We cordially invite you to participate in the 40th Annual POD Conference to be held in San Francisco, California on November 4 - 8, 2015

This year’s conference theme is **Back to the Future: Critical Reflection, Effective Practice.** This theme will guide us as we celebrate an amazing accomplishment, our 40th annual conference, and affords us a unique opportunity to appraise our past and present work as educational developers. The theme also seeks to inspire conversations about the future direction of our organization by connecting the previous presidential addresses by Kathryn Plank, who encouraged us to look at ourselves in the present, and Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, who guided us through an examination of our past.

At this year’s conference, we will go “**Back to the Future**” by exploring the organization’s rich past, as well as our progress in promoting meaningful change in higher education. Since its inception, POD and its members have sought to advance the field of educational development in higher education. Along the way, new ideas have emerged, old ideas have been reinvented, some have been discarded, and other have stood the test of time. This year’s conference represents a perfect time to appraise our progress and prepare for the future of educational development.

As we set out to celebrate four decades of service to higher education this November, we ask you to engage in a process of **critical reflection.** Faced with increasing demands, fewer resources, and limited time, reflection feels more like a luxury than a necessity. Yet, as John Dewey noted, “we do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.” Thus, reflection is vital to learning, not just at the individual level, but at all levels of the academy.

With this in mind, we ask you to consider the process of critical reflection.

- What are the characteristics of a reflective practitioner, department, organization, or profession?
- What should we reflect upon in our work as educational developers?
- In what ways has reflection played a meaningful or impactful role in your work?
- What role does reflection play in overcoming challenges or in identifying new solutions?
- What role does reflection play in promoting innovation?
- What strategies have you found useful or effective in guiding critical reflection on your efforts, or in the efforts of your center, organization, or institution?
- What methods do you use to share what you learn from reflection and introspection with others?

We also challenge you to reflect on **key topics and issues** important to our work and in assessing our progress as educational developers.

- How do past challenges compare to those we face today and to the ones we will likely face tomorrow?
- How does the work we did in the past compare to the work we do today and will do in the future?
- What has the impact of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning been on our work?
● How has the function and purpose of assessment changed over time and how might it evolve in the future?
● How has our understanding of how learning works changed and what influence has this had on how we work with our constituents?
● What progress has POD made in educational development and higher education?
● Who do we turn to help us reflect upon key topics and issues?
● How open are we to listening to others (colleagues, those in other fields, etc.) for guidance and feedback on key topics and issues?
● What were our past key topics and issues and have they come back again?
● What do we do to help make educational practices inclusive for all learners?
● How have the topics of diversity and inclusion impacted our work and progress in educational development?
● How do we assess ourselves to demonstrate that we are effective agents of change at our institutions?

Lastly, we must explore how we motivate and inspire those around us to value and engage in critical reflection.

● How do we inspire others (faculty, departments, organizations, etc.) to critically reflect on their work, their effectiveness, and their progress?
● What approaches have you used to encourage faculty to critically reflect on their work?

By reflecting on the past, as well as our progress and experiences, we identify and continue to refine effective practice, and the annual conference has served as a nexus for the of sharing time-tested approaches for 40 years. In celebration of this milestone, we encourage participants to share these enduring practices and more importantly, to create platforms for critically reflecting on these strategies and for discussing how they may be used to meet current and future challenges.

● What time-tested strategies or practices have been useful in meeting current challenges? How might these strategies be used to meet future needs or challenges?
● What are other examples of time-tested practices/strategies that have been revived for current technologies?
● How do we adopt new technologies or strategies that build upon effective practice?
● What are ways we can use current effective practice to help us envision future needs?
● What implications do effective or emerging practices in other areas or fields (i.e., maker movement, business, psychology, social media, etc.) have for us in our work in educational development or in the strategies we encourage faculty to implement in their classrooms?

Because of its persistence, diversity, and innovative spirit, San Francisco represents an ideal location for this year's conference. The city has faced numerous challenges throughout its history, including devastating earthquakes, great fires, and economic busts. After each, it met the challenge - building upon its past to find a new direction and new success. San Francisco’s ability to not only endure, but to evolve, will serve as a powerful backdrop for us as we explore and build upon our own experiences in order to meet current and future challenges. Though it
has struggled at times to accept different cultures and ideas, San Francisco has embraced its diversity, and in doing so, reminds us that inclusion is an important component for not only improvement, but progress and success. Today, the city stands as a progressive, multicultural city that is connected to tremendous innovation, serving as the home to a vibrant maker movement, as well as the headquarters for leading technology and software companies.

The official Call for Proposals, with more detailed information about the submission and review process and deadlines, will be available later this month, so keep an eye on your email and on the POD website! The database will open for submissions on February 18th, and proposals are due on March 9th.

We look forward to going back to the future with you in San Francisco. Please plan to join us as we celebrate this important benchmark in our organization’s ongoing progress.

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