

**Community-Campus Partnership for Tomorrow Planning
July 30, 2008**

Small Group Discussion Session Notes

Session G

Participants:

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Question #1: *How should we define community? What process should we use for selecting the community? What criteria should we use? Should we work in more than one community as a part of the pilot?*

(Discussion comments)

Can we define community as a population, a certain group that cuts across geographical lines? Low-wealth high schools? Can we choose a demographic rather than geographic population? There are pockets of poverty in Tier 3 counties that could be addressed. Low-wealth K-12 schools throughout the state could be chosen, for example, as a pilot project. Demographics are critical—who are we serving? Both the university and the community should know who we are serving? Can we address a statewide problem rather than a specific region? There are also advantages to a place-based approach, for example the ability to address a broad array of interrelated issues within one place.

Regardless of the community chosen, we need a concrete way to think about outcomes.

How we choose a community vs. how a community chooses us. How to identify a community that wants to be a partner? Communities that applied for grants but didn't get them might be candidates. Halifax County for example, didn't get the GEAR UP grant but still needs help. Or we could identify a community that has received a grant in the past that we can sustain. Building a community that can sustain relationships with us, building up their own capacity is key.

If you did pick k-12 graduation rates in one county, for example, every issue would be involved. Pick something that has a bigger demographic that have a bigger stake in solving a problem. Both a place-based and a need-based approach have pros and cons.

Is there a place for addressing a portion of a problem—for example, literacy within a community? Is there space in Orange County—is the whole university involved?

Should we stay out of counties that have UNC campuses, for political and pragmatic reasons? Relative proximity, the ability to get to the site and back in one day is important to the practical aspects of doing research. If we want meaningful engagement it should be at a site within a few hours.

Have we already decided that the community has to be from a Tier 1 county? What about NE Central Durham? The City of Durham is already doing something like this. There are pockets in many of these places that are as bad-off as Tier 1. Should this be re-examined? Also a distance problem, as mentioned above. Students that work on the Durham city project can work at night, for example, and get back home easily. NC State's response also focuses on urban areas.

Can we focus on a number of small projects throughout the state? A community that cuts across geographic lines vs. one place, as mentioned above. We should consider the impacts of a community project on the larger geographical area—small areas of Durham impact the whole city and the region, for example the “gateway” to Durham.

Urban regions along highway corridor should also be considered. Proximity to urban center, resources is a benefit of this approach. We should ask to whom do Tier 1 communities connect? Franklin County as an example, we need to consider transportation patterns and economic relationships. Franklin County developed as result of building infrastructure. Tier 1 could be the target communities, but how can we connect them to adjoining communities, maybe Tier 2 or 3 counties?

We should seek partnerships where we already have a presence.

(Written Comments)

--Region, town, population, region type. Allowing community to choose us? Yes to more than one community if one population cuts across multiple towns.

--Demographics, geography and purpose. EG K-12, Halifax Co, up to college and beyond. Three communities with geographic diversity and purpose that are in significant pockets of poverty (group of Tier 3) and are reasonably reachable (within 1 long day) from UNC-CH and no other UNC system school.

--Socioeconomic, geographic, underserved. We should identify 1-3 communities across the state and work with them on similar focus area.

--Community—a group that has a common bond—geography, interest. Selecting a community should be a mutual decision, the community should express a need and be interested in the partnership. Criteria—level of need, commitment to project.

--How will we choose? How will we be chosen?

Question 2: *What will success look like at the end of our work with a community? What might it look like from the community perspective? What might it look like from the campus perspective?*

(Discussion Comments)

There should be a measurable outcome—whatever we pick, we need a metric. Set a modest goal and a timetable. This tells the community we're not just experimenting, and communities should expect a result. It should be outcomes-focused, and all the partners need to benefit, not just the university.

It is important for students who are involved to receive benefits as well, which might be different than university's benefits. Students involved in the Durham project often come back later to volunteer and remain involved. There are 3 pieces—the students, the school, and the community all benefit.

