Walking the Talk: Achieving the Promise of Authentic Partnerships

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What is Partnership?

1. the state of being a partner: participation
2. A) a legal relation existing between two or more persons contractually as joint principals associated in a business    B) the persons joined together in a partnership
3. a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary
What is Partnership?

- Creating Equal Partners: The need to shift power and the necessity to listen to one another and to respect different perspectives
- Defining Community: It is important not to consider the community as the "subject" of research
- University: Must be willing to participate in building the communities’ capacity for understanding and benefiting from research. It must also have the ability to change its rules, attitudes and beliefs.
- Funding: Commitment to a community-partnered research model includes a commitment by the funding source to maintain close contact throughout the length of the project
How is this done?

Circle of Influence Model for Collaborative Research © 2002

Source: This model was developed by L. Jones, M.A., D.S. Martins, M.D., Y. Pardo, R. Baker & K. C. Norris, M.D.
What are the ingredients needed for engagement?
To do this work, personalities are important:

- Honest
- Open
- Positive
- Flexible
- Facilitatory

- Dedicated
- Patience
- Accepting
- Respectful
- Non-Arrogant
What it means to be...

- Authentic
  - Short-term goals
  - Brief
  - Shoot from the hip
  - Staff
  - Agency-Driven
  - Operation

- Non-Authentic
  - Long-term goals
  - Depth
  - Evidence-Based
  - Relationship Builder
  - Community-Ownership Policy
Challenges Associated with Academic Partnering

The academic calendar:

- Usually 8 months, (September-June) with several breaks within that 8-month period
- Students may only be available for a single semester or quarter
- Faculty members also plan their work around academic calendar
- Challenging, but not impossible: the key to getting the most out of your collaboration is to know the academic schedule and plan ahead
Financial Cost

- Time and materials to exchange knowledge, supervise, and evaluate the partnership or participate in research
- Time spent in planning and coordinating partnership activities
- Material costs—for example, space and resources dedicated to partnership activities
Challenges Associated with Academic Partnering: Power Differentials

Campus Partner usually has:

- More resources
- More personnel
- More perceived power

Sources of Conflict:

- Control over the allocation of resources
- Leadership
- No MOU
Communities and Universities have Different Values and Priorities

Community
- Specific mission with matching priorities
- Make sure potential campus partners understand your mission, goals, and expectations, such as site location, and population served

University
- Multiple missions and priorities
- May be some overlap with community’s missions and priorities, but less attention is paid to them
Communities and Universities have Different Languages:

- Academia often uses confusing “jargon”
- This can lead to misunderstandings and marginalization of one partner or their staff and constituents
- Careful planning is the key
- Share documentation, such as a website or annual report
- Avoid jargon or make sure it’s explicitly explained
Faculty Incentives

- Faculty members are evaluated on teaching, research, and service.
- Difficult for faculty to show that community work is relevant to their evaluation.
- Some institutions are re-writing the guidelines for faculty promotion to include high quality community work.
- It may be worth asking faculty members about their evaluation process.
- Understanding faculty evaluation can give CBO’s insight into the actions and decisions of faculty members.
Community Incentives differ from faculty incentives

Non-tangible:
- Community-defined power
- Capacity building
- Tearing down barriers that exist between community members, academia, and researchers

Tangible:
- Knowledge transfer
- Infrastructure building
- Stipends
- Partnership with others
Words to Remember:

- Improvisation
- Resiliency
- Connectedness to others
- Spirituality
- Emotional Vitality
- Gallows Humor
- Healthy Suspicion of the Message and the Messenger

Joe White, Ph.D    February 23, 2006 African American Mental Conference, Los Angeles, CA