A HANDBOOK FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL DELIBERATIVE POLLING®

This Handbook was developed and written by
Liz Style, Program Manager, SPPDD

With contributions from

- Robert Cavalier, Philosophy, Co-director, SPPDD
- Megan Voorhis, English, Professional Writing Program
- Randy Weinsten, 2005-2006 Coro Fellow in Local Democracy
- Tim Dawson, English, Professional Writing Program

Special Thanks to:

Jim Fishkin, Center for Deliberative Democracy (Stanford University), Cynthia Farrar at Yale’s Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Greg Crowley of the Pittsburgh Coro Center for Civic Leadership, members of PBS’s By the People project, Karlyn Voss and the Directors of Carnegie Library-of Pittsburgh, our Advisory Board Members, our social scientists, Mike Bridges (CMU) and Amelia Haviland (RAND), and Peter Shane, Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Law and Policy Studies (OSU) for their guidance and early work with us to introduce Deliberative Polling to Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Carnegie Mellon University’s Campus Conversations has gained the support of many groups and departments, with space and resources supplied by the Department of Philosophy. Significant financial support has come from the President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, the Provost of Student Affairs, the Provost of Education and the Alumni Association. We are grateful to the Phi Beta Kappa Society, which through a grant from the Teagle Foundation underwrote the development of this Handbook.

Copies of Handbook are available at caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/
WHAT IS DELIBERATIVE POLLING?

Liberal democracies of the kind we see forming around the world are only the beginning of what Benjamin Barber has called “strong democracies.” Strong democracies, in addition to securing basic constitutional freedoms such as universal suffrage, freedom of the press and assembly, have a population of informed and engaged citizens. As political philosopher Will Kymlicka argues: “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens” (Introduction to Political Theory). According to proponents of Deliberative Democracy, these qualities and attitudes develop as citizens actively engage one another in deliberation. Citizens willing to listen to all sides of an issue and to let the force of the better argument, in all its richness, become a guide are able to develop better-informed opinions about important issues.

“Open and informed” conversations among the citizenry are essential to deliberative democracy. “Openness” refers to the support and encouragement of a diversity of perspectives, actively making sure that multiple perspectives are given a voice in a discussion. “Informed” refers to the need for the discussion to be based upon the best, most complete data, information and available arguments. These broad requirements of practical reason have been adopted by advocates of strong, deliberative democracies with the goal of achieving a strategy for democratic decision-making on a range of practical political problems. This model can also be applied to decisions at the College and University level.

Deliberative Polling® is a particular instance of this kind of democratic decision-making process. Developed by Professor James Fishkin (Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University), it seeks to combine the social science of random sampling with the ideals of ‘open and informed conversations.’ While traditional public opinion polls solicit intuitive responses from people who may not be well-informed on the topic, a Deliberative Poll indicates what people think...
about an issue if they have had time to learn all perspectives on an issue and discuss it in a group of peers and ask questions from a panel of experts.

DELIBERATIVE POLLING ON CAMPUS

As applied to the campus, deliberative polling (through random sampling of the campus community) brings together a truly diverse and representative group (diverse in gender, ethnicity, degree program, political affiliation, etc. and diverse in role: student, faculty, staff, alumni). The protocols specify that this group and the campus as a whole receive comprehensive, well-designed and balanced information on a topic and the kinds of choices available. Participants then gather in a forum, are randomly assigned to small groups, whose discussions are facilitated and guided by trained moderators and assistants. As they deliberate, each group generates questions that will be posed to an ‘expert panel’ or ‘resource panel’ in a plenary session. Both prior to and after the event, carefully designed assessments measure the opinions of the participants.

Note: The term “expert panel” as it is used in Deliberative Polling© protocols refers to a panel comprised of individuals who represent multiple perspectives and multiple levels of expertise on an issue. Members of this panel educate participants; they do not debate or advocate. At the campus level we have included a faculty member, a member of student government, the Dean of Students, the Vice Provost and administrative staff on our panels. Each panel member brings their own type of experience, knowledge and expertise to the issue at hand and together they are representative of the campus community. Some practitioners prefer to call these panels “resource panels.” For the purposes of this document the term “expert panel” will be used.

The design and delivery of the deliberative polling process brings into play the various interdisciplinary resources of a college or university curriculum. In the
process, it also educates students in the virtues of a strong democracy and encourages them to see themselves as ‘citizens’ of a campus community.

This Handbook for College-Level Deliberative Polling® outlines key steps involved in organizing and running a deliberative poll on a college campus. It reflects the experience and knowledge we have gained as we established the Carnegie Mellon Campus Conversations Initiative. We recognize, of course, that all academic institutions operate differently. Nevertheless, the information in this manual can be a guide to the creation of a successful event or initiative on your own campus.

This handbook is divided into two sections: 1) Mapping Your Course of Action and 2) Hosting the Event. It is accompanied by an online Coordinator’s Toolkit: templates for developing the various documents you will need including the background materials that help inform participants prior to the event.

Section 1: MAPPING YOUR COURSE OF ACTION
Offers a planning strategy to prepare for a campus deliberative polling initiative or event.

Section 2: MANAGING YOUR EVENT
Provides an organizational foundation for carrying out a successful deliberation.

COORDINATOR’S TOOLKIT:
This Toolkit contains a wealth of useful materials that can be modified to fit the specific objectives of your Initiative. Examples include IRB forms, Letters of Invitation to Participants, sample Final Reports, and so forth. This Toolkit, along with design templates for developing background materials, can be found on the Campus Conversations website: http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**WHAT IS DELIBERATIVE POLLING?** .................................................................2  
DELIBERATIVE POLLING ON CAMPUS ...........................................................3  

**SECTION 1: MAPPING YOUR COURSE OF ACTION** .........................................6  
STRATEGIC PREPARATION ...........................................................................7  
COORDINATING KEY PLAYERS AND CULTIVATING ADVOCACY .....................11  
CREATING A TIMELINE ..............................................................................17  
DEVELOPING TOPIC INFORMATION AND SURVEY MATERIALS ....................20  

**SECTION 2: MANAGING YOUR EVENT** .........................................................33  
PLANNING THE EVENT ..............................................................................34  
HOSTING THE EVENT ................................................................................38  
COLLECTING DATA AND ASSESSING RESULTS ...........................................45  

A Handbook for College-Level Deliberative Polling  |  5  |
SECTION 1: MAPPING YOUR COURSE OF ACTION

Planning begins long before the day of the deliberative poll. In the following section we discuss a six-month pre-poll timeline, and we explain how you can lay the groundwork for an ongoing initiative as you plan your first event.

Strategic Planning involves:

- Establishing a Mission and Setting Goals
- Coordinating Key Players:
  - Core Team, Advisory Board, Volunteers, Advocates
- Creating a Timeline
- Developing Topic Information and Survey Materials
- Outreach and Recruitment
STRATEGIC PREPARATION

DREAM BIG, START SMALL

One of the first decisions you will need to make is whether you want to institutionalize a deliberative polling initiative on your campus or whether you want to hold a single deliberative poll. If you are as enthusiastic about the promise of deliberative democracy as we are, your answer may be, “An initiative, of course!” Our advice: Dream big, but start small. Our experience teaches us that the planning of a deliberative polling initiative begins with the careful planning, execution, and documentation of your first deliberative poll.

The strategic decisions you make and supporters you gain when planning your initial polls build the foundation for your initiative and determine its viability. Therefore, while we describe in detail the planning of a single poll, this handbook is written from the perspective of planning for the institutionalization of a deliberative initiative.

We began with the dream of institutionalizing deliberative polling on our campus. While we were encouraged by and had the support of Carnegie Mellon’s President’s Advisory Council on Diversity, we learned it takes more than a nod from the President to move forward.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN INITIATIVE

Successfully building and maintaining an initiative at your institution requires organization, collaboration and dedication every step of the way. We have found that, like many fledgling enterprises, a successful initiative also requires a core group of committed individuals.

