Using Norms to Foster Inclusive and Effective Meetings

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Outcomes for Today

► Distinguish implicit from explicit norms

► Collaboratively developed explicit norms for academic senate meetings
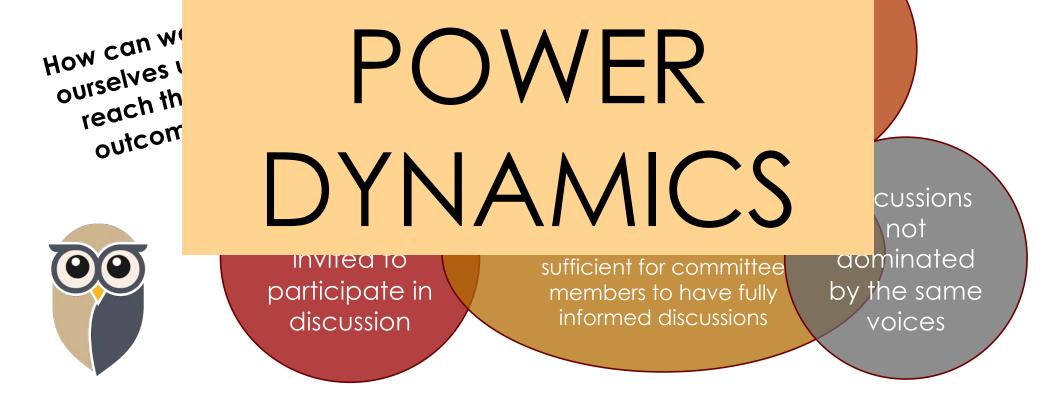
► Be OK with being imperfect! This is a journey.

Ask questions as they arise

What does an inclusive, effective meeting look like to you?

Define a Concrete Outcome(s) for Each Agenda Item

▶ Articulate *concrete goals* &/or deliverables

This	Rather than this…
Approve proposed policy changes based on constituent feedback	Discuss policy
Review proposed budget cuts and answer committee members' questions in preparation for them to facilitate discussion among their constituents	Discuss budget cuts

http://blog.meeteor.com/blog/meeting-agenda/

During the Meeting: the "art" of facilitation – setting/reviewing norms

- "Standards of behavior"
- Ground rules for how team collaborates
- Aligns participants' expectations, guides actions during meeting
- Gets everyone on the same page
- Every member understands how to interact with others

Recommend spending some time at first meeting of the year to help committee members set norms for the year/term

General Meeting Norms
May be standard for all meetings regardless of topic

- Process norms
- Preparation norms
- Communication norms

- Honor individual experience and perspectives. Assume you can learn from everyone.
- Ask clarifying questions and avoid making assumptions
- Make sure everyone's voice is heard.
- Balance your participation – allow all others to speak before you speak a second time
- Practice active listening without interrupting

During the meeting: active listening to

- **Practice active listening**
  - **Contact**: Listen to each participant attentively and reinforce what is being said by maintaining eye contact or non-verbal responses.
  - **Absorb**: Take in what each person says as well as their body language without judgment or evaluation
  - **Feedback**: Paraphrase and summarize what the speaker says back to the speaker
  - **Confirm**: Get confirmation from the speaker that you understand their points accurately.

Norms for virtual meetings

- ▶ Use the mute when not speaking

- ▶ Video?

  - ▶ Sense of community

  - ▶ Body language is important for communication

  - ▶ Life!

- ▶ Chat?

  - ▶ Can foster community

  - ▶ The equivalent of side conversation(s) – consistent with active listening?

More General Meeting Norms
May be standard for all meetings regardless of topic

- Process norms
- Preparation norms
- Communication norms

- Raise ideas/issues in the room rather than waiting until later
- All opinions are valid. Cultivate your ability to consider "outlying" opinions.
- Avoid being defensive if others are confused and/or ask for the reasoning behind your thinking

General Meeting Norms
May be standard for all meetings regardless of topic

- Process norms
- Preparation norms
- Communication norms

- Everyone helps group stay on topic. Speak up if we're getting off track.
- Challenge past assumptions and "sacred cows*"
- Address conflict openly
- Look ahead to positive action, rather than shoulda-coulda-woulda
- Aim for GETGO – good enough to go, not perfection
- Everyone is responsible for helping uphold norms

*an idea, custom, or institution held, especially unreasonably, to be above criticism (with reference to the Hindus' respect for the cow as a sacred animal).

Norms for Specific Types of Agenda Items

- Brainstorming norms
- Check-in/information sharing norms
- Decision-making norms

- We will use [consensus, consultative, majority rule] as our decision-making standard
- Each person is responsible for ensuring they understand the options and arguments before making the decision
- Be willing to support a team consensus even if you don't initially agree with it
- Don't push your ideas on the team after a decision has been made
- Represent your constituents rather than yourself
- Acknowledge when you're playing devil's advocate to help test a decision or idea

During the meeting: Managing Discussion

▶ How can you intervene in a productive way to keep discussion moving when someone is long-winded, off-topic?

▶ Ensuring all voices are heard –

  ▶ What do you do when one person is dominating the discussion?

  ▶ What do you do when one person appears disengaged?

Use your norms!!