



# Newsletter

Spring 2008

## President's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues—

First I want to thank all of you for your continued support and involvement in OPEN. Our mission is to provide a regional, interdisciplinary forum for professional development, and exchange of practical, methodological, and theoretical knowledge in the field of evaluation. To address this mission, OPEN is continuing its focus on creating training sessions and workshop to assist evaluators in developing specific competencies.

Since January 2008, OPEN has sponsored the following events: SPSS Intermediate Training, SPSS Syntax Training, SAS training (with another one the end of May due to high demand), Questionnaire Development Workshop, Needs Assessment Workshop, and a Student Event. Other events that are in the works include Evaluation 101 for Funders and Those New to Evaluation. This workshop will be in June at PSU. Other skill development workshops that are being planned include AtlasTI software training, an intermediate/advanced level Logic Modeling workshop, and more SPSS Syntax training.

Second, while OPEN has been pleased with the success of these events, we realize that they likely serve specific sections of the OPEN membership. Therefore, OPEN plans on conducting a needs assessment survey to determine what other competencies evaluators need help developing. Mike Sikes, President-Elect will be heading that charge, so please watch for the survey later this year.

Third, I wanted to let you know what other tasks that the OPEN Council is taking on. Activities include an overall update to the OPEN website and the use of a better platform for maintaining the OPEN member directory.

I also want to recognize the OPEN Council. Mike Sikes (President-Elect) is an evaluation consultant that recently relocated to Oregon. Kelly Smith (Secretary) will soon be graduating from PSU with her MPA. Kelly's areas of expertise include program evaluation and policy analysis. Carolyn Manke (Financial Officer) is the Manager of Evaluation for Friends of the Children. Gina Magharious (Student Rep) has been involved with OPEN since 2006 and is working towards her PhD in Applied Psychology from PSU. Elizabeth Bamberger is our AEA Affiliate Rep and the priceless communication team includes Chari Smith (Newsletter Editor), Juna Snow (Webmaster), Pamela Clark (Communications Director), and last but certainly not least Ryan Bliss (listserv manager). I would highly encourage your to check out the brief bios for the OPEN Council members—they are impressive [http://www.oregoneval.org/OPEN\\_Leadership2008.pdf](http://www.oregoneval.org/OPEN_Leadership2008.pdf)

Thank you again for support of OPEN. Please feel free to contact me anytime at [ostrogor@ohsu.edu](mailto:ostrogor@ohsu.edu).

Tanya Ostrogorsky, OPEN President 2008

**Save the Date**

OPEN 2008 Annual Conference

Friday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

Key Note Speaker: David Fetterman

# OPEN Event Highlight: Driving Behavioral Change

By Ellen Konrad, OPEN Reporter

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, local public opinion researcher Mike Riley gave a presentation on challenges and trends in public survey research. There were approximately 25 OPEN participants at CubeSpace. His talk was especially timely as it followed closely on the heels of the surprisingly inaccurate poll predictions of the New Hampshire presidential primary results. Riley acknowledged the outcome with a wry smile. He noted that while national polling organizations have developed increasingly sophisticated survey research techniques that make such large-scale errors rare, they are nonetheless humbling experiences and provide opinion researchers with cautionary reminders of the modern challenges to obtaining credible survey information.



Effective assessment of public opinion and the potential affects of policy interventions on citizen behavior require the use of diverse, multiple methods and the constant refinement of survey techniques. Researchers can no longer assume they are reaching a cross-section of the public through traditional telephone surveys—especially the inclusion of young people—and therefore sample frames must increasingly include cell phone users. Researchers are also finding prospective respondents less willing to take the time to participate in surveys and more skeptical about the value of their participation.

