

## **Dialogue: A Tool for Hearing Community Perspectives on Partnerships**

### **PRESENTERS/CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Barbara Holland, Director, NSLC, [barbarah@etr.org](mailto:barbarah@etr.org), 1-866-245-7378 ext 273  
Elaine Ikeda, Director, CACC, [elaine@cacampuscompact.org](mailto:elaine@cacampuscompact.org), 415-338-3983  
Carol Wilkinson, MiraCosta College, [cwilkinson@miracosta.edu](mailto:cwilkinson@miracosta.edu), 760-795-6616

### **Session Description**

Opportunities for hearing and incorporating the perspectives of community members must be created if local communities and post-secondary institutions are to work toward greater reciprocity and sustainability. California Campus Compact has held a series of dialogues with community partners to inform the development of resources that may strengthen partnerships for community service, service learning, and civic education initiatives. Session participants will engage in one of these dialogues, explore community perspectives on partnerships, and discuss how the model could be adapted to convene their own community partner dialogues.

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This session will incorporate small group dialogue, and large group presentation and discussion.

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Learned about a replicable model to engage service learning community partners in dialogues on partnerships, and about resources for partnership improvement that will incorporate the results of these dialogues and be made available to the field later in 2005-06.
- Practiced using the model by engaging in a meaningful dialogue with other session participants about what makes for ideal community/campus partnerships, which elements currently exist in their partnerships, and which elements, if worked on, could improve reciprocity and impact.

### **California Campus Compact Focus Groups/Dialogues with Community Partners**

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Learn and Serve America Higher Education (LSAHE) and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) have provided funding for California Campus Compact to undertake a research project to explore community partner relationships in California.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

California Campus Compact is conducting this research in an effort to continually strengthen the field of community service and service learning. We realize that there is much that can be learned from the community representatives that partner with our member institutions. We will gather information about partnerships directly from community representatives throughout the state. This information will be collected and analyzed to form some promising practices (from the perspective of community representatives) on cultivating strong partnerships.

## **FOCUS GROUP/DIALOGUE DETAILS**

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**Nature and Purpose of the Project:** The overall purpose of the project is to document characteristics of strong and effective community partnerships and to identify best practices that can be shared with our member institutions. This research project involves participating in group discussions (focus groups or dialogues). During this time, community partners will be asked to share their thoughts and impressions about a number of different topic areas related to community partnerships in which they are involved. These questions will focus on the characteristics of ideal partnerships, the impact of these partnerships, and suggestions for improving partnerships.

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Participants in this conference session will hear a brief review of other related work that has been done in the past and will receive the protocol and research questions that are being utilized in this research project. They will also hear about the most recent findings from the focus groups that have taken place thus far.