



Partnership Development Training Module

PROJECT FUNDED BY

COLLEGE  SPARK

WASHINGTON
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SECTION 1: Partnership Development
Module Curriculum Information Sheet for Participants

Intended Audience

AmeriCorps Members (VISTA AmeriCorps Members, SIS AmeriCorps Members, Retention Project AmeriCorps Members) or Student Leaders

Learning Objectives

The training participants will:

- Understand the continuum from Communication to Collaboration.
- Understand recognized characteristics of effective campus-community partnerships.
- Reflect on one partnership in which they are currently engaged to consider whether the partnership is as effective as they currently view it.
- Apply their knowledge of effective campus-community partnerships by conducting a partnership strengthening interview.

Curriculum Outline

Participants are guided to work through the curriculum and materials in this order:

1. Read: What is Partnership and Why is it Important
2. Read Text: Achieving the Promise of Authentic Community Higher Education Partnerships: Community Partners Speak Out!~ Wingspread Conference Report 2006
3. Review the Handout: Continuum from Communication to Collaboration
4. Engage in the Reflection Activity
5. Complete Praxis Activity
6. Review the Reflection Activity: Identify ways to strengthen partnerships
7. Complete the module assessment/evaluation.

Definitions

Praxis: "Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted or practiced, embodied and/or realized. It is a practical and applied knowledge to one's actions."

~[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praxis_\(process\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praxis_(process)), May 13, 2010.

Reflection: Reflection is an active process of discovery, meaning-making and connection between what is being learned and how the knowledge or skill is relevant to the learner on any number of levels—including professional, personal or societal. Reflection can be done in any number of ways—thinking, speaking, writing, visual representation, creative movement or other artistic expressions. Reflection relies on critical thinking to identify, analyze and synthesize the connections made during any reflective activity.

SECTION 2: What is Partnership and Why is it Important?

What is Partnership?

Partnership is the term used in the field of civic engagement to talk about the existing or intended relationships between individual people and entities pooling or sharing resources, knowledge and other assets to achieve one or more goals that are mutually beneficial.

In higher education, the term **campus-community partnership** is often used to discuss the concept we are exploring in this training module.

The connotation of these terms is that every person and/entity contributes assets and resources and receives benefit for their participation. The concept of **reciprocity** is often discussed. Reciprocity being that there is an exchange (goods/labor/services/resources/information) occurring in the relationship. The hope in the civic engagement realm is that this exchange is **mutually positive**. It is, however, important to note that negative responses and experiences within partnerships occur as well. As individuals working to **develop partnerships** with community entities, it is the goal to minimize the behaviors and risks that can lead to negative exchange and impact.

Furthermore, there exists the underlying intent in the higher education civic engagement field that partnerships expect to produce outcomes that **strengthen society**. The public purpose of higher education is fulfilled when students learn and apply civic skills that will contribute to the vitality of our democracy for the present and future. The strengthening of society can take many forms. It may be that citizens participating in the partnership have developed a stronger sense of community with one another. It may be that the effort put forth by the partnership resulted in addressing a problem or filling a need within a segment of a community. A partnership can add to a city, state, or nationwide effort to make significant social change. The Retention Project, hosted by Washington Campus Compact, is an example of a statewide effort aiming to increase academic success and college access and to lower the high school drop-out rates across the state for low-income and at-risk populations.

Example of a basic partnership:

Great City recently took ownership of a small, unkempt lot in a low-to-mid income, residential neighborhood. The once private lot was owned by a resident whose home burned down. For 10 years the lot has sat vacant with property taxes unpaid. Recently, the lot was turned over to the city through legal and financial proceedings. Many people in the neighborhood feel the lot is an eye-sore and has become a loitering spot for teens and others who are conducting less than positive activities in the area.

The city government of Great City and the people of the neighborhood, through the neighborhood association and the Chamber of Commerce have formed a partnership to revitalize the lot as a neighborhood park that would include a building where students will come to spend time after-school working on homework and receiving tutoring and mentoring.

Examples Campus-Community Partnerships (using the same scenario above):

As the partners (city officials, neighborhood association members and local businesses) have started planning the new park and how the work will get done on the lot, they've decided it would be important to document the process from start to finish—perhaps even creating a public display that would stay at the park about how it came into being.

Great City's city manager contacts the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning at Great City Community College to ask if there is a way for college faculty and students to take an on-going part in the existing partnership.

