

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS FUTURES PLANNING**

The College of Education and Health Professions is currently engaged in a strategic planning process that will set the course and direction of the college for the next five years and beyond. Dean Smith has expressed his desire in seeing nothing less than total transformation in the college; incremental change at the margins is not enough. In addition to setting stretch goals for the college, aligning stakeholders, and addressing the organizational structure and policies of the college, the transformation will also include the culture of the college and is intended to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration.

The College has selected Appreciative Inquiry as the methodology for guiding this transformation. Appreciative Inquiry first emerged in the 1980's at Case Western Reserve University as an organizational development tool. AI turns traditional organizational development on its head by focusing on strengths instead of weaknesses, and by rooting out the causes of success instead of uncovering the causes of failure. Instead of getting mired in analysis paralysis that is focused on the past, AI helps the entire organization, including both internal and external stakeholders, focus on a compelling vision for the future that all stakeholders are committed to making a reality. AI focuses on what gives meaning and life to a particular organization and then leverages the strengths that already exist to move the organization to new levels of performance and excellence.

At the initial meeting of the Design Team, faculty, staff, and students spoke with conviction when asked, "for the sake of what are we doing this?" Their answers included:

- For the sake of the health and well-being of the people of this state.
- For the sake of the future economic health of the state of Arkansas.
- For the sake of the institution, the University of Arkansas, because a strong, vibrant, top ranked college of education and health professions enhances the reputation of the entire institution.
- For the sake of the college itself, to attract the faculty, staff, students, and resources that it needs.
- For the sake of our children whose health and education rests in our hands.

Appreciative Inquiry is a process of diligently and consistently seeking out the best that is currently being practiced and building upon existing strengths to take the college to new levels of achievement and recognition. The process includes several distinct components, including AI interviews and an AI whole systems summit.

How can the Advisory Council help the college? First, by participating in the AI interview process and sharing your thoughts about the college and its future with one of our Design Team members. Second, by participating in the summit, tentatively scheduled for the first week of January or the first week of February 2011.