

Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative

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Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative

PROPOSAL

To create a 3-year partnership of Arizona Community Colleges Campuses to convene and moderate statewide forums on issues facing Arizona. The topic of the first year's forums would be the role of Arizona Community Colleges in addressing community issues.

Objectives

1. To convene citizens, community leaders, elected and appointed officials to familiarize them with the programs and services currently offered by Arizona Community Colleges;
2. To engage them in a discussion about community needs and issues and how Arizona Community Colleges can assist them in addressing those needs and issues.
3. To broaden and deepen the relationship between Arizona Community Colleges and the communities they serve, to expand community ownership of Arizona Community Colleges and to enable people in the community to see the relevance of their community colleges.

Background

In recent decades, Arizona Community Colleges have expanded their mission from providing higher education and workforce skills to providing skills for living. They have repositioned themselves from education-oriented institutions to community-responsive institutions. The community colleges' renewed commitment to their civic mission is the most recent example of this responsiveness.

The Arizona Community Colleges are singularly well positioned to reinvigorate democracy and citizenship. Although there are many programs delivered by community colleges that work toward developing the skills needed for civic engagement, the Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative distinguishes itself by being statewide and available to virtually every individual regardless of education, socio-economic status, ethnic origin, etc. It is also unique in that it is built on the very foundation of representative government. A true representative government must act in the common interest and only the public can identify that interest. A representative government must have a *public voice* that informs its public policy decisions. Politics doesn't begin with electing officials and passing legislation. It begins in the choices that citizens make about the purposes and direction of their communities.

METHODOLOGY

Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative - Issue Forums

The Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative proposes a statewide network of issue forums that would be convened and moderated by Arizona State Community Colleges. These issue forums would provide a safe, non-partisan, venue for citizens to struggle with challenging issues facing their communities. The issue forums are rooted in the simple notion that citizens need to come together to reason and talk – to deliberate about common problems facing their communities.

Deliberation distinguishes itself from debate or dialogue in that the “talk” focuses on making tough choices after considering the trade-offs and consequences of the various approaches to dealing with the problem. Making choices about how to proceed in addressing a community problem is difficult because people favor different approaches. These different approaches may contain conflicting values. People have to work through these conflicts until they have a shared sense of direction or common ground for moving ahead. Diverse groups of people finding common ground in for action yields sound approaches to the solving community problems. The goal of public deliberation is to make sound decisions as a community about what action is best for the public as a whole.

Common ground for action is often confused with *consensus* or *compromise*. The distinction between these terms may seem like hairsplitting, but it does make a difference. The concept of *common ground for action* is based in a very different understanding from that which lies behind *consensus* (total agreement) or *compromise* (an apportioning of agreement). *Common ground for action* suggests a relationship we have reached when we know we must take action together as a community **even if** we do not fully agree about our convictions. People don't give up their convictions to adopt other people's convictions. Nonetheless, they can find ways to work with each other –sometimes even when they don't particularly like each other – that is the reality that the phrase *common ground for action* attempts to capture.

A process known as “issue framing” is the structure behind an issue forum. When framing an issue, researchers have found that the public's view of how an issue should be addressed can be “clustered” into three or four approaches (there are never just two polar opposites). Generally speaking, these clusters represent values held by the public involving their beliefs about a free market, education, government intervention, personal responsibility, etc. Presenting the choices in this way invites citizens to confront the conflicts among the different approaches and avoids the usual debates in which people lash out with simplistic arguments.

Issue forums provide the public space in which people can make decisions together about their common fate. Citizens cannot act together until they decide together. By making choices, the public defines what it considers to be in the public interest and finds common ground for action.

Format of Deliberative Discussion Issue Forums

Welcome

“Ballots”

Pre-forum ballots are a way to get everyone focused on the issue (e.g. the role of community colleges) and a way for each participant to identify their initial feeling on the issue.

