



The Evaluation Center News

Newsletter of The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University

October 2007

From the Director . . .



Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation for this remarkable opportunity to become The Evaluation Center's director; it is humbling to follow such accomplished Center leaders as Arlen Gullickson, Daniel Stufflebeam, James Sanders, and Michael Scriven. We won't let them off so easily, however—I'm pleased to say they all remain active with the Center in important roles. Numerous

high achieving staff have passed through the Center over the years, and the quality of the current staff, students, and associated faculty is truly impressive. If people are the only true resource, then we are wealthy indeed.

A few words about my own background may be in order. I have been deeply involved in program evaluation for 30 years. My evaluation work has ranged across the social services, drug and alcohol addiction treatment and prevention, HIV prevention, youth development, public health, and mutual aid (mostly funded by the National Institutes of Health). I have also tried to improve the standard of evaluation whenever possible—for example, by developing and testing new instruments to measure outcomes in child welfare services and critiquing the reliance on self-reports of substance misuse that has been so common in addiction treatment evaluations.

The Center is an active, vibrant organization, but it does face certain challenges. The opportunity for evaluation, at least on the federal level, has continued its trend toward "big science"—large for-profit firms with extensive resources that qualify them to become preferred providers of evaluation services to federal agencies. Collaborations with such "primes" will be needed to enable the Center to contribute to evaluations of major national programs and

policies. The concept of "independent evaluation," with some exceptions, has become tenuous at all levels of government-sponsored evaluation. We clearly need a discussion of alternative models for program and policy evaluations of regional and national significance.

Fortunately there are opportunities for smaller, high quality evaluation and research centers at universities and nonprofit organizations, though it will be increasingly urgent to develop specialized "niches" within which a given center can successfully compete. Historically, the Center has been most prominent in evaluations related to education; and it is important to build on that record, for instance, by expanding current evaluation work on charter schools, scholarship programs (e.g., the Kalamazoo Promise), and STEM programs (e.g., Advanced Technological Education program). At the same time, other niches must be developed, for instance, by building on the Center's ongoing evaluation of Heifer International projects and perhaps my evaluations of mutual aid and peer mentoring. There is, incidentally, a common emergent theme in the aforementioned efforts—that of supporting individuals and organizations to enhance their self-reliance to enable them to achieve their full potentials.

Finally, the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation constitutes a resource that may be unique among evaluation centers. Doctoral students put their learning into action under the guidance of experienced mentors, while also making substantial contributions to Center projects. I also note that every effort is made to recruit a multicultural student cadre, since diversity brings important varied perspectives on evaluation issues.

And now I have to get back to drafting a budget . . .

Inside

Project Highlights	2
Staff Updates.....	2
Project Spotlight	3
Publications	4
Presentations	4
Ph.D. Program News	5
<i>Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation</i> ...	6



The Evaluation Center News is published by The Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University.

Lori A. Wingate, Editor
The Evaluation Center
4405 Ellsworth Hall
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5237
269-387-5895 www.wmich.edu/evalctr

Project Highlights

The Center's external awards for fiscal year 2006-07 totaled \$1.3 million. Continuing from the previous fiscal year were our evaluations of these projects/programs:

- NSF's Advanced Technological Education program
- Kamehameha Schools' programs in Hawaii
- Delaware charter school initiative
- High/Scope Ready Schools assessment instrument
- 21st Century Learning Community Centers program for Kalamazoo Community in Schools Foundation
- Middle School Enrichment program for Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Milwaukee Math Partnership for the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee
- University of Montana's Partnership for Comprehensive Equity
- No Disposable Kids program for Starr Commonwealth and Kalamazoo Public Schools
- Bay-Arenac ISD's ParentConnect and EvenStart
- Rapides Foundation's Systemic Initiative in Education in central Louisiana
- CDC's Swift Worksite Assessment and Translation methodology
- Education for the Arts, a Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency program funded by the Gilmore Foundation
- Federal Railroad Administration's Confidential Close Call Reporting System (subcontract to New Vectors)
- Sarah Bush Lincoln Health System's Healthier Communities initiative
- Tsunami hazards in Alaska

The Center acquired seven new projects in FY 2006-07:

Birth of the American Evaluation Association (AEA). AEA selected the Center to document the history of birth of the organization through interviews with key players in the merger and analysis of historical records.

Charter School Student Achievement in the Great Lakes Region. Through a subcontract with Arizona State University's (ASU) Educational Policy Studies Lab, the Center is conducting secondary analysis of student achievement data for charter schools in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Charter School Teacher Attrition in the Great Lakes Region. Through another subcontract with ASU, the Center is researching the causes of teacher attrition in charter schools in Great Lakes states.

