

POWERED BY PUBLICS EQUITY ROUNDTABLES: A GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITIES

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ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

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INTRODUCTION

APLU's Powered by Publics Equity Roundtable series was a pilot project, undertaken with support from Lumina Foundation, to test an approach for engaging students in the transformation of higher education. The aim of the series was to elevate the voices of students from low-income and minoritized backgrounds and provide a space for constructive dialogue with universities administrators around the issues that significantly impact their ability to live, learn, and thrive.

Every university asks its students for feedback from time to time, but students often perceive surveys and focus groups as a one-way exchange. Less common are opportunities for administrators to engage with students as equal partners in the improvement of the university community. The roundtable approach provides a forum for students to speak and know they have been heard, as administrators respond in real time. At an equity roundtable, administrators intentionally seek to understand the perspectives of students who have been marginalized and move from listening to action. These events, if held regularly and with fidelity, have the potential to transform campus culture, resulting in improved student belonging, engagement, and academic success.

APLU, in partnership with Changing Perspectives, has produced this guidebook to help other universities not included in the pilot project hold their own equity roundtables on campus. By using this guide, a university can create its own spaces for inclusive and action-oriented dialogue that meet the unique needs of its student population.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is intended for university leaders whose mission is to advance student success and improve campus culture and climate. Users of this guide should have the decision-making authority to act upon the information shared at the roundtable event within a reasonable time frame. The ability to act and communicate those actions is essential for building trust with students. At these

ABOUT THE POWERED BY PUBLICS EQUITY ROUNDTABLES

APLU, as part of its [Powered by Publics](#) initiative, held a series of four university-led equity roundtables in the Summer of 2022. Institutions were selected to host and participate through a competitive RFP process. Three of the roundtables were in person, and one was held virtually.

Participants included 80 students and alumni from 20 universities across the country. The host institutions were:

- The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- University of Colorado Denver
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- The University of Texas at Arlington

Results of the roundtables are summarized in a final report, [Advancing Equity, Centering Student Perspectives](#), available on the APLU website at www.aplu.org/library/

events, participating students and alumni are making themselves vulnerable, sharing personal details, reliving past traumas, and dedicating time away from their studies, work, and family obligations. Institutions should consider assuring students that this time will be well spent and catalyze necessary change at the university. In addition, users of this guide must have a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as these values are deeply embedded in the design and implementation of the roundtable.

WHY CONDUCT AN EQUITY ROUNDTABLE?

The roundtable format allows students to generate their own ideas, in their own words, for resources, policy changes, and process improvements that will help them be successful at the university. In addition, this format allows students to become changemakers, giving them seats at the table and shared responsibility for the decisions that affect their daily lives. Finally, the roundtable format creates a space of psychological safety, in which students are genuinely cared for by leaders who are dedicated to their success. In an ideal world, these roundtables would be conducted regularly, year after year, as new classes of students are enrolled and their needs change. When conducted with care and intention, the roundtable will amplify the voices of students from minoritized groups and honor their contributions with action.

GOALS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

Although each university will have its own customized goals for an equity roundtable, at its core the roundtable is intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide a forum to candidly discuss university policies and practices and explore which policies might lead toward equity or reinforce inequities in higher education.
- Identify barriers that contribute to inequitable outcomes for low-income and minoritized students at the university.
- Hear student-posed solutions and strategies for addressing those barriers at various points throughout the student journey.

If the event is successful, participants will:

- **Know** more about the root causes of inequities in higher education and how to address them, using solutions designed by and for students.
- **Feel** seen, heard, respected, and cared for as valued members of the university community.
- **Act** with urgency and intention to address the barriers revealed during the roundtable, and ensure those actions are visible to the student and alumni who participated.



SUCCESS STRATEGY

University leaders should consider intentionally sharing these goals and desired outcomes with students prior to the event (in addition to the agenda, names, and brief bios of those who will be in attendance). It is highly recommended that leaders incorporate the goals of the forum in the request for student participation. Doing so will help students understand and buy into the purpose of the event, what to expect, and how their ideas will be used.

