



E-PARCC

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

**Program for the Advancement of
Research on Conflict and Collaboration**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE CITY OF SEATTLE'S LANGSTON HUGHES PERFORMING ARTS INSTITUTE

TEACHING NOTE

Summary of Case

The City of Seattle's Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI, pronounced 'el-pie') is a venerable cultural and performing arts center that has primarily engaged and served the African-American community in Seattle. It was established to provide community support to the underserved black neighborhood, the Central Area, through the federal Model Cities Program in the late 1960s. For over forty years, LHPAI has been owned and operated by the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, but due to a variety of issues, in 2012, Seattle's Mayor planned to transfer the entity to the much smaller city department, the Office of Arts and Culture (OAC). This transfer helped to more closely align LHPAI with the broader arts community, but also brought some grave concerns regarding its financial stability. In 2012, the center covered 90% of its operating expenses from the Parks Department funds, and OAC did not have the resources to financially support LHPAI at that level.

Because of the budgetary significance of the LHPAI transfer, the Seattle City Council required newly hired OAC Director Randy Engstrom to create a long-term financial sustainability strategy for LHPAI and recommend which organizational model would best serve its needs – should LHPAI remain owned and operated by the City, or should it become a non-profit? As a new city staffer, and as a white man, Randy must thoughtfully consider how to engage LHPAI supporters

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and the city's African-American community as he charts a new course for the center. Without successfully forming and implementing a strategy to engage stakeholders, choosing the best direction for LHPAI to help it become financially sustainable, and keeping its afrocentric programming intact, the beloved center may fail.

Uses of the Case

This case allows students to identify stakeholders, analyze power differentials, and evaluate collaborative processes and mechanisms by providing a narrative about a municipal leader's process of developing and implementing a community engagement plan in transitioning a public entity into a non-profit entity. It also illustrates the challenges new leaders face when working within communities different from their own. In particular, the case enables discussions about the tensions between public value, fiscal stewardship, racial equity, community responsiveness, and municipal responsibility.

This case can be taught in the first year of either a traditional or executive program in public administration, public policy, arts management, or public affairs. This case fits best in courses related to leadership and management, change management, community engagement, arts policy and public-private partnerships. Because the case provides opportunities for multi-step analysis and asks students to both evaluate the protagonist's actions to-date and strategize about future action, it is likely to fit better in the middle or end of a course.

The case also includes an epilogue that can be used as a follow-up during class discussions. A suggested teaching plan and a set of discussion questions for both the case and epilogue are provided at the end of this teaching note.

Orientation of Case

The case itself is deliberately written as a straightforward narrative with no commentary, describing the timeline of events as it actually unfolded. This case format allows students to assess the effectiveness and ethical integrity of Randy's decisions in the community engagement process that he undertook, forcing the students themselves to debate and determine whether his strategy and decisions were appropriate to the situation. In leading class discussions, instructors can challenge students to articulate what constitutes ethical stewardship, community engagement, and participatory decision-making in settings such as the one the case describes, in which racial inclusion, equity, and social justice are at stake. Additionally, the case narrative is designed to allow students to consider the strategic design of the community engagement process, rather than to explore or debate specific community engagement tactics. In order to be able to evaluate Randy's decisions, the students need to

know the historical context of the case, so the case features extensive background on the history of the neighborhood, the community and the center. This teaching note provides instructors with guidance about how to elicit the theoretical and strategic implications of the events that the case narrative describes.

Key Student Learning Objectives

- Develop awareness of racial, economic, and cultural issues and propose strategies for city officials to work inclusively with diverse communities
- Articulate an organizational problem and explain the challenges, interests and values surrounding it
- Identify and analyze different tradeoffs inherent in the LHPAI transfer and proposal, like fiscal stewardship, city efficiency, and racial equity
- Identify and analyze the perception of risk by key stakeholder groups
- Identify sources of power and analyze how stakeholders exercise their power
- Analyze different leadership strategies that build and create inclusive, collaborative decision-making processes
- Explore the benefits of incorporating a community engagement process to address organizational problems
- Articulate and debate different interests and values that arise during community engagement processes
- Evaluate a community engagement process and make recommendations to improve the process

