The Collaboration Continuum

NORDP Facilitating Working Group

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Collaboration Continuum

- Shared Interest
- Clusters or Interest Groups
- Collaborative Working Groups
- Proposal Teams
- Research Teams

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...

Examples
Collaboration Continuum

Shared Interest

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Shared Interests

Goals = Potentials = Constraints

- Enhance opportunities to find out about other research
- Enhance knowledge of other faculty and their research

Faculty:
- Know what other research is being conducted
- Extra time to explore connections
- Have a place to make connections
- Are rewarded for collaboration

- Too busy
- Ignorance of other institutional research
- Disciplinary/departmental silos
- T&P policies “punish” collaboration
- Lack of institutional collaboration structures

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Shared Interests

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...

- **Focus on specific topics**
  - List interests; explore, identify, and distribute potential topics to work on
  - Hold an initial faculty meeting to discuss: assign a scribe and plan regular meetings

- **Focus on institutional expertise**
  - Brainstorm a list of people; figure out possible ways of combining interests; brainstorm ideas for what you can do with them; look for faculty who can network
  - Utilize networking strategies (such as Speed Networking); have RD staff actively network faculty
  - Create an intercollege/interdisciplinary brown bag series to share research; creating social/professional opportunities to meet
  - Identify a “Faculty Commons” space on campus where faculty can go to meet/relax/work on shared projects

- **Institutional efforts**
  - Start a seed funding program on campus for new faculty teams (interdisciplinary or a particular topic focus)
  - Develop a robust faculty expertise database to track and match faculty
  - Acculturate new faculty to promote collaboration
  - Update faculty expectations: reduce faculty time constraints; include networking as Service component
Shared Interests

Success Story

• Speed Networking on the College of Health Sciences

• Potentials
  – Strengthening ties/enhance knowledge of others
  – Cross-disciplinary topic and faculty
  – Facilitated process
  – Post-session survey

Missed Opportunity

• Sustainability Sessions

• Potentials
  – Cross-disciplinary topic and faculty
  – Structured sharing of research

• Constraints
  – Lack of follow-up
  – Lack of leadership/champion

Resources

• Growing the Scholarly & Research Enterprise through Speed Networking. Presenters: Gail Fisher, Manager, Research Development Office, University of California, San Francisco; Angela Shotts, Coordinator of Research Support, University of Alabama; Erica Gambrell, Coordinator of Research Services, University of Alabama
Collaboration Continuum

Clusters or Interest Groups

Shared Interest
Collaborative Working Groups
Proposal Teams
Research Teams
Clusters or Interest Groups

**Goals**

- Initiate regular meetings
- Enhance knowledge of other faculty
- Potential future research collaboration (eg grant proposal), potential events (symposium)

**Potentials**

- Enhance visibility of group or topic on campus
- Build new collaborations
  - Meet people working in same/similar research area, but different perspective
  - Interdisciplinary relationships
- Useful in decentralized environments

**Constraints**

- Lose momentum/interest over time without explicit goals and/or leadership

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Clusters or Interest Groups

- Could be one group or many
- Establish schedule regular meetings/meeting times
- Interdisciplinary, passionate leader(s)
- Regular ways to contact each other and share information (eg group email lists - list-serv, Google Groups)
- Hold informal lunches/meet-ups with speakers
- Establish manageable team size
- Create defined deliverables or outcomes
- Define participant roles
- Delegate leadership and logistics
- Host forum to discuss funding opportunities in a particular area
- Host faculty panel showcasing interdisciplinary collaborations that have worked (produced publications, grants, etc.) – how did the faculty member get involved? how did the new collaboration benefit his/her career and research opportunities?

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...
Clusters or Interest Groups

Success Story
• Engineering & Global health: talks from leadership led to afternoon symposium
  – Research sharing and networking led to ongoing meetings, proposal development, and external funding

Missed Opportunity
• Health systems group – too diverse and well funded individually to come together in a group on a regular basis

Resources
• Research Sandpits
  – http://www.bath.ac.uk/hss/research/research-sandpits/
  – http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/routes/network/ideas/whatisasandpit/
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Collaborative Working groups
Collaborative Working Groups

Goals

- Making progress towards defined goal(s)
- Acknowledging contribution/role of each group member
- Selecting an RFP

Potentials

- Short defined stage with an objective
- Faculty focus on common goal(s)
- Building trust
- Building common ground

Constraints

- Time/commitment from participants
- Finding leadership
- Dominating agenda of a single group member
- Documenting the work (e.g., meeting minutes)
Collaborative Working Groups

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...

