**Call Notes from January 19, 2011**

**Next Call**: Wednesday, February 2, 4-5 p.m. EST. Call-in number: 866-205-7636. A few days before the call, John and Tim will add the revised outline and timeline in Dropbox and alert the group via e-mail.

**Topics Discussed**:

* First round of feedback from Bruce, Matthew, and Barbara
* Purpose of policy paper, including audiences (higher education leaders and stakeholders; policy makers; funders; and constituents of IA, NERCHE, and the Center) and policy objectives
* Work plan, including timeline for revising drafts, collecting feedback, and launching
* Strategy for dissemination of policy paper and *Change* magazine article

**Actions**:

* Contact Nancy Cantor and *Change* magazine: Susan will e-mail Nancy to see if she’s comfortable contacting Peg Miller at *Change* magazine. If Miller agrees to schedule a conversation, either John or Susan will join Nancy. Conversation will clarify timeframe.
  + At some point, John or Susan should ask Nancy for her ideas about dissemination – for example, a Presidents Council Meeting at the White House?
* Revise outline: John and Tim will draft a new outline for the paper, including recommendations for developing both the shorter piece and the longer, narrative piece for *Change*, and assigning writing tasks.
* Revise timeline: John and Tim will do the next draft of the schedule, including milestones for writing, vetting, and launching. Both for vetting and dissemination, each of the partner organizations (IA, NERCHE, and the Center) will think about other event and constituency opportunities in 2011-2012. Some opportunities for vetting and launching include:
  + Sunday, May 22, 2011, 4-6 p.m. in NYC before Imagining America’s National Advisory Board Meeting. Jamie will follow-up.
  + AASCU’s American Democracy Project National Meeting, Orlando, Florida, June 2-4, 2011
  + AAC&U’s Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success, University of Vermont, June 14-18, 2011
  + IA conference in the Twin Cities, Sept. 22-24, 2011
  + IA conference in NYC, May 2012

**Rough Transcript**:

John: How should we incorporate feedback into next draft?

Susan: I sensed a need to articulate the policy paper’s purpose in an affirmative frame that builds on opportunities rather than thinking about it as a critique of existing practice (differentiation between good and bad, thick and thin). We could still incorporate critique, but with a sense of possibility and momentum.

Tim: Yes, similar to the tone of Susan’s “Architecture of Inclusion” piece that articulates a theory of change, that is less about reacting and more about leveraging the notion of full participation.

Adam: Yes, we’re saying inclusion and participation can be heightened by highlighting and furthering connections to civic engagement. We need to recognize what’s there that’s working, and point out tools that are more inclusive.

John: In the next draft, we’ll connect the data to a more abstract frame regarding actual institutional practice (what does it mean on a particular campus?); acknowledge the complicated history of interdisciplinary units and their connection between diversity and engagement; and address nuances of how community engagement is done, particularly in relation to advancing diversity, because, as one of the respondents pointed out, it can be done in ways that undermine diversity efforts. We’ll also measure language and tone. For me, the driving motivation for doing this document is the complicated and nuanced organizational culture in higher education, where bringing about change is difficult, and the history of diversity and engagement is complex. We’ll want to acknowledge that and raise issues in a way that aren’t currently being raised, and do it in a way that creates an opening for change strategies in higher education.

Tim: The era that we’re in now is trying to come to grips with the sun setting of affirmative action policies. We’re employing more culturally based pathways to full participation. Imagining America’s asset as a consortium is its ethos and mission, which might flavor the policy paper in a way that’s distinctive. Coupling that with a positive tone is to our advantage.

Susan: The way the document is currently framed, we make an assertion at the outset that these things are related, and then we have a list of data points that support that they’re related. The title of the document ends on “the success of underserved students.” Do we want to have a more pointed impact around that question? In doing that, do we need to specify the mechanism of relationship among the different components, and also among the different data points? There are conversations happening in silos at the university (some on diversity, on faculty diversity, on public citizenship, etc.). Our claim asserts that if you’re interested in the success of underserved students, those things need to be brought together. If you bring them together with the goal of advancing the success of underserved students, you also achieve other goals because they are interrelated. Undeserved students’ success exists in a context of an institutional environment with dynamics about faculty, about the public value of the work, about who is in the community and how institutions connect with them, etc. If you put underserved students’ success at the center, all those dynamics need to be engaged to enable that success. In the process of doing that, you’re also advancing a set of other interrelated goals. Our feedback revealed that that’s not self-evident. We have to provide an understanding of how and why the dynamics are interrelated. I wonder if the policy paper will have the biggest punch if it has a concrete outcome attached to it – the success of underserved students. And the policy paper says you can’t do that without these other things. I think it would be powerful; not new, but not the usual way it’s talked about.

