launched the Pathways Past Poverty community mobilization effort (P3) in October 2007, a long term project that will continue for many years, and include many public events. The project currently involves several task teams that are developing specific proposals for projects that will be partly funded by the United Way's new "Bridging the Gap" fund. Working with United Way VP of Community Investment Mary Atchison and the United Way P3 Coordinator Marija Weeden-Osborn, Carcasson serves as the primary facilitation and process advisor of the overall project. CPD students participated in eight initial "approach committees" that met several times during the spring of 2008, and then the CPD then designed and facilitated two community open houses in April and May 2008 to gather public feedback on preliminary goals developed by the approach committees, which received significant media coverage. A total of 250 community members participated over the two forums. In the fall of 2008, candidate forums were held that involved all candidates for state house, senate, and county commissioners. Over the years, several meetings have been held to present new data concerning poverty in Larimer County. During the past year, CPD students were not as involved in the project, but Carcasson continued to work as an advisor and member of the Advisory Committee and Steering Committee.



Participants listen at the Pathways Past Poverty presentation of the new poverty data at the Fort Collins Police Department.

PSD Think Tank - The CPD continues to work with a group of PSD high school students representing five different high schools as they serve in the PSD Think Tank. Think Tank students have been often participants in CPD events, and then in February of 2008, twelve students were trained as facilitators during an all day



Members of the PSD Think Tank take a break from their CPD facilitation workshop at the Tamasag Retreat Center north of Fort Collins.

workshop run by Dr. Carcasson.

Those students then assisted in the Childhood Obesity Project, and will

be utilized in coming years for a variety of projects. Many of the students that were trained were sophomores, and additional trainings for new students will likely be held to continue the relationship. In the fall of 2009, Dr. Carcasson, Think Tank organizer Elaine Holmes, and several of the students presented at the Colorado Association of School Boards meeting in Colorado Springs on their deliberative work. They are the only student group that has ever been asked to present at the conference. In the spring of 2010, the students have been asked by the school district to develop their own television show for the PSD public access channel, which they have entitled the "Student Voice."

Improving Higher Education – Initiated with a community forum in April 2009, the CPD continues to work on how deliberation can be used to improve higher education given shifts in

the economy, culture, and purpose of higher education. Unlike some of the other ongoing projects, this project is lead by the CPD and focused on improving conversations about higher education at CSU. As part of this effort, a group of CPD student associates organized and ran a month-long study circles process with about a dozen participants. The purpose of this group was to work through student ideas about the strengths and areas for improving higher education, particularly at CSU. The CPD also ran a Student Department Meeting for the CSU Communication Studies Department. Over 70 students took part in an appreciative inquiry process about what they like about the department and ranked their priorities for making improvements in course offerings and department foci.

Concerned Larimer (www.concernedlarimer.org) - Concerned Larimer (CL) is a new organization that has developed in Larimer County focused on working within the faith community to examine what role that community should play in addressing issues of poverty and need. In particular, the organization hopes to develop a network of “connectors” from various faith institutions across the county that will work together to explore issues of interest and develop increased capacity. CPD Director Carcasson serves on the advisory committee of Concerned Larimer as a representative from Pathways Past Poverty, and has assisted in the training of CL connectors. Three all day trainings have been held during the fall of 2009, with support from the CPD as well as Larimer County.

Campus Forums - The CPD also runs many forums on campus at CSU, both to expose students to deliberative forums and a different way of doing politics, and to provide CPD students with additional opportunities to hone their facilitation skills. During the 2008-2009 school year, the CPD ran forums in classes that totaled 656 students. Forums primarily utilized National Issues Forum issue books, and included topics on the Energy Problem, Racial and Ethnic Tensions, Immigration, Health Care, the Environment, and Improving Community Politics. Classes that hosted the CPD include IU175, SPCM 207, SPCM 437, and the CSU President’s Leadership Program. These in-class forums are designed to introduce students to the deliberative perspective, usually through the use of National Issues Forum (NIF) style forums. These forums utilize NIF or Public Agenda issue discussion guides, available online at www.nifi.org or www.publicagenda.com. These issue guides focus on key social problems, and provide at three distinct approaches on how to address that issue.

3. CPD RESEARCH

2009 also saw the first publication connected to the work of the CPD. Dr. Carcasson published a report with the Center for the Advancement of Public Engagement (CAPE). The report, entitled, “Beginning with the End in Mind: A Call for Goal-Driven Deliberative Practice,” was very well received by the deliberation community, and is available online at http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/PA_CAPE_Paper2_Beginning_SinglePgs_Rev.pdf Sandy Heierbacher, director of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, discussed the report on the NCDD website, and has already used it to explain the broad purposes of deliberative practice (see her comments at <http://www.thataway.org/?p=1571>), and it is listed among the “Best of the Best” resources at the NCDD website (<http://ncdd.org/rc/best-of-the-best-resources>).

