Campus and Community Conversations Planning Guide
Using Dialogue to Inform Achieving the Dream
Planning, Implementation and Communication

This Planning Guide was created by Public Agenda, a national partner of Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count. Achieving the Dream is a national initiative to help more community college students succeed, particularly students of color and low-income students.

Achieving the Dream’s mission is to improve results for the nation’s community college students. Reaching out to and engaging critical stakeholders within the college and surrounding community around efforts to improve student success rates is one important dimension of this work. When done well, community and stakeholder engagement builds understanding, support and new partnerships that can help students meet their goals with greater success.

This Planning Guide offers principles, practical guidelines and carefully crafted materials that can help colleges successfully include campus and community dialogue into the mix of their engagement activities. These principles, guidelines and materials are drawn from a number of sources. First, they reflect Public Agenda’s 30 years of experience as a public opinion and civic engagement organization. Second, they are a product of the collective wisdom of Achieving the Dream’s national partners, including many of the nation’s pre-eminent experts on community colleges and social change. Finally, they have benefited from—and will continue to do so in subsequent editions—the many pioneering community colleges that are doing the real work of Achieving the Dream.

We would especially like to thank the community colleges who took part in the pilot engagement projects with Public Agenda from 2005 to 2008, and whose valuable insights and contributions to the development of these materials are greatly appreciated. Thank you very much to the Alamo Community College District in San Antonio, TX; Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, MA; Capital Community College in Hartford, CT; Coastal Bend Community College in Beeville, TX; Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, OH; Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT; Jefferson Community College in Steubenville, Ohio; Norwalk Community College, in Norwalk, CT; South Texas Community College in McAllen, TX; Tallahassee Community College in Tallahassee, FL; the University of New Mexico at Gallup in Gallup, NM and Valencia Community College in Orlando, FL.

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  - Locate on the menu, View > Navigation Panels > Attachments > name of document file
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

This section begins by explaining how Campus and Community Conversations can be integrated into your college’s Achieving the Dream efforts. It provides an overview of Public Agenda’s Campus and Community Conversation model. Finally, it describes the outcomes of several past applications of Campus and Community Conversations at selected Achieving the Dream schools.

Engaging the Campus and Broader Community through Dialogue

Broad–based engagement is one of the four core principles of the ATD model of institutional change and performance. (The four core principles are: 1. Use of evidence to improve programs and services. 2. Committed leadership. 3. Broad engagement. 4. Systemic institutional improvement.)

In fact, these core principals are interrelated in a number of ways. For example, strong leadership from the top is necessary to change an organization, but it is not sufficient. Institutions that encourage faculty, staff, students and the broader community to take responsibility for student success, and create meaningful opportunities for these stakeholders to take the lead in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their offerings will reap a number of benefits. Specifically, campus and community engagement can:

- MINIMIZE RESISTANCE to institutional change efforts.
- Help UNERATH critical internal AND external obstacles to student success and help GENERATE solutions.
- Foster a sense of SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA among the members of the campus and external community.
- Create a “DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP” that COMPLEMENTS core & DATA TEAM LEADERSHIP that can lead to creative solutions across the institution while helping to MAINTAIN MOMENTUM IN THE FACE OF CORE LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS.
- Working collaboratively to enhance student success can be a POWERFUL FORM OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF.

Reactions from leaders at colleges who have held Campus or Community Conversations:

“I don’t see how we could have effectively implemented our ATD strategies... without incorporating the whole community engagement piece. It is very key. It has been seen as an add-on, but it is a huge piece of ATD... you can’t make assumptions about what to do at the college in a vacuum.”

“I wish we did this four years ago; this should have been a key piece in the planning year.”
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

Finally, the qualitative data gained through various engagement strategies can contribute meaningfully to the use of evidence to improve outcomes and inform interventions and strategies.

By “engagement” we mean more than simply communicating with faculty, staff, students and community to keep them informed about the initiative and invite their “buy-in.” Rather, we mean involving these critical stakeholders early, often, creatively and authentically in the change process, for “institutional change means changing behavior of people across the institution, and their support will come most readily when they share responsibility for diagnosing the problems and crafting solutions.”

Dialogue, while not the only strategy, can be a very powerful tool to aid colleges in their community and stakeholder engagement efforts.

This Planning Guide will guide community college leaders through a tested model for engaging campus stakeholders and/or the broader community in a powerful way through dynamic, productive conversations about helping students succeed.

Campus and/or Community Conversations can raise awareness about community college activities and issues, open up new lines of communication among various campus stakeholders or between the college and the broader community. Frequently, such dialogues spawn new ideas, initiatives and partnerships that will help more students succeed.

Public Agenda’s Campus/Community Conversations Model

Public Agenda’s approach to community dialogue involves several key principles and guidelines that can be applied flexibly to different settings. All of these principles apply whether you are planning a conversation that includes external stakeholders or just college-based stakeholders.

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Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

Local, Nonpartisan Planners and Sponsors

Community colleges will be most successful recruiting diverse participants and creating powerful follow-up if they enlist the help of a diverse group of stakeholders to assist in sponsoring and planning the dialogue. This is particularly true for Community Conversations, where the involvement of other community-based organizations and institutions in the planning process is crucial for success. For a campus conversation, the only sponsor as such will be the college, but a planning team composed of a diverse group of staff, faculty, administrators and students is recommended.

Diverse Participants: Beyond the Usual Suspects

True Campus and Community Conversations should include a broad cross section of participants. For Campus Conversations, a range of stakeholders from the college should be involved, including full time and adjunct faculty, students (even alumni if you like), all kinds of staff members, administrators, etc.

For Community Conversations the participation should reflect the diversity of the community, not just the professional community, the college’s Advisory Board members, and a few well-known concerned citizens. The goal is to include average citizens as well as experts and professionals and to ensure that all groups and stakeholders are represented.

Dialogue in Small, Diverse Groups with Trained Moderators and Recorders

A genuine exchange of views can best occur in small diverse groups, with well-trained nonpartisan moderators to facilitate the dialogue and recorders who document the proceedings for effective follow-up.
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

The Power of Choicework

Public Agenda has developed a Choicework Discussion Starter for use by ATD colleges called “Success Is What Counts: A Community Conversation to Help All Community College Students Achieve.” The Discussion Starter is organized around giving people alternative ways of thinking about an issue, or what Public Agenda refers to as “Choicework.” We have found Choicework to be an exceptionally effective way of providing people with a structure for engaging in an issue with which they may have little experience. This discussion starter can be found in the Participant Guide in Appendix 1.

Follow-Up

It is important that these dialogues be part of a process, one that is connected to the college’s ATD agenda, thereby contributing to success at the college. If they are only single meetings that come and go, with no discernible connection to the life of the college, the ATD initiative, students and the community, then they will have been of little value. Thus, a major focus of this guide is how to connect these dialogues to action aimed at helping more students succeed through effective follow-up activities.

Picturing a Campus/Community Conversation

Each Campus or Community Conversation should be a significant event—this is more than just a small meeting. Typically, each will have somewhere between 60 and 120 participants. The session begins (or sometimes ends) with a meal and is followed by welcoming remarks by the conversation’s sponsors or planners, after which participants move into small discussion groups of about 12 to 14 people each.

Each group should be as diverse and representative of the campus and/or community as possible. The small group discussion is designed to take about two hours; the entire event will take about four hours.
The basic structure of an evening Campus or Community Conversation is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 – 6:10</td>
<td>Registration, Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10 – 6:30</td>
<td>Introduction (large group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Host provides welcome, purpose, agenda overview. Brief presentation of key Achieving the Dream data points and instructions for breaking into small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 – 8:30</td>
<td>Small group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups of 12-14, each with a trained moderator, recorder and Choicework discussion starter materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Overview, introductions, ground rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:40</td>
<td>Presentation/discussion of Choicework materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:20</td>
<td>Interim Summary on Common Ground, Concerns/Disagreements, Outstanding Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Bridging From Dialogue to Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Using a question like “How can the college and community work together to help all community college students succeed?”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Prioritize Action Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10</td>
<td>Next Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>Finish, participants fill out survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Report Out (large group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderators or participants share highlights from each group. Host discusses plans to follow up on the conversation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

Outcomes of Past Campus and Community Conversation Initiatives

Outcomes of Campus and Community Conversations are as varied as the colleges, communities and issues themselves. In every case, real change is the result of strategic follow-up to Campus and Community Conversations that builds effectively on the momentum and priority action areas generated by the dialogues.

The outcomes for your local college and community will depend on your advance planning for follow-up, the ideas and insights that emerge from the conversations and the ways in which the college, the partner organizations and individual participants take advantage of the process. Following are a few examples of outcomes from past Campus and Community Conversations at community colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative.

Community Conversations

Jefferson Community College, Steubenville, OH

In 2006, Jefferson Community College (JCC) and several community partners hosted a Community Conversation on Student Success. Responding to recommendations that emerged from the conversation that the college improve its outreach efforts to area high school students, the college expanded its advising/recruitment staff to include two JCC graduates who visit high schools on behalf of the college.

Another recommendation of the conversation was to strengthen connections between high school and college faculty. In response, the college expanded its High School Teacher Expo, an annual event where teachers come to the college to visit and hear classroom presentations by college faculty. Participation since the conversation has grown from 25 to 60 teachers annually.
And, just a few months after the Community Conversation was held, the community passed a levy to support the college with an unprecedented amount of support.

A second Community Conversation, held in 2008, explored the issue of college readiness in partnership with local school districts. As a result of this conversation, representatives from the college and school districts have begun to meet on a semi-regular basis to respond to the concerns expressed by parents and other participants. The steps being taken so far include:

- Starting in the fall of 2009, three districts will launch a new program aimed at recognizing students who maintain a 2.5 GPA or better, and targeting them with information on local colleges. These students will also be made aware early on of their eligibility for the county’s “Horizon Grant” which provides two years of free tuition for students graduating from Jefferson County Schools—available even to those students who don’t qualify for financial aid. College recruiters will run this initiative at the three “pilot” districts.

- Current Jefferson Community College students who graduated from local schools will go back to the high schools during homeroom and assemblies to talk with students about college, how important it is, and what they need to do to get there.

- A number of districts have invited JCC to set up a booth at their annual “kick-off” nights, where incoming high school students learn about the schools, classes and extracurricular opportunities.
South Texas Community College, McAllen, TX

South Texas Community College and a number of community partners have held two Community Conversations, one largely with business and educator participation and another with primarily community, student and family participation. The college president has formed and leads a taskforce to raise funds for adult basic education courses and GED acquisition, and some of this work is reaching across the border to partner with Mexican institutions. The community engagement work has also led to the creation of an Instruction Research Team to examine ways of addressing instructor attitudes that have been identified as barriers to student success.

The college is institutionalizing and broadening its community outreach and partnerships via a newly formed Community Engagement Department, a community engagement blog and a new partnership with the National Hispanic Institute to engage high school students and their parents about college readiness. The college’s five-year strategic plan includes an ambitious array of community engagement projects for 2009-2013.

The college is also moving towards a better way of communicating and sharing information with the community, particularly with the families of students attending the college. A new mandatory freshman orientation program entitled ‘First-Year Connection’ includes a family component that emphasizes the importance of family support during the students first year. And, after hearing in the Community Conversation that the college needed to do a better job of letting the community know about its’ available resources and services, high school students are now invited to come to the campus for a tour and the opportunity to use the colleges’ computer and science labs.

Finally, the college is establishing enhanced partnerships with local school districts. Following the Community Conversations, the college adopted two elementary schools, where the college leads activities and gives the students T-shirt that read “I am going to college!”
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

University of New Mexico at Gallup, Gallup, NM

A college-and-community leadership team was established in Gallup, NM to engage the community and implement actions in support of community college student success. The team created a historical timeline representing the first merged history for the Gallup area which includes the Native tribes, and the Hispanic and Anglo legacy in the region. This will be shared with the public schools and will be utilized in history courses at the college.

The Team held its first Community Conversation (or “Talking Circle”) and the college established a Student Success Committee to address the recommendations made by participants. More Navajo and Zuni participants were involved in the Talking Circle than in past college-community collaboration efforts, and some new community leaders now serve on the college’s Achieving the Dream Student Success Committee. The leadership development activities and 2008 Talking Circle sparked conversations about race and culture that have given some college faculty and staff “ammunition” to advocate within the institution for greater sensitivity to issues facing Native students. And, as a result of the Talking Circle, partnerships between the college and some Zuni and Navajo educational agencies have been strengthened.

The college is now seeking grant funding for outreach programs at Navajo Chapter Houses, a recommendation that emerged from the 2008 Talking Circle. The college also applied for a U.S. Department of Education grant focusing on implementing some of the interventions on campus suggested at the Talking Circle and cited the Conversation in support of its application. Building on the success of the UNM-Gallup Community Talking Circle, the Zuni and Navajo tribes in the region organized their own talking circles in 2009 to further discuss the issue of college student success.
Section 1: An Introduction to Campus and Community Conversations

Campus Conversations

Coastal Bend Community College, Beeville, TX
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH

Coastal Bend and Cuyahoga Community Colleges both undertook a series of faculty/student dialogue groups combined with Campus Conversations (and in the case of Coastal Bend, Community Conversations as well) as a way of engaging their institutions around their Achieving the Dream work.

Both colleges reported that the dialogues and conversations were a very positive way to promote understanding and build relationships between students, faculty and staff. Participants in the conversations were excited to be involved in a respectful dialogue in which their concerns, suggestions, and strategies for action were taken seriously. Faculty and students both expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to interact with each other outside of the classroom environment and said they would appreciate more opportunities for this kind of relationship building.

The engagement process contributed to the building of a culture of evidence at the colleges. For example, at Coastal Bend College, the college’s institutional research department completed a full content analysis of the qualitative data revealed in the dialogues and campus conversations held on each of the four campuses. The IR staff created a detailed presentation and presented it to the president, core and data teams, and the board of trustees. The data were used to inform the college’s new strategic plan. At Cuyahoga, the ATD core team planned to use the data from its dialogues and conversations in deliberations as the college ended the “demonstration” phase of ATD and moved toward making policy decisions to widen the implementation of student success strategies. The core team created a final report based on the engagement experiences that was shared with the strategic planning team to inform their preparation of the FY09-14 strategic plan. ☐
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

Section 2 explains the creation of a planning team, the first step in organizing a Campus or Community Conversation initiative.

Creating the Planning Team

The Planning Team is responsible for the actual work of organizing the Campus or Community Conversation as well as making sure that appropriate follow-up takes place in a timely manner. The team should be a diverse group of individuals who are interested in the project, bring a variety of skills and resources to the table, and are willing to commit the time necessary over the next few months to make it happen. The Planning Team should include people with access to and credibility with various important segments of the populations you want to participate in the conversation, whether that’s a local immigrant community in the case of a Community Conversation or developmental math faculty in the case of a Campus Conversation.

What Does the Planning Team Do?

- Makes major strategic decisions, including topic selection and additional customization of discussion materials, selects conversation location, decides on media policy and so forth.

- Creates workgroups to manage the various planning tasks, drawing from its ranks and recruiting additional people as needed to get the job done.

- Spearheads communications efforts (in coordination with workgroups) such as developing talking points, promotional materials and media guidelines.

- Coordinates and executes follow up activities such as mailing of thank you letters, drafting and distributing of conversation summary report, and other follow up activities.

Who Should Be on the Planning Team?

Campus Conversations

Your planning team should have about 8-12 individuals and should include a reasonably diverse group of people from the college. Members could include staff from academic affairs, student affairs, finance, institutional research, full time and part time or adjunct faculty, administrators and deans, and even
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

students. You may find that this is a great opportunity to engage faculty and students directly in an Achieving the Dream related project, and that they may be good champions for the overall initiative among their peers as a result of their involvement in planning (and attending) the conversation.

Community Conversations

Community Conversations are most successful when a diverse group of stakeholders is involved in the planning process. Although your college is taking a leadership role in this effort, **Community Conversations work best if they are presented and run by a coalition of local institutions and organizations.** Doing so gives the initiative broader reach into the community and communicates that the conversation will be open to multiple interests and viewpoints. Wider sponsorship brings a greater variety of skill sets to the proceedings and opens up possibilities for long-term partnerships and follow-up.

Plan for about 5-10 different community organizations/institutions to join the planning team, which should have about 12-20 members. In addition to the college personnel listed under the section on Campus Conversations above, the college may have a “community relations officer” of some kind, and it will likely make sense to include that person. Beyond this, whom might you recruit to the initiative? Might any of your trustees enjoy this kind of project? What about alumni?

In addition, you should consider approaching the following potential community partners:

- Local employers (especially those who hire community college graduates) or the Chamber of Commerce.
- The local k–12 public school district and/or local four-year colleges.
- A local chapter of the Urban League, the ymca, religious institutions, social service providing organizations and the like.

TIP

Use a variety of methods to recruit members, and keep in mind that a personal invitation is often the best.
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

- Local government officials.
- Respected active citizens who have worked with you in the past, or with whom you would like to develop a relationship.
- A local community or education foundation.

This is a great opportunity to reach out to organizations and potential partners with whom you may not have worked with in the past. Colleges may be tempted to take on the lion’s share of work themselves, particularly if your college has a public relations or community relations department. It is very important to create a true team of people from within and outside of the college who will take responsibility for various aspects of the work involved. Both your Community Conversation and your long term possibilities for follow-up work will benefit.

It takes some extra planning up front to bring a good mix of community interests on board, but it is worth the time to make this a true community effort. It’s a good idea to consider some “unlikely” partners: people and organizations of different experiences, backgrounds and maybe political leanings. Planners do not have to agree on politics or education policy, as long as they agree that community dialogue is an important way to help tackle community challenges. It’s critical to think about who will be able to implement the action ideas that emerge from the conversation and to involve them from the beginning.

A Note on Additional Conversation Sponsors

There may be additional organizations and/or individuals that you’d like to invite to the table, who for one reason or another may be unable to join the planning team or provide staff but who would be interested in lending their name and general support or endorsement to the endeavor. We suggest you think of these groups as “sponsors,” and you can list their names in your materials and communications about the conversation. Sometimes it’s a good idea to reach out to certain groups or organizations for political reasons, or to help diversify your team. Of course, it’s always preferable if they can join the planning team, but if they can’t, offer to include them as a “sponsor.”

TIPS

Think about how you can involve your college’s ATD Core and Data Team in the conversation. As Planning Team members? Participants? Observers?

Think about involving informal leaders who may not have a title or an official position but are respected and trusted in their community.
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

Explaining the Initiative to Potential Planning Team Members or Sponsors

It’s best to be ready with a brief and straightforward “pitch” that explains the purpose of the Campus or Community Conversation and why you are hoping they will want to get involved, and what that involvement will entail. Your “talking points” might include the following:

- We are organizing a Campus or Community Conversation about helping more community college students succeed.

- It is based on a model of public engagement developed by the organization Public Agenda, which has been used in hundreds of communities nationwide. The model is carefully designed to be:
  • inclusive, going beyond the “usual suspects” to include a true cross section of stakeholders and community members.
  • productive, with trained moderators and recorders working with small groups of diverse participants, using carefully prepared discussion materials.

- The conversation is an integral part of the college’s work through its Achieving the Dream Initiative which is about closing achievement gaps on campus and helping more students reach their goals.

