



What is Formation?

Formation is the process of creating a quiet, focused and disciplined space in which the noise within us and around us can subside and the voice of the inner teacher may be heard -- space in which the external and internal powers of deformation are diminished and the grace and truth that are ours may regain their original form.

-- Parker J. Palmer

Formation provides inspiration and renewal. Through inner work, individuals reconnect with their own values and truths, the qualities that make them whole. Renewed community college employees can recommit to the institution and to the students they serve.

Formation principles and practices inform and renew institutional cultures. Community colleges can recommit to their mission, rooted in the belief that each and every learner has inherent worth and potential.



Mission and Goal

The **mission** of the Center for Formation in the Community College (CFCC) is to enable community colleges to create transformative communities of faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, community partners, and those for whom we all work and with whom we all learn: our students.

Our **goal** is to foster communities of the heart. We intend to work with colleges who want to support individual formation for their employees, and also to affect their culture through institutional formation. Although we describe separate pathways to individual and institutional formation, the Center intends to work only with colleges that are committed to both.



History

In August 1997, the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) began its work in formation with a visit to the Fetzer Institute and a meeting with Parker J. Palmer, Ph.D. Individuals from the League for Innovation in the Community College, the Fetzer Institute, and the DCCCD met in January 2000 to explore interest in a national community college formation movement. Collaboration among the Fetzer Institute, the League for Innovation, and the DCCCD resulted in the founding of the Center in March 2001.

Since its inception, the Center has offered sampler retreats, facilitator and team preparation retreats, and conference presentations. The first CFCC inter-college gathering of those actively engaged in formation work was held in September 2001. Mentors and consultants, provided by the Center, are working with individuals and colleges in their formation efforts.



Objectives

The objectives of the Center are to support individuals and their institutions in **building awareness, deepening learning, and sustaining growth**. The methods for doing this include the following:



Building Awareness

Sampler: a brief introduction to the principles of formation in a one-and-a-half day retreat

Retreat: an introduction to the principles of formation in a two-and-a-half to three-day experience

Study: a list of resources provided for study by individuals and dialogue with colleagues

Conference Presentations: awareness-building presentations at relevant professional conferences



Deepening Learning

Formation Team Preparation: preparation and mentoring of facilitators and others who perform key roles in institutional formation (e.g., champion, advocate, supporter, implementer)

Retreat Series: the formation team members provide appropriate formation experiences for their colleagues

Continuing Study and Writing: reading, dialogue, and writing for publication



Sustaining Growth

Annual Gathering: an inter-college gathering of formation facilitators and team members held each fall and sponsored by the CFCC

By formation, I mean an educational process rooted in the assumption that each of us has that spot of grace or truth within ourselves -- an ongoing source of truth-telling and well-being that needs only to be released from deforming pressures and allowed to reclaim its rightful role in the centering and grounding of our lives.

-- Parker J. Palmer