

A Brief History of the International Alliance for Invitational Education

William W. Purkey
*UNC-Greensboro
Greensboro, N.C.*

Beyond our Galaxy, in some forgotten time (circa 1968), two young professors at the University of Florida, Betty Faye Siegel and William Watson Purkey, applied for and received a small grant from the Noyes Foundation of New York to train educators. The grant provided modest fellowships for teams of teachers, principals, and school board members to attend a three-week residential summer program on humanizing the educative process. Although the funding was to be for a single summer, the program was so successful that the Noyes Foundation continued its support for the next eight years.

During the eight summer workshops at the University of Florida the concept of Invitational Education began to emerge. More than 300 educators attended the residential workshops, worked with Drs. Siegel and Purkey, wrestled with invitational theory, and contributed greatly to the emergence of what became known as Invitational Education. Many present leaders of the Alliance, including Judy Lehr, John Novak, Sandra Damico, Gurney Chambers, Bruce Voelkel, and others began their association with the Alliance by being involved in these early workshops.

After eight years of funding, the Noyes Foundation ended its support. This was a major turning point, for Drs. Siegel and Purkey decided that the summer workshops would continue without funding other than registration fees. Summer workshops and programs were successfully conducted at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Guilford College, and most memorably, at Western Carolina University, affectionately recalled as "Camelot" by those who attended, where it was necessary to keep waiting lists of those eager to participate.

From 1968 until 1978 there was no Alliance, no organization, no dues, no structure...just an idea...and people who believed in it. In 1978, Drs. Siegel and Purkey met in the mountains of North Carolina and "officially" formed the Alliance for Invitational Education to encourage and bring together the proponents of Invitational Education.

Even after the Alliance was formed it had none of the trappings of a real organization. It had no membership list, officers, or a dues structure. Yet, the I Alliance continued to grow.

A second major event in the history of the Alliance occurred in the summer of 1982 during an Invitational Education Workshop held at Lehigh University and directed by William Stafford. At the conclusion of this one-week workshop, twelve leaders in the Alliance met and created a formal structure for the Alliance. Membership dues were set, and officers (Co-directors, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Chair, Newsletter Editor, and Member-at-Large) were appointed in order to have the Alliance Chartered by the State of North Carolina as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit educational organization. This was accomplished thanks to the hard work of Robert Turner of Averett College, Virginia.

It was during the 1982-86 period that Canadian Invitational Education began to establish itself as a major voice in invitational theory and practice. Dean Fink, John Novak, Peter Hudson, and many others offered highly successful Canadian conferences and workshops and wrote numerous position papers dealing with the theory and practice of Invitational Education. During this time, John Novak organized a SIC (Special Interest Group) in the American Educational Research Association. This SIG continues to be highly active in AERA and has been of tremendous value in addressing substantive issues in invitational theory and practice before the most rigorous and demanding audiences.

From 1982 through 1986 the Alliance continued to flourish. Workshops and conferences were held at Kennesaw College, UNC-Greensboro, and Graylyn Conference Center at Wake Forest University. In 1986, the Alliance membership dues were increased to \$20.00. This allowed the Alliance to hire its first paid part-time Executive Secretary, Marilyn Mueller. Conrad Austin was asked to be the Alliance Membership Chair.

The last few years, from 1986 on, have been great ones for the Alliance. Paula Helen Stanley became Executive Secretary and added tremendously to the strength of the organization. The Canadians organized a most productive Niagara-on-the-Lake Conference. New books by David Strahan, Jack Schmidt, John Wilson, and others explored various facets of invitational theory and practice. Two major foundation grants were received; one from Z. Smith Reynolds and another from R.J.R. Nabisco. These grants were to explore the efficacy of invitational theory in combatting such problems as school drop-outs and classroom discipline,

Three of the most successful events held during the past three years have been the Toronto Conference headed by Dean Fink, the Orlando Conference directed by Bettie Palmer Sprat, and the Baltimore Conference led by Don McBrien. These ventures were great successes professionally and financially for the Alliance. They produced sufficient income to allow the Alliance to invest in new opportunities, including the development of an annual publication and this refereed journal.

As we enter springtime, 1992, the future of the Alliance looks bright. A task-force is hard at work at UNC-Greensboro planning both a full-day training program on the invitational model and an International Conference to be held in Greensboro this fall. Our Alliance bookstore continues to show a profit and our membership continues to grow. As we head into the wind and follow the stars to the new century, we can enter in our log, as did Christopher Columbus, "This day we sailed on."

Chronology

1971-1978	William W. Purkey and Betty Siegel direct Noyes Foundation workshops on Humanism, University of Florida.
1978-1981	Drs. Purkey and Siegel direct summer workshops at Western Carolina University.
1978	Drs. Purkey and Siegel organize informal Alliance for Invitational Education. Canadian Invitational Education forms with John Novak and Dean Fink.
1979	Tarrytown, New York. Invitational Education Workshop, Marymount College.
1980	Guilford College Conference, Greensboro, NC, directed by Bob Turner.
1981	Brock University Conference, St. Catherines, Canada. Dr. Betty Siegel accepts Presidency of Kennesaw College, Marietta, GA.
1982	Lehigh University Conference, Bethlehem, PA, directed by Bill Stafford. Alliance formerly organized; annual dues, \$10.00; 12 members.
1983	Kansas Association for Invitational Education formed by John Wilson. American Educational Research Association SIG formed by John Novak.
1984	William W. Purkey and John Novak author <i>Inviting School Success, 2nd Ed.</i> Kennesaw State College Conference, directed by Betty Siegel.
1985	University of North Carolina at Greensboro Workshop, directed by William Purkey.

- 1986 Graylyn Leadership Conference, Wake Forest University, directed by Don Russell.
Alliance membership dues increase to \$20.00.
Alliance establishes paid, part-time executive secretary position, accepted by Marilyn Mueller.
- 1987 Canadian Regional Conference, Toronto, directed by Dean Fink.
Greensboro Conference, directed by William Purkey.
Paula Stanley becomes second Executive Secretary.
William W. Purkey and John J. Schmidt author *The Inviting Relationship*.
- 1988 Niagara-on-the-Lake Conference in Canada, directed by John Novak.
William W. Purkey and John Novak write the Phi Delta Kappa fastback, *Education: By Invitation Only*.
Alliance receives research funding from Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.
John J. Schmidt authors *Invitation to Friendship*, a book for children.
- 1989 Alliance purchases computer and laser printer for newsletters.
Alliance Bookstore created to offer invitational materials and books for sale.
Newsletter expanded and renamed The Forum.
- 1990 Orlando, Florida International Conference, directed by Bettie P. Spratt.
Inviting Schools Award Program moves to Furman University, directed by Judy Lehr.
Graylyn "Futures Committee" plans for 21st Century, Wake Forest University.
William W. Purkey and John J. Schmidt author *Invitational Learning for Counseling and Development*.
John J. Schmidt writes *Living Intentionally & Making Life Happen*.
- 1991 William W. Purkey and Paula H. Stanley author *Invitational Teaching, Learning and Living*.
Alliance applies for "Center" status at UNC-Greensboro.
Baltimore International Conference, directed by Don McBrien.
- 1992 Dean Fink organizes an Invitational Education Network within the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
Alliance publishes its first annual volume, *Advances in Invitational Thinking*, edited by John Novak.
Alliance begins publishing the *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, edited by John J. Schmidt.