**LFC Collaborations, with Rocky College:**

**How to Run Effective Meetings – Takeaways**

27 March 2012

**Key Ideas:**

Meetings are an important site to practice and demonstrate leadership. Because a member’s time is valuable, a leader should ensure that meetings are both fun and productive. There are many steps a leader can take to facilitate good conversations and decision-making processes before, during, and after the meeting.

1. **Recognize the different kinds of meetings:** Depending on the group’s size, mission, and task at hand, the meeting may involve more social time or more business, task-oriented time. Leaders must understand what their group’s needs are at the time and design a meeting that will fulfill those needs.
2. **Agenda-setting**: Leaders should design an agenda with a clear purpose and list of items that need to be covered during the meeting. It is helpful to allocate time between these items, so that leaders can keep meetings on track and moving forward.
3. **Make meetings inclusive**: Meetings are, by definition, a group of people gathered together in the same space. There is no reason to bring people together if they are not going to be included in the conversation – either to give feedback, or because they have an active stake in listening to ideas being presented.

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|  | **Ways a Leader Can Address the Problem** | | |
| **Challenge** | *Before* | *During* | *After* |
| Members show up late | Constant reminders; clear attendance list of who’s coming and not; set clear expectations with members by having them sign contracts when they join your group |  | Hold them accountable: don’t let them slide too often |
| Members don’t show up at all | Set up regular meeting times early; email/phone/text reminders of meeting time |  |  |
| Members feel their presence not valued at meetings and therefore remain disengaged and non-participatory | Seek member buy-in by having them contribute to the agenda (tool: Google doc) | Moderator calls on people by name to seek input. This is not scary if you create a good group culture. Can also use the late-averaging brainstorming technique | Thank people for attendance and input (sometimes send personal thank you’s). Create culture that rewards work and is fun! |
| Purpose of meeting is unclear | Set agenda and specify the meeting’s overall purpose, as well as each agenda item’s purpose; put group’s mission statement on top of agenda | Moderator should tie meeting back to group mission and use language (‘…because…’) to guide conversation |  |
| Difficulty maintaining momentum between meetings |  | At end of each meeting, create next week’s agenda and next week’s action items | Follow up on tasks, set specific deadlines ad check ins |
| Meetings drag on (example: tangential conversations, one member dominates conversation) | Send out agenda before hand, with a specific amount of time allocated for each item; set a standard of what/how things are discussed | Use timers to keep meeting on track |  |
| Too much socializing at beginning of meeting, and hard to transition to business | Bring food/something in the beginning, and when you make announcement about snacks, simultaneously say “this is a great time to begin business…” |  |  |
| Too much socializing throughout meeting | Schedule icebreakers at beginning of meeting, schedule outside social events |  |  |
| Failure to reach consensus | Acknowledge perhaps no consensus is possible or that it will be difficult | Moderator needs to identify group priorities and guide conversation |  |
| People are not actively listening | Give them a reason to listen | Shift people back on track | Recap with feedback |
| Too many side conversations | Have group leaders seat themselves around the room (disperse power), encourage people to sit near people they didn’t walk in with/know as well | Close computer/phones; set the tone, communal language (“why don’t we all put our phones away”) |  |