



Newsletter

Spring 2006

OPEN Doors to AEA

By Eric Einspruch, OPEN founding member

This fall, the American Evaluation Association (AEA) annual conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, for the first time ever. Mel Mark, AEA President, a recognized leader in the field of evaluation, and last year's OPEN annual conference guest speaker, will present the plenary address on the conference theme "The Consequences of Evaluation". Those who have attended previous AEA conferences know they provide outstanding opportunities for professional development and networking. Some OPEN members are already planning to make the most of this opportunity to attend the AEA conference without the usual high travel and hotel costs.

This year the American Evaluation Association, which now has about 4000 members from all 50 States and from 60 foreign countries, celebrates its twentieth year as a leading professional association for evaluators. AEA has developed the Guiding Principles for Evaluators and has championed the cause of professional accountability. The Association publishes two leading professional journals, produces position papers on major issues, and promotes professional networking and exchange of ideas via listservs.

OPEN is actively involved in the 2006 conference. This year will be the first time in its seven years that OPEN has not held its own conference. Instead, as Oregon's Local Affiliate of AEA, we will focus our efforts on enhancing the 2006 AEA conference. Several OPEN members are serving on the Local Arrangements Committee, gathering information for those attending the conference, organizing events, and assisting AEA in recruiting student volunteers for the conference. Please contact OPEN's AEA representative, Eric Einspruch at eeinspruch@rmccorp.com for involvement opportunities with OPEN's Local Arrangements Committee.

OPEN is a vibrant organization and we are delighted to help with this year's AEA conference. We have a seven year history of organizing regular technical training and networking events, as well as our own annual conferences featuring nationally known speakers. We regularly e-mail members information about job announcements and events, and we provide additional information on our web site and in our newsletter. We are currently increasing our outreach to students and working with members in the mid-Willamette Valley area to make programs available outside of Portland. All of this is made possible by the enthusiasm and hard work of our member volunteers!

We strongly encourage you to be involved in the evaluation community by attending the 2006 AEA conference in Portland, participating in OPEN activities, and informing your colleagues and professional networks of these opportunities.

Resources:

www.eval.org for complete information on AEA and the 2006 AEA conference.

www.oregoneval.org for OPEN announcements, newsletters, and contact information.

Mark Your Calendars!

By Karen Banks, Program Committee Chair

April 28 from Noon to 2 pm: What Program People Want From Researchers and What Researchers Need From Program People. Dr. David Morgan, professor at PSU, will host a Brown Bag event aimed at a wide audience of program staff, evaluators, researchers, and policymakers. Bring your lunch and OPEN will provide beverages. Dr. Morgan has specifically requested a room with lots of white boards because he promises this event will involve everyone in some interactive, hands-on activities, including time for discussion or questions.

There is **no charge** for this Brown Bag and OPEN members are encouraged to invite program managers, graduate students, faculty, and other evaluators to attend. The event will be held in the Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard, Room 380 (Horsetail Room). Parking is available in a facility across the street on the south side of the building. There is a fast food restaurant at the same corner.

May 23, 2006 from 3 pm to 5 pm: Effect Size and Power Analysis. Dr. Nancy Perrin, statistician and professor at OHSU, will be conducting a two-hour workshop for evaluators and researchers. Just think about how many times you have written a sentence like, "Although program participants performed better than the control group, the difference was not statistically significant." Perhaps you needed a sample size four times larger, but did not realize it.

One member of the Program Committee, Michael Bamberger, recently pointed out that many evaluations are doomed from the start, if the criterion is statistical significance, because it was impossible for the results to show such a difference given the sample size.

This event will be held in the Multnomah Building, Horsetail Room (380.) Parking is available in a facility across the street on the south side of the building. Attendance for this workshop is free for OPEN members and \$10 for nonmembers.

For more information on any events, please email Karen Banks at: datadetectives@comcast.net .



President's Message

Dear colleagues and friends,

I am pleased to be able to write this message in a year so full of excitement, activity and opportunity for those interested in program evaluation, and especially those involved in OPEN.

As you are probably well aware, this year Portland has the privilege of being the host city for the American Evaluation Conference, being held October 31 – November 4, 2006. Many OPEN members have already expressed interest in this year's conference, both in terms of submitting presentation proposals to AEA, and in helping this year's Oregon-based Local Arrangement's Committee plan for the arrival of AEA in beautiful downtown Portland.

In addition to this fall's AEA-hosted events, OPEN has a full schedule of events and activities planned pertaining to our theme: "Communicating: Relationships, Reporting and Responsibility." OPEN will be hosting workshops, discussions, and brownbag events throughout the year focusing on research design, power analyses, and improving communication of evaluation results as they relate to this year's theme. We will also be hosting a variety of social and networking events—something our members have asked to see more of in the upcoming year.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank this year's OPEN council, OPEN committee members, and Local Arrangements Committee volunteers. It is through the hard work of these committed individuals that OPEN is able to host so many opportunities for all of us this year.

I look forward to seeing you at this year's events, and welcome you to share your interests and ideas with me, so that OPEN can continue to benefit your professional development.

Thank you, and have a wonderful Spring!

Jerod M. Tarte, *President, 2006*