PLANNING

INITIAL STEPS

Universities seeking to implement an equity roundtable should allow sufficient time for planning the experience. Start by clarifying the intent of the roundtable and what success looks like for your institution. In addition, your institution should consider the following:

- Clarity on the mission, vision, and goals of the roundtable.
- Roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the planning.
- Clarifying and communicating student participant expectations, including pre-work to prepare for discussions and attendance.
- A budget. Anticipated expenses include space, food, supplies, and external facilitation or consultation, if desired.
- Criteria for recruiting students, alumni, faculty, and staff who should be invited to participate, as well as data to collect during registration.

The ideal roundtable will engage a diverse group of university leaders, adult students of color, transfer students, current students from minoritized populations, and alumni to engage in candid conversations about systemic barriers that contribute to inequitable outcomes, and strategies to overcome such obstacles for all students, particularly those from marginalized populations. The roundtables may tackle issues of equitable access to college, equitable student success, and equitable career pathways, as well as other equity priorities important to the university.



QUICK LOOK: TIMELINE FOR HOSTING AN EQUITY ROUNDTABLE

3-6 months prior to the event:

- Set a date for the convening.
- Find a venue. The venue should be accessible to students with special needs, provide audio-visual services, and allow food to be served.
- Set the agenda. Schedule a call with the planning team and facilitator(s) to agree on the agenda, pre-work, and other content. Agree on a format (virtual, in-person).



1-2 months prior to the event:

- Select students and administrators from your campus. To ensure a diverse group, engage student organizations particularly those for specific identity groups.
- Register participants. The registration form should include any pre-survey questions, demographic questions, and dietary restrictions. Students also appreciate learning more about the other participants; you may consider collecting information for mini biographies to distribute in advance.
- Order catering.



2-4 weeks prior to the event:

- Send out materials to participants. These should include the vision and goals, agenda, pre-reading, and information about other attendees.
- Designate notetakers. Clarify how information will be collected (particularly if recording is required) and how the qualitative data will be used to inform next actions.

DEVELOPING THE AGENDA

The process of developing the agenda and discussion questions will take up the bulk of planning time. Anticipate holding at least two meetings prior to the convening for the planning committee to reflect on the purpose and goals of the event, craft an agenda, and translate discussion questions for a student audience. Furthermore, campus teams will need to articulate a plan for communicating the learnings from the roundtable and the next steps for how the learnings will be utilized.

Effective framing of discussion questions is critical for success and campus leaders should prepare to allocate an ample amount of time to develop the prompting questions, including in consultation with the facilitator(s). The campus team should work collaboratively to develop thoughtful questions that will address the themes of the convening. For example, questions may address:

- How students experience the university's culture, policies, and community.
- How students use campus resources, including which groups benefit most from services and barriers to access.
- Student concerns related to interactions with faculty and administrators.
- A deeper understanding of what students need and expect from the university.
- Students' financial responsibilities and costs associated with attendance.
- How students' families and community members feel about the university and how they support the student throughout their academic journey.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“Choose the roundtable theme(s) carefully and socialize it with the participants before, and more importantly after, the event.”

Questions should be framed in a manner that is culturally sensitive and accessible to students. Consider the following suggestions to help frame questions for the students' perspective:

- Avoid high-level, policy-oriented questions.
- Write for the audience – students – and not for the administrators.
- Seek assistance from colleagues who are trained qualitative researchers with backgrounds in community-based participatory research (CBPR) or youth participatory action research (YPAR).
- Structure the question sets using motivational interviewing techniques (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Doing so will help administrators empathize with and understand the students' perspective while empowering students to generate solutions.
- Add probing or follow-up questions to contextualize more complex ideas.

See Appendix for a sample agenda and discussion questions.

IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of the roundtable is a critical factor when determining who should be at the table. To ensure meaningful and impactful conversations (powell at al, 2019), consider including:

- The students most affected by the issues the campus is seeking to address through the roundtable.
- If known, students who have not held leadership roles in student government or have not previously been asked to participate in focus groups.
- The students and campus stakeholders benefiting from change strategies.
- Campus personnel implementing student success programs, interventions, and initiatives.
- Campus personnel evaluating program outcomes.
- Campus personnel who already have a strong understanding of student perspectives and the issues the roundtable seeks to address (e.g., frontline staff).

Leaders should endeavor to include students from marginalized racial and cultural identities including, but not limited to, the following: racially/ethnically minoritized students, students with disabilities, religious minorities, and LGBTQIA+ students. In addition, the voices of student veterans, working students, adult learners (undergraduates aged 25+), transfer students, and student parents are important to include because they have unique needs that may not be met by existing student services.

To find these students, leaders should consider engaging project coordinators, frontline workers, and cultural center personnel who have already built relationships of trust with these students. Involving these personnel and including them in the planning will help create

an environment of psychological safety for students.

The types of university administrators to invite will depend on the nature of the discussion questions selected, and which roles are involved in supporting students in these areas. Other university administrators that the planning team may consider inviting include the chief diversity officer and representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, alumni affairs, institutional research, enrollment management, and career services. Consider inviting champion faculty and deans as well. When crafting an invitation list, however, consider that there should be a 2:1 ratio of students to administrators, to avoid overwhelming the student voice.

Once the date, time, and location of the roundtable is set, plan to recruit potential participants through multiple channels, including social media, student affinity groups on campus, and in person – for example: bulletin boards, a table on the quad staffed by peers, in cultural centers, and at student-led events.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“Also consider asking administrators and campus personnel to recommend students for the roundtable according to the guidelines that are set. Utilizing students referred and nominated will help increase the number of students to choose from and ensure that they meet the criteria.”



COMPENSATION

The equity roundtable model is an opportunity to engage students as equal stakeholders and partners in decision making, which repairs trust and restores goodwill.

Students who participate in an equity roundtable will be taking time away from their families, work schedules, and classes to assist university leaders in their endeavor to improve the university. These leaders should consider providing compensation as a best practice, not only to ensure students' attendance but also to communicate the value of their input. A small stipend or honorarium paid to each student is a worthwhile investment to ensure an effective event.

CHOOSING THE FACILITATOR(S)

Quality facilitators are essential for success, as the roundtable will generate difficult (but critical) conversations. The facilitator's role is to keep communication open and flowing, foster an atmosphere of psychological safety, assist participants with transitioning from question to question, help participants probe deeper if conversations remain at the surface level, and ensure the voices of students are heard, amplified, and honored in the space.

The facilitator should have a background in mediation, counseling, or other experience that requires managing difficult group dialogues. A counseling background is particularly useful as the roundtable may lead participants to revisit painful and traumatic experiences. If the facilitator does not have this background,

the university may consider providing an additional mental health professional to be available throughout the day and support students as they process these traumatic experiences. Furthermore, universities may consider having more than one facilitator to manage the roundtable and assist with processing the diverse perspectives of the participants.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“If campuses choose to host a roundtable virtually, make sure that the facilitators are familiar and/or trained to hold discussions on Zoom and are fully supported by the hosting university's IT Department.”

The facilitator will work with university staff to design an agenda and an approach that will uncover barriers to equitable access and student success. Responsibilities might include:

- Facilitate discussion during the event, encouraging participants to share their perspectives and elaborate on key themes as they are uncovered.
- Moderate the discussion according to agreed-upon rules for engagement, which may include fostering psychological safety, inclusion, and respectful discourse.
- Keep participants on topic and on schedule.
- Capture and summarize key ideas and themes that emerge from the group throughout the meeting. The facilitator should not be required to take notes during the events – this task should be handled by a separate individual.



SUCCESS STRATEGY

A third party or external facilitator is recommended to increase trust and likelihood that students will be candid in their remarks. Having someone from the outside also frees up leaders to focus on active listening rather than running the event. If costs are prohibitive, consider recruiting someone from the university's cultural center or conflict resolution center, if appropriate.