After communication and networking, it is decided that the Community Colleges' journalism teacher will take this on as a service-learning project. Students will research the history of the property (the previous owners, the fire that left the property vacant, the family who was unable to care for the property) in order to learn investigative journalism. Other students, to learn basic reporting, will follow the development of the current action by attending and reporting on neighborhood association meetings, city council meetings, and Chamber of Commerce activities that include actions relevant to the park's development. Other students studying visual journalism will document the demolition and construction project using digital media (cameras, videotape, and on-line communication strategies). Together the students will produce a written and visual account and timeline for the new park project.

Additionally, after hearing about the project, sociology, English, and math faculty have contacted the Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning about how they might form partnerships in the future about having their students participate in tutoring and mentoring at the new afterschool drop-in facility.

Why Partnership is Important

Perspective and Ownership: Partnership allows for many people to have a voice in addressing issues and creating positive change. As multiple perspectives are shared, a fuller understanding of the needs, assets, strategies, and abilities needed or available to address an issue are understood. No person or entity appreciates having a solution forced on them by others outside their experience and perspective--especially without the ability to suggest the best or most culturally appropriate way to approach the situation. Partnership shows respect and requires open dialog that can allow for authentic understanding and meaningful solutions to arise. At the least, involvement in a partnership usually leads to increased awareness of issues, needs, strategies, and solutions. At best, life-long civic conscientiousness and citizen responsibility to engage in identifying and solving community issues is developed.

Access and Resources: Partnership is critical to leveraging and mobilizing necessary resources to achieve any complex goal. It is a rare instance when any one person or entity has access to all the needed information, knowledge, organizational systems, space, social and cultural competency, skill,

experience, financial or other physical supports. Convening people or entities that bring to the partnership the identified and needed resources allows for partnership to prosper and succeed.

Shared Liability: In today's society of rules, regulations, laws, risk management, insurance and litigation it is important for entities to create systems, programs and activities that consider how to protect the people and physical assets of those involved in any endeavor. Partnerships allow for these concerns to be addressed, negotiated and for partners to bear appropriate levels of legal liability for the endeavors of the partnership.

Developing Partnerships:

Partnerships don't just happen. Significant amounts of communication, networking, planning and other forms of initial interaction must occur to develop understanding and trust as you move toward establishing **authentic partnership**. It is inappropriate to simply call any entity you interact with a partner. A partnership is developed mutually and is best when there is formal agreement that a partnership has been put into place.

Developing a partnership requires clear terms and open communication. It is best if each partner explicitly and clearly states how they understand their needs, goals, assets and roles in the partnership. Evidence is important that each entity or individual can clearly articulate why they are part of the partnership, how they expect to benefit, what, how and when they are expected to contribute, and when they expect to see some sort of result from the partnership. One of the most common ways to outline a formal partnership is in a document called a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**. An MOU simply states the names and contact information of the partners, their goals and roles. It may include a timeline such as start dates, end dates, or a renewal period. While not all partnerships require something as formal as an MOU, utilizing a written communication strategy that can be utilized to address accountability or solve confusions or conflicts can be helpful as you work to develop understanding, trust and a working relationship that is effective and viable for the long-term.

Being a good partner—reliable, organized, trust-worthy, invested and competent—is invaluable in developing partnerships. If it is your role to develop partnerships, it is critical that you have good follow-through, clear communication skills, and can show the existing or potential partner that you value and respect their time, energy, effort, and resources. Remember that every moment that a partner spends attending to or acting on behalf of the partnership and listening to or sharing with you about the partnership is a moment that they are choosing to not invest elsewhere. There are many options for how an entity or individual can spend their time. Make sure you are taking an active role in making it easy for others to invest in you, your program, and your institution as a partner.

SECTION 3: A Continuum from Communication to Collaboration in Effective Campus-Community Engagement Interactions

Type I Interactions

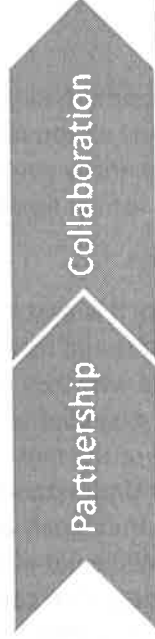


Characteristics of Type I Interactions

Developing Relationship & Setting a Foundation

- Making Interpersonal and Professional Connection
- Understanding Motivation, Assets, Needs, and Goals/Objectives
- Trust-Building
- Less Time Required
- Entities work independently
- The following types of campus-community engagement can take place effectively in this realm
 - Student Volunteerism
 - Practicum, Internship and most forms of Field Study

