**Notes from Community Track – Women of Power: Re-envisioning Activism (**10:00-11:50 a.m)

Showcase Oregon 2016 – March 7th, 2016

**Chair:** Matt Roberts, Senior Director for Community Relations, Unviersity of Oregon

María Chavez-Haroldson:

* María is an immigrant from Chihuahua, Mexico. She is the oldest of 10. She was a teen mom and a high school drop-out. She is a domestic violence survivor. She has been in Oregon for over 30 years.
* She works with incarcerated youth from minority populations. There are 10 facilities in Oregon. Her team has the most diversity.
* As a Latina woman, she has to work and study harder to be heard and recognized, to build credibility in the work that she does.
* One of her phrases is “Nothing for us without us.” She believes it is important to talk to the incarcerated youth and sincerely listen to them, to ask them how we can serve them better. She works hard to know the youth and to hear their real stories.
* She believes navigating bias is at the heart of what she does.
* Her team has overcome systemic oppression in their personal journeys, and continue to do so in their work. On a recent committee, 45 elements were identified as a focus in work with incarcerated youth. Equity started at the bottom of the list. Through studying, hard-work, and strategization, María succeeded in getting equity moved to the top of the list.

Patti Buss:

* Patti remembers being 16 in her high school music class. At the end of one term, the students were performing for their teachers and administrators. A girl in her class started singing her performance, and Patti noticed some male classmates mocking the singer during the performance. She realized they were mocking the singer because of her weight. None of the adults in charge noticed, so Patti approached the instigator of the mocking herself to tell him he shouldn’t treat other people like that. When he responded that he didn’t see anything wrong with his behavior and would continue it, Patti punched him and ended up suspended. From this incident, Patti learned to direct her passion for correcting injustices into more productive strategies other than punching someone.
* Since then, she has been involved in community services throughout her life. For her, her spiritual background and belief in Jesus are inseparable from her quest for justice. She and her husband moved to Oregon 20 years and were involved in pastoral work. Eventually, they saw a need and began the organization One Hope. It is a non-profit that joins congregations together to do community work.
* Their work is not necessarily religious but focused on community needs. They frequently partner with private sector on projects.
* Project Hope is a partnership between congregations and schools that has been running for 6 years. It is a 2 day event. The first day is dedicated to preparing the facility and grounds of the school before kids return from summer break. The second day is a Kids’ Fair at five locations where kids in need have fun and get to leave with new shoes, backpacks, and school supplies.

Shelia Stickel

* Shelia runs Advocacy Group, which finds advocates to be the faces of issue campaigns. Anyone can be the face for an issue campaign if they are passionate about it.
* Shelia was an RA and the co-president of the ASUO at Stanford. During her time there, it was the first time 2 people shared that presidency.
* Shelia identifies as an only-parent. She does not say single mom because it carries that connotation that someone left her, which is not the path she chose. She chose to have her two children by herself using a sperm donor. She had no idea how heavy a burden being financially responsible on her own was going to be.
* She became involved with politics because of issues she was experiencing in her life, and she believes that is how many people become involved. They see an injustice or something that is not working and become involved in trying to change it, leading to involvement in politics.
* Issue campaigns are based on emotions not facts, so it is important to have a face that people can respond to emotionally. It is important that the people involved have passionate feelings about the issue.
* Shelia believes it is important to learn the rules to be an effective advocate for change.
* When she is feeling low or worn out, she asks herself “What would a dynamic woman do?”

Diana Pei Wu

* Jobs with Justice has been in Portland for 25 years. They work with 110 organizations to make the work place better with dignity and respect for employees at all levels
* They believe that people in their line of work are in it because they have survived conditions were they were not respected and suffered from systemic oppression.
* They thinks it is important to acknowledge that we are on Native lands.
* It is work that we have to do together.
* They work with many PSU students who are already trying to create change. For example, they works with a student who identifies as a trans African Boricua woman who has worked to establish safe spaces for people who fall outside of the gender norms.
* When we win, we win together – it is transformative and life changing.

Questions

What are the barriers and challenges to deepening cross- coalition relationships?