Heifer Learning Centers. Using the Key Evaluation Checklist as a framework, the Center is evaluating the impact and quality of Heifer Learning Centers' programs.

Heifer International. Teams comprised of Center staff and doctoral students evaluated Heifer projects in China and West Africa. This follows our prior evaluations of Heifer projects in Albania, Nepal, Thailand, and the U.S.

Kalamazoo Promise. With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, The Evaluation Center, Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), and Upjohn Institute are studying the impact of the Kalamazoo Promise, which provides KPS graduates with up to 4 years of tuition and fees at any public college or university in Michigan.

Oral Health Program Evaluation Plan. The Center is developing a comprehensive evaluation plan for the Michigan Department of Community Health's oral health program.

Staff Updates

Dr. Stephen Magura, Ph.D., C.S.W., began his directorship of The Evaluation Center on July 2, 2007 (see p. 1).



Chris Coryn

Dr. Chris Coryn is now a senior research associate at the Center and program manager of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in evaluation (IDPE) (see p. 5). Dr. Coryn was the first student to complete the IDPE program. He defended his dissertation, *Evaluation of Researchers and Their Research: Toward Making the Implicit Explicit*, on June 1, 2007.



Dan Stufflebeam, Arlen Gullickson

Drs. Daniel Stufflebeam, Arlen Gullickson, and Michael Scriven retired from the University on June 30, 2006. Drs. Stufflebeam and Gullickson continue to have offices in the Center. Dr. Scriven moved home to California. He continues to serve as advisor to many IDPE students.



Michael Scriven (center) with IDPE students

Project Spotlight: Evaluating the Kalamazoo Promise

Announced in November 2005, the Kalamazoo Promise is a scholarship program that provides four years of tuition and fees at any public college or university in Michigan for all students who graduate from Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), reside in the district, and have been KPS students four years or more (with continuous enrollment/residency). The benefit ranges from 65 to 100 percent of tuition and mandatory fees, depending on how long a student was enrolled in KPS.

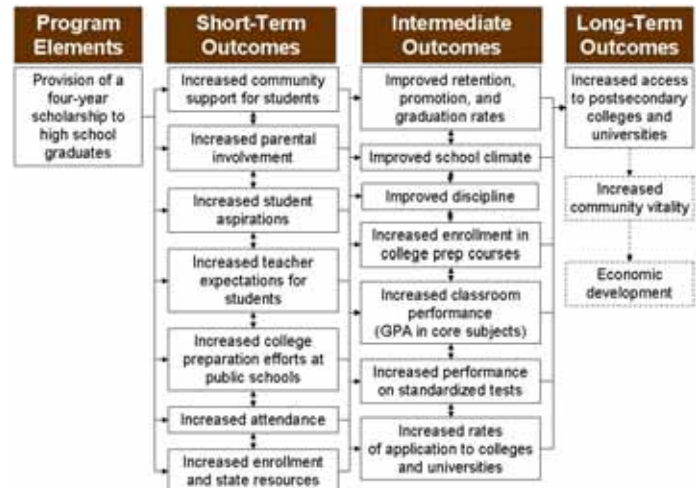


A few of the approximately 775 KPS students who have benefited from the Kalamazoo Promise since its inception

The Promise is supported by anonymous donors and has no stated goals, although many envision it as a tool for economic development. Indeed, the Kalamazoo Promise Web site (kalamazoopromise.com) offers the observation “that there is a strong correlation between overall academic achievement and a community’s economic vitality and quality of life.” The scope and unique nature of this scholarship program has garnered national attention, and a number of other communities across the country are attempting to replicate it.

The Evaluation Center, in partnership with the Kalamazoo Public School District, submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education to evaluate the systemic change brought about by the Kalamazoo Promise. This proposal for a 2-year evaluation focusing on the educational impacts of the program was approved, and work on it started in the spring of this year. Dr. Gary Miron, chief of staff of The Evaluation Center, is leading the project; Stephanie Evergreen is project manager. The evaluation’s purpose is to determine whether or not the Kalamazoo Promise—through its transformative effect on the educational culture within the school district, students, and parents, and the engagement of the community—improves the progress of students through their K-12 experiences and better prepares them for success in postsecondary educational programs. The evaluation is both formative and summative in nature and seeks to understand and measure the program’s short-term, intermediate, and potential long-term educational outcomes. The evaluation team developed a logic model to map these outcomes and are collecting data to

determine impacts in each of the identified areas as well as to discern any unanticipated effects of the program, either positive or negative.