Type II Interactions



Sustaining Relationship & Building on a Solid Foundation

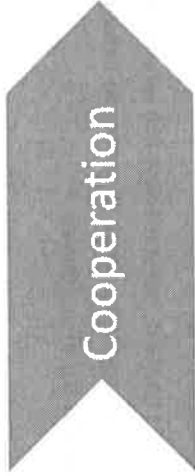
- Must engage in Type I interactions prior to developing effective Type II interactions
- Deepening Interpersonal and Professional Connection
- Respecting and Leveraging Motivation, Assets, Needs, and Goals/Objectives
- Taking Risks based on Trust
- Sharing Power, Praise and Consequences
- More Time Required
- Entities work collaboratively
- The following types of campus-community engagement can take place effectively in this realm
 - Service-Learning
 - Participatory Action Research
 - Scientific Research



- Introductory and initial communications:
- Phone conversations or voice mails
 - E-mail, Post delivered mail
 - Student-delivered written communication (in-class hand-outs/letters of introduction/intent
- More complex exchange of information:
- Phone conversations
 - Two-way e-mail communication
 - Survey or questionnaire inquiry/response
 - Formal or tentative tone and language exists



- Introductory and initial meetings:
- Face Face meetings (usually a series of opportunities—more than one meeting)
 - On-going exchange of information by e-mail, where familiarity in tone, language, and concepts is evident
 - On-going phone discussion
 - Social media networks established and utilized, when appropriate



- Agreement to engage is mutual and positive in nature:
- Students “placed” with organization for general purposes
 - Each entity agrees to certain roles and responsibilities
 - Each entity works fairly independently without much need for shared power or further exchange of knowledge or information

Example: 10 students need to complete 20 hours of service. A local non-profit has many projects where students can help.



In this context, partnerships are when two or more entities agree to work together to achieve mutual benefit for all involved.

Example: Faculty member needs students to learn English writing skills.

Not-for-Profit needs newsletter articles written. Partnership motivates both entities to meet needs through use of assets and achievement of goals.

Effective campus-community partnerships focus on establishing “authentic” partnership.

For more information on how to put each principle into action:

Visit On-Line:

<http://www.ccpbh.info/>

Click on the “authentic partnership” link.

Read:

Achieving the Promise of Authentic Community-Higher Education Partnerships: Community Partners Speak Out! Seattle, WA: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007. **Copyright** © 2007, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

- Authentic partnerships embrace quality processes.
- Authentic partnerships achieve meaningful outcomes.
- Authentic partnerships are transformative at multiple levels.
- Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
- The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
- Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
- Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
- There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments.
- Partnerships can dissolve and need to plan a process for closure.

Collaboration

For the purposes here, collaborations are partnerships that have endured a successful partnership period. Based on trust, partners work to build a shared, longer-term vision and future for mutual engagement.

For example:

A college sociology professor and a college business management professor collaborate on a multi-year student project to decrease homelessness in the community.

A group of three non-profits or governmental agencies work to reduce and eliminate poverty and homelessness.

The professors, their students and the community Agency representatives partner to share resources, decision-making power, and ideas. All entities desire an end to homelessness in their community. All student projects ensure advancement of the community groups' organizational goals and/or the more holistic community goal of eliminating poverty and homelessness.

- Collaborations go beyond partnerships in that the involved entities work toward a shared outcome.
- Healthy, effective collaborations deepen relationship and rely on collaborative process.
- Collaborations welcome new partners who will further strengthen the effort and allow for the outcomes to be achieved.

According to Friend and Cook (1992):

- Collaboration is voluntary.
- Collaboration requires parity between individuals.
- Collaboration is based on mutual goals.
- Collaboration depends on shared responsibility for participation in decision making.
- Individuals who collaborate share their resources.
- Individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes.
- Individuals who collaborate value this interpersonal style.
- Professionals who collaborate trust one another.
- A sense of community evolves from collaboration.

Found at <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/~fulmer/define.htm> 3/15/10

SECTION 4: Effective Partnership Development
A Reflection Activity

1. What is the name of one organization/entity with which you desire to build or maintain a strong community partnership? _____

2. What do you know about this entity's organizational vision, mission, strategic goals, project specific goals, organizational structure, hopes and/or concerns about the partnership?

3. What factors, characteristics, activities, or traits indicate or give physical evidence that this is or could be a strong, effective partnership?

4. How do the entities and representatives share power/decision-making and the benefits or consequences of program outcomes?

5. How many days/weeks/months ago did your last communication with a representative from this community partner occur? _____

6. In your opinion is this an adequate period between communications for effective partnership development to occur? Yes No

7. What barriers exist for more effective communication to occur?

8. How can those barriers be overcome?

9. Who, by name and title, is/are the individual representatives at the community partner's site?

10. What do you know about this/these individual's(s') motivations, assets and needs in working with college students as (mentors volunteers, service-learners, researchers)?