Survey researchers are turning increasingly to the use of web-based polls, web panels (i.e., recruiting people to participate as needed), traditional focus groups, and thoughtful “listening” to comments in public venues or on Internet chat rooms pertinent to the study topic. Whenever possible, researchers should try to target specific segments of the public because those individuals are more likely to have a strong connection to the study topic and their contact information may be more readily available from institutional sources (e.g., students, new mothers, voters). A possible strategy for obtaining responses from transient or homeless populations might be to work with public libraries to survey users of public access computers. Despite these challenges, public opinion surveys continue to be effective tools for measuring public awareness of a topic, changes in perceptions and attitudes, and ultimately, changes in individual behavior.

## OPEN Community News

This is a new feature in the OPEN newsletter. It highlights happenings in the OPEN evaluation community including publications, new contracts, and/or other interesting news. In this newsletter, we are featuring the following organizations: Research into Action, NPC Research, and Independent Consultant Sharon Baggett.

### **Recent Publications and Presentations:**

#### Research Into Action:

“Lessons from NEEA’s Hospitals Market Initiative.” With Jane S. Peters and David Cohan. *Proceedings of the 2008 National Symposium on Market Transformation*. American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. April 2008.

“Bedpans, Baked Beans and Businessmen: Changing the Business Practices that Drive Energy Use in Hospitals, Grocery Stores, and Commercial Real Estate.” With Marjorie McRae, David Cohan and Rick Kunkle. *Proceedings of the 2008 National Energy Services Conference*. International Association of Energy Services Professionals. Phoenix, AZ. January 2008.

#### NPC Research:

Burrus, S. W. M., & Green, B. L. (April 2008). *Oregon Relief Nursery Statewide Data Quality Review Progress Summary*. Prepared for Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Salem, OR. NPC Research: Portland, OR.

Burrus, S. W. M., Worcel, S. D., & Aborn, J. A. (March 2008). *Harford County Family Recovery Court (FRC) Evaluation: Process, Outcome and Cost Report*. Prepared for Harford County Family Recovery Court, Bel Air, MD. NPC Research: Portland, OR.

## OPEN Community News cont'd

### Major evaluation contract awards or major new in-house evaluations:

#### Research into Action

- Pacific Gas & Electric - process evaluation of PG&E's energy efficiency programs in the agricultural and food processing segment
- Southern California Edison - process evaluations of several of SCE's Innovative Designs for Energy Efficiency Activities [IDEEA] programs
- Avista Utilities - verification audit of energy savings from energy efficiency programs.
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory - to conduct a workforce needs assessment for the entire U.S. energy efficiency services industry
- Northwest Power and Conservation Council - review of impact evaluation research on energy efficiency programs

#### Sharon Baggett, Independent Consultant

- Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services Needs Assessment for long-range planning (in conjunction with the Institute on Aging, PSU)
- Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services Information & Assistance Services Evaluation
- National Park Foundation, Volunteer Innovation Program Evaluation

#### NPC Research

- Portland Relief Nursery Trauma Network Evaluation
- Oregon Children's Relief Nursery Statewide Evaluation
- Oregon Access to Student Assistance Programs in Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE) Evaluation
- Missouri Meth Users in Drug Courts: Program Elements Associated with Success
- Rutland Vermont Adult Drug Court Evaluation

### **Staff Highlights**

NPC recently hired three staff who are a welcome additions to the research and support teams!

- **Wendy Nuzzo**, Project Assistant, data processor for the Healthy Start Evaluation Project.
- **Becky Moreno**, Project Assistant, data collector/interviewer for the Washington County Oxford House Evaluation.
- **Tiana Jacobson**, Administrative Assistant, has numerous responsibilities in providing vital assistance to staff.

With the recent resurgence of interest in energy efficiency, Research Into Action has grown from five to 11 employees over the past year.

Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue: Carolyn Manke, Tanya Ostrogorsky, Ellen Konrad, Juliette Mackin, Ryan Bliss, and Sharon Baggett. If you would like to contribute to our next issue and/or want to be included in the OPEN Community News section, please contact the OPEN Newsletter editor Chari Smith at [chari@crsmithconsulting.com](mailto:chari@crsmithconsulting.com).

Thank you!