You are one of the visionaries who believe that this method of deliberation is a sound one and is viable on your campus. You and one or two others must be ready to work hard to implement this method.

MISSION AND GOALS FOR YOUR INITIATIVE

The next step in your planning is to identify the mission or goals of your work. You can begin by summarizing what you wish to achieve through deliberative polling.
Your mission and goals will increase others’ understanding of your work and bolster support for it. Your particular mission and goals may change or be adapted based on your experience. They may also change as you form or consult an advisory board (more on this later). At Carnegie Mellon, we identified the following goals for our initial polls:

1. Disseminate information and improve decision-making procedures,
2. Facilitate campus-wide discussions to raise awareness of important issues,
3. Encourage students to question, expand and articulate their perspectives,
4. Exemplify campus diversity by embedding it in students’ deliberative activities,
5. See students become more engaged with one another across groups that otherwise seldom come into contact,
6. Showcase and assess the benefits of deliberative polling and other forms of democratic dialogue.

The above goals were guides for our first poll on File Sharing and Diversity on Campus. They were meant to gauge student opinion on life, learning, and values at our university while creating social capital within the campus community and highlighting the virtues of campus diversity.

As our initiative has developed, in successive polls we have successfully included faculty, staff, graduate students and alumni in the deliberative process. We have adapted our goals to include these groups even as we have simplified the expression of our goals. Our present mission and goals are captured in the following three statements:

1. Highlight the virtues of campus diversity, as this is embedded in the nature of deliberation
2. Create a sense of campus community as well as an appreciation of democratic practice and civic engagement
3. Provide a tool for dissemination and feedback.

STARTING SMALL
You may wish to consider your first poll is a ‘beta test,’ a learning-out-loud experience. Perhaps you should choose one demographic from your campus community--undergraduates only for example. If you are in a large university, you may want to consider undergraduates from one school or from one group of departments within a school.
MISSION AND GOALS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL DELIBERATIVE POLL

Each poll is unique. In addition to any overall goals you set for deliberative polling on your campus, you will want to identify poll-specific outcomes. Poll-specific outcomes should be based on the topic you choose and on how and by whom the polling results will be used. Anticipating how the results of your campus deliberative poll can be made useful to your campus community will help you plan ahead and will provide all members of your Core Team with information that will help them to establish and reach specific goals and objectives. We find answering the following questions a good guide to establishing poll-specific outcomes:

1. What knowledge of the topic should participants have before they arrive at your event?
2. How will you want to gauge the impact of the event with respect to:
    - Changes in perceptions as a result of the poll?
    - General impressions of the event itself?
3. Who will receive the results of the poll?
4. How would you like the results to be used?

Answers to these questions help determine how you will research your topic, develop survey questions, analyze the results, and how your campus community can make the results useful. For example, at Carnegie Mellon the results of a deliberation among faculty and students on Faculty Course Evaluations had goals different from the deliberation among faculty and students on the Student Bill of Rights. The former offered information to the faculty senate as it prepared its recommendations to the Provost. The latter helped put to rest a discussion in the Student Senate on whether or not students at Carnegie Mellon had adequate recourse to appeal a grade if a student felt the grade was based solely on ideological differences between the student and professor. (See “Polling for an Educated Citizenry,” Cavalier and Bridges, Chronicle of Higher Education, v53.20 [01/19/2007].)

Campus Conversations can also be used to sponsor a discussion of controversial topics, like stem-cell research or sexual identity and marriage-equity, topics that may engage the differential value systems that operate in a pluralist society.

BEING CLEAR ON GOALS

Deliberative polls are not referenda. They do not legislate. They do, however, provide a snapshot of what the larger group would probably think if everyone in that larger group had an opportunity to learn about an issue, to discuss it with others who hold a diversity of opinion and to be able to ask questions of experts.
These “talking values” deliberative polls can serve as an alternate representation of these issues that highlights the advantages of a more deliberative approach.

Your poll should feature topic(s) that are important to the group you sample. That is, the topic should be one that involves the participants developing informed opinions about decisions with consequences for them.

Remember: The outcome of the poll, the opinions of the participants, should have a recommending influence on the outcome of a policy decision. For example, in April 2007, we developed a Campus Conversation that offered a cross-section of the Carnegie Mellon community the opportunity to provide guidance to a new committee responsible for the implementation of Carnegie Mellon’s recently established Public Art Policy.

For topics that involve controversial campus policy discussions, you may wish to address some of the tensions that may arise by holding Deliberative Polls early in the decision-making process; that is, well before the decisions have to be made – and certainly before they have been made. A Deliberative Poll on, for example, changes to Core Curriculum, should be used as those changes are being initially discussed, not in the crisis atmosphere of impending policy actions.
Coordinating Key Players and Cultivating Advocacy

Key Players in Your Deliberative Polling Initiative

To institutionalize and maintain a deliberative polling initiative or even to hold one deliberation on your campus, it is necessary to build relationships with people who will become advocates and resources for your effort. At Carnegie Mellon developing these relationships happened organically as we conducted each poll, but we started by identifying, recruiting and retaining certain key players. Presently, our administrative structure includes:

- Core Team
- Advisory Board
- Volunteers

We started with a Core Team to plan and carry out the first two deliberative polls. We then developed an Advisory Board and began planning for and cultivating a cadre of volunteers to assist in future efforts.

A Core Team: Principle Organizers

Having two Principle Organizers who work with each other to develop the overall college-level deliberation or initiative is a good start. If you have more, all the better. However, beginning with a primary sponsor, or principal, and an interested student coordinator is a good beginning.

1) Primary Sponsor

The Primary Sponsor is usually a faculty member whose professional work and interests dovetail with the nature of the project. He or she will play an active role in overall management; this person becomes the central force who provides continuity to the overall process. It will entail at least 5-8 hours per week – perhaps more as one gets closer to the time of the event. In their article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Cantor and Lavine argue that this type of work holds intrinsic value for tenure and promotion practices. (v52.40 [06/09/2006]: B20).

“Our working definition of public scholarship in the arts and humanities comprises research, scholarship, or creative activity that: connects directly to the work of specific public groups in specific contexts; arises from a faculty member’s field of knowledge; involves a cohesive series of activities contributing to the public welfare and resulting in ‘public good’ products; is jointly planned and carried out by coequal partners; and integrates discovery, learning, and public engagement.” – Taking Public Scholarship Seriously
2) Student Coordinator

A Student Coordinator can be a project manager, someone who will be in charge of organizing and developing the groundwork for each poll. This can be a good project for a senior undergraduate or graduate student, a work-study arrangement for student interns, an appointment held by a fellow or someone in a community service project (the campus after all is a community). Coordinating a Campus Conversation will involve at least 15-20 hours per week - more closer to the time of the event.

At Carnegie Mellon our Core Team consists of two to three people who remain involved on an on-going basis (1 faculty, 1 part-time/volunteer staff, and 1 student). As the planning process proceeds, this team grows by 6 or more, depending on the needs of each poll. The members that are added are primarily involved with the research, review and writing of the background materials.

3) Poll-Specific Core Team Members

The additional Core Team members give your deliberative poll credibility so choose them carefully. You should have a representative from each campus demographic who will be sampled to participate (e.g., faculty, students, staff, alumni). You should choose good content experts. These members will guide the development of the background materials, lead you to participants for the expert panel, and help promote the event among their peers and colleagues. Poll-specific Core Team members should be willing to commit two to three hours of their time once a week or once every other week for a period of three months.

