

# NURTURING DEMOCRACY AND FOSTERING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH INFORMED AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT



# CAMPUS DELIBERATIVE FORUMS A How-To Handbook

## NURTURING DEMOCRACY AND FOSTERING CITIZENSHIP

While colleges and universities increase their efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, recent controversies surrounding academic freedom and free speech at campuses across the United States have raised concerns about the health of our democracy. These concerns are exacerbated by the polarizing effects of social media and the ‘echo chambers’ of online interaction. It seems that, as a nation, we are today more divided than ever. Moreover, if the commentary of partisan pundits is to be believed, we seem at a loss for what strategies we might use to address these divisions.

The political philosopher Will Kymlicka has argued that “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens.” In developments that resonate with this insight, more and more institutions of higher education are considering what roles they might play—through research, teaching, and community engagement—to foster in their students and faculty the qualities, attitudes, and practical skills for a type of citizenship and civic engagement that can address divisions, promote inclusion, and strengthen democracy by facilitating productive engagement among alternative or competing perspectives.

To address concerns about division, to promote inclusion, and to foster the type of citizenship that will strengthen our democracy, we can look to the field of deliberative democracy. Even as some of the most prominent—or at least some of the loudest—voices have chronicled the decline of democracy, scholars and practitioners of deliberative democracy have been working, through research and practice, to devise techniques that support active citizenship and strengthen democratic governance across the globe. Proponents of Deliberative Democracy maintain that the qualities and attitudes necessary for productive citizenship and healthy democracies develop as people actively engage one another—and engage divergent views—in open, informed and inclusive public conversations. Citizens willing to listen to many sides of an issue and to let the force of the better argument, in all its richness, become a guide are able to develop better-informed opinions about important issues. These informed opinions, in turn, serve as valuable guidance for decision-makers.

Deliberative democracy has quietly flourished over the last thirty years as theorists of deliberative democracy and practitioners of democratic dialogue and deliberation have engaged residents of diverse communities in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. As a field of theory-informed practice, deliberative democracy is characterized by ongoing experimentation and innovation. Focused on *engaging difference as a resource*, rather than regarding peoples differences as a problem to avoid or barrier to overcome, deliberative democrats seek to devise practical strategies based on three principles: *inclusion, reciprocity, and legitimacy*.

## Principles of Deliberative Democracy

### **Inclusion: Engaging difference as a source of wisdom**

Peoples life experience gives them a particular wisdom and insight on issues. Deliberative engagement is focused on providing a structured means for people from diverse backgrounds to share their particular wisdom. As a result, everyone involved can develop a richer understanding of how issues and policy options affect people differently. Rather than consensus, deliberation pursues a *collective wisdom*. Participants collaboratively develop this collective wisdom as they engage in deliberation, and this collective wisdom becomes the resource individuals draw from for their informed opinions about issues and policy options.

### **Reciprocity: Making reasons and reasoning public**

Collective wisdom develops when people commit to listen and learn from one another. Deliberative forums are not a forum for debate; instead, they are designed to enable people to share the reasons why they hold particular views. Because people's reasons are often grounded in their experience, deliberative engagement supports and encourages people sharing their experience in ways that they find meaningful and comfortable. For some this might mean stating concise, 'properly formed' arguments (premises leading to conclusions). More often, deliberation will involve people telling stories.

### **Legitimacy: Informed and inclusive process**

Public engagement that involves people from diverse backgrounds in a creative, collaborative, dialogic relationship with experts and policy makers can foster relationships of trust, commitment, and investment in the process and its outcomes. Policy makers can point to a deliberative process and to the data generated by the process to reveal the range of people and perspectives that were engaged. As a result, deliberative engagement can foster a sense of legitimacy about decisions, even among those who may disagree with them.

In addition to sharing a foundation in these principles, research on deliberative engagement identifies four key features that these practices share ("Mapping Deliberative Civic Engagement," *Democracy in Motion*, 2012) :

- They engage a group of people reflective of the diversity of the communities impacted by the outcomes of the deliberation
- They involve people in structured discussions
- They provide people with the opportunity to compare values and experiences, consider a range of policy options, and engage relevant arguments and information
- They connect engagement to tangible actions and outcomes.

