

CHALLENGING EXCLUSION AND PROMOTING PARTICIPATION:

Celebrating Twenty Years of the
Forum for Access and
Continuing Education (FACE)

Edited by Dr Tony Acland MBE

July 2013

The logo for the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) is displayed in a large, stylized font. The word 'FACE' is written in a light blue color. The letter 'F' is significantly larger and is filled with a darker teal color. A horizontal teal arrow extends from the right side of the 'F' across the middle of the 'A', 'C', and 'E'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to all members and associates of the *Forum for Access and Continuing Education* (FACE) who have contributed to this special 20th FACE Anniversary publication.

Anthony Hudson, Dr Jamie Mackay, Agnieszka Spytowska and Tom Ward deserve particular mention for their support in terms of providing information and resources in the compilation of this edition. From inception to completion, the FACE Chair, Professor John Storan, has proved an inspiration and provided guidance throughout the publication's development.

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) for its considerable contribution to the post compulsory education sector during the last twenty years.

As this publication demonstrates, FACE has enjoyed 20 years of successful networking and support, becoming a valued and significant player in the field of access to HE and lifelong learning. In particular, it has built a well deserved reputation for its conferences, publications and networking capacity - all of which are reflected in the contributions to this publication.

At a time when promoting access to higher education presents both challenges and opportunities, it is important that organizations such as FACE continue to provide policy makers and educational leaders with an informed practitioner voice.

I therefore thank FACE for the sustained services it has provided over the last 20 years, both to its membership and indeed to the sector as a whole.

**Professor Les Ebdon CBE,
Director of Fair Access to Higher Education**

PREFACE

From its inception FACE has been a member led organisation providing a forum for members and non-members to come together. It has done this for the last 20 years which is quite some achievement.

This publication is therefore in part celebration as well as testament to the amazing work and contribution that FACE has made over those 20 years through the recollections of those who have been directly involved in a variety of ways. This collection of papers includes a wide range of reflections and commentaries from members and non-members who have both contributed to and benefited from FACE over the years. The reflections and comments in the three sections speak not only of the broader and ever changing context in which FACE has been operating over the last two decades but also of the ways in which FACE has developed as organisation. FACE was established in 1993 following the abolition of the binary line in HE although its origins can be traced beyond. Over the years it has become a highly effective network with a strong and developing membership offering a range of services. For some contributors to this publication it is the excellent annual conference, networking, practice and knowledge exchange opportunities that have proved particularly valuable. For others it has been the opportunity that FACE has provided to get published perhaps for the first time in one of the growing collection of publications that it independently produced which have together created a body of knowledge which has been the foundation and informed numerous developments in support of HE to access and lifelong learning including national policy, funding and institutional activities and behaviour. For still other contributors it is the fact that FACE is an independent member-led NGO and registered charity which provides an effective and confident voice on behalf of members.

Although FACE began as a UK focused organisation, over the years it has established formal partnerships with a number of international sister organisations, in for example Sweden and the USA. Such partnerships have led to considerable mutual benefits. We owe a debt of gratitude to all our international partners and friends who have not only been the source of inspiration but have also helped FACE develop as an organisation in so many important ways over the last two decades.

The insightful contributions in this publication provide a collective picture of not only the value of FACE in its different roles as conference organiser, publisher, network facilitator, NGO, knowledge and practice exchange, advocate and professional developer to name just a few. In reading these different accounts I was struck by the depth and extent of cooperation that has made these here fore mentioned roles possible. A number of contributors highlight such cooperation in the sense practised and exchanged across FACE networking and this in turn acts as the organisational glue which has in my view underpinned the sustainable and much valued network that FACE has undoubtedly become. Critical to this cooperation and the backbone of the network has been the FACE membership not only through the financial support they have provided but also through the input of members to the Executive Committee and the myriad of other activities that have been supported over the years. The members of the Executive Committee over the years have been highly effective in steering and managing FACE to the benefit not only of members and

their institutions but also through one of FACE's core aims which is to support and encourage a socially inclusive framework for lifelong learning, challenging exclusion and fostering full participation.

So let me finish by thanking not only each of the contributors for their rich and illuminating reflections and comments but also Tony Acland former longstanding executive member who has acted as editor for this publication and done such an excellent job. These papers truly celebrate and communicate the value and significance of FACE over the last two decades and help us to understand how we might to continue to develop it for the future. Thank you to all members and supporters past and present for knowing and understanding and indeed practicing cooperation in the ways that are captured in this publication. At a time of enormous challenge and change in further and higher education and increasing fragmentation the need for an organisation such as FACE with the strength and achievements described in these papers has perhaps never been greater.

Professor John Storan
Chair, Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE)

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of FACE Anniversary Publication

The primary aim of this publication is to celebrate the role and achievements of the *Forum for Access and Continuing Education* (FACE) during the last twenty years in the words of FACE members and associates. Equally important, contributors to this edition have aimed to look to the future at the key challenges and opportunities confronting FACE members and the sustained support that FACE membership can provide.

Following discussion by the FACE Executive of the importance of appropriately marking FACE's 20th Anniversary, the FACE Chairman wrote to all members, emphasising that:

‘As part of this celebration we want to invite written contributions from members and others who have been involved in some way with FACE over the years to share reflections, memories and experiences. The plan is to put these together in a celebratory publication.’
(Professor John Storan, September 2012).

Following this invitation, nearly 30 contributions were received from members and associates of FACE by the deadline. Contributions were received in several forms:

- i) Responses to a short questionnaire, focusing on the past and future role of FACE, including the personal benefits experienced by members.
- ii) Individual or joint papers reflecting on FACE's role in the post compulsory education sector and future challenges and opportunities.

This publication reports on the views, hopes and aspirations of FACE members and associates. A light touch editorial approach has been adopted, with the emphasis firmly on presenting the voices of contributors expressed in their own words.

First, however, it is important to set the scene by outlining the Mission, Aims, Role and Origin of the FACE community of practitioners.

Mission, Aims and Role of FACE

FACE, originally named the *Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education*, was established in 1993 as a registered charity with the mission to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information and practice to encourage continuing education and lifelong learning between practitioners and providers.

By promoting collaboration and innovation between practitioners and providers, FACE aims to support and encourage a socially inclusive framework for Lifelong

Learning, challenging exclusion and fostering full participation. As a large multi-sector network FACE plays a key role as a pressure group, service provider, staff development forum, national policy shaper, information service and event organiser.

Following a period of consultation, FACE amended its title in 2005 to the *Forum for Access, Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* reflecting the increasing importance FACE members were putting on widening access for full time and part time learners of all ages. However, as many contributors to this publication point out, widening access is but one of a number of important continuing education and lifelong learning issues that FACE focuses upon.

Origins of FACE

FACE has its roots in a long tradition of lifelong learning and continuing education forged by practitioners determined to work together to share good practice and to provide a platform to discuss key issues and ways forward with providers.

In the 1970s and 1980s the binary divide in the Higher Education (HE) sector made it difficult for practitioners to provide a united voice. Despite good will between many practitioners, lifelong learning advocates in Polytechnics found that their viewpoints and interests differed from those working in the established universities. In this context, Polytechnic practitioners felt there was a need to create a new network. This led to the development of the *Polytechnic Association for Continuing Education* (PACE) which provided a discussion forum and, to some extent, a common platform for practitioners in the new HE sector.

When the binary divide was abolished in the early 1990s, members felt that it was an appropriate time to review and reinvigorate the network and also to cooperate with a wider range of continuing education practitioners from the Further Education (FE) sector and the so-called 'Third Sector', such as research organisations, museums and educational charities. Further and extended, debate took place within the network about the relationship of PACE with the University Association for Continuing Education UACE. After deliberation it was decided that FACE would continue in its present form and look to build upon the strong base it established, it was decided that it was important to retain the integrity of the network, rather than merge with other continuing education organisations that might have different priorities. It was agreed that a name change was needed and an updated modern registered charity should be established in 1993, with the title *The Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education* (FACE).