Ground rules

Ground rules stress the importance that issue forums are not an arena for debate. At this time, it is stressed that there is choice work to do and that the forum is designed to help the group find common ground and a shared direction for acceptable approaches to community problems.

Background Information

The background information provides participants with an overview of what is currently happening within the issue. It is presented with as much objectivity as possible. In our initial forums we plan to use the college-specific results of the economic impact analysis of Arizona community colleges being undertaken through the ACCA.

Personal Stake

In the first few minutes participants are encouraged to talk about their personal experience with the issue to be deliberated during the forum and to tell their stories. This makes the issue palpable and genuine, human rather than abstract.

The Deliberation

Participants examine the “framed” issue by deliberating on the three or four approaches to addressing the issue. In a typical forum, the participants discuss each approach for approximately 20 minutes.

Ending a Forum

After deliberating, participants reflect on the discussion and look for common ground for action. The ending of a forum is determined by why the group was convened. If the group works together in some capacity, it is an opportunity to identify acceptable action steps for the group to take. Conversely, the forum may serve only to gain a sense of what the public is willing or not willing to do to resolve a community issue.

Ballot (Post-forum)

For the participants, the post-forum ballot is a way to face the conflict found within them. Often they discover aspects of each choice that they hold valuable. Yet, the things they care deeply about are often in conflict. For the conveners of the forum, the post forum ballots offer an opportunity to gain a sense of how the

public is “thinking” about this issue AFTER they have reflected deeply about the consequences of taking action in any direction.

Significant Findings From the Studies of Public Deliberation

Over the past fifteen years, there have been more than a dozen studies, conducted with a variety of research methods, on the effects of citizen deliberation. The studies indicate that public deliberation makes a difference. Not only does it change the way individuals understand an issue, it changes the way people talk with each other; and it improves a community’s ability to deal with its issues, concerns and problems:

Here are some other highlights:

- Every kind of person seeks out and takes part in citizen deliberations.
- Virtually everyone is capable of deliberating important public issues.
- People reconsider their own opinions and judgments.
- People recognize the view of others and develop a greater understanding of those viewpoints.
- People approach issues more realistically and are willing to consider costs, consequences and trade-offs.
- People come away with a greater sense of efficacy, self-worth and confidence (including increasing their image of themselves as political actors who are capable of participation and action).
- People become more interested in political and social issues.
- People define their self-interest more broadly.
- People increase their activity around issues.
- Deliberation in a community establishes and enhances communication between groups.

These proven benefits of deliberative forums embody many of the very important skills of citizenship. These skills are not easily taught in a classroom or in an abstract way. Deliberative issue forums provide the rare opportunity for student and community members to engage in the endangered practice of deliberative democracy within their community where it is relevant and applicable.

Inviting office holders to the forums

The importance of including officeholders in the forums cannot be overstated. This is a wonderful opportunity for Arizona Community Colleges to begin a relationship with or enhance pre-existing relationship with elected officials, and with candidates who are standing for office in each service area. As community leaders with voting privileges, these important individuals will make uninformed choices about legislation impacting our community colleges if they do not understand the important role community colleges play in our communities.

For good participation from our elected and appointed officials and candidates for office, as well as any appropriate agency staff from federal, state, county or local government, we must supply them with the one thing they have little or no access to...a public voice. For the most part, public officials hear only special interest and “squeaky wheels” which may or many not be representative of the majority of the public.

Question such as: “What will I learn? How will this make me a better legislator, leader or politician?” must be answered in new and compelling ways.

Experienced conveners report the following “do’s” and “don’ts” when inviting officeholders to a forum:

- Do invite the officeholder to attend a forum to listen to the deliberation.
- Do provide some suggestions about what the officeholder might listen for. (Examples being (1) what matters most to people; (2) how did they deal with the conflicts and trade-offs; (3) was there any sense of possibility?)
- Do “protect” the officeholder. If you invite the office holder to the conversation, make it clear to the participant they are not to demand answers or create situations that change the ground rules. Forums should be a “safe-place” for officeholders, candidates and agency staff to meet with the public.
- Do invite them to share how they are struggling or wrestling with the conflict and trade-offs in the issue.
- Don’t invite office holders to have a “debate” with other officeholders.
- Don’t expect or allow officeholders to become the “experts” to tell participants what should be done.
- Don’t demand that they justify their position.