- Solving one or several problems will provide focus
- Identify potential RFPs the group(s) could respond to
- Maintain regular meetings
- Set up collaboration space (Basecamp, Google Docs, etc.)
- Assist with funding searches
- Provide a timeline with milestones if applicable to the group’s goal(s)
Collaborative Working Groups

Examples

Success Story
- Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Initiative (KE)
- Potentials
  - University priority
  - Faculty interest/expertise
  - Momentum of meetings, senior faculty leader, free lunches
  - Intramural funding competition solidified faculty teams

Missed Opportunity
- Social Networking and Ethics (QW)
- Potentials
  - Faculty interest
- Constraints
  - Lack of leadership
  - Lack of organization
  - Lack of overarching goal

Resources
Collaboration Continuum

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Proposal Teams

**Goals**
- Building trust to carry out proposal development & eventually the research
- Producing a competitive grant narrative/application as a team

**Potentials**
- PI is a motivated faculty member able to motivate others
- Available RD support – especially for large or interdisciplinary proposals
- Better organization: timeline, milestones, regular meetings & communication
- Tasks assignments and accountability

**Constraints**
- Lack of knowledge of institutional resources
- Lack of knowledge about time needed to do a team proposal
- Follow through by PI and Co-I’s in their respective roles
- Getting the work done – having it fall to a single person
- Personality conflicts that can prevent buy-in and progress
- Staying together to revise & resubmit if proposal not funded
Proposal Teams

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...

- Need a strong leader (PI) and strong Co-Investigators
- Establish manageable team size
- Need someone to edit/compile proposal
- Assign responsibilities: clear division of duties, defined deliverables or outcomes
- Maintain transparent communication
- Assure each person fulfills his/her responsibilities
- Schedule project phases to meet deadlines – create a timeline
- Review of project should be continual
- Determine use of technology (email, Google Docs, Basecamp, etc)
- Provide proposal review (scientific, can be separate from grant editing support)
- Re-establish roles considering budget
- Create workshop on Science of Team Science/Collaboration at start of the project
- Consider a signed agreement between PI/group and RD professional(s)/Office of Research Development
Proposal Teams

Success Story

• NSF Coastal SEES Proposal (2013)
• Potentials
  – Many preliminary cluster meetings prior to working on the grant
  – Trust already developed in the group; faculty knew each other but may have not worked together in the past
  – Promising funding opportunity identified by RD staff, excellent fit for institution and faculty expertise and interest
  – Regular meetings set over a semester and regular communication established
  – Strong PI identified – excellent leadership and communication skills, excellent writer

Missed Opportunity

• International collaboration (Carnegie – very high institution)
• Potentials
  – Organized RD professional providing leadership, identifying roles, providing a timeline
• Constraints
  – Insufficient time to write a strong proposal
  – Language barriers; Communication breakdowns: Unspoken expectations about the need for recognition and dignity
  – Complications caused by large difference in time zones (while PI awake, the Co-Is were sleeping)
  – Issues of leadership: PI told RD professional she was taking too strong a role but then when she backed away the Co-Is took over while PI did not exert strong leadership
  – Technological issues – did not know how to use Word Track Changes function

Resources

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Research Teams

Goals

- Maintain collaborative momentum
- Publish
- Individual level:
  - Leadership development
  - Mentors for junior faculty
- Re-engage in proposal development

Potentials

- Momentum as a team (history of collaboration)
- Shared knowledge of collaborators
- Existing funding provides resources

Constraints

- Tenure & Promotion not conducive to collaboration (lack of institutional reward)
- Team research can take longer than individual research
- Leadership/Faculty attrition
Research Teams

Conditions that can increase potentials or decrease constraints...

- Work with administrative personnel in each organization
- Needs a strong management plan
- Maintain fiscal responsibility
- Establish regular meeting times
- Establish reporting mechanisms
- Assign clear responsibilities
- Set regular meetings with leadership
- Highlight/publicize successes
- Institutional recognition as strategic asset
Research Teams

Success Story
• K20 Educational Research center
• Potentials
  – Strong faculty identification with the center
  – Continually working on funding opportunities
  – State outreach contracts brought in regular funding
  – Institutionally recognized as strategic asset
  – Leader networking

Missed Opportunity
• CASR/K20
• Potentials
  – Institutional support for strategic assets
• Constraints
  – Leadership attrition

Resources
Your turn!

Questions and Comments?

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It’s a Shared Effort

How you can help:

• Leave your name/email so we can contact you about sharing ideas and/or an example
• Watch the NORDP listserv for invitations to Collaboration Continuum surveys
• Contribute references to the shared Mendeley Reference List
• Join our working group and help organize the effort

http://goo.gl/ERdWPq