ADVISORY BOARD

An Advisory Board is the backbone of any good and sustainable campus deliberative polling initiative. Members offer advice, input on the choice of topic for each poll, as well as insight on campus policy, politics and perspectives related to the topic. At Carnegie Mellon, our Campus Conversations Advisory Board consists of well-connected and highly motivated members of the administration, staff, faculty, alumni and student base.

Two suggestions that are equally important:

1) The role of the student coordinator is very much self-defined: you can do little and get it done or you can do a lot and both a) increase the prestige of the Fellowship, and b) significantly advance the initiative...Do a lot.

2) Talk to everyone you know well and don’t know well. Build advocacy by explaining what you are doing and what it means while having a few drinks at the bar or while chatting with someone in the hallway. Advocacy will come from unexpected places, so spread it wide. At the same time, though, don’t let the naysayers get you down.

-- Randall Weinzen, Student Coordinator/Coro Fellow in Local Democracy 2005-2006
You, of course, will need to identify key players on your own campus. It helps to have the support of the head of your department and college dean, whether or not they serve as advisors.

**Library Partnership**

The library is a natural partner as its mission is directly related to the essential idea behind deliberative polling: to educate and inform the population. A partnership with your university library can go far beyond a single representative on your Advisory Board.

Librarians can play a critical role in gathering information for the background materials. The Carnegie Mellon University Libraries help develop resource guides that list library holdings related to the topic. By placing the resource guide and background materials in a prominent place at their entrances, libraries make the information available as well as promote the deliberation. Your campus or community library can also be a great place to host planning discussions, or, if there is room, the deliberative event itself.

Writing about deliberative polling in an article entitled “Libraries as Foundations of Democracy,” Herb Elish, former Director of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, said, “[Libraries] are one of the few places left in our society where things are truly free, and everybody is treated equally….Our form of government depends upon a really informed populace, one in which there is light rather than heat…There is no better place than a library to accomplish this…” For Elish, libraries are not only sources of information, but potential forums for conversation.
KEY PLAYERS IN AN INDIVIDUAL POLLING EVENT

At Carnegie Mellon we establish an expanded Core Team for each event, consisting of the Principal Investigator, staff/student coordinators and faculty, staff, students and administrators who have a certain level of expertise and interest in the work and the topic. Together, this team will flesh out topics, review and comment on the background materials, help generate the survey questions, and identify panelists for the expert panel. Additionally, this team can help create connections among media outlets and others who may be interested in and helpful to the initiative.

POLL SPECIFIC CORE TEAM MEMBERS

1) University Representative: represents the interests of the Administration at your university. This could be someone from the President’s Office, a Vice-Provost, etc.

2) Document Designer(s): skilled in drafting unbiased documentation and presenting information in a clear and concise manner. For our purposes, we enlist the aid of the members of the Professional Writing Program at Carnegie Mellon University. It may be the case that one individual is an expert on language and another an expert on layout, or, better yet, this expertise may belong to a single individual (Carnegie Mellon’s Document Design courses are a good curricular fit here).

3) Social Scientist: understands survey design and statistical analysis. This individual plays a central role in determining what questions will best articulate what the project is designed to assess and in analyzing the changes in the pre-poll and post-poll data. Social Science and Statistics Departments are a good source of this talent.

4) Student Representative: someone representing the viewpoints of the students in general. This individual could be from the Student Senate or another high-profile student-run organization. This individual can help with articulating the issues from a student perspective and making sure the document is understandable and easily read within 20 – 35 minutes.

Often administrators, the primary sponsor and other members of the faculty will have ideas about who else should be on your expanded poll-specific Core Team. When recruiting, always be sure to explain the initiative in a succinct and appealing way. Feel free to use the summary of deliberative polling and examples found in the accompanying Coordinator’s Toolkit.
Your campus media can play an important advocacy role. For example, the student newspaper can be a powerful way to get the word out about your initiative. Connecting with the newspaper as early as possible gives you ample time to explain the initiative, and explain it to the right person. Starting early will help ensure that when your initiative is discussed in the media the information is complete, appropriate, and is disseminated in a timely manner.

Getting the media involved early also ensures that the results of the event will be published in a timely manner. You should also consider campus radio and TV stations. Depending on your topic or the size of your event, you may also find that off-campus media will be interested in your Campus Conversations, and you should plan to at least send them information about the event.

**STUDENT SENATE**

Student Senators are key advocates. They can help you identify issues that are important to students, and they can help generate "buzz" about your Campus Conversations. Student Senators are also visible, highly involved members of the campus community. They can become great partners in promoting the understanding of the initiative. At Carnegie Mellon, we have found that the senators welcomed the Campus Conversations as a way for them to get a better understanding of what the student body felt about certain issues.

**FACULTY SENATE**

A faculty member from the Faculty Senate should be on your Advisory Board. Many items that come before the Faculty Senate require both dissemination and campus community input. In cases where there are policy decisions and options at stake – and where the importance of the issue merits it – the Faculty Senate might wish to utilize a deliberative poll.
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Organizations and student participants (both undergraduate and graduate) can help you market your initiative. Involving student organizations may also help to ensure that any randomly sampled participants that are members of those organizations will be present at your event. Building awareness among the student population will also help familiarize them with deliberative polling and increase future participation rates.

UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

Alumni also make great partners. They have an historical perspective on many issues and the benefit of hindsight. Including local Alumni is a great way to connect them to the present student body and keep them involved in the life of the campus. Incorporating online tools (see below) also allows Alumni from around the country to participate in these conversations, connecting both to the campus community and to their fellow Alumni.

CAMPUS STAFF

Because the issue you address may affect the entire campus community, it is a good idea to involve Staff Councils (representing secretaries, business managers, managers, ground workers, police, cafeteria workers, etc.) as you develop your initiative.
CREATING A TIMELINE

A timeline orients the Core Team to the tasks that must be accomplished prior to the day of the poll. Using a visual representation like a Critical Path Chart allows the team to see ongoing projects within the context of other tasks.

Often the timeline will not become clear until you have chosen a date. When choosing a date be sure to consult the campus academic and events calendar as well as a religious observance calendar. Additional items on your timeline will depend on the particular requirements of your institution and the goals you are working toward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A SIX-MONTH PLANNING STRATEGY FOR A DELIBERATIVE POLL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you begin the process, many of the planning activities are ongoing from month to month. Of course, you will not always be able to anticipate everything and so you should also be prepared to make changes when they become necessary. It is important to maintain a central document that outlines all (or most) of the tasks to be accomplished, and your timeline should include as much information as possible. In the box on the next page we have identified the basic things that any time line should include.
WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR TIMELINE

- Regularly Scheduled Meetings of the Core Team and Sub-Groups
- Development of Background materials
- Development of Survey Materials
- Ideal Dates of Media Coverage
- Timeframe for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval
- Ideal Date of the Event
- Ideal Date of Initial Contact with both Convenience and Random Sample
- Timeframe for Moderator Training
- Timeframe for Small Group Assistant Training
- Timeframe for Locating and Securing the Expert Panelists
- Deadline for Reserving the Required Space(s) for your Event
- Deadline for Catering and Refreshments for Event Reception

A WORD ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Regulatory Compliance Office is a Federally required panel of Administrators and Faculty who verify that studies involving human participants meet certain criteria to ensure that participants are made aware of what is required of them, are informed of any risks, and are treated in a way that is both respectful and mindful of their safety. Deliberative Polling® qualifies as a minimal risk experiment according to the Federal guidelines.

Be sure to check what information is required from the IRB by speaking with the office at least three months in advance. In order to secure IRB approval, the following must be included with your IRB application:

1) All researchers must be qualified by the National Institute of Health to conduct research on human subjects. These would be the faculty advisor, the project coordinator, anyone who has direct and continuing contact with recruitment and management of participants as well as anyone involved in analyzing the data. All readings and quizzes for NIH certification can be accomplished in a single day. The free course can be completed online at:

cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp

2) All materials that participants will see such as surveys, contact letters, and most importantly, consent forms, must be included in your application in order to
receive approval. With the exception of consent forms, the final drafts of your documents can change up to 30 days before your polling event. However, updated drafts of all documents should be submitted even after approval has been secured.

