



AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM OF OREGON

ALF Class Project Summaries

As part of the ALF experience, each class undertakes a project that requires the collaboration of the entire class. This "Leadership in Action" experience is an important segment of the program. It provides the opportunity to utilize the diverse and significant resources of ALF Fellows to serve the common good in Oregon, challenges ALF Fellows to develop a common direction, tests the extent to which social capital has been developed within the class, and reinforces the trust-based relationships that will be needed and sustained in the future. Below is a brief description of each ALF class project to date:

Class I

Women's Mentoring Project

Designed and implemented a mentoring program to assist women in achieving professional and community service goals. The project involved researching effective mentoring practices, recruiting 55 mentors (including class members) from private business, government, and community involvement sectors, providing mentor training, matching potential mentees with mentors, conducting mentorship for 18 months, and celebrating successes at the end. At least three spin-off programs developed as a result of this project: Open Options, a mentoring project matching at risk teenage high school students with professional women in Central Oregon; Douglas County Mentoring Project; women's mentoring project in the Multnomah County District Attorney's office; and a state government mentoring project for minority employees.

Class II

Children's Initiative

Performed service on an individual basis at a day care facility, and helped raise funds for the *Oregon Childhood Development Fund* in order to provide additional resources to Oregon's day care facilities. Additional objectives included researching the availability of and need for day care services in Oregon and then educating the broader community about those needs.

Class III

Camp Odyssey

Designed and ran a day camp for teenagers of diverse backgrounds with a curriculum focused on understanding and gaining a mutual respect of people from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. The camp has become a permanent organization co-sponsored by other non-profit organizations, including JANUS Youth.

Class IV

Columbia River Salmon Curriculum

Developed an interactive curriculum on the Columbia River salmon, incorporating consensus building skills, collaborative planning and reasoning skills. The curriculum was designed to enhance the leadership skills of students, build skills for group problem solving, and strengthen students' sense of social responsibility. It was also designed to explore the values, positions and responsibilities of agencies involved with Columbia River salmon, and generally promote the idea that all stakeholders deserve to be present when public policy decisions are made.

Class V

Support Residential Programs for Drug Addicted-Moms

Added support to residential treatment houses that allow mothers to remain with their children as they undergo treatment. The class lobbied the legislature for additional beer and wine tax to help create new homes and provide services to homes in existence, but the class was not successful in these efforts. However, the class was successful in raising others funds and resources to support these treatment centers and performed direct service in a center in Eugene.

Class VI

Diversity Retreat

Developed and implemented a retreat for Senior Fellows to build and expand upon the diversity training component of the Fellows Program. The program was designed to inspire Fellows to take a more active role in diversity issues, and develop a wider range of skills to fulfill that role.

Class VII

RUN - Rural Urban Network

Created and conducted a two-day retreat to establish ties between ALF Fellows and leaders in rural communities. The class formed a partnership with the Rural Futures Forum and designed a program to explore the barriers to and opportunities for positive relations between the urban and rural areas of the state. Many relationships that were built through this project continue to be strong.

Class VIII

Camp Odyssey Extension for Parents

Prepared an educational component for parents whose children attend Camp Odyssey that recognizes the difficulties kids face when they return home from a very emotional and powerful experience. Through this project, class members encouraged parents to talk to their kids about the experience, raised funds to videotape the camp experience, and distributed copies to campers.