11. What specifically are the **SHARED GOALS/OBJECTIVES** of this partnership?

12. Do you think the partner representative(s) fully agree(s) with your articulation of these shared goals if he/she/they were reading this now?

- Yes, 100 %--it is our official, written statement.
- Yes, generally.
- I don't know.
- No, we would need to have deeper discussion on the question.

13. What are the tasks and behaviors that you or your program could contribute to strengthen a partnership?

14. What risks could you take to improve the partnership?

15. Would your partners agree with your responses to #13 and #14?

- Yes No I don't know

16. What might the partnership site representatives add to the list?

17. What barriers stand in the way of you or the program being able to contribute the items listed in #13 and #14?

18. How can those barriers be overcome?

Before completing the final reflection summary, review the handout: "A continuum from Communication to Collaboration in Effective Campus-Community Engagement Interactions."

Reflection Summary:

After reflecting on the qualities of what makes an effective, authentic, community-campus partnership, what specific commitments can you make to maintain quality or to intentionally design effectiveness into an existing or new partnership?

**SECTION 5: Effective Partnership Development Praxis Activity
Partnership Building or Strengthening Interview**

GOAL

Conduct ONE (1), 30-minute (face-to-face format encouraged) interview with a current or potential community partner (a representative of an organization with which you interact for the purpose of your campus project/goals). Document responses in writing or electronically, if permitted. Discuss responses and strategies for improvement with your supervisor. Prioritize at least ONE behavior you can implement to develop, strengthen, increase or ensure efficiency in the partnership. Provide follow-up communication to your community partner representative/interviewee.

STEPS to Consider:

- 1: Discuss with your supervisor which community organization (school/agency/government department) would be best to interview to determine how you, your program, project, or campus department can BE A BETTER PARTNER or HOW YOU CAN DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP.

There may be many reasons for choosing a first interview partner:

Start with someone with whom you have a good relationship, where trust exists so that you feel secure in getting honest, open feedback that will make what is good only better.

OR Start with someone with whom you have a positive, but less than optimum relationship, where understanding and trust remains to be developed.

OR Start with the organization, school, or entity that you hope to partner with in your current endeavor (mentoring program, service-learning project, other civic engagement opportunity.)

WACC does not recommend completing this praxis with a person, partner, or entity where need for relationship repair exists or where a partnership is experiencing a state of chaos or complex change. Start with an easier conversation that may prepare you to understand where you/your program/project/department have room for growth as a partner and will prepare you to have the harder conversations in the future.

2: Write ten (10) OPEN-ENDED, intentional questions that reflect the characteristics of effective partnership and the nature of your specific work together. Have your supervisor review your question set and provide feedback about the clarity and appropriateness of your questions.

Open-ended questions can be answered in many different ways. Here are some examples:

- What are the primary benefits your organization receives from the partnership with (the college/university program)?
- What would you say are the main challenges or deficits in this partnership?
- What can be done to minimize the challenge or remove the deficits of this partnership?
- What are at least two ways that this partnership can be improved as we move into a new academic year?
- As you consider entering into a partnership with (the college/university program) what are some of the questions, concerns, risks, or issues that you feel must be addressed?
- What assets and what needs do you feel your organization brings to this partnership?
- What assets do you hope (the college/university program) can contribute to the partnership?

Avoid Closed-Ended Questions. This type of question can be answered with one or two words such as “Yes/No.” Closed-Ended questions also elicit a response with a single answer, such as, “Which month is best to begin the program at your school?” Closed-Ended questions are valuable and can be asked during a planning phase—not a relationship/partnership building phase.

At this point, ask questions that help you understand the motivations, needs, assets, aspirations, values and frameworks of your partners.

- 3: Schedule and conduct the interview. Ask permission to take notes or tape-record the session.
- 4: Write a brief written summary report that reflects your understanding of what the partnership needs to improve in effectiveness, authenticity or reciprocity.
- 5: Submit the report to your supervisor and schedule a time to debrief the information together.
- 6: Thank your community partner in writing for his or her time. Share a copy of the written summary report (*AFTER your supervisor has given you feedback on it*) and inform the community partner what change, behavior, or other tangible response they can expect from you/your program based on the conversation.

Example: If further discussion is needed to develop process or procedure: “Based on your input and our review of this information, I will contact you by next Friday to set up a meeting to discuss how to proceed.”