FIRST YEAR FORUMS 2002 THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

“...the agenda of the campus is not set primarily by those on the campus but by the customers of the institution. Listening becomes the key skill because if you know what is wanted and how it can be provided, then you do have the proverbial better mousetrap and people will indeed beat a path to your door.”

--Robert Theobald, Futurist

Focus

The focus of this year's forum is on the role of community colleges. We are proposing this issue because of the following desired outcomes:

- During this important election year, a forum on the role of community colleges can help inform the candidates and elected officials about the valuable services currently provided by community colleges i.e., economic impact, workforce development, community building activities, etc.
- A forum on the role of community colleges will harvest valuable community input regarding the needs of the communities we serve and can help us direct programming in order to address those needs.
- Issue forums provide an opportunity to develop relationships with candidates and elected officials.
- Forums support goals and objectives of several of Arizona's Community Colleges who have committed to developing a civic mission. (see below)
- To begin the three-year Initiative with an issue that is not overwhelming in scope or too politically sensitive while we build capacity.
- The forums can be used by each institution to connect with their community to achieve an institutional goal unique to the individual campus while simultaneously supporting a statewide initiative which benefits all Arizona Community College campuses.

Naming the issue

One of the first tasks of the Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives from each campus, would be to “name the issue in public terms”, People recognize that an issue “hits home” when they hear it named in public terms, described in the same terms they use to talk about *what* they care about and *why* they care about it. For example, a community may have a land use problem. If it is only talked about in expert terms of density and infrastructure, many citizens won't engage the issue. It is when they hear it in terms of what they care about, i.e., an undesirable business is being built next door, that they readily grasp its day-to-day impact on their lives. So the issue of “What is the Role of the Community College” needs to be named in a way that any citizen can identify with the issue, regardless of the person's point of view.

After naming the issue in public terms, then a range of choices for public action can be identified that reflect the different concerns and include the tension between and among the different positions people hold.

Public policy institute training

Once the issue is clearly identified, the Steering Committee will collaborate to begin framing the issue for public discussion. Training in the art and craft of issue framing and deliberation will occur in a Public policy institute (PPI). This training vehicle was developed by Kettering Foundation to assist citizens and communities in thoughtful and successful public deliberation. The PPI which will provide training for this Initiative will take place on April 18-20 in Phoenix. Led by national and local faculty from Kettering, the Steering Committee members and the Moderators identified for each college will participate in intensive workshop sessions to acquire the skills and techniques to moderate the issue forums that are the heart of this Initiative. *The PPI will begin with a “sample” forum on the role of community colleges on the evening of April 18, and all ACCA members are encouraged to attend so they can experience what the forums on their campuses will be like.* (More detailed information on the PPI will be provided to Steering Committee members and Moderators at a later time.)

2002 Time line

JANUARY

- ACCA leadership is briefed on the rationale and structure of the Initiative (1/17).

FEBRUARY

- Each Arizona Community College will select a **college representative** to serve on a statewide working group to assist in designing the Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative and make recommendations for implementing statewide forums on the role of community colleges. (2/15)
- Grant is written for project costs (consultants, training, Coordinator (pt) etc.)
- Each Arizona Community College will enroll two individuals from their college who can be trained in the skills of moderating deliberative democracy the Public Policy Institute (PPI) in Phoenix on to be held on April 18, 19 & 20.
- First meeting of the College Representative/Conveners from each college serving as Steering Committee. Meeting schedule for 2002 will be determined.
- PPI curriculum design