FACILITATOR QUALIFICATIONS

- Excellent verbal communication skills.
- Experience in conflict resolution.
- Experience managing uncomfortable conversations about race and racism is strongly preferred.
- Knowledge of higher education, including both the student journey as well as university structures and operations.
- Familiarity with challenges facing minoritized student groups (e.g., students of color, religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ students, and veteran students), adult learners, and transfer students.
- Knowledge of and experience applying equity frameworks, including asset-based framing.
- Experience facilitating conversations with diverse groups.
- Ability to quickly build rapport and establish trust within a group.
- Ability to actively listen to and summarize discussions, reflecting main themes, feelings, and ideas.

DATA TO COLLECT

The leadership team should carefully consider which data they absolutely must collect, as extensive registration surveys may lead to survey fatigue and unintended exclusion of students whose time is limited (e.g., working students, student parents). That said, pre- and post-event surveys are an excellent way to gauge whether the roundtable achieved its goals. Aim to include no more than five multiple choice questions to assess knowledge, perceptions, and beliefs prior to the event.

The registration survey should also collect logistical information required to hold the event in a culturally sensitive and inclusive way. For example, students may need accommodations for disabilities, food allergies and dietary restrictions, religious practices, childcare, and lactation.

Suggested registration questions include:

- Name
- Preferred pronouns
- Ask participants if they would like to opt-out of having their pronouns printed on their badge
- Preferred badge name(s)
- Role: administrator, faculty, staff, student, alumnus/a
- Title/Occupation
- Student classification: first-time, transfer, full-time, part-time
- Major or discipline
- Email address
- Allergies and dietary restrictions
- Other accommodations
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Veteran status

CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES

Embedded in the roundtable's purpose and goals is to create a comfortable space in which students can candidly share their experiences and have those experiences be heard by decision makers at the university. To create this environment, it is essential to view the meeting space, catering, and related amenities with an eye toward equity and inclusion.

The meeting space should be accessible to all participants, taking into consideration diverse emotional, cognitive, and physical ability needs. Provide sufficient space for breakout discussions as well as quiet reflection. There should be ample meals and snacks for all participants. Finally, consider a location central to the university with access to related amenities, such as a pharmacy (for feminine hygiene products, Tylenol, etc.) or a lactation room for nursing parents.

For more suggestions on how to create inclusive spaces, see the Appendix.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“Administrators in particular should avoid lengthy titles and higher ed jargon.”

MEETING MATERIALS

Help students prepare for the event by sharing: the mission, vision, and goals; who is leading the event and their credentials; and what outcomes are expected if the event is successful. Consider creating a pamphlet with mini biographies of all the attendees (e.g., where they are from, what they are studying, a fun fact, a photo). This pamphlet will help students build relationships with their peers and university personnel before, during, and after the event, helping them build social capital and expanding their network.

Consider including a contact list that participants can refer to if they have questions or concerns before, during, or after the event. Consider including a primary point of contact (name, email, and cell phone number) and the facilitators' contact information.

PRE- AND POST-ROUNDTABLE EVENTS

Holding a pre-roundtable social event (e.g., coffee hour, dessert reception) is an excellent opportunity for participants to build relationships with each other and for the facilitator to set the stage for a successful event. To maximize the value of this pre-roundtable event, we suggest that institutions consider:

- Holding an icebreaker to encourage a collaborative group dynamic and begin the process of vulnerability norm-forming.
- The facilitator introducing the norms and discussion rules for the roundtable.
- Providing and recollecting name tags.
- Printing the contact list and making it available for participants.

Equally valuable is a post-roundtable social event for students to unwind and process what they experienced. Such an event will solidify the relationships built before and during the roundtable. As with the main event itself, consider accessibility and diversity of student needs when identifying the activity and venue.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“Have a contingency plan for the event. Even if you think of everything, something unexpected can happen. Be prepared to manage unexpected issues.”

