Educational Excellence & Collaborative Activities via a K-20 Online Community of Learners: A Panel Presentation of the Ongoing Impact of Three PT3 Grant Awards to the Field of Deaf Education

Ongoing communication differences, increasing geographic separation and a persistent tendency to focus upon a particular aspect of deafness (e.g., speech vs. language vs. literacy vs. academics), or an age of deaf/hard-of-hearing (d/hh) individuals (e.g., preschool vs. school aged vs. adults) have combined to increase the isolation that is experienced within Deaf Education. Parents who must decide upon the educational programming of their d/hh children and the professionals who must provide that programming, rarely have the opportunity to interact, to share ideas, or to collaboratively seek solutions. In addition, many parents and professionals are unaware of existing resources and few have the opportunity to draw upon the expertise of researchers and faculty at the nation’s 73 deaf education teacher preparation programs. Those faculty, and approximately 3,000 preservice teachers, in turn, rarely have the opportunity to interact with one another, to share their work parents, and learn from existing teachers of students who are d/hh that reside outside of their immediate geographic area. In recognition of this problem, the Association of College Educators - Deaf /Hard-of-Hearing (ACE-D/HH) submitted and received three PT3 grants (1999-2006). The grants, totaling over $3,900,000, have/are being used to: 1) reduce isolation; 2) increase collaboration; 3) recognize and support instructional and technological excellence; 4) increase Web based curricular resources and learning opportunities; 5) establish state, regional and national collaborative activities between K-12 schools, colleges/universities, organizations, projects and businesses; 6) conduct research concerning K-20 “best practices;” 8) conduct research concerning the applicability and impact of existing and emerging technologies to enhance K-20 teaching and learning; and 9) establish a nation wide, “Virtual Professional Development School” for the field of deaf education.

The proposed panel will present “lessons learned” from the ACE-D/HH three PT3 grant efforts. The lessons will be presented from three perspectives, i.e., a) a ‘Big Picture” systemic reform model for K-20 education; b) the impact of the “Big Picture” upon K-20 deaf education within the south-east region of the United States; and c) an outside evaluator’s documentation of change and impact. The resulting information and planned “Q&A” have been designed to support the use of the ACE-D/HH K-20 system’s change model throughout K-20 education.

Panel Members:
1. Harold Johnson/Prof./Kent State University
2. Katharine Stephens Slemenda/Associate Prof./Converse College
3. Donna Mertens/Prof./Gallaudet University

Panel Organization:
A. “Big Picture” concepts and strategies
B. Regional impact of the “Big Picture”
C. An evaluator’s perspective
D. Q&A