3) Depending on your institution, there may be additional requirements regarding the nature and goals of the project. Any modifications to the protocols listed in the IRB application must also be submitted in writing. (See the Coordinator’s Toolkit for a sample consent form and an example of a modification proposal.)

Building a good relationship with the staff of your university’s IRB office as you begin your work will make working with them in the future easier. As your initiative grows it is important that you develop and maintain a good relationship with your particular IRB staff contact. Keep him or her informed of your work and progress, as this person can be instrumental in guiding you through the application and renewal process. If you intend to hold deliberations regularly, be sure to inquire about yearly renewals. These are generally simpler to fill out than another new application.
DEVELOPING TOPIC INFORMATION AND SURVEY MATERIALS

It is critically important that the background materials represent the issue in a truly fair and balanced way; however, these materials need not be exhaustive since the deliberative process and the questions to the expert panel will provide participants with additional information. The background materials and survey materials are necessarily connected, and the contents of each will determine the types of analyses you will be able to include in your final report. Therefore, you will need to consider a series of discrete but connected goals and objectives for the background and the survey materials.

SELECTING THE TOPIC

Your advisory board should maintain the responsibility for final topic selection. Members of your advisory board, such as your student representative, will be able to give you additional feedback about how the campus community may respond to potential topics. In general, your topic, and the issues it generates, should be something that is currently on the radar at your institution or in the community, and there is always a chance that your institution may not be able to endorse some of the topics that might be interesting to you.

You can begin to locate a promising topic by reading your student newspaper and talking to student representatives. These resources can provide you with an idea of what students are talking about as well as what your institution would like to learn from a campus deliberative poll.

Any topic that you choose should result in an actionable item; the deliberative poll should actually inform a real decision. Without real influence these Campus Conversations will lose traction.

RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

The Background Materials provide all participants and others involved in your deliberative poll with the information essential to understanding the important issues connected to your chosen topic. A copy of the background materials should be provided to each participant, and you should plan to make copies available in other ways, such as online and through your campus libraries.

Researching issues related to your chosen topic and developing the background materials is a collaborative effort involving a Lead, the principal person overseeing document development, and other Core Team members. The person who assumes leadership for developing the background materials could be the
primary sponsor, student coordinator, or a highly dedicated individual of faculty or administrative status.

**RESEARCHING BACKGROUND MATERIALS**

- Locating materials that can provide some background on the issue, both at your institution and elsewhere.

- Networking with libraries to aid you with research, especially in terms of locating source material.

- Searching the Internet can also help add substance to your chosen issue (for instance: describing the national counterpart to a campus-specific initiative, providing examples of what other universities have done in similar situations, etc).

- Interviewing and meeting with university members from a variety of perspectives to gain an understanding of the issue as it exists on campus.

While the Lead may bear the primary responsibility of research and writing, document designers will have access to all rough drafts and should craft them into a visually appealing and unbiased finished product. It is crucial that your background materials represent all sides of your topic and the issues it generates fairly and accurately.

**GENERAL OUTLINE OF BACKGROUND MATERIALS**

In the box to the right we describe a general outline for the background materials. Note that the document will contain information about the deliberative polling process in addition to information about the topic and its related issues.

**GENERAL OUTLINE OF BACKGROUND MATERIALS**

- What is a Deliberative Poll?

- Why should I participate?

- Summary of Issue/Debate Nationally or Globally.

- Summary of Issue/Debate specific to your campus.

- Representation of the issue with diverse viewpoints

- Questions to trigger an initial discussion.
DESIGNING THE DOCUMENT

While it is important to provide necessary information in order to inform participants, we found that participants are not always willing to take the time to read a lengthy document. Often the document’s layout will determine whether or not it is read. Presentation, readability, and a wise use of white space are key. The final document should contain unbiased information presented in an easily accessible format.

In general, the document will probably need to be a minimum of 12 pages, but it should not be more than 20 pages. Using visual representations (graphics, photos, alternate fonts) and sidebars to highlight important or even secondary information (statistics or ‘testimony’) is a good way of creating an engaging document. This reduces the overall length of the document, breaks up the main body of the text, and increases readability.

Another way to keep document length to a minimum is to represent the issue as “voices.” For example, if the issue you have selected has a long back-and-forth dialogue between two or more groups or individuals, represent each viewpoint or position as a voice. Furthermore, using voices to represent criticisms provides a concise way of revealing the richness of the debate. We recommend trying to find at least three voices so that the discussion does not turn into a debate format (pro and con). We also try to embed positions that oppose as well as support each Voice within the perspectives themselves, thus encouraging some critical thinking within each Voice.

Pictures are a valuable resource. However, they should always be used to help clarify a point or even establish information that cannot be captured in words. You can take your own pictures or better yet consult your school’s librarian about photo archives that you can access for the document.

Additional information or primary source information can be included in an Appendix. We have also found it useful to prepare library and web resources for ‘further reading’. Our Campus Conversation on the “Student Bill of Rights,” for example, has all three elements (caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/polls/apr06/index.html).
TESTING THE DOCUMENT

To ensure that the background document is both clear and concise, it is a good idea to test it with both the Core Team and individuals representing your participant pool. This can be done in a focus group of individuals representing students, faculty and staff who are invited to read the document and reflect on how they feel about both the presentation and the readability. You can also approach individuals randomly to ask for their input.

Researching the topic and developing the background materials is an organic process that constantly feeds back on itself. Therefore, the research, design, and testing process, while initially occurring chronologically, can take shape in a variety of ways depending on responses from your focus groups. In general, feedback often generates issue-related questions that further research can answer.

Be aware: No matter how well researched your background materials are, you will find others on campus who will want the topic researched further. They may suggest that you add information to the background materials. You need to decide if you will and how you will incorporate suggestions for additional material. Will you add an appendix? A paragraph? A reference for further reading? Will you add someone to the panel who can address this additional material? Will you refer participants to a web site or a blog for further information?

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Surveys are, of course, core to the deliberative polling process. A well-designed survey will be easy for participants to read and respond to, and it will gauge in a detailed way the informed opinions of the participants. An efficient design also aids data entry and analysis. Although you want an efficient design you will also want to consider various ways your survey can capture information. For example, we have found it helpful to place several ‘comment fields’ in the survey, as this provides participants an opportunity to express themselves beyond the confines of the questions and to provide us with valuable qualitative data.

After a draft of each survey has been developed, ask your established focus groups to review the survey and provide feedback. The focus group should let you know whether the questions are clear and appropriate. For example, you
might ask the focus group members what they would like to know as a way to discover how you might reformulate or add to the questions.

When you survey and how often will depend on what you are trying to assess. Generally with deliberative polling there is a pre-deliberation and post deliberation survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN TO ADMINISTER SURVEYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• As you recruit participants and before they read the background materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• After participants have read the materials but before they participate in the event (usually this survey can be administered during event registration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immediately after the event (have the moderators collect them);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At the end of the year (if you school does year-end surveys, some questions relating to Campus Conversations could be included)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember: before participants fill out the pre-poll survey they must accept the conditions of and sign the consent form. This can be done at the event or, if you use a web-based registration tool, online beforehand.