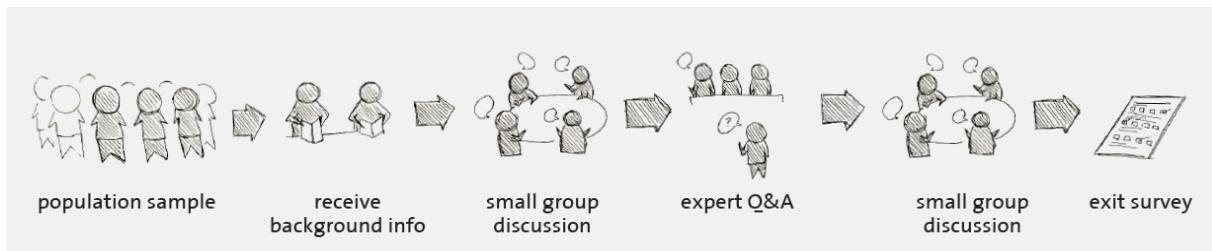
Across the field of deliberative democracy, a range of practices have been devised to strengthen democracy at various levels of governance. A useful overview of this range is provided by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's "Engagement Streams Framework," examples of a variety of practices and strategies can be reviewed online at Participedia (<https://participedia.net>), and the edited collections *Approaching Deliberative Democracy* and *Democracy in Motion* provide scholarly evaluation of deliberative practices and their impact.

For more than a decade, the Program for Deliberative Democracy at Carnegie Mellon University (PDD) has contributed to this field. Working with partners across our campus, with colleagues at other academic institutions, and with community leaders and policy makers in the Pittsburgh region, we have supported informed and inclusive deliberative public engagement on campus at Carnegie Mellon, in neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh, in communities throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania, statewide projects in Pennsylvania and Maryland, national projects in partnership with other academic institutions, and international projects at the Carnegie Mellon campus in Qatar. In addition, PDD launched a consultancy, the Art of Democracy, that has worked over the last five years to help the City of Pittsburgh institutionalize deliberative engagement as a best practice for nurturing productive relationships with residents and for soliciting their input.

The insights gained as PDD extended its impact beyond the campus of Carnegie Mellon helped inform further development of our on-campus engagement initiatives. Campus Deliberative Forums are one result of our ongoing work. This handbook provides an overview of Campus Deliberative Forums and a brief introduction to key aspects of organizing a Campus Deliberative Forum (Section One) and to practical matters of managing the day of your deliberative event (Section Two). The basic information in this handbook reflects our experience gained through various initiatives to nurture deliberative engagement at Carnegie Mellon University and beyond. Resources, sample materials, and reports from various deliberative events can be found online through the Program For Deliberative Democracy (<http://hss.cmu.edu/pdd/>) or by contacting Dr. Robert Cavalier ([rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu)) or Dr. Tim Dawson ([tim@theartofdemocracy.org](mailto:tim@theartofdemocracy.org)).

## WHAT IS A CAMPUS DELIBERATIVE FORUM?

Campus Deliberative Forums offer an effective and efficient way to engage diverse campus community members in a process of open, informed and inclusive deliberation. Organizing a forum engages the varied interdisciplinary resources of a college or university. Both the organizational process and the forums themselves offer students, faculty, and staff various opportunities to experience the roles and responsibilities of active citizenship.



As detailed in the graphic above, Campus Deliberative Forum protocols include several key components designed to engage difference as a resource. This graphic also serves as an outline for an organization process that involves

- Actively recruiting a diverse group of participants (diverse in gender, ethnicity, degree program, political affiliation, etc.; diverse in roles: student, faculty, staff).
- Developing comprehensive, well-designed briefing materials, including written documents and a briefing presentation that provides balanced information on a issues and options for addressing them.
- Supporting participants engagement in small group discussions, facilitated by trained moderators.
- Convening a diverse resource panel of experts with varied, relevant expertise for a question-and-answer session during which the experts respond to questions developed by each of the small groups.
- Designing a survey that allows participants to record their individual opinions.

The benefits of Campus Deliberative Forums include:

- Highlighting the virtues of campus diversity (throughout the organizing process and in the event of the forum itself)
- Creating a sense of campus community
- Providing means for dissemination of unbiased information
- Providing a means for campus community members to provide feedback to policy makers
- Fostering citizenship, leadership, and civic engagement that nurtures democratic norms

## **SECTION ONE: ORGANIZING YOUR CAMPUS DELIBERATIVE FORUM**

Organizing Your Campus Deliberative Forum will involve

- Coordinating a Core Team
- Cultivating Advocacy
- Establishing an Agenda and Outcomes
- Developing Briefing Materials and a Survey
- Outreach and Active Recruitment
- Developing a Plan for Analyzing Data and Sharing Results

### **1.1 COORDINATING YOUR CORE TEAM**

Campus Deliberative Forums involve a Core Team that works to coordinate the logistics for the forum, to develop the materials to support participants engagement, and to build relationships with other individuals across your campus who can provide resources and serve as advocates for the event.

#### **KEY PLAYERS**

A Primary Sponsor and one or two Student Coordinators serve as key players for organizing a forum.

