TWO COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND HOW THEY GREW

Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference
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Introductions

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Presentation Overview

- Community of Practice Definition
- How it Started: History, Mission and Goals
- Where We are Now: Successes and Challenges
- Movement Activity
- Small Group Discussion
- Report Out
- Resources and Wrap-Up
What is a Community of Practice?

A **community of practice** is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.
Building a Successful Community of Practice

- Design the community to evolve naturally, to support shifts in focus.
- Create opportunities for open dialog within and with outside perspectives.
- Welcome and allow different levels of participation.
- Develop both public and private community spaces.
- Focus on the value of the community.
- Combine familiarity and excitement.
- Find and nurture a regular rhythm for the community.
How it Started: History, Mission and Goals

**Boundary Spanners**
Engagement staff are profiled as “boundary-spanners,” as they are responsible for the interacting with partners outside of the institution and “community-based problem solvers,” implying that the skills characterizing the work of engagement staff are largely technical and hands on, managing the daily tasks involved with advancing the partnership.

(Weerts & Sandman, 2008, 2010)
Where We are Now:  
Successes and Challenges
Successes

CU Boulder
• Formal support from Office of Outreach & Engagement
• Regular networking and professional development events
• Steering Committee oversees mission and vision, plans direction and strategy
• Variety of topics covered for professional development
• List-serv to keep people connected in-between events
• Process for co-chair succession planning
• 16 events since 2015; hundreds of professionals reached

UW Madison
• Formal support from Morgridge Center for Public Service
• Monthly meetings focused on professional development and community building
• Steering Committee plans regular events and socials
• Variety of topics covered for professional development
• List-serv, Facebook and LinkedIn with more than 350 members regularly utilized to share events and job postings
• One of three sponsors of UW-Madison Community University Partnership Awards
• Active participation in titling and compensation studies
Challenges

CU Boulder

- Maintaining momentum and relevance to current needs
- Staff turnover affects awareness
- Recruitment for steering committee
- Timing events for maximum attendance
- Ensuring community of practice outlasts any one person

UW Madison

- Lack of systematic succession planning, particularly with the chair/co-chair positions
- Steering Committee members are volunteers who tend to already be overworked and overcommitted in their units
- Determining the best way to represent community voices in our community of practice created specifically for academic staff
- Struggles recruiting and welcoming new folks to the group
Time to Move!
Small Group Discussion & Report Out

- Group 1: Starting a Community of Practice with Nicole and Jeanne
- Group 2: Identifying Common Goals and Practices with Beth and Jim
- Group 3: Sustaining Momentum and Improving Outcomes with Amanda and Megan
Resources


- "Outreach and Engagement Staff and Communities of Practice: A Journey from Practice to Theory for an Emerging Professional Identity and Community," Harden, S. & Loving, K. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship,* Volume 8, No. 2, Fall 2015.


- **also a New Companion Guidebook to previous resource (2019)**

- Campus Compact Community Engagement Professional Credentialing Program (https://credential.compact.org)

Thank You!

Contact Us

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