- Results of the conversation will be used to:
  • Further refine our understanding of the issues and help generate solutions.
  • Build support for efforts already in place and for developing new programs.
  • Forge new community relationships and strengthen existing partnerships.
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

It is best to explain the Campus or Community Conversation initiative in a way that will make sense to the people you are talking to—in other words, that will relate to their personal background, their work at the college, or their organization’s mission or goals. Help them see how their involvement in the process can enable them to further the work they are already doing, as well as contribute to the college, its students and the community overall.

For example, when talking to local employers or the Chamber of Commerce, you can explain how a successful process will lead ultimately to better-prepared potential employees—and that a community that sees its local businesses getting involved in the community’s potential as a whole is more likely to support those businesses in the future.

It’s important that members of the Planning Team or other sponsors understand this isn’t a typical public relations event. Make sure they are comfortable with the idea that this is an open dialogue and not about selling pre-decided solutions.

Campus/Community Conversation Organizing Structure

Your Planning Team should begin the planning process with a 3-4 hour Planning Workshop to review the Campus and Community Conversation model, set the goals of your conversation, make some key strategic and practical decisions and divide into workgroups to follow through on various planning tasks.

A sample agenda for a Community Conversation Planning Workshop is on the following page, but download the attached document [ComConvPlanWkshop.doc] to customize based on your situation.
Planning a Community Conversation on Improving Student Success
Community Conversation Planning Workshop  |  4:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Agenda

4:00–4:30 pm  Introductions/Opening Remarks
- Review Today’s Agenda
- Intro to Achieving the Dream Initiative: Student Success Agenda
- Community Conversations: An Engagement Strategy for Change

4:30–5:00 pm  Intro to:
- Community Conversation Model
- Community Conversation Structure
- Choicework Video and Discussion Starter
- Watch Community Conversations communications video
- What results typically come out of a Community Conversation?
- What are the results we want for our college and community?

5:00–5:30 pm  Planning for the Results We Want: Strategic Decisions
- Strategic Decision 1: Creation of Planning Team and other sponsors
- Strategic Decision 2: Customizing the Conversation Content
- Remaining Strategic Decisions

5:30–6:00 pm  Break and Dinner/Refreshments

6:00–6:30 pm  Planning for the Results We Want: Critical Tasks
- Critical Task 1: Recruiting Participants
- Critical Task 2: Recruiting Moderators and Recorders

6:30–7:00 pm  Critical Task 3: Nuts and Bolts
- Critical Task 4: Managing Communications and Strategic Follow Up

7:00–7:20 pm  Confirm Workgroups, Discuss Next Steps
- Review Strategic Decisions and Planning Timeline

7:20–7:30 pm  Final Questions and Wrap Up
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

After the initial Planning Workshop, members of the Planning Team should try to meet or communicate regularly—ideally once a week—to make sure planning stays on track and to give the workgroups an opportunity to share their progress with the whole group as well as voice questions and concerns. It’s up to the individual workgroups to decide how often they need to meet to accomplish their tasks and keep up momentum.

It is a helpful practice to designate someone as the primary liaison and coordinator for the Planning Team. And it usually makes sense to divide the responsibilities among five main workgroups (see “Community Conversations Organizers Chart” below) so that no one person or organization bears the entire burden. Each workgroup should also have someone play the role of liaison to the larger Planning Team.

Workgroups

Recruiting Participants

- Should be composed of diverse members with knowledge of, and standing in, the various sectors of the community you wish to recruit.

- Implements recruitment plan, including distributing fliers, making follow-up phone calls.

- Keeps track of participant registration in advance of event; pre-assigns registered participants to small discussion groups.

Organizing the Nuts and Bolts (Logistics)

- Selects/secure location for the Community Conversation.

- Coordinates meal and meal-related needs.

- Ensures that all necessary equipment and supplies are prepared and in place for the Community Conversation.
Section 2: Creating the Planning Team

- Sets event timeline and oversees day-of-event staffing, including: participant registration, equipment/venue set-up and clean-up, and provides general support and troubleshooting to other workgroups.

**Managing Moderators, Recorders and Host**

- Recruits and plans training for moderators and recorders.
- Plans and manages moderating needs for all opening and closing plenary sessions, which should be coordinated with the Logistics workgroup.

**Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up**

- Creates basic communications tools and products, such as talking points for recruiting participants, a flier/invitation to the event, a “pitch letter” to explain the event to potential partners and allies.
- Manages media relations.
- Creates a post-forum summary report and leads post-forum communications with participants.
- Communicates with participants about action opportunities both before and after the event (for instance, making people aware of organizations and events relevant to the forum’s theme), organizing follow-up task forces that forum participants can join and so forth. ☎️
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

This section discusses a number of strategic decisions that the Planning Team needs to consider:

- Choosing and customizing the topic.
- Defining “community” for the purposes of this conversation.
- Are you planning a single conversation or a series?
- Will your conversation be monolingual or multilingual?
- What can you do to make it possible for everyone who wants to attend to be able to attend?
- Will you invite observers, and if so, whom?
- Will you involve the media, and if so, how?
- Are there critical strategic considerations unique to your situation?

Choosing and Customizing Your Topic

A critical task for Campus and Community Conversation organizers is to select and frame the topic for discussion. Included in this tool kit is a discussion framework that Public Agenda has developed and carefully tested called “Success Is What Counts: A Community Conversation to Help All Community College Students Achieve.” (See the Participant Guide in Appendix 1). It employs a Choicework approach, inviting people to consider several ways to address a particular concern or need, which is a great way to get the conversation going. The discussion starter has been used successfully at a number of colleges.

Because this topic has been carefully pretested and is available in video as well as in print format (English and Spanish language), we advise you to start with this discussion module before developing your own or moving on to other topics.

Customizing Your Discussion

The “Success Is What Counts” discussion framework is meant only to get the conversation going, and there is plenty of room to customize the discussion to cover issues that are important to your college and community. The material can be customized by
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

developing specific “probes” (questions that moderators keep in mind and ask during the small group discussion) that can explore how a larger theme of the discussion relates to a given college’s specific situation and concerns.

An even more powerful way to customize the materials is to design a subsection of the dialogue that addresses the specific concerns of a given college. This is usually done as a “Part 2: Bridging from Dialogue to Action” following initial discussion using the “Choicework” framework.

Examples of “Part 2: Bridging from Dialogue to Action” discussion topics for Achieving the Dream colleges:

- “How can the college and the wider community (or simply the college community) do a better job of working together to help more students succeed?”
- “How can the college and the k–12 community work together to make sure more students are prepared for college-level work?”
- “Our community college is about to implement a new initiative to help more community college students succeed. We’d like to tell you about it, get your feedback and see if there are ways you’d like to participate.”
- “What specific strategies should our college adopt that would make the greatest impact on improving student success, and how can the campus community be involved?”

In this way, the conversation will combine materials that have been tested in focus groups and previous conversations (that is, the Choicework) with enough customization to make sure each college can adapt the proceedings to best fit its situation and goals. We believe that balancing both these elements (pretested materials and customization) offers the best recipe for successful conversations.
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

Defining “Community” for the Purposes of This Conversation

An important early step in your planning concerns the size and composition of the community you wish to engage.

One question here has to do with the scope of the community you are engaging. If you are organizing a Community Conversation, will the conversation be based in a neighborhood around a single college or campus, within a single town, or around a region with several campuses?

Small and medium sized communities can have successful community-wide forums, although local organizers who begin community-wide often want to follow up with more local, neighborhood-based conversations. In large urban centers, it may make more sense to plan a series of neighborhood-based forums, in order to narrow the scope to a level that average residents can relate to. There is no one way to think about this. Rather, it is something that you should decide for yourselves based on your goals and your knowledge of the local culture.

Another question concerns how you conceive of the community members and stakeholders you wish to include. The “Recruiting Participants” section is concerned primarily with helping you think about whom to invite and how to do so effectively. Please turn to that section for further thoughts and guidelines on this crucial subject.

Are You Planning a Single Campus or Community Conversation or a Series?

A related consideration is whether you want to plan a single conversation and then pause to assess how best to follow up or, alternatively, arrange a series of conversations from the start.

If you are interested in the series idea, there are a few options to consider. One is to apportion several full-scale conversations over a predetermined period of time. Another is to organize one full-scale conversation and then hold several smaller, “satellite”
conversations; this will provide some scale to your effort, allow you to reach specific sectors of the community and keep your workload manageable.

If you are organizing a Campus Conversation at a multi-campus institution, you’ll want to consider whether you want to hold one large conversation that brings together the college community from multiple campuses, or whether it makes more sense to roll out a series of conversations at each campus. We have seen this done in different ways in different places—your college’s specific situation, resources, and goals will determine the best process for you.

Will Your Campus or Community Conversation Be Monolingual or Multilingual?

In many cities and towns across the country, non-native English speakers or those with limited to no English are a large and vital part of the community. It is very important to the success and overall credibility of your initiative that you make provisions for involving those community members. This is especially important for Achieving the Dream conversations if your data analysis has shown that there is an achievement gap between ESL (English as a second language) and other students and you are targeting their achievement as part of your initiative.

While multilingual forums present some challenges, they are not insurmountable.

**Structuring the Conversation to Include Non-English Speakers**

To begin with, you will have to decide whether to organize discussion groups by language—in which case you will need to provide a bilingual moderator and recorder (who have participated in the moderator/recorder training)—or have non-English speakers mixed in with the others but provide translators for each small group.

Mixing non-English-speaking and English-speaking participants in the same group offers the greatest diversity. On the other hand, having same-language groups eases the flow of conversation for
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

English and non-English speakers alike. In our experience, planners have most often chosen to provide simultaneous translation during the opening and closing plenary sessions and to create one or two non-English-language breakout groups so that non-English speakers can experience a free-flowing dialogue.

Whichever approach you choose, make sure:

- You have enough translators and bilingual moderators.
- Participant materials are translated.
- Interpreters are available during the opening and closing plenary sessions, either at the front of the room or at the table with the non-English-speaking residents.

What Can You Do to Make It Possible for Everyone Who Wants to Attend to Be Able to Attend?

Of course, you'll want the conversation to be held in a well-known, accessible location that people will feel comfortable visiting during whatever time of day the meeting takes place. What else can you do to make it possible for virtually everyone to attend? Can you, for instance, provide some assistance for participants with transportation and/or with child care?

Of course, there are limits to how far organizers can go to make things accessible. Time and money can be factors. Depending on the facility, there may not be appropriate space for child care. But these are questions you will want to think about.

Will You Invite Observers, and If So, Whom?

Observers might be education or community leaders such as K–12 superintendents, college presidents and other senior members of the college’s administration; town council members; mayors; and others who will attend the discussion groups to listen and observe the proceedings but not participate actively.
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

This is not to say that such people should necessarily be observers rather than regular participants; rather, it is an option that might be preferable for you and/or for them. In some instances, a public official or authority figure like the college president could become a distraction if the group focuses more on that person than on the issue under discussion, and it may be best for that person not to be present. In other cases, such individuals have felt comfortable staying in the background and just listening. Authorities and leaders rarely get to hear from a broad cross section of the community in great depth without feeling as if they are “on the spot” to respond. In still other cases, local leaders have participated effectively in the discussions and everyone seemed perfectly comfortable with it.

You might consider asking one of the observers to speak briefly at the closing plenary session, sharing his or her perceptions of the session. And you should definitely plan to meet with observers after the event and include them in your plans for follow-up.

Will You Involve the Media, and If So, How?

Occasionally, a local media outlet has acted as a co-sponsor of a Community Conversation and is therefore part of things from the beginning. But more typically, organizers need to decide if they want to involve the media and how. Also, you must be prepared to respond to the media if they become interested in your project.

In general, media coverage has been very positive, so unless there are specific reasons to assume the media will be hostile, you do not need to be overly anxious about bad press.

The most important issue related to the media is how to protect the quality of the conversations. Participants who see the press in attendance may feel less comfortable expressing themselves or advocating a position. One way to handle this is with a simple ground rule that reporters usually agree to abide by:

TIP

If you do include observers, inform your moderators so they’ll be ready. Assign observers to specific discussion groups so no one room is overloaded—no more than two or three observers per room is a good rule of thumb. Make sure chairs are set up for observers outside the circle of participants.
Reporters may report what they hear, but they may not attribute quotes to individuals unless they speak to that person following the meeting and the person agrees to be quoted.

If the media are present under these conditions, the moderator should inform the group at the outset. The same ground rules that you lay out for reporters can also be applied to “bloggers,” should you have any who wish to attend and blog the discussion, either during or after the event.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do we get media coverage for our Campus or Community Conversation?
   - Alert the media about the conversation through a press release or media advisory.
   - If you decide, you can also invite reporters to cover the conversation itself.
   - Ask a member or members of the Planning Team to write an opinion piece for the local newspaper calling attention to the issue and the upcoming conversation.

2. What if a news article isn’t accurate or gives the wrong impression?
   - Make every effort to provide reporters with the most accurate, up-to-date information possible, and try not to have too many people in contact with reporters. In fact, you might think about designating a “spokesperson,” someone who will be the main point of contact with the media.
   - Nevertheless, mistakes do happen. If one does, be sure to call the reporter or editor and ask to have the misinformation corrected. Even if the paper doesn’t publish a correction, it will hopefully not repeat the mistake in any future stories.

TIPS

Be ready for press inquiries that might come your way. Consider preparing a brief, clear statement or series of talking points about the purpose of the forums, the sponsors and organizers, when and where they’ll occur and so forth. Share talking points with all those on the Planning Team likely to encounter the press. For an example, see page 15.

Occasionally, a reporter or member of the media may show up unannounced to the conversation. Make sure you prepare the moderators for this possibility and let them know that if this happens, they should explain the ground rules to the reporter and secure an agreement to abide by them; also make sure there are no objections within the small discussion group itself.
Section 3: Strategic Considerations

Are There Critical Strategic Considerations Unique to Your Situation?

The strategic questions and considerations we’ve discussed so far are almost always important themes for Planning Team discussion, regardless of the college or community. But your institution or community may be subject to unique dynamics that you should be aware of and prepare for.

For example:

- Are there hot button issues on campus or in the community that are liable to emerge? If so, how can you prepare for them?
- Is it election season, and if so, is that a factor to take into account?
- Are there racial or other social tensions in the community or on campus that should be thought through?
- What is the perception of the college in the community? Are there any particularly challenging community leaders or groups that will need special attention?
- Are there any special opportunities that the community or campus conversation could help you take advantage of? For instance, perhaps a new community foundation has formed or a new school board has been elected. Including such stakeholders as co-sponsors or observers could be a good way to build new relationships.
Section 4: Practical Considerations

Section 4 provides an overview and timelines for many of the practical tasks that must be accomplished, from drawing up a budget to recruiting and training moderators. While many of these tasks can be handled by one of the workgroups, it’s a good idea for everyone on the Planning Team to understand the entire process.

Budget and Funding

The following template may help you create a budget for the forum(s). It is possible to ask for and receive in-kind donations from community organizations or local businesses for some of these items, such as space, food or printing expenses. You should designate one or two individuals from the Planning Team to develop an overall budget as well as budgets for each workgroup.

Planning Tasks and Timeline

You should start planning your Campus or Community Conversation at least two months in advance, preferably three. This sample timeline and task list on the following page is meant as a rough guide to help you get started. Detailed information on these tasks and other practical considerations are included in subsequent sections.
Planning Tasks and Timeline

10-12 weeks before Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Establish the Planning Team, schedule an initial Planning Workshop

8-10 weeks before Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Planning Team members attend Planning Workshop
☐ Set date, location of Community Conversation
☐ Define scope of community, choose/customize conversation topic
☐ Decide on media and observer policy, address other strategic considerations
☐ Planning Team members join one of four workgroups; workgroups begin their tasks

4-6 weeks before Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Extend invitations to participants and observers (via mail, email, in-person, etc)
☐ Recruit moderators and recorders
☐ Secure location, food, other logistics
☐ Planning Team and workgroups meet as needed

3-4 weeks before Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Continue recruiting participants, using targeted outreach to assure a diverse participant group
☐ Begin initial contact with media (if appropriate)
☐ Planning Team and workgroups meet as needed

1 week before Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Hold Moderator/Recorder Training
☐ Make reminder calls to participants
☐ Finalize all logistics
☐ Finalize opening and closing plenary plans, decide who will handle questions, etc.

Hold Campus/Community Conversation

1 day after Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Planning Team meets to debrief (moderators and recorders may attend as well)

1-3 weeks after Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Send thank-you letter/email to participants Invite participants to join online discussion network for ongoing discussion (if appropriate)
☐ Follow-up workgroup (or entire planning team) meets to plan follow-up actions
☐ Analyze small group discussion outcomes, compile evaluation results
☐ Create summary report, send to participants
☐ Share report with appropriate parties, begin next steps in planning process

1+ month after Campus/Community Conversation
☐ Create recommendations memo or other follow-up action plan
☐ Report to participants about what actions have been taken, what impact the conversation has had
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Part 1 of this section will help you think about whom to invite and how best to go about inviting them. You will also find some suggestions on how to include and welcome participants who don’t speak English.

Part 2 of this section offers a step-by-step guide for participant recruitment and pre-registration and provides instructions for assigning pre-registered participants to small breakout groups for the Campus or Community Conversation.

Part 3 of this section explains the material you will need to provide participants at the event. Examples of these materials are included as appendices at the end of this guide.

Part 1. Whom to Invite and How to Gain Participation

Whom to Invite

We recommend an invitational, or mostly invitational, discussion. Why? In our experience, extending a personal invitation is the best way to ensure the most representative and diverse group possible. An invitation that is extended by someone who is a friend, a respected local leader or another trustworthy source is far more likely to engender a positive response than a general announcement viewed on a bulletin board or in a newspaper. The diversity generated from well thought out and targeted invitations is also helpful in preventing “single issue” advocates or the most strident voices from dominating the proceedings.

Campus Conversation participants should include current and possibly former students, full and part time faculty, staff, administration and any other important members of your campus community. You may have to work a little harder to ensure participation by adjunct/part time faculty but this is a great opportunity to familiarize them with the ATD initiative, hear their perspectives on student success, and learn about ways the college could better integrate them into campus life.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Community Conversation participants should include a wide cross section of the community’s general public along with students, faculty, administrators, community leaders and any and all “voices” and stakeholders who would want to be represented and/or have important roles to play in the success of the college and its students. This is a good place to make use of your alumni—get them involved!

We recommend you consider recruiting the following:

- The general public, aiming for a demographic spread that roughly reflects the overall community.
- Parents/guardians and spouses of community college students.
- Current community college students and alumni.
- Four-year college students (recent high school graduates, transfer students and the like).
- Community college faculty and administrators.
- K–12 educators/school administrators/guidance counselors.
- Four-year college administrators, guidance counselors and/or faculty, if there are any nearby.
- Community leaders, such as:
  - local government officials.
  - community-based organizational leaders, particularly those in workforce development programs and who serve low-income communities and/or populations of color.
  - religious leaders.
  - civic leaders, such as the League of Women Voters.
  - others: ______________________________________
- Local employers, especially those who might be in a position to hire young people from the community.
- High school students (11th and 12th graders).
- Others: _______________________________________

TIP

Sending out personalized invitations and making phone calls help you target your prospective participants, and open the group to more than just the “usual suspects”—that is, those people who show up at every public meeting on your issue.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Tips for Successful Recruiting

▶ Ask that people RSVP if they plan on attending. This pre-registration will help you keep track of how many participants to expect. It will also help you ensure greater diversity among participants since you will be able to track who is coming.
Make special efforts to reach out to people who tend to be uninvolved and who represent the diversity (ethnically, economically, politically) of the campus or community.
Invitations should come from personal contact by credible sources within sub-communities. For example, a respected senior citizen is often an effective person to invite other senior citizens to attend, and a student will often be the best person to invite other students.