IMPLEMENTATION: CONDUCTING THE ROUNDTABLE



- Anticipate that students will share personal and emotional experiences.
- Be prepared to validate students' experiences/resist the impulse to correct or invalidate students' perceptions.
- Be comfortable with discomfort.
- Be prepared for critical perspectives and embrace them as caring feedback.
- Listen actively and with empathy.
- Silence is okay; give people time to process and resist the urge to respond and “fill the void.”
- Be comfortable leaving the event without all questions asked or answered.
- Be okay with making yourself vulnerable.
- Be open and honest about not knowing something.
- Be prepared to articulate the next steps in the process, including tangible actions, communication, and transparency. Acknowledge that “you may be gone by the time we implement this” but that your actions will help future students.

FACILITATOR(S) RESPONSIBILITIES

In their opening remarks, facilitators will set the tone for the day, making it clear that what is said in the roundtable should be considered confidential, and that only aggregated main themes will be shared with decision makers for the purposes of campus improvement. Any information shared will not be used against any participant, which includes students, staff, faculty members, or community agents in a harmful way.

Facilitators will review the day's agenda and each opportunity for dialogue, student-led share-outs, and discussion group rotations. The event should be timed to ensure all questions are answered by students, providing at least 15-20 minutes to share-out the results of each discussion session. During these report-outs, administrators and staff may have follow-up questions that will help them understand the students' perspectives and begin co-designing solutions.

A good facilitator will be carefully observing students and their reactions throughout the day. They may notice that the retelling of certain experiences is particularly difficult for individuals and give participants the chance to process conversation alone at break throughout the roundtable.

GROUP ROTATIONS

The primary goal of the roundtable event is to maximize opportunities for administrators to hear from students and alumni. Based on the experiences of the PxP Equity Roundtables, consider discussion groups of students and administrators and rotate at the end of each question set. Because students and administrators may not know each other, include short introductions, or an ice breaker at the beginning of each session. Regular rotation allows administrators to engage with new students and hear more perspectives. The ratio of students to administrators should be weighted toward students (e.g., groups of 8-10 students for every 2-3 administrators). Each group should identify a notetaker to share during report-outs. All notes from the group discussions will be shared with the Lead Notetaker; therefore, instructions should be given to ensure that the notes are legible and easy to follow.

See Appendix for Sample Agenda.

NOTETAKER ROLE

A lead notetaker for the event should be identified at least one week prior to the roundtable. This individual will be responsible for capturing main themes from the event as well as quotations from students (which can be anonymized and included as evidence for a final report). Ask the notetaker what resources they will need to complete this task. **Because of the sensitive nature of equity roundtable conversations, audio or video recording is strongly discouraged.** However, if the notetaker insists that recording is necessary, this should be disclosed to all participants in advance and positive consent obtained from all participants.

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“Add dedicated time during the day where students could talk alone in groups without administrators. It encourages courageous discussions without the thoughts and feelings of being “under surveillance” from administrators.”

WISDOM FROM CAMPUS LEADERS

“The notetaker role is a great opportunity for administrators and faculty.”



SUCCESS STRATEGY: MODEL EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

- Listen as much as possible.
- Seek out information about gaps in student services and reasons why students might not be able to access them.
- Use active listening to engage in deeper understanding of students' experiences.
- Silence cell phones and other distracting devices (and leave them in your pocket or bag!).
- Mingle with students and get to know them.
- Acknowledge traumatic experiences when they are shared and offer additional resources and supports, such as a space to debrief with trusted individuals.

FOLLOW UP

Prompt follow up is just as important as careful planning and implementation. As each day passes and regular workloads resume, memories of the event will fade. Students may be anxious to see evidence that university leaders plan to follow through on the actions agreed to at the roundtable. Even if actions cannot be completed until after these students have graduated, administrators can build trust and goodwill by communicating their intentions clearly and regularly providing updates on progress toward planned changes.

POST-ROUNDTABLE DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION

As mentioned earlier in this guide, evaluation activities should be planned well before the event. The planning team should have a clear definition of success and a method of evaluating whether that definition was met. Although pre-/post-event surveys are a good way to measure impact, they are not the only way. Post-event debriefings for administrators and students will allow the university to capture intangible outcomes. For example: Do participants feel or think differently following the event? Do they plan to take an action that they hadn't considered taking before the event?

