

# AOD Prepares Professionals for the New Century



Dr. Mel Silberman

Traditional teaching is being challenged as organizations and schools experience the effects of a dynamic society — profound demographic change, rapidly developing technology, and a shifting economic base. Such an environment requires adaptive professionals who are prepared for the challenges of the global economy as well as the local community.

The Adult Organizational Development (AOD) program in the College of Education prepares adult educators, administrators, trainers, consultants, instructional developers and facilitators for careers in business, education and health care. The program enables them to develop an understanding of changing social systems, facilitate adult learning, design and deliver training, and communicate effectively for team development.

A glance into the careers of some AOD graduates reveals the advantages the program offers professionals in varied occupations.

### Education and Business: A Valuable Connection

Christina M. Ferris's undergraduate field was business — but she is looking to the College of Education to complete her master's in AOD. She enrolled in the adult learning and training track and currently serves as training coordinator for the Small Business Development Center of the Fox School of Business and Management at Temple University.

"The AOD program teaches creative new approaches to adult education that really work and apply to the corporate world," Ferris says.

Recently, Ferris received the Fox School's coveted Peter Musser Award of Excellence for conducting entrepreneurial and construction management workshops. "The great variety of learning techniques in the AOD program — projects, papers and field-based practice promoted my personal effectiveness in teaching adults in the workforce," says Ferris.

Ferris appreciates the availability of courses offered in both Harrisburg and Philadelphia which are scheduled at times to fit students' busy agendas: "I am able to work while earning my degree and not take years in doing so."

Susan Snipes-Wells, creates structured, interactive, executive-level learning events for family businesses, professional advisors, and educators at the Family Business Alliance of the Fox School. She is a current student of the Organizational and Team Development track of the AOD program.

"Experiential learning in the AOD program guided me in the task of unlocking people's communication skills, which is extremely important in my business field," says Snipes-Wells. She also points out that the program provides marketable skills for an array of occupations. AOD graduates can find employment in corporate human resources and management, professional development positions for public and private schools, and team and adult development positions in many other fields.

### Training Individuals to Lead State Associations

As director of education for the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, Ed Tyson (Ed.M.'00) develops and plans educational events for an entire industry. He credits the AOD program with giving him the experience he needed to obtain employment and succeed in his profession.

"I was told the main reason I was chosen [for this position] over many other qualified candidates was on the basis of my discussion of current adult learning paradigms — a direct result of my AOD courses," says Tyson. He adds that the field-based practicum "fully immersed me into the subject matter, creating an experiential learning environment in the real world that extends far past the written word."



Ed Tyson and fellow student Denel Keister

Tyson attributes the strength of the AOD program to the College of Education faculty. "The sum total of [faculty members'] real world experience, varied teaching strategies and intellectual abilities make for a learning environment that far exceeds that of similar programs at other universities," he says.

Responding to Tyson's praise, Dr. Mel Silberman, professor and AOD program advisor, says, "We are delighted that in two short years we have built a vibrant program that combines cutting edge practice and theory as well as a rich environment for action learning. This premier program exists at the right time and in the right place — The Temple University College of Education."

### Preparing Practitioners for the Non-Profit World

The training techniques that Danielle Taylor (Ed.M.'99) acquired in AOD classes prepared her to work as an education and training specialist for Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR), where she counsels and trains individuals in sexual assault reduction.



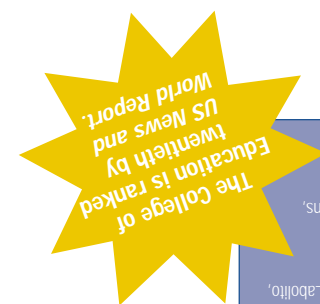
Danielle Taylor

Taylor jokes about the marketability of her degree, saying, "I picked up my diploma on a Friday, and the following Monday I started my job as a training specialist. Now can you beat that?" Turning serious, Taylor recalls an incident that proved to her the validity and importance of the program. While in a field assignment at a large investment company, she noticed reference books on her mentor's shelf — the same ones used in her classes. Taylor says

she was elated to learn that her trainer relied on the same information Temple presented. "I thought that if it is good enough for a top professional working in the field, I must be getting my money's worth."

Taylor echoes the sentiments of numerous AOD graduates about the value and applicability of the program to so many fields: "The bottom line is, that in class scheduling and in teaching methods, the College of Education made the program responsive to the needs of the adult professional."

The College of Education has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for exemplary work in staff development. The Center for Vocational Education's Teacher Leadership Network is one of only two university-based staff development programs highlighted on the Department of Education's web site for "1999 Best Practices in Staff Development."



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