▶ Over-recruit those participants least likely to come. For example, you should probably not over-recruit full-time faculty, but you might want to over-recruit adjunct faculty and those students who are likely to benefit most from your ATD initiatives—i.e., those who may currently be struggling.

▶ Consider involving students through appropriate classes. For instance, a political science or education professor might offer class credit if his or her students get involved in the Campus or Community Conversation as organizers or participants.

▶ Even though this section is organized around groups that should be represented, each person should be invited as an individual, bringing his or her own points of view, rather than purely as a representative of a group.

▶ In addition to personal outreach, it is a good idea to send written invitations. This helps people feel they are being included in something special.

▶ Communicate that the meeting is different—more interesting, engaging and welcoming than most community forums or meetings.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

- Also communicate that the meeting matters, which means talking about why it is so important to improve results for local community college students and that the organizers are going to use the results to improve policies and support new initiatives to help students succeed.

- Setting up a web site about the conversation is a good idea. Many colleges found this as an easy way for participants to RSVP for the event. There are numerous online services that can help you offer participants the option of registering online or you can create your own website.

Recruiting Non-English Speakers

One of the first questions organizers should ask when they begin to recruit participants is whether there are non-English-speaking populations within the community that ought to be represented, and if so, how best to include them in the discussions. (See section 3 for more detail on multilingual conversations.) Invitations and the Participant Guide, for instance, should often be translated into your community’s dominant second language, whether it’s Spanish, Chinese, Creole or something else. (This tool kit does contain some materials in Spanish.)

Moreover, it makes good sense to have as a member of your Planning Team someone with ties to the non-English-dominant community you are interested in, someone who can inform the planning process and help with grassroots outreach to recruit people to the upcoming conversation(s). Such personal outreach is important to successful recruitment in general, but it is critical here. The more welcome you make people feel, beginning with the invitation, the more likely they are to attend. This means, for example, phone calls to potential Latino participants by a Spanish speaker.

TIPS

An invitation delivered by phone or in-person is the number one way to ensure a yes. If you’ve sent an invitation via email, be sure to follow up with a phone call.

When potential participants hear about the Campus/Community Conversation frequently and in myriad contexts, they will be more likely to participate. Generating a “buzz” through the media will help with this and can be even more powerful when it’s supported by word-of-mouth, flyers and advertisements.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Part 2. Step-by-Step Guide for Participant Recruitment and Pre-Registration

1. As you begin recruiting participants, make a list of the kinds of people you would like to participate in the conversation and set targets for how many people from each category you’d like to have attend the conversation. See below for a sample target-setting worksheet.

   **REMEmBER, YOU SHOULD OVER-RECRUIT THOSE PARTICIPANTS LEAST LIKELY TO COME.**

2. Track participant information throughout the recruiting process, capturing as much information about participants as possible. You can use an online registration system like EventBrite (www.eventbrite.com) or develop your own registration tracking system.

3. As the recruitment process nears the end, review the log: have you come close to your targets for participants from each category? Is the group as demographically diverse as you’d like it to be? If not, focus your final recruitment efforts on any categories of people you’d like to have participate in higher numbers.

4. Confirm with participants in advance of the conversation. It takes a lot of work, but the best way to ensure high levels of participation is to call everyone who has said they will attend to remind them of the date, time and location of the Community Conversation, to ask if they will need childcare (if it is being provided), and to confirm that they plan to attend. Alternatively, you can send participants a confirmation letter or email.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Assigning Participants to Small Groups

5. Once recruitment is completed, go through the participant list and assign each participant a small group number. Your group should meet 2-3 days before the conversation to do this.

Participants should be divided across groups in a way that maximizes diversity within each small group and ensures that each group has at least a few representatives of each target category (i.e. students, parents, educators, community members, etc.). There should be 12-14 people assigned to each group.

6. In advance of the Community Conversation, create a Participant Registration List (this should include name, affiliation and contact information but not personal demographic information). Each participant’s small group number should be noted alongside their name on the Participant Registration List, so that they can write it on their nametag when they check in at the Community Conversation. (You can also print nametags in advance for all pre-registered participants that includes the appropriate small group number. This helps to streamline the registration process at the Community Conversation.)

The workgroup coordinating participant recruitment can work with the logistics workgroup on the task of preparing the Participant Registration List and assigning participants to small groups. The logistics workgroup will be responsible for organizing the registration process, so it is important for members of that group to be familiar with the participant registration list.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question:
What happens if we are not getting enough representation from some important groups that should be at the forum?

Answer:
Track progress, increase invitees and try new strategies. Ask those who have agreed to attend to bring a friend from that community. Think about why you are having trouble attracting those individuals—what is keeping them from attending? Then try to address those obstacles directly. Think about targeted media (radio/press) ads.
Section 5: Recruiting Participants

Part 3. Participant Materials

The Participant Guide

Appendix 1 contains the text of the “Success Is What Counts” Participant Guide. To customize your Participant Guide, you can simply place a cover page and introduction over the guide that is provided; alternatively, you may prefer to create something more elaborate.

The cover can be as simple or elaborate as you wish and as resources allow; in the past, groups have added their logo, the title, time and place of the event, a list of sponsors and so on. You may want to add (here or in accompanying materials) a brief introduction about the college, a note about the Achieving the Dream initiative, a few bullet points with your student achievement data, and a statement about your commitment to acting on the results of the conversation.

The Participant Survey

In addition, all participants should complete a Participant Survey before they leave. These are completed at the end of the closing plenary sessions. Data from the surveys allow you to assess the event and plan for future community discussions. See Appendix 2 for a sample Participant Survey.

Non-English Language Materials

If you have decided to hold a bilingual forum, you will need to coordinate the production and distribution of a translated Participant Guide. Public Agenda has created Spanish versions of the print and video “Success Is What Counts” discussion materials. See Appendix 5 for all Spanish language materials.

Other Materials

Other materials you might consider including in a packet for participants are an agenda to the event and the names of sponsors, organizers and moderators. However, we suggest keeping these packets relatively clutter-free.

Sample Participant Recruitment Worksheet on the following page
### Participant Recruitment Worksheet

**Organizer:**

**Responsible for categories:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target no.</th>
<th>No. Invited</th>
<th>No. Accepted</th>
<th># Still Needed</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Community Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 6: Organizing the Nuts and Bolts (Logistics)

Section 6 deals with the Logistics workgroup, which handles the “nuts and bolts” tasks of a Campus or Community Conversation.

Part 1 of this section addresses logistical tasks that must be organized in advance, such as:

- Selecting a location for the Campus or Community Conversation.
- Coordinating the meal and meal-related needs.
- Ensuring that all necessary equipment is arranged and in place on the day of the event.

Part 2 of this section address the tasks requiring day-of-event coordination, including:

- Making sure all equipment is in place for plenary and small group meetings.
- Registration/Check-in of participants.
- Providing general support and troubleshooting to other workgroups.

Part 1. Organizing and Planning in Advance

Selecting a Location for the Conversation(s)

The conversation can probably be held at the college itself unless there’s a good reason to hold it somewhere else. You’re looking for a location that is welcoming, not particularly controversial and relatively easy to find and travel to. Additionally, the location must be able to handle the space needs of a broad-based Campus or Community Conversation, with:

- A dining area for up to 100 to 125 participants.
- A large room (can be the same as the dining area or different) for the opening and closing plenary sessions.
- Breakout group rooms that are easily and quickly accessible and can accommodate about 12 to 18 persons each. Such rooms must be able to have seating arranged in a circle or semicircle.
- Enough restrooms in the building for all attendees.
- Appropriate space and personnel if childcare is to be provided.
Section 6: Organizing the Nuts and Bolts (Logistics)

Providing Meals

Offering a meal before the conversation begins is a great way to set a relaxed and friendly tone and carries symbolic weight as people who may be on different sides of an issue or from different parts of town break bread together. (It’s also possible to end the event with a meal; serving it as you begin the closing plenary session.)

You may be able to find local merchants or civic groups willing to donate food or utensils or volunteers who will offer to serve or clean up.

Equipment Checklist for Community or Campus Conversation

Very little special equipment is needed for a typical Community or Campus Conversation. The following checklist, however, will help you plan for what you do need.

Registration

☐ Long rectangular table and chairs for registration staff

☐ Registration/check-in sheets to keep track of participants as they arrive

☐ Blank sheets for walk-ins to complete on-site registration

☐ Name tags for participants and staff, pens, markers, etc.

☐ Information packets for participants containing the Participant Guide, Participant Survey and any other supplementary materials you choose.

☐ Other: ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

Sample Word Document of Equipment Checklist for Community or Campus Conversation is attached as follows:

For directions on downloading attachments, see page 4

EquipmentChecklist.doc
Section 6: Organizing the Nuts and Bolts (Logistics)

Dining area
☐ Tables for serving food
☐ Tables and chairs for eating
☐ Plates, forks, knives, napkins, garbage cans, etc.
☐ Other: ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________

Central discussion room
(may also be used for one of the small group discussions)
☐ Podium and microphone
☐ Optional: Seating, if more than one speaker
☐ Optional: PowerPoint set up, if a brief presentation is to be made at opening and/or closing plenary sessions
☐ Other: ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________

Breakout rooms
☐ TV monitor and DVD player if using video discussion starter
☐ Flip chart, markers, masking tape (or self-stick flip chart)
☐ Movable chairs set up in a circle, semicircle or horseshoe
☐ Stickers in the shape of dots, stars, etc. for the moderators to give to participants during the prioritizing action items part of the discussion
☐ Other: ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
       ___________________________________________
Part 2. Day-of-Event Coordination

Main Room and Breakout Rooms

When they arrive at the event, Logistics workgroup members check that the dining and/or plenary room setup is adequate, with enough seats for the expected crowd to see and hear everything and microphones and audiovisual equipment as needed.

Although the Moderator/Recorder workgroup should be checking to make sure everything is in place in the breakout rooms, you may want to coordinate with its members to make sure everyone knows who is bringing what to the event. Make sure all audio/video equipment is working before the start of the event and that each room has a flip chart and markers.

The rooms should ideally be set up in a horseshoe or semi-circle shape. (Each location is different of course, but you should try to get as close to this as you can.)
Section 6: Organizing the Nuts and Bolts (Logistics)

Registration

When participants arrive at the Campus or Community Conversation, they should check in at a registration table. At the table, they should receive a Participant Guide, Participant Survey, program or agenda and nametag indicating their small group assignment.

A task that this workgroup and the workgroup coordinating participant recruitment can share is assigning participants among the breakout groups and preparing a list of preregistered participants for use at the registration table. The participant registration List should be divided into three or four sections by last name, with each section having roughly the same number of participants (i.e. A-F, G-L, M-R, S-Z). Print signs for each of the sections so that participants will know which line to join at the registration table.

At least four people will be needed to work the registration table at the Campus or Community Conversation. Arrange the registration table so that each volunteer is given a unique section of the registration list and is seated near a sign indicating which section s/he is registering. For instance, the volunteer with the section of the list covering participants with last names beginning in A-F should be near a sign reading “A-F”. Additionally, one volunteer should be responsible for checking in unregistered participants.

Each volunteer should have a pen or pencil to mark off participants as they arrive as well as a stack of name tags and markers for participants to fill out with their name and small group number. If you have pre-printed nametags, you can lay them out alphabetically on the registration table for participants to find themselves.
As participants register, volunteers should check them off on the registration list. This will help the planning team estimate how many people attended the Community Conversation.

Participants who show up unregistered or whose names do not appear on the registration list should be randomly assigned to a small group. Again, one volunteer should be responsible for registering unregistered participants and for assigning them to small groups. Try to distribute unregistered participants evenly across small groups. Be sure to capture their contact information. A blank registration sheet should be available for this purpose. Without their contact information, you will be unable to follow up with them after the Community Conversation.

At the end of the evening, one member of the logistics workgroup should be responsible for gathering all of the sections of the registration list as well as the registration sheet with contact information for additional participants. After the event, record who attended the conversation on your master electronic version of the registration list and to add the information of the participants who were not on the list. This will help ensure that you can stay in touch with participants to provide them with a summary of the conversation, update them on progress and invite them to get involved in any subsequent activities.

**TIP**

A note on walk-ins: It’s always possible that you’ll have some people who are not preregistered (and thus assigned to a specific group) but wish to participate.
Section 7: Managing Moderators, Recorders and Host

Part 1 of this section will help you understand how to select, train and support the moderators and recorders for each of the breakout groups.

Part 2 of this section also discusses the role of the “host,” or master of ceremonies, who will lead the opening and closing plenary sessions at the Campus or Community Conversation itself.

Part 1. Managing Moderators and Recorders

Recruiting Moderators

We can’t stress enough how important it is to focus on recruiting good moderators (and recorders). Moderators play a key role in the conversations and have a very large impact on the experience. We have occasionally encountered people with a great deal of facilitating experience who do poorly in this type of setting and those with no experience who do very well. Thus, while the following guidelines can help you to select moderator trainees, the most important qualifications—“people skills,” the ability to think on one’s feet and a real interest in supporting an open, inclusive dialogue—should be kept in mind regardless of a candidate’s background on paper or other “political” considerations.

Depending on how many moderators you will need for your conversation (one each per small group of 12 to 14 people), you should recruit a few extra people who are willing to attend the training and the event as alternates. It’s always possible that you will have an influx of walk-ins and will need to form an extra discussion group, or someone may have a last minute family conflict or emergency and won’t be available to moderate on the day of the conversation. Also, as you may plan to hold more than one conversation, you will want to have enough trained local moderators who can serve in those future conversations. Finally, some people prefer to co-moderate or co-record, so you can double these functions in a couple of instances if you wish.

The Best Moderators:

1. Know the material and are familiar with the issues, but need not be experts
2. Are simple and straightforward, providing leadership for the dialogue process without being controlling
3. Remain nonpartisan and steer the conversation away from herself/himself and to/or within the group
You will need moderators with the following skills, knowledge and background:

- Group facilitation skills/experience, especially in working with diverse groups and with the general public (as opposed to working only with professionals).
- Ability to create an environment in which it is safe and comfortable for people to express their views.
- Ability to help participants articulate the reasoning, experiences and values supporting their positions.
- Ability to play devil’s advocate and challenge people (in a friendly, civil way, of course) to consider alternate viewpoints.
- Comfort with and ability to manage group conflict.
- Ability to take a nonpartisan moderating stance.
- Nonpartisan credibility. Some people may be able to moderate in a nonpartisan manner but, because of past associations, will not be viewed in that light by members of the group.
- Some general familiarity with community college and education reform debates, although expertise is not required. This attribute is less important than the others.
- Some diversity. Ideally, the moderator team overall will roughly reflect the demographics of the community, so it is often a plus to have some diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and the like among the moderators.

Moderators have been drawn from among the following backgrounds:

- Businesspeople, including trainers and consultants.
- Social workers and others in community service.
- Qualitative researchers.
- Therapists and counselors.
Section 7: Managing Moderators, Recorders and Host

- Mediators and people trained in conflict resolution.
- Educators, including those in higher education (although faculty and administrators from the community college should not moderate unless they are comfortable with criticism and can stay nonpartisan and open to all views).
- Clergy, including pastoral counselors.

Recruiting Recorders

The recorders also play a crucial role and should be carefully selected and trained. Recorders must be able to quickly summarize the main points in the discussion and write them legibly enough for all to see. Like the moderators, they must also be nonpartisan, trusted to record all ideas, not just those they agree with.

Ideally, recorders will attend the moderator/recorder training session. If recorders are not able to attend, they should be fully briefed and should meet with their moderators prior to the conversation to clarify roles and tasks, create a sense of teamwork and avoid last minute confusion.

If a recorder is unable to attend the moderator/recorder training, it is important that he or she be supplied with a guide and be fully briefed on the following:

- The purpose of the Campus or Community Conversation.
- The structure of the meeting and the recorder’s role.
- Exactly what recorders are expected to do during each phase of the small group discussion.

Organizing the Moderator/Recorder Training

It is critical that anyone who serves as a moderator for the Campus or Community Conversation attend the training session. If a recorder is unable to attend, that person can be carefully briefed later on. Let them know why they are being asked to serve as a moderator or recorder and what the Campus or Community Conversation is all about.

TIP

At Cuyahoga Community College, in addition to having recorders with flip charts, students from the court reporting/stenography program typed notes during the small group discussions. It was great practice for the students, and made collecting the data much easier for the organizers once the event was over.
The training should take place two to seven days prior to the conversation. This will allow enough time for the training to “sink in” and for moderators/recorders to familiarize themselves with the procedures and moderator/recorder guide, but not so much time that the information is no longer fresh.

The training takes approximately four hours and is usually scheduled from 9:00 to 1:00 or 12:00 to 4:00, with a short lunch or snack break. We strongly advise you to schedule trainings during the day, rather than after work or on Friday afternoons. There is a lot of material to practice and absorb, and it is very hard for trainees to focus after a full day of work. You’ll likely get some resistance when you tell people the training takes four hours, but stand firm! In the end, this much time is needed to make sure they are confident and well prepared.

You’ll need a room that can accommodate a trainer, the moderators/recorders and any observers who might wish to attend. The room should be set up to resemble a breakout room at the actual Campus or Community Conversation. Chairs should be arranged in a circle, semicircle or horseshoe. If you have more than 20 or so people attending, you may need two rooms.

You will also need the following:

- Two flip charts with paper and pens.
- DVD player and TV or DVD player and/or laptop, projector and screen to show training PowerPoint and Choicework video.
- Copies of the Moderator/Recorder Guide (Appendix 3) and any additional handouts you wish to provide.
- Lunch and/or refreshments.

About the training

The basic structure of the moderator/recorder training is as follows:

1. The lead trainer provides trainees with information about the Campus or Community Conversation, explaining the purpose, goals and any relevant logistical information such as location, date, time, etc.
2. The Campus/Community conversation model is explained, along with specific detail on the roles for moderators and recorders and tips for successful moderating/recording.

3. Using the moderator/recorder guide as an outline, trainees will run through a practice session of a small group dialogue session. Trainees take turns practicing their moderating/recording skills with the group acting out the roles of conversation participants. The lead trainer and other trainees will offer guidance and constructive reflection on the performance of each trainee.

Public Agenda is available to provide the moderator/recorder training and/or some consulting on the training for colleges planning to hold community or campus conversations. We can also provide additional training materials such as agendas, Powerpoint presentations, etc. Please contact us at (212) 686-6610 x44 for more information and materials related to moderator/recorder training.

