UNIVERSITY of DAYTON

Fitz Center for Leadership in Community

Building and Sustaining A Community Partnership

Why Partner for Community Engagement?

- Faculty aspirations:
    - Creating a meaningful experience for students
    - Finding satisfaction in professionally contributing to your own community
    - Addressing local concerns and problems

"The service makes the students better learners and makes me a better teacher."

-UD Faculty Member

- Community Partner aspirations:
    - Influence voters, future professionals and donors, and possible future employees
    - More people working on public problem solving
    - Expanding capacity of organization

- TRANSFORMATION!

Topics

1. Collaboration and Partnership
2. Characteristics of Successful Partnerships
3. Standards and Principles
4. Developing a Partnership
5. Challenges
6. Sustaining Partnerships
7. Resources

Collaboration ---- Partnership

- **Collaboration:**
  - Cooperative arrangement in which two or more partices work jointly together toward a common goal

- **Partnership:**
  - A sustained collaboration between institutions of higher education and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources. With reciprocity and trust as guiding values, partners share a vision, resources, and power as they work together on common goals.

Aims of a Campus-Community Partnership:

- Address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good;

- Enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity;

- Enhance curriculum, teaching and learning;

- Prepare educated, engaged citizens;

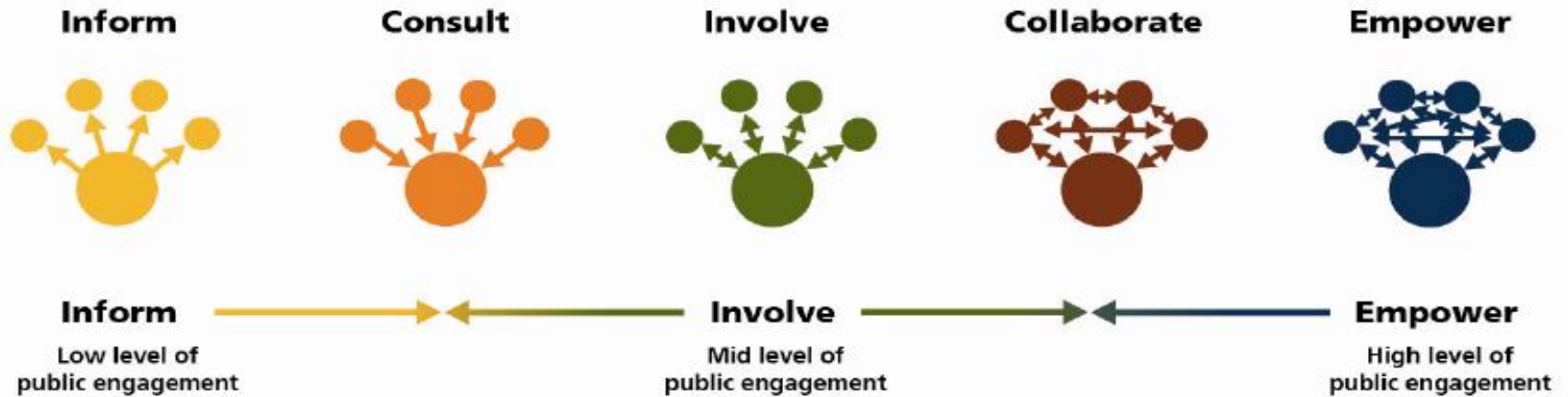- Strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility.

  - Excerpted from: Carnegie's Community Engagement Classification definition

Definition: Community Engagement

- CE describes activities that are undertaken **with community** members.

- In **reciprocal partnerships**, there are **collaborative community-campus definitions** of problems, solutions, and measures of success.

- CE requires processes in which academics **recognize, respect, and value** the knowledge, perspectives, and resources of community partners.

- Processes are **designed to serve a public purpose, building the capacity** of individuals, groups, and organizations involved to understand and collaboratively address issues of public concern.

+ Community Engagement Continuum

Inform — Low level of public engagement
Involve — Mid level of public engagement
Empower — High level of public engagement

Transactional — "giving back" through community investment

Transitional — "building bridges" through two-way communication

Transformational — "changing society" through deep interactions with strategic community partners

Broad ← Level of Engagement → Deep

Technocratic
Doing "for"

Democratic
Doing "With"

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships

- Dedicated Leadership with Balanced Power
  - Many levels of organization

- Shared Vision, Values, Goals, and Accountability
  - Clear, measurable, and realistic

- Clearly Defined Roles Based on Assets
  - Plan to use strengths of both organizations

- Sustainability and Adaptive Capacity
  - Teams instead of individuals; growth mindset instead of fixed

- Shared and Sufficient Resources
  - Staff, time, funds, materials, skill

- Focused on Addressing Genuine Community Concerns

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships

- 3C's:
  - Commitment
  - Communication
  - Compatibility

- Constructive conversations

- Asset and strengths focused while also addressing needs and building capacity

- Shared success, rewards, recognitions

- Level playing field

Effective Partnerships for Education

- Promote Learning
  - Community priorities and research or course outcomes are well aligned
  - Community stakeholders are willing collaborators and communicators
  - Able to mentor and/or co-educate students
  - Provides safe learning environment

Partnership Principles

- Mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment

- Equitable involvement of all partners in all aspects of the process, openness

- Valuing of diverse cultures, perspectives, and expertise

- Reciprocity
  - Flow of knowledge, information, and benefits in both directions.
  - Shared resources, decision making, and leadership.