Key Issues for Analysis and Strategy

Randy's Decision-Point

At the end of the case, Randy faces a dilemma. The action committee deliberations brought more divisive conversations that he anticipated, and he worried that the group would not be able to see past differences in opinions to come to consensus on anything. He also recognizes that he made assumptions that committee members would agree that both LHPAI's mission needed to stay intact and that the City subsidy needed to be reduced. The committee is also behind on making progress towards the goals he laid out for them. Randy knows that engaging

community members is an essential piece of good public management, but he also knows that it is especially important in this task for LHPAI because the African-American and Central Area community have such strong emotional ties to the center. He has to decide if he should change the way he is implementing his community engagement strategy, or if the group will arrive at consensus without additional intervention. He needs to consider the risks and benefits of making any changes, and decide what tactics or strategies he could employ in order to help committee members see past some of their deeply held interests.

Personal and Public Values

From the very beginning, LHPAI leaders have infused personal values into the mission and programmatic focus of the activities at the center. Also, the City has continued to financially support this center for over forty years with the assumption that the public benefit outweighs the public cost. The changing demographics of the Central Area, and the low participation rates and meager revenues at LHPAI, call these public benefits for the high public cost into question. What is the public value of this center? How do you measure the public benefit of an entity that aims to serve an underserved and marginalized minority community, especially in the face of neighborhood gentrification? What would be the loss to the community if the center were not supported by the City anymore?

A similar key issue is how the discussion of personal and public values of LHPAI enters into the Action Committee deliberations. Stakeholders within the committee hold different professional and personal relationships with LHPAI, and these different relationships bring different ideas of what public value means. Although arguably both Royal and Jackie lack the skills necessary to bring an increase in revenue to LHPAI, which many members value (financial stability), other members acknowledge the value that these two women have brought to the arts community and the African-American community for years. Another example is valuing the past. Many committee members feel that an important value is staying true to the center's original purpose. Students can identify and articulate the values displayed in committee deliberations as a way to set themselves up for later reflections of their own personal values as public servants.

Stakeholders and Risk

Randy decides to invite staff from non-profit arts agencies, LHPAI, Mayor's Office, and the City Council to join the Action Committee. These groups of stakeholders all have personal and professional issues at risk that potentially holds them back from deciding what is best for LHPAI. It is clear that some topics, like funding or staffing, were not openly talked about because of Royal's presence in the committee meetings. Similarly, some committee members were

frustrated that City staff did not want to make drastic recommendations because they might face political backlash. However, Randy invites them to join the committee because previously, the lack of political will prevented LHPAI from being held accountable to implementing any ideas. What are the risks and benefits of including these types of folks to a community engagement process?

Arts, Municipal Responsibility and Social Equity

A key issue within the entire narrative is whether a municipal government should be in the business of running a performing arts center. Leaders have confronted this question throughout the center's history. Steve Sneed's story highlights that despite deftly maneuvering around some of the bureaucratic constraints to help the center become a true performing-arts facility, he was not able to help it become financially stable. At the same time, he provided performing arts opportunities for African-American kids and low-income kids that were not available elsewhere. LHPAI supporters through the years often expressed diametrically opposed views about whether the center should stay within the City or become independent. Those advocating for LHPAI to become a non-profit felt that the center could have the artistic freedom to produce afrocentric art without having to serve the needs of everyone. And those advocating for LHPAI to stay on the City budget argued that the City should fund entities that provide unique and important public value, such as promoting afrocentric art. Since 2008, many arts non-profits in Seattle have closed because of the Great Recession. What are the risks and benefits of LHPAI becoming a non-profit, especially as a niche, culturally-specific center for arts?

Similarly, LHPAI leadership has maintained a mission and produced programming that serves low-income communities and "grass-roots" artists; they have openly stated that their center exists to support social and racial equity. What is the role of the municipal government to support these entities that work to provide social equity for marginalized groups? What is the City's responsibility to honoring LHPAI's mission?

Suggested Readings and Frameworks

Topic: Participatory Problem Solving and Community Engagement

The following readings provide foundational support to help students understand collaborative governance, participatory designs, and community engagement. Understanding the differences between these concepts will help students better identify Randy's community engagement process, and help them determine whether his process matched his intentions. Similarly, knowing the nuances between participation and inclusion, or analyzing who in the committee

has what type of power, can allow students to suggest different tactics for Randy at the final decision-point in the case.