Coordinating the Moderators and Recorders at the Conversation

In addition to recruiting moderators and recorders and setting up the training, the Moderator/Recorder workgroup should ensure that all moderating/recording essentials are in place at the event, including the following:

- Extra copies of the Moderator/Recorder Guide.
- Adequately sized breakout rooms, with enough seats properly configured (in circle, semicircle or horseshoe shape, not classroom style).
- Extra participant discussion materials, including copies of the Participant Guide, any handouts or posters that might be employed as conversation aids and, when appropriate, DVDs or other audiovisual materials.
- DVD/TV setups if using video discussion starters.
- Flip charts, markers, masking tape (self-sticking flip charts are ideal).

Successful Moderating Strategies:

1. Bring new voices into the discussion—be sure that everyone gets to speak (without pressuring)
2. Occasionally sum up and focus the discussion
3. Probe when needed to get beneath the surface or introduce arguments that may have been overlooked (while remaining nonpartisan)
4. Point out tensions between different points of view
Section 7: Managing Moderators, Recorders and Host

- Other: ___________________________________________
  ___________________________________________
  ___________________________________________
  ___________________________________________

See Appendix 3 for a basic version of the Moderator/Recorder Guide for the “Success is What Counts” Discussion Framework in English. The Spanish Language version of the Moderator/Recorder Guide can be found in Appendix 5.

Part 2. Managing the Opening and Closing Plenary Sessions and the Role of the Campus or Community Conversation “Host”

A Campus or Community Conversation should open and closes with plenary (whole group) sessions that sandwich the breakout dialogue groups. Each plenary session is about twenty minutes in length.

The opening plenary session is devoted to welcoming participants, giving them an overview of the proceedings, providing them with basic information and background and offering some words of encouragement. You might consider asking a current or former student to make a few remarks to set the tone.

The closing plenary session is for brief, efficient reports from each breakout group, information on follow-up activities, thanking participants and making sure participant surveys are filled out.

While numerous people may be involved in making remarks at the opening and closing plenary sessions, it’s a good idea to have a master of ceremonies, or “host,” as the main facilitator. The host is often a lead member of the Planning Team or a prominent member of the community/college who is good at this kind of thing. Try to choose someone charismatic and energizing.

A detailed Host Guide providing guidelines to managing the opening and closing plenary sessions may be found in Appendix 4.

TIP

At South Texas College, organizers had a raffle and gave out door prizes, such as South Texas college sweatshirts, book store gift cards, and other goodies at the closing plenary session. This encouraged participants to stay for the entire event, and created a fun atmosphere.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Part 1 of this section will focus on the tasks dealing with communications to participants and the media before and after the conversation.

Part 2 of this section offers guidelines for coordinating follow-up activities, in particular linking campus or community dialogue to meaningful action by the college and/or the community.

Finally, Part 3 of this section discusses how to expand and institutionalize the dialogue process.

Part 1. Communications & External Relations

Your Planning Team as a whole will have decided how much focus you want to place on media relations and other kinds of communications. At the very least, you’ll need to develop some basic pieces that will help you can use in a number of ways.

There are three fundamental communications tools you will find useful:

▶ A set of talking points to help you explain the initiative.

▶ A flyer that explains the purpose of the community conversations and gives basic information, such as when and where it will take place.

▶ A “pitch letter” to explain the event to potential partners and allies.

You can build on these to create more materials as needed.

The talking points should convey factual information about the conversation as well as the intent behind it. These should be distributed to everyone on the Planning Team, to help them talk about the event.

(You can begin with the talking points outlined on page 18 of this guide.)

A basic flyer should provide a succinct, visually appealing presentation of the event that you can use to generate interest and “buzz” as well as recruit participants.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Finally, a pitch letter should contain everything in your talking points, but in a more personal manner. Depending on its recipient, the letter should be tailored to focus on why you think whoever is receiving the letter should be interested in participating, donating food, observing the conversation and so forth.

You can also consider creative ideas to get messages across, such as the use of T-shirts, bumper stickers, coffee mugs and ads on local restaurant menus, on the college’s television channel and student media, etc.

Online Communications

You may want to consider if there are ways to use a community Web site, and/or the college’s Web site, to create an interactive means of communication about the conversation and its aftermath.

The Media

Media relations were covered as one of the strategic considerations discussed under section 3, and members of this workgroup should review that discussion. It will be the responsibility of the Communications/Follow-up workgroup to implement any decisions by the Planning Team as to media relations.

Part 2. Linking Community Dialogue to Meaningful Action by the College and the Community

In our experience, almost everyone who attends a well-organized, well-run Campus or Community Conversation comes away feeling that the experience was exciting, refreshing and extremely valuable. The vast majority feels that there was not enough time and that more people ought to be involved in the dialogue, and everyone wants to see the conversation lead to real results in their community.

Sample News Release is attached as follows:

1. For directions on downloading attachments, see page 4

NewsRelease.doc
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Ensuring that the Campus or Community Conversation connects to action and to your Achieving the Dream goals and interventions is the responsibility of the entire Planning Team. The job of this workgroup is to make sure that ideas on follow-up are considered from the beginning of the planning process and to coordinate and implement follow-up plans as they develop.

In practice, this means that the Planning Team should think early on about how to create the conditions for effective follow-up to the Campus or Community Conversation. At the very least, we suggest the following follow-up activities:

- Provide a summary report of the Campus or Community Conversation to all participants. If you think it will take some time to put together the report, an immediate thank-you letter sent by mail or email is a nice gesture.

- Report results to community and college decision makers and, when possible, convey decision makers’ response(s) back to participants. For example, college administration, ATD Core and Data teams, and other student success task forces or initiative leaders should be fully briefed on the event and the data collected. As appropriate, you should also share results with k-12 school leaders, business leaders, and local elected/appointed officials and policy makers.

- Disseminate the results in other ways, such as online and through media channels.

- Suggest ways that participants who are so inspired can stay involved, such as joining or volunteering with organizations dedicated to making a difference in student success and/or the lives of young people in the community and helping with future Campus or Community Conversations.

- Pick at least one issue or problem raised during the conversation to address concretely and specifically in your follow-up. This could be something you are already working on or something new. Let participants know you will be addressing the issue/concern and invite them to help, if appropriate.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Beyond these basic steps, the Planning Team might consider the following:

▶ Creating action task forces to plan and promote specific policies or new initiatives based on important directions for action that emerged from the Campus or Community Conversation.

For instance, the idea of creating a closer partnership among the college, the K–12 system and a community-based organization may have emerged as a hot idea in the conversation. A task force could be formed to create an action plan with representatives from each of those institutions plus volunteers from the Community Conversation. Or perhaps the idea emerged of creating a community foundation to support special initiatives to provide support for low-income community college students. A task force or study group could be formed devoted to researching and promoting such an initiative.

▶ Continuing and expanding the dialogue that was begun in the Campus or Community Conversation on the Internet or through a newsletter.

Providing needed information: One category of outcome produced by this conversation process is to identify questions people have, areas where they want more information. For instance, they may have questions about a specific college policy or practice, how the college is funded, what student achievement data says or how other colleges have solved certain problems. There are often items here that are easy to respond to, and the college and organizers should do so after a community conversation—it is an important sign of good faith on the part of the organizers and shows participants that someone is addressing their questions.

▶ Convening a leadership session to react to some of the results of the deliberations.
  • For instance, a college leadership team and/or trustees board could meet following Campus or Community Conversations and issue a response, and/or a meeting of community leaders could do the same.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

- Conducting a focus group to better understand some of the areas of disagreement that were identified at the meeting and how you might help people work through them. This can lead to new ideas for future forums and other kinds of community action.

- Taking advantage of the fact that many people simply want to help in any way they can after a Campus or Community Conversation and may be open to volunteering or raising money for the college and its students. It is important to capitalize on this energy and motivation as quickly as possible—after all, most of us lead busy lives, and good intentions are easily “overtaken” by the events of daily life.

There is, of course, no single right way to do this. The question is, what would be a good approach for your college, community partners and community?

Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Campus or Community Conversation Summary Report

STEP 1: Review and Interpret the Data

Collate the flip chart notes from each small group discussion into a single document organized around areas of Common Ground, Concerns/Disagreements, Outstanding Questions and Priorities for Action.

Review the post-forum participant surveys, notes from moderator and organizer debriefing meetings and incorporate findings from these into the document as appropriate.

STEP 2: Analyze Data, Identify Major Themes

Analyze the collated discussion notes for major themes that arose across discussion groups. You should generally be able to identify at least one or two themes for each of the following areas: Common Ground, Concerns/Disagreements, Outstanding Questions and Priorities for Action. If each small group ranked their priorities for action, pay particular attention to the extent to which certain priorities are similarly ranked across groups.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

STEP 3: Write the Report

The summary report can be structured in a number of different ways and your team should feel free to customize the content and design of your report to suit your needs and preferences. We have found that the following structure generally works very well for summarizing Campus or Community Conversation outcomes with clarity, brevity and meaning.

I. Report Overview

1. Statement of purpose: What was the rationale for holding a conversation on this issue?

   i. Sample Language:
   “The goal of the Campus/Community Conversation was to bring a diverse group of stakeholders together to engage in a productive, action-oriented dialogue about helping all college students succeed. The results are being used to inform leadership about the community’s values, concerns and priorities, and to educate, encourage and enable more individuals and groups across the community to work together to make progress on this issue. Finally, in addition to helping the community tackle this particular issue, we hope that the Campus/Community Conversation also provides a model and method for addressing other issues in the future.”

2. Acknowledge the organizational sponsor(s) of the Campus or Community Conversation, as well as any individuals who have played a major role in the Conversation.

3. Why Do Campus/Community Conversations Matter?

   i. Sample Language:
   “Too often, important decisions about the challenges facing our campus/community are made behind closed doors and without the valuable input and involvement of ordinary citizens. This is partly because good opportunities for citizens to engage in productive dialogue that contributes to solutions and organizes action are hard to come by. Campus/Community Conversations are inclusive community events that go beyond the ‘usual suspects’ to bring diverse stakeholders together address a pressing issue.”
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

“Rather than lectures by experts or gripe sessions by angry constituents, well-designed Campus/Community Conversations create a frank, productive problem-solving process in which diverse ideas are put on the table, diverse participants sit at the table, and people work together to find common ground and shared solutions. Such conversations are best thought of as a step toward better communication, collaboration and problem solving on important challenges facing the campus/community.”

4. Day of event, location, number/type of attendees, etc.

II. Deliberation Summary

1. Key Areas of Common Ground
2. Concerns or Disagreements
3. Outstanding Questions
4. Priorities for Action
   (This section can begin to elaborate on key points)
5. What’s next?
   In addition to summarizing the participant discussions from the conversation, it is the responsibility of the Planning Team to identify which ideas for action might be most effectively pursued by participants (i.e. which ideas could be pursued without needing more resources), ideas that touch on existing resources that people may be unaware of, ideas that connect with the missions of the sponsoring coalition’s current efforts, etc. The goal is to help identify the “low-hanging fruit” or those opportunities for follow-up activities that would be comparatively easy to develop.

Additionally, you might also want to identify some more ambitious actions that would require new resources, or decisions by local leaders who will need to be convinced—i.e., things that cannot be acted upon right away but are worth pursuing overtime. But unquestionably you’ll want to identify those actions
that can be addressed right away by participants, organizers and, if possible, local officials. Announcing an action plan to participants and inviting them to get involved is a great way to conclude a summary report.

STEP 4: Disseminating the Report

The first audience for your summary report should be the participants themselves. The summary report must be sent out to participants in a timely manner, ideally within two weeks of the Campus or Community Conversation.

Often, you will also want to submit the summary report to local officials or other leaders and ask them to comment on or respond to the ideas and issues raised. If appropriate, the officials’ responses can be distributed to Campus or Community Conversation participants.

Part 3. Expanding and Institutionalizing the Dialogue Process

Whether you planned a single Campus or Community Conversation or a series (see section 3, “Strategic Considerations”), as you reach the end point of a phase of dialogue work, you’ll want to think about how and when to use dialogue in the future. Following are some of the questions you’ll want to think about.

What Should the Second Series Be About?

You might hold a second round to delve further into a specific issue identified by participants as important. This was the case at Jefferson Community College in Steubenville, OH, where the question of how to help students be better prepared for college emerged front and center at the first community conversation. JCC organizers joined forces with the local school districts to hold a second conversation roughly a year later on the topic of college readiness. (See page 10 of this guide for more detail on the outcomes.)
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Even if you have convened small workgroups designed to get more specific about areas of common ground and action ideas, people still often want to:

- Work through important areas of disagreement that were identified. These issues may not have been resolved in the original series. (Note that sometimes important disagreements among participants need to be worked out. At other times there may be a disagreement between the participants and some college policy.)

- Reconsider some facet of the conversation once a crucial piece of missing information is obtained that people said they needed.

Remember, it makes sense to hold a forum only on a topic about which people feel a sense of urgency and where there are important community issues to work out. What did you learn about this from your first series of Campus or Community Conversations?

Remember as well that Public Agenda has discussion frameworks prepared on various education issues that could be useful to you in your follow-up work. All of our discussion starters can be found on our website at www.publicagenda.org/publicengagement/choicework-discussion-starters.

If you choose a topic other than ones we have materials prepared for, you’ll have to develop a way to frame the issue and get the discussion started. This is something you might try to do yourselves, or you might want some outside help. For example, Public Agenda offers a one-day workshop on framing issues for public discussion.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Keep in Mind:

CHOOSE A TOPIC that is of strong interest to the college and/or community.

One way to get at this is to make a list of discussion topics that relate to issues on the college’s agenda. Then make a list of the topics that relate to the concerns of average parents, students and community members. The overlap between the two lists is a good place to look for first conversation topics—if you choose a topic that is of strong interest to both the college and the community, more people will be motivated to engage in the process.

CHOOSE AN ISSUE where public input and involvement can make a real difference.

For instance, if a new statewide policy will be affecting community college funding the day after your forum, it may not make sense to use that topic, as the discussion could immediately become outdated. On the other hand, if the college is in the process of developing new plans for creating a more diverse faculty, then public input and involvement can have very direct payoffs.

Remember that it’s possible to customize the topic somewhat to take local issues into account.

Specific probes and questions can be built into the moderator and participant materials to help people engage in themes that may not be in the video.

Who Should Attend?

Do you want to delve deeper with the original participants, expand to new participants or try to combine new people and veterans? It can be tricky to hold a second forum on the same topic with both veterans and new participants. It’s not impossible—you can, for example, keep the veterans in their own discussion groups—but it does add a layer of complexity.
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Where Should It Be Held?

This question is especially important for regional meetings, but it can be worth a little thought with respect to any site. Were the space and location adequate? Would changing the location make it easier to recruit certain participants and/or be important for symbolic reasons?

Who Is Going to Organize It?

Is the original planning team intact? Is everyone on board for round two? Would a partially or wholly new planning team make sense at this point? Are there individuals from groups that were underrepresented at the first session who should be invited to participate? At the very least, you should think about how the more enthusiastic participants from the last forum might play a role in helping with the next one.

Who Is Going to Moderate It?

Do you have the moderators you’ll need for a second series? Might your moderators benefit from a brief “tune-up training” as they prepare for a new topic? Do you need to, or want to, train new people or draw on moderators from outside your community?

What Were the Weaknesses Last Time, and How Can You Address Them?

No one needs to tell you that public engagement is challenging and every session will have had its strengths and weaknesses. How would you assess yours? What can you do to be more successful next time? What new strategies might be employed?
Section 8: Coordinating Strategic Communications and Follow-up

Do You Want to Experiment with the Formula?

Related to the last topic of improving on the formula is revising it to better suit your needs and those of your community. For example, aiming for about 100 participants from across your community is not essential. You may decide that it makes more sense to hold a series of three smaller, neighborhood-based forums over a six-month period.

This is not a suggestion to depart from the fundamental principles that we have found to be essential, such as:

- Striving for a broad, diverse group of participants “beyond the usual suspects.”
- Working in small, moderated groups.
- Providing some structure to the conversation, so people have a place to start and the most experienced and expert among them don’t end up taking over. Discussion materials generally work best if they involve choices and are presented in a clear, nonpartisan, jargon-free manner.
- Maintaining a nonpartisan, inclusive and open sponsorship and atmosphere.

Should you decide to change the formula, please feel free to bounce your ideas off of us. We may have tried something and failed already, and you might as well hear about that sooner rather than later. That said, we have every reason to believe that you can improvise on the approach in ways that work well for your situation, and we look forward to learning from any experiments you conduct.

GOOD LUCK!
Appendices, Part I

English Version

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

Appendix 1: Participant Guide
Appendix 2: Participant Survey
Appendix 3: Moderator/Recorder Guide
Appendix 4: Host Guide
Appendix 5: Sample Invitations and Summary Reports
Community colleges serve a wide variety of students with a wide variety of goals.

For example:

- They offer a first step into higher education, often the best step for students who can’t afford tuition at a four-year college or who don’t have the necessary grades.
- They are an option for students who prefer to stay close to home.
- They provide marketable job skills to both recent high school graduates and older students who want to upgrade their careers.

Like all community colleges, our college has some students who are struggling. In other words, we have some achievement gaps—and we want to do something about them. Our goal in this dialogue is to think about how the college and community can work together to close achievement gaps and help all students succeed.

We’ll begin by describing three areas that the college and community could focus on to achieve these goals:

- Making sure students are able to do college-level work.
- Helping students deal with the pressures in their lives.
- Ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience.

Of course, each of these approaches to student success may be of value. And you may have other ideas to add. But, it’s also important to set some priorities so that we can put our resources to the best possible use.

We’ll begin by reviewing these three approaches in greater detail. Which do you think is likely to have the greatest impact on student success, and why?
Approach 1: Focus on making sure students are ready to do college-level work

For a variety of reasons, too many community college students arrive without a solid enough academic foundation. With adequate preparation, these students are better able to take advantage of the educational opportunities the college has to offer, and less likely to be thrown off course by the pressures in their lives.

Therefore, we should do things like:

▶ Strengthen remedial education and tutoring to help struggling students catch up.
▶ Support improvements in k-12 education and the transition from high school to college.
▶ Offer English as a Second Language programs for non-native English speakers.

Those who like this approach say, “With many students arriving at community college without the academic skills and attitudes it takes to succeed, it’s critical to make sure they’re ready for college-level work.”

But others say, “The college has a big enough task providing a quality education once students arrive. It’s not practical to expect it to make up for things students should have learned before they get there.”

Approach 2: Focus on helping students deal with the pressures in their lives

Community college students tend to be busy people with busy lives. Most have jobs, many have children, and few have a great deal of money. As a result, there are many pressures in their lives that can make it difficult for them to stick with their studies and meet their goals.

Therefore, we should do things like:

▶ Ease the burden on lower-income students by providing scholarships and childcare.
▶ Encourage employers to allow flexible work schedules to help students balance college and work.
▶ Mentor students who need support and guidance in managing the challenges in their lives.

Those who like this approach say, “By helping community college students cope with the pressures that can derail their studies, we can increase their chances of success.”

But others say, “These are adult college students who need to take responsibility for their personal lives, however complicated they may be. The college should keep its focus on teaching and learning.”
Approach 3: Focus on ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience

The most important thing we can do to promote student achievement is provide a quality educational experience, one that is challenging and engaging, and gives students the skills they need to meet their educational and career goals. If we do that, we’ll be able to help every motivated student to succeed.