One of the original founders of FACE and a long-standing member of its predecessor, PACE, has kindly summarised and 'brought to life' the origins of the network as a community of practice for educators in lifelong learning:

'Way back in the late 1970s, my then boss asked me to go in his place to a meeting of the *Polytechnic Association for Continuing Education* (PACE)–

he said I'd like it. I did. I soon became PACE's Secretary and minuted meetings for many years. In fact I continued all the way until FACE was born.

I soon found that PACE was a great community of practice and I was enthused by the passion, commitment and vision of the people brought together by PACE, not least their dedication to student-centred learning, making access not just possible but desirable. PACE was a real 'pathfinder' presence, not least in things such as the nascent credit accumulation and transfer which exercised our minds then – and still does in the new age of MOOCs (massive open on-line courses) and the KIS of death (key information sets) that beset educational organisations in this era of league tables. Never before has the importance of lifelong learning been so relevant to our rapidly changing world, or the potential to achieve lifelong learning so great as the digital world now allows.

Life moved on. I took early retirement in 1995, but continued to work in the broad field of educational development, and particularly in helping teaching staff to develop their ways of designing assessment and giving students feedback. All this is, of course, very close to access and continuing education, and nowadays I spend as much time in colleges as in universities, often abroad. My own life has continued to be inspired and shaped by all sorts of things that PACE and later FACE brought to my view.

I have continued to watch with interest the progress of FACE, and am so glad that the mission is still as intense as ever, and progressing as always. 20 years on, FACE is a shining example of the strength of a great community of practice, soldiering on with its important work.'

[Professor Phil Race, former Executive member of PACE and FACE]

Structure of FACE Anniversary Publication

Part One provides an overview of contributing members of the FACE Executive that responded to a short questionnaire. Members commented on:

- i) The main contribution of FACE to the post compulsory education sector during the last twenty years.
- ii) The way in which they had personally benefitted from FACE membership.
- iii) The future challenges for the sector and what role FACE could contribute.

Clear themes emerged in the survey responses. FACE was seen as a:

- supportive community or network of lifelong learning practitioners
- effective advocate of policy and practice for access and lifelong learning
- successful conference, seminar and event organiser
- unique vehicle for cross-sector engagement of practitioners

- accessible archive of knowledge, research and innovative practice and vital site for knowledge exchange through its publications

Respondents also recounted their personal experiences of the benefits of FACE membership and considered a range of future challenges and opportunities, including the importance of financial and political factors and the need to continue to find measures to engage the next generation of practitioners in the UK and internationally.

Part Two comprises of a series of papers contributed by FACE members and associates engaged in the UK post compulsory education sector.

Professor Danny Saunders OBE in *Looking Back Over Two Decades of FACE Involvement* focuses his discussion on the changing fortunes of widening participation and lifelong learning in Wales. He identifies positive educational developments following devolution, but he also looks with concern at the decline in provision for adult learners during the recession. Professor Saunders argues that FACE has been extremely helpful to policy makers and practitioners ‘... because of its ability to discuss and compare regional and national policies as well as providing support from practitioners who are engaging in new and pioneering work – in the UK as well as internationally’.

Peter Jones in *Twenty Years of FACE: Some Personal Reflections* takes the reader on a personal and professional journey. He identifies how FACE has supported his career and outlines some of the ways in which FACE has influenced national debate and policy making, for example, for championing student access and retention in higher education.

Dr Tony Acland MBE in *Memoires of a retired practitioner* endorses the past successes of FACE but argues that its future role as a practitioner led organisation is even more important as governments and leaders of academic institutions are forced to increasingly focus on value for money in a time of financial constraints. He claims that ‘FACE needs to lead the way by providing a vehicle for practioners and policy makers to debate key widening access and continuing education priorities’.

Dr Liz Marr in *FACE Response to the second call for evidence* presents an example of FACE’s increasingly important advocacy role by providing the full text of the FACE response, which she led, to the 2013 Higher Education Funding Council (Hefce) consultation invitation. Amongst a range of arguments presented, the FACE response highlights the importance of improved Information Advice and Guidance for adult learners and the desirability for national evaluation standards and protocols for specific defined activities in outreach.

David Noyce, Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) Associate Director, London and East, in *FACE Derry Conference 2013: Speaker’s experience* noted that the conference theme, Divided Communities, worked well and provoked a lot of reflections on the context in which widening participation

plays out. He found that the discussion amongst practitioners from very contrasting backgrounds was informative and productive.

Part Three provides an international focus, with papers reflecting the increasing international dimension of the FACE practitioner community.

Ted Stepp in *FACE—An Appreciation from a Practitioner in the Marshall Island, Western Pacific* views FACE as serving a key role as drawing together scholars, teachers, administrators, politicians, and students who are especially concerned about accessibility to higher education. As an international delegate, Tedd has personally participated in six annual FACE conferences since 2006. He argues that, as a developmental educator, he has been ‘enriched and supported by the FACE organisation and drivers’.

The Executive Committee of ‘Include’ in *Greetings from FACE’s Swedish Sister Practitioner Organisation: INCLUDE--- the network of Widening Participation in Sweden* explain that Include is a ‘Swedish widening participation network established in 2008 and inspired by FACE’. With half the universities in Sweden as members, including academic leaders, the network functions to support practitioners by organising events and also maintaining a dialogue with national policy makers.

USA National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) provided an extensive contribution to the FACE Anniversary Publication in *Developmental Educators Reflections on Participation at FACE annual conferences*. As a sister organisation of FACE, NADE presidents reflected on their collaboration with FACE as well as their personal experiences of FACE conferences and study visits, 2006-13. NADE presidents conclude their analysis by sending ‘sincere congratulations to the FACE organization and its members on your years of outstanding service’. NADE Presidents value their experiences and continue to benefit from the insights they received at the FACE study visits and conference and they looked forward ‘to bright prospects for another twenty years of cooperation and collaboration between FACE and NADE as we continue to undertake research, improve practices, and share common hopes for our students’ success in higher education’.

PART ONE: Survey of FACE Executive Members

In addition to the general invitation to all FACE members and those associated with FACE to provide papers on the role of FACE during the last twenty years, a short questionnaire was completed by a number of members of the FACE Executive who offered reflections and views on three questions:

1. Thinking of the last 20 years, what do you consider to be FACE's main contribution to the sector?
2. How have you personally benefitted from FACE?
3. Looking to the future, what do you consider to be the main challenges facing FACE and what can FACE contribute to the sector?

Thirteen members of the FACE Executive responded to the questionnaire, including several joint submissions. Their contributions provide a clear insight into the role and importance of FACE to the post compulsory education sector. In addition, members point to the impact that FACE membership has made to their personal development and professional competence.

Members recognised that the role of FACE and the services it provides to its membership should not be viewed in an historic or a static manner. Indeed, the majority of respondents wished to emphasise that there were significant challenges facing the sector and that FACE had an important continuing role as a powerful voice independent of the practitioner and, as such, an invaluable aid to policy makers and funding bodies.

A number of recurring themes were highlighted in the survey responses and the following survey analysis adopts a thematic approach. In order to as far as possible accurately capture the voice of the contributors, illustrative quotations are used throughout.

Community of Lifelong Learning Practitioners

All survey respondents wished to emphasise how invaluable they found FACE as a network or community of practitioners in the post compulsory education sector. Members saw FACE's contribution to the sector as, 'building a unique and independent community of good practice in lifelong learning and access to learning.' [HE manager].

Respondents were keen to argue that the organisation, as a community of practitioners, was far from the impersonal, over-formal institution that they had experienced elsewhere in the sector. They saw FACE as a friendly, equalitarian community, accessible to all practitioners. The following statements were typical of members' viewpoint:

'Fundamentally FACE is an organization which is friendly, and encourages and listens to everyone whether they be starting out in their career or in a senior position. No-one needs to be intimidated joining in with any FACE

event, and I am pleased to have been part of making it accessible to all.’
[senior HE manager]

‘FACE is a collegiate forum to learn from, share ideas with and disseminate knowledge through. (and everybody is so lovely).’
[HE Director]

Survey respondents also recognised that FACE provided an expert network of practitioners where colleagues felt secure in sharing and debating current issues, helping them, for example, to develop appropriate responses to consultation invitations from policy leaders and funding bodies:

‘FACE provides a great opportunity for all members to join an active community, and has been particularly helpful to me in bouncing ideas off colleagues while trying to compile appropriate returns to HEFCE [Higher Education Funding Council for England] in respect of Widening Participation activity, and more recently to OFFA [Office for Fair Access] in relation to Access Agreements.’ [senior HE manager].

