

CG news

The Common Good News
Regis University Institute on the Common Good

issue one | fall 2005

Director's Note

ICG begins 7th year

The Institute on the Common Good was created in the fall of 1998 through the insight of Fr. Michael Sheeran, S.J. President of Regis University. Its purpose was to provide opportunities for people in the community with diverse perspectives to engage one another around civic and social issues. Over the years, the Institute has blended research and educational opportunities, and theory and practice to promote the common good through the collaborative tools of dialogue, democratic deliberation, and communal discernment. In that time we have hosted numerous scholars and practitioners of the common good, from Nobel Peace Prize winners and nationally recognized authors to in-the-trenches community workers. Our educational offerings have included workshops and courses on a wide range of dialogue techniques as well as the hosting of an international conference on dialogue and deliberation with hundreds of participants. We have also facilitated community processes throughout the state on issues ranged from education, to racism, to community development and immigration.

We look forward to our continued work with the community. Through the dedicated support of University and outside sources we continue to serve as a free resource to the world. Please let us know if we can be of service to you.

~Paul Alexander

Guest Columnist: Ashlee Stadig **Dialogue Dynamite**

My junior year at Regis University proved to be a life altering experience because of one class, Strategies of Dialogue. Dr. Janna Goodwin, Communications professor and mentor helped spark my interest in of dialogue through this new and innovative course. As a Communications major, I took the class as one upper-division course in a three-course requirement to receive my certificate in conflict mediation. Little did I know that this stick of dialogue dynamite was going to blast my thoughts on communication into tiny little pieces, leaving me no choice but to rethink my life, pick up the pieces, and put them back together to form a new agenda for what I wanted to do with my degree.

Throughout the semester, Dr Goodwin integrated the Institute on the Common Good (ICG), into the course to help us better understand what dialogue was all about. Dr. Goodwin had us facilitate our own personal dialogues outside of class, which through trial and error proved to be a great learning experience. In addition, we were also required to attend the three diversity dialogues facilitated by Leilani Rashida-Henry (ICG facilitator) to allow us to observe professional facilitation. As a final project, I

chose to help conduct a dialogue on student communication at Regis with five of my peers.

The student communication on campus, as researched by other communication classes that I had taken, revealed some interesting information. We concluded that students were not speaking or participating in the classroom in fear of what might be said about them outside of class. We learned that gossip was a huge factor in the communication styles and tactics practiced between students. My course team conducted a dialogue that touched upon the ways in which we, as a community, could help make Regis a more democratic and free-speech environment void of gossip. We collectively decided to use a performance dialogue in which a theatre company came and acted out a thirty-minute montage of skits relating to campus life and gossip. The montage served as an ice-breaker and common subject to begin the dialogue.

Unfortunately, few students and staff responded to the advertisements and our attendance was disappointing. But, like they say in theatre land, "The show must go on!" and so it did. Our main focus was not the attendance, but instead the practice of facilitation; and this goal was

definitely accomplished. I loved facilitating so much, I could hardly contain myself. I did however, manage to hold the container in the dialogue! I felt so fulfilled and good about what I had just accomplished.

I decided from then on that I really loved the idea of dialogue as a means of bringing people together to talk about tough issues. I was mesmerized by the fact that I had never known dialogue existed before this time in college. I felt a calling to somehow bring dialogue to the students of the Regis community.

Before I knew it, school was out, and my love for dialogue was just beginning. With the grace of God and a gracious ICG team, I was invited onto the staff as an intern. My focus for my internship is now further integrating the ICG ideals of dialogue, democratic deliberation, and communal discernment into the Regis community. I am highly energetic and enthusiastic about the innovative work I am helping to bring to the Regis community. With collaboration and hard work, I hope the Regis community may come to know and love dialogue as much as I do, with the hunger to always learn more and obtain the ability to practice dialogue successfully!