Therefore, we should do things like:

- Raise academic expectations and standards.
- Train faculty in effective teaching strategies, including those that help less successful students.
- Invest in up-to-date technology.

Those who like this approach say, “Having high academic expectations for students and providing them with a rigorous and engaging course of study is the key to student achievement.”

But others say, “Community colleges serve many different kinds of students, and we shouldn’t assume that all of them need or want an equally rigorous academic experience. Some have more immediate and practical goals.”

THE CHOICES IN BRIEF

Approach 1: Focus on making sure students are ready to do college-level work

- Those who like this approach say, “With many students arriving at community college without the academic skills and attitudes it takes to succeed, it’s critical to make sure they’re ready for college-level work.”

Approach 2: Focus on helping students deal with the pressures in their lives

- Those who like this approach say: “By helping community college students cope with the pressures that can derail their studies, we can increase their chances of success.”

Approach 3: Focus on ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience

- Those who like this approach say: “Having high academic expectations for students and providing them with a rigorous and engaging course of study is the key to student achievement.”
**Participant Guide**

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

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**Summarizing a Choicework Conversation**

These questions are a good way to summarize a Choicework conversation, prior to considering more action-oriented questions.

1. In our conversation so far, have we discovered any common ground? What do we agree on or have in common?

2. What were our important areas of disagreement? What are the issues we may need to keep talking about in the future?

3. What are the questions and concerns that need more attention? Are there things we need more information about?

---

**Bridging from Dialogue to Action**

These questions can help you move from dialogue about the issue at hand to actions that can help address the issue.

1. How can we work together to make a difference in our community on the issues we discussed today?

2. Is there anything that you, as individuals, might do, or do differently, as a result of today’s conversation?

3. What would you like to see happen to follow up on today’s conversation? What should the immediate follow-up steps be?
APPENDIX 2: Participant Survey

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve
Location: ___________________________________________________________ Date: ____________

This survey will provide more information on your views and feedback on how to make future meetings more successful. Please hand it in before you leave.

Please indicate which small group you were in: ________________________________________________

1. Do you have any additional thoughts about today’s topic, something you didn’t say earlier and would like to say now? If so, what is it?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

2. Is there any information or data you feel would be useful to you as you continue to consider today’s discussion topic?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

3. How should we follow up on today’s meeting? (Please select your top two ideas for follow-up.)

☐ more discussion on today’s topic (Any particular subtopics?)

☐ more discussions like this in different parts of the community (Any particular locations?)

☐ discussion of a different issue (Any particular issues?)

☐ community action (What kind?)

☐ Other (Please explain)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
4. Compared with most other group discussions or public meetings you’ve attended, was your group today more diverse than usual, less diverse than usual or about the same?

☐ more diverse
☐ less diverse
☐ about the same
☐ not sure

5. How useful did you find today’s meeting to be?

☐ very useful
☐ somewhat useful
☐ not very useful
☐ not useful at all

6. Can you think of any specific groups or individuals who did not attend today’s meeting who you think would like to be invited in the future? If so, please list below.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

Throughout today’s discussion, how often did you...

7. decide something was more complicated than you originally thought?

☐ Never
☐ Once or twice
☐ Three or more times
☐ Not sure

8. hear arguments against your position that you thought were good?

☐ Never
☐ Once or twice
☐ Three or more times
☐ Not sure

9. find your moderator to be:

☐ very helpful
☐ somewhat helpful
☐ not helpful

Comment (optional):

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
Participant Survey

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

10. How often have you attended Community College Events in the past?
   - This was my first time
   - 1 - 3 times
   - 4 - 8 times
   - 8 or more times

11. Overall, what did you like most about today’s meeting?
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________

12. What did you like least about today’s meeting?
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the meeting format?
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________

(Questions 14-18 are for research purposes only)

14. Please indicate the category that best describes your main occupation:
   - Full-time community college faculty
   - K-12 educator or administrator
   - Part-time community college faculty
   - High school student
   - Businessperson
   - Homemaker
   - Current community college student
   - Clergy
   - Community college alumni
   - Retiree
   - Community college administrator
   - Other (please specify):
     __________________________________________
     __________________________________________

15. Are you a family member of a community college student?
   - Yes
   - No

16. Are you of Hispanic/Latino descent?
   - Yes
   - No
## Participant Survey

**Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve**

17. How would you describe your racial background?
   - [ ] White
   - [ ] Black, African or African American
   - [ ] Asian or Pacific Islander
   - [ ] Native American or Alaska Native
   - [ ] Other:

If you said “Yes” to question 18, please fill out the contact information below. You may tear it off and hand it in separately if you wish so your earlier answers remain confidential.

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18. Would you like to be kept informed about follow-up activities?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

**Comments?**

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About This Guide

This guide was designed by Public Agenda to be used in conjunction with the print and video dialogue materials titled “Success Is What Counts: How Can We Help All Community College Students Succeed?”

The dialogue materials present several alternative approaches to the topic, different ideas for people to weigh and talk about, or what Public Agenda calls “Choicework.” This is an effective way to give regular citizens a structure for engaging a complex issue. It allows people to sort through competing values, trade-offs and practical challenges. And because it is presented in clear, jargon-free language, the structure allows virtually anyone to participate and find his or her own voice in the conversation.

This guide will help moderators and recorders understand their roles and lead them through the discussion process step by step.

Goals

The primary goal of this Community Conversation is to create a productive dialogue among a diverse cross section of community members that will:

► Open up lines of communication between the community and the college.

► Share ideas and perspectives about how best to help all community college students succeed and close any achievement gaps that might exist. In doing so, we will work specifically to identify areas of common ground, clarify disagreements and identify questions and concerns.

► Brainstorm and prioritize the ways in which the college and the community can best work together to help all young people succeed.

Moderating Tasks and Objectives

On the most basic level, the task of the moderator is to make sure the participants in the small group discussions understand what they are supposed to be talking about and to keep the discussions focused and on schedule. Beyond this, moderators make the conversations as participatory and productive as possible.

A successful moderator is comfortable with the goal of an open dialogue without a predetermined conclusion. It is essential to the credibility of the dialogue that moderator does not direct the outcomes of the conversations and remains neutral and unbiased. The moderator does, of course, have an agenda with regard to the process of the session—to
Moderator/Recorder Guide
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facilitate a civil, constructive dialogue among diverse members of the community who do not often communicate with each other. But the goal is not to lead anyone toward a “correct” answer. If you do not feel you can be objective, or if you feel you could get defensive or impatient with “wrong answers,” this is not a good role for you.

In general, moderators should be familiar with the issues to be addressed, but they need not be experts. We encourage a natural, straightforward style of facilitation, since elaborate or workshop-like techniques can come across as gimmicky and/or intimidating in this setting. Moderators are more like skillful hosts who keep a party lively without themselves becoming the center of attention.

A moderator’s primary objectives include:

▸ Making sure a point is well understood by everyone in the group.

▸ Helping participants explain why they feel the way they do—for instance, have they had particular experiences that have led them to their current views?

▸ Pointing out contradictions and tensions among different ideas being discussed.

▸ Bringing a new voice into the discussion to enrich what is being said.

▸ Occasionally summing up and (re)focusing the discussion.

▸ Introducing important arguments that are being overlooked to see what people think.

Other important moderating objectives:

Creating an environment where people are comfortable expressing ideas.

These sessions are carefully designed to foster an environment in which people can honestly explore their thinking and the opinions of others and engage in constructive and stimulating dialogue about an important public concern. The moderator can contribute by establishing a relaxed but focused tone for the session and modeling honest and straightforward, yet civil and respectful communication.

Not allowing individuals or subgroups to dominate the discussion.

Especially early on in the discussion, a major goal of moderators should be to involve as many people as possible. This doesn’t mean making everyone participate equally but, rather, it involves creating a situation where everyone has an opportunity to do so and you should occasionally “check in” with people who have not spoken to see if they have anything they want to add to the discussion.

Two typical challenges in this regard are (1) the dominant personality, who will talk at such length or with such force that less aggressive members of the group fade into the background; and (2) those with greater experience and expertise who simply have more fully formed views and can talk at greater length.
Moderators should not feel the need to police these issues too tightly. A common mistake of novice moderators is to jump in too quickly if someone appears to be “getting out of line.” In our experience, it’s best to let things play out a bit and allow the group to react and deal with the individual or situation without interference—which is usually all that is needed.

But moderators may need to intervene from time to time to keep the conversation open, constructive and accessible to everyone. The ground rules you’ll set for the discussion will help you do this.

Helping people examine their own views, understand the views of others and communicate effectively about the issues with diverse members of the community.

In post-conversation surveys, most participants state that they heard views different from their own position which had merit, and that they reconsidered one of their own positions at least once. Moderators can facilitate these outcomes by encouraging people to examine their views, to articulate and explain them clearly, and to hear (and perhaps respond to) the views of others.

Clarifying, and advancing, the local “state of the debate” on the issue at hand.

Again, the aim is not to achieve perfect consensus. Rather, it is to facilitate a positive and stimulating conversation among equals that allows views to be articulated and examined.

In this way we hope the dialogue will clarify:

▶ Areas of common ground.
▶ Important concerns or disagreements that will require continued dialogue.
▶ Outstanding questions that deserve further attention.
▶ Ways in which the community can act together on behalf of students and schools.

A Note on Group Conflict

Beginning moderators are often anxious about too much conflict. We find instead that groups often strive to minimize their conflicts and reframe them as areas of common ground. This can artificially conceal real tensions that may need attention. It is important, therefore, that moderators take an accepting attitude toward group conflict and disagreement, an attitude that communicates, “This is normal and useful to understand.” Moderators should look to neither agitate disagreements nor shy away from them, but rather help the group to identify and clarify areas of conflict and disagreement. If the group as a whole wants to focus on a particular conflict, moderators should help participants make as much headway as realistically possible in a short discussion.
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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The Recorder’s Role

Throughout the small group session, recorders will make notes of the discussion on flip charts, freeing moderators to concentrate on managing the flow of conversation.

The recorder’s job is a crucial one: to record the major points during the small group discussions. While the recorder is not expected to write everything that is said word for word, he or she should try to capture the essence of the main points being made by each participant.

It is especially important to record not only each person’s position (“I’m for such and such”), but each person’s thinking (“I’m for such and such because…”).

It is equally important that recorders do their best to keep their own views out of the way and record the proceedings as faithfully as possible.

Some practical tips:

- You will be working on a flip chart so the group can see the document you are creating. On the first sheet, be sure to identify which group you are recording and number the pages as you go.
- Do not bother with people’s names; just record their perspectives and ideas.
- Write as large and legibly as you can without slowing down.
- You can occasionally ask the group or moderator to clarify a point if it is unclear to you or if things have moved too quickly.

Ideally, you’ll be able to remove each finished page and tape it onto a wall so the participants can see the pages when they are ready to summarize their conversation. But some rooms don’t have walls that work for this, and it’s important not to miss anything, so if you can’t get the sheets up on a wall, simply flip them over as they fill up and keep writing.
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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Structure of the Small Group Discussions

Most Community Conversations begin with a light meal, followed by welcoming remarks. Afterward, organizers separate participants into small, diverse groups of 12 to 14 to review the Choicework and discuss the topic at hand. Each group should be as diverse as possible, not only demographically but with respect to the different kinds of community members present. The entire small group discussion is designed to take a little less than two hours.

It is the moderator’s responsibility to manage the small group discussions. There are two major phases, each with several components:

60 MINUTES  PART I: GENERAL DISCUSSION

10 minutes  Group orientation, introductions, ground rules
40 minutes  Introduce Choicework and discuss
10 minutes  Interim summary: common ground, concerns or disagreements, outstanding questions

50 MINUTES  PART II: BRIDGING FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

How Can Our College and Our Community Do a Better Job of Working Together to Help Students Achieve Their Educational and Career Goals?

30 minutes  Brainstorming ideas for action and collaboration
10 minutes  Prioritizing actionable ideas
10 minutes  Identifying next steps

The remainder of this guide will work you through each section of the conversation in detail.
Moderator/Recorder Guide
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Detailed Moderating Procedures

Part I: General Discussion of Choicework Materials (60 minutes)
This first discussion item uses the Choicework Discussion Starter as a starting point. The procedure for handling this phase of the small group discussion follows:

A. Group Orientation
Moderator makes a few brief, opening remarks, explaining:

▶ Who you are and what your role is.

▶ Why we are meeting (reinforcing what was said in the opening plenary session).

▶ What’s going to happen in the small group.

B. Introductions
Have a brief round of introductions. We recommend making a seating chart so you know who is sitting where as you manage the discussion. Note if someone is a faculty member, a parent, a local business owner, a student and so on. This will help you manage the conversation, especially early on while you’re working to get everyone involved.

Note: If a recorder has not been prearranged, you’ll need to find a volunteer.

C. Ground Rules
Cover any simple ground rules you might want to apply to the discussion. For example, you might say something along these lines:

▶ “Let’s all work together to keep the conversation on track and to make sure everyone has an equal chance to speak.”

▶ “We want this to be a session where people feel free to express their views and where they can consider the views of others. It’s okay to agree with others, and it’s okay to disagree as well. We just ask that you disagree with ideas, not with people. In other words, let’s keep this constructive and avoid getting personal.”

▶ “Are we ready to get started?”

D. Introducing the Choicework Materials
It helps to introduce the Choicework Discussion Starter along these lines:

▶ “To help us get the conversation started, we’re going to watch a short video that presents three contrasting ways of looking at how best to help community college students achieve their educational and professional goals.”
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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“After we watch the video, I’m going to ask you which view is closest to your own, and we can start talking about it. You may also have other ideas that aren’t on the video, and we can talk about those as well.”

Refer participants to their Participant Guide in case any of them want to follow along with the written text, but do tell them they can just watch the video—the written text is merely for those who like to refer to it.

Then roll the video. The Participant Guide is reproduced on the following four pages, after which you’ll find guidelines for getting the discussion going after the video.

Success Is What Counts: A Community Conversation to Help All Community College Students Achieve

Community colleges serve a wide variety of students with a wide variety of goals.

For example:

- They offer a first step into higher education, often the best step for students who can’t afford tuition at a four-year college or who don’t have the necessary grades.

- They are an option for students who prefer to stay close to home.

- They provide marketable job skills to both recent high school graduates and older students who want to upgrade their careers.

Like all community colleges, our college has some students who are struggling. In other words, we have some achievement gaps—and we want to do something about them. Our goal in this dialogue is to think about how the college and community can work together to close achievement gaps and help all students succeed.

We’ll begin by describing three areas that the college and community could focus on to achieve these goals:

- Making sure students are able to do college-level work.

- Helping students deal with the pressures in their lives.

- Ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience.

Of course, each of these approaches to student success may be of value. And you may have other ideas to add. But, it’s also important to set some priorities so that we can put our resources to the best possible use.

We’ll begin by reviewing these three approaches in greater detail. Which do you think is likely to have the greatest impact on student success, and why?
Approach 1: Focus on making sure students are ready to do college-level work

For a variety of reasons, too many community college students arrive without a solid enough academic foundation. With adequate preparation, these students are better able to take advantage of the educational opportunities the college has to offer, and less likely to be thrown off course by the pressures in their lives. Therefore, we should do things like:

- Strengthen remedial education and tutoring to help struggling students catch up.
- Support improvements in K-12 education and the transition from high school to college.
- Offer English as a Second Language programs for non-native English speakers.

Those who like this approach say, “With many students arriving at community college without the academic skills and attitudes it takes to succeed, it’s critical to make sure they’re ready for college-level work.”

But others say, “The college has a big enough task providing a quality education once students arrive. It’s not practical to expect it to make up for things students should have learned before they get there.”

OPTIONAL MODERATOR PROBES

- Will this choice have a major impact on the students who are struggling most?
- In other words, will it help us close achievement gaps? Why?
- How well is our community college doing with this choice today?
- What are the college’s strengths and weaknesses in this area?
- Is this choice missing anything that is absolutely critical to student success?
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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Approach 2: Focus on helping students deal with the pressures in their lives

Community college students tend to be busy people with busy lives. Most have jobs, many have children, and few have a great deal of money. As a result, there are many pressures in their lives that can make it difficult for them to stick with their studies and meet their goals. Therefore, we should do things like:

- Ease the burden on lower-income students by providing scholarships and childcare.
- Encourage employers to allow flexible work schedules to help students balance college and work.
- Mentor students who need support and guidance in managing the challenges in their lives.

Those who like this approach say, “By helping community college students cope with the pressures that can derail their studies, we can increase their chances of success.”

But others say, “These are adult college students who need to take responsibility for their personal lives, however complicated they may be. The college should keep its focus on teaching and learning.”

OPTIONAL MODERATOR PROBES

- Will this choice have a major impact on the students who are struggling most?
- In other words, will it help us close achievement gaps? Why?
- How well is our community college doing with this choice today?
- What are the college’s strengths and weaknesses in this area?
- Is this choice missing anything that is absolutely critical to student success?
Approach 3: Focus on ensuring a rigorous and engaging academic experience

The most important thing we can do to promote student achievement is provide a quality educational experience, one that is challenging and engaging, and gives students the skills they need to meet their educational and career goals. If we do that, we’ll be able to help every motivated student to succeed.

Therefore, we should do things like:

- Raise academic expectations and standards.
- Train faculty in effective teaching strategies, including those that help less successful students.
- Invest in up-to-date technology.

Those who like this approach say, “Having high academic expectations for students and providing them with a rigorous and engaging course of study is the key to student achievement.”

But others say, “Community colleges serve many different kinds of students, and we shouldn’t assume that all of them need or want an equally rigorous academic experience. Some have more immediate and practical goals.”

Optional Moderator Probes

- Will this choice have a major impact on the students who are struggling most?
- In other words, will it help us close achievement gaps? Why?
- How well is our community college doing with this choice today?
- What are the college’s strengths and weaknesses in this area?
- Is this choice missing anything that is absolutely critical to student success?
E. Getting the Discussion Started

After the video, begin by explaining to people that they’ve just heard three different ways of looking at how to help community college students succeed and that we want to get things started by asking them which approach is closest to their own thinking. Ask for a show of hands:

“How many lean more toward Approach 1?”
“How many lean more toward Approach 2?”
“How many lean more toward Approach 3?”

Then begin to ask people why they leaned one way or the other, and you’re off and running. Be sure to start with non-educators—a parent or two, a student, an employer—then bring in the voice of one or more education professionals.

Our real aim here is to get the group thinking and talking to each other. If people are talking only to you as the moderator and not to one another, it can be helpful to connect their points so they can react to one another a bit. For example, you might invite a proponent of Approach 1 to respond to a comment made by a champion of Approach 3 to help the group get the idea that it’s okay to react directly to one another’s statements.

F. Interim Summary

After the Choicework phase of your discussion, take 10 minutes or so to work with the group on the three summary questions listed below for this first phase of the conversation.

Recorder: If you haven’t done so already, put up three flip chart pages labeled “Common Ground,” “Concerns/Disagreements” and “Outstanding Questions.” (We recommend putting them up at the start, to save time and because they can be helpful along the way.)

