

Loyola University New Orleans operates in a transactional partnership paradigm with some history of inadvertently exploitative practices. The Office of Community Engaged Learning, Teaching and Scholarship (OCELTS) is now ushering in university-wide standards to interrupt and improve those patterns in current and future community engagement initiatives. Our agenda is the promotion of institutionalization, accountability and realistic investment in our university-community partnerships, increasing their transparency and decreasing the risk to partners who participate. This Community Engagement Partnership Rubric is a tool in this campaign, intended to promote data-driven decision-making among partners.

The rubric was developed in Spring 2013 and revised over the 2013-14 academic year. The university's Community Partner Council (CPC) participated in reviewing drafts, actively work-shopping the proposed rubric over two meetings, and piloting its early uses. CPC influence is particularly heavy in characteristics such as Succession Planning where members both provided input on the construct of the rubric, as well as demonstrated what would become the well-institutionalized partnership model for succession planning with the way their agencies' handled turnover.

This rubric serves our institution as a framework to facilitate the shift from our specific problematic practices to the improvements we seek. But we recognize that every institution's aspirational trajectory differs. In publicly sharing this rubric, we intend to offer it as a template to be customized by each institution, and our descriptions and categories to act as examples for modification or inspiration.

The primary audiences for our rubric are current or potential (university and community) partners of community engaged initiatives that include 1) a significant student participation component, 2) one university partner and one community partner, and 3) at least one university staff or faculty member in a leadership role. Our aspirational characteristics in the "well-institutionalized partnership" level strive toward articulation, intentionality, sustainability, and proactivity.

We do caution that users not misapply the rubric, customized or not, by allowing individual characteristics to overshadow, or stand in for, their objectives. The intention is that by acknowledging and honoring the contextual complexity, our reactions and interactions will better reflect our values and aspirations.

References

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP RUBRIC

CHARACTERISTICS	WELL-INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTNERSHIPS	BUILDING QUALITY & COMMITMENT	BUILDING QUANTITY & CRITICAL MASS	PRIORITY AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT
Intended Duration	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-year, consistently active. <input type="checkbox"/> Shared impact. Achievement of common goals that exceed the sum of each partners' individual contribution.	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-year, inconsistently active. <input type="checkbox"/> Mutual need. Reasons for partnership include meeting each partners' individual, possibly long-term, organizational needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year. <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience or availability. Reason for partnership is for one partner to meet an immediate or short-term need.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership ends after a single event or short or isolated project. <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership is continued from previous years or previous leadership. No institutional benefit from partnership.
Reason for Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-year, used as a planning tool; includes all aforementioned sections, approved by legal counsel and risk management representatives. <input type="checkbox"/> All available means have been applied to reduce both the level and/or the likelihood of risks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Single semester or year; used to clarify expectations and hold parties accountable; includes parties' rights and responsibilities; approved by Legal Counsel or Risk Management. <input type="checkbox"/> Risks identified, assessed, solutions identified and some implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Undefined length or MOU is simply used as a check off to legitimize partnership; includes hold harmless, indemnification clauses, and liability insurance. <input type="checkbox"/> Risks identified and assessed, but no solutions identified or actions taken.	<input type="checkbox"/> No agreement signed or only informal agreement signed, missing hold harmless, indemnification clauses, and liability insurance. <input type="checkbox"/> Risks have not been articulated for one or more stakeholder groups.
Contract, MOU, or Written Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly scheduled; ongoing; directly with agency staff. Open and honest. Focused on partnership and opportunities for improvement and enhancement. <input type="checkbox"/> Partners are willing to make proactive efforts to ensure that each other's conditions are met and boundaries are respected while maintaining the achievement of intended outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular, conducted directly with partner agency staff. Open and honest. Focused primarily on participant performance, both equally on positive and negative. <input type="checkbox"/> Conditions and boundaries documented and mutually adhered to.	<input type="checkbox"/> Infrequent, informal, or done through a third party. Focused on solving problems with participants. <input type="checkbox"/> General conditions discussed for all partners but not expressly recorded. Boundaries are acknowledged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither problems nor opportunities for improvement are discussed together between parties. <input type="checkbox"/> Conditions of partnership unstated or controlled by one partner. At least one partner sees the other's boundaries as negotiable.
Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Information, results, and decision-making processes are publicly shared and proactively disseminated. <input type="checkbox"/> Partners have standing representation on each other's advisory committees. Partners spearhead decisions about how to involve partners in decision-making. Feedback regularly collected from all partners and reviewed by partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine processes exist for sharing information and results. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular solicitation of feedback from all partners is built into the partnership. Established methods exist for partners to have a voice in each other's governance, policies, and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Information and results shared upon request. <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is welcome when received, but not systematically solicited. One or more partners involved in decision-making by invitation only.	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to information, decision-making processes, or results is restricted. <input type="checkbox"/> Either partner has no voice or input. One or more parties sees the other's participation in decision-making as unnecessary.
Monitoring & Checking In	Conditions & Boundaries	Transparency	Voice & Input	
BASICS				
RELATIONSHIP				