‘FACE has provided opportunities for those in the sector to debate services and sometimes controversial issues affecting the sector – which I believe has provided senior managers and the funding authorities with a menu of solutions to improve the sector.’ [Diversity consultant]

Strong Advocate for the Practitioner

It is clear from a number of members’ responses that one of the most valuable roles of FACE is to act as ‘the Voice of the Practitioner’ [HE Director] by providing informed responses to consultation invitations from government, policy makers and funding bodies but also through publication and supporting research activity. Members perceive this advocacy role to have grown in importance during the last five years and they consider that FACE has been effective in championing the cause of lifelong learning and continuing education.

The following excerpts from the survey demonstrate the strength of opinion concerning FACE’s advocacy role:

‘FACE has been a consistent advocate for widening access in higher education and providing support to practitioners as the widening participation agenda developed.’ [senior HE manager]

‘FACE has enabled the voice of the practitioner, the student and the researcher to be heard loud and clear in the noisily contested debates about financing the sector and widening access to further and higher education.’ [research organisation representatives]

‘FACE brings together a solid UK-wide network of theorists and practitioners with the ability to influence at national level. My individual voice becomes stronger when added to others.’ [HE Director]

'It has also been an increasingly vocal mouthpiece for members to feed into the national debates about widening participation, and to the recent flood of policy consultations which have accompanied the introduction of student loans, fees and so on. Only this month the Executive has been rallied in order to ensure that the views of the WP/Access community in FE and HE are heard during the current round of conferences discussing "collaboration in a competitive world.' [senior HE manager]

Conferences, seminars and events

FACE has directly sponsored and jointly organised a number of conferences, seminars and events with universities and other professional organisations. In the survey almost all respondents indicated that FACE conferences and seminars, in particular, served an invaluable role for discussing topical lifelong learning issues and proved useful for members developing effective institutional policy and practices.

The annual FACE conference is held in high regard in the post compulsory education sector and is particularly noted for the care taken to ensure that the conference visits different regions of the UK and Ireland and is not just a London or English based event, with several conferences held in Wales and others in Scotland, the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. As respondents in Part Three emphasise, the diverse cultural venues chosen have proved to be an attractive conference feature, helping to attract international practitioners and post graduate students to engage in the lively lifelong learning discourse for which FACE has become renowned.

Since the first conference was held as a one day event in London in 1993, the annual conference has been organised over a three day period, with the travel needs of delegates facilitated by starting and ending the conference at midday. More than 3,000 delegates in total have benefitted from the FACE conference experience.

The appropriate length of the conference has been regularly reviewed, particularly considering the increasingly tight financial constraints on many institutions. In fact, as one member observed, 'delegates from across the UK and internationally have continued to support the conference in its current format, facilitating sustained discussion and network building'. [senior HE director].

The following ministerial endorsement at the 2012 annual conference in Derry, Northern Ireland, demonstrates the growing importance of the annual FACE conference. When opening the conference, Dr Stephen Farry, Minister for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland, commented that:

'This is the first time that the FACE conference has been hosted here in Northern Ireland and we are delighted that, in partnership with the University of Ulster, it was decided to hold what I believe is it's 19th annual conference here in this historic city.

Over the years the FACE conference has become the premiere annual networking opportunity for all concerned with, and involved in, higher education access, widening participation and lifelong learning. This conference has attracted, as it always does, delegates not only from every part of the UK but also from many other parts of the world. I know that FACE members and their institutions have been at the forefront of exciting developments concerned with widening participation to higher education.

This year's conference is therefore a very valuable opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and best practice in this area. Importantly, the conference presents an opportunity to hear from colleagues from a wide range of different backgrounds and contexts, coming together to contribute valuable insights in relation to the conference's theme of widening participation in divided communities.'

[Dr Stephen Farry, July 2012]

Dr Farry's view is strongly endorsed by respondents to the survey of FACE members who considered the conferences to be invaluable for sharing ideas, research and good practice, as well as being the networking opportunity of the year!

The following extracts from the survey demonstrate the high regard that members held for FACE events:

'Attending FACE annual conferences has given us access to a range of national and international practice-based evidence and insights on all aspects of the sector from well-informed students, leaders, practitioners and researchers. This has enriched our research and evaluation work in this area.' [research organisation representatives]

'The community of practitioners which comes together at the annual FACE conferences has grown up together holding as key to the post-1992 HEIs and many FE Colleges the principles of equality and access to higher education, of progression for school students and so-called "second chance" education for mature learners. With the development of this community has come a welcome influx of interest from international colleagues, many of whom have more difficult barriers to overcome, and their experience and enthusiasm has been a welcome addition to the collective spirit.' [senior HE manager]

Unique Cross-Sector Engagement of Practitioners

Some survey respondents felt that the cross sector nature of FACE's approach was a major strength. They argued that it was a unique quality for a body of practitioners to promote the needs of the whole post compulsory education sector, including Higher Education, Further Education and the so-called "Third Sector" (such as research organisations, museums and educational charities).

Several members recognised that it was not an easy task to engage Further Education and 'Third Sector' organisations on an equal footing with the powerful Higher Education sector. However, they argued that FACE's cross sector approach was unique and that FACE should continue to strive to ensure that the voices of all continuing educational practitioners were fully represented.

The following survey quotations sum up this position succinctly:

'From its inception FACE has endeavoured to bring together, bridge the gap, between the FE and HE sector in their efforts to widen participation and promote continuing education. It did lose its way during the late 1990s when the FE contribution was diminished. However, I am pleased to say that in more recent times this is being addressed.' [HE manager]

'FACE needs to build on the good work so far and help to bring together the diverse practitioners in lifelong learning together. To provide more opportunities for different sectors, FE, HE and third sector to learn from each other. [senior HE manager]

'[Compared with other networks] ... FACE provides more opportunities for different sectors, FE, HE and third sector to learn from each other.' [partnership and development manager]

The engagement of FE members has been particularly noticeable in recent years, with, for example, a strong link built with the Association of Colleges (AOC). This has helped FACE to become an important forum for raising pressing continuing education policy issues affecting both FE and HE. For example, in 'Widening Participation and Social Mobility: An Alternative View', Nick Davey, HE Policy Manager for the AOC, argued that:

'What is needed is traditional HE, probably at a lower price and with tough widening participation targets, and a flexible, consumer and employer-led 'other system' – equally funded – that focuses on higher level skills development, part-time and blended provision, and credited learning in the workplace. And that vision can only be achieved by organisations such as FE colleges and HE institutions, rooted in their local communities and with strong links to local and regional employers and schools and colleges creating local learning and qualification pathways – local tertiary eco-systems and credit accumulation and transfer schemes – that will meet the needs of all who can benefit from some form of higher education. Not an elitist system masquerading as mass; but a truly comprehensive system able to meet the learning needs of diverse learners whatever their previous educational experiences. From elitism to inclusion! (*Speaker's Corner*, FACE Bulletin, March 2013)

Accessible Archive of Knowledge, Research and Innovative Practice vital site for knowledge exchange through its publications

Respondents considered that one of the most important contributions of FACE, both to members and the sector as a whole, was the gathering and archiving of lifelong learning knowledge, research and innovative practice.

‘Through the archives which FACE has within its publications, which are an invaluable distillation of the experience of a large number of individuals and teams within the widening participation movement, operating in many institutions across the UK and beyond, current and future activists will undoubtedly be able to find support and encouragement, and solutions to some of their current issues. It is important that we all try to ensure that this archive is accessible.’
[senior HE manager]

‘It [FACE] has built up a strong body of evidence about what works at international and national levels.’ [HE Director]

‘FACE has been at the vanguard of innovative practitioner research and practice through conferences, publications and seminars. The FACE network has been an expansive conduit for ideas, practice and support for WP practitioners across UK and beyond. It’s reach often much further than its membership base might suggest.’ [Third Sector manager]

‘FACE enables members to keep up to date with developments in other geographical areas; build a sound knowledge base; and have a source of information and comment from like-minded and respected professionals.’
[HE Director]

As several members of the FACE Executive have emphasised, FACE has not simply acted as an archive of lifelong knowledge and research, but also has actively engaged in promoting its development. This has taken several forms, through the:

- i) opportunity to contribute new ideas and information on the FACE website. ‘Speakers Corner’, for example, has been a particularly popular showcase for Executive Members to share their latest thinking on lifelong learning policy challenges and developments.
- ii) Since 2003, the annual FACE edited book has engaged 476 UK and international lifelong learning practitioners, contributing 276 peer reviewed articles. The publication has developed a growing reputation and, for example, has been recommended reading on post graduate programmes.

