

Building Shared Commitment and Action: Planning the Dialogues

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Goals for this session

- Take a dialogue "census"
- Discuss the role of dialogues in the sequence of Core Commitments activities
- Share as a group some tips, hints, strategies for success

Broad outcomes of the dialogues

- Raise campus awareness
- Create a learning perspective, including honestly addressing data
- Model respectful communication
- Reflect campus context
- Expand campus capacity
- Raise additional questions and issues
- Point to additional types of assessment (e.g., developmental) to help measure progress, success

Three-phase sequence of activities for Core Commitments



Phase 1: Engage with the big ideas

Spring-Early Fall 2007 (pre-inventory)

- Publicize project
- Share & discuss the Core Commitments guiding philosophy
- Share and discuss the five dimensions with constituents (dialogues serve as learning opportunities in their own right)
- Build a shared vocabulary and shared commitment to project goals
- Learn which dimensions resonate most with constituents, which resonate least

Phase 2: Engage with the evidence

Late Fall 2007-Early Spring 2008 (post-inventory)

- Discuss instances of congruence and dissonance within and among constituent groups
- Examine where there is C/D and for whom
- Probe reasons why C/D might be occurring
- Consider disaggregating data further (e.g., by major, unit, department, gender, race/ethnicity) to provide a more robust picture of responses within and across groups
- Record new questions that grow out of the dialogues; use them as the basis for further data collection/investigation

Phase 3: Engage with the efforts

Late Spring-Fall 2008 (various project activities)

- What will be different in terms of outcomes, given the new efforts? How will you define and measure success?
- Do the efforts have sufficient “reach” and depth (or a plan for scale-up and for a developmental trajectory)?
- Consider how to ensure coherence between Core Commitments efforts and other initiatives on campus, as well as linkages between CC efforts and mission, strategic planning, budgeting, etc.
- Learn where pockets of success/promising practices may exist
- Learn who else might serve as “local” experts

Strategies for success

PREPARATION

- Engage subset of constituents in planning
- Consider cross-constituent *and* constituent-specific versions
- Move beyond positional leaders when recruiting participants
- Disseminate materials/information in advance
- Consider handouts so participants can take away main points
- Consider using already-existing gatherings for some of the dialogues

Strategies for success

PREPARATION

- Recruit facilitators who are responsive to group dynamics and differences with regard to race/ethnicity, gender, position on campus, etc., and who can model taking seriously the perspectives of others
- Tap facilitators trained in group process, dialogue, conflict resolution, etc.; also consider a train-the trainers model
- Inside the group or outside the group?
- Co-facilitators?

Strategies for success

ACTION

- Set ground rules for discussion
- Balance attention to individuals and to group
- Recognize that not everyone is comfortable contributing in a large group, esp. depending on who else is in the room
- Have several individuals serve as note-takers and observers
- Use data to create a "common narrative" for discussion

Strategies for success

ACTION

- Make note of “lone” perspectives
- Minimize the impact of “roadblock” resisters, but also recognize that not all resistance is bad
- Encourage participants to take the concepts/content back to their home units/departments for further discussion.

Strategies for success

REFLECTION

- Team members and facilitators discuss what worked and what did not work
- Could include a subset of participants in this discussion
- Consider follow-up conversations if key groups did not have sufficient presence
- Make note of questions that were not answered or new ones that were generated in the process
- Provide a channel through which participants can submit feedback following the dialogue