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

- "A Communities of Practice (CoP) Health Check," Published by Stephen Dale, January 14, 2016 (http://collabor8now.com/communities-of-practice/a-communities-of-practice-cop-health-check/)

- *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge.* Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002)

- "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.

- T*he Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for An Emerging Field.* Dostilio, Lina. 2017.
- **also a New Companion Guidebook to previous resource (2019)

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

- "Community Engagement and Boundary Spanning Roles at Public Research Universities," Weerts, D.J. & Sandmann, L.R. *Journal of Higher Education,* 2010, 81(6), 702-727.

Thank You!

Contest Us

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