Members recognised that developing, exchanging and archiving information had been greatly facilitated during the last ten years by an excellent website. It was recognised that this was not only important for current members, but it was also essential for attracting practitioners at early stages of their careers. The growing

importance of using modern technology was succinctly summed up by the following survey contribution:

‘For me, I was interested in joining an organisation that was unafraid to embrace new technologies and tools to truly outreach to existing and new potential members. Through the website, FACE has been able to provide a strong shop-front to communicate to WP practitioners who and what it is and - more importantly - the significance of the work that it undertakes. The social media platforms - Facebook and Twitter - have complemented the website and introduced new ways to engage and interact with members and non-members alike. Moreover, they act as an important tool to entice new members to sign up! I look forward to seeing how the organisation develops further.’
[HE development manager]

Members Personal Experiences of the benefits from FACE

Almost all respondents to the survey wished to emphasise the way in which they had personally experienced the benefit of FACE membership. Members felt that they had become more effective as practitioners, as well as enhancing their usefulness to their employers.

Members expressed the view that FACE was a friendly and welcoming community that helped them share good practice and discuss the development of policies and strategies in their own organisations. They also felt that it was not just about sharing ideas and information, but FACE also provided excellent personal support from other members.

The following comments are typical of the responses demonstrating the personal value members attached to FACE membership:

‘Excellent [FACE] network contacts have provided me with support and inspiration in my work. Information and ‘the inside track’ on developing policy issues in higher education.’ [senior HE manager]

‘Even when things appeared insurmountable, I have genuinely been heartened by knowing that I have friends in FACE who I can call to discuss things with. This has been particularly helpful sometimes in a regional context, and the local informal FACE networks for me were very important in devising early responses to Aimhigher activities, and also to the creation of Access Agreements and WP Strategic Statements
[widening access manager]

‘FACE is an organisation which has provided a range of essential support mechanisms to me personally and to many of my colleagues over the last 20 years.’ [HE manager]

‘FACE was the first organised ‘professional association’ that I came across when I first began working in widening access in 2002. At that time, there was no other national organisation devoted purely to the work of widening access. There was also a platform for presenting papers and contributing to the research agenda, which is still very much needed in the sector across the UK.’

[widening access practitioner]

‘Amazing opportunities for networking and establishing working partnerships – and personally given me opportunities to present papers on promoting diversity.’ [Diversity consultant]

Future Challenges and Opportunities

As members looked to the future, they identified key challenges and important opportunities for the FACE community of practitioners.

Financial constraints and being cost effective: Several members were concerned about the difficult financial constraints facing the sector and they wished to highlight the importance of continuing FACE’s scrupulous policy of keeping administrative costs to a minimum, as well as the fees charged for membership and attendance at events. As the lifelong learning policy debate takes on an increasingly global dimension, members see FACE as having a key role as a cost effective forum for discussion and policy formulation.

The following statement from a survey respondent explored the relationship between financial constraints and the growing role of FACE in the UK and internationally:

‘There will be much less money in the sector generally and it may be harder to make some FACE events sustainable. There are other organisations lobbying hard for recognition in order to keep paid administrations in post. We need to lobby equally hard to ensure that funding remains directed at the needs of students rather than on job creation schemes. Our contribution to the opportunities for adult and lifelong learners needs to be emphasised so we don’t become a lone and overshadowed voice. Current European networks are ineffective and global ones too expensive to participate in. We need to find ways of expanding within those constraints.’

[HE inclusion and partnership director]

Political constraints and opportunities: Other members argued that there was a constraining political context, as well as financial limitations, affecting the work of the lifelong learning practitioners. They saw that FACE as having an increasingly important role in responding to such pressures, as the following comments demonstrate.

‘Dealing with the changing political environment and the funding of widening access and continuing education will continue to be a major

challenge. Engaging and influencing the senior manager community in higher education will also always be important for this agenda. FACE's strength in this regard is its expanded network across the UK, its capacity to lobby UK Government and its indefatigability in driving forward the work of access in the UK.' [HE manager]

'The main challenges facing FACE during the next two years focus on identifying, and shaping if possible, the most likely policy changes to the sector after the next general election (2015). This will involve positioning ourselves with the necessary intelligence and networking so that FACE can make its mark on any new developments in the sector.' [HE director]

Sustained voice for policy development: Members argued that the FACE organisation and community of practitioners offered the sector a sustained voice and continuity in forthcoming debates on policy developments and strategies. They felt that FACE should continue 'to act as a voice of informed experience in developing the agenda of lifelong learning and access. [senior HE manager]

The following statements sum up members' aspirations for FACE providing an effective voice for practitioners:

'FACE can contribute to the sector by providing targeted expert inputs to the policy discourse through conversations with government ministers and their 'shadows', conference and seminar presentations and consultation submissions which articulate, where appropriate, alternative policy directions, policy refinements and different ways of change management which will improve students' opportunities and learning experience.' [research organisation representatives]

'FACE should focus on getting HE institutions working closely with the lower levels of the education sector to promote WP/Access through partnerships and collaboration. FACE had established a firm reputation for facilitating policy development and universities should beware of turning to "pop-up organisations" trying to gain popularity' [Senior HE manager]

Engaging young and international practitioners: There was a view from long-standing members that FACE should redouble its efforts to engage younger practitioners in the UK and internationally as FACE had a great deal to offer as a practitioner community. The following arguments were developed:

'It is vital that FACE continues to attract passionate individuals who will engage with the policy and law makers both here in the UK and back in their own countries, and will create their own ongoing support groups and professional friendships. New members would benefit from critical peer support that FACE offers, the importance of which cannot be overstated.' [HE director]

In a climate of change and a certain loss of ardor for WP in some institutions the support, guidance and encouragement offered by FACE to colleagues is invaluable. The level of experience and expertise of FACE members combined with its international partnerships and links places the organization in a unique position to inform, lobby and support best practice in WP not only in all parts of the UK but further afield.
[‘third sector’ manager]

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG): Concern was expressed with the decline in effective IAG for learners of all ages. As one member noted:

‘The breaking up of longstanding IAG networks, with many new entrants to this area of work is a huge challenge. There is no clear source of information. FACE can contribute by continuing to press for a national voice through collaboration. [Head of progression and partnerships]

PART TWO: Reflections of UK FACE Members and Associates

Part Two contains papers contributed by FACE members and associates engaged in the UK post compulsory education sector. These papers constitute considered responses to the FACE Executive's general invitation (September 2012) for contributions to the Anniversary Publication.

Looking Back Over Two Decades of FACE Involvement

Professor Danny Saunders OBE

Looking back over two decades of FACE involvement there seem to be two developments which have in particular had a massive impact on lifelong learning and widening participation. The first is devolution, with the replacement of the Welsh Office by a National Assembly for Welsh Government. Widening access to further and higher education has been a key feature within subsequent policies, alongside an interest in making Wales a distinctive and imaginative place for learning. The recent challenges in Wales are profound given the regional impact of recession within a nation that has a huge amount of public sector employment as well as private sector companies depending almost totally on the public sector for their business. But not withstanding these economic difficulties there are also many positive features for lifelong learning in Wales - including the Welsh language, lower university fees, and a strong track record for access achievements including the Community University of the Valleys led by the Department for Adult Education in Swansea and the Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute led by the Universities of Glamorgan and Newport. Wales has not experienced some of the major developments in England – such as Aim Higher or the Lifelong Learning Networks or the Office for Fair Access. There has however been a very keen interest in learning about what has happened across the border, and seeing how organisations and individuals view the overall impact of these initiatives on learning by disadvantaged groups and communities. **This is where FACE comes in, because of its ability to discuss and compare regional and national policies as well as providing support from practitioners who are engaging in new and pioneering work – in the UK as well as internationally.** We hosted a FACE conference at the University of Glamorgan, and realised that this community of like minded colleagues was very special indeed. There was so much to learn from all of the projects and initiatives – not to mention sharing some of our own experiences and good practice.