- Class IX* **The Oregon Solutions Project**
Produced a videotape honoring four Oregon projects where community residents joined together to solve problems, effect change in their community, and improve the quality of life in Oregon.
- Class X* **Support/Strengthen Oregon CASAs**
Worked to promote, celebrate and enhance Oregon's CASA program. The class offered a training session at the national CASA conference in Oregon and provided scholarships and housing for folks for whom the cost of attending the conference would have been prohibitive. The class also hosted a reception for Oregon CASA volunteers to celebrate their service.
- Class XI* **Community Oregon**
This project aimed to address the urban/rural divided by organizing full day visits for senior fellows, legislators, state agency directors and other leaders to visit and immerse themselves in a community other than their own. Issues explored during the visits included resource use, the migration of retired people to small communities, the changing economy, water quality, growth management, and outside interests dictating resolutions on complex issues. This project has been continued and expanded under joint sponsorship of ALF and the Luke Center at the University of Oregon.
- Class XII* **Building Links between Schools and the Business Community**
Collaborated with the Citizen's Education Commission to organize a conference to build and strengthen links between principals and business leaders. The groups developed exchanges between principals and business leaders and leadership trainings. They also sought ways for the education and business communities to learn from each other's leadership challenges and triumphs, and better share resources.
- Class XIII* **A Parenting Summit**
Developing a parenting summit, in collaboration with a team of parenting educators, that discusses and looks to establish at least minimal standards for what is taught in parenting classes. Some parenting programs are excellent. Others teach material that research shows is counterproductive. The parenting educators collaborating with the class believe this work could have a dramatic long-term statewide impact. Details of the conference are still being developed.
- Class XIV* **Emerging Leaders Program**
Implemented a leadership enhancement program to support young, emerging leaders in Oregon. Class 14 members identified emerging leaders in their communities to participate in a three part leadership program: 1) a weekend conference exploring leadership and critical issues in Oregon, 2) Community Oregon visits to gain first hand knowledge of issues in communities different from their own, and 3) a wrap-up leadership skills training weekend.
- Class XV* **Oregon Youth Exchange Series**
In partnership with three Oregon communities, organized and implemented a youth leadership and cultural exchange program. Eighteen middle school youth from Madras/Warm Springs, Portland, and Woodburn participated in three weekend sessions, one in each of the three communities, focused on team building, leadership training, diversity, and community service.
- Class XVI* **Collaborative Community Builders**
The mission of the Collaborative Community Builders is to serve as a catalyst for exploring organizational issues and community impact. CCB acts as a neutral party, actively listening, providing a safe and supportive environment for an open discussion of organizational challenges. Our "think tank" of community leaders offers diverse perspectives about issues affecting our state. Goals included:
- Acting as a clearinghouse in linking community leaders to the resources they need
 - Providing dynamic collaboration and support to empower community leaders in their personal growth and leadership strategies.
 - Work with community and or organizations in need of renewal, or lacking in support resources.
- Class XVII* **"Speaking of a Better Oregon" Forum**
Forum participants were invited to explore Oregonians' basic values and beliefs among Oregon's "Nine States"* and how they potentially related to current views of the state's government revenue and spending patterns.
- Adam Davis and Su Midghall of David & Hibbitts, Inc. launched the Forum by reviewing their 1992 Values & Beliefs Study and the 2002 follow up results. ALF Senior Fellows were given an opportunity to participate in the Value & Beliefs survey prior to the Forum, and a discussion of how ALF Senior Fellows responses were similar or different from the statewide findings was included. Then, a representative from the state's Legislative Fiscal Office provided an overview of the basic components of Oregon's budget. The Values & Beliefs study and the Oregon budget overview

provided background information for ALF Senior Fellows to pursue possible solutions in the course of the Forum's afternoon discussions.

Lunch included a panel of ALF Senior Fellows - specially invited to represent the nine "states" of Oregon - to further reflect on the implications of the values and beliefs expressed by their respective areas to statewide decision-making.

The afternoon consisted of "Oregon Café" discussions (a format borrowed from a group dialogue structure known as the "World Café") focusing on six questions designed to increase understanding and insights about state government budget issues. Class XVII members captured suggestions for how to act on areas of agreement and how to continue a constructive dialogue on areas of disagreement.

