

# Engagement Concepts

Common Ground

Basic Rules

Asking Questions

Active Listening

Debate / Dialogue

Managing Conflict

# Common Ground

- Common ground implies something that is shared and valued amongst a group. It can serve as an impetus to work collaboratively.
- Before a process begins involving joint decision making, the facilitator can ask questions that keep everyone focused to what's shared and valued collectively.
- What are our shared interests and responsibilities to advance the mission of the academic senate?

# 9 Basic Rules

Expected behaviors that support a productive process:

1. Listen to each other without interruptions.
2. Ask questions for clarification.
3. Summarize what we hear each other saying.
4. Acknowledge what needs to be acknowledged.

# Ground Rules

5. Listen for opportunities to build on each other's ideas.
6. When you disagree, state why.
7. Separate people from their behaviors. Name the behavior that is problematic.
8. Each and every participant is responsible for holding everyone accountable to the ground rules.
9. The facilitator has the right to intervene when the process breaks down.

# Active Listening

- There are times when participants need to vent. As the facilitator, let them vent. When you want to re-direct them from their venting back to the task at hand.
- Intervene by stating “Let me summarize what has been said.” Check for accuracy, “Is that correct?” - followed by “are we ready to move on?”

# Active Listening

- When participants are arguing and not listening to each other- interrupt them with a question followed by other questions realigning them to a productive conversation.
- Is this conversation working? Would you like it to work? What do you need from each other to make it work? What do you hear each other saying?
- Questions serve specific functions when managing a process.

# Asking Questions

## **Information Seeking Questions**

1. Can you give me a specific example?
2. Can you say more about why you think that?
3. What is most important to you about this problem?

## **Interest Based Questions** (what matters most to people)

1. What would it take for you to give up that position?
2. What is important to you and why?

## **Questions that Challenge Positions**

1. Is there another way to look at this issue?
2. What is the benefit of being open to or building on points of view different from mine?
3. Do I have to be right?
4. How do we move forward with our acknowledged differences?

# Asking Questions

## Questions that can break an Impasse

1. Where are you stuck and why?
2. What's behind your resistance, and what do you need to get past it?
3. What are you not talking about that you still need to discuss?
4. What question are you waiting to be asked?



# Asking Questions

## Questions to test for Agreement of Outcomes

1. Has everyone been heard and acknowledged?
2. Is this agreement/outcome acceptable to everyone?
3. If not, what is stopping you from supporting it?
4. What are your specific objections?
5. What changes, amendments, additions would make you support the agreement?

# from Debate to Dialogue

- Dialogue is built on collaboration. Debate is built on competition.
- Debate is circular. Participants argue or disagree with each other and are interested in convincing others that they are right rather than discovering the underlying causes of their conflict.
- Dialogue seeks to understand the meaning behind disagreements and underlying interests.

# Facilitator Effectiveness

- Managing members of a group whose task is to accomplish agenda items is a challenge.
- How decisions are made and who makes them are important to know before the process begins. Does each participant have an equal voice? Who has the final say? Is the process built on collaboration? Is compromise expected? When is it good or not good to accommodate? When should you avoid something? And finally when is it necessary to compete?
- What follows are five Basic Approaches to effectively managing conflict inherent in group interactions: *avoidance, accommodation, compromise, collaboration, competition*

# Avoidance

## When to

- If tensions/emotions are high and cannot be diffused or when others can resolve the conflict effectively.
- When you need more time before making a decision

## When not to

- Not holding each other accountable to the ground rules

# Accommodation

## When to

- When the issue is more important to the other person(s)
- To avoid unnecessary conflict.

## When not to

- When one gives up too much of what they value for the sake of avoiding conflict. [degree of sacrifice] will I have regrets or have resentment afterwards?

# Compromise

## When to

- When goals are moderately important
- When participants are committed to mutually exclusive goals.
- To achieve a temporary solution to a complex issue or problem

## When not to

- When give and take is not equal or mutually acceptable to everyone.

# Collaboration

## When to

- When the objective is to learn from each other.
- To merge insights from different perspectives.
- To gain commitment by consensual decision making.

## When not to

- When quick or decisive action is required.
- When there are unresolved conflicts between others at the table.

# Competition

## When to

- When people compete against the problem not each other.
- When knowledge and experience counts – a decision needs to be made independent of group input.
- When consensus or collaboration fails.

## When not to

- When the objective is to win at all costs.
- When relationships are strained due to unresolved conflicts



# Summary

- When outcome & relationship are both not that important
  - Avoid
- When outcome & relationship are both important
  - Collaborate
- When outcome is important, but relationship is not
  - Compete
- When outcome is not important but relationship is
  - Accommodate
- When outcome & relationship are moderately important
  - Compromise