

## **Second Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty Summit Held at the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems**

Researchers and directors from across the country gathered for the second summit of Race, Ethnicity and Poverty (REAP) centers held at the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) on June 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>.

The organization was founded with the mission to identify and locate existing REAP centers, determine what these centers do and how they function as research entities, and create opportunities for future collaboration among centers.

The event brought together researchers and practitioners from centers housed in universities such as Stanford University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Michigan; as well as independent centers including: the Council on Social Work Education Center for Diversity and Social & Economic Justice, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and the Urban Institute.

Attendees spent the first evening of the summit at a reception hosted by Larry Davis, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work Dean and Director of the Center on Race and Social Problems, who founded REAP last year. The reception gave the attendees an opportunity to meet and mingle with REAP directors and University of Pittsburgh faculty and administrators.

Participants expressed enthusiasm for the chance to meet with other centers. "The REAP Summit is a very exciting initiative that promises to advance our impact as a group of research centers across the country working to promote and carry out research on racial and economic justice." said Beth E. Richie, Director of the Institute for Research on Race & Public Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The summit began Friday with an opportunity for center representatives to introduce themselves and share information about the mission and activities of their organizations, some which have been in existence for 50 years.

Members then heard from Jocelyn Sargent, a Program Officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, who spoke about "Funding Opportunities for Race Research" She reviewed the funding opportunities offered by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and but also shared information about foundations nationwide that support Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty research. Her list of the top 20 funders in all three areas (LINK TO THIS) was especially of interest to REAP members. Ms. Sargent also urged participants to "Do what you do best. Use your network of relationships..." and to "add value by connecting your work to the foundation's current projects."

Senior Vice President of the Urban Institute Margery Turner then led a spirited discussion about "Federal & Foundation Strategies for Boys and Men of Color" by addressing the new report from the Obama administration: "My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report to the President"

released in late May. The conversation that followed centered on gender issues, systemic causes of inequality, and the need for pragmatism in the face of race issues.

Matthew Whitaker, Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at Arizona State University, presented information about “Black-Latino Coalition Building.” He stressed that by 2050, Blacks and Latinos will be a majority coalition so this is a critical time important to start building avenues of communication and collaboration, and that REAP centers can play an important role.

“The REAP summit is a historical, singular, desperately needed gathering of scholars and practitioners who are committed to understanding the ways in which race, class, gender, and ethnicity interact with the life courses of American citizens. Its influence is wide-reaching and its potential is unbound.” remarked Whitaker.

After lunch, attendees reconvened and held the first of three afternoon panels. The first, “Impact of REAP Centers,” was moderated by Dr. Richie, and included:

John Burkhardt, Director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity University of Michigan who discussed impact of affirmative action.

Nancy Lopez of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico who focused on how centers can build strategic partnerships; leverage strategic opportunities to advance racial justice research, policy and practice; and engage scholars, practitioners, and civic leaders in productive dialogues about equity-focused data collection, analysis and reporting in health, education, criminal justice, employment, and housing.

Michael Twyman, Director of the Institute on Race and Ethnicity at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock discussed impact REAP centers can have on campuses by addressing issues of systemic racism and white privilege.

M. Belinda Tucker, Vice Provost of the Institute of American Cultures (IAC) at UCLA spoke about how faculty can lead the way against on-campus discrimination. She suggested REAP centers can create a community of scholars who are supportive of their efforts by offering RFP for faculty and hosting dialogue sessions.

The second panel of the afternoon focused on the “Discussion of Center Management Issues”

Moderator Tim Ready, Director of the Lewis Walker Institute for the study of Race and Ethnic Relations at Western Michigan University concentrated on questions of inequality and wealth.

The group then discussed such a topics as grooming future center leaders, succession planning (especially if it includes a national search), and the creation of faculty lines and joint appointments that are controlled by the centers themselves.

Issues of funding also took center stage, with participants addressing the difficulties of working within university/institutional advancement office parameters. Center directors highlighted the importance of including a clause in endowment contracts that states “the endowment is dependent upon continued university support”.

Finally, Dr. Davis led the last panel of the day “Where does REAP go from here?” Some ideas shared by REAP members included the possibility of inviting students and publishing policy papers which can be added to the REAP website. Attendees noted that group communication could be improved by updating the REAP website and utilizing the listserv more often.

The group also addressed the future of REAP by suggesting that members pay dues (on a sliding scale), and suggested that next year’s summit be hosted by another REAP center. Strengthening connections between meeting—perhaps by hosting working meetings- was also explored, as was developing a REAP mission statement, goals and objectives.

For more information please visit the REAP website at [www.reap.pitt.edu](http://www.reap.pitt.edu).