#### **Primary Sponsor**

The Primary Sponsor provides overall management; he or she is the central force driving coordination and collaboration throughout the organization of your forum. This person can be a staff member or a faculty member with a position in a center devoted to civic engagement or an office of student affairs for your campus. At Carnegie Mellon, for example, the primary sponsor for many forums has been a faculty member who directs the Program for Deliberative Democracy, although some forums have been organized by staff members within the Office of Student Affairs. Most recently staff in a new Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion has taken on this role.

#### **Student Coordinator(s)**

Student Coordinators work closely with the Primary Sponsor to establish plans, execute tasks, document progress, coordinate volunteers, and to manage communication with Core Team members and the other individuals providing resources or support for your forum. Serving as a Student Coordinator is a valuable project for a graduate or an undergraduate student, who can engage the project as a fellowship, a work-study opportunity, or as community service.

## ADDITIONAL TEAM MEMBERS

For each forum, the key players enlist and oversee the work of additional members. Additional members should include faculty, students, staff who have an interest in Democratic engagement, in the topic, or in the results from the forum. The Core Team should include members with a certain level of expertise in the following: content areas relevant to the topic, survey development and analysis, document/communication design.

As a part of the forum's Core Team, these additional members will

- Identify a topic and establish the agenda for the forum
- Guide the research and development of the forum's briefing materials
- Develop surveys
- Recruit participants for the expert panel
- Promote the event among their peers and colleagues.

### **SPECIAL EXPERTISE AMONG CORE TEAM MEMBERS**

#### **Document/Communication Designer**

Each Core Team requires a person skilled in drafting unbiased documentation and presenting information in a clear and concise manner. It may be the case that one individual has expertise and experience in writing for public/non-expert audiences and another in design; better yet, this expertise may belong to a single individual.

#### **Social Scientist**

As a member or as a consultant, the Core Team requires a person who understands survey design and statistical analysis. This individual plays a central role in developing a plan for recruiting a diverse pool of participants, determining what questions will best articulate what the project is designed to assess, and analyzing the survey data.

### **CONSULTING WITH YOUR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Campus Deliberative Forums involve engaging participants with a specific protocol and gathering data. As a result, you will want to work closely with your campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Regulatory Compliance Office to make sure that your forum adheres to all the federal safety and ethical guidelines associated with studies involving human participants.

You should contact your IRB as soon as you begin organizing your forum to learn whether you will need to secure IRB approval or whether your forum will be eligible for exception from IRB requirements. If you intend to hold deliberative forums regularly, be sure to inquire about yearly renewals, as these are generally simpler to fill out than a new application for every forum.

## CREATING YOUR TEAM'S PLANNING TIMELINE

A planning timeline orients the Core Team to the tasks that must be accomplished prior to the day of your forum. The timeline often becomes clear only after you have chosen a date for your forum. When choosing a date be sure to consult your campus academic and events calendars as well as a religious observance calendar.

It is important to maintain a central planning resource/document that outlines all (or most) of the tasks to be accomplished. Your timeline should include as much information as possible. Using a visual representation like a Critical Path Chart can be useful, as it allows the team to see ongoing projects within the context of other tasks.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PLANNING TIMELINE

- Regularly Scheduled Meetings of the Core Team
- Development of Background materials
- Development of Survey Materials
- Ideal Date of the Event
- Schedule for Outreach
- Schedule for recruitment of participants
- Schedule for Moderator recruitment and training
- Schedule for Locating and Securing the Expert Panelists
- Schedule for Event Logistics (reserving space, catering, etc.)

## 1.2 CULTIVATING ADVOCACY

From the beginning and throughout the process of organizing your forum, Core Team members should be reaching out within their departments and across the campus to generate interest and enlist advocates for the forum. Cultivating advocacy begins with outreach, but outreach is only the first step.

As will be discussed in the section on outreach and recruitment, initial outreach by Core team members should be accompanied by guidance and resources from the Core Team that helps those who are contacted to become advocates who can actively recruit participants for your forum.

Below is a useful starting list of organizations whose members can be enlisted as advocates for your forum:

Student Councils  
Faculty Councils ((Department and University-Level)  
Staff Councils  
Library staff  
Student Organizations  
Media (On- and Off -Campus)



## 1.3 ESTABLISHING YOUR AGENDA AND DETERMINING OUTCOMES

The initial work of your Core Team involves identifying a topic, establishing an agenda, and Determining outcomes for your forum.

### IDENTIFYING A TOPIC

Your forum will focus on a topic that is important to your campus community. Topics can include issues or policies of specific concern to your campus community members or issues that are of general concern on and off your campus. Topics for a forum may appear in campus media, they may be the focus of debate in student or faculty councils, they may be the focus of activism on campus, or they may be issues of concern to a particular department or course.

