



POD Network News

Spring 2019

Building on a foundation of empathy: Centering our priorities on inclusion and diversity – *Angela Linse, POD Network President*

While spring is well underway in the south, the northerners are just now seeing flashes of spring green, purple crocus, and smiling daffodil faces. As the season changes, so too does the POD Network leadership team. I am honored to step into the presidential role and look forward to continuing to work with co-presidents, Cassandra Volpe Horii (Past President) and Donna Ellis (President Elect), but most importantly with, the heart of this organization, our network members.

Since many of you do not know me, you might want to learn bit about my background and current role. I have been in our field for more than 20 years(!) and can trace my roots in educational development back to the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) at the University of Washington (UW) where I was mentored by POD luminaries Jody Nyquist and Don Wulff, and the rest of the CIDR team. Now I serve as Executive Director and Assoc. Dean of the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence at the Pennsylvania State University. I work with an awesome team of faculty and staff to advance the practice and scholarship of effective teaching at 24 Penn State campuses. In between, I was the assistant director for faculty development in the UW Center for Engineering Learning & Teaching and the director of Temple University's teaching and learning center.

Lately, I have been thinking a lot about the importance of inclusion, equity, and diversity for the POD Network and the future of higher education. Some of my thoughts are prompted by dreadful stories about students being [targeted](#) or [profiled](#) on campus. I am also inspired by brave souls who thoughtfully challenge the status quo inside the academy, including Asao Inoue and his [opening speech](#) at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and the authors of posts such as those in [Conditionally Accepted](#). I am looking forward to changes in the rising and returning student populations and the new perspectives and energy they will bring to our physical and virtual campuses. Creating equitable and inclusive learning and professional environments is more important than ever.

The POD Network has a long commitment to diversity and inclusion. We have made significant progress since 1993 when POD's Diversity Committee was first established. The committee charge is to advise and advocate for improvements in POD Network efforts toward the creation of an inclusive community, recruitment and retention of members from underrepresented groups and institutions, and cultivation critical attention to questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our field. This work includes, but is not limited to:

- Diversifying POD network membership.

- Donald H. Wulff Diversity Travel Fellowship Program to increase participation by people from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and/or underrepresented institutions;
- Educational Development Internship Grants, which provide a person from an historically underrepresented group with career exploration opportunities in educational development and/or diversity in educational development;
- Implementation of accessible, inclusive practices at the annual conference (e.g., microphones in all sessions and making available a quiet room during the conference);
- Raising the visibility of scholarly work on DEI related to educational development via an annual position paper and communication with other POD committees and SIGs; and
- Developing and disseminating resources related to inclusive practices, including identification of a DEI sessions at the annual conference.

The Diversity Committee has been incredibly successful in meeting its charge. But in recognition that the Diversity Committee cannot and should not do this alone, the POD Network [2018-2023 Strategic Plan](#) places diversity and inclusion at the heart, the start, and the foundation of what we do. This positioning acknowledges that progress requires intention and the purposeful effort of the entire community. This priority also represents members' voices and determination and it reflects a critical need at many institutions. We have committed to action in three areas:

- 1) making the POD Network a more diverse and inclusive organization in its membership, leadership, and foci;
- 2) providing information, resources, evidence, and research that enables members to lead or contribute to change initiatives at institutions that serve a wide variety of student and faculty populations; and
- 3) outreach and partnership with other organizations to enable informed decisions about the best way to include and amplify the voices of marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented populations.

Just recently, we have taken some small steps to advance the first and third areas above. In March, the POD Network committed funding that we hope will broaden our leadership to include members from all types of institutions by providing need-based travel funds for Core Committee members. Core also increased financial support for travel fellowships administered by the Diversity Committee, Adjunct Special Interest Group (SIG), and the Graduate, Professional, and Postdoctoral Development SIG. We nearly finished writing a POD Anti-Harassment Policy. A conference plenary session is being planned with [Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#).

There will always be more work to be done in this arena and I want to hear what the members think should be first. Please consider sending me your responses to one or more of the following questions:

- How else can the POD Network act with intentionality and purposeful effort to advance diversity inclusion?
- What would you urge me to prioritize in the next 11 months? In other words, what actions should I take to help us advance change in the first year of the strategic plan?

- What might you commit to doing, individually or collectively, to advance the work of DEI within POD or in your own institution?

Please do not hesitate to send me your ideas and your actions by email at president@podnetwork.org!