In the post-deliberation survey it is helpful to ask participants how they felt about their experience. This program evaluation will help determine what went right and what may need improvement the next time. For an example of what these questions might look like, consult your Coordinator’s Toolbox.
LOCATING AND CONTACTING EXPERT OR RESOURCE PANELISTS

As in any conversation, some facts and ideas will require clarification. When talking with friends or colleagues, this often takes the form of looking up some fact on the web, in a book or newspaper, or consulting with someone who is considered knowledgeable. Expert panelists serve to dynamically answer questions posed by participants, creating additional perspectives and new knowledge about the topic. Panelists can include university officials, representatives from student government and experts in specific disciplines fields including ethics, history, women’s issues, diversity, etc.

Reaching out to potential members of an expert panel should be done as soon as possible. Generally they are busy individuals so it is a good idea to reserve their time early.

Begin to identify individuals for the expert panel as your research reveals more about the topic. Consulting with potential panel members can help to focus issues contained in the background materials document. They can also function as readers of the final draft of the document.

Generally speaking, four people are sufficient for an expert panel, with a fifth university or campus community member serving as a moderator during the question and answer period. Above all, it is important that, collectively, the panel is representative of the range of the opinions and outcomes the topic covers.

Your advisory board can be a good resource for locating potential panelists. A good advisory board will be informed and well connected so it should be relatively easy for your advisory board members to suggest appropriate panelists who will be able to address the questions that arise from the small groups. Another resource will be your own network of campus resources. Any of these contacts may in turn be able to suggest viable alternatives to serve on the panel.
When you first contact potential panelists, you should be prepared to explain the purpose of a deliberative poll in detail and you should take care to explain the panelists’ role as educators in the deliberation. Panelists are not debaters or pundits. Since panelists will be acting as educators it is suggested that they be prepared to explain positions they may not personally hold, or that may even be contrary to what they believe. Panelists should avoid sarcasm and witticisms that aim to please or offend various members of the audience. It is our experience that such barbs backfire and negatively affect the impact of the panelists.

“I have also been an advocate of this process as a way to spark intentional conversations about important topics within this academic community as a way to instigate change and growth….As a panelist, it is very valuable to observe the working groups before and after the panel discussion, if possible. I was not able to do this for very long but imagine that it would have been an interesting process and providing me with interesting insights into why participant perceptions about campus policies and organization culture are as they appear…. It was interesting to hear that things that participants perceived to be accurate with regard to university policy and process. Additionally, if was fascinating to watch the interactions and to hear the dialogue taking place with regard to the participants’ understanding of the issues.”

- Jennifer Church, Expert Panel Member

During the event, the primary role of the expert panel is to answer the questions that participants have generated during their first discussion in small groups. These questions might be related to something in the background materials, but frequently they are about something the document does not cover.

**LOCATING AN EXPERT PANEL MODERATOR**

While you are recruiting the panel members, you should also attempt to recruit an expert panel moderator. This person can also be the one who opens the Welcome Plenary. (More on this when we talk about the agenda.) Ideally, the expert panel moderator will be a recognizable campus figure. This can include deans of particular schools within your institution, administrators, or even popular professors. When contacting these individuals, in addition to defining their role as an expert panel moderator, it is also important to explain that their individual contribution is unique.

We have learned that having someone with the skill and personality of a Master of Ceremonies moves things along well. At Carnegie Mellon we have employed a professor from the School of Drama. This professor teaches his students how to
be Emcees, and he uses his role as Panel Moderator to model the skills he teaches.

THE ROLE OF THE EXPERT PANEL MODERATOR

- Mediate the discussion between experts and participants. According to the protocol, in each small group, the participants not only select the questions to be asked, but also an individual from the group who will ask the question. Groups take this task very seriously and moderators should avoid asking the question themselves, or adding any additional comments.

- Encourage appropriate panelists to answer each question or ask the entire panel what they think could best answer a particular question based on the expertise of the panel members.

- Ensure that the given answer fully addresses the question by directly asking the participant if they feel the question was adequately answered. If so, the moderator will call on the next participant.

- See that panelists do not express their opinions sarcastically or with total disregard to other panelists.

IDENTIFYING SAMPLE POPULATIONS

The power of the deliberative poll lies in the random sample. A representative random sample of the community you are polling provides a picture of what the entire community would think if it participated in the same protocol or process. As such, any supermajorities found in the post-poll survey data have a strong ‘recommending force’ to the extent that you can say, essentially, “This is what the campus thinks when it is informed on an issue and has the opportunity to discuss it and ask questions of experts.”

The best and easiest way to generate the random sample is to use the records of all enrolled students in your institution’s Enrollment Services Office. Generally, this office often has the ability to generate a sample for you based on the criteria by which you want to randomize. At Carnegie Mellon, the random sample for both undergraduate students and faculty was gathered from the same office. Samples of staff were drawn from contacts at Staff Council and alumni were drawn the Office of Alumni Affairs. However, other schools may have different ways to access these databases. The social scientist on your team will probably know your school’s policies and procedures.
The social scientist can also advise you on the appropriate size that the sample needs to be in order represent the population and what response rates you can typically expect from your campus community. With these two pieces of information a fairly accurate number can be generated.

Getting people to participate will also be a challenge. At Carnegie Mellon, we had a very low turnout rate at our first event. One way to overcome a potential lack of participant involvement is to offer incentives (e.g., $25.00 cash) to the random group and to provide good food and refreshments to all who attend. We have also found it both helpful and useful to bolster the random sample with what is called a ‘convenience sample.’

A convenience sample is a group of participants who are self-selected. That is, they have volunteered to participate but were not part of the random selection process. This group may have come from a number of classes that have an interest in the topic or the process. We have also solicited participants through marketing campaigns (posters, campus announcements, announcements at weekly organization meetings, etc.) designed to reach out to the community at large. (See the Coordinator’s Toolkit for an example of a marketing plan designed to attract a convenience sample.)

Ideally, this convenience sample will be representative of the diversity of your campus population so that, even though they have been self-selected, they can still present a rich array of viewpoints that exist on your campus. The convenience sample serves the additional role of increasing your number of participants that, in turn, increases the exposure of this and future events on campus.

It is a good idea to have a cap on the total number of participants based on your resources, such as the number of rooms you are able to reserve. As the randomly sampled population will allow you to draw significant conclusions from the data, it is vital that you are able to identify and include all randomly sampled participants in the event. Extra space can be allotted to the convenience sample, which can fill participant numbers to capacity.

It is extremely important not to mix the random and convenience samples in small group discussions, as this will affect the representative quality of the results. However, we have found it useful to compare the data analysis between the two groups and have often observed common trends – thus allowing us to combine the results when appropriately noted.
CONTACTING YOUR SAMPLE POPULATION

An introductory letter or email can serve as the initial contact with the randomly sampled population. This message should contain a brief overview of the initiative, as these potential participants may not yet be familiar with the process of deliberative polling. In the following box we detail the questions a convincing and informative note should address.

INITIAL CONTACT MESSAGE TO SAMPLE POPULATION

- What is Deliberative Polling?
- Why should I participate?
- Why should I care about Deliberative Polling?
- Why should I care about the issue the poll covers?
- Why does my opinion matter?
- What are you going to do with the results?

Additionally, it is important to clearly explain what the next steps are for someone who wishes to participate. These steps may include signing a consent form, taking a baseline survey, or contacting the coordinator by phone or email for further information. Your note should also encourage those who are not interested to let you know they will not be attending the event. Be sure to remove these people from your database right away to avoid follow-up contact with them. (See Coordinator’s Toolkit for an example of a contact letter that was sent via email.)

It is a good idea to reach out to the convenience sample in much the same way, so that they receive the relevant information regarding the details of the event.