Topics for a forum may be emergent; that is, some particular event or circumstances may highlight the need for new or revised policies on your campus. Topics, however, may prove ‘evergreen’ and ongoing; that is, forums can be organized to involve campus community members in regular planning and decision-making processes, such as updates to your university’s strategic plan. For topics that involve controversial campus policies, you may wish to convene Campus Deliberative Forums early in the decision-making process, well before the decisions have to be made – and certainly before they have been made.

Remember, the outcome of the forum, the opinions of the participants, should have a recommending influence on the outcome of policy decisions with consequences for your campus community members. Whatever topic is chosen, your forum should help participants engage the topic in ways that are relevant to their needs as members of your campus community. For example, a forum on the topic of climate change can direct participants towards a discussion of how your campus should respond to climate change in respect to the various missions universities pursue (e.g., research, teaching, community service).

### ESTABLISHING AN AGENDA FOR YOUR FORUM

A forum agenda is a series of questions that participants will discuss in their small-group deliberations. Developing this agenda is itself a deliberative process. As your Core Team members work to formulate an agenda, they will engage in deliberation amongst themselves. In addition, they should reach out to different campus constituencies and engage diverse stakeholders from the community to help develop answers to two foundational questions.

1. What is the particular conversation our community needs to have about the issue or topic on which the forum will be focused?
2. What do we need to learn from the group of people who we will recruit to come to the forum?

Prepared with answers to these two foundational questions, your Core Team will then work to develop an agenda of three or four questions that can foster deliberations that are relevant to the needs of the particular, diverse stakeholders on your campus. The three or four questions that make up your forum's agenda will serve as the basic framework for all the other elements of the forum.

The briefing materials developed for the forum will need to provide information relevant to the agenda of questions. Moderators will use these questions to spur small-group discussions during the forum. Expert panelist will need to be able to provide diverse perspectives relevant to the agenda of questions. Finally, the surveys developed for the forum

will invite participants to share their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about the issues and policy options relevant to your forum's agenda of questions.

When establishing an agenda for your forum, keep in mind the fundamental deliberative question: What ought we to do about the topic and issue being discussed?

Your forum should encourage participants to engage the topic or issue as a problem to be solved rather than as an issue to be debated. As a result, the agenda you establish and the materials you develop to support participants' engagement should avoid a pro-con framing of the issue.

#### DETERMINING OUTCOMES FOR YOUR FORUM

The agenda you establish for your forum should also be directed towards specific goals. To determine these goals, the key players on the Core Team should work with decision makers on campus to determine how and by whom the forum's results will be used.

For the purpose of setting goals, then, the Core Team must address two additional questions:

- Who will receive the results of the forum?
- How can the results be most useful?

Answers to these questions help determine how the Core Team will research the topic, develop survey questions, analyze the results, and how your forum will most usefully serve your campus community.

When thinking about goals, it is important to keep in mind what Campus Deliberative Forums are designed to achieve. The results of these forums provide a snapshot of what diverse members of the campus community think about an issue after they have had the chance to hear from experts and to discuss the issue with others who hold a diversity of opinion. The result of Campus Deliberative Forums is a range of informed opinions; the forums do not drive towards consensus. Campus Deliberative Forums are not referenda; they do not legislate.

## 1.4 DEVELOPING BRIEFING MATERIALS AND SURVEYS

Briefing materials provide participants and others involved in your forum with the information essential to understanding the important issues connected to your chosen topic. The briefing materials and surveys are necessarily connected; the contents of each will determine the types of analyses you will be able to include in your final report.

Briefing materials have two components: a short Discussion Guide and a concise Briefing Presentation (10-15 minutes). Each participant and expert panelist receives a copy of the Discussion Guide, and you should also plan to make copies available in other ways, such as online and through your campus libraries.

Briefing materials are a resource for the participants; their purpose is support participants' engagement before and during the small-group discussions. Thus, the Core Team must carefully consider the needs of participants as they create the briefing materials. It is critically important that the briefing materials represent the issue in a fair and balanced way; however, these materials need not be exhaustive—the small group deliberations and the Q&A with the expert panel will provide participants with additional information. In addition to developing briefing materials, it is useful to engage with librarians to prepare library and web resources for 'further reading'.

The Discussion Guide and the Briefing Presentation should be organized in the same way, provide the same information, and use exactly the same terminology. Participants should be given time to review the Discussion Guide prior to the beginning of the forum. If possible, it should be made available to participants several days before the forum. Those giving the Briefing Presentation should reference relevant sections of the Discussion Guide as they proceed through the presentation.