Debriefing sessions should be scheduled separately for administrators, and for the student and alumni participants. The purpose of these debriefing sessions is to consider what was shared, process emotions that may have arisen during the event, and plan immediate next steps. For administrators, this debriefing should be considered a working meeting with an agenda (see sample agenda on next page).

Students and alumni may choose to debrief more informally, in a space they find familiar such as the student union, common area of a dorm, or local coffee shop. The student debriefings may be led by students themselves or the facilitators, if available. Universities may consider tracking these student cohorts and following up with them regularly in the future (e.g., in a month, six months, a year) to see how student perceptions and experiences may have changed following the roundtable. These touchpoints are also a trust-building exercise between the university and its students – it helps show students that the university cares and is committed to following through with testing and implementing ideas generated during the roundtable.

Equity Roundtable Debrief

Date, Time

AGENDA

1. Reflecting on the experience
 - a. How did you feel during and after the roundtable? Were there any “aha” moments or insights that came up for you?
 - b. What worked well? What could have been done better?
2. Moving from listening to action
 - a. Which student insights/recommendations were the most meaningful?
 - b. What changes might we make based on what we heard? Which could be made immediately with existing resources? What longer-term change should be planned?
3. *Optional exercise:* Mapping proposed changes on a 2x2 matrix for impact feasibility.
4. Next steps
 - a. Who else on campus should be involved in the action plan?
 - b. What communications will be sent out, and to whom?
 - c. When will this group meet again? What must be done before the next meeting?

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Accumulating small wins early helps build momentum. These small wins also demonstrate that students were heard, and the university is serious about responding. Administrators should consider: are there any simple changes or solutions that could be tested or implemented quickly with existing resources (e.g., changing the hours of a service/activity)? Systemic changes (e.g., tuition affordability) will require extensive planning and buy-in from stakeholders across the university. Breaking this process down into achievable steps with short-, mid-term, and long-term milestones can help make it less daunting for the team.

Post-event communications are critical for momentum and accountability. Each communication should be: clear, concise, and consistent; jargon-free; and reviewed by a diverse team for [inclusive language](#).

The university may consider the following communications:

- Post-event email thanking participants for their time and contributions, and what they can expect to see next.
- Memo to senior leadership with a summary of insights from the event and proposed next steps.
- Regular status updates about actions that are planned, in-progress, and completed.

Consider creative ways to make changes visible and accessible. Doing so keeps students informed about what to expect and fosters a culture of transparency and accountability. For example, the University of Maryland created an [online dashboard](#) to hold itself accountable for changes requested by Black students in 2020.

CONCLUSION

This guidebook has offered an approach to understanding and centering the lived experiences of students from low-income and minoritized identities as they progress along their journey to a college degree. Universities that wish to achieve equitable student outcomes may consider using this approach as one of several that will inform and catalyze action toward meeting these students' unique needs. Roundtable events, if done with intention and care, can contribute to increased student trust and a campus climate of inclusion, transparency, and accountability. Senior administrators can use the data and insights generated by these events to make substantive, equity-first policy changes. The suggestions in this guide will help university leaders plan, implement, and sustain momentum in inclusive ways. It is APLU's hope that more public universities will test this approach on their campuses as a way to discover student-posed solutions to barriers that prevent access, progression, and completion toward a college degree.

APPENDIX

List of participating institutions in the Powered by Publics Equity Roundtables (2022):

- Florida International University
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- Missouri University of Science and Technology
- New Mexico State University
- North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- Rutgers University - Newark
- Texas State University
- The University of Texas at Arlington
- The University of Texas at El Paso
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- University at Buffalo (SUNY)
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Colorado Denver
- University of Illinois Chicago
- University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of New Mexico
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Wayne State University

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Other helpful resources:

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EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS WITH LOCATION, FOOD, & AMENITIES