Additionally, these readings, especially Fung, could support a discussion of Randy's choices for how to engage the community through the committee process. It may also lend itself as a good foundation for a discussion of whether a community engagement process was even needed to make a decision about LHPAI's future organizational model; instead, would it have been a better use of time and resources to engage the community in the implementation of a new model?

- Feldman, M. and A. Khademian, "Managing for Inclusion: Balancing Control and Participation." *International Public Management Journal* (2000).
- Fung, A. "Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance." *Public Administration Review* (2006).
- Purdy, J. "A Framework for Assessing Power in Collaborative Governance." *Public Administration Review* (2012).
- Quick K. and M. Feldman. "Distinguishing Participation and Inclusion." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (2011).

Topic: Navigating Value Differences and Building Consensus

These readings discuss tactics and strategies to build consensus within groups, and can be used to support learning objectives aimed at helping students evaluate and design community engagement practices. These readings will also support learning objectives related to identifying public, personal and institutional values that are at stake within the case. In the case, Randy decides to bring people who have had different relationships with LHPAI to discuss the role that LHPAI holds within the black community and the greater Seattle arts scene. Committee members display "deep value differences" as the committee process unfolds, and arguably these differences create a stalemated situation within the committee. These readings help provide students with practical tactics for how Randy can navigate these value differences and address conflicts in order to help the group reach consensus.

- Carpenter, S. "Choosing Appropriate Consensus Building Techniques and Strategies." Chapter 1 in Susskind, et. al (eds.), *The Consensus-Building Handbook* (1999).
- Forester, J. "Dealing with Deep Value Differences." Chapter 12 in Susskind, et. al (eds.), *The Consensus-Building Handbook* (1999).

- Nabatchi, T. “Designing Participation to Identify and Respond to Values.” *Public Administration Review* (2012).

Topic: Equity and Race in Public Management

These readings explore the role of public administrators play in working to serve culturally and ethnically diverse residents within their communities. Historical remnants of race-based policies, like red-lining, continue to impact the lives of many people of color in America, and they pose equity, ethical and practical dilemmas for public decision-makers. In the case, Randy is faced with balancing many goals for LHPAI, such as fiscal stewardship, municipal responsibility, racial equity, and equality with regards to other cultural arts organizations. Given that LHPAI was started and funded to serve Seattle’s black community because they city was attempting to undo the effects of the discriminatory policies they practiced for decades, race and equity must be part of the conversation about determining LHPAI’s future. LHPAI does not exist in vacuum, and the issues voiced by the African-American community, namely gentrification of the Central Area, lack of access to arts resources, and lack of equitable opportunities to participate in performing arts programming, need to be considered and heard while making a decision about LHPAI’s future.

- Alexander, J. “Avoiding the Issue: Racism and Administrative Responsibility in Public Administration.” *American Review of Public Administration* (1997).
- Spina, S. “Addressing Remnants of the Past: Proactive Responses to Equity Issues in Public Administration.” *State and Local Government Review* (2013).

Topic: Leadership and Public Value Governance

These readings offer different frameworks for how managers and leaders can build authentic participation within groups. They offer different perspectives on how leaders view themselves and the role they can play to include people in decision-making for organizational dilemmas. The case highlights how Randy enters the committee assuming that because of the conversations he’s had with potential members, that committee members will accept that LHPAI needs to become a non-profit with its mission intact. These readings will help students identify Randy’s leadership style and identify what personal or public values motivate him to engage in this work. How do his values play into the decision he needs to make regarding LHPAI’s future? It will also allow students to personally reflect on their own values: why are they committed to public service? What personal or public values motivate them?

- Bryson, J., Crosby, B., and L. Bloomberg. “Public Value Governance: Moving Beyond Traditional Public Administration and the New Public Management.” *Public Administration Review* (2014).

- Foldy, E.G., Goldman, L, and S. Ospina. “Sensegiving and the role of cognitive shifts in the work of leadership.” *The Leadership Quarterly* (2008).
- Goleman, D. “Leadership that Gets Results.” *Harvard Business Review* (2000).