At Carnegie Mellon, we contacted participants via email for purposes of efficiency and practicality. However, given the massive amount of email that students are barraged with daily, it was important to choose a subject heading carefully. Over the course of four messages sent to our random sample for the Fall 2005 event, we alternated between focusing on a raffle item “Chance to Win an IPod! Help Carnegie Mellon!” and on the power of deliberative polling “Your Voice Matters!”
Tell Carnegie Mellon What You Think!” We employed a mix of strategies because it was our hope that each would appeal to different types of students. When we eventually settled on a $25 cash stipend for each randomly sampled member who participates in the event, the subject line read “$25 stipend available”. Note: While you may have a less than optimal turn out of the random sample for your first one or two events, it is best to prepare for a target sample number of 100 (thus adding $2,500 to the budget).

RECRUITING SMALL GROUP MODERATORS AND ASSISTANTS

It is important that participants’ opinions/voices are heard equally and that they listen to each other’s viewpoints. Thus, moderators are placed in individual rooms to keep small group discussions flowing and focused on the issues being addressed.

The moderator of the small group is in charge of watching the clock and keeping the group on task. This involves setting aside time for the group to hone, refine, and decide which questions will be asked of the expert panel and to make sure the group has enough time to fill out the post-poll survey. Moderators should not offer their own opinion on anything that arises during the discussion, but they should assist in keeping the discussion on track. They should also try to bring everyone into the conversation, but intervene if one participant begins to dominate the discussion.

The ideal moderator is a careful, objective listener. Additionally, small group moderators must be able to refrain from providing additional information, even if something that might be inaccurate is said, unless it is reported correctly in the background materials (whereby the moderator is allowed to refer the participants to this information).

Hopefully, the questions and responses that occur during the plenary session with the expert panel will address and clear up any misconceptions or factual errors that unwittingly arose during the small group discussion.

Moderators can be upperclassmen on campus, resident assistants, student leaders, graduate students (especially in schools of social work or counseling.

The essential difference between this process and the large amount of discussion and meeting moderation that I have done in the past was that reaching a consensus was specifically not a goal of the process. For me, the most valuable result of the training provided in advance of the event was an understanding of that fact. While there was no effort at consensus on content, we did need to achieve a consensus on formulation of questions for the expert panel. The greatest challenge was to work the development of these questions into the discussion without seriously interrupting it or taking too much time. The room assistants became a big help in doing this by keeping track of potential questions on the board as they came up, so we had material with which to work in developing the questions near the end of the discussion time. --Sue Broughton, Moderator
psychology), or members of community groups. Among community groups, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and mediation services are likely to have members who would be interested and may have some experience with moderating, facilitating and mediating. It is also possible that your school or other nearby universities may have groups on campus whose members have experience in facilitating groups and who would be interested in deliberative polling.

No matter the background or training you will need to schedule a one to two hour orientation and training session for all moderators. It is important that they understand that the group does not need to reach consensus on any issue. This may be very different from their past experiences as moderators.

The small group discussions are meant for sharing and listening because that allows participants to learn from one another. The only consensus the group needs to reach is on the two questions they want asked of the expert panel and who in the group will ask each question.

Small group assistants are responsible for tracking the flow of the discussion, writing down and reviewing the questions the participants formulate, and assisting with any in-room needs of the participants.

Recording all questions and major points that arise during the first half of the event will be a valuable asset when it comes time to refine the questions the group will ask the expert panel. The small group assistant’s record will allow group members to refer back to information mentioned previously and see how the conversation evolved, what connections were made between sub-topics, and any concerns group members may have voiced during their discussion. The ideal small group assistant is a polite, careful listener who has legible handwriting. College students of all ages and academic disciplines are a good source of small group assistants.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS
The measures described above seek to ensure that your event approaches a democratic ideal. However, we don’t wish to be Pollyannaish. Democracy is a second best institution and must rely on non-ideal settings; deliberation is imperfect and requires considerable structure -- all of which implies that ‘doing’ deliberative democracy is incredibly demanding. Over the course of the first two years of our initiative, we saw much to celebrate. But we have also seen many of the tensions and challenges that Social Choice Theorists warn us about. Individuals and committees will naturally have their own agendas and these may serve to frame the discussions. Stakeholders may grow increasingly concerned about the outcomes. Squeaky wheels may seek to influence and even
manipulate the process. These aspects of social/political reality are in many ways natural and require open communication and ‘good political skills’ (meeting with concerned parties, reviewing early draft materials with representatives from different campus groups, reminding all that the results of the deliberative poll are not referenda but have consulting power at best). In other words, the Project Lead needs to be prepared for the social side of this initiative as well as understanding the details leading to a successful event.
SECTION 2: MANAGING THE EVENT

Now to host the event! Planning for the deliberative event is a process that includes many activities that will need to be accomplished before, after, and during the event itself. Much of this work will take place as you are researching the topic and developing the background materials.

Strategic Implementation involves:

• Planning the Event

• Hosting the Event

• Collecting and Assessing the Results
PLANNING THE EVENT

ORGANIZATION

A smooth-flowing, professional event takes time and careful consideration. Your planning should make the deliberative event seamless for the participants. Appearing disorganized can interfere with the deliberative polling process and affect attendance at future events.

Those divisions on campus sponsoring the event will expect to be represented in a professional manner. Participants want to feel that they are attending something special, something they want to be a part of. When setting up the event, view the participants as honored guests and plan for their comfort accordingly. The checklists in Coordinator’s Toolbox can be very helpful in making sure nothing is overlooked. Rely on these to guide you. You can also modify them to suite your individual situation.

Deliberative Polls have been held for as long as three days and as little as 3 hours with most being held for one day (6 – 7 hours). When you hold the event – weekend, weekday, evening – and for how long – 3 hours, 6 hours - will depend on your assessment of what participants will tolerate and the amount of time needed to effectively discuss the topic.

We found that Wednesdays after 4:30 work best for us, given the school’s schedule and the amount of time participants seem to be willing to spend. A typical agenda might involve the following:

SAMPLE AGENDA:

EVENING EVENT (3.5 HOURS)

5:00 – 5:30 Registration
5:30 – 5:45 Opening plenary
5:50 – 6:50 First small group
6:55 – 7:55 Resource panel plenary
8:00 – 8:30 Second discussion and Survey

SPACE

After you have determined a date for the event, rooms, tables, chairs and audio-visual equipment should be reserved as soon as possible to insure you will have
enough space within close enough proximity to allow participants and staff to move easily from one place to another. Locating space in one building is best. If you find you need to use more than one, it is best if they are physically connected. Make sure the space meets the requirements on the Location Checklist in the Handbook Toolkit.

The general space requirements for a Deliberative Poll are as follows:

1) An auditorium to host the Welcome Address, Expert Panel Plenary and Closing Plenary

The auditorium (or a large room that can be set up auditorium style) should be able to comfortably accommodate the total number of participants and the expert panel plus any guests, observers and staff. Be sure this room is not too big. If you reserve a room that holds 250 people and 75 are scheduled to attend, the attendees will feel lost and may scatter about the room rather than group together, thus losing a certain sense of closeness and the event will appear not well attended.

2) Rooms to hold small group discussions

These can be classrooms, conference rooms, seminar rooms, etc. They should be large enough to accommodate 10-12 participants plus a moderator sitting in a circle around a table or in a circle of chairs. There should also be room for 1 or 2 observers to sit outside the circle far enough away so they will not seem to be part of the group. Each room should have a black board, white board or a newsprint tripod and pad for the small group assistant to note participant comments.

3) A space for registration

You will need an area close to the auditorium for registration. Generally, two 6’ or 8’ long tables with 4 chairs are enough for a check-in location. Here, participants should receive their nametags and any other important information, such as the agenda, the expert panel bios or other materials necessary for their participation. With attendance over 50, we recommend separating the registration areas into students and faculty/staff/alumni. A third section can be reserved for questions and special cases. Work hard to ensure a graceful registration process.
4) A quiet place for filling out the consent form and pre-poll survey

Unless all participants are completing the consent form and pre-poll survey online prior to the event, you will need to set up an area for these activities and carefully consider how you will manage them.

