



E-PARCC

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Syracuse University

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

Developing a Young Professionals Network for the Arts:

Classroom Simulation Scenario

A local government arts and culture agency in a mid-sized southeastern United States city is struggling with budget cuts to promote existing programs in live theaters, museums, and concert halls. They are also struggling to develop new programming that is attractive to the emerging young professionals demographic in the region.

The young professional demographic can be defined in many ways. In this case, the local government arts and culture agency is defining the demographic as between the ages of 25-35, college educated, and actively involved in career development and advancement. This demographic is most likely in their first, second, or third job after college, and working to navigate the professional world. Many are new to the cities in which they work; others secured employment in the cities where they attended college and remain in a place that is somewhat familiar.

With advice from an official with the region's chamber of commerce, the local government arts and culture agency has determined the best way to move forward is through connections with young professionals groups (YPGs). YPGs

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are organizations, formally or informally organized, focused on the education, development and/or socialization of young professionals (YPs). They range from loosely defined groups that gather for happy hours at local bars to well-planned organizations that have a governing body and adhere to a mission. There are three main categories into which most YPGs fall: chamber of commerce-supported YPGs, independent, volunteer-driven YPGs, and community organization (non-profit) supported YPGs.

The main purposes of YPGs are to attract and retain talent, and engage YPs in the community, connect them to each other and other professionals of all ages, and develop the next generation of community leaders. They tend to be focused in small geographic areas, such as a citywide group. A region-wide group has not previously been created. The purposes remain the same, but the planning becomes more difficult when a region spans many miles and includes many cities.

For the local government arts