

Dialogue and Deliberation for Furthering CCE's University-Community Engagement

The Extension Reconsidered project in New York State is encouraging a “deliberative” approach as part of our reflection on Extension and its role in University-Community Engagement. Using a deliberative process offers particular benefits, such as:

- Building understanding and knowledge about our system
- Providing a facilitated forum to help bridge differences in opinion about our work
- Engaging diverse voices in order to seek answers about how we could work
- Engaging in a democratic process to model problem solving

Deliberative processes come in many forms, but all include elements of pre-determined ground rules, respectful listening and inclusion. A good survey of deliberative processes is available online at the [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#). Choosing an appropriate deliberative process should be based on your goals in using a deliberative process, the amount of time you can commit to the process, and the availability of resources.

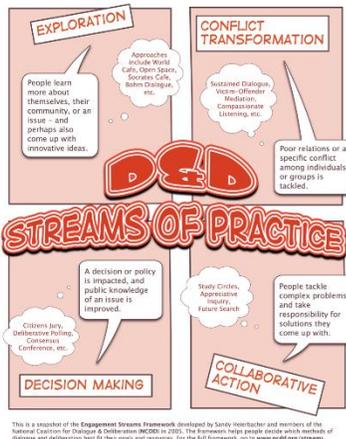


Figure 1 There are many methods for dialogue and deliberation. For a full overview see: the Engagement Streams Framework from NCDD (linked below)

One well-tested model is the “deliberative forum”, developed by the Kettering Foundation’s [National Issue Forums](#). This model offers a strong method for engaging people with diverse perspectives and experiences, and promoting a dialog that helps participants learn more about other views, recognize tradeoffs inherent in each view, and emerge with a richer understanding of choices and opportunities for Extension.

The main elements of the Kettering deliberative forum model are facilitated group discussion(s) prompted by a discussion guide that lays out three distinct responses to a framing question¹, with closing reflections and assessment. In the case of Extension reconsidered, a potential framing question is: “What should Extension’s role be in its second century?” The process can be tailored to meet the interests, goals, and time and resource availability of a particular host county or region. CCE’s Extension Reconsidered team will provide support and assistance for planning and for the events.

The goal of these deliberative forums is to engage diverse stakeholders in a process of discussion and reflection that will contribute to local dialogs and relationships, and will help shape the implementation of Strategic Plan Initiative A as we move forward. University-Community Engagement spans the breadth of extension work here in New York State, and by holding deliberative forums in each of the several regions of New York State and on campus we hope to attain a fair representation of citizens, collaborators, staff, and faculty with an interest and stake in our work as we move forward in fulfilling the promise of CCE’s Strategic Plan.

¹ For more information about framing questions see: Naming and Framing Difficult Issues to Make Sound Decisions, Kettering Foundation (2011) <http://kettering.org/publications/naming-and-framing-difficult-issues-to-make-sound-decisions/>

Strategic Initiative A: University-Community Engagement

“CCE will serve as the flagship for the University’s federally and statutorily mandated efforts in public engagement and outreach, thereby ensuring that the research, knowledge, and collaborative potential across the University is readily accessed and utilized by New York State residents, institutions, and communities.” People, Purpose, Impact” A Strategy for Engagement in the 21st Century. Cornell Cooperative Extension (2012)

We are hoping to have 4-6 deliberative events altogether between now and September, with some hosted in county associations and one or more hosted on campus. The results of these deliberative forums, and other public deliberations occurring as part of Extension Reconsidered, will be synthesized in a document to be presented on October 8, 2014 at the CCE Executive Leadership Conference.

A very good overview of multiple deliberation methods and their use and contexts is provided in the [EngagementStreams Framework](#) (pdf) developed by [the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#).

Specific information on the National Issues Forum process can be found online at: <http://www.nifi.org/>

Thanks to Sandy Heierbacher of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation for providing the image and Engagement Streams Framework for inclusion here.