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E-PARCC

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Open Electronic Teaching Resources brought to you by the

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

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Restoration of the Wic Wac Valley

Teaching Note

This simulation provides practice in resolving complex policy and planning disputes in the arena of water and environmental policy. It is based on the concept of interest-based negotiation. The simulation is designed for 11 participants, although it can be contracted to 8 and expanded to 14 if required. It is meant to be used in a classroom or training session and takes approximately 2.5 hours. Materials needed include flip charts and markers (or large butcher paper) and a sketch map of the river area. The primary teaching objectives of the simulation are as follows:

- Practice all aspects of interest-based negotiation and conflict resolution in a complex public policy setting.
- Practice skills of facilitation, recording, and negotiation, especially when major water policy and environmental issues are at stake.
- Understand the power--and complexities--of coalition building, and how to use coalition structures to create lasting agreements.
- Understand the concepts behind framework agreements.
- Understand how to handle situations where scientific data are in dispute and there is insufficient or a lack of clarity around technical information.

This simulation was written by Jeff Loux of the University of California- Davis, and edited by Laurel Saiz. It was double-blind peer reviewed by a committee of academics and practitioners. This simulation is intended for classroom discussion and is not intended to suggest either effective or ineffective handling of the situation depicted. It is brought to you by E-PARCC, part of the Maxwell School of Syracuse University's Collaborative Governance Initiative, a subset of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). This material may be copied as many times as needed as long as the authors are given full credit for their work.

- Recognize the nuances of different interests and how to negotiate agreements with many variables.

The following represents the general instructions given to all participants:

Instructions

The following description is a scenario involving multiple interests, complex technical issues and unresolved disputes addressing fundamental differences in approach and thinking. You will be assigned one of the roles to play: either a participant or the facilitator/recorder (neutral professionals assigned to help resolve the dispute). You will have about 30 minutes to read the instructions, understand the basic situation and your role, and meet briefly with other participants you believe may have sympathy with your position. These loosely affiliated “caucuses” or affinity groups can be developed and used throughout the simulation as you see fit. The facilitator and recorder should meet early and quickly try to analyze the situation, develop an action plan and an agenda for the workshop/meeting.

The next step is to convene a meeting of the parties where you try to identify and resolve issues and seek resolution. However, the facilitator and recorder are free to utilize any approach or sequencing of discussions that they feel may bring about agreement. For example, you may want to have each participant write out its primary interests or write them on a flip chart to save time. You may also want to task several people with generating trial balloons or options that meet multiple interests early on to facilitate negotiations. You will have 45 to 60 minutes during this next phase to get as close to agreement as you can. At the end of that time, you may not have a final resolution of all issues, but at minimum the group should have:

- A concise interest statement from each “side” or interest and/or a concise set of issues to be resolved. Stick to 2 to 3 main ones.
- A fully resolved agreement OR a framework agreement. That is, an agreement to a long term process to resolve unresolved issues; agreement on certain issues, perhaps contingent on other agreements or technical findings; and agreement on principles, objective criteria and technical studies to complete the negotiation.

You will have 20 to 30 minutes at the end to write up the agreements and decide who will present your progress to the other groups. Recorders can use flip charts, large graphic wallpaper or another device to keep track of the discussion and any agreements you reach.