## BRIEFING MATERIALS: GENERAL OUTLINE

Briefing materials should provide the following:

- An explanation of the Campus Deliberative Forum protocols
- Information about the decision-making process relevant to the focus of the forum (e.g., what is the process, who are the decision-makers, how will results of the forum be included in this process, etc.)
- *Capture the current conversation:* Provide an overview of diverse viewpoints on the topic/issue. Resources for capturing the current conversation come from scholarly research and from credible channels for expressing opinions on and off campus. The diverse views from this conversation should be explained in language that is accessible, meaningful and relevant to members of your campus community. Representing at least three voices can help you to avoid framing the current conversation as a pro/con debate.
- *Models to think with:* To spur participants' imaginations, the briefing materials should provide examples of what people can do or have done—on your campus, on other campuses, or in some other context—to address the issues being discussed.
- *Forum Agenda:* Provide the list of questions that the Core Team developed for the forum's small-group discussions.

### RESEARCHING YOUR FORUM'S TOPIC

Research that will enable you to capture the current conversation and identify 'models-to-think-with' involves a collaborative effort that is coordinated by a lead writer. This person oversees development of the Discussion Guide and Briefing Presentation from beginning to end. Researching briefing materials can include the following:

- Locating materials that provide background on the topic, including what significant affects the topic has had on your institution and elsewhere
- Interviewing and meeting with campus community members from a variety of perspectives to gain an understanding of the various ways the topic affects your campus community
- Consulting with librarians.

### DESIGNING YOUR FORUM'S BRIEFING MATERIALS

While the lead writer bears the primary responsibility of research and writing, the Core Team enlists a designer who can craft the materials into an accessible and visually appealing finished product. Using visual representations (graphics, photos, etc.) and sidebars to highlight important or even secondary information (statistics or 'testimony') is a

good way of creating an engaging document. This reduces the overall length of the document, breaks up the main body of the text, and increases readability.

#### DEVELOPING YOUR FORUM'S SURVEY

The Core Team should include a member with expertise developing surveys. Alternately, the Core Team will need to engage in ongoing consultation with someone who has this expertise. A well-designed survey will be easy for participants to read and to provide their responses. The design should also allow for efficient data entry and analysis after the forum. Your survey should include various ways to capture information. It is helpful, for example, to place several 'comment fields' in the survey, as this provides participants an opportunity to express themselves beyond the confines of the questions and to provide valuable qualitative data. In addition to questions related to the topic, agenda, and goals of your forum, your survey should solicit participants' perceptions about the value of the forum, both as a whole and in its particular elements (briefing materials, small-group deliberations, and expert panel). It is also useful to solicit suggestions of topics for future forums.

#### REVIEWING AND TESTING YOUR BRIEFING MATERIALS AND SURVEY

To ensure that the briefing materials and survey are clear and useful, they should be reviewed throughout their development. Preliminary drafts should be tested with both the Core Team and individuals representing your participant pool. This can be done in a focus group of individuals representing students, faculty, staff who you ask to read the document and reflect on how they feel about both the presentation and the readability. This focus group should let you know whether the information in the briefing materials is relevant and useful and whether the survey questions are clear and appropriate.

## 1.5 OUTREACH AND ACTIVE RECRUITMENT

#### IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

The recommending power of a Campus Deliberative Forum depends on the diversity of the group that participates. A social scientist, as a member of your Core Team or as a consultant, can help develop your plan for identifying a diverse participant pool. Your team's social scientist can also advise you on the appropriate size that the participant pool should be in order represent the population and what response rates you can typically expect from your campus community.

The gold-standard for opinion polls is a representative random sample of the community; achieving this gold-standard requires levels of funding that can be difficult to attain. If you have the necessary funding available, you should consider convening a representative random sample. However, a concerted effort to recruit a diverse participant pool can generate a group of participants that suggests what the entire community would think if it had the chance to participate in the same deliberative process. In particular, to the extent that you can recruit a diverse participant pool, you can feel comfortable assigning a 'recommending force' to any supermajorities in the survey data.

## ACTIVE RECRUITMENT

Your forum should be connected to a real decision-making process with consequences for members of your campus community, and you will provide food for the participants. Nevertheless, getting people to participate in your forum will be a challenge.

Recruitment begins with an introductory outreach message. This introductory message should clearly explain what you expect the individual receiving the message to do to help make the forum a success. In addition, initial outreach efforts should include resources people can use to recruit participants within their particular networks and departments.

The introductory outreach message, however, is only a first step. The Core Team will need to be persistent in following up with people who express interest and providing them with ideas and resources that help them to encourage others to participate. From the beginning and throughout the process of organizing your forum, members of the Core Team should encourage their colleagues to provide other incentives to participants (e.g., course credit), and they should be securing commitments from those who sign on as advocates (e.g., student organizations commit to sending three of their members, faculty commit to offering course credit in one or more classes, etc.).