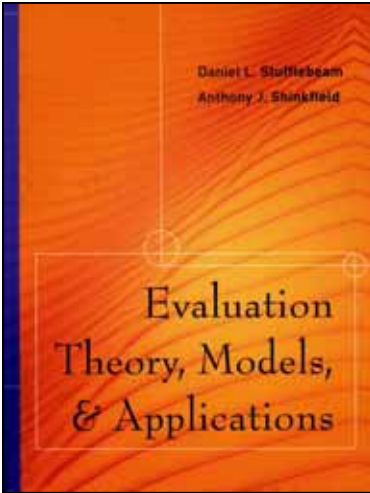
Data collection activities include interviews with district students, teachers, and administrators and community members; an annual survey of high school students; and a review of public and district documentation. Center staff also are engaged in conducting residual gains analyses of school-level indicators, whereby individual KPS schools are compared with demographically similar schools in the state. The Evaluation Center is collaborating with WMU’s College of Education and the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research on other data collection activities.

By the end of this evaluation, there should be a solid base of evidence regarding the short-term as well as many of the anticipated intermediate outcomes, including changes in student achievement on standardized tests. Early indications suggest that systemic change is occurring and that diverse stakeholder groups are working on more focused and coordinated goals, particularly improving student readiness for college. Complete findings from the first year of the evaluation are expected to be made available to the public in spring 2008.

The Evaluation Center also has been advising and providing evaluation support to other communities in the country that are seeking to replicate the Kalamazoo Promise.

For more information about the Kalamazoo Promise evaluation, please visit www.wmich.edu/evalctr/promise

Publications



With Anthony Shinkfield, **Daniel Stufflebeam** coauthored *Evaluation Theory, Models, & Applications*. This text includes several checklists that were originally published in the checklists portion of The Evaluation Center's Web site. It applies several evaluation models to a single evaluation case and includes review exercises and discussion questions.

With Duane Gill, **Liesel Ritchie** published articles in *Sociological Inquiry* (forthcoming) and *Sociological Spectrum* related to their research on technological disasters. Dr. Ritchie is editing an upcoming special issue of the *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy* called "Voices of Katrina."

Chris Coryn and **Michael Scriven** are editing a forthcoming issue of *New Directions for Evaluation* on the evaluation of research.

Chris Coryn had articles published in the *Evaluation Journal of Australasia* and *The Qualitative Report*, as well as a review of the book *Dyadic Data Analysis* in the *American Journal of Evaluation*.

Gary Miron authored chapters in three forthcoming books: *Battleground Schools: An Encyclopedia of Conflict and Controversy*, *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy*, and *Handbook of Research on the Politics of Education*.

Chris Coryn, James Sanders, and Michael Scriven published articles in the *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*.

➔ Numerous **reports** on Evaluation Center projects are available on our Web site. The best way to find them is via the portal to project-specific sections of our site:

wmich.edu/evalctr/project-web

Presentations

Chris Coryn, Anne Cullen, Arlen Gullickson, Gary Miron, James Sanders, and Michael Scriven presented at the American Evaluation Association meeting in Portland in November.

Anne Cullen, Arlen Gullickson, Gary Miron, Liesel Ritchie, and Michael Scriven gave presentations at the American Educational Research Association meeting in Chicago in April.

The Evaluation Center was represented at the CREATE conference in July 2006 by **Arlen Gullickson, Jerry Horn, Mary Ramlow, Barbara Wygant, and Pamela Zeller**.

Chris Coryn presented a paper at the meeting of the European Evaluation Society/United Kingdom Evaluation Society in London in October ('06) and the Japanese Evaluation Society conference in Tokyo in December.

Chris Coryn and Liesel Ritchie presented a paper at the Mid-South Sociological Society conference in October.

Gary Miron led a Broad Seminar at the Hechinger Institute, Columbia University in September. He also gave presentations for the Louisiana school superintendents, Delaware State Board of Education, National Education Association governing board, the Michigan State University College of Education, and the World Bank Institute.

Steve Magura had several studies presented at the annual conference of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) in Quebec, Canada, in June. He is an elected member of CPDD and serves on the publications committee.

Several staff members have been active in The Evaluation Center's Evaluation Café series, including **Chris Coryn, Liesel Ritchie, James Sanders, Michael Scriven, and Daniel Stufflebeam**.



The **Evaluation Café** schedule is available on our Web site. Photos and slides from most past previous presentations are also available.

wmich.edu/evalctr/evalcafe

Ph.D. Program News

After just four years in existence, WMU's groundbreaking Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation (IDPE) program has 26 active students and 2 graduates—Nadini Persaud and Chris Coryn. Dr. Persaud is a faculty member in the Department of Management Studies at the University of the West Indies in Barbados. Dr. Coryn stepped up as program manager for the IDPE program after the departure of Michael Scriven, who headed the program from 2004-07. Dr. Daniel Stufflebeam, who founded and directed The Evaluation Center from 1965 to 2002 and designed the IDPE program, is mentoring Dr. Coryn in his new role.