Explain to the group that you’ll be covering all three summary topics in a limited amount of time, and encourage everyone to focus. Begin with number one, though you might jump around as the discussion unfolds.

- In our conversation today, have we discovered any common ground? What do we agree on or have in common?
- What were things we have concerns or disagreements about? Things we might have to keep talking about to work out our differences and move ahead?
- What are the outstanding questions that need more attention? Are there issues about which we need more information?
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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Tips for Managing the Interim Summary

► **IMPORTANT:** You should briefly “process” each suggestion by a group member to make sure most people are comfortable with having it go up on one of the charts. For example, ask, “Does everyone agree that was an area of common ground?” before putting it up on the chart. If the issue can’t be resolved quickly, it can become a question for further discussion on the “Questions/Concerns” chart.

► It is important to discourage people from introducing new material here – the task is to sum up the previous conversation, not begin a new one.

► This is one place where you can introduce your own observations, as can the recorder. For example, if the group is missing a point of disagreement that you recall clearly, you might say, “I seem to recall some disagreement about __________. Is that accurate?”

► We don’t need 100% agreement to list something as “Common Ground,” as long as most people agree. Minority views can usually be noted under “Outstanding Questions.”

---

**TIPS**

► The aim is to generate actionable ideas and clarify those that seem to be the most useful to the group and likely to bear fruit in the future.

► Start with some of the non-educators.

► As people put out ideas, open them to discussion by asking others what they think.
Part II: Bridging from Dialogue to Action

G. Brainstorming Ideas for Action and Collaboration

After the interim summary, you’ll make the transition to Part 2, about ideas for action and collaboration, for closing achievement gaps and helping all community college students succeed.

Explain:

“So far, we’ve been talking about different approaches to helping students succeed. Now, we’d like people to end the discussion by focusing on where we should go from here. To do this, we’d like you to address the following question:

“How can our college and our community do a better job of working together to close achievement gaps and help all students succeed?”

Recorder: Start a new sheet on the flip chart, with this section’s title at the top.

H. Prioritizing Actionable Ideas

First, tell the group that you’d like each person to choose three ideas that he or she favors most. Give the group about a minute to consider the list, then ask each person to write down the number of his or her three favorite ideas. (If someone has only one or two favorites, that’s fine.)

Second, ask all participants to come up to the flip chart and place stickers next to each of the three ideas they favor. (As moderator, you should have a sheet of stickers to hand out to participants.) Having all participants mark their favorite ideas simultaneously makes it easier for people to express their own preferences without pressure from other group members.

Third, after all participants have starred their favorites, pick the three with the most stars as the group’s initial consensus. These should be the priorities reported in the closing plenary session, along with ideas for next steps.
Moderator/Recorder Guide

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Time: _______ to _______
Identifying Next Steps (10 minutes)

I. Identifying Next Steps

In the final 5 to 10 minutes, work with the group on the theme of next steps, or “How should we follow up on today’s conversation?” Tell them this final section will be organized around two questions—one on steps for individuals to follow up on the discussion and one on how the Community Conversation process as a whole should move ahead.

Note: If time is too short, skip the first question and use only question two. (Recorder: Put on the flip chart.)

1. Is there anything that you as individuals might do, or do differently, as a result of today’s conversation?

2. What would you like to see happen to follow up on today’s conversation?

Facilitate this section in a round-robin style: Go around the circle, asking each group participant to share in turn. As needed, you can stimulate their thinking on question two by asking:

▶ Are there any particular aspects of today’s subject that we need to come back together and spend more time on? (If so, what?)

▶ Are there other subjects that we should be discussing besides today’s?

▶ How can we include more people in the conversation? Would that be a good idea?

▶ (Assuming this is the case) There were several strategic ideas in the last part of the discussion where there was a lot of common ground. How can we build on that?

When the discussion concludes, ask participants to fill out the surveys in their packets.

Ask participants to fill out their surveys before returning to the large group, and to leave completed surveys with you. Please return all completed surveys you collect to the Community Conversation organizers.

Also, be sure to remind people how important the final large group plenary is.

That’s where everyone will have a chance to hear from the other groups and will talk as a large group about the best way to follow up this Community Conversation. As people return to the large group meeting place, work with your recorder to get your notes in order for the recap presentation, which will cover the three biggest priorities from the group’s Part 2 discussion and ideas for next steps.
Moderator’s Time Chart

60 minutes  Part 1: General Discussion

Time: _______to_______
Orientation, Introductions, Ground Rules (10 minutes)

Time: _______to_______
Review Choicework and Discuss (40 minutes)

Approach 1: Make sure Kids are Ready for College-Level Work

Approach 2: Help Students Deal with the Pressure in their Lives

Approach 3: Ensure a Rigorous, Engaging Academic Experience

Time: _______to_______
Interim Summary (10 minutes)

Common Ground
Concerns or Disagreements
Outstanding Questions

50 minutes  Part 2: Bridging from Dialogue to Action

How can our college and our community do a better job of working together to close achievement gaps and help all students succeed?

Time: _______to_______
Brainstorming Ideas for Action & Collaboration (30 minutes)

Time: _______to_______
Prioritizing Actionable Ideas (10 minutes)

Time: _______to_______
Identifying Next Steps (10 minutes)
Bridging from Dialogue to Action Report-Out

Top 3 Priorities:
1. 
2. 
3. 

Next Steps:

Additional Notes
The Host’s Role

The main tasks that the host must manage are convening and facilitating the opening and closing plenary sessions and explaining to the participants what to expect during the course of the evening.

1. Moderating the Opening Plenary Session

The following overview is intended to help you host the opening plenary session of the Community Conversation. You may modify the content or the timing to fit appropriately within your event:

5 MINUTES:
Welcome, statement of purpose and a few words of gratitude and encouragement for the participants.

10 MINUTES:
Brief presentation about the community college and its history, mission and challenges, including a few well-chosen facts drawn from Achieving the Dream data analysis to create context for the discussion (basically, about any achievement gaps the college seeks to address and/or information on interventions and strategies if you know what they are).

5 MINUTES:
Nuts-and-Bolts overview of the session.

Nuts-and-Bolts Overview

After the host has welcomed everyone to the event and the few speakers have made their addresses, it’s time to explain the flow of the evening. The basic message is, “Now that you’ve been welcomed and have some idea why we’re here, I’m going to tell you how we’re going to accomplish our goals tonight.” It is generally useful to emphasize the following points—although if earlier speakers cover some of them, you can edit. Use whatever language works best for you, of course, and leave yourself 5 to 10 minutes.

- “We’ll be moving into small groups in a few minutes, where the real work of the session will take place. You’ll notice that on your nametag is a [number, letter, color…]. That tells you which group you’ll be going to. [Give directions as needed.] In each group you’ll find a cross section of your community, a moderator [or moderators] who will help keep the conversation moving along, a recorder to keep a record of the major points being made and a 10-minute video that will help you get the discussion started.”

- “The goal is to have an honest exchange of views among a diverse cross section of the community on the important topic of helping community college students succeed. Through this community conversation, we will identify areas of common ground, as well as those areas where we disagree or need more information. Through this community conversation, we will identify areas of common ground, as well as those areas
Host Guide

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

where we disagree or need more information. We do not expect to arrive at a perfect consensus or a complete action plan at the end of one meeting, but we do think we can take an important step toward greater consensus and toward developing ways of working together that can help the college and its students succeed.”

▶ “We’re hoping for a dialogue that’s frank and honest and that’s also positive, constructive. We urge you to take the time to listen to one another, try to understand one another’s points of views and, if you disagree, to disagree with ideas, not with individuals. Most of all, enjoy yourselves and make the most of this opportunity to learn from one another.”

▶ “After your small group discussion, we’ll all come back together for a short ending session here to compare notes and talk about follow-up and where we go from here.”

▶ “If you have any questions about the session, your moderator will be able to help you with them—or talk to anyone whose name tag reads ‘Staff’.”

II. Moderating the Closing Plenary Session

Welcome the group back together and assure them that this final session will move quickly and involve two items:

1. Brief reports from each group.
2. Closing remarks to thank participants and speak about whatever follow-up is planned.

Reporting Out

It’s your job as host to facilitate the reporting-out process, whereby the recorder or moderator of each group reports back the highlights of its discussion once the small groups are over.

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE REPORT-OUTS COVER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ONLY:

▶ Top three priorities for action
▶ Next steps for forum follow-up
Host Guide

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE FOR SMALL GROUP REPORTS:

▷ All recorders and moderators (or conversation participants if they are doing the report-out) should convene at the front of the room near the microphone, with the appropriate notes ready to go. Remind the audience that these reports will describe a few highlights and that a fuller report on the conversation will be forthcoming.

▷ Choose one person to begin the reporting (where there are good notes and the person who will be handling the report is confident). This individual will give the most complete report of his or her group’s discussion of priorities for action and ideas for next steps (in 3 minutes or less). The person reporting should identify his or her group before launching into the report.

▷ Each subsequent group report will add a few highlights concerning similarities or differences from the first report, but go into less detail. In this way, you keep the reports fresh and avoid the tiresome repetition that can take place.

▷ As the reports are being made, have one of the recorders keep a master list of next steps, so that at the end of the series of reports you, as host, can review the next steps list for the whole group, emphasizing the most common themes.

Make sure that all the notes from the small groups—and especially their report-out notes—are collected for the post-conversation report that the Follow-Up workgroup will be responsible for.

Closing Remarks

Some basic talking points for the closing remarks might include the following:

▷ Thank the participants for their time and effort in attending the Community Conversation.

▷ Emphasize again (as was done in the opening plenary) that notes from the small groups and the surveys will be summarized and distributed to participants. If other follow-up activities are already planned that you are aware of, make sure to let participants know about those as well.

▷ Optional: If you have a portable microphone or microphone stand stationed in the audience, or if the group is not too large, you can ask if anyone from the audience would like to make any comments. This can lead to some final thoughts about what people thought about the session and where they think the process should go next.

▷ Again urge participants to drop off their surveys before leaving. These should have been distributed to participants as they returned from their small groups.
Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

For directions on downloading attachments, go to page 4

Sample invitation from Valencia is attached as: ValenciaInvitation.pdf

Sample invitation from Gallup is attached as: GallupInvitation.pdf
Planning Guide: Campus and Community Conversations

APPENDIX 5: Sample Invitations and Summary Reports

Success is What Counts: A community conversation to help all community college students achieve

Sample summary report from Valencia is attached as: ValenciaReport.doc

Sample summary report from Tallahassee is attached as: TallahasseeCC-SumRpt.pdf

Sample summary report from Jefferson is attached as: JeffersonCC-Rpt.pdf
Los Apéndices, Parte II

1. Spanish Version

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Apéndice 1: Guía de Participantes
Apéndice 2: Cuestionario de Participantes
Apéndice 3: Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates
Apéndice 4: Muestra Invitación
Los colegios comunitarios dan servicio a estudiantes con características diversas que a su vez tienen una gran variedad de metas.

Por ejemplo:

- Los colegios comunitarios son un primer paso hacia la educación superior, en ocasiones la mejor alternativa para quienes no pueden financiar cuatro años de colegio, o bien para quienes no tienen las calificaciones necesarias para ser admitidos.

- También ofrecen una alternativa para quienes simplemente prefieren estudiar cerca del lugar en el que viven.

- Además ofrecen capacitación para el trabajo, ya sea para estudiantes recién graduados de secundaria o de “high school” o para estudiantes que se han graduado varios años atrás y que desean actualizarse para avanzar en su profesión.

Como todos los demás colegios comunitarios, el de nuestra comunidad tiene estudiantes que son más exitosos que otros. En otras palabras, existen brechas entre el nivel de desempeño de unos y de otros, y queremos hacer algo al respecto. Nuestro objetivo al iniciar este diálogo es reflexionar sobre las formas en que el colegio y la comunidad pueden trabajar conjuntamente para reducir esas brechas y ayudar a todos los estudiantes a sobresalir.

Empezaremos por describir tres áreas en las que el colegio y la comunidad pueden concentrar sus esfuerzos:

- Asegurarse de que los estudiantes estén en posición de realizar estudios a nivel de colegio.

- Ayudar a los estudiantes a sobrellevar las presiones que enfrentan en la vida.

- Garantizar que el proceso de aprendizaje sea una experiencia enriquecedora y rigurosa.

Cada una de estas áreas o enfoques es importante, al igual que otras ideas que ustedes puedan contribuir. Sin embargo, es importante establecer prioridades para poder utilizar nuestros recursos de la mejor manera posible.

Comenzaremos por revisar cada uno de los enfoques con mayor detenimiento. ¿Cuál creen que tendrá el mayor impacto en el éxito de los estudiantes y por qué?
Guía de Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Enfoque 1: Concentrar esfuerzos en asegurarse de que la preparación de los estudiantes sea suficiente para realizar estudios a nivel de colegio

Por una variedad de razones, muchos estudiantes llegan al colegio sin una base académica sólida. Una preparación adecuada puede permitir a estos estudiantes estar mejor equipados para aprovechar las oportunidades educativas que el colegio les brinda y para evitar distraer sus estudios por las presiones que enfrentan en la vida.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

▶ Brindar cursos de revisión y programas de asesoría para ayudar a los estudiantes a fortalecer las áreas en que se encuentran menos preparados.

▶ Mejorar la educación secundaria (“K-12 education”) y la transición entre la educación secundaria y el colegio.

▶ Ofrecer programas de inglés como segundo idioma o “programas ESL” para estudiantes que necesitan mejorar su conocimiento del idioma.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Dado que un gran número de estudiantes llegan al colegio comunitario sin los conocimientos ni habilidades necesarias para sobresalir, es de suma importancia asegurarse de que están preparados para aprovechar al máximo su experiencia en el colegio.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “La tarea que el colegio tiene que cumplir es de por sí ardua. No es práctico esperar que el colegio realice la tarea adicional de ayudar a los estudiantes con conocimientos que debieron haber aprendido antes de llegar al colegio.”
Guía de Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Enfoque 2: Concentrar esfuerzos en ayudar a los estudiantes a enfrentar las presiones que enfrentan en sus vidas

Normalmente, la vida de los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios es bastante compleja. La mayoría tiene un empleo, muchos tienen hijos y solamente muy pocos tienen dinero suficiente. Estas presiones les dificultan mantener la atención necesaria en los estudios para alcanzar sus metas.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

- Ofrecer programas de becas y servicio de cuidado de niños para ayudar a los estudiantes en condiciones económicas limitadas.
- Promover que sus empleadores permitan horarios de trabajo flexibles para quienes quieren estudiar.
- Dar asesoría y acompañamiento a los estudiantes que lo necesiten para manejar sus problemas personales.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Al ayudar a los estudiantes a manejar las presiones que enfrentan en su vida personal y que pueden distraerlos de sus estudios podemos aumentar sus probabilidades de éxito.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “Los estudiantes de colegio son adultos, por lo que deben de tomar responsabilidad de sus vidas, sin importar lo complicadas que son. El colegio debe de concentrarse nada más en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.”
Guía de Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Enfoque 3: Concentrar esfuerzos en lograr que el proceso de aprendizaje sea una experiencia rigurosa y enriquecedora

Lo más importante que tenemos a nuestro alcance es ofrecer a nuestros estudiantes una educación de calidad; una experiencia enriquecedora que los motive a superarse y que a la vez les proporcione los conocimientos y habilidades necesarios para alcanzar sus metas educativas y profesionales. Si logramos eso, podremos ayudar a cada estudiante motivado a sobresalir.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

▶ Elevar expectativas y estándares académicos.
▶ Capacitar a los profesores en el uso de técnicas efectivas de enseñanza, incluyendo aquéllas que permiten ayudar especialmente a los estudiantes con desempeño más bajo.
▶ Invertir en tecnología avanzada.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Mantener altas expectativas académicas con respecto de los estudiantes y ofrecerles una experiencia rigurosa y enriquecedora son la clave para que los estudiantes tengan un buen aprovechamiento educativo.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “Los colegios comunitarios dan servicio a estudiantes de todo tipo, y no debemos suponer que todos necesitan o quieren una experiencia académica igualmente rigurosa. Algunos tienen objetivos más prácticos e inmediatos.”
Guía de Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

RESUMEN

Enfoque 1: Concentrar esfuerzos en asegurarse de que la preparación de los estudiantes sea suficiente para realizar estudios a nivel de colegio

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que,
“Dado que un gran número de estudiantes llegan al colegio comunitario sin los conocimientos ni habilidades necesarias para sobresalir, es de suma importancia asegurarse de que están preparados para aprovechar al máximo su experiencia en el colegio.”

Enfoque 2: Concentrar esfuerzos en ayudar a los estudiantes a enfrentar las presiones que enfrentan en sus vidas

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“Al ayudar a los estudiantes a manejar las presiones que enfrentan en su vida personal y que pueden distraerlos de sus estudios podemos aumentar sus probabilidades de éxito.”

Enfoque 3: Concentrar esfuerzos en lograr que el proceso de aprendizaje sea una experiencia rigurosa y enriquecedora

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Guía de Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Resumen de charla

Estas preguntas son una buena forma de resumir una conversación antes de considerar otras concernientes a un curso de acción.

1. En nuestra conversación hasta ahora, ¿hemos encontrado alguna causa en común? ¿En qué estamos de acuerdo o qué tenemos en común?
2. ¿Cuáles fueron las áreas más importantes de nuestro desacuerdo? ¿Cuáles fueron los asuntos sobre los cuales necesitamos seguir conversando en el futuro?
3. ¿Cuáles fueron las preguntas e inquietudes a las que necesitamos prestarle más atención? ¿Hay cosas respecto de las cuales necesitamos obtener mayor información?

Desde el diálogo a la acción

Estas preguntas les pueden ayudar a salirse del marco del diálogo sobre el asunto de que se trata y colocarse dentro del contexto de las acciones que faciliten la resolución del asunto.

1. ¿Cómo podemos trabajar en conjunto para cambiar positivamente la actitud de nuestra comunidad con respecto a los asuntos tratados en el día de hoy?
2. ¿Hay algo que ustedes, como personas, podrían hacer, o hacer de una manera diferente, como resultado de la conversación que mantuvimos hoy?
3. ¿Qué les agradaría ver que ocurriera a consecuencia de la conversación que mantuvimos hoy? ¿Cuáles deberían ser los pasos de seguimiento más inmediatos?
Apéndice 2: Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir
Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Lugar: _______________________________________________________________ Fecha: _____________

Sus respuestas al cuestionario nos ayudarán a mejorar la forma en que llevaremos a cabo los diálogos con la comunidad en un futuro. Por favor, entréguelo antes de salir.

Por favor indique el grupo pequeño en el que usted estuvo participando:

______________________________

1. ¿Tiene alguna sugerencia adicional sobre el tema que discutimos el día de hoy? ¿Algo que no tuvo oportunidad de mencionar y le gustaría decir? Si es así por favor menciónelo a continuación.

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

2. ¿Qué información o datos estadísticos podrían serle útiles para analizar el tema del día de hoy?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

3. ¿Cómo deberíamos dar seguimiento a la reunión de hoy? (Por favor seleccione dos de las ideas que se mencionan a continuación).