Participation is driven by people not posters. The advocates you engage reinforce the legitimacy of the forum. Potential participants need to receive information and encouragement from people they trust and respect. Outreach and recruitment are supported by posters, flyers, a website, and announcements on websites and in campus publications. However, these resources are not sufficient to generate participation.

### **INTRODUCTORY OUTREACH MESSAGE: CONTENTS**

- What is a Campus Deliberative Forum?
- Why should I participate?
- Why should I care about the issue the forum addresses?
- Why does my opinion matter?
- What are you going to do with the results?
- How do I participate (e.g., include registration link)?

## RECRUITING MODERATORS FOR SMALL GROUP DELIBERATIONS

During your forum, each small-group will be facilitated by a trained moderator. Moderators help maintain a focused, relevant, and respectful discussion as they help participants move through the agenda of questions established for the forum. At the end of the forum's small-group discussion period, moderators help participants develop questions for the expert panelists.

Small group deliberations provide participants with a chance to share their particular wisdom and to learn from the particular wisdom of others. Moderators must maintain the proper focus on participants and on the unique learning opportunities represented by the make-up of each small group. To maintain the proper focus, moderators must avoid becoming participants in the discussion, they must avoid offering their own opinions, they should not encourage participants to regard them as experts on the issues being discussed, and they should refrain from providing additional information. (If participants raise questions during small-group discussions, moderators can point to any relevant sections of the forum's Discussion Guide or suggest that the group pose the question to the expert panel).

When recruiting volunteer moderators, organizers should make an effort to recruit volunteers from the communities that will be engaging in deliberation. Moderators can be upperclassmen, resident assistants, student leaders, or graduate students. You can also recruit moderators from off-campus groups, such as the League of Women Voters, mediation councils, or conflict resolution services. Those who volunteer to be moderators need not have any prior training, although past experience facilitating dialogue or mediation can be useful. Several days before the event, you will need to provide moderators with a brief training session. At this training, moderators receive an introduction to the principles of deliberative democracy, the protocols of a Deliberative Community Forum, an annotated agenda for the small-group discussions, and copies of the briefing materials and surveys.

## RECRUITING A RESOURCE PANEL OF EXPERTS

To address questions that emerge as participants deliberate in their small groups, Campus Deliberative Forums include a plenary Q & A with a resource panel of experts. Panelists' primarily focus on answering the questions that participants generate during their small group deliberations, offering additional perspectives and new knowledge about the topic.

Generally speaking, four or five people are sufficient for a panel, with another university or campus community member serving as a panel moderator. Individual panelists should have expertise related to the forum's topic and to the information contained in the forum's briefing materials. (Panelists should receive briefing materials and surveys prior to the forum.) As a whole the panel should include a range of perspectives informed by diverse practical experience. Panelists can include experts in specific disciplines, people with practical experience engaging issues in their day-to-day work, university officials, or representatives from student government. Above all, it is important that, collectively, the panel is representative of the range of the opinions and options related to the topic of the forum. In addition, consultation with potential panelists prior to the forum can be useful: they can help identify important resources, information, or perspectives to include in the forum's briefing materials.

Panelists need only participate in the resource panel Q&A. If panelists attend the entire forum, they should be encouraged to observe—but not participate in—small-group discussions. (Guidelines for panelists are provided in section 2.)

## 1.6 DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR SHARING YOUR FORUM'S RESULTS

During the process of planning the forum, the Core Team should develop a plan for analyzing the data from participants' surveys and for sharing the results. Results should be shared in a timely manner, with participants and with relevant decision makers. Results should also be made available more broadly through various media outlets.

During the forum's Briefing Presentation, organizers should explain how information from the forum will be used to inform decision making processes, and they should explain the plan for analyzing data and sharing the results of your forum.



## SECTION TWO: MANAGING YOUR EVENT

Managing Your Event involves

- Coordinating Logistics (space, catering, etc.)
- Securing volunteer staff
- Preparing staff-support materials
- Hosting the event

### 2.1 EVENT OVERVIEW

While the Core Team's key players facilitate and oversee the organizational work discussed in section one, they also must attend to the practical matters of managing the event of the forum.

Campus Deliberative Forums last about 3 hours. When participants arrive, they sign in, providing their name and contact information. (You can use this information to share the forum's results with participants.) When they arrive, participants receive a copy of the Discussion Guide and a copy of the forum's agenda, they are assigned to a table for small-group discussions, and they are invited to enjoy the light refreshments you have provided. When participants check in at their tables, they meet their moderator, who encourages them to review the forum's Discussion Guide as they enjoy their snack.

