



Request for Proposals

Building the Architecture of Inclusion Through Higher Education: Sustaining and Scaling Full Participation at the Intersection of Public Engagement and Diversity

Submission Deadline: March 4, 2012

For questions about the project: Margaret Salazar Porzio (msalaz@law.columbia.edu)

To submit a proposal: Robin Higgins (rjhiggin@syr.edu)

Imagining America (IA) has undertaken a project with the Center for Institutional and Social Change (the Center) to build capacity for linking diversity and public engagement at IA partner institutions across the nation. This goal is a central focus of the 2012 IA national conference, and has been identified as a priority for many IA members. The project involves working with 15 institutions in 3 collaborative working groups to develop shared strategies and tools to build the architecture for integrating diversity and public scholarship. It will also develop and apply indicators of the collective impact of these efforts. Institutions committed to these goals will be selected to participate in one of three structured, collaborative working groups that build on the strategies and tools of partner institutions, using the frameworks developed by Imagining America and the Center for Institutional and Social Change to build the capacity of all IA institutions.

Each institutional team will prepare for and participate in a day-and-a-half long workshop with 4 other institutional teams, building on the Center's work with Syracuse University (SU) and the University of Southern California (USC). These sessions will be held in New York City (April 26-27, 2012), Los Angeles (September 13-14, 2012), and Michigan (November 2012, dates TBA). The aims are to help participating institutions to realize the goal of integrating engaged scholarship through building inclusive institutions of higher education and to enable IA to advance these goals on a national level, through its work with member institutions, its 2012 conference, and its participation in national policy discussions and publications.

Through a phased collaborative action-research and strategic network development effort, this project will:

1. generate prototypes, frameworks, strategies, roles, indicators, and networks for linking diversity and public scholarship and increasing the sustainability, centrality, and scope of such initiatives;
2. mobilize and build the collective capacity of cohorts of individual and institutional innovators so that they make long term commitments and demonstrable progress toward this goal, and
3. build national momentum to catalyze cross-institutional learning and policy change.

Background and Vision

This collaborative project proceeds from a shared vision: to build higher education institutions that enable people from all communities, backgrounds, and identities to participate fully, and in the process, to build collective knowledge and capacity needed to solve difficult public problems, a dual agenda we refer to as “institutional citizenship” (Sturm 2006). Consistent with this vision, the project uses collaborative inquiry to advance three linked goals: (1) increasing access, success and full participation in higher education for underrepresented groups and communities, (2) building higher education’s capacity to address urgent challenges facing these communities through public engagement, and (3) prompting the institutional re-imagining needed to facilitate the achievement of these goals. This work will identify and document concrete narratives, examples, mechanisms, strategies and indicators of institutional citizenship. With this knowledge, Imagining America and its member institutions will be in a stronger position to encourage and enable the cultivation of these synergies at the institutional and policy levels, with the development of concrete policy recommendations.

This project builds on a mixed-method, action research collaboration with SU and USC, which has undertaken to map, systematically document, learn from, build upon, and network across innovations within and between a set of strategically placed higher education institutions and their constituent communities. The inquiry focuses on three overarching questions:

1. How does the goal of increasing institutional diversity and full participation interact with developing the capacity and commitment to address tough problems facing multiple communities? What are the strategies and frameworks that enable these linkages to form and last?
2. Taking a systems view, how do activities, relationships and resources cluster to become arenas for promoting broader sustainable change? How do change and policy leaders build out systematically from hubs and hot spots at the forefront of change? What can one initiative learn from another about that building out process?
3. How can arts, design, and humanities serve as a particular vehicle for linking diversity/inclusion with public scholarship/engagement?

Activities

The Center has developed and is refining a set of tools to map and document systems level strategies and impacts. The Center will use these tools to support the work of participating institutions involved by conducting collaborative inquiry sessions, workshops, and qualitative research to examine and specify the features of diversity and public engagement on each campus.

