Representatives from civic engagement programs throughout the University of California system met at the Office of the President in Oakland on September 11 to discuss current trends in university community partnerships. The agenda included best practices in partnership, focusing on health, workforce development, and education.

Jorge Aguilar, Associate Vice Chancellor of Educational and Community Partnerships, UC Merced, presented a new partnership initiative at UC Merced called CURAJ (Community-University Research & Action for Justice). CURAJ, located at UC’s newest campus in California’s under-resourced Central Valley, connects researchers with the local community. The program encourages UC faculty to be involved in regionally-engaged scholarship.

Damon Lew, UCPP Workforce Development Coordinator, provided a comprehensive overview of workforce development efforts at UCSF, including Employer Days, Community Outreach Internship Program, job fairs, and workshops. Finally, Richard Duran, Professor, Gervirtz Graduate School of Education, UCSB, discussed best practices in educational partnerships in his presentation, “UC as a Partner in Civic Engagement with Families and Community: P-20 Education.” Dr. Duran presented several educational partnerships focused on creating pipelines for students to both college and work opportunities. These programs provide learning experiences for undergraduates in social sciences and education as they bring UC students into the community to work with youth. The afternoon session focused on the challenges and opportunities in civic engagement as well as planning for future growth.

The group decided to develop an inventory of civic engagement initiatives from each campus to be posted on a central website. This will encourage sharing of information as well as provide easier access to partnership programs statewide. The group also agreed to convene again in the Spring of 2009, bringing community partners to the table as well to discuss the many opportunities found through university community partnerships.

The series will continue with trainings in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) in October and Non-Profit Board Development in November. Please visit our website for more information and to register.

As a follow-up to Dr. Welch’s talk, we hosted a roundtable discussion of both university and community members engaged in partnership. Audience members asked questions about partnerships and networked with colleagues.

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This month we will be featuring the Community Partnerships Resource Center (CPRC). CPRC was recently awarded San Francisco General Hospital Foundation’s 2008 Heart Award. CPRC will use the award funds to translate their CPRC-produced resource guides for families and individuals impacted by violence and/or homicide. The support will help CPRC to translate these guides into Spanish and Chinese and produce hard copies for distribution.

“These guides were inspired by our community partners in Visitacion Valley who saw a need for this—a need people across the City shared. University students and frontline crisis responders took a key role in bringing this together,” said Roberto Ariel Vargas, Coordinator, CPRC, “Sadly, these guides are more important by the day as we face another wave of increased street violence in San Francisco.”

These guides were developed in partnership with UCSF staff, students and faculty, and CPRC’s community-based partners who work to serve San Franciscans impacted by violence.

You can download a copy of these guides on the CPRC website, www.partnerships.ucsf.edu. Any suggested edits should be sent to Vargas (rvargas@fcm.ucsf.edu) by the 3rd of October. You can also fax the CPRC at 206-8387.