Diana

* For the first time in 25 years, Portland Jobs with Justice hired a black organizer just four or five years ago. The bias may be unintentional but it is still there.
* Outreach has to be intentional. In their collaboration with the ironworkers union, they met a Native man who told them that there is a direct program for Native youth to get into the ironworker industry. However, he didn’t know how to make other Native groups aware of this program. Through collaboration with Jobs with Justice, he has begun to build strategies to raise awareness and get Native youth into the program.
* Diana has also been working with employees of a bakery that wanted to unionize. They work in a bakery. Many of them are immigrants and refugees. The union organization is made up of a lot college-educated white men who have an unintentional bias and there is a historical mistrust between the two groups. At the moment, the immigrant and refugee workers are scared of their employers and are unsure about unionizing. Diana’s team is work to collaborate and build trust between the workers and the union organization.
* There are high costs and backlash from having a different opinion. It is painful and makes people tired and sick. The community can heal together by being grounded in values. On a personal level, remember to act out of principles and values, not out of personal gain.

Shelia

* There is power in connecting with like minds.
* Do not be afraid to ask for what you want, but know what you are asking for. Asking the question is powerful. Do not be afraid to talk to people.

María

* When you are intellectually and emotionally exhausted, find inner-strength, remember those that came before you, go back into the cocoon of who you are.

Patti

* Advocacy moves at the speed of trust and there is no short-cut
* Take the time to build authentic relationships without fear and a ton of personal agenda.

How do we dismantle systemic oppression?

María

* Bring advisory boards together to have a collective voice.

How do you navigate power and privilege, and not just perpetuate social systems but create social change?

Diana

* You have to live through hard experiences. Diana started working in jobs where they received no dignity or respect. From those experiences, they learned to be committed to being the colleague/boss that they needed.

Shelia

* The most important thing as a leader is to give.
* Show your commitment through your actions.
* When you are coming out of college, you have to put in the hard work every day. Life is a grind.

Patti

* It’s important to invest in the next generation and to have an open dialogue. Take ownership of your own pain and insecurities, so that you are not passing them on.
* Facilitate the dreams of the next generation and give them opportunities to lead.

María

* Let the upcoming generation sit at your spot in the table. Leaders should share the space with upcoming leaders – let them know it is their place too.

How do you balance advocacy and activism, and protect the youth?

Diana

* Many will experience tokenism – jobs and spaces where they don’t want you to be your authentic self. It is important to stand together and say “not in our house.”
* In hostile situations where you are “catching bullets,” catch the bullets yourself, shield the youth. It is not responsible leadership to put youth in those situations.
* Be there to support them and back them up the entire way.

María

* Give them opportunities in their justice seeking to tell their stories. It is healing to tell their stories, but they need to have safe space to do so, an inner circle of protection.

Shelia

* Sometimes “movement people” have to be used to get the ball rolling and some interests will have to be downplayed. For example, in the campaign for same sex marriage, the ads had to have women because the public wasn’t ready to see men in same sex couples. Those men had a personal need to be seen, but in order to get things started it had to be women in the ads.

Patti

* You have to surround the youth and be transparent – share your own journey and be vulnerable.
* Create a space to become whole in before expecting them to engage.

How do you start building alliances?

Patti

* Ask other activists and advocates to tell you about their organization.

María

* Listening is key.
* It can help to literally have them draw out a map of their dreams and goals, so that you can help navigate them and gain understanding of the systems they will have to face.

Shelia

* Be clear about goals and give voice to them.

Diana

* There is so much going on, so many people, and so much energy that there is room for everyone.
* Do not shove your agenda and try to find people that you can work with.

How can UO as an institution help students? What can students do?

María

* Inquiry, which means going to the decision makers and ask questions. Find out how often policies are revised and what are the hard traditions that have never been changed.
* Learn the historical context that has led to the current state, determine the ideal state, and then create a solid proposal for change.
* Understand the language of the institution – become the student before becoming the teacher.
* Change can be intimidating to professionals and their professional identity. Try to honor them and bring them into the transitions.

Shelia

* She is involved with the Alumni Association and thinks that is a great way for students and former students to provide feedback to the institution and create change in the institution, through participation.

Diana

* The institution should support student activism, such as the Black students that have become more active.
* White administrators should not show up uninvited to students of color meetings.
* Currently at PSU, students are fighting to have all workers paid a minimum of $15/hour. UO could take the opportunity to build trust by raising the minimum $15/hour without having students fight for it.