MARCH

- Directors and College Conveners will collaborate to identify at least 2 people from each college/site who can be recruited and trained as **Moderators**
- Develop overall schematic for the forums, how participation will be secured, audience, facilitation, flow, candidate involvement, closure, etc.
- Secure both a local/regional media outlet and the Arizona Republic as co-sponsors of the forum.
- Design pilot forum
- Invite college presidents and trustees to dinner (6 pm) and to pilot forum
- Develop logistical plan and checklist for each forum
- With consultant, refine process for identifying candidates and **elected officials** for involvement and securing their involvement, including contacts with party leadership

APRIL

- Public Policy Institute (April 18-20)
- Kick-off public forum on the role of community colleges on the evening of April 18, 2002

MAY

- A list of key targeted "headliner" participants from each service area should be prepared for each forum, and key individuals (College leadership, Convener, local planning committee, supportive community and political leaders etc) assigned to make 2-3 calls each to brief them on the forum and secure their attendance.
- Design Marketing campaign including but not limited to: handbill for key audiences and bulletin boards - particularly on-campus and at key government buildings, popular downtown locations (bookstores etc.), and large employers.

JUNE

- Determine locations for each forum (map of Arizona, with sites identified)
- Visit sites and scout logistics
- Candidates for local, regional, state and federal offices as well as incumbents contacted and invited to participate in the forums
- A list of politicians committed should be periodically faxed to other targeted participants in optimize attendance.

JULY

- Black out period.
- Periodic media coverage

AUGUST

- Hosting a breakfast or lunch with key civic, business and political leaders to brief them on the form and to solicit their participation.
- Forum schedule published
- Periodic media coverage

SEPTEMBER

- Hard news media coverage announcing the forums plus comprehensive listing of the event in every daily and weekly papers calendar section. These are often the prior weekend.
- Different points of view pre-advertised in statewide and local press
- Pitch a pre-forum story to both Phoenix and regional press. This is best accomplished by pre-releasing a report or study that quantifies and dramatizes the issue at hand (Year 1: results of economic impact analysis of each community college), and by arranging radio and print interviews.
- To generate forum day coverage we need (1) a large attendance; (2) to schedule the event with media deadlines in mind; and (3) to pre-commit access for the media to key "headline" participants - probably right after the conclusion of the forum, and (4) to ideally "produce" something tangible and quotable (a statement, a position paper, recommendations etc.)
- Arizona Community Colleges will convene forums on the role of community colleges in their communities prior to the 2002 General Election.

OCTOBER

- Arizona Community Colleges will convene forums on the role of community colleges in their communities prior to the 2002 General Election.
- Periodic media coverage

NOVEMBER

- Election
- Thank you's

DECEMBER

- Summary/evaluation
- Written report to ACCA on results and evaluation

WHAT WE NEED FROM THE PRESIDENTS & THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The commitments we need from each President or Chancellor are listed below. Campuses that lack certain resources need not exclude themselves from the process, and our forum schedule will be developed in order to enable all colleges to implement the Initiative in a fashion that meets its own needs and circumstances. Please contact us with your challenges so we can help you overcome them.

Your Attendance at the Kick-Off Event Scheduled on the Evening of April 18

For your convenience, the kick-off event has been scheduled for the evening of April 18th, 2002 after the ACCA Presidents and Trustee meeting. There will be a dinner, media interviews and a forum on the Role of Community Colleges. (The exact time and place have yet to be determined.)

Human Resource Needs

One College Representative/Convener

The ACLI will need at least one representative from each Arizona Community College to serve on the **Steering Committee** to plan and implement the Initiative. The college president will nominate this representative. The representative will need regular access to the President and senior administration.

Two Moderators from Each College

The ACLI would like at least two individuals from each college to be trained in the skills of moderating deliberative democracy. This training will take place at the Public Policy Institute (PPI) in April in Phoenix. Since moderating forums is difficult work, having co-moderators to share in the task assures that it does not become too much for one individual. It also prevents cancellation due to moderator illness. (Note: once you have identified the Convener, we will work collaboratively with that individual to assist you in identifying the Moderators. Do not feel compelled to nominate these individuals at this time.)