☐ ampliar la discusión sobre el tema de hoy (mencione subtemas específicos)

☐ llevar a cabo más discusiones de este tipo en otras partes del vecindario (mencione lugares específicos)

☐ discutir un tema distinto (mencione qué tema en particular)

☐ acción comunitaria (mencione el tipo de acción)

☐ otra (por favor explique de qué se trata)

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

4. En comparación con otros diálogos en grupo o reuniones públicas en las que usted ha participado, ¿cómo califica la diversidad del grupo de hoy? (seleccione una de las opciones a continuación)
   □ mayor diversidad
   □ menor diversidad
   □ un nivel de diversidad similar
   □ no estoy seguro(a)

¿Durante el día de hoy, qué tan seguido usted:

7. Decidió que algo resultó más complicado de lo que usted había pensado?
   □ Nunca
   □ Una o dos veces
   □ Tres o más veces
   □ No estoy seguro(a)

8. Escuchó argumentos en contra de su opinión, los cuales usted considera buenos argumentos?
   □ Nunca
   □ Una o dos veces
   □ Tres o más veces
   □ No estoy seguro(a)

5. ¿Qué usable encontró usted la reunión de hoy?
   □ Muy usable
   □ Un poco usable
   □ No muy usable
   □ Totalmente no es usable

6. ¿Qué grupos o personas que no participaron en la reunión de hoy usted considera deben ser invitados en el futuro?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

9. Usted considera que el/moderador(a) de su grupo fue:
   □ muy bueno
   □ suficientemente bueno
   □ no muy bueno

Comentarios (opcionales):

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

10. ¿Con qué frecuencia ha asistido usted reuniones del colegio comunitario en el pasado?
   □ Nunca
   □ Una a tres veces
   □ Cuatro a siete veces
   □ Ocho o más veces

11. En general ¿qué le gustó más de la reunión?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

12. ¿Qué fue lo que menos le gustó?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

13. ¿Tiene alguna sugerencia para mejorar la manera de conducir la reunión?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

(Las preguntas 14 a 18 serán utilizadas para obtener datos estadísticos únicamente)

14. Por favor indique la categoría que describe mejor su ocupación:

☐ Profesor, miembro de la facultad del colegio comunitario por tiempo completo
☐ Personal administrativo o educador de nivel escolar K-12
☐ Profesor, miembro de la facultad del colegio comunitario por medio tiempo
☐ Estudiante de “high-school”
☐ Empresario/ negocio propio
☐ Ama de casa
☐ Estudiante del colegio comunitario
☐ Sacerdote o representante de una comunidad religiosa
☐ Estudiante graduado del colegio comunitario
☐ Retirado
☐ Personal administrativo del colegio comunitario
☐ Other (please specify):

15. Familiar de un estudiante de colegio comunitario?
☐ Sí
☐ No

16. ¿Es usted de origen hispano o latino?
☐ Sí
☐ No

17. ¿Cuál es su origen?
☐ Blanco
☐ African-American
☐ Asiático o de las Islas del Pacífico
☐ Americano Nativo o Nativo de Alaska
☐ Otro:

☐

18. ¿Quiere mantenerse informado de actividades futuras?
☐ Sí
☐ No
Cuestionario De Participantes

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Si su respuesta a la pregunta 18 fue “Sí,” por favor proporcione sus datos personales a continuación. Usted puede desprender esta hoja y entregarla por separado si usted lo desea, para que sus respuestas sean anónimas.

NOMBRE

DIRECCIÓN

CIUDAD, ESTADO, CÓDIGO POSTAL

TELEFONO

DIRECCIÓN DE CORREO ELECTRÓNICO

Comentarios?
Información acerca de esta guía

Public Agenda ha diseñado esta guía para que sea utilizada junto con los materiales para debates disponibles en forma impresa y en video, y titulados “El éxito es lo que cuenta: ¿Cómo podemos ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad para que tengan éxito?”

Los materiales para debates presentan varias maneras alternativas de enfocar este tema, diferentes ideas para que las personas las evalúen y conversen sobre las mismas, o bien lo que Public Agenda llama “Choicework.” Esta es una forma efectiva de proporcionar a los ciudadanos comunes una estructura que les permita abocar un tema bien complejo. Permite que la gente elija entre una variedad de valores opuestos, factores de ventajas y desventajas y desafíos prácticos. Y debido a que dicha estructura se presenta en un lenguaje claro y libre de jergas, virtualmente hace que cualquier persona tenga la oportunidad de participar en los debates y encontrar su propia voz en los mismos.

Esta guía ayudará a los moderadores y anotadores de debates para que comprendan los papeles que deben desempeñar y los guiará, paso a paso, a través del proceso de las conversaciones.

Objetivos

El objetivo primordial de esta Conversación Comunitaria es el de crear un diálogo productivo entre los miembros de un sector transversal y diverso de la comunidad, que permita:

- Establecer líneas de comunicación entre la comunidad y la universidad.
- Compartir ideas y puntos de vista en cuanto a la mejor manera de ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad para que tengan éxito y vengan cualquier obstáculo que pueda existir. Obrando de esta manera, nos concentraremos específicamente en identificar aquellas áreas de interés mutuo, aclarar cualquier desacuerdo que haya e identificar preguntas e inquietudes.
- Crear una tormenta de ideas y dar prioridad a las formas en que la universidad y la comunidad pueden coordinar sus esfuerzos de la mejor manera para ayudar a los jóvenes a que tengan éxito.
Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Una conversación comunitaria para ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito

Tareas y objetivos del
Moderador de debates

Dentro del nivel más básico, la tarea del moderador es la de asegurarse que todos los participantes de un grupo de discusión pequeño comprenden de qué deben hablar, hacer que los debates no se desvíen de su punto de enfoque y que se lleven a cabo dentro del periodo de tiempo establecido. Más allá de esto, los moderadores deben hacer que los debates sean productivos y de que cuenten con la mayor participación que resulte posible.

Un moderador fructífero se sentirá tranquilo si logra el objetivo de abrir un diálogo sin ninguna conclusión predeterminada. Para la credibilidad de un diálogo, es esencial que el moderador no controle los resultados de los debates y se mantenga neutral e imparcial. Por supuesto, el moderador tiene su propio programa con respecto al proceso de la reunión: el de hacer posible que se establezca un diálogo cortés y constructivo entre los diversos miembros de la comunidad que no se comunican entre sí con frecuencia. Pero no es el objetivo el de dirigir a nadie para que dé una respuesta “correcta”. Si usted no piensa que puede ser objetivo o cree que podría ponerse a la defensiva o impacientarse al recibir “respuestas incorrectas”, entonces este papel no es el apropiado para usted.

En general, los moderadores deben conocer los temas a tratar, pero no necesitan ser expertos en la materia. Nosotros aconsejamos el uso de un estilo de dirección natural y directo, ya que las técnicas complicadas, como las de los talleres de trabajo, pueden dar la impresión de ser artimañas o intimidar a los participantes en este tipo de ambiente. Los moderadores actúan más bien como anfitriones capacitados que hacen lo posible para que todos se diviertan en la fiesta, pero sin llegar a ser el centro de atención de los invitados.

Los objetivos principales del moderador incluyen lo siguiente:

- Cerciorarse de que todos los integrantes del grupo comprendan bien cada punto.
- Ayudar a los participantes a explicar la razón por la cual se sienten de cierta manera. Por ejemplo, preguntándoles si experimentaron algo en particular que los llevó a sus actuales puntos de vista.
- Señalar contradicciones y tensiones con respecto a las ideas que se están debatiendo.
- Introducir en las discusiones una voz nueva a fin de enriquecer lo que se está diciendo.
- De vez en cuando, hacer un resumen de lo conversado y para volver a enfocar las discusiones.
- Introducir cualquier argumento importante que se haya omitido para ver qué piensa la gente al respecto.
Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Una conversación comunitaria para ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito

Otros objetivos importantes del moderador:

Crear un ambiente donde la gente se sienta cómoda expresando sus ideas.

Estas sesiones se preparan cuidadosamente a fin de proporcionar un ambiente en el cual la gente pueda explorar con franqueza su propia forma de pensar y las opiniones de otros y participar en diálogos constructivos y estimulantes acerca de las inquietudes públicas de importancia. El moderador puede contribuir estableciendo para la sesión un tono que sea relajado, pero que no se aparte del objetivo de la reunión y un modelo de comunicación franco y directo, pero que sea al mismo tiempo cortés y respetuoso.

No permitir que ninguna persona o subgrupo domine el debate.

Especialmente al inicio de un debate, uno de los principales objetivos de los moderadores es el de involucrar al mayor número de personas que sea posible. Esto no significa hacer que todos participen por partes iguales sino, más bien, crear una situación donde todos tengan la oportunidad de hacerlo y, de vez en cuando, “dirigirse” a las personas que no hayan hablado para ver si tienen algo que desean agregar a la discusión.

Dos desafíos típicos al respecto son los siguientes: (1) una personalidad dominante, que habla durante mucho tiempo o con tanta intensidad que los miembros menos dinámicos del grupo desaparecen detrás del escenario; y (2) aquellos que tienen más experiencia y conocimiento y que simplemente están mejor informados y pueden hablar a brazo tendido.

Los moderadores no deben verse en la necesidad de controlar los temas mucho. Un error común de los moderadores novicios es la de intervenir demasiado rápido si tienen la impresión de que una persona “se está pasando de su línea”. La experiencia nos ha enseñado que es mejor dejar que las cosas se calmen un poco y permitir que el grupo reaccione y trate con la persona o la situación en cuestión sin ninguna interferencia, lo cual es comúnmente todo lo que se necesita.

Sin embargo, los moderadores podrán verse en la necesidad de intervenir de vez en cuando a fin de mantener la conversación abierta, constructiva y accesible a todos. Las normas básicas que usted establecerá para el debate le ayudarán a hacerlo.

Prestar ayuda para que las personas examinen sus propios puntos de vista, comprendan las opiniones de otros y se comuniquen con efectividad con los diversos miembros de la comunidad acerca de los temas.

En encuestas realizadas a la conclusión de un debate, la mayoría de los participantes dijeron que habían escuchado opiniones que si bien eran diferentes a las suyas, tenían mérito y que habían reconsiderado uno de sus propios puntos de vista por lo menos una vez. Los moderadores pueden hacer que esto sea factible animando a las personas a que examinen sus puntos de vista, los expresen y expliquen claramente y escuchen (y quizá respondan) a las opiniones de otros.
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Aclarar cuestiones sobre el tema que se está tratando y seguir adelante con el “estado del debate” interno.

Una vez más, el objetivo no es el de lograr que se llegue a un acuerdo perfecto. Más bien, es el hacer posible que se lleve a cabo un debate positivo y estimulante entre partes iguales y que permita que las diversas opiniones sean expresadas y se analicen.

De esta manera, esperamos que dialogando se definan:

▶ Las áreas de interés mutuo.
▶ Las inquietudes o desacuerdos importantes sobre los cuales se necesita continuar debatiendo.
▶ Los temas pendientes que merecen se les preste mayor atención.
▶ Las formas en que la comunidad puede actuar en conjunto en representación de los estudiantes y las escuelas.

Una nota sobre conflictos entre los miembros del grupo

Con frecuencia, los moderadores que recién se inician temen que se presenten muchos conflictos. En cambio, hemos descubierto que los grupos, frecuentemente, hacen todo lo que esté a su alcance para minimizar sus conflictos y los reencuadran como áreas de interés mutuo. Esta manera de actuar puede hacer que las tensiones reales, a las cuales se les debe prestar atención, queden escondidas artificialmente. Por consiguiente, es importante que los moderadores adopten una actitud de aceptación con respecto a los conflictos y desacuerdos entre los miembros del grupo, una actitud que comunique lo siguiente: “Esto es normal y de utilidad cuando se entiende”. Los moderadores no deberán tratar de alborotar a los miembros del grupo cuando están en desacuerdo ni tampoco apartarse de ellos con timidez, sino más bien ayudarlos para que identifiquen y aclaren cuáles son las áreas del conflicto y del desacuerdo. Si el grupo en conjunto desea prestarle atención a un conflicto en particular, los moderadores deberán ayudar a los participantes para que avancen en una buena dirección tan realista como sea posible, mediante una conversación breve.
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Papel del anotador

Durante la reunión de un grupo pequeño, los anotadores deberán tomar notas de los debates en rotafolios, liberando así a los moderadores de esa tarea para que se concentren en manejar el desarrollo del debate.

La tarea del anotador es de crucial importancia: registrar los puntos principales que se tratan durante el curso de los debates de un grupo pequeño. Si bien no se espera que el anotador escriba todo lo que se dice textualmente, el mismo deberá tratar de capturar la esencia de los puntos principales señalados por cada participante.

Es de especial importancia registrar no solamente la posición de cada persona (“Estoy a favor de tal y tal cosa”), sino también lo que piensa cada persona (“Estoy a favor de tal y tal cosa porque...”)

Es igualmente importante que los anotadores hagan todo lo que esté a su alcance para mantener afuera sus propios puntos de vista y registrar las sesiones tan fielmente como les sea posible.

Algunos consejos prácticos:

- Usted desarrollará su tarea en un rotafolio para que el grupo pueda ver lo que está creando. En la primera hoja, asegúrese de identificar al grupo cuyos debates está registrando y enumere las páginas a medida que vaya avanzando.
- No se moleste en anotar los nombres de las personas; solamente registre sus puntos de vista e ideas.
- Escriba en letras grandes y tan legiblemente como le sea posible, sin disminuir la velocidad.
- Ocasionalmente, podrá pedirle al grupo o al moderador que aclare un punto determinado si no está bien claro para usted o si las cosas se han movido muy rápido.

Idealmente hablando, usted podrá remover cada página terminada y pegarla sobre la pared, de modo que los participantes puedan ver todas las páginas cuando estén listos para hacer un resumen de sus debates. Pero algunas habitaciones no tienen paredes que permitan obrar de ese modo y es importante que no omita nada. Entonces, si no puede montar las hojas sobre una pared, simplemente volteelas, colocándolas unas encimas de las otras, a medida que las llene y continúe escribiendo.
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Estructura de los Debates de un Grupo Pequeño

La mayoría de las Conversaciones Comunitarias comienzan con una comida liviana, seguida por palabras de bienvenida.

A continuación, los organizadores separan a los participantes en pequeños y diversos grupos de 12 a 14 personas para que revisen el “Choicework” y conversen sobre el tópico de que se trata. Cada uno de los grupos debe ser lo más diverso que sea posible, no sólo demográficamente sino también con respecto a las diferentes categorías de los miembros comunitarios que se encuentran presentes. La duración total del debate de un grupo pequeño está diseñado de tal modo que lleve un poco menos de dos horas.

El moderador tiene la responsabilidad de manejar las conversaciones de un grupo pequeño. Hay dos fases principales, cada una provista de varios componentes:

60 minutos  PRIMERA PARTE: CONVERSACIÓN GENERAL
10 minutos  Orientación del grupo, presentaciones, normas básicas
40 minutos  Presentación del video de Iniciación de Conversaciones (“Choicework”) y debate
10 minutos  Resumen intermedio: Intereses mutuos, inquietudes o desacuerdos, cuestiones pendientes

50 minutos  SEGUNDA PARTE: DEL DIÁLOGO A LA ACCIÓN
¿Cómo puede nuestra universidad y nuestra comunidad contribuir mejor en conjunto para hacer que los estudiantes logren sus objetivos de educación y carrera? 

30 minutos  Intercambio de ideas para acción y colaboración
10 minutos  Ideas para acción, por orden de prioridad
10 minutos  Identificación de los próximos pasos a seguir

El resto de la presente guía lo llevará paso a paso a través de cada una de las partes del debate en más detalle.
Primera Parte: Conversación general acerca de los materiales de “Choicework” (60 minutos)

Para conversar sobre el primer tópico, se utiliza el material de Iniciación de Conversaciones de “Choicework” como punto de partida. A continuación se presenta el procedimiento a seguir para manejar esta fase de las conversaciones de grupos pequeños.

A. Orientación del grupo

El moderador hace unos comentarios de apertura breves, explicando:

- Quién es él, y cuál es el papel que desempeña.
- El motivo por el cual nos estamos reuniendo (recalcando lo que se dijo en la sesión plenaria de apertura.)
- Lo que va a suceder dentro del grupo pequeño.

B. Presentaciones

Establezca una rueda de presentaciones que sea breve. Le recomendamos que haga un cuadro de los asientos para que sepa dónde están sentadas las personas a medida que dirige el debate. Tome nota de si alguien es un miembro de la facultad, un padre, un propietario comercial local, un estudiante, etc. Esto lo ayudará a manejar el debate, especialmente al principio cuando se está esforzando para que todos participen.

NOTA: Si no se han hecho los preparativos necesarios para que esté presente un anotador, entonces tendrá que encontrar un voluntario.
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C. Normas básicas

Hable de cualquier norma simple que quiera aplicar al debate. Por ejemplo, podrá decir algo que se asemeje a lo siguiente:

- “Actuemos en conjunto para que el debate se mantenga en perspectiva y para asegurarnos de todos tiene la misma oportunidad de hablar”.

- “Nuestro deseo es que esta reunión sea un lugar donde la gente pueda expresar sus opiniones libremente y asimismo considere las de otros. Está bien si se está de acuerdo con otros, y también está bien si se está en desacuerdo. Solamente les pedimos que estén en desacuerdo con las ideas, no con las personas en sí. En otras palabras, mantengamos esta reunión en forma constructiva y evitemos dirigirnos a otros negativamente de manera personal”.

- “¿Están listos para empezar?”

D. Presentación de los materiales de “Choicework”

Es de gran ayuda presentar el material de Iniciación de Conversaciones de “Choicework” de la siguiente manera:

- “Para ayudarnos a que la conversación empiece, vamos a mirar un video corto donde se presentan tres maneras opuestas de ver cuál es la mejor manera de ayudar a los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad para que logren sus objetivos de educación y carrera profesional”.

- “Después de que miremos el video, les voy a preguntar cuál es el punto de vista que más se acerca al de ustedes y después vamos a empezar a conversar sobre el mismo. Posiblemente ustedes tengan otras ideas que no aparecen en el video y de ser así, también podremos conversar sobre ellas”.

En el supuesto caso de que los participantes deseen seguir el video con un texto impreso, refiéralos a la Guía para Participantes; pero digales que solamente necesitan mirar el video, que el texto escrito es meramente para aquellos que quieren referirse al mismo.

A continuación, ruede el video. La Guía para Participantes aparece reproducida en las cuatro páginas siguientes, después de las cuales encontrará recomendaciones para iniciar la conversación después de que se haya mirado el video.
El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Los colegios comunitarios dan servicio a estudiantes con características diversas que a su vez tienen una gran variedad de metas.

Por ejemplo:

- Los colegios comunitarios son un primer paso hacia la educación superior, en ocasiones la mejor alternativa para quienes no pueden financiar cuatro años de colegio, o bien para quienes no tienen las calificaciones necesarias para ser admitidos.
- También ofrecen una alternativa para quienes simplemente prefieren estudiar cerca del lugar en el que viven.
- Además ofrecen capacitación para el trabajo, ya sea para estudiantes recién graduados de secundaria o de “high school” o para estudiantes que se han graduado varios años atrás y que desean actualizarse para avanzar en su profesión.