We need to see what personal and professional relationships can be built. The university can learn from the community. We can't always look at helping the community as the goal, but rather should see success as learning and forming relationships. Teachers, for example, can learn from the community and change how they teach. Communities add credibility to what they already know. They already know what they need, but the university adds credibility.

(Written Comments)

--Outcomes focus. Campus: research, partnerships, identify work. Community: increased economic indicators, education indicators (college-going, test scores, teacher retention)

--Have a measurable outcome; it should increase/decrease (improve). Eg. HS Graduation Rate.

--Community: exposure and access to the campus, rewarding personal and professional relationships, community capacity building, credibility added to their efforts. Campus: enhanced relationships with community, student recruitment and retention, new direction and confidence in teaching.

--Both/all parties benefit. Community: achieves real, measurable results. Campus: is able to put theory into practice, learns how to engage in partnerships, learns new areas to focus on. Ideas for continuing or engaging in other projects.

--Depends on what the community wants.

Question 3: *What are the risks to be avoided in this project? What factors must be present for success?*

(Discussion Comments)

It is key that authentic relationships don't end. The biggest risk is ending relationships. Sustainability is the key. Building and creating professional jobs—grant-writing, research

etc. Create ongoing projects, capacity—put 4 students in the county, for example, that can carry on the work.

Stumbling over each other is a risk, the community gets frustrated by too many people coming at once.

Bringing people in too late is a risk—we want them in right away.

We must manage expectations right away.

What do students bring to projects? While they often begin believing they will give to the less fortunate, in reality they learned more from the community, received more from them than they gave.

We need orientation and community framing in order to obtain access.

Faculty rewards systems have to exist—promotion and tenures. Giving credit is key—including to people that work from the community. Training APPLES workers, for example. Even a framed certificate from UNC might mean a lot. Including them in professional presentations is another important example.

(Written Comments)

--Risks: failure to break down silos, work across administrative lines. Success: Identifying point person in community, also across campuses. Who has expertise? Faculty and Staff rewards.

--Creating too high expectations or abandoning the community after the project. Goal should be building sustainable community partnerships/relationships. Faculty reward systems.

--Risks: bringing in the community too late in the process, not including community in planning process. Success: managing expectations, community-led, faculty reward systems, community rewards, a plan for stability and an exit strategy.

--Risks: campus seen as elite showing less-fortunate the way, community unable to continue project unassisted. Success factors: both/all parties must cooperate, respect, be willing to learn, all parties must see the benefits.

--Easier said than done--#1 is listening.

Question 4: *What process should we consider using to involve members of the community in the partnership?*

(Discussion Comments)

Use existing local networks. Don't reinvent them.

Reach across age groups.

Use existing faculty relationships.

The silo problem—many researchers are working on the same problems even in the same communities and don't even know about each other. We don't need a comprehensive catalogue, but we still have a need to know what we are doing on campus.

It is important to identify a central community member that knows what's happening in the whole community.

Silos happen across campuses as well. Who has expertise around a certain issue, for example, is often not known.

A counter-force to collaborative work is that this kind of work is not always in faculty's interest, for example, the grant seeking process does not favor collaboration.

(Written Comments)

--Existing networks.

--Using existing local networks in schools, government, non-profit and listen to their priorities and resource needs. UNC-CH connections and/or expertise.

--Mobilize a network of experienced community partners. Establish someone who can serve as a bridge between community and campus.

--Planning meetings, research/info development, make sure community members are recognized/included, make sure all ages are included

Question 5: *What process should we use for involving campus partners in this project? How do we involve people in the process of identifying the community's interests? How do we involve people in helping to address community needs once they have been identified?*

(Discussion Comments)

How can we find out who could potentially involved? A variety of databases exist, which have their own problems.

We should talk to Tony Caravano and follow-up on people who came to the UNC Tomorrow meetings, they've already identified themselves as wanting to be involved. Use students and alumni to use existing backgrounds, relationships. Former student leader, Emily Williamson, is head of community college in Burke Co., for example. After we pick our topic, see who has done it.

Outreach—one process that has worked at NC State is to invite anyone interested doing work in a particular city to come to lunch. Find out who those people have been working with and invite them to lunch, etc. This is a slow process, but it sustains relationships, improves on previous work.

