

De-mystifying the World of Partnerships
Queensborough Community College
City University of New York

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Background Information

Queensborough Community College is one of 23 campuses of the City University of New York. The college is located in the county of Queens, the most diversely populated county in the United States. Students who attend Queensborough come from over 129 countries and speak almost as many different languages. The majority of students who enroll at QCC live in Queens and the majority of them find employment in Queens. The university is committed to an open enrollment policy, and it is dedicated to academic excellence within an environment of diversity. Queensborough provides a rich general education core aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking and decision making skills, utilizing effective learning strategies and emphasizing the integration of academic and support services with a focused attention to pedagogy.

In December 2006, Queensborough Community College was one of eight community colleges awarded the American Association of Community College's *Broadening Horizons through Service Learning* grant. This grant provided seedling funding for the institution to explore the service learning pedagogy's integration into its academy model which would unfold in the fall 2009.

Although no formal service learning office presently exists, the formidable service learning project at Queensborough is sustained because of its rich and robust partnerships. These partnerships range from the local level to the geographically larger community; from the economic partnerships to the civically engaged partnerships. When educational institutions invite community-based organizations to partner with them in the educational process, the initial skeptical response from the community-based organization can be alleviated if both parties come to the table with clearly identified visions. Once reciprocity is reached, the service learning experience will produce a win- win partnership. This workshop will offer an opportunity to share experiences and best practices and build a communication network for future knowledge sharing.

Content of Presentation

Presenters will explore the strategies for demystifying the notion of partnerships by engaging attendees in a scaffold task and reflective analysis that will both define the concept of partnership and create a deeper understanding of the essence of service learning partnerships. This interactive workshop will highlight the various partnership models that the Queensborough Community College service learning practitioners have formed and how these partnerships were provided the freedom to grow, and then, it will segue to a discussion of key ingredients for successful partnerships. Presenters will showcase the various partnerships that have fostered a service learning climate in the academy while encouraging robust and inclusive excellence that far exceeds the expectations of all the key stakeholders.