Dialogue and Deliberation Resources

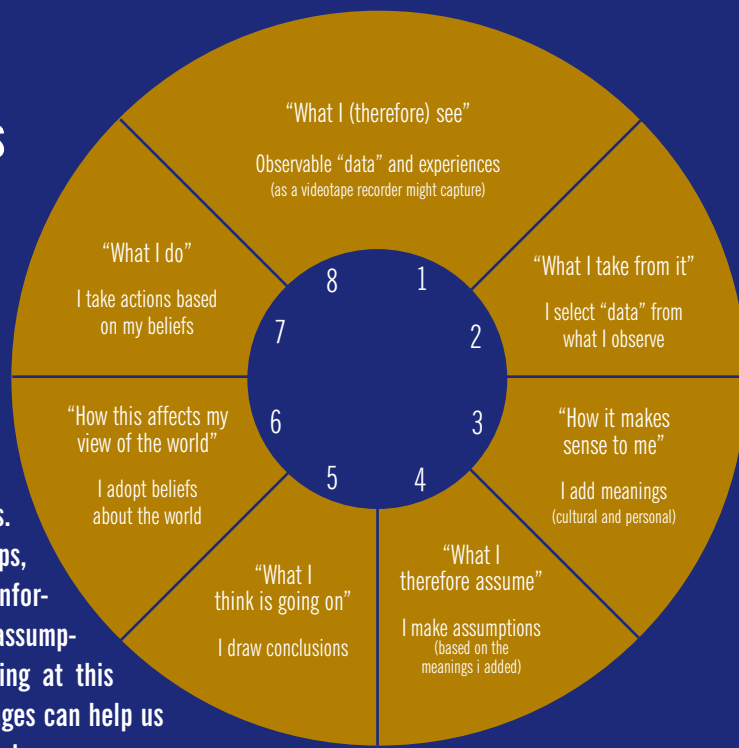
Dialogue Tip of the Month

Marisa Dunning, Colorado Civic Corps AmeriCorps* VISTA, serving through the Institute, has developed a Circle of Assumptions based on the Ladder of Inference of Chris Argyris.

So often we jump to conclusions based not on the actual facts of the matter but on the added and often false meaning we add to the facts.

The circle is a graphic representation of our thinking process. We gather data (perceived information about people, relationships, situations and conditions); add meaning (try to make sense of the information in light of what we already know or think we know); make assumptions, draw conclusions, make decisions and take action. Looking at this process as a circle consisting of stages that affect subsequent stages can help us to better identify the origins of many misunderstandings and conflicts.

The start of the circle is shown at the point where we gather data and experience: “This is what I see” or “This is what I am experiencing.” At this stage, each individual uses all of his senses to take in what is happening.



Try out the circle the next time you find yourself making judgments. It might be a fellow worker who is driving you crazy, a family member, a teenager on the street, or a member of another political party. How much of what you think about that person and how you act toward that person is based on clear cut observable fact and how much on all the assumptions and meaning you have added to the situation? You might actually find yourself in a new relationship and more open to what might emerge. That is the beginning of true dialogue!

Dialogue Resource of the Month

One of the best resources available on Dialogue and Deliberation can be found at the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation at www.ncdd.org. This wonderful site has links to a wide variety of resources including focused listservs. The ICG serves as the fiscal sponsor and agent for the work of NCDD.

Collaboration at Work Around the State

Every issue of the ICG newsletter we will highlight one particular non-ICG collaborative effort that seems to be reflective of good community processes: including inclusiveness, dialogue to action strategies, support and involvement of key leaders; development of trust, and interim successes.

I-70 Corridor Project

The (144 mile corridor) Corridor provides access to many of Colorado's recreation and tourism destinations, as well as providing for the movement of people, goods, and services across the state. This broad public outreach has included more than 250 meetings involving the public, agencies, and I-70 communities. The public input was obtained through a website, newslet-

ters, telephone calls, and publicized meetings. The information gathered and used to create the draft EIS statement is a true collaborative effort, bringing many voices and concerns to the forefront of public discussion. While the I-70 Corridor traffic concerns have not yet been solved, the effort demonstrates how dialogue can engage citizens and bring to life a participative democracy. For more information or to view the draft statement please visit: <http://www.i70mtncorridor.com/>

ICG Highlights

What is happening at the Institute on the Common Good?

“The Communities Strengthening Colorado Initiative”

One of the numerous ways ICG engages in community based programs is through “Communities Strengthening Colorado”. In 2002, Regis University’s Institute on the Common Good was awarded a \$1 million Federal grant split over three years. The grant, Communities Strengthening Colorado (CSC), is part of a statewide service-learning initiative funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and Learn and Serve America to engage Colorado communities and youth in civics and service-learning through dialogue.

This initiative represents an important paradigm shift in the state’s approach to mobilizing resources and expertise, creating sustainable solutions to local issues through dialogue and citizen service. CSC is spearheading efforts in K-Higher Education service-learning by integrating institutions of higher education into communities through civic learning in schools and community-based organizations.

The CSC initiative funds five regions around the state approximately \$25,000 a year to engage their communities in developing civic learning outcomes through the use of democratic dialogue. The Institute on the Common Good supports this process in each funded community. This approach encourages local communities to train their own facilitators in a deliberative democratic dialogue and planning process.

As recipients of the CSC grant, Naropa University and Project Yes in Boulder County have set wonderful examples of what CSC grantees are doing.. One of their projects administers two after-school service learning programs at local elementary schools that both empower students to design and implement service projects and highlight their accomplishments through community wide

news-
paper
articles.

