Capacity-Building
Student Development
Training

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

Overview: This guide introduces students to the idea of capacity building. A Bonner Program goal is to partner with community organizations in ways increase the organizations ability to do their work while building on student leadership within the organization. Students will explore and identify opportunities for increased capacity-building with the organizations with whom they work. In the process, they will identify areas of personal and professional skill building. Capacity-building opportunities complement the direct service work of students at partner sites and can be integrated into how the student and organization plan for their work and develop multi-faceted partnerships.

Category: Planning, Leadership, Goal Setting, Reflection, Communication, Leadership Transition

Level: Moderate to advanced. Students should have had at least one year's experience at an organization.

Recommended Bonner Sequence:

Students who are in their second or third year within the Bonner program.
Can also be used:
• With seniors in planning their leadership transition at their site
• As a mentoring tool between upper level students and their mentees

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

Participants will:
• Gain an understanding of capacity-building (its definition and what activities it covers)
• Identify opportunities for capacity-building at their site
• Identify areas for personal and professional development
• Reflect on their own experience at their site
• Plan for conversation with site supervisor on the development of position descriptions for student placement(s) (their own and others)

Materials:
• Flip chart paper
• Markers
• Stories from upper class students (this can be in video form, written and read aloud, or shared by the student in-person)
• Handouts: Bonner Transformation Goals, Capacity Building Opportunities Form, Copies of corresponding current position descriptions for each student
• Power Point/Prezi Presentation

Brief Outline:

This workshop is designed to give students an overview of capacity-building. They should have a majority of time to reflect on their own experience and focus on the Capacity Building Worksheet.

The outline has the following parts:
1) What is Capacity Building? suggested time 10 minutes
2) What does Capacity Building look like? suggested time 15 minutes
3) Capacity Building worksheet suggested time 25 minutes
4) Reflection suggested time 10 minutes
Part 1) What is Capacity-Building?
Suggested time:

LARGE GROUP BRAINSTORM

Ask students:
• Are you familiar with the idea of capacity-building?
• What do you think it means?
• What are ways that organizations/we do capacity building

Capture their ideas on Flip Chart Paper. Your responses and ideas of capacity-building highlight/align with the definition and activities outlined by the Corporation for National Community Service and National Council of Non-profits.

DEFINITIONS - Use PowerPoint

Capacity Building
• Strengthens an organization’s ability to achieve its mission over time
• Enhances the organization’s ability to do its work
• Increases positive impact on individuals and communities

Capacity Building Areas
• Efficiency/Efficacy
  o Improved outcomes with the same level of resources or improved or consistent quality of services with fewer resources
• Scale/Reach
  o Number of new people served, new populations served, and/or new or expanded services
• Leverage
  o Additional resources or assets garnered through capacity-building activities such as funding, volunteers, in-kind support, and partnerships

Capacity Building Activities
• Volunteer Management
  o coordinate/manage service program, volunteer recruitment
• Training and Program Development
  o coordinate programs, develop new programs, write training manuals, organize/lead training workshops
• Fundraising
• organize events, identify grant and funding sources, write grants
  • Communications
    o website and social media development, coordinate meetings, online
      networking support; create print marketing materials
  • Research
    o community-based research, policy research
  • Collaboration/Partnership Building
    o Identify partners and/or stakeholders, organize/facilitate meetings,
      build and maintain relationship

Part 2) What does Capacity Building Look Like?
Suggested time:

The Bonner Program supports students in intensive multi-year engagement in service. This involvement allows us to build upon and enrich community partnerships to support long-term, collaborative problem-solving approaches that feature multiple levels of student involvement, leadership, and activity.

Upper Level Student Reflections
Share 2-3 student reflections with the group. This can be presented as a video, written and read aloud, or shared by the student in-person. After presentations, ask participants to share what resonated with them about the stories. Each participant should share. If stories are shared in-person, allow time for participant questions of the presenters. If your upper level students can stay you can modify the pair and share and have them facilitate a small group using the same questions below.

Pair and Share
In your role at your site:
  • Are you engaged in capacity building?
  • How?
  • If not what is the potential?

Part 3) Self Reflection & Capacity Building Worksheet
Suggested time:

Hand out the Capacity Building Worksheet and students’ current Position Descriptions.

Have students do the following during the session:
• Review their current Position Description.
• Complete “Organizational Capacity-Building Opportunities” Form.
  o What are their interests for professional development and their ability to work with the organization to increase capacity?
  o Narrow down opportunities to 2-3.

Cover the following with the students during the session and assign as homework:
• Remember this is a collaborative process between you as a student employee and the organization.
• When you meet with your supervisor discuss the following:
  o Discuss: Passions, interests, values, and your top 5 StrengthsFinder themes of talent with your supervisor in the context of your work. Refer to the previously completed Strengths Handout: TITLE HERE
  o Share: What gaps do you see in programming or at the org? What suggestions do they have for addressing? What is the potential for capacity-building? Think about how you connect the organization with Macalester as a whole.
  o Match: your professional development interests, skills, and passions w/ organizational need.
  o Review: your narrowed down opportunities list with your supervisor in the context of developing your position description for next academic year. Also discuss potential for developing additional connections with your institution beyond Bonner.

Part 4) Concluding Reflection
Suggested time:

Pat Donohue, from TCNJ, in his paper, “A Developmental and Capacity-Building Model for Community Partnerships” summarizes this work as follows:

Each level of activity from direct service to capacity-building opens up opportunities for students to be challenged to develop personally, socially, civically and academically. This approach cultivates the common ground between community and student development.

• Comprehensiveness: capacity-building speaks to the range of activities discussed today that we make available to our primary community partner organizations.
• **Concentration**: we try to bring all four components of our model to bear so that each agency on an annual basis is receiving a steady infusion of energetic volunteers, quality research, staff development workshops, and policy analysis and similar reports or news.

• **Continuity**: it takes time to build a multi-faceted partnership and each layer grows from a position of trust—as well as shared resources and expertise.

A capacity-building approach has several advantages:

- It addresses project continuity and sustainability by establishing long-range project goals, leadership succession, and peer mentoring strategies that exceed the duration of any one student or member who may leave;
- It offers feedback and assessment strategies that are responsive to the short- and long-term needs of a community partner; and,
- It promotes an integrative learning and developmental strategy for students and their community partners alike.

With these things in mind wrap up the session with a “Once Around” with each student answering the following question: What are you most excited about in moving forward with this work?”

**Handouts for Workshop**

**Resources:**

A Developmental and Capacity-Building Model for Community Partnerships  
By Patrick Donohue (Middlesex County College/The College of New Jersey)

National Council of Non-profits

Corporation for National Community Service