Marketing Director or Other Marketing Staff

Although public relation materials will be created by the ACLI, distribution of those materials into the community must be implemented by the Marketing Department of each community college.

Research Director

An individual in charge of “harvesting” results of the forum and any public policy changes that might develop as a result of the citizen forums. In the first year, your Office of Institutional Research could fill this role.

Co-Directors (2)

Bernie Ronan, Director of the Center for Civic Participation at Maricopa College and Susan E. Adams, Director of The Leadership Center at Yavapai College will serve as Directors of the Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative. Staff support to facilitate start up of this Initiative will be provided by The Leadership Center of Yavapai Community College and the Center for Civic Participation of the Maricopa Community Colleges.

Coordinator (1)

If grant funding is available, we would like to hire a full-time **Coordinator** working to support of the Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative, in order to assure quality across the state and to enable all colleges to participate in Year 1. Salary range: \$60,000. If immediate hiring of the coordinator is desired, the Arizona Community Colleges could partner to underwrite this position.

Public Affairs Consultant

If grant funding is available, a **Public Affairs Consultant** will be hired to develop and implement the Initiative in partnership with the Marketing Department at each Community College

Other Resources

Space

The Initiative will take place on Arizona’s community college campuses. Therefore space will need to be identified by each college where a forum as described in this proposal can be held. College representatives working with the Steering Committee will develop more detailed space requirements as the Initiative progresses.

Event costs

Each forum will entail certain logistical costs, e.g. refreshments, materials, printing etc. Each college is expected to incur these costs.

College Representative/Convener (1)

The ACLI will need at least one representative from each Arizona community college to serve on the **Steering Committee** to plan and implement the Initiative. The college president will nominate this representative. The representative will need regular access to the President and senior administration.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Faculty or administrator

- History of community involvement e.g. through their academic discipline, service learning, community partnerships
- Fairly well-known and well-regarded by college faculty and staff (5+ years of service)
- Network of contacts in the local and regional community

COMMITMENT

- Shares the goals and values of the Initiative
- Be spokesperson and point of contact for ACLI on their campus and in their community
- Seconded to the ACLI, through overload or administrative assignment, for at least one year
- Work with team of ACLI staff and other reps from Arizona community colleges
- Work with team of volunteers from their own college to plan and implement the forums at their campus(es)
- Attend training session (Public Policy Institute) April 18-19
- Attend regular meetings of ACLI working group
- Be responsible for logistics and implementation of forum(s) on their campus(es)

Moderators (2)

Good moderators in deliberative democracy are scarce, in part because our society is unaccustomed to deliberation. Political discussion tends to lean towards debate. In contrast, deliberation is weighing the costs and consequences of a variety of possible actions. It is a process of discovering what is valuable to people and becoming aware that divergent values pull us in different directions when considering options for address problems in our community. These conflicts in what we hold valuable have to be worked through. Deliberation doesn't result in absolute agreement, but it can (1) reveal the general direction in which people want to move, (2) the range of approaches to a problem that would be acceptable, and (3) what people are not willing to do to solve a problem.

In order to assure that the Arizona Civic Leadership Initiative (ACLI) will have moderators skilled in leading deliberation, the ACLI will sponsor a 3-day training in the deliberative democracy in Phoenix on April 18, 19, & 20, 2002. Known as Public Policy Institute, the purpose of the workshop is to train moderators in the principles and practice of deliberative democracy.