- Consider the walking distance from the parking lot/drop off point to the event space. Any person experiencing pain or discomfort because of getting to the space will not be able to show up optimally and authentically. Also, be mindful of access to wide elevators that can fit mobility scooters, aids, and wheelchairs.
- In addition to access, spaces should be considered for their seclusion, as conversations shared can be intimate and personal.
- In conjunction with the space being favorable for all, it is essential that all dietary needs are met for all in attendance. That includes vegan, vegetarian, and gluten free options for participants. Seek to collect information about food allergies from participants ahead of time but be proactive in selecting menu choices that avoid common allergens (e.g., peanuts, tree nuts). The planning team should work with on-campus catering to ensure there are enough meals for all that have registered, with extra in the event participants need or want additional sustenance.
- If participants are required to engage in the roundtable for more than eight hours ensure two meals (e.g., breakfast and lunch) are available for participants, with a 15-minute minimum break approximately every 2 hours.
- Ensure there's access to a refrigerator for participants who need medication, special food, or breast milk storage. A lactation room or private space should be available for nursing parents.
- As a best practice, name tags should include the following:
 - » Information on the front:
 - Participant's first name
 - The phonetic spelling of their name
 - Pronouns (if volunteered during registration)
 - Institution
 - Status (student, faculty, staff, etc.)
 - » Information on the back:
 - Participants will be divided into small breakout groups. To provide some structure and ensure there's an even distribution of students to staff/administrators, use a group labeling system so people know where to go during each breakout session rotation. At a minimum, please include a minimum of 5 group names for rotation purposes.
 - ▶ E.g. – For round one – groups are labeled by colors. For round two – groups are labeled by shapes. For round three – groups are labeled by Starbucks drinks.
 - ▶ E.g. – On the back of Participant A's name tag: Group Blue for Round 1, Group Circle for Round 2, and Group Mocha Latte for Round 3.
 - Be mindful about ensuring groups have a mix of faculty, staff, and students and that group compositions are not repetitive.

SAMPLE APLU EQUITY ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Prepare Before

Bring an image/artifact that expresses what your education means to you. You will have one minute to share it with the rest of the group.

Pre-Reading for Administrators & Staff Materials – list here

Day 1

6:45 pm Meet attendees to walk them to reception
7:00 pm Reception and ancillary activities

Day 2

8:00 am Meet attendees to walk them to the convening venue
8:00 am Breakfast/Refreshments

8:30

Welcome, Goals for the Day Introduction to Facilitators & Ground Rules

9:00

Participant Sharing on “What an Education Means to Me”

Each attendee will have one minute to share an image/artifact and briefly describe how it expresses what their education means to them.

9:30

Small Group Discussion One: Equitable Access to the University

- How did you learn about the university and why did you choose to attend it?
 - » Why did you attend a 4-year vs a 2-year?
- Did you feel that you were allowed on your campus before you enrolled?
- How often did you visit your campus before you enrolled?
- How would you describe the recruitment process to your university? Were there any moments that stood out for you? How did you feel about your journey to college?
- What roadblocks, if any, did you face in your enrollment? Were there any policies or practices that surprised you? Confused you? Helped you?
 - » What problems did you face when you came? How did you make it?
- Were there any moments along the way that concerned you? What things could the university have done to address these concerns?
- Were there things the university could have done to involve or better help your family/home community support your college journey?
- Can you think of a policy rule that negatively affects underrepresented students' access to higher education at your university?
- Can you think of an example or strategy your university is using to support underrepresented students' access to higher education? How is it helping?

10:00

Report Out

10:30

Break

- Participants will change tables upon return from break

10:45

Small Group Discussion Two: Equitable Pathways for Student Success

Transition

- Why is college important?
- Did you talk about college in your house or with your family?
- What was your experience with transitioning to the university? With orientation? With academic advising? With enrolling in your first semester of courses?
- What resources did you utilize during your transition to the university?
 - » What 3 resources or people did you use to help understand your university?
 - Did these things help you feel safe?
- Was there anything unique about your transition to your university in comparison with your peers? What was similar? Does your university acknowledge these similarities and differences? In what ways?
- Do you have someone at the university who encourages you to pursue your goals and dreams? If so, who?
- What role, if any, did finances play in your choice of university?