- Participatory processes and consensus decision making

- Blending of individual goals, needs, assets and strategies into common goals and outcomes.

Community Partners Desire...

- **Collaborating with you**
  - open and frequent communication
  - Sharing in decision making
  - Agreeing on vision, mission, outcomes, roles, and accountability

- **Being co-educators and co-learners**
  - Coming to classroom, giving orientations, facilitating reflections
  - Wisdom, expertise, and perspective respected and acknowledged
  - Not viewing community as a "lab," a place to give expertise, or people to "save"

- **Long term relationships**
  - But also working together to identify short term projects

- **Mutual benefit**
  - Sharing resources, avoiding undue burden
  - Building capacity for each other's needs and assets

Developing Partnerships – Adding The Glue

- "The adhesive substance of a partnership that promotes and sustains trust, communication, connectedness, and meaningful work efforts and products. Glue ranges from building sweat equity to establishing credibility, to being able to translate and navigate between the community and academic realms. Glue resonates in the process, infrastructure, policies and procedures that honor open communication, fairness, trust, and meaningful planning processes that ensure each partner is respected and heard."   -CCPH

Generating the "Glue"

- "What kinds of structures, policies, processes, and people constitute glue for your partnership?

- What are some strategies you would want to implement for your partnership that would help to generate glue? What are the potential challenges to implementing these strategies?

- What are some of the policies and procedures you would want to adopt (or revise) and adhere to for your partnership that would help to generate glue?"   -CCPH

Development of a Good Faith Partnership Agreement

- Sets operating norms

- Enhances trust

- Helps facilitate equity

- Provides guidance on how all work together

- Outlines strategies for decision making and conflict resolution

- Establishes principles and processes

- Ensures all are involved

Addressing Expectations of Different Partners

- **Community partners may be motivated by the potential to:**
  - Access resources, advocate for policy change, build bridges across socio-cultural/political barriers, create jobs, address inequities and injustices, identify gaps through comparison, improve services, protect the community, solve a problem

- **Institutional partners may be motivated by the potential to:**
  - Attract and support students, advance careers, address inequities and injustices, formulate policy, generate knowledge, obtain institutional funding, raise the visibility of the institution

Challenges

- What challenges might the cultural differences and expectation differences create?

- Other Challenges:
  - Lack of time and resources
  - Decisions made behind "closed doors"
  - Grants require community but money goes to institution
  - Not involving community in all aspects of partnership (project planning, evaluating, assessing, educating, etc.)
  - Faculty, staff, and students are not culturally competent
  - No planning for sustainability
  - Community lacks infrastructure
  - Maintaining energy and morale

Expect the Unexpected

- Remember cultural differences:
  - Non-profit =
    - mission driven, "doing more with less", small environment, credibility earned as a result of outcomes, reality, immediate needs, experiential and context knowledge valued

  - University =
    - discipline driven, greater resources, large/bureaucratic environment (slower), credibility due to perception and credentials, idealism, expert knowledge valued

Expect the Unexpected

- Investigate any miscommunication
    - Goal misalignment?   Expectations not clearly understood and shared?
    - Break down in communication between stakeholders? Change of personnel?

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

- Communication and collaboration

- Ask for feedback

- Provide recognition

- Develop further collaborations – deepen engagement

- Follow through on their requests for assistance

  - Letters of support on grants

  - Helping them to identify staff members

- Open dialogue about needs

  - Dialogue to make sure both needs are still being met through the partnership

- Plan ahead and discuss changes and continuances

Lessons Learned

- Create a partnership culture
  - Everyone shares credit
  - The work is promoted by all to each others' work/institutional setting
  - The environment is open: new members welcomed to partnership (individual/institutional)
  - Trust is well established
  - Learning and educating roles are shared

CONCLUSION

- Commitment, compatibility, and COMMUNICATION are key!
- Partnerships, like any relationship, need to be nurtured
- Start small and build together
- Develop "interdependent partnerships"
  - accomplish end results that individuals or individual institutions could not achieve on their own
  - organize/match expertise to produce a sum that is greater than its parts
- Recruit people who are committed to the project and the process
- Celebrate successes

Questions? More Information?

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