

National Peace Academy

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First-ever U.S. National Peace Academy Launched

CLEVELAND, OH – After decades of discussion, years of planning, and months of coordination and collaboration among hundreds of local, national, and international experts and organizations focused on the inter-related issues of peace and non-violence, plans have been formalized to establish the United States' first National Peace Academy.

The announcement was made following a three-day summit at Case Western Reserve University, attended by more than 170 scholars, academicians, business representatives, government officials, researchers, and community leaders from around the nation and from 10 other countries. The participants represented a broad spectrum of experts and practitioners, ranging from community-based and faith-based conflict resolution organizations to international authorities on human rights and peace initiatives under the auspices of the United Nations. Areas of specialized interest and practice ranged from domestic violence and spousal abuse to more global humanitarian issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, genocides in Darfur and Rwanda, and violence-related famines and health crises in conflict-riddled regions throughout the world.

The goal of the National Peace Academy (www.nationalpeaceacademy.us) is to support and advance a sustainable culture of peace through research, education, and real-world application. The Academy will augment and work in collaboration with the efforts of myriad existing programs and institutions, including an estimated 400 programs at universities across the U.S., aimed at enculturating concepts such as peace, social justice, and professional ethics into community-based efforts, government policies, business practices, and international diplomatic initiatives.

Dr. Shannon E. French, Director of the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence at CWRU, praised the organizers and participants for their commitment to “living the principles that they espouse, whether in their own organizations or communities or through their involvement in national and international efforts to address military conflicts, political oppression, and humanitarian crises.”

The National Peace Academy's coordinating effort will continue to be centered at Case, and its organizers will work in collaboration with learning and research institutions and peacebuilding field workers across the U.S. and worldwide. The Academy hopes to be a clearinghouse and resource center; a training institute for educators, government agencies, and community groups; and, potentially, a full-blown academic program offering undergraduate and graduate degrees.

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Dr. Dorothy (Dot) Maver, Co-Director of the academy and one of the principal organizers of last week's summit, pointed out that the practical applications of the National Peace Academy's mission go beyond non-violence and peace-building initiatives. "They extend into the realms of global environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and human rights-based business practices," she said. "Conflict, political and cultural animosity, social injustice, and ethical malfeasance are often the central obstacles to the implementation of strategies that can make the planet more livable, the workforce more productive, and the population more secure, healthier, and more prosperous."

She noted that one of the convening organizations for the summit was the Center for Business as an Agency of World Benefit of the nationally renowned Weatherhead School of Management at CWRU.

Representatives of the sponsoring and participating organizations will be meeting over the next few weeks to establish a timetable for the next steps leading up to the official opening of the Academy.

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