Additional Resources

Video

These videos offer students a view into the look and feel of LHPAI’s afrocentric programming, and introduce students to LHPAI Artistic Director Jackie Moscou (overview of LHPAI video), and OAC Director Randy Engstrom and LHPAI Executive Director Royal Alley-Barnes (final proposal video). The first video is a great one to show in class before discussion of the case. The second video could be used after students read the epilogue, because it shows Randy and Royal discussing their final proposal to the City Council.

- LHPAI Profiles- Jacqueline Moscou (2 mins):
https://youtu.be/S_MSxMELeW0
- Final proposal presented by Randy and Royal to the City Council (20 mins):
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/CouncilBriefings?videoid=x21175>

Documents

These documents could be used in case the instructor wants to have a lengthier discussion about Randy’s final decisions in changing the Action Committee’s recommendations before he presented to the City Council. The instructor should only use these after students have read the epilogue. The documents below are the final recommendations that Randy presented to the City Council in December 2013.

- Action Committee Recommendations:
http://clerk.seattle.gov/public/meetingrecords/2013/cbriefing20131216_3c.pdf
- OAC Recommendations:
http://clerk.seattle.gov/public/meetingrecords/2013/cbriefing20131216_3a.pdf
- LHPAI Transition Timeline:
http://clerk.seattle.gov/public/meetingrecords/2013/cbriefing20131216_3d.pdf

Suggested Teaching Plan for a Community Engagement course within a Public Affairs or Public Administration Program

Student Learning Objectives

- Develop awareness of and practice discussing the intersection of racial, economic, and cultural issues surrounding organizational problems
- Articulate and debate different interests and values that arise during community engagement processes
- Explore the benefits of incorporating a community engagement process to address organizational problems
- Evaluate a community engagement process and make recommendations to improve the process

Class Readings

- Forester, John. "Dealing with Deep Value Differences," chapter 12 in Susskind, et. al (eds.), *The Consensus-Building Handbook* (MIT Press, 1999).
- Feldman & Khademian, "Managing for Inclusion: Balancing Control and Participation." *International Public Management Journal* (2000).

Class Discussion Plan

Review Student Learning Objectives

Play the "Overview of LHPAI" video. This three-minute video highlights afrocentric performing arts and community engagement that LHPAI works to create. Artistic Director Jackie Moscou briefly introduces LHPAI's mission and focus, and viewers get a chance to see what the theater looks like and who within the community engages in the theater. Experiencing a piece of an LHPAI performance through viewing this video will help orient students to what afrocentric performing arts looks and feels like at LHPAI. The instructor can introduce the video as a way to help students be more connected to the case, then can segue into the class discussion without any follow-up needed.

To begin the class discussion, the instructor can position students in the case to elicit the competing values inherent in the case. An opening question could be:

- *Question: What are the competing values at play regarding LHPAI? Imagine you are an LHPAI staff member, Randy, an Arts Commissioner, or a member of another nonprofit arts community. What values have you brought to the Action Committee process?*
 - The instructor can write these values on a board. The group should be able to come up with the elements of this list:
 - Community representation and self-determination
 - Historical tradition
 - Multiculturalism
 - Racial equity
 - Changing demographics of the community
 - Honoring consequences of gentrification
 - City financial stewardship
 - Quality programming
 - “Good” management
 - Public value

To continue to pull out key information from the class, a follow-up question could be:

- *Question: What are the manifestations of these values in the Action Committee process? Give some examples of how these values conflict with each other. (For example: the demographics of the community and the preserving the historical mission.)*

To help the class explore the benefits of a community engagement process, have students split up into pairs to answer the following question, and then have small groups share out ideas afterwards. Avoid talking about too many of the particulars of Randy’s choices of how he implemented this process. This discussion should focus on the idea of engaging community stakeholders in a decision-making body to provide a recommendation for an organizational dilemma:

- *Question: Given the wide variety of values and conflicts at stake in this case, what are the risks and opportunities/benefits of conducting this form of a community engagement process for LHPAI?*
 - Students should elicit responses such as:
 - Risks: Adds more cost to an already financially suffering entity; Risk of the committee coming up with a plan that is not feasible/political viable;
Members not knowing all the significant information or history