The second development is I am afraid less pleasant and extends well beyond Wales. Despite the publicising of all the laudable widening access policies and strategies within the UK, and despite all of the well intentioned partnership working and collaborative consortia, **lifelong learning within the UK has simply nose dived when it comes to the provision of adult education in community settings. There has been widespread closure of extra mural and continuing education departments, and the gap has not always been filled successfully through alternative provision. And when it comes to campus based adult learning, the statistics reveal a steady decline in part-time enrolments for higher education courses. FACE has continually warned about the dangers of a sector-wide pre-occupation with full-time learners**

who will not drop-out – the “safe student” agenda which inevitably favours the less disadvantaged learners. The Forum has campaigned and lobbied for more effective policies and strategies which provide an additional widening access dimension for student recruitment and retention both on and off campus. This is not the place to detail why adult community learning has declined or how it has been done or who is responsible; all I want to emphasise is that this is the time to make sure that all of the lifelong learning practitioners and advocates have a community of practice to draw on for support and advice. FACE focuses on high profile access operations which reflect civic engagement by entire institutions. In so doing it is an association which recognises the needs of a constituency so often in the throes of organisational restructuring, not to mention all of the fixed term employment contracts for project staff and the need to continually provide funding agencies with evidence about learner attainment and progression. This is why FACE is invaluable, not just because of its annual conferences but also through all of the networks, website, executive meetings, regional seminars, and publications. I would like to say a big thank you to all of the friends and colleagues in this great international network called FACE; people who have helped provide so much support and encouragement over so many years.

Twenty Years of FACE: Some Personal Reflections

Peter Jones, FACE Shropshire Children’s University

Is it really twenty years? 1992 seems a very different world. We had an incompetent prime minister with a barely working majority, sweeping reforms across the education sector as a whole and radical shake ups of higher education funding and organisation. We had a maverick education secretary left to plough their own furrow intent on introducing policies that seemed to narrow the life chances of whole swathes of the population whilst chanting the mantra of social mobility... it was a very different world in 1992; Barely recognisable. It was around that time that I became an unwitting beneficiary of FACE activity. Unbeknown to me as a thirty something worker in low paid jobs the work of FACE was impacting on my life chances. Sometimes we can lose track of the individual stories and the impact that the work of FACE has made on individuals. The achievements of FACE in influencing government policy, developing and promoting scholarly activity and publication, widening the boundaries of the access and participation debates and impacting on practice and structures should not be underestimated and I’m sure many will list these achievements however, I would like to focus briefly on what the ethos of FACE has given me. It was in 1993 that I decided to return to education. In those days the mature student with a handful of seemingly ancient qualifications was not really top of the list for most HEIs not even the newly created post 1992 institutions. Looking back and I’m sure this is no coincidence, all those institutions bar one, that accepted my application were FACE members. Those that rejected my application out of hand were not (including post 1992 institutions). It would be difficult to determine any causal link between the ethos of an institution and FACE membership and vis-versa however, it is surely no coincidence that the head of the department I was studying in was an executive member of FACE and on reflection much of the practice and policies being forced through the

institutions could be found to have their genesis in several early FACE (and PACE) publications and conference papers.

Fast forwarding a few years and various scholarships and qualifications later the value of FACE became more pronounced. Working on retention and access initiatives, now as an academic member of staff, the FACE publications became essential in not only identifying themes and issues and developing new provision but very importantly pointing out where we might be going wrong and what we had missed. Strength of FACE publications is that they are written by practitioners and academics who actually want to share knowledge, understanding and experience. There is a minimum of obfuscation that plagues many publications in a similar area.

As a young(ish) academic the support and help provide by the editors of the FACE publications was invaluable. Whilst, I had published elsewhere the ethos always seemed much more judgemental on the merits and style of a paper. Whereas, the ethos of FACE has always been much more enabling, with editors and others providing advice, guidance and encouragement. I have found the experience of writing conference abstracts, papers and more latterly editing these publications a rich and valuable experience which as enhanced and developed my skills as an academic and practitioner and given me the confidence to publish and edit elsewhere.

The impact of FACE on the lives of the people it engages with either directly or indirectly should not be underestimated. Whether, it is those underrepresented in HE gaining access and participating fully, whether it is the students who are retained as opposed to dropping out, young academics and practitioners delivering their first conference paper, publishing their first paper or more seasoned staff gaining inspiration and knowledge from publications and conversations. FACE is a great enabler and twenty years on its role is as important, if not more so than it has ever been.

Memoires of a retired practitioner

Dr Tony Acland MBE, Honorary Fellow, University of Winchester

Eighteen years as a member of FACE proved both professionally beneficial and a lot of fun!

I have benefited in a number of ways from FACE membership, particularly through the opportunity to listen to (whether I want to or not!) and share ideas with widening access practitioners and policy makers, not just in the UK, but also across the world.

As new members often observe, FACE conferences and meetings provide a friendly and supportive environment to present papers and engage in lively, but friendly, debate.

In recent years, FACE has particularly 'upped its game' by engaging in a number of national consultations and through working closely with international networks to promote the important debate of how further and higher education institutions and partnerships can engage with young and mature learners from

disadvantaged and under represented backgrounds. The quality of FACE publications and the website has been a notable strength in recent years and I would like to commend all who have worked so hard to make them so relevant and professional.

Finally, as FACE approaches its twentieth anniversary, it is important to look to the future. Never has there been a more important time for a practitioner-led network of this kind. As governments and leaders of academic institutions are forced to increasingly focus on value for money in a time of financial constraints, FACE needs to lead the way by providing a vehicle for practitioners and policy makers to debate key widening access and continuing education priorities.

I wish FACE every success in continuing such a key role for the sector.

FACE Response to the second call for evidence

Dr Liz Marr, Director of the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships at the Open University

The Forum for Access and Continuing Education was established as a Charity in 1993 and exists to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information and practices in Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education. By promoting collaboration and innovation between providers and practitioners FACE aims to support and encourage a socially inclusive framework for Lifelong Learning, challenging exclusion and fostering full participation. In these times of great change in UK higher education (HE), particularly in England, and against a backdrop of austerity and economic uncertainty, FACE members have been striving to bring to a wider audience their findings in relation to access to higher education. FACE therefore welcomes moves to develop a national strategy for widening access and student success and is pleased to respond to the HEFCE call for evidence. In doing so, we wish to highlight some potential strategy components and draw HEFCE's attention to the body of evidence collated over the last twenty years and held in FACE archives, which underpins these recommendations.

(see <http://www.f-a-c-e.org.uk/publications-and-research/publications-and-research.htm>)

1. Collaboration:

- The interim report suggests that the effective delivery of outreach programmes requires the full, adequately resourced involvement and engagement of HEIs, FECs and schools, and
- The collaborative provision of outreach delivers benefits in terms of scale, engagement, coordination and impartiality.

FACE firmly believes that collaboration is key to success. There is a multiplicity of agencies involved in widening access, in addition to institutions across the whole of the education landscape. These include third sector organisations, charitable trusts, smaller community-led groups (on the role of which we feel there should be a more explicit emphasis) and local and regional networks which

have evolved from Aimhigher partnerships and Lifelong Learning Networks. Collaborative working is crucial to avoid duplication of effort and its corollary, gaps in provision. However, the collective experience of FACE members is that overloading schools and colleges with multiple interventions leads to resistance and ultimately withdrawal from engagement. Aimhigher partnerships, where they worked well, managed to avoid such saturation by integrating with all relevant local and regional agencies.

Across the country, collaborative partnerships are now operating in a myriad of ways, some suited to local and regional context, others which could be replicable at national level. Evaluation of Aimhigher highlighted the good practice but the vacuum created by its demise has been filled by a less than coherent service provision. FACE would therefore recommend an audit of existing collaborative activity and the construction of a national register which would facilitate partnerships learning from each other. Partnerships should also be required to develop local/regional targeting strategies to ensure an even spread across schools, colleges, community groups etc.