John: Yes, it will be helpful to have your thinking and writing on that section.

Dudley: Yes, and the success of underserved students also relates to the recruitment process. I also like the idea of bringing in some history – as Barbara’s comment indicated – to support what we’re saying now. So it doesn’t seem like we’ve snapped this out of the blue. There are historical currents. Like Tim said, affirmative action is no longer the mechanism for this. We seem to be asserting a general context that the recruitment and success of underserved students is important to creating a culture of democracy and of economic competitiveness. And yes, I agree with making it concrete.

Tim: Yes, in the spirit of being concrete about our intentions, Susan’s suggestion helps us to claim this as a policy paper.

Susan: It’s not a concept paper – it has to have a policy attached!

Tim: We should connect the relationship between underserved students and the faculty who have demonstrated the greatest interest or activity in publicly engaged scholarship and teaching, and the implications of faculty diversity.

Adam: As we’re talking about actual institutional practice, where on a campus are the decisions made about institutional diversity? It’s about campus culture, and where those offices are located.

Tim: I was reading a paper about the evolution of deans of women to student affairs offices, which started with the needs of women being “the other,” but it became efficacious when it moved into the main center of decision-making at the institution. It goes to Adam’s point about power centers at the university.

Susan: Regarding the length and style of the document, it’s currently short, punchy. Is we’re talking about now a more narrative format that would spin out a kind of theory, i.e. a story line of why the success of underserved students (regarding access, participation, and career pathways) connects with all these other things? What are thoughts about a narrative structure and length?

Tim: We should also pay attention to the audiences we’re targeting for change, so it can be developed for a particular venue.

John: I envisioned something shorter, with less narrative, to try to pack as much punch as we can. Maybe the *Change* piece would be longer, more narrative, would tell the story around it. It’s partly the story of IA’s work.

Susan: Having both forms in mind from the beginning is helpful.

John: Should our process be aimed at the longer narrative first, and distill policy from that, or vice versa?

Susan: I sensed momentum and urgency to the policy piece. How will the policy change get taken up, either by IA as an organization or in the public arena? Should we think about it in relationship to some event or is it enough to just put it out there?

Dudley: There will be a series of opportunities for dissemination; we need to know who the audiences are. I was recently at the Mellon Foundation talking to program officers in Scholarly Communications and the Arts. They said a policy paper would be helpful because in previous conversations they’ve had trouble getting their “arms around” IA. They understand its aspirations, but not the case for the linkage of engagement with access, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

John: I sense urgency. I don’t know what a symbolic event could be. When we did the Presidents’ Declaration at Campus Compact it was the turn of the century on July 4.

Susan: It depends on the timeframe for *Change* magazine. I can e-mail Nancy and suggest she contact Peg Miller.

Dudley: I would suggest John or Susan join Nancy on the conversation with Peg.

John: Having a better sense of timeframe is an outcome of that conversation.

Dudley: My sense of urgency is people wished they had it five years ago, but if it comes in September, the opportunity (and the problem) isn’t going away. For an appropriate launch, is there some connection with the White House since IA got a start there, or with some other high visibility convening or conference?

Susan: The Department of Education’s priority is on linking higher education institutions with solving tough community problems (e.g., sustainability, K-12 education), and I understand that there is considerable interest in the White House with making those connections.

Tim: John, how was the AAC&U roundtable sponsored by Department of Education?

John: There is an opening, but I didn’t have a sense that anyone around that table was putting the pieces together in the way that we’re talking about. The work that we’re doing came up with Ira Harkavy, and he thought it was really interesting. It was not part of the discourse. There was a lot of talk about civic engagement, where it fits in higher education, and diversity, and even the diversity around the table at the meeting, but it didn’t get to the level of what it means on our campuses in the long-term as we think about the students that are coming to our campuses, the faculty we are trying to recruit and retain, pedagogical practices, scholarship, etc.

Susan: My sense is that it would be great to create urgent deadlines, to use the May 2011 event in NYC to get feedback, to use the process as an opportunity to create conversations within our organizations – and to get feedback and get people energized, and feel we’ve done justice to the feedback. I imagine creating a schedule where there are milestones and targets, including opportunities for collaborative engagement. Then align the launch with a large public event (perhaps the IA conference in the fall) so the policy document gives rise to some mobilization. The vetting creates energy and the feedback benefits it; the drafting becomes part of the process to get it into positions where it can have impact.

Dudley: Ask Nancy, whoever talks with her next, to see if she has ideas for the White House. In one sense, IA is a legacy of the White House, and she was involved early on. In May, we could suggest a critique with the IA board on Sunday, May 22, from 4-6 p.m. I like the idea of building stakeholders as we go along.