Another exciting program that Project YES has established are community dialogues through Art in the

Community projects, which invite youth to discuss pertinent social issues through large-scale art projects. During 2002-2003 Naropa students who earned AmeriCorps scholarships, contributed more than 60,000 hours of service to the community and provided \$600,000 of in-kind service to local non-profit organizations. Naropa University and Project Yes offer just one example of how CSC is helping to shape the lives of future leaders by providing civic and service learning opportunities to hundreds of youth and community participants across the state. The dialogue processes used throughout this initiative help youth to carefully weigh out the options and make considerate choices as responsible citizens. For more information regarding Naropa University and Project Yes please visit their web-site at www.project-yes.org or for additional information regarding other CSC projects please contact Karen Stran at kstran@regis.edu.



2005 ICG Fellow

Cliff Barry of Shadow Work Seminars has been awarded the 2005 ICG Community Fellowship. Each year the Institute sponsors an individual to develop resources in the field of dialogue, deliberation, communal discernment, or other collective processes. Cliff’s work focuses on developing strategic resources for facilitators to engage more effectively with the underlying psychological and spiritual forces at work within the entire field. Cliff has over 15 years of facilitation experience, and has led workshops across the US and Canada. He will facilitate two workshops (“Clean Talk” and “What’s At Risk Process.”) this coming year. Stay tuned to the ICG website for more information on Cliff’s work.

Mark your calendars **for the Institute's exciting upcoming events!**

"Dynamic Facilitation" Workshop with Jim and Jean Rough September 12-14, 2005- Regis University

Dynamic Facilitation is a NEW way of facilitating people to address difficult issues collaboratively and creatively. It engenders a nonlinear, heartfelt, transformational way of thinking called "choice-creating," which is suitable for solving IMPOSSIBLE issues and reaching rapid consensus. Dynamic Facilitation doesn't require that participants learn a new approach. People can just be themselves. The dynamic facilitator follows group energy in a natural way, opening the door to new realms of group effectiveness and empowerment. This process is appropriate in wide ranging areas like team management, conflict resolution, transformational leadership, diversity work, community dialogue, innovation, trust-building, coaching, and addressing impossible issues.

"Ethical Dimensions of Stem Cell Research"

**Father Kevin Fitzgerald, S.J., Georgetown University
October 12, 2005- Regis University**

Dr. FitzGerald, Research Associate Professor in the Department of Oncology at Georgetown University Medical Center, came to Georgetown from a position at Loyola University Medical Center in Illinois. He received a Ph.D. in molecular genetics and a Ph.D. in bioethics from Georgetown University. During his five years at Loyola, his research efforts focused on the investigation of abnormal gene regulation in cancer and research on ethical issues in human genetics. He has published both scientific and ethical articles in peer-reviewed journals, books, and in the popular press.

United Nations Seminar

**"Threats, Challenges, and Changes at the United Nations"
Monday nights in October, 2005- Iliff Great Hall at East Iliff and
South University, All seminars are from 7:00 pm- 9:30 pm**

The United Nations is again at the center of controversy. After sixty years of successes and increasing frustrations, member neglect has left the institution struggling to maintain its effectiveness. Join us for the 3rd annual seminar series to discuss the important issues facing the U.N. today. This is a program of the U.N. Seminar Committee of the United Nations Association/Colorado. For more information, a brochure and a registration form go to <http://unseminars.coloradointernational.org> or call 303-757-2232

"Clean Talk" Workshop, facilitated by Cliff Barry November 17-18, 2005- Regis University

Given the ever-changing work environment, knowing how to speak cleanly--that is, without mixed messages and double entendres--is an opportunity leaders and co-workers can seize to increase collaboration and boost innovation and effectiveness. These human moments at work carry the seeds of real growth and productivity. The "Clean Talk" process will provide you with a way to communicate authentically and cleanly when faced with having to deliver difficult feedback or unwelcome messages. Additionally, this process will assist you to do so in ways that will strengthen your working relationships and take maximum advantage of the time you actually do spend talking while you work.

**For more information regarding any of the upcoming events or for a list of other future events
please visit our web-site at www.icgregis.org or contact us at (303) 458-4967.**

Need Help?

If you believe you may be in need of the collaborative dialogue resources of the Institute please do not hesitate to give Katie Bruen a call at 303-458-4967, email us at icg@regis.edu, or visit our website at www.icgregis.org.

Mission Statement of The Institute on the Common Good

To promote the common good through the use of dialogue, discernment and democratic deliberation.



**Institute on the
Common Good**

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