

Organizing a Group to Support a Whole-of-Institution Agenda for Engagement

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Pressures on Higher Education

- Address the 'Big Questions' – local/global
- Attract and retain more students from under-represented populations
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of education pathways
- Meet student demands for experiential learning
- Integrate research and teaching
- Deepen international partnerships
- Develop entrepreneurial perspectives
- Attract and retain a new generation of faculty/staff

Common Engagement Challenges

- Ensuring that Engagement benefits the college/university and the community – engagement to what end?
- Aligning engagement with institutional priorities and goals
- Building consensus on the meaning of engagement
- Level of activity and participation matches institutional goals for Engagement
- Sustainability internally and externally
 - Strategic value
 - Leadership
 - Human/Financial Resources
 - Infrastructure
 - Partnerships

Risks to Engagement

- Leadership turnover
- Reliance on one person to facilitate
- Soft-funded resources
- Lack of connection to core strategies & goals
- Lack of integration into curriculum
- Over-reliance on early adopters
- Diverse mix of models and areas of focus
- Minimal attention to feedback from partners, students, faculty, and/or to impacts

Strategies to build activity

- Create a 'working group', council or committee; Work with them to develop a set of principles and framework for engagement and partnerships
- Take an issue-based approach; not scatter-shot
- Invest in faculty development
 - Engaged research & teaching methods
 - Internal understanding of diverse scholarly practices
- Create infrastructure to develop community partnerships, provide faculty support and development
- Monitor and measure engagement activity
- Integrate engagement into recruitment and selection
- Study the impact on community and students
- Use impact data for institutional visibility and fundraising

What Roles Would Your 'Council' have?

- Moral support
- Endorsement/blessing
- Advice
- Advocacy
- Networking
- Training/mentoring others
- Fundraising
- Expertise
- Continuity/sustainability
- Leadership

(Feld, 2001)

A Scale of Involvement

Awareness → Listening
= FYI Only

Action/Impact → Involving/Doing
=Shared Responsibility

Advocacy → Influencing
=Strategy and Decision-making

Which People Match Your Goals?

What are the risks to engagement at your institution?

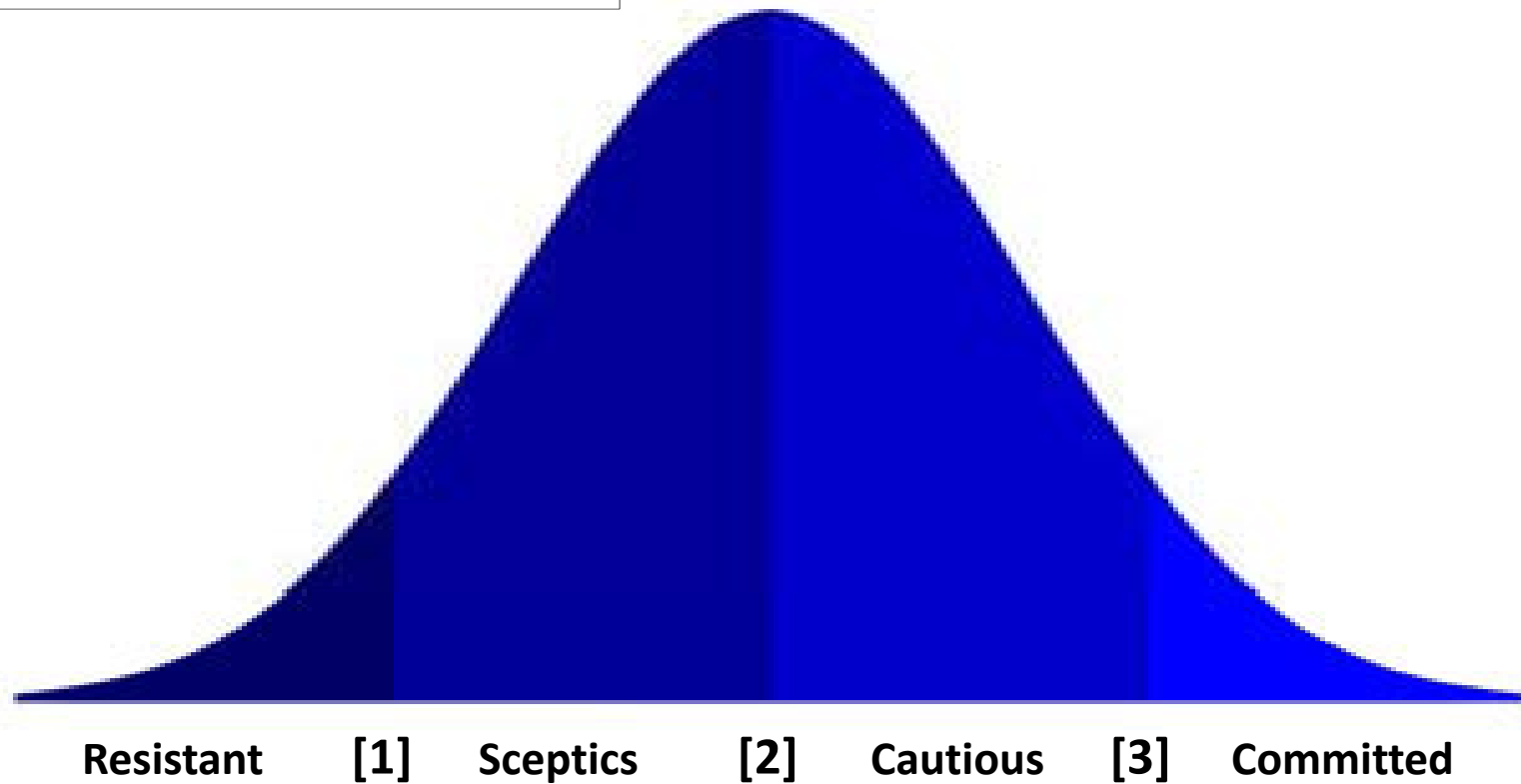
What are the strategic priorities at your institution?

How could engagement focus more on those priorities?

Who are your current allies?

What additional allies do you need?

Barriers to Change



[1] Manage resistance

[2] Provide evidence to sceptics

[3] Provide incentives to attract and engage the cautious

Remember the Bell Curve

- Focus on the willing and the interested; work from right to left!
- Respect the views of those who resist, but do not let them dominate the discussion
- Recognize that there are diverse concerns – this requires diverse responses
- You can implement almost any change with about 25% of the relevant personnel on board - because **many remain passive/neutral**

Questions for you

Who are your Early Adopters of Engagement?

What do you think motivates them?

Who might your next target group be and what might get them involved?

Plus/Minus Factors for 'Councils'

- Ineffective if only made up of 'the choir' or dominated by one or two personalities
- Can be seen as an 'inside group' or club
- Once initial tasks or goals are met, interest may wane
- ✓ Provides continuity in case of transitions
- ✓ Expands the level of input and influence
- ✓ Enhances objectivity and reflection
- ✓ Creates an institution-wide perspective

Quality Design Elements & Strategies

- Specific mission, tasks, 'terms of reference' or scope of work
- Intentional logic for member selection (aligned with purpose and with a mix of perspectives across institution)
- Meetings with purpose – Action-oriented, evidence-based; links to Tracking & Measuring
- Temporary sub-groups that involve others
- Rotating membership schedule
- Leadership endorsement
- Strategic choice of chair
- Scheduled Sunset Review

Start Planning Today

- Useful tools:
 - Defining the Engaged Campus
 - Holland Matrix
 - Purposes Worksheet
 - Planning the Vision for Our Community Engagement
 - Civic Engagement Group Models