Tim: How does the policy paper relate to the future work of NERCHE and the Center for Institutional and Social Change?

John: I’d be happy to shift it to a more iterative, collaborative process. If we’re going to have a draft in May, what are the key places for it to be vetted? What is the process for gathering that feedback into the writing group to incorporate into further iterations? In terms of the launch, I think it can be multiple launches. We can insert ourselves into the discourse, such as at AAC&U, AASCU, and the American Democracy Project. In terms of NERCHE’s work, it would be a welcome addition to conversations in our Think Tanks and in Project Compass. It potentially could inform the work we do with the Carnegie engagement classification. In 2015, we’ll be doing the classification again. There isn’t a question within the documentation framework that raises issues around the relationship between community engagement and the success of underserved students, and there should be.

Susan: This work is at the heart of what we’re trying to do with our research with Syracuse University, and a number of other projects. The way we’re doing this work as a group of organizations coming together to share intellectual capital and produce something where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, we’re each bringing different resources to the table, whether its conceptual frameworks, experience with Carnegie, a long history of doing this work. The idea that the Center could be part of that work, and we can use the document and collaboration to support going to foundations together to get funded to bring this work forward in a concrete way and connect it to events that we could jointly sponsor or invite each other to, all of that seems consistent with why we exist as an organization. The idea that coming out of the policy document could be concrete proposals that we would make collaboratively to support advancing this work together in the future is exciting. This is the first step to exploring how three centers of gravity can work together.

Tim: One outcome of the call is that we arrived at having a punchy outcomes-based policy paper and also a longer, more narrative expression for *Change*.

Susan: Perhaps John and Tim could do another outline of the punchy policy paper to reflect the feedback and conversation. In the outline, feel free to allocate jobs.

John: Sure.

Susan: Feel free to have a conversation with any of us to get there.

Tim: We could do it with an eye toward what sections need to be developed more fully for the *Change* article, have two lines going.

John: Maybe it can be in between, we’ll put together an outline and flesh out a few pieces of it, and then we’ll leave other pieces open and figure out how to define different writers to different pieces. We’ll circulate the outline to writing group as basis for next call.

Dudley: John, as you and Tim go through that work, could you take the timeline and do a revision of that so it becomes iterative?

John: If we’re going to shift this to having a draft by mid-May, we need to add the places where it’s going to get vetted in the work plan, with some end point in mind. And the date that we’ll begin taking it into the public for more widespread conversations.

Dudley: One vetting to be with IA board on May 22.

John: There aren’t many academic meetings between May and September. Is the vetting period extended through the fall?

Susan: Let’s think about a vetting process over the summer to plan toward some launch event early in the fall. Anything launched after April in the academic year gets lost.

John: Yes, in September, it might get picked up by *Inside Higher Ed* and *The Chronicle*. What are opportunities in summer?

Susan: There may be synergy between the research project and this project. We’re at the beginning of that work, but we’ll put together an advisory group, map networks to be involved, plan work to do over the summer. I can imagine some opportunities coming out of that.

John: AASCU’s ADP meeting; Tim, we can propose to George to have a session there.

Tim: I’ll be at the University of Vermont with George Sanchez working on the High-Impact Educational Practices Institute, and it would be a great place to carry this policy paper forward.

John: Yes, having an open forum would be great.

Dudley: Within IA membership and its different pieces of work, there are opportunities. For example, Adam, maybe a group within PAGE could be convened to give a hard look at this?

Adam: Yes, it would be a great opportunity to have a convening with graduate students, and a way we can spread out the vetting and presentation throughout 2011-2012.

John: We’ll work up a revised timeline and put it on Dropbox. When you add something to Dropbox, just e-mail the group.

Susan: I’ll be in Boston this spring working on a culture and community initiative with the Harvard Business School. The dean brought in Robin Ely, who writes about diversity, learning organizations, inclusion, integrating diversity into the mission, all of that, in the context of business. She’s been put in charge of this large initiative to do a different kind of organizational assessment of who is a full participant of the Harvard Business School, and how does that connect to its mission of producing public value in the world. And then where are the barriers, and what can be done to make Harvard Business School a place to advance those goals? They’re using “Architecture of Inclusion” as a frame, but not necessarily using it with faculty. Ely works with David Thomas who works on cross-racial mentoring, and the conditions under which people of color succeed in higher eduation and in corporate America. So these things could come together in some way; this whole idea of transformative leadership feels like a cross-cutting theme that might emerge from this, we’ll see.

Dudley: Let’s continue to share such information on each call because we may spot more opportuniries.

Susan: The Center agreed to help think about IA’s conference in NYC in 2012, so there are opportunities there to build toward something, and to start the conversation now about how that might take place.

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