Carcasson and Sprain also published an article on the “Key Aspects of the Deliberative Democracy Movement” in *Public Sector Digest*, an online subscription journal. The article is available in PDF form by emailing the CPD at cpd@colostate.edu.

Carcasson, along with Laura Black and Elizabeth Sink, has also written an essay explaining the links between deliberative democracy and the academic discipline of communication studies for the *Journal of Public Deliberation* entitled, “Communication Studies and Deliberative Democracy: Current Contributions and Future Possibilities.” That essay is available online at <http://services.bepress.com/jpd/vol6/iss1/art8/>

Carcasson and Sprain also wrote a case study based on a CPD event inclusion in a book of case studies for group communication courses titled, *Group communication: Cases for analysis, appreciation, and application*. Our case study “A different kind of public meeting: Engaging a public controversy through small groups” provides the opportunity to explore how facilitators can create more productive conversations about controversial public issues.

4. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES BY DIRECTOR MARTÍN CARCASSON AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LEAH SPRAIN

On behalf of the CPD, Martín Carcasson and Leah Sprain also participate in a number of events and serve the community in a number of capacities. During the last year, they have:

- Presented at the annual diversity conference at CSU on the use of the Study Circles program for diversity issues.
- Continued to serve as lead facilitator and primary advisor to the Pathways Past Poverty project.
- Served as a member of the Pathways Past Poverty Policy Change Committee.
- Served as a consultant with CSU Development on organizational improvement
- Served on the leadership team for Concerned Larimer
- Served on the executive committee of the University Network for Collaborative Governance
- Co-presented a “short course” on Deliberative Democracy at the National Communication Association Conference in Chicago
- Ran a deliberative process for the legislative assembly of the National Communication Association
- Attended Deliberation and Higher Education Workshop sponsored by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, OH
- Attended Deliberation and Non-Governmental Organizations workshop sponsored by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, OH
- Been an invited speaker to the Kettering Foundation summer retreat in Lexington, KY
- Been an invited speaker to the Kettering Foundation Annual Board Meeting in Dayton, OH
- Assisted with the facilitation of Pathways Past Poverty steering committee meetings
- Served on the Site Committee for Werner Elementary
- Served as a guest lecturer on deliberation and democracy in several classes
- Attended Deliberative training workshop sponsored by the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, OH
- Ran a key pad process for the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce breakfast
- Served on a committee concerning public engagement with Thompson Valley School District.
- Designed and ran a two day workshop to train city of Longmont employees on public engagement processes

- Designed and ran a half-day workshop that introduced the deliberative perspective to the St. Vrain School District Student Council
- Served as a public engagement consultant to the St. Vrain School District, working with John Poynton, Communications Manager for the district
- Presented to the Mesa County Communications Officers Association about deliberative democracy and public participation

PART IV: CPD FUNDING

The CPD has received funding from a number of generous sources during its first four years. A CSU College of Liberal Arts Academic Enhancement Program Grant of \$7,795 was awarded in the spring of 2006 that provided funding for a course release, research assistant, and travel for Dr. Carcasson to originally develop Center for Public Deliberation. A grant from the Council of Public Policy Education provided \$5,000 a year for the first three years (2006-2009). The CSU Department of Communication Studies matched that grant, providing an additional \$5,000 a year of ongoing support. The department and the College of Liberal Arts also provide for Dr. Carcasson's and Dr. Sprain's salaries, as well as in-kind support in the form of offices, web support, a storage area, and access to a copier and supplies.

The Communication Studies department also provided one-time funding for the CPD to purchase a set of 250 electronic keypads (the United Way of Larimer County also provided \$500 toward that purchase).

The Bohemian Foundation through its Pharos Fund grant process has also been a very strong supporter of the CPD. In our three years, we have received three grants from the Pharos Fund, totaling \$44,864. Pharos funding has made it possible for Dr. Carcasson to travel to deliberation conferences and workshops, to hire a graduate assistant, and to support more events and trainings.

The Kettering Foundation has also been critical to Dr. Carcasson's own work and development, providing summer research funding all four summers totaling \$40,000, as well as providing Drs. Carcasson and Sprain the opportunity to interact with deliberation researchers and practitioners from across the country and globe.

We would like to express our deep thanks and appreciation to all these organizations for making the Center for Public Deliberation's work possible.



CENTER FOR PUBLIC DELIBERATION

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