

Engaged Institutions Initiative Consultancy Summary

School of Public Health University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Section II: Your Consultants and the Consultation They Provided

2.1 What were the presenting questions or issues that were the desired focus of the consultation?

As a SPH with faculty, staff, and students involved in the scholarship of engagement at the individual level, our EII Team was seeking consultation on moving the scholarship of engagement to the institutional level. Specifically, we were looking for direction and structure to guide the development of a Strategic Plan on becoming an engaged institution for eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities.

2.2 What were the scope of work and outcomes of the consultation?

Our first consultation with Victor Rubin in November 2006 focused on how to formulate a Strategic Plan. Dr. Rubin provided concrete resources and examples from: the WK Kellogg Foundation's history with university-community partnerships and PolicyLink's experience of providing technical assistance to universities on policies and structures for community engagement, and facilitated both the EII Workgroup and Team meetings. At the conclusion of these meetings, all participants observed that we had "turned the corner" in arriving at a sense of unity and trust as a "team."

At our second consultation in February 2007, Dr. Rubin was accompanied by Meredith Minkler. Dr. Rubin shared his overall reflections on the draft of our Strategic Plan and offered suggestions on how to:

- Improve critical areas of the Strategic Plan, such as an explanation of the relationship linking diversity to health disparities;
- Identify a specific audience; and
- Narrow the scope of the Strategic Plan.

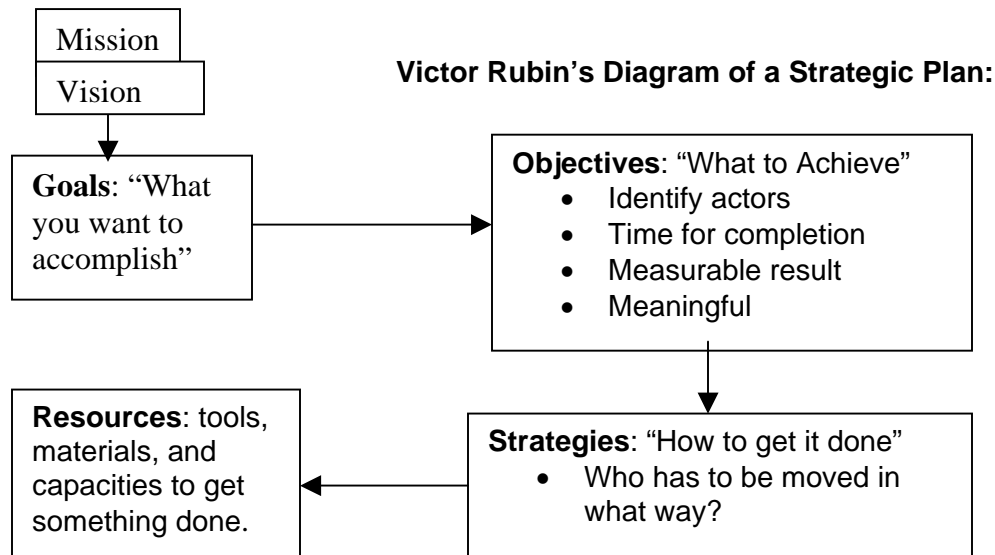
Dr. Minkler led our group in a discussion on:

- The scholarship of advocacy; and
- Concrete suggestions for focusing our Strategic Plan's strategies on issues of diversity.

It had been very rare that we discussed the potential linkage of advocacy and scholarship in a public university setting, and the discussion with Dr. Minkler was helpful in expanding our understanding of the relationship and our potential ability to be advocates without losing our credibility as scientists.

2.3 What new ideas, recommendations and/or strategies did you gain from the consultation?

Dr. Rubin was extremely helpful to our Team. Although we had completed several drafts of our definition of health disparities, a vision statement, and goals, we had little direction on how to proceed with writing a formal Strategic Plan. One of the most helpful tools he provided was the following diagram of the components of a Strategic Plan and their definitions.



In his explanation, Dr. Rubin provided examples from his experience with PolicyLink's technical assistance to other universities. He noted that our Strategic Plan should guide UNC SPH in making choices, setting priorities, and marshalling resources.

Dr. Minkler educated our group on the five different types of advocacy. In a discussion about diversity, she suggested that we formulate a group similar to Berkeley's "Minority Concerns Committee" composed of faculty members, students, and alumni. This committee assists with faculty and staff recruitment in order to ensure that the value of diversity is upheld in the recruitment process. They oversee the language of postings, advise on places where the University might advertise. The head of the committee is required to take part in all search committees.

2.4 What worked well during the consultation?

For both site visits made by Dr. Rubin to North Carolina, our EII Team had scheduled meetings for him with a variety of stakeholders across campus. For instance, along with meeting with the small workgroup and the large Engaged institutions team, he met with the Director of the Carolina Center for Public Service, the SPH Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, the UNC Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement, and Director of the Minority Research Core of the Carolina-Shaw Partnership for the Elimination of Health Disparities. These meetings helped to familiarize Dr. Rubin with the University and the SPH, the stakeholders for understanding and addressing racial and ethnic health disparities, and the already-existing infrastructure at UNC for promoting engagement and diversity.