Incentivising collaboration in a competitive environment is challenging. FACE welcomes guidance which stresses the importance of including collaborative activity in Access agreements but requiring financial commitment from additional fee income could be problematic for institutions where this is low, especially for HE in FE providers. Clear benefits to the collaborating partners are better incentives, particularly through progression and articulation routes which improve recruitment and retention for all parties. Additionally, the economies of scale associated with joint tracking and the use of national data sets might also provide encouragement. It might therefore be a requirement that HE providers include in their Access Agreement, at least demonstration and evidence of involvement in meaningful collaborative structures.

It may be tempting to consider establishing a new national managing body to coordinate the activities of local partnerships and encourage new ones. Many FACE members were active in Aimhigher and recognise the advantages of local organisation. However, there is a risk that reintroducing a separately funded national collaborative project alongside the existing networks will prove counter-productive and we recommend that EITHER a new national body is created OR existing and emerging networks are allowed to flourish or wither. If the latter path is taken, conducting the audit and establishing the register should be sufficient to allow those partnerships with potential to become sustainable.

2. Adult Learners

The main report from the Inquiry into Lifelong Learning highlighted the position that FACE has consistently held when it stated the following .“Adults need opportunities to re-engage with education throughout their lives, to retain and upskill, to renew and rebuild, to find a new direction or to progress on a journey they have already begun.” Such a process of lifelong learning needs to be situated in the context of the communities that adult learners live and work in which in turn contributes to the development of those communities and their healthy sustainability in both the short **and long term**.

FACE members are extremely concerned at the very significant fall-off in applications to HE from mature students, since the introduction of higher fees and loans. This is especially worrying when the recommendations of the Leitch report in relation to Level 4 skills are reviewed. The current policy emphasis on 14-19 and the focus on collaboration with schools and colleges serves to underline this potential gap in the new strategy. There are specific challenges linked to adult entry to HE, such as the decrease in Access courses and an FE funding mechanism which restricts the potential for adults to take one A level as evidence of level 3 achievement in a particular subject. Whilst the decision to waive loan repayments for Access students who successfully complete their higher level qualifications is welcomed, the decrease in provision and the increasing pressure on funding for other pre-entry qualifications is adding to the barriers for adult progression. The introduction of loans for part time study is very welcome for this target group but there has also been a falling off of opportunity which further impacts participation

An additional challenge is the dispersed nature of potential adult learners. They may be already in the workplace and seeking to enhance their skills and employability or unemployed and attempting to become employable. Outreach activity has to be focused on communities and be accessible through, for example, online resources and guidance. Organisations such as the WEA, Unionlearn, NEC etc are valuable assets to collaborative partnerships focused on adults and consideration should be given to mechanisms for facilitating national engagement strategies.

The provision of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is still an issue in the sector but is particularly problematic for this demographic who are more likely to have non-standard or vocational pre entry qualifications. The lifelong learning networks individually produced progression pathways, articulated routes and such-like but there is no national guidance on such routes and how they might support journeys for adult learners (or indeed for younger learners). FACE would recommend work is undertaken to develop such guidance, including the opportunities for credit accumulation and transfer, credit recognition and approval or prior (experiential) learning as options for access to and progression through HE.

3. Tracking, monitoring and evaluation

As is well-known to all stake-holders, a major challenge in assessing impact of activity designed to raise aspiration, enhance achievement and increase progression to HE is the ability to easily track learners through their educational journey. For example, many of the schools FACE members work with do not have their own Sixth Forms and tracking learners after Year 11 is difficult. A national approach to data in order to facilitate tracking would be welcomed. Data sharing at national level would also support and facilitate collaborative working.

FACE would also like to highlight the desirability for national evaluation standards and protocols for specific defined activities in outreach. We are aware of the work which has already been done in this area but would remind HEFCE of the challenges inherent in evaluating activity which may be a single component of a multiple-intervention approach and the limited conclusions

which can be drawn about its effectiveness. This issue again emphasises the importance of collaborative work where the impact of the whole experience can be monitored rather than assessing the impact of individual contributions.

4. Other issues

We would also like to point out that there are issues associated with rural access and the wider problem of geographical gaps in part-time HE provision. Furthermore we would stress that accessing HE does not necessarily mean accessing a full time three year degree programme. Many learners, especially adults, may find shorter programmes (Certificates and Diplomas) more attractive. We would recommend that the strategy addressed alternative higher education provision, such as work-based CPD style learning and higher apprenticeships, for example, as specific developments.

Finally, FACE would like to recommend that consideration be given to a more imaginative student support regime. NSP fee waivers and bursaries merely reduce future loan repayments for some students.

FACE Derry Conference 2013: Speaker's experience

David Noyce, Hefce Associate Director, London and East:

First, I thought the theme of the conference, "Divided Communities", worked very well and provoked a lot of reflections on the context in which widening participation plays out. The choice of location, Derry, was inspired and acted as a perfect environment in which to conduct the discussions.

Probably my strongest memories relate to exploring the town; the wonderful guided walk around the city walls; and a number of individual encounters which took place during my brief stay. I got the sense of a community in which the traumatic recent history of the place was only just receding. There were signs of a lot of investment (the Peace Bridge, the development of the market area, and the presence of the Tall Ships), but also some signs of continuing division. In particular, I remember as we walked around the walls seeing a bonfire in the process of being built for the annual marching season and the graffiti, "No Surrender". I was asked in a local bookshop, "Where do you come from?". When I made some non-committal response along the lines that I wasn't really from anywhere I got the response, "Round here everyone is from somewhere." I thought that interchange spoke strongly to identity and the divided communities theme!

I thoroughly enjoyed the keynote speakers, particularly Martin Hall. His talk on how the English HE Reforms are interacting with issues of inequality is a subject there has been insufficient discussion about and I thought he did an excellent job. In their different ways, I thought the presentations by John Burkhardt on public good and Kerry Hudson on the Western Sydney experience were both interesting but personally they didn't resonate quite as much. Maybe there is always a tension between bringing in international perspectives and having relevance to the local audience. I recall some interesting tensions between widening participation and fair access in Kerry's presentation, with her

expressing a slight resentment of expectations that more prestigious universities might take students rather than them staying at the local university as an end in itself. That issue might speak to a future theme, although it would need to be handled with care.

With regard to my own session, I regretted there was not more time for questions and answers. For the future with these round table sessions it might be better to confine the content to a particular issue and enable more discussion to draw out similarities and differences between different countries.

As ever with these events the main benefits emerge from the networking that is enabled. In the time I had at the conference there were multiple stimulating conversations with conference attendants. Even at the end on the way to the airport I was able to discuss dyslexia and the current situation in the South West with a fellow delegate which for me was a nice way to end the conference.

In the post Aim Higher world I think there is even more need for conferences like FACE to bring practitioners together and share practice. I hope therefore that you keep up the good work and organise more conferences of this type.

PART THREE: Reflections of International FACE Members and Associates

Part Three provides an international focus, with papers reflecting the increasing international dimension of the FACE practitioner community. These papers constitute considered responses to the FACE Executive's general invitation (September 2012) for contributions to the Anniversary Publication.