The forum begins with short opening remarks (5 minutes) and the Briefing Presentation (no more than 15 minutes). An hour of small-group discussions follows. During this hour, each table's moderator guides the participants through the agenda of questions developed by the Core Team. At the end of the hour, each small group develops a question for the forum's Expert/Resource Panel. Over the next hour, the panel responds to a question from each table. Following the Q&A, participants have a brief opportunity to reflect on the panel's responses. Finally, participants complete a survey to provide their individual opinions about the topics discussed at the forum.

#### **SAMPLE TIMING FOR THREE-HOUR FORUM: EARLY EVENING**

5:00 – 5:20	Registration
5:20 – 5:25	Welcome/Opening remarks
5:25 - 5:40	Briefing presentation
5:40 – 6:40	Small group deliberations
6:40 – 7:30	Expert panel Q&A
7:30 – 7:45	Small-group reflections
7:45 - 8:00	Complete survey

## 2.2 COORDINATING LOGISTICS

### SPACE

It is best to arrange for one hall that can accommodate all the round tables for the small-group discussions, tables for the expert/resource panel, and tables on which to lay out the food. You will also need an area to set up tables for registration inside or outside this hall.

### CATERING

Simple, light snacks and water are generally sufficient; however, if your forum occurs during meal times, you may want to provide something more substantial, such as a boxed lunch. Keep in mind that a diverse group will have diverse dietary needs. You can reinforce your forum's focus on inclusion by providing options that respect this diversity.

### DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Clear directional signage is very important; do not assume that all members of your campus community are familiar with all campus locations. Directional signage can also help brand your event and create some curiosity about it among those not attending.

## 2.3 VOLUNTEER STAFFING

The number of volunteers you need will depend on the number of participants you expect at the event. However, when moderators are included, even a small event can require 20 to 30 volunteers.

### **STAFFING FOR A CAMPUS DELIBERATIVE FORUM**

- Event Coordinator
- Registration Coordinator
- Registration Table Staff (3-4)
- Staff-at-Large to act as greeters, to provide direction to participants, and to serve as 'runners' who will attend to lapsed or forgotten details (2-3)
- Moderators for each small group (plus 1 or 2 extras in case a moderator cannot attend at the last minute)
- Lead Facilitator, who will keep time, oversee small-group discussions, and support any table moderators who may need assistance

## 2.4 PREPARING STAFF-SUPPORT MATERIALS

Within the week prior to your event, you should hold a “walk-through” meeting with your volunteer event staff. The following materials should be prepared for this meeting:

### ANNOTATED EVENT TIMELINE

Each event-staff member should receive a comprehensive outline, detailing tasks from set-up through clean-up, that specifies who will complete each task and at what time.

### PARTICIPANT FOLDERS

Each participant should receive a folder containing the agenda for the forum, the forum Discussion Guide, and information about the expert panelists.

### MODERATOR’S ANNOTATED AGENDA

Each moderator should receive an agenda for the forum annotated with details of the specific timing for the small group discussions and providing suggested language moderators can use to guide participants through the forum’s agenda of questions.

### REGISTRATION TABLE MATERIALS

Prepare a list of those who have pre-registered and sign-in sheets for those who will register on the day of the forum.

## 2.5 HOSTING THE EVENT

### REGISTRATION

It is important that registration be organized carefully. As the first contact you have with participants, registration sets the tone for your event. Your registration table should be staffed by at least three people, with each assigned to specific tasks:

- One person will sign participants in and assign them to a table for their small-group discussions (6-7 participants should be assigned to each table).
- One person will provide participants with their folder of materials, explain what the folders contains, and give directions for what participants should do with the materials (e.g., read the Discussion Guide).
- One person should assist participants with creating a nametag.

In addition, someone not involved in registering participants should be available to answer any questions participants have, and another person should stand at the door to the room to welcome participants, guide them to their tables, and explain how to get the food you have provided.

### OPENING REMARKS

Opening remarks should be no more than five minutes long. The Core Team should enlist a key campus administrator or leader to provide a welcome to participants, to speak to the importance of the issue, and to emphasize the value of the participants’ input.

## BRIEFING PRESENTATION

Your Briefing Presentation can be conducted by a member of the Core Team (or by a number of Core Team members). It should provide an orientation and overview for the participants that includes the following:

- A general overview of the Campus Deliberative Forum process
- An explanation of the process of planning and research that went into developing resources for the forum
- A review of important information that directly mirrors the organization and language of the forum's Discussion Guide. This review should emphasize why the topic is important, what key questions and choices participants will be discussing, and how the results of the forum will be used.
- A review of the forum's agenda and ground rules,
- 'Housekeeping' announcements (e.g., where are the bathrooms)