- Opportunities/benefits: Avoid picketing and continued mistrust from community; Gain legitimacy from black community; Gain buy-in from key stakeholders who could help this transition be successful

The class will likely be ready then to assess Randy's efforts. Preface these questions by having them assume that a community engagement process is appropriate for the LHPAI situation, and then ask the following question:

- *Question: What are the most important strengths and weaknesses of Randy's engagement strategy to date? How effectively do you think Randy has navigated and managed these conflicts?*
 - If preferred, start with these shorter questions here:
 - *What's he done that worked? Why did these tactics/choices work?*
 - *What constitutes working? For example, is sometimes provoking constructing, fruitful conflict more constructive than letting tensions simmer?*
 - *What might he have handled differently or better? Why?*

After the class has had time to evaluate Randy's efforts, switch gears to discuss how they might proceed at the decision-point in the case. This may be an appropriate time to review basic elements of achieving consensus. To get students starting to think about successful outcomes, you could ask them to pair up and discuss the following question:

- *Question: What's an example of when you achieved a "good compromise"? What made it good? What conditions, principles, or tactics made it possible? If Randy asked you for advice about how to create those conditions in the LHPAI Action Committee process, what would you suggest?*

For the final class activity, students will then generate tactics that Randy might use, and evaluate the degrees of risk, pay-off and feasibility for each tactic. Students would then map tactics into a "feasibility-payoff-risk" matrix, and prioritize high-feasibility, high-payoff, low-risk tactics. Split students into small groups and give them the following prompt:

- *Question: What are some tactics Randy might consider at the end of the case? How can Randy deal with the fundamental tensions and conflicts within the Action Committee while keeping everyone on board with the process? What are the risks, payoffs and levels of feasibility for each tactic?*

- Groups should generate examples such as:
 - Bring in new committee members
 - Ban LHPAI staff from attending meetings
 - Start the next meeting with a “values identification exercise”
 - Use an outside facilitator
 - Give more power to co-chairs to set the agenda

Using the examples above, the “feasibility-payoff-risk” matrix might look like this:

Tactic	Feasibility	Payoff	Risk
Bring in new committee members	Medium	Medium	Medium
Ban LHPAI staff from attending meetings	High	Medium	High
Start the next meeting with a “values identification exercise”	High	Low	Low
Use an outside facilitator	Medium	Medium	Low
Give more power to co-chairs	High	Low	Low

When student groups are finished, have each of them present to the whole class, providing time for groups to ask questions of each other.

Takeaway Lessons

The generalizable takeaway is that stakeholders will bring a variety of personal values and perceptions of public value with them to group decision-making processes. A strong manager will work to understand these values and their importance to different stakeholders. By employing different tactics, the leader can help to seek compromises around *shared* values so that the group can work together better.

Another takeaway is the practice of thoughtfully and deliberately considering how and when to implement a community engagement plan. Ideally, students will see that different types of community engagement processes and tactics bring different benefits and risks to both the agency the students work for and to the community they are trying to serve.

Epilogue Follow-up Discussion Plan

The epilogue allows students to discover the changes that Randy made to his initial community engagement plan and the outcomes from those changes. It explains the Action Committee's final recommendation and shows how Randy again was faced with weighing municipal responsibility with the expressed needs from the community. Finally, the epilogue shares reflections from Action Committee members about the community engagement process and the final plan.

After students have read the epilogue, the instructor can draw out a discussion about Randy's final decision to change the committee's recommendations. An opening question could be:

- *In light of the Action Committee's reflections at the end of the epilogue, what do you think about the ethics and impacts of Randy's changes to the LHPAI proposal?*

Then, the instructor could revisit some questions posed in the earlier discussion, drawing out a discussion of benefits and risks to the City Council decision of requiring a stakeholder participation in developing a plan for LHPAI, and in Randy's community engagement strategy:

- *Was it worth doing or just a waste of committee members' time and City resources?*
- *Should the City have decided on the timeline and budget changes by itself? Why or why not? If so, in what other ways could the Randy have created an authentic, inclusive community engagement process to support the future of LHPAI?*

The general purpose of the epilogue discussion is to have students consider when and in what context different types of community engagement can add value or pose risks, and what those values and risks are to the community, the public, and the agency implementing the strategy.