FACE—An Appreciation from a Practitioner in the Marshall Island, Western Pacific

Ted Stepp, College of the Marshall Islands, Western Pacific

My first awareness of the FACE organization was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, when I met FACE Chair, John Storan, at the annual National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) conference in February 2006. As an instructor of Developmental Education at the College of the Marshall Islands in Micronesia, I had discovered that NADE was the premier US professional organization for developmental educators, and I learned that FACE was NADE's "sister" or associated organization in the UK. John's dynamic approach to helping students, particularly non-traditional students, gain access to higher education piqued my interest, and I decided to attend the next FACE conference, which was held at the University of Wales, Swansea, in summer 2006. I have been to every FACE conference since 2006, with the exception of the 2011 conference in Glasgow due to serious illness on my part. I very strongly value **my experiences with FACE for several reasons.**

First of all, and perhaps most importantly, FACE draws together scholars, teachers, administrators, politicians, and students who are especially concerned about accessibility to higher education for all in the UK. The complex mix of financial constraints, public policy, economic and labor trends, new technologies, teaching methodologies, and personal hindrances to higher education among students and prospective students all find places at the sessions and discussions and in the publications and special events provided by FACE. **This is healthy for educational improvement in the UK, and those of us who represent other nations far and wide very often find FACE issues quite relevant abroad.**

The professional networking at FACE conferences is quite enriching, even memorable. At FACE 2008 at York St. John University, hearing from and seeing the University's student ambassador corps participating in the conference as well as providing extremely courteous and efficient guidance on campus was an excellent example of best practices in support of effective education. It was delightful to meet these students, some of whom were clearly non-traditional students. Also, the many professions represented at FACE conferences, be they traditional faculty, contemporary scholars, or personal counselors addressing critical student needs, make attendance at a FACE conference a wonderful opportunity to put together the great variety of components that make up effective educational practices in our complex world.

Always a great aspect of the FACE experience is the constantly changing venue for the gathering. Since I have been active in FACE, I have had the privilege of visiting Swansea, York, London, Stoke-on-Trent, Southampton, and Derry, Northern Ireland. The creative efforts of the FACE planners make each conference experience a truly moving dip into the history, culture, and “personality” of the UK. Those of us who attend from abroad are always enriched by the broad and deep qualities, both professional and cultural, of the FACE conference experience.

I will retire from the College of the Marshall Islands in 2013 and will, no doubt, reduce some of my professional activities and increase leisure travel. However, **I must say that, over the years, through my growth as an educator through FACE, the students and teachers in this remote, tiny island in the Western Pacific have been enriched and supported indirectly by the FACE organization and drivers. I am grateful, and I hope that FACE continues to serve the UK well for many years into the future.**

**Greetings from FACE’s Swedish Sister Practitioner Organisation:
INCLUDE--- the network of Widening Participation in Sweden**

Executive Committee of Include

In 2002, university colleges and universities in Sweden were instructed by the government to carry out activities to promote widening access (defined as increased recruitment of socially and ethnically underrepresented groups). Since then, universities have worked with partner schools (students aged 11 to 19) in disadvantaged areas, the Nightingale concept with students mentoring preschool children, pre---college programs, summer schools etc. Perspectives of “Student life cycle” and “Early warning system” have been implemented by the universities. However, in a report five years later few of the universities could show results of an actual widened access (The Agency for Higher Education, 2007). In 2006 the new government removed the requirement to work with widening access from its ordinance for universities, but it was reinstated in 2013.

The Swedish network for widening participation, Include www.include.nu, was an answer to the declined interest from the government in these issues. The network was introduced in 2008 as an initiative from some of the leading universities in Sweden --- Karolinska Institutet a medical university, Uppsala University, Linköping University and Södertörn University College. The network model was inspired from FACE and today about half of the universities and university colleges in Sweden are members of Include. The network is keeping the dialog running and on the political agenda. The main focus is to get people involved with widening participation and access together and to strengthen the work in different institutions. Include arrange network meetings every semester and a national conference every second year. During the last years Include and various members of FACE have had the opportunity to share good practice and exchange ideas.

As sister organisations FACE and Include have developed a close relationship over the years, which has proven beneficial to both networks.

Members of the Include executive committee have on a regular basis participated in FACE annual conferences and there presented the on-going work in Sweden. Study visits and other activities and meetings have been arranged in both countries and these opportunities to share experiences have been very useful and inspiring to the members of Include. Include would not have been such a success without the international input from FACE and other important contacts in Europe.

Developmental Educators Reflections on Participation at FACE annual conferences

USA National Association for Developmental Education (NADE)

Editor's note: FACE are grateful to Gerry McBroom, NADE President 2008 and current NADE International Committee Co-Chair for leading and compiling the following contributions.

Contributors: Dr Williams, D. NADE President 2006
Dr Barrow, H. NADE President 2007
Dr Geraldine L. McBroom, President 2008
Professor Karr, R. NADE President 2009
Dr Patty-Graham, K. NADE President 2010
Dr Davis, M. NADE President 2011
Dr Neuburger, J. NADE President 2012
Dr Goosen, R. NADE President 2013

Introduction

[President Dessie Williams, President Hilda Barrow, President Rosemary Karr, President Karen Patty-Graham, President Marcella Davis, President Jane Neuburger, President Rebecca Goosen]

The National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) is pleased to congratulate FACE on its twentieth anniversary. NADE and FACE have enjoyed over 12 years of professional cooperation and mutual collaboration, and we look forward to continuing this relationship.

Begun in 1976, NADE is a non-profit organization with a current membership of over 3000 educators from all 50 U.S. states and territories as well as other nations. As our mission states, "NADE seeks to improve the theory and practice of developmental education at all levels of the educational spectrum, the professional capabilities of developmental educators, and the design of programs to prepare developmental educators." To fulfill this mission, NADE's purposes include such activities as "providing professional development, ... disseminating exemplary models of practice, coordinating efforts with other organizations, and facilitating communication among professionals." Since NADE defines the term developmental education as a "comprehensive and continual process," we share the emphasis FACE places on lifelong learning and continuing education.

Because of our shared missions and purposes, NADE and FACE entered a formal reciprocal partnership in 2002. Together, we seek opportunities to exchange information on practice and theory. Members from both organizations attend annual conferences hosted by the sister organization. For many years, NADE has been honored by the attendance of the FACE Chair John Storan and other FACE members at our annual NADE conferences, and NADE officers have attended FACE conferences annually. Additionally, members from our partner organizations have been asked to present keynote addresses, to serve on international panels, and to engage in conversation on issues confronting the global educational community. For the past four years, the current FACE Secretary Michael Hill has also served in the role of NADE's International Committee Co-Chair. In fact, the influence of FACE on NADE is very apparent in this committee's primary responsibilities: to organize study tours at local colleges and universities in the conference city, host international attendees at NADE, and develop and present panels on issues of international import for the annual conference—activities NADE has replicated from the FACE conferences.

The NADE officers who have attended FACE conferences have returned to the U.S. not only with ideas for improving our national conferences but also, and perhaps more importantly, with greater knowledge of educational issues facing other countries. Although terminology may vary and revenue and funding may be different internationally, NADE presidents attending FACE continue to bring greater knowledge to our organization, to their states, and to their individual colleges and universities. To honor this opportunity for exchange and recognize the FACE anniversary, we present here reflections from several of the NADE presidents who attended FACE site visits and conferences in the past.

Former NADE President Dessie Williams Reflections on FACE

The FACE conference in Cork, Ireland (July 2006) was a magnificent conference. It was truly inspiring to meet other higher education professionals from across the waters. Each expressed similar concerns to those we in our various American academic environments have: dealing with academic preparedness, juggling familial situations, handling financial challenges, etc. Of particular note was the information exchange in sharing strategies for helping our students across cultures and diverse academic backgrounds. Through research and development, keynote speakers set the stage for open discussion about higher education and ways to bring lower-performing students to a college level of performance.

Dr. John Storan and his team extended their much-appreciated hospitality, taking us to meet Ireland's Lord Mayor and seeing in the Mayor's office a bust of our very own JFK. They brought us to Cork University, an institution steeped in history and reputation for educating some of Ireland's finest the world over. From kissing the Blarney Stone to visiting some historic castles to simply sitting and chatting over a spot of tea, the entire experience was one from which to glean much and to long be remembered.

Former NADE President Hilda Barrow's Reflection on FACE Conference

My trip to the 2006 FACE Conference was a highlight of my service as NADE President and of my professional life. Prior to the conference, I was welcomed in London by John Storan for a visit at the University of East London and by Michael Hill at Kingston University. At both institutions, I visited with students, faculty, and staff members engaged in providing access and opportunity for underrepresented students. During those visits and at the subsequent conference, I realized again and again how much we all have in common with our student populations and the challenges they and we face.

