

Community Engagement (CE) Self-Assessment Matrix for Achieving the Dream (ATD) Colleges

PART I: Using the Community Engagement Matrix

The Community Engagement Matrix is a self-assessment, discussion and planning tool for colleges wishing to examine their current public engagement practices and capabilities. It can be used by individuals, but it is also useful as a discussion starter for small group discussions among members of a college's ATD leadership team(s) and as a means of engaging additional stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and students. It may be an illuminating exercise for administrators/college leaders to compare their impressions with those of other college stakeholders such as faculty and staff to see where their impressions are similar or different. Coaches and data facilitators also can use this tool to help their colleges begin to think about ways in which they can progress from beginning to more advanced engagement practices.

To use the matrix:

- 1) Begin by reviewing the items under the "Activity" column on the far left. Moving down the list, for each item, i.e., "CE Planning" "Staff Training/ Expertise", etc. assess the college's current level using the categories to the right of each activity as a guideline, filling in the "What level are you?" and "Goals" columns as you go.
- 2) Once the group has come to an agreement about where the college's current practices fall along the continuum, you can use the following questions to stimulate discussion.
 - c. Where/ in which categories would improvements in our practices make the greatest impact on student success and why?
 - d. Where are the areas with "low-hanging fruit", i.e., those areas where we can advance from one level to the next with a relatively small investment of resources/time, and which areas will require a greater investment?
 - e. What goals are we willing to set for ourselves regarding our public engagement practices? Where would we like to be in one year? Three years?



Achieving
the Dream

Community Colleges Count

Adapted from "A Matrix for Public Engagement" by KSA-Plus, with help from Public Agenda, appearing in *The Superintendent's Fieldbook*, Cambron-McCabe et al. (eds.), Corwin Press, 2005

Community Engagement (CE) Self-Assessment Matrix

ACTIVITY	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	WHICH LEVEL ARE YOU?	GOALS
Infrastructure						
CE Planning	Planning to plan	Plan focuses on ad-hoc mix of messages/ events/materials	Plan is data-driven & focused on ATD goals	In addition to 3, plan is created with community input		
College Staff Training and Expertise	Printed materials only	Limited customer-service training for administrators and support staff	Broad communications training, including media and community engagement training, for most staff	In addition to 3, training has ATD goals in mind—closing achieve gaps, data based, etc.		
CE Resources (Budgets, staff, technology)	Resources appear for emergency response only	No regular budget, part-time staff; no website or email database	Minimal budget, 1-2 full-time staff; modest website and email database	Fully funded CE office/dept, extensive website and email database		
College Leadership Involvement	President and senior level administrators are minimally aware of community engagement efforts	President/ Administrators briefed and received printed CE materials/info on efforts	President/ Administrators have provided staff and resources to support college's engagement efforts	President/ Administrators are actively engaged and participate in CE meetings and activities		

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ACTIVITY	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	WHICH LEVEL ARE YOU?	GOALS
Basic Practices						
Welcoming Environment	Visitors don't feel welcome or know where to go for information	Visitors feel welcome and know where to go for information	College proactively reaches out to bring community onto campus	Customer service ethic embedded in staff; community use of school increases		
Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity	President and Administrators demonstrate minimal cultural/ethnic awareness	College provides materials and activities that reflects staff and student diversity through paintings, newsletters and programs	Campus community feels satisfaction and pride about the level of cultural awareness and sensitivity college demonstrates	Community views the College, President, Administrator, staff and students as reflective and understanding of those they serve		
Publications (This includes printed and electronic materials)	Basic info only	Materials are reader friendly and match readers' interests	Materials improved with community and student input	Materials speak to student achievement; more opportunities for users to customize information (e.g., web)		
Media Relations	Priority is damage control	Ongoing relationship w/ media is built on trust	Media efforts gain coverage of student outcomes and public engagement	Media helps promote & facilitate student achievement and public engagement		

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Advanced Practices						
Community Listening/ Research	Listening only when initiated by community	Infrequent efforts to listen to community concerns	Regular listening with mix of tools (focus groups, community conversations, open houses, etc.)	Feedback frequently sought and acted upon on specific initiatives aimed at ATD goals		
Two-Way Communications	Communications mostly one-way. Community rarely hears from college except for funding requests	Minimal attempts to create conversations, mostly with prospective students or “squeaky wheels”	Regular opportunities for community dialogue are planned, with effective outreach to diverse audiences— “beyond usual suspects”	In addition to Level 3, systematic efforts at dialogue to develop mutual understanding and partnerships re: improving student outcomes.		
College-Community Partnerships	No meaningful partnerships	Limited or mainly college-controlled partnerships	Partners share decision making on common projects aimed at achievement	College and partners hold each other accountable for student success		

PART II: GOALS AND STRATEGIES WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to elaborate on the goals you identified using the matrix, and as a place to do some planning for how and when to make progress on those goals.

Community Engagement Goal	Strategies to Achieve Goal	Action Steps	Timeframe & Person/ Department Responsible

NOTE: Additional resources are available to help ATD colleges plan and execute their engagement work, including a Stakeholder Engagement Manual, Campus & Community Conversations Organizer's Planning Guide, Principles and Practices for Student Success Guide: Faculty Engagement, and Planning Workbook for Faculty/Student Dialogues. All materials are located on the ATD web site (www.AchievingTheDream.org) or from Public Agenda pedept@publicagenda.org.