When choosing two moderators to assist your college with these forums, think about the following characteristics and skills needed for successful moderation in

deliberative democracy. Experienced moderators report that it is important to insure that:

- Everyone is encouraged to participate, but no one should dominate.
- Listening is as important as talking.
- Participants are encouraged to speak to each other, rather than just to the moderator.
- Participants must fairly consider every option and fully examine all the trade-offs involved in a choice.
- The moderator is not constantly intervening. To the contrary, the essence of good moderating is to encourage people to engage one another. It is the group's responsibility to do the work of deliberation.
- Above all, the moderator also must remain impartial so that the group can do its job.
- Move the conversation beyond sharing stories to looking at costs and consequences of the options
- Make sure that best case/positive side of all options are considered and understood. To diminish an option is to stop deliberation.
- Stay with deliberation until participants have identified the conflicts among the approaches.
- Can assist participants in discovering a shared purpose or recognition of how interests are interconnected.

(Note: some faculty have a difficult time moderating issue forums because their skill is direct instruction. In deliberation, the participants teach each other through sharing thoughts and concerns. Please keep this in mind when considering potential moderators.)

RELEVANCE OF THE INITIATIVE TO THE MISSION AND GOALS OF ARIZONA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Cited below are samples of mission/purpose statements, vision statements and strategic goal statements from selected Arizona community colleges that support the objectives of this Initiative.

AZ Western College **(A Vision in Progress)**
Arizona Western will serve as a center for community wellness as a major part of improving the quality of life for our people.

Coconino Community College **(Purpose & Goals)**
Cultural and Community Service's purpose is to develop and provide activities and programs that celebrate and preserve cultural diversity and awareness, encourage volunteer service, support community awareness, protect public welfare, and support fine and performing arts.

Northland Pioneer College **(Growth Objective)**
Expand Northland College's community outreach for providing cultural events and community services.

Cochise Community College **(Goals)**
Cochise College will expand educational opportunities to the communities it serves in order to prepare its citizens for participation in the New Economy.

Mohave Community College **(Purpose)**
Another purpose is to foster community awareness and student development by serving as a:

1. Civic Catalyst – Role model for positive citizenship evidenced by community service, leadership training, and sponsorship of student organizations.
2. Cultural and Social Center – Hub of community activity, sponsor of performing and visual arts, and provider of informational resources.

Pima Community College **(Strategic Goals)**
Assist the economic development of the greater community through collaborative planning, workforce development programs, lifelong career education and training, and technical assistance to business and governmental agencies.

Yavapai College **(Strategic Initiative and Community Benefits)**
Build healthier communities by encouraging people to participate in government and design their own future with sustainable economic development and stewardship of resources.

As result of Yavapai College, the citizens and communities in Yavapai County will have;

1. Educated and informed community leaders who possess the vision and knowledge to build healthier communities,
2. Access to the benefits or partnerships created with various private and public entities.
3. Programs and services which demonstrate accountability with respect to quality, productivity and the changing needs of the community.

Maricopa Community Colleges **(Governing Board Goals)**

Continuing/Community Education

1. Community members will be provided opportunities for personal interest and development to include:
 - Accessibility to college facilities and services as appropriate...(for)
 - Forums, dialogs for balanced views of contemporary civic and public issues.

**ARIZONA CIVIC LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE
BUDGET 2002
(Cash costs to be raised by grant writing)**

	CASH	IN-KIND
MANAGEMENT		
Co-directors		Susan Adams YC Bernie Ronan MCCD
Coordinator	60,000	
Public Affairs Consultant	10,000	
Steering Committee		Representatives ACCA
TRAINING		
Public Policy Institute (April 18-19)	5,000	Per-participant costs paid by colleges
FORUMS		
Issue framing - facilitation	5,000	Working Group
Events		Food and site costs paid by colleges
Total	80,000	

BUDGET:

- Yavapai CC serves as fiscal agent for operational budget
- Dr. Kim Sheane to advise Steering Committee
- Each college pays for costs of its participation in training, operational costs of its forum(s)
- Kettering Foundation provides \$5,000.00 for start-up costs in support of the Public Policy Institute in April and provides funding and technical assistance for this initiative.
- Center for Civic Participation provides \$5000.00 for start-up costs