New IDPE students: Awgu Ezechukwu, Brandy Pratt, Tererai Trent, and Melisa Borgos-Colon

Six new students started the program this fall. *Melisa Borgos-Colon* received her master's degree in planning from the University of Puerto Rico. *Awgu Ezechukwu* has an M.P.A. from WMU and M.S. in economics from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. *Brandy Pratt* has an M.P.A. from American University. *Tererai Trent*, originally from Zimbabwe, has an M.S. in plant pathology from Oklahoma State University. *Anne Cullen*, a project manager at The Evaluation Center, has an M.S. in agricultural economics from Michigan State University. *Stephanie Means* received her M.S. in engineering management from WMU.

If there were any concerns about the sustainability of the program following the retirement of Dr. Scriven, one of the most formidable figures in evaluation, they have been allayed as Dr. Coryn has hit the ground running in his new role—establishing internships for students, winning grants for evaluation projects that will provide students with employment and practical experience, securing additional associateships from the University, recruiting additional WMU faculty to join the IDPE faculty, and shepherding students through the program.

One of the main tenets of the IDPE program is that the best way to learn about evaluation is to do it. In keeping

with that philosophy, Dr. Coryn worked out an arrangement with Kalamazoo Communities in Schools (KCI), whereby 2 IDPE students will serve as interns with KCI, providing assistance with internal evaluation and needs assessment activities. Each intern will provide 8-12 hours of service per week, gaining valuable practical experience and providing KCI with needed services. Additionally, a 2-year task order agreement with Chicago Public Schools will provide paid work opportunities for advanced IDPE students, under Dr. Coryn's supervision. Projects may range in value from \$50,000 to \$1 million.

WMU's Graduate College approved four additional associateships for the program, which means six IDPE students will receive full University support beginning in fall 2008. An additional achievement is the Stufflebeam Fellowship, which provides up to \$1,000 to a new IDPE student to support his or her travel to the American Evaluation Association (or other relevant) conference. This year's recipient is first-year student Melisa Borgos-Colon.

Dr. Coryn is advising University librarians on how to spend library monies allocated for the IDPE program. This will ensure that IDPE students and others at WMU have access to a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of evaluation books and journals.

Three WMU professors recently joined the IDPE faculty: Dr. Mozhdéh Bruss, associate professor of family and consumer sciences; K.C. O'Shaughnessy, professor of management; and Harold Glasser, associate professor of environmental studies/ The success of the IDPE program and its students depends on the engagement of its universitywide, interdisciplinary faculty.



Mozhdéh Bruss



K.C. O'Shaughnessy



Harold Glasser

IDPE students John Risley and Thomaz Chianca, both of whom started the program in 2003, expect to defend their dissertations (respectively, *Evaluation Principles and Practice in International NGOs* and *Legislative Program Evaluation in the U.S.*) this fall. Three students are expected to defend in the in the spring.

For more information about the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Evaluation at WMU, please visit www.wmich.edu/evalctr/phd

Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation

The *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation (JMDE)*, in its fourth year and eighth issue, is now published using the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal System. The journal's past issues are slowly being transferred to the new system's archives, and we hope to have the move completed later this year or early next year (as well as publishing HTML versions of all of the papers that have appeared in the journal). Issues 5, 6, 7, and 8 are currently available in these archives; and 1, 2, 3, and 4 still can be found at evaluation.wmich.edu/jmde. Other recent changes include a new and more easily recognizable and recallable domain name—the journal's new URL is jmde.com—and indexing of the journal in ERIC and several other scholarly databases. References to *JMDE* papers are now beginning to emerge in journals such as the *American Journal of Evaluation*, *New Directions for Evaluation*, *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, and *Evaluation and Program Planning*, as well as on many government Web sites and in a few policy-related documents and reports (e.g., The Tertiary Education Committee of New Zealand report (*ex*)*Citing Research: A*

Bibliometric Analysis of New Zealand University Research 1981-2005). Contributors to *JMDE* include some of evaluation's leading theorists and practitioners, such as Tom Cook, Lois-ellin Datta, Brad Cousins, Michael Bamberger, Christina Christie, Stuart Donaldson, William Fear, E. Jane Davidson, Michael Scriven, John Hattie, Hellmut Eggers, Richard Hake, Wolfgang Beywl, and James Sanders. The journal has more than 1,000 subscribers in more than 100 countries and averages more than 3,000 unique downloads per issue.



JMDE editors are Michael Scriven and E. Jane Davidson. Chris Coryn and Daniela Scroeter are associate editors. Visit jmde.com.

The Evaluation Center
4405 Ellsworth Hall
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo MI 49008-5237