Work with functional adjacencies—approach smaller literacy groups, see if there interested in working with the library, for example.

How to involve administrative and staff expertise—not just faculty and students? This kind of work helps them develop professionally. Look at overlooked populations within the campus, not just the directors of units.

Staff driven outreach is key, for example the work done at the Kidney Center. It is important to include this group.

City and County departments have clear understandings of who's doing what, who would be good partners, not necessarily the political heads but rather the staff.

SOG trains local leaders, they have good expertise on what's happening. The Institute for Public Health—they know who's doing what in each county.

We need to pick carefully—communities must be “vetted”. Use these resources to do research.

AHEC is a good resource. Library state networks have “circuit riders” that Go along AHEC stops delivering medical information.

Not a central place, but pockets of expertise. Where can I go as a new professor to get info on a particular area in Durham, for example? County extension + Ahec+SOG, Rural Center, SBTDC, Sheps, Apples,etc.

What is the mechanism to bring all this together? Faculty expertise/research vs. community knowledge. Every group has its own expertise, but we don't put it together geographically.

(Written Comments)

--Database development, open calls/forum

--See who has been seeking partnerships/resources, federal/state resources, unfunded grants, inquiries, or alumni or current student connections, UNC Tomorrow meeting participants.

--Open meetings and open calls, identify key departments that already have an outreach and community based focus, alumni, look at key staff and administrative positions/expertise that have responsibilities to run programs for faculty and more senior staff.

--Meetings, research projects, utilize GA research already done for UNC Tomorrow, students/alumni with connections in community already.

--Depends on how we define/choose/are chosen by the community.

Question 6: *What conditions must be present for you to be actively involved in this project? Community members? Faculty? Staff? Students?*

(Discussion Comments)

Motivation and determination. People have to be educated about what they can do, but people must prioritize time and commitment, they must believe in its possibility. Educate people about what they can do and make this a top priority.

Must be designated as a priority by the top levels, with administrative support. The Chancellor needs to come out and support this.

Use graduate student support, give faculty course release and a graduate assistant. Provide true adequate resources and support, not just expecting people to do this aftertime.

Some Centers and Institutes already have a mandate to do this—capitalize on this rather than piling on other groups.

e-NC Authority is a good resource for physical infrastructure.

This is a Win-Win situation for the University, students, and the community--particularly through leadership funding. If community leadership is not getting paid, it dies out. Leaders need benefits to sustain efforts. This is a common loss in projects. Leadership can get bitter and counterproductive if they don't feel supported.

Support for community-driven grants. How do we help to support them rather than how do they help us? This is a change of direction that will be hard. If you need us, communities ask, why don't you give us money?

Public awareness is needed everywhere. Sharing information.

High administration support must be communicated all the way down, including middle levels of administration.

Administration structure must really support this—tenure reform, for example. There are challenges to this that originate outside of UNC and the state—academic disciplines and standards, for example.

(Written Comments)

--Administration support at highest levels, trust on both sides—campus and community. Faculty rewards, staff rewards, removal of sanctions.

--True adequate support of project, time and or research/teaching assistant to enable better project progress. Eg. Partner with appropriate class (APPLES) and make students part of the project. Project must be University Priority.

--Community must be major decision maker in the process of project design, faculty/staff designated as a priority, time and funding.

--Support from department, relevance to mission, perceived benefits, encouragement from top administration, public awareness

Question 7: *Can you identify similar projects from this campus or from any other organization that might provide useful guidance in developing this project and share the lessons learned? Can you identify other people with relevant experience who might provide helpful guidance?*

(Written Comments)

--Access to Education has many campus researchers, leaders, and interest groups across faculty/staff/students. Carolina Covenant, Robertson Scholars, JKC Advisory Corps, APPLES/CEI course on AMST 57, GEAR UP

Top Two Critical Points:

1) Consider that there are pockets of need in non-Tier 1 counties and that we may need to think beyond communities of place to consider communities of interest across county lines or along corridors.

2) Focus not on campus service to communities but rather on the development of true reciprocal partnerships focused on realistic but imaginative shared goals and with real resources for all participants.