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ONE

The first small group discussion should be at least an hour long. Of that time, 50 minutes should be dedicated to discussion of the questions established as the forum's agenda, leaving ten minutes for participants to formulate their group's two questions for the Expert Panel. Each group will develop two questions, although each table will only ask one of the group's questions. The other question is formulated in case the group's first question is asked by another table. Additionally, each group selects a group member to ask the question. These questions should be written down on a separate piece of paper or on a special form you develop for this purpose. These questions should be collected, at the end of the forum, along with the surveys.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION: SMALL-GROUP DELIBERATIONS**

Our Goal: We seek to engage difference as a resource—to enrich our own understanding of issues by learning from the particular knowledge and experience of each participant. We ask that you:

- Please explain your point of view.
- Please focus on sharing your reasons, your experiences, and relevant facts.
- Please treat your group members with respect at all times.
- Please listen to other people's views; don't interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- Please be mindful of the limited time we have to learn from one another today. If you have been the only one speaking for 2.5-3 minutes, the moderator will ask that you allow others an opportunity to contribute.

## EXPERT/RESOURCE PANEL Q&A

Prior to the forum, panelists should receive the guidelines below and a copy of the forum's Discussion Guide and survey.

### *Guidelines for Resource Panelists*

As a whole, the panelists should be able to address all the participants' questions; however, each panelist is not expected to address every question.

- Panelists should address questions as teachers rather than as pundits or advocates.
- Panelists should address only questions relevant to their experience or expertise.
- Panelists should provide participants with a range of relevant perspectives. Panelists may wish to associate themselves with a particular position or perspective, but they should also explain what they know about alternative positions and perspectives.
- Panelists should not attempt to persuade participants of any particular position.
- Panelists should identify points of difference, if any, between their views and those of other panelists, but they should not debate other panelists.

### *Guidelines for Panel Moderator*

- In each small group, the participants not only select the questions to be asked. Moderators should avoid asking the question themselves or adding any additional comments.
- Encourage appropriate panelists to answer each question or ask the entire panel what they think could best answer a particular question based on the expertise of the panel members.
- Ensure that the given answer fully addresses the question by directly asking the participant if they feel the question was adequately answered.
- See that panelists engage civilly and respectfully with the participants and with other panelists.

### *Guidelines for Observers*

Panelists should be encouraged to observe small group deliberations. However, these deliberations are designed as an opportunity for participants to engage with and learn from one another. Given this goal, observers should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please do not sit at the small-group discussion tables; pull up a chair alongside the table as you listen in.
- Please do not try to engage in the discussions at the tables you observe.
- Please make sure to visit several tables during the small-group discussion period.

## SMALL GROUP REFLECTION AND SURVEY

The second small group discussion period provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on the expert panel Q&A and to discuss how the expert's answers might change the way they've come to understand and interpret the issues under discussion.

At the end of this second discussion period, participants receive the survey. All participants should complete a survey and deliver it to their table's moderator before they leave.

## MODERATOR DEBRIEFING

After the official end of the forum, moderators should be convened for a debriefing session. To this debriefing, moderators should bring the surveys they have collected and their group's written questions. During this debriefing session, the key players of the Core Team should ask moderators to discuss the quality of the conversation at their tables, to identify any topics, ideas, or points that emerged as particularly significant during their group's discussion, and to identify any concerns, challenges, or critiques participants expressed about the organization of the forum or the materials they were provided.

## A FINAL WORD

Campus Deliberative Forums engage people at a deep intellectual level, empower them to voice concerns, and help people articulate opinions which may never have been brought to light without the type of structure, focus, and pragmatic support that a Campus Deliberative Forums offer. The power of deliberative engagement extends beyond the results of any particular forum, however. When structured well, forums provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage one another as citizens of a shared community. In addition, those involved in the process of organizing a well-structured deliberation –as an advocate, coordinator, researcher, writer, volunteer, or moderator—experience a different form of leadership, one based on supporting the voice and agency of others.

Individual deliberative events can have a powerful impact. This handbook provides a basic overview of how to organize an opportunity for informed, inclusive, well-structured democratic deliberation on your campus. However, the task of nurturing democracy, citizens, and leadership is an ongoing effort. In our experience over the last decade, we have found that individual deliberative events can also awaken an appetite among community members for more of the type of robust, fruitful engagement enabled by a Deliberative Community Forum. Thus, as you are organizing individual deliberative events, it can be useful to think about how you can take steps towards creating an infrastructure that can support an institutionalized, ongoing deliberative engagement initiative on your campus. Guidance for how to create an infrastructure to support an ongoing deliberative engagement initiative, resources and samples for each of the particular elements discussed in this handbook, and moderator training materials are available by contacting Dr. Robert Cavalier ([rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu)) or Dr. Tim Dawson ([tim@theartofdemocracy.org](mailto:tim@theartofdemocracy.org)).