General experimental procedures must be followed to insure the professional ethics and the scientific accuracy of an experiment with human subjects (participants). The participant must read the consent form, have any questions or concerns addressed and sign the consent form without coercion or the perception of coercion. The signing of consent needs to be witnessed by an experimenter who has received certification in “Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams.” The self-study for this certification can be found at http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp. Certification is valid for 10 years.

The consent form must be signed before any experimental action is taken. Since filling out the pre-poll survey and hearing the Welcome Address are part of the experimental action, the consent form needs to be signed just after participants register, but before any other activities take place.

Because the data you are collecting is scientific data, you need to be sure all participants and their responses are treated equally. After signing the consent form, the participant can be handed the pre-poll survey to take. Be sure all pre-poll surveys are filled out and collected before the Welcome Address begins or at least when participants are exiting the session (drop off boxes are helpful here).

You may either want to reserve a room in which you can set up the consenting and pre-poll survey activities or have participants fill out this survey in the auditorium where the Welcome Address will be given. In either case, be sure you have staff whose sole assignment is to collect the surveys as soon as each participant is finished. This insures that all surveys are collected and the presence of these staff will motivate participants to fill out their surveys.

5) A large, open area for a reception

If you choose to have a reception after the event, use an open area where people can congregate and talk. One purpose of the reception is to give people a chance to socialize after the event and compare experiences. It also gives event staff a chance to speak directly to participants asking them about their personal opinion of the overall event and expert panel members have an opportunity to engage informally with participants and staff.
We generally schedule our space use to include a lobby or hallway area in front of the auditorium and place three table stops: registration, consent, survey, in the order in which participants need to access them when they arrive. Participants will come to know that this is the area to which they will go when they are not in their small groups.

We try to schedule classrooms close to the auditorium. Scheduling use of space this way also allows you to more easily control participant flow, to monitor any materials and food, and to drive participant flow through certain areas to maximize their participation in certain activities.

If you choose to use this area as the reception area, you can include activities external to the deliberative event. For example, you might have tables with representatives from student organizations associated with the topic or other relevant campus or community groups.

**STAFFING**

The number of staff you need to schedule will depend on the number of participants you expect at the event. However, even a small event can involve the efforts of 20 to 30 staff people. In general, we employ 3 or 4 registration staff, two staff people per room (as Moderators and Assistants), and about 10 volunteers to act as Staff-at-Large.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFFING FOR A DELIBERATIVE POLL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• One Coordinator for the entire event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One Registration Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(who also serves as an assistant to the Coordinator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 or 4 Registration Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One moderator and one assistant for each small group you anticipate (plus one or two extras of each in case a moderator or assistant cannot attend at the last minute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A number of Staff-at-Large to act as greeters, to provide direction to participants, and to serve as ‘runners’ who will attend to lapsed or forgotten details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOSTING THE EVENT

EVENT PREPARATION

Materials that should be prepared and ready the day before the event include checklists, signage and an annotated agenda to help keep all coordinators and staff organized the day of the event.

REGISTRATION CHECKLIST/PARTICIPANT LIST

This Excel worksheet includes the names of participants, whether they have filled out a baseline survey (if applicable), signed the consent form and appearance release, and whether the administrator has both their pre-poll and post-poll surveys. Staff can place x’s in the appropriate boxes as materials are returned. It is important to document that the consent form and pre-poll survey have been filled out in case your IRB or any other appropriate body wants to audit the study.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Even though your poll will primarily involve members of the campus community, clear directional signage is still very important. It can help brand your event (always choosing the same color paper for example) and create some curiosity about it with those not attending. It is important not assume that all members of your campus community are familiar with all campus locations. Keep the directional signage simple and clear since these messages are primarily intended to move participants to the event as quickly and efficiently as possible.

SIGNAGE FOR YOUR EVENT

- Event: Campus Conversation in building B This way (with an arrow)
- Registration
- Small group rooms with group numbers on the signs
- Expert panel session
- Reception
- Restrooms
- See the Registration Checklist in the Handbook Toolkit for a few more ideas.
ANNOTATED AGENDA

It is very helpful to have an annotated agenda with contact information to hand each person who staffs the event. An annotated agenda is a comprehensive outline of your event that specifies who will complete each task and at what time. Your agenda should encompass set-up through clean-up, and specificity is recommended. It can be handed out during staff orientation so people can highlight or note their specific tasks. See the Coordinator’s Toolkit for a complete annotated agenda.

It is also helpful to have an addendum for small group moderators, providing guidelines for their opening and closing comments as well as a timetable detailing the length of small group activities. See the Toolkit’s Moderators Guide for an example. Also see Site Checklist, Panel/Speaker Checklist for more ideas of what to add.

PRE-REGISTRATION

About an hour to an hour and a half before the participants are scheduled to arrive, the small group assistants should help set up the rooms in which the group discussions will be occurring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION ROOM SET-UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create a roundtable atmosphere. If possible, secure a large table around which the participants and the moderator can all sit, if not, set up the desks or chairs in a circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clean the chalkboard/whiteboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set out snacks/water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tape the room number/group number sign to the door.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moderators should arrive about half an hour before participants to receive their room assignments, meet the small group assistant with whom they will be working, and listen to an orientation that details the day’s events or explains any changes. (Moderators and small group assistants can also meet earlier in a joint orientation session a few days prior to the event.)
PRE-POLL SURVEY

Participants should arrive at least half an hour prior to the welcome session. This allows them enough time to sign all necessary consent forms as well as take the pre-poll survey.

REGISTERING PARTICIPANTS

At the time of registration, participants should be provided with the following materials:

- Consent form if they haven’t already physically or digitally signed one (i.e. if there was no baseline/ pre-document survey).

- Appearance release form (so pictures can be taken and the event documented -- See Toolkit for an example).

- Agenda of the day’s events.


- Pre-poll survey, if applicable (to be completed and returned to the registration desk prior to the welcome session).

- A copy of the Ground Rules for participants and observers.

WELCOME ADDRESS

The welcome session should not be more than fifteen minutes long. The purpose of the welcome session is to provide an orientation for the participants that should include the following:

1) a general overview of deliberative polling
2) an explanation of why the topic is important, what key questions and choices should be considered and how the results of the surveys and discussions will be used,
3) a review of the agenda and ground rules,
4) ‘housekeeping’ announcements, and
5) dismissal of participants to their small groups.
We generally assign one person the give the overview, another to emphasize the importance of the topic and a third to review the agenda, to provide housekeeping announcements and to manage the dismissal of participants to their small groups.

At the end of the welcome session, participants are called by group number and they are asked to follow their moderator and small group assistant to the room for their first discussion.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ONE

The moderator will have a list of guiding questions to help the discussion along in the event that the discussion begins to slow. Furthermore, it should be clear that while all discussions are occurring, it is important that the participants respect the discussion and one another. It is the moderator’s responsibility to make sure that this occurs.

GROUND RULES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

• Treat other group members with respect;
• Listen to other people’s views and do not interrupt;
• Explain your own perspective; and
• Focus on reasoned arguments, challenging experiences, and relevant facts.

There are also ground rules for observers that, among other things, state that they are not allowed to speak or interrupt in any way during the small group discussion. Of course, observers can enter and leave as they need to and it is recommended that observers try to sit in on two sessions to ensure that they get a fuller perspective on how deliberations take place. More information on Observer Rules can be found in the Handbook Toolkit.

"After serving as a moderator at the Campus Conversation on the Student Bill of Rights, I recognized the manner in which the process both enlightened and empowered the student body. More precisely, the deliberations allowed the participants to move beyond ideological differences, and thoughtfully explore a controversial issue confronting the campus community. These deliberations are powerful vehicles which serve as catalysts for student involvement."- Neil Guzy, Moderator/Coro Fellow in Local Democracy, 2006-2007
questions down on question submittal form. Additionally, each group will select a member of the group to ask of the questions.