**As featured in the 2003 Oregonian series "The Nine States of Oregon": Portlandia, Southern Oregon, Cowboy Country, Central Oregon, Columbia Corridor, Timber Country, The Coast, The Valley, & Edutopia.*

Class XVIII "Race, Ethnicity and Leadership in Oregon" Forum

This forum focused on the challenges of leading in a state whose population is changing rapidly and dramatically. Forum attendees were given an opportunity to explore their capacity to lead in areas dealing with race and ethnicity in particular. Based on their experiences and learnings during their ALF year, the class shared how to assess an environment in order to be able to talk about race, provide tools to talk about and facilitate dialogue around race, and convey a sense of responsibility for taking these issues on and talking about them in one's local communities.

Class XIX "Economic Success in Oregon: The Untold Story" Forum

Oregon faces unprecedented economic challenges and competition worldwide, which threaten the foundations of our communities – good quality jobs. The good news is that new research – and actual performance in the marketplace – is increasingly showing that creativity, quality of life, and a focus on environmental "sustainability" can be major forces driving economic development. Few Oregonians are aware of the success of companies leading this economic resurgence, the source of their creativity, the positive impact they are having in regions across the state, and just why these companies and regions are successful.

The purpose of this forum was to foster a broader conversation about these emerging economic trends by documenting some of the success stories already happening in Oregon. The Forum invited Oregon decision makers and opinion leaders statewide to increase their awareness of new thinking in economic development, and spawn a network of Oregonians who are interested in working to apply this knowledge in their own communities.

Class XX "What I Believe About Oregon" Forum

Description written by Class XX: Like the classes that came before us, the members of ALF Class XX spent a lot of time trying to find a project that both spoke to us personally and addressed an important issue within the state. As our year together progressed, our discussions increasingly revolved around the question of whether there is or is not a divided Oregon, and if there is, what divides us? Is it geography? Politics? Economics? Education?

We decided that maybe we were asking the wrong questions and that we needed to go back to the beginning -- and that meant challenging people's assumptions. We set out to explore what individuals believe about the state. We're not talking about what the official statistics and the pie charts say, but rather what people believe when they have a chance to tell their own version of the Oregon story. We suspected that individuals feel diminished and disconnected from their fellow citizens by the enormity of institutions and by the complexity of daily life, and we felt that it was profound—and in some ways counter-cultural—for individuals to express their most deeply held feelings, beliefs and ideas about their community.

We'd been asking lots of folks from around the state to write a short essay about what they believed about Oregon. We meant 'believe' in the sense of "What do I know, based on my experiences, to be true about Oregon?" We didn't mean what your particular political party believes, or what your school or religious institution or neighborhood believes. "What *you* believe."

So we invited you to join us to explore these deeply held beliefs about our much beloved state, to participate in writing your own set of beliefs to share with other Forum participants, and to engage in some meaningful and revealing dialogue about these beliefs with a broad range of Oregon citizens and leaders. We felt you would find that not only is there power in writing and reading aloud your beliefs, but there is tremendous power in hearing someone else speak theirs.

Forum Program Highlights:

- Kick-off with lunch and a keynote address by Oregon's newly appointed Poet Laureate, **Lawson Inada.**

- Video clips of Oregonians from a wide range of life experiences reading their "What I Believe" essays.
- A facilitated table dialogue to include an invitation to write your own "What I Believe" essay, share with others around you, and explore life experiences that have led to these similar or divergent perspectives about Oregon.

Class XXI

"ALF: Reloaded"

Description written by Class XXI: What's your vision for the ALF senior Fellow network? Handed down from the mountain top, one of the commandments to new ALF classes is "The Class Project." Class XXI has chosen to focus on a topic core to ALF itself – fulfilling ALF's mission.

As our class discussed project ideas, a recurring question was, "what happens after our year is over?" And as we asked more questions of staff and board members about what the network of Senior Fellows does, we increasingly came to believe that the ALF Senior Fellow Network represents an underutilized and underleveraged reservoir of both leadership and skill in tackling tough issues facing our communities and the state. Our class project is about activating the network and we are seeking your thoughts.