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CHARACTERISTICS	WELL-INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTNERSHIPS	BUILDING QUALITY & COMMITMENT	BUILDING QUANTITY & CRITICAL MASS	PRIORITY AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT
CAPACITY RELATIONSHIP				
Partnership Coordination	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership management is professionalized and an opportunity for development. Senior-level staff included in partnership management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Each partner has a full-time staff person whose job description includes coordinating of the partnership.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinating the partnership is an unrecognized add-on to someone's regular responsibilities for one or more partners. Partnership duties are assigned ad hoc or to temporary, part-time or unpaid staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> No primary contacts or coordinators identified among any partners.
Resource Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners leverage resources from one another. Each partners' resources are sustainable. Policies and procedures exist for sharing resources, and for partners have preferred status.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners contribute sufficient resources to meet most partnership expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Resources are provided by one or more partners, but resource sharing is either burdensome or unsustainable.	<input type="checkbox"/> One or more partners cannot provide the resources necessary to the partnership.
Succession Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership is unaffected by turnover. New staff expect to assume partnership management, coordination, and contact roles. A succession plan has been implemented at least once.	<input type="checkbox"/> Turnover among originating partners is manageable. A succession plan is in writing and on file with all partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Turnover presents a risk to the partnership, but a succession plan is in place.	<input type="checkbox"/> Turnover would be catastrophic to the partnership. Individuals who established the partnership have personal ownership over it. No succession plan has been discussed.
Supervisory Expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors mentor, nurture and co-educate supervisees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors skillfully instruct, offer friendly support and lead supervisees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors only perform basic functions, such as verifying timesheets.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is not a supervisor on site, or volunteers report inappropriate interactions with supervisors.
Demonstrated Effectiveness [Community Partner]	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner has a demonstrated history of sustained effectiveness in the proposed partnership activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner has a demonstrated history of effectiveness in the proposed partnership areas or of sustained effectiveness in similar or related activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner has no history of attempting the proposed partnership activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner has a history of attempting the proposed partnership activities but cannot demonstrate the success of those attempts.
Demonstrated Effectiveness [Organization]	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit has a demonstrated history of sustained effectiveness in the proposed partnership activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit has a demonstrated history of effectiveness in the proposed partnership areas or of sustained effectiveness in related activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit has no history of attempting the proposed partnership activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit has a history of attempting the proposed partnership activities but cannot demonstrate the success of those attempts.

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CHARACTERISTICS	WELL-INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTNERSHIPS	BUILDING QUALITY & COMMITMENT	BUILDING QUANTITY & CRITICAL MASS	PRIORITY AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT
OUTCOMES	Intended Outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners are all invested in the intended outcomes, consider them critical and aligned with each partner's mission and/or strategic plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable benefits for all partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> One or more partners identifies intended outcomes as positive, but not urgent or critical. <input type="checkbox"/> One or more partners give and one or more partners receives a temporary benefit.	<input type="checkbox"/> Intended outcomes are either not made explicit, are identified by one or more partners as unnecessary or counter-productive, or single intended outcome is to publicly claim the other as an affiliate. <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits of partnership are unclear or demonstrably negligible for at least one partner.
	Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Burdens of participation are discussed explicitly and honestly by partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Costs of participating in the partnership are not specifically discussed by partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> The issue of cost or burden is downplayed. Or at least one partner sees the other partner's costs as irrelevant to the partnership.
	Costs or Burden	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners recognize injustice and try to mitigate the consequences of injustice. Partnership is focused on empowering people and organizations to withstand the effects of injustice and resist it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partners are focused on alleviating the consequences of injustice, rather than on prevention or systemic solutions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Over served populations are targeted. One or more partners is more focused on sustaining itself as an organization than achieving meaningful impacts.
	Justice & Charity	<input type="checkbox"/> To increase impact and inform long-term planning <input type="checkbox"/> Methodologically robust, systematic, utilization-focused, designed and conducted with input from multiple stakeholders. Outcomes and quality are prioritized.	<input type="checkbox"/> To strengthen programs and improve processes and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Tracking and assessment are systematic, methodologically sound, including multiple stakeholders, with some direct and some indirect measures. Outcomes and quality appear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfy assessment requirement
	Reason	<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive data gathered, analysis conducted, methodically stored, easily accessed. <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders validate analysis, analysis longitudinal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data remains on instrument, never compiled. Instruments stored unsystematically. <input type="checkbox"/> Data reviewed in raw form, not compiled or analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking/assessment is nonexistent. Anecdotes treated as an adequate substitute for empirical, representative data. Exclusive focus on satisfaction and quantity. <input type="checkbox"/> No records exist or they cannot be produced on request.
ASSESSMENT	Nature & Focus	<input type="checkbox"/> Data compiled in one place. Data stored systematically until analysis is complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Data compiled, analyzed for patterns, and findings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotion/PR/visibility, justify program continuation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tracking or assessment is unsystematic, satisfaction-oriented, methodologically weak. May rely on estimates. Focuses heavily on satisfaction and quantity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking/assessment data is collected but never reviewed.
	Data Collected & Stored	<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders validate analysis, analysis longitudinal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data reviewed in raw form, not compiled or analyzed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking/assessment data is collected but never reviewed.