Climate

- Do you feel your university is a welcoming place? Are there ways it could be more so?
 - » As a student I feel I can be always my true self on campus without someone looking at me funny. Why or Why not?
- How does your university acknowledge the cultural differences of different student groups?
 - » Can you provide an example?
- The term “hidden curriculum” is often used to describe “unwritten rules, unspoken expectations, and unofficial norms” that can negatively impact students’ educational experiences. Can you think of any examples of “hidden curriculum” that impacted your university experience?
 - » Did you feel like you fit in and what things made you feel like you were not welcomed?

11:15

Report Out

- Participants will change tables upon return from break

11:30

Small Group Discussion Three: Equitable Pathways for Student Success Continued

Curriculum/Academics

- Did/do you face any challenges in understanding your major/program curriculum? Your degree requirements?
 - » Any challenges with utilizing university systems related to academics (e.g. scheduling and enrollment tools, degree audits, student information portals, etc.)?
- How did you decide upon your major/program of study? Did campus professionals (e.g. advisors, faculty, etc.) help you to make this decision?



- » Do you have a relationship with your faculty members, instructors, and other academic personnel that are not staff?
- Do you face any challenges in getting the courses you need or in succeeding within your courses? What are they?
 - » What stops you from getting A's in all your courses?
- Have you felt that your identities (gender, race, religion, socio-economic, etc.) were/are represented in your major/program curriculum?
 - » Do people look like you in your major, program, and curriculum (books)?

Campus Resources & Involvement

- What experiences have you had using student success resources (e.g. writing or math resource centers, tutoring, success coaching, career counseling, etc.)?
- What experiences have you had using financial or wellbeing resources (e.g. health center, counseling, scholarship and financial aid office, money management center, etc.)?
 - » Do you use the services above?
- How do/did you learn about university resources? Through orientation? The website? Referrals from peers, staff, or faculty? Are there any resources you wish the university provided that do not currently exist?
- Did/does your university encourage you to participate in campus events and activities?
 - » Specifically, what campus events?
- What is the most important non-academic activity in which you've engaged at your university? Why and how is it important to you?

Persistence

- Have you or anyone you know stopped out of the university?
- Are there any programs, structures, or policies that have helped you to stay at the university?
 - » What things on campus made you want to stay or come back?
- If you were mentoring a new first year student, what advice would you give to them to help them successfully navigate your university?
- If there were one thing that you could change about your university to help every student succeed, what would it be?

12:00

Report Out

12:15

Lunch Break

- Participants will change tables upon return from break

1:15

Small Group Discussion Four: Equitable Career Pathways

Career Services

- How would you describe career guidance, development, and/or resources at your university? Have you taken advantage of your university's career services? Who at the university (if anyone) has helped you to explore and match your major/program to your career goals?
- Have you participated in any high-impact practices, such as internships, undergraduate research, co-ops, etc.–to enhance your career development? If

yes, how would you describe the value of these practices to your educational experience? If not, why not?

- Do you feel that your university is preparing you well for life after college? Why or why not?
- Are you confident that your major/program will lead to a good job or acceptance to graduate/professional school? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been discouraged from pursuing a major/program at your university? If so, by whom and how?

Finances

- What role, if any, has finances played in shaping your choice of major?
- What role, if any, has finances played in choosing your courses?
- Are there university co-curricular activities or experiences you've missed out on because of financial concerns (e.g. participating in Greek life)?
- Are there any career/professional development opportunities you didn't explore because of finances (e.g. taking an unpaid internship or job shadowing)?
- Are you concerned about debt post-graduation?
- Is there anything the university could be doing/could have done better to prepare you for post-graduation life?
- If you could change one thing about career development at your university to better prepare students for post-graduation life, what would it be?

2:15

Report Out

2:45

Break

3:00

Wrap Up and Adjournment

Post-Event Activities – List Here

Facilitators' Bios – List Here

Emergency Contacts – List Here

Travel Information – List Here



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