We've conducted individual interviews and group discussions all over the state for the past few months. This project culminates with the Annual Forum, where we will share with you the results of our interviews and solicit your thoughts on where we go from here. "ALF Reloaded" is about all of us that have taken this unique journey in leadership together. Through the use of a movie-themed presentation and strategy cafes, we will explore ways that ALF can reach its full potential in Oregon.

Forum Program Highlights:

- Presentation of Interviews with Senior Fellows
- ALFie awards
- Video clips
- Facilitated "Strategy Café" table dialogues

Class XXII

ALF in Action: Hunger Project

From the Class XXII Final Report: ALF Class 22 began their exploration of the issue of hunger in Oregon in the fall of 2008. We conducted a survey to better understand the perspectives of ALF fellows on hunger and how their beliefs influence their engagement in this issue.

Our Class 22 Project Forum in January probed these issues even further with an afternoon session focused on poverty and hunger in Oregon and what we can do to solve this problem. In the first breakout session following a keynote address by Dr. Donna Beegle, ALF Fellows and guests talked about the assumptions that we have about the root causes of hunger and considered the question, "If we understand the causes of hunger, why is it still an issue in the richest nation on Earth?"

In the second breakout session, ALF Fellows broke up into different sectors – Individuals, Faith-Based, Government/Legislative, Corporate/Private Sector, Non-Profit/Community Organizations and considered how the sector they have chosen is playing or can play a role in helping to solve the problems of hunger.

A summary of the comments from each breakout session was compiled following the Forum. With nearly 100 ALF Fellows and guests participating in the forum, comments were been combined and edited for brevity, but not completely sanitized. As you can imagine, this was a very lively discussion. These comments as well as a comprehensive clearinghouse of information regarding hunger in Oregon can be found at the website Class 22 developed for their project at <http://www.alfinaction.org>.

Please take a moment and look at these comments. If you were at the forum, they should bring back some evocative thoughts about the discussion in the room and the challenges we face. We welcome your thoughts and comments about this effort, and for your help in reducing hunger in Oregon.

In the course of their research, Class 22 found that many ALF senior fellows expressed great interest in wanting to get involved. As a result, Class 22 also arranged two service opportunities in the morning prior to the Forum for those wishing to participate at either the Oregon Food Bank, or serving meals at Blanchet House.

Class XXIII

On the Brink of Economic Failure – Can Oregon Survive?

This forum was designed to engage Oregonians and leaders to learn about the effects of an unstable revenue system. The state revenue system, dominated by the personal income tax, remains highly volatile over the short-term. Oregon's General Fund limits legislative discretion and ties up the general fund. Often voter initiatives mandate new program expenditures without specifying new revenue sources or offsetting decreases.

In addition, Oregon's unemployment rate more than doubled in a years' time, surging faster than that of any other state. Projections are that Oregon's unemployment will remain high, causing tax revenues to stay low. Voter mandates including long sentences for repeat criminal offenders mean some budget cuts are off-limits. Oregon also has the second-most crowded classrooms, and continues to have one of the nation's shortest schools years. Stable and consistent funding of Oregon's public schools continues to be a challenge.

Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown moderated a panel of elected officials, business leaders, and representatives from law enforcement and education to discuss these challenges and pose possible solutions.

Panelists included:

- Margaret Carter, Deputy Director, Oregon Department of Human Services
- Ryan Deckert, President, Oregon Business Association
- Tim Evinger, Klamath County Sheriff
- Sue Hildick, Executive Director, Oregon Chalkboard Project
- Frank Morse, Oregon State Senator
- Lane Shetterly, Former State Representative, Chair of Revenue Restructuring Task Force

The forum also featured a presentation on communicating with Oregonians about public finance using results of the Values and Beliefs survey work done by Adam Davis, of Davis, Hibbitts and Midghall.

University Student Participants Offered \$1,500 Challenge: ALF Class XXIII extended a challenge to local government and public policy students at Oregon universities who attended the forum to develop proposals that would advance efforts to expand public understanding of Oregon's financial system. The winning team was offered a \$1,500 award and the opportunity to present its proposal to select Oregon state legislators.