For each of the day-long sessions we will engage in the following activities:

- Identifying the arenas of activity where diversity/full participation and public engagement have the potential to connect;
- articulating the range of collective goals and outcomes for these projects and their potential for collective impact;
- mapping strategies for linking these projects and producing collective impact;
- identifying the information currently available about these outcomes and strategies;

- analyzing the capacities that must be developed to advance these goals and actionable steps for developing those capacities; and
- sharing tools for building this kind of reflective practice into the regular meetings and data-gathering practices of the university.

Project collaborators will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrable institutional commitment to linking diversity and publicly engaged scholarship as well as the desire and capacity to use insights garnered from the initial research and day-long sessions to advance this larger institutional goal.
- Capacity and commitment to engaging in reflective inquiry about the mechanisms, strategies, and impacts of linking diversity and public engagement, and
- Capacity and commitment to collecting and working with the relevant information prior to, during, and after the day-long session as part of a larger institutional goal for creating and advancing practices for linking diversity and public scholarship.

With these criteria in mind, institutional collaborators should indicate interest by demonstrating their capacity to:

- identify a team of key people in campuses and communities who want to be part of this conversation, who are in positions to understand how these linkages are happening and how they could happen more effectively, who have the capacity and interest in gathering the information, and who want to be able to move their institution along this “linking” continuum in a productive way;
- devoting resources necessary to engage in: (1) information gathering by individuals who can also bring this work forward beyond the day-long sessions and work towards hardwiring these kinds of practices into their institutions; (2) hosting a set of conversations between their team and major stakeholders on the campus and in the community to discuss collective impact; (3) participating in, and sharing information gathered at the day-long session with their team members; (4) sharing the lessons at the national IA conference in October 2012.

Outcomes and Next Steps:

The three collaborative working groups will build on emerging and existing efforts to produce scholarship and research focused on linking diversity and public engagement in a more sustained way. These three sessions will be the first steps in the formation of a larger research-in-action network that will be seeded by the initial set of fifteen institutions and will include:

- 1) **An action agenda going forward.** Fifteen institutions will participate in the three collaborative working groups leading up to the conference and beyond. Part of these sessions will include developing an action agenda for each set of institutions as well as individual institutions to move this work forward. Action agendas could involve collaborative work to seek other external sources of funding to do further research and/or implement findings.
- 2) **A set of next steps.** A workshop at the Imagining America national conference in October 2012 will be geared towards planning for next steps. IA institutions that want to participate at the conference will have an opportunity to learn from and work with the collaboration through this workshop.

- 3) **Information sharing across institutions.** There is a commitment on the part of IA in collaboration with the Center to share the work generated from these sessions with the IA membership and through publications and future meetings, etc. The group will decide on a plan for information sharing at the IA national conference workshop in October 2012.

Proposals for Collaboration and Participation

Institutions interested in participating in the “Architecture of Inclusion” project should prepare a proposal of *no more than 5 pages* that address the following:

- why the institution is interested in participating and what it hopes to gain through participation;
- how this work relates to and will advance current and planned goals and initiatives underway;
- who will be the members of a team of key stakeholders and change agents from the campus and/or community who are in a position to learn about their institution, participate in the workshop and take action based on what is learned through the workshop. The selection committee recommends that three people from each institution comprise their team, including for example: 1) someone in a relatively senior leadership position who can bring this work forward on an institutional level, 2) someone in a leadership position around diversity and/or public scholarship/engagement, and 3) someone involved in information gathering and/or reporting on these kinds of issues for use by the institution; and
- where and when you would prefer to participate: at one of the three collaborative working group sessions held in New York City (April 26-27, 2012), Los Angeles (September 13-14, 2012), or Michigan (November 2012, dates TBA); or at the IA national conference workshop in New York City (October 5-7, 2012).

We welcome any and all questions you might have and will gladly provide phone and email consultation on the proposal drafting process. **Please address inquiries to the Center’s Associate Research Scholar, Margaret Salazar Porzio (msalaz@law.columbia.edu).**

Please address proposals to: Robin Higgins (rjhiggin@syr.edu).

Deadline for Submission

March 4, 2012