

## Community Assemblies

Since the early 1990s, faculty and staff have conducted several community assemblies. The assembly process focuses on a specific community issue, providing a neutral and structured forum for citizens to discuss the issues, examine alternatives for response, and work toward a consensus for action.

Over the years topics have ranged from community decision making and children at risk to economic development and environmental quality. More recently, state officials have openly participated in offender reentry and community health issues. Specific Assembly topics have been:

Community Decision Making, 1991

Young Children at Risk, 1992

Partnerships for Governing in the 21st Century, 1992

Complex Choice: Economic Development and Environmental Quality, 1993

Communication: Reconnecting the Community, 1995

Community Reconnection: A New Beginning for Offenders, 2002

Prescription for Healthy Citizens, 2004

Prior to each Assembly, a set of background papers on the topic are prepared and distributed to all the Assembly participants. Following the Assembly, two publications are prepared. First, is a Sense of the Assembly, which provides a summary of the discussions and recommendations resulting from the Assembly process. The second, a book, includes not only the Sense of the Assembly, but also a selection of the background papers. The books are available at the Wichita State University Library and Wichita Public Library.

The ultimate goal of the assembly is to encourage citizen participation in developing local government policy and to cultivate civic responsibility. For more information, contact Misty Bruckner.