**EXPERT PANEL PLENARY**

The Expert Panel session should be at least one hour long. The purpose of this session is to answer the questions of each small group.

It is best if the questions are written on a Question Submittal Form. This form should be in triplicate. The small group assistant writes the question on the form exactly as the group wants it. One copy is given immediately to the person in the group who will stand up and read the question posed to the panel, the other copies are given to the staff who will review the forms to avoid duplication of questions. The staff will then give one copy to the Panel Moderator and the other copy will be filed.

The Panel Moderator can use the question submittal forms to devise an order for addressing the groups’ questions. If there are duplicate questions, questions should be organized so that each group gets to ask at least one of the questions developed in their small group discussion. The Expert Panel Moderator is also in charge of making sure that each question is answered to the satisfaction of the representative group asking the question.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TWO AND POST-POLL SURVEY**

The purpose of the second small group discussion is to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the answers they received at the expert panel session and to discuss how those answers might change the way they've come to understand and interpret the issues under discussion. This conversation can last from 15 minutes to a half an hour.

At the end of the discussion, the assistant will distribute the Post-Poll Survey. All participants should complete a post-poll survey and hand it back to the assistant prior to attending the reception.

**DISTRIBUTION OF INCENTIVES**

If you plan to give monetary or other types of incentives to participants, make arrangements to distribute them after the participants leave their discussion rooms and have turned in their surveys. We provide $25 stipends to the Random Sample groups only. At one deliberative poll we handed out a yellow card to each random sample participant as he or she turned in the survey. That card was then presented to those who were distributing the incentives in the reception area.
CLOSING PLENARY AND RECEPTION

A closing plenary is not part of the protocol for a deliberative poll; however, there is no reason not to schedule one. It can and should be very short – a thank you to the participants and an invitation for any comments on the experience or any questions about how the data will be distributed, etc. If you opt not to have a closing plenary, make sure each moderator has a closing script in the small group discussion room, which can be presented before the small groups take the survey.

Remember: The participants have struggled through several hours of discussion and taken certain risks in expressing their opinions to others whom they do not know. They have formed a strong group bond. The breaking of this bond at the end of the event deserves to be honored and recognized.

A reception can be a time for participants to get to know one another beyond the small group discussion. This can also be a good time to casually gauge participants’ feelings about the event in general. However, there are times when participants simply want to go home after they have filled out their surveys. You will need to consider the time and duration of the event and weigh the costs and benefits. We have also considered an additional “capstone” event that would bring the entire campus together in a celebration of democracy and as an opportunity for regional organizations (like the League of Young Voters) to encourage greater civic engagement on campus and beyond.

AUGMENTING THE EVENT WITH ONLINE TOOLS

Informational websites can be extremely useful for Campus Conversations. The project website should have a Mission Statement as well as information on deliberative polling. The site should also contain information on upcoming events and archives of previous events. Design of the website can utilize student talent, but care must be taken to ensure that the site can be easily updated and maintained by a web manager. (See caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/ for the Carnegie Mellon site.)

Over and above the informational use of online tools, interactive online communication software can play an important role in the initiative. Very often participants want to ‘continue the conversation’ for important reasons. For example, people may have found new information that they want to post and discuss. Participants may also have further questions to ask the experts or want to challenge others on certain points that were not fully covered during the actual face-to-face event. Additional opportunities for survey and user input can be
created by expanding the conversation for a specified period (e.g., 5 or 7 days). Last, but not least, online tools provide alumni with the opportunity to participate in these campus events from a distance. In fact, alumni who have participated this way have become very interested in this whole process.

As with all software, attention should be paid to the thoughtful use and integration of online tools that augment the conversation. The Toolkit has a section on the use of PICOLA (Public Informed Citizen Online Assembly), a program specifically designed for online deliberative polling and other forms of structured, democratic dialogue. To see how this online environment was used during a Campus Conversation on Public Art Policy, go to caae.phil.cmu.edu/picola/public_art/
COLLECTING DATA AND ASSESSING RESULTS

RESULT ASSESSMENT

Aside from developing the survey instrument, the primary responsibility of the social scientist on the team is the analysis of the data. This person will look for statistically significant changes in the pre-poll vs. post-poll data, compare random and convenience samples, and review the qualitative assessments included in the post-poll questionnaire (via comment boxes, etc.). Students can help with the data entry and initial analysis (we use SurveyMonkey for initial data entry, analysis and graphical display). An initial summary of the data should be completed in about one week and made available to the participants, other stakeholders, and campus media. See the Report the Student Bill of Rights at: caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/polls/apr06/index.html

CREATING THE FINAL REPORT

The theme of the Final Report will likely vary with the goals of your initiative. For instance, the first final report of the Carnegie Mellon Initiative focused on ways to improve response rates and institutionalize the Initiative on campus; our second final report focused on the event content and the use of the results to help inform campus decision makers. The second report also included an assessment of how well we overcame the problems we experienced previously, a review of what problems remained, and a discussion of any new problems we encountered. More recent Final Reports are focused solely on the analysis of the data and represent the full findings of the deliberative poll and its relevance to the topic at hand. See the Report on Public Art Policy at: caae.phil.cmu.edu/cc/polls/nov06/index.html
A FINAL WORD

“I do not think I am overreaching when I say that there is a considerable amount of discontent among my generation when it comes to the current political process in the United States and the way that important yet controversial issues are addressed in a manner that does not take into account the moral perspectives and unique opinions of many disparate and underrepresented groups. While I knew very little about Deliberative Democracy before my work with the SPPDD began, I did feel that there was a “void” within the current political model, and democracy to me seemed little more than a painfully necessary, yet invariably problematic process that was bound to leave someone or some group feeling left out. Anyone familiar with the concept of Deliberative Polling and the power of Deliberative Democracy, however, knows that this need not be the case.

We have spoken many times about the real power of the Deliberative Model, the way that it turns students into citizens and community members into leaders for the future, and how it is able to engage people at a deep intellectual level, and empower them to voice concerns and articulate opinions which may never have been brought to light without the type of focused, pragmatic conversation that a Deliberative Poll can offer. We, of course, can make these claims because we have seen it first hand. Deliberative Democracy does not just have the potential to work — it does work, because it addresses the fundamental need to be heard and connect with others, a need which has so often been neglected or ignored in so many communities where town meetings, often dominated by a few “squeaky wheels” [that] have been the model used to conduct public affairs.

Our Campus Conversation on Public Art Policy was a testament to this. For the first time, students, staff, faculty and alumni were able to enter a discussion as equals, as citizens of the community who, despite coming from different backgrounds and contributing in different ways to University life, all had something important to say and were willing to keep an open mind when listening to the life experiences and concerns of others.

It is of course one thing to organize an event on a University campus and quite another to take these same principles and apply them to a largely troubled and factionalized community, but if any doubts remained about the model after our experiences on campus, our July 2007 Community Conversation has surely silenced them. We succeeded in bringing together nine neighborhoods, all of which were suffering from poor economic condition, the specter of crime, and years of inter-neighborhood violence which bred deep-seated suspicion within the larger community and robbed the area of many of its youth. The Community Conversation proved to me that a Deliberative Poll will succeed in virtually any
situation, as long as the necessary (and often quite difficult) planning and organization is conducted in a thoughtful and timely manner. It was my honor to be a part of the staff that helped put the initiative together, not only because it reinforced in my mind the importance of what we were doing, but also because it left me firmly convinced that I had made a difference in the lives of people who had gone so long without a real opportunity to sit down and work on the problems facing their neighborhoods.” – Dan Giesey, 2006-07 Coro Fellow in Deliberative Democracy