Como todos los demás colegios comunitarios, el de nuestra comunidad tiene estudiantes que son más exitosos que otros. En otras palabras, existen brechas entre el nivel de desempeño de unos y de otros, y queremos hacer algo al respecto. Nuestro objetivo al iniciar este diálogo es reflexionar sobre las formas en que el colegio y la comunidad pueden trabajar conjuntamente para reducir esas brechas y ayudar a todos los estudiantes a sobresalir.

Empezaremos por describir tres áreas en las que el colegio y la comunidad pueden concentrar sus esfuerzos:

- Asegurarse de que los estudiantes estén en posición de realizar estudios a nivel de colegio.
- Ayudar a los estudiantes a sobrellevar las presiones que enfrentan en la vida.
- Garantizar que el proceso de aprendizaje sea una experiencia enriquecedora y rigurosa.

Cada una de estas áreas o enfoques es importante, al igual que otras ideas que ustedes puedan contribuir. Sin embargo, es importante establecer prioridades para poder utilizar nuestros recursos de la mejor manera posible.

Comenzaremos por revisar cada uno de los enfoques con mayor detenimiento. ¿Cuál creen que tendrá el mayor impacto en el éxito de los estudiantes y por qué?
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Enfoque 1: Concentrar esfuerzos en asegurarse de que la preparación de los estudiantes sea suficiente para realizar estudios a nivel de colegio

Por una variedad de razones, muchos estudiantes llegan al colegio sin una base académica sólida. Una preparación adecuada puede permitir a estos estudiantes estar mejor equipados para aprovechar las oportunidades educativas que el colegio les brinda y para evitar distraer sus estudios por las presiones que enfrentan en la vida.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

- Brindar cursos de revisión y programas de asesoría para ayudar a los estudiantes a fortalecer las áreas en que se encuentran menos preparados.

- Mejorar la educación secundaria (“k-12 education”) y la transición entre la educación secundaria y el colegio.

- Ofrecer programas de inglés como segundo idioma o “programas ESL” para estudiantes que necesitan mejorar su conocimiento del idioma.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Dado que un gran número de estudiantes llegan al colegio comunitario sin los conocimientos ni habilidades necesarias para sobresalir, es de suma importancia asegurarse de que están preparados para aprovechar al máximo su experiencia en el colegio.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “La tarea que el colegio tiene que cumplir es de por sí ardua. No es práctico esperar que el colegio realice la tarea adicional de ayudar a los estudiantes con conocimientos que debieron haber aprendido antes de llegar al colegio.”

¿El enfoque o alternativa elegido tendrá un impacto significativo en los estudiantes que tienen mayor dificultad en la escuela? En otras palabras, ¿nos ayudará a cerrar las brechas que existen entre el nivel de desempeño de unos y de otros? ¿Por qué?

¿Cuál ha sido el resultado de tomar esta alternativa en nuestro colegio comunitario actualmente? ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas y debilidades del colegio en este enfoque?

¿Está faltando algo en esta alternativa que sea absolutamente indispensable para lograr que los estudiantes sobresalgan?
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Enfoque 2: Concentrar esfuerzos en ayudar a los estudiantes a enfrentar las presiones que enfrentan en sus vidas

Normalmente, la vida de los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios es bastante compleja. La mayoría tiene un empleo, muchos tienen hijos y solamente muy pocos tienen dinero suficiente. Estas presiones les dificultan mantener la atención necesaria en los estudios para alcanzar sus metas.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

- Ofrecer programas de becas y servicio de cuidado de niños para ayudar a los estudiantes en condiciones económicas limitadas.
- Promover que sus empleadores permitan horarios de trabajo flexibles para quienes quieren estudiar.
- Dar asesoría y acompañamiento a los estudiantes que lo necesiten para manejar sus problemas personales.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Al ayudar a los estudiantes a manejar las presiones que enfrentan en su vida personal y que pueden distraerlos de sus estudios podemos aumentar sus probabilidades de éxito.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “Los estudiantes de colegio son adultos, por lo que deben de tomar responsabilidad de sus vidas, sin importar lo complicadas que son. El colegio debe de concentrarse nada más en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.”

PREGUNTAS DE SONDEO PARA EL MODERADOR (OPCIONALES)

¿El enfoque o alternativa elegido tendrá un impacto significativo en los estudiantes que tienen mayor dificultad en la escuela? En otras palabras, ¿nos ayudará a cerrar las brechas que existen entre el nivel de desempeño de unos y de otros? ¿Por qué?

¿Cuál ha sido el resultado de tomar esta alternativa en nuestro colegio comunitario actualmente? ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas y debilidades del colegio en este enfoque?

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Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Una conversación comunitaria para ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito

Enfoque 3: Concentrar esfuerzos en lograr que el proceso de aprendizaje sea una experiencia rigurosa y enriquecedora

Lo más importante que tenemos a nuestro alcance es ofrecer a nuestros estudiantes una educación de calidad; una experiencia enriquecedora que los motive a superarse y que a la vez les proporcione los conocimientos y habilidades necesarios para alcanzar sus metas educativas y profesionales. Si logramos eso, podremos ayudar a cada estudiante motivado a sobresalir.

Por eso, debemos hacer cosas como:

- Elevar expectativas y estándares académicos.
- Capacitar a los profesores en el uso de técnicas efectivas de enseñanza, incluyendo aquéllas que permiten ayudar especialmente a los estudiantes con desempeño más bajo.
- Invertir en tecnología avanzada.

A quienes les gusta este enfoque sostienen que, “Mantener altas expectativas académicas con respecto de los estudiantes y ofrecerles una experiencia rigurosa y enriquecedora son la clave para que los estudiantes tengan un buen aprovechamiento educativo.”

Pero otros sostienen que, “Los colegios comunitarios dan servicio a estudiantes de todo tipo, y no debemos suponer que todos necesitan o quieren una experiencia académica igualmente rigurosa. Algunos tienen objetivos más prácticos e inmediatos.”

PREGUNTAS DE SONDEO PARA EL MODERADOR (OPCIONALES)

¿El enfoque o alternativa elegido tendrá un impacto significativo en los estudiantes que tienen mayor dificultad en la escuela? En otras palabras, ¿nos ayudará a cerrar las brechas que existen entre el nivel de desempeño de unos y de otros? ¿Por qué?

¿Cuál ha sido el resultado de tomar esta alternativa en nuestro colegio comunitario actualmente? ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas y debilidades del colegio en este enfoque?

¿Está faltando algo en esta alternativa que sea absolutamente indispensable para lograr que los estudiantes sobresalgan?
E. Inicio del debate

Después del video, comience explicándole a las personas que lo que recién han escuchado son tres planteamientos diferentes sobre la manera en que se puede ayudar a los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito y que para empezar, les va a preguntar cuál de esos planteamientos es el que más se approxima al criterio de ellos. Pidanle que levanten las manos:

“¿Cuántos se sienten más inclinados por el Planteamiento 1?”

“¿Cuántos se sienten más inclinados por el Planteamiento 2?”

“¿Cuántos se sienten más inclinados por el Planteamiento 3?”

Luego, empiece preguntándoles por qué se inclinaron de una manera u otra. De ese modo, usted ya está listo y las cosas están en marcha. ASEGÚRESE DE EMPEZAR CON LOS QUE NO SON MAESTROS (UN PADRE O DOS, UN ESTUDIANTE, UN EMPLEADOR) Y LUEGO TRAIGA LAS VOCES DE UNO O MÁS EDUCADORES.

Nuestro real objetivo en ese momento es hacer que las personas del grupo empiecen a pensar y a conversar entre sí mismas. Si las personas solamente hablan con usted en calidad de moderador y no entre sí mismas, puede resultarle útil que conecte los puntos opuestos para que puedan reaccionar entre sí mismas un poco. Por ejemplo, puede invitar a un proponente del Planteamiento 1 a que responda a un comentario hecho por un campeón del Planteamiento 3. De ese modo, los integrantes del grupo se harán de la idea de que está bien reaccionar directamente a los comentarios de otros.
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Hora: ________ hasta________
Resumen intermedio (10 minutos)

F. Resumen intermedio

Después de la fase “Choicework” de su conversación, tómese unos 10 minutos para trabajar con el grupo acerca de las tres preguntas resumen que se presentan a continuación, preparadas para esta primera fase del debate.

ANOTADOR: Si todavía no lo ha hecho, monte tres páginas del rotafolio caratuladas “De interés mutuo”, “Inquietudes/desacuerdos” y “Cuestiones pendientes”. (Recomendamos que se monten al principio para ahorrar tiempo y también porque pueden ser de utilidad durante el curso del debate.)

Explíquele al grupo que va a cubrir tres tópicos en forma de resumen dentro de un tiempo limitado y pídale a todos que se concentren. Empiece con la pregunta número uno, aunque podrá saltar de una a otra a medida que la conversación se desarrolla.

- En nuestra conversación de hoy, ¿hemos encontrado alguna causa en común? ¿En qué estamos de acuerdo o qué tenemos en común?
- ¿Cuáles fueron las cosas que nos inquietaron o sobre las cuales no estuvimos de acuerdo, cosas sobre las cuales debamos continuar conversando para combatir nuestras diferencias y poder seguir adelante?
- ¿Cuáles son las cuestiones pendientes a las que es necesario prestarle mayor atención? ¿Hay tópicos respecto de los cuales necesitamos obtener mayor información?
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Recomendaciones para el manejo del resumen intermedio

- **IMPORTANTE**: Brevemente, “procese” cada una de las sugerencias hechas por un miembro del grupo a fin de asegurarse de que la mayoría de las personas se sienten cómodas en que se las anote en una de las hojas del rotafolio. Por ejemplo, podrá preguntar, “¿Están todos de acuerdo de que ésa era un área de interés mutuo?” antes de colocarla en la hoja. Si el asunto no puede ser resuelto rápidamente, puede llegar a ser una cuestión sobre la cual se necesita continuar conversando para después colocarla en el cuadro correspondiente a “Preguntas/Inquietudes”.

- Es importante en esta etapa no animar a las personas que presenten materiales nuevos, ya que se trata de resumir la conversación anterior, no empezar una nueva.

- Este es el momento en que podrá introducir sus propias observaciones, como así también podrá hacerlo el anotador. Por ejemplo, si al grupo le escapó algún punto de desacuerdo que usted recuerda claramente, podrá decir “Me parece recordar que hubo desacuerdo con respecto a ________. ¿Es así o no?”

- No es necesario que la gente esté de acuerdo en un 100% para poder anotar algo en la categoría de “Interés Mutuo”, únicamente que la mayoría esté de acuerdo. Los puntos de vista de la minoría por lo general se pueden anotar en la lista de “Preguntas Pendientes”.

Recomendación

- El objetivo es el de generar ideas de acción y aclarar aquellas que parecen ser las de mayor utilidad para el grupo y posiblemente resultar fructíferas en el futuro.

- Empiece con los que no son maestros.

- Pida a las personas que viertan sus ideas y ábralas para que se converse sobre ellas preguntándole a otros lo que piensan.
Segunda Parte: Del diálogo a la acción

Hora: _________ hasta_________
Intercambio de ideas para acción y colaboración (30 minutos)

G. Intercambio de ideas para acción y colaboración

Después del resumen intermedio, deberá hacer la transición a la Segunda Parte, que se trata de Ideas para acción y colaboración para vencer obstáculos y ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito.

Explique lo siguiente:

“Hasta ahora, hemos hablado de las diferentes formas en que podemos contribuir para que los estudiantes tengan éxito. Ahora, nos gustaría que terminen el debate pensando adónde deberíamos ir desde aquí en adelante. Para ello, nos gustaría que aborden la siguiente pregunta:

“¿Cómo puede nuestra universidad y nuestra comunidad contribuir mejor en conjunto para cerrar las brechas de realización y hacer que los estudiantes tengan éxito?”

ANOTADOR: Empiece una hoja nueva en el rotafolio y escriba el título de esta sección en la parte superior.

Hora: _________ hasta_________
Ideas para acción, por orden de prioridad (10 minutos)

H. Ideas para acción, por orden de prioridad

Primero, dígale al grupo que le gustaría que cada persona elija las tres ideas que más le agradan. Dele al grupo alrededor de un minuto para que valore la lista, luego pídale a cada persona que escriba el número correspondiente a sus tres ideas favoritas. (Si alguien tiene solamente una o dos ideas favoritas, eso es suficiente.)

Segundo, pídale a los participantes que se acerquen al rotafolio y coloquen una etiqueta engomada al lado de cada una de las tres ideas que más le agradan. (Como moderador, tendrá que tener a su disposición una hoja de etiquetas engomadas para dar a los participantes.) Note que le es más fácil a las personas expresar sus propias preferencias sin la presión de los otros miembros del grupo si hace que los participantes marquen sus ideas favoritas simultáneamente.

Tercero, después de que todos los participantes hayan colocado estrellas al lado de sus ideas favoritas, elija las tres que tengan más estrellas como el consenso inicial del grupo. Éstas serán las prioridades a ser informadas en la sesión plenaria de cierre, junto con las ideas correspondientes a los próximos pasos.
Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Una conversación comunitaria para ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito

Hora: _________ hasta_________
Identificación de los próximos pasos a seguir (10 minutos)

1. Identificación de los próximos pasos a seguir

Durante el curso de los 5 a 10 minutos finales, trabaje con el grupo sobre el tema de los próximos pasos a seguir, o bien “¿Cómo podríamos darle seguimiento a la conversación de hoy?” Dígales que esta sección final será organizada alrededor de dos preguntas: una, sobre lo que las personas pueden hacer para dar seguimiento al debate; y otra, sobre la forma en que el proceso de la Conversación Comunitaria en su totalidad, deberá continuar.

NOTA: Si el período de tiempo que le queda es demasiado corto, omita la primera pregunta y utilice solamente la segunda.
(Anotador: Ponga el rotafolio a la vista.)

1. ¿HAY ALGO QUE USTEDES, COMO PERSONAS, PODRÍAN HACER, O HACER DE UNA MANERA DIFERENTE COMO RESULTADO DE LA CONVERSACIÓN QUE MANTUVIMOS HOY?

2. ¿QUÉ LES AGRADARÍA VER QUE OCURRA PARA DAR SEGUIMIENTO A LA CONVERSACIÓN DE HOY?

Dirija esta parte del debate con las personas sentadas en un círculo alrededor suyo. Vaya alrededor del círculo y pídale a cada participante del grupo que comparta su ideas cuando le toca el turno. Si es necesario, podrá estimularlos para que piensen acerca de la pregunta número dos, preguntándoles lo siguiente:

» ¿Hay algún aspecto en particular del tema tratado en el día de hoy sobre el cual necesitamos volver a conversar juntos y al que le debemos dedicar más tiempo? (De ser así, ¿cuál es?)

» ¿Hay otros temas que deberíamos abordar, además de los que cubrimos hoy?

» ¿Cómo podríamos incluir a más personas en el debate? ¿Cuál sería una buena idea?

» (Suponiendo que éste es el caso): En la última parte de la conversación, hubo varias ideas estratégicas de interés mutuo. ¿Cómo podríamos usarlas?
Guía Para Moderadores y Anotadores de Debates

El éxito es lo que cuenta: Una conversación comunitaria para ayudar a todos los estudiantes universitarios de la comunidad a que tengan éxito

Una vez concluida la conversación, pídale a los participantes que llenen la encuesta que se encuentra en sus paquetes.

Pídale a los participantes que llenen la encuesta antes de volver a reunirse con el grupo grande y que se las entreguen a usted. Sirvase devolver todas las encuestas llenas que haya recogido a los organizadores de la Conversación Comunitaria.

Asimismo, asegúrese de recordarle a la gente que el plenario final del grupo grande es muy importante.

Que ahí es donde todos tendrán la oportunidad de enterarse de lo que opinan los otros grupos y conversar, como grupo grande, sobre la mejor forma de dar seguimiento a la Conversación Comunitaria de ese día.

Cuando la gente se haya ido para reunirse con el grupo grande, trabaje junto con su anotador para poner las notas en orden y usarlas en la disertación de recapitulación, la cual cubrirá las tres prioridades principales del grupo durante la segunda parte del debate e ideas para los próximos pasos a seguir.
Horario de Trabajo del Moderador

60 minutos  Primera Parte: Conversación general

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Orientación, presentaciones, normas básicas (10 minutos)

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Presentación del video “Choicework” y debate (40 minutos)

**Planteamiento No. 1:** Asegurarse de que los jóvenes están listos para estudiar a nivel universitario

**Planteamiento No. 2:** Ayudar a los estudiantes para que puedan encarar las presiones cotidianas

**Planteamiento No. 3:** Asegurarse de que a los jóvenes les interesa ir a la universidad

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Resumen intermedio (10 minutos)
Intereses mutuos
Inquietudes o desacuerdos
Cuestiones pendientes

50 minutos  Segunda Parte: Del diálogo a la acción

¿Cómo puede nuestra universidad y nuestra comunidad contribuir mejor en conjunto para cerrar las brechas de realización y hacer que los estudiantes tengan éxito?

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Intercambio de ideas para acción y colaboración (30 minutos)

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Ideas para acción, por orden de prioridad (10 minutos)

Hora: ______ hasta_______
Identificación de los próximos pasos a seguir (10 minutos)
Informe correspondiente a “Desde el diálogo a la acción”

Tres prioridades principales:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Próximos pasos a seguir:

Notas adicionales:
El éxito es lo que cuenta: Diálogo con las comunidades para ayudar a los estudiantes de colegios comunitarios a sobresalir

Lunes 5 de mayo de
5:30 a 9 p.m.
Cena incluida — Se requiere que confirme su asistencia. El servicio de cuidado infantil estará disponible por una tarifa muy económica.

Kansas City, Kan., Community College, Jewell Bldg.
7250 State Avenue
Kansas City, Kan., 66112

usted está invitado
a una conversación de la comunidad del condado de Wyandotte

¿NUESTROS HIJOS ESTARÁN PREPARADOS PARA LAS CARRERAS DEL SIGLO XXI?
Asegurándonos de que todos los estudiantes obtengan las habilidades que necesitan para ser exitosos

¿SABÍA QUE…?
Muchos de los trabajos nuevos mejor pagados y más interesantes requieren habilidades avanzadas en matemáticas y ciencia. Los empleadores locales afirman que constantemente tienen que contratar personal fuera de nuestra región porque no contamos con suficientes adultos jóvenes preparados luego de haberse graduado para tener éxito en estos campos.

ACOMPÁÑENOS PARA HABLAR DE:
1. lo que se está haciendo ahora para mejorar los logros de los estudiantes en matemáticas, ingeniería, ciencia y tecnología;
2. lo que todavía se necesita hacer para mejorar la educación de nuestros niños y las calificaciones de las pruebas; y
3. cómo los padres, estudiantes, educadores, empleadores y otros líderes de la comunidad en el condado de Wyandotte pueden trabajar juntos para mejorar las oportunidades de los jóvenes y apoyar el crecimiento económico en nuestra región.

PARA PARTICIPAR, CONFIRME SU ASISTENCIA A:
El Centro Inc., Sandra Cintora: (913) 677-0177

Invitación de la muestra se adjunta como:
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