The conference in Swansea was delightful. The hospitality and openness which I experienced was in every encounter whether in sessions or in social gatherings. I attended a symposium conducted by John Storan and included participants who gave an overview of the concept of access in Great Britain and the changes which at that time were being made to allow a greater variety of students to be served. I also attended several sessions dealing with the same kinds of issues we face in the US: preparation, retention, support services, and, of course, politics. Throughout the conference, the highest levels of professionalism and expertise were evident. John and I discussed the possibility of a joint FACE/NADE which hasn't come to fruition yet but would be an excellent idea.

In addition to the professional side of the conference, I really enjoyed getting to know participants on an individual basis and sharing common stories and experiences. In spite of the fact that Charles and Camilla were at the university but didn't come to visit us, we soldiered on and experienced great camaraderie. The side trip up into the farmlands of Wales was fun and informative. The countryside is just beautiful, and the sights are still sharply in my memory. We also visited the quaint seaside village of Mumbles which was another wonderful experience.

My continued connection with FACE and its members is high on my list of treasured experiences. I truly value the time I spent at the conference because I learned so much about the educational system in Great Britain, but I value even more the friendships and networks that I formed as a result of being able to attend the conference. Members of our profession, whether we call it developmental education or access, are fortunate to have professional organizations which enable us to share our time and talents with others and which support our work in good times and in trying times.

Former President Geraldine McBroom Reflections on FACE Experience

Like other NADE presidents who attended FACE conferences, I was given a tour of university facilities—mine with John Storan at the University of East London. I also was invited to participate in the international panel roundtable discussion, was treated to superb hospitality, and enjoyed conversations with colleagues from Great Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, the Marshall Islands, to name just a few. I learned about differences in assessment, curricula, and government regulations.

Most of what I remember, however, is the overriding similarity in the issues delegates to the conference faced, no matter where they were from, and the

enthusiasm and dedication for addressing these issues. We all were concerned about learners who were ill-prepared--academically and emotionally--those who had few or no role models in their families or even communities, those who needed support as they changed careers or wanted to advance their training. We all shared our best practices to support these learners as well as the difficulties in funding programs for this population, in tracking, and in documenting the successes our students experienced.

I left the conference with new ideas for my college and new contacts for NADE across the globe. I met educators who would present at our conferences and serve in our organization. On a personal level, I left feeling as if I had a support network of bright, energetic colleagues who were facing similar concerns and who were devoted to helping students as they accessed higher education to become lifelong learners.

Former President Rosemary Karr's Reflection on FACE Conference

Prior to the conference, I participated by invitation in a site visit to Kingston University with Dr. Michael Hill. The primary purpose was to discuss increased access to higher education with an emphasis on successful mathematics redesign. The topic of increased access and the difficulties that accompany it are not in isolation. I believe that by sharing what the organizations in the United States have tried, in terms of accomplishments and mistakes, helps to move the field forward. It requires all of us working together to improve the situation and opportunities for all students.

During the FACE conference, I served as a panelist for the International Round Table Discussion on Lifelong Learning, facilitated by Dr. John Storan. The insight into other cultural perspectives during the panel and subsequent conversations were invaluable for understanding and supporting the international students who are attending colleges in the United States.

Reflections on FACE Conference Experience by Former NADE Presidents Karen Patty-Graham and Marcella Davis

We arrived at the London Heathrow Airport on June 29, 2009, and boarded the train to the Docklands of East London. It was unseasonably hot and "minding the gap," manipulating the train schedules, and maneuvering the stations were new experiences. Upon arrival at the Docklands, we found that an entire village had been created in preparation for the Michael Jackson concert; however, with Michael Jackson's sudden death, that dream of economic prosperity and fame had faded, and many of the new buildings were sitting sadly silent.

On June 30, we participated in a memorable Widening Participation Study Visit sponsored by Dr. John Storan at the University of East London. On this impressive Docklands campus with smokestack-style dormitories, we met with several university officers and toured the spacious UEL Library overlooking the River Thames and the Dockland Airport. This Study Visit gave us a better understanding of the United Kingdom university system, a very positive impression of the University of East London as an institution, and a sense of connection with dedicated colleagues who face the same challenges we face in

American colleges and universities. It was apparent that we share the same goals--we strive to improve the quality of the lives of our students and the well-being of our society as a whole through education.

From East London, we took the train on to North Stafford. The conference focused on themes of access, diversity, and participation in higher education. We joined U.K. conference participants in a panel discussion about pre-college outreach programs that promote access to higher education and also participated in an International Round Table among representatives from the United Kingdom, South Africa, France, the Marshall Islands, and the United States. This session dealt with issues of access, preparation, diversity, and retention in higher education systems in these countries. We also joined with the FACE Board to discuss a joint research comparative study of best practices and strategies to address the dilemma of students' weakness in math. The evenings were highlighted with dinners and entertainment. We were especially thrilled to have the featured dinner at the newly honored Wedgwood Museum, where we were permitted to tour the display of unbelievably beautiful Wedgwood creations of art.

In every aspect, participation in the FACE Conference was a valuable experience. We all shared academic discussions with international colleagues. We all learned of differences among systems of higher education, but we also learned that we share more similarities in the issues and challenges faced by educators as they strive to improve the lives of students and their communities through education. We were able to bring to NADE a greater understanding of these commonalities through follow-up newsletter articles, increased involvement of the International Committee, appointment of an international co-chair of the IC, guaranteed international panels at NADE, study visits in conjunction with NADE, and discussions of further collaborations between our organizations.

Former NADE President Jane Neuburger's Reflection on FACE Conference

Traveling to Southampton in the south of Great Britain was memorable on many levels. The conference itself brought together developmental educators scattered across the globe; I participated in a round-table discussion of international participants and attended presentations given by colleagues from South Africa (fantastic blending of a graphic arts credential with indigenous art, history, symbol and legend), Wales (making a difference in rural and urban poverty areas, the Marshall Islands (what wondrous things they do with distance communication). In a plenary, I provided an overview of what was happening in developmental education and learning assistance in the United States. I brought home to my university and to NADE, a more robust understanding of the scope of developmental education, from adult education to early childhood literacy.

Southampton, a seaport city directly across from France, is not far from Stonehenge (from a distance, we witnessed a Druid ceremony for Summer Solstice), from Winchester (very early seat of governance for England, with walled roads and cobblestoned streets), Winchester Cathedral (one of the largest cathedrals in Europe) and home to the legendary Round Table of King Arthur and Alfred the Great (849-899), first Anglo-Saxon King of England. Bits of

limestone from the white cliffs of Dover wash up on shore, and yes, it's chalk, and it writes.

Participating in the FACE conference was inspirational and thought-provoking. Despite differences among our cultures, we all identify "at-risk" students and provide targeted services. Funding is always an issue for education, not just developmental education. Social issues interrupt students' educational sequences everywhere, whether it be poverty, tribal warfare, the planting or hunting season, or cultural differences between the classes about the uses and ultimate purpose of participating in postsecondary education.

So much of our educational system in the United States is based on models from the United Kingdom. Yet, there are differences in how we fund education (the U.K. used a model of performance based funding) and in the progression through to meaningful credentials, including degrees (the U.K. has always had multiple pathways to credentials for students, starting before what we would call high school graduation). NADE might want to learn more about these models and how they are working, as our nation works to redesign how we offer developmental education and support. It is important to continue the collaboration between our organizations.

NADE President (2013) Rebecca Goosen Reflections on FACE Conference

I had the opportunity to attend the FACE conference in beautiful Glasgow, Scotland. The relationship with FACE allows NADE to have meaningful dialogue that creates a better understanding of the challenges and solutions that can assist both organizations in providing greater students success in a global atmosphere. The meeting in Glasgow helped NADE gain a broader perspective in methodology, allowed thoughtful dialogue and acquisition of new perspectives. FACE's attendance at our annual conference grows their knowledge of new practices in the field and a greater understanding of higher education in the States.

Conclusion of NADE Contributors

NADE sends sincere congratulations to the FACE organization and its members on your years of outstanding service. It is clear from their reflections that NADE presidents value their experiences and continue to benefit from the insights they received at the FACE study visits and conferences. We look forward to bright prospects for another twenty years of cooperation and collaboration between FACE and NADE as we continue to undertake research, improve practices, and share common hopes for our students' success in higher education.

References

For more information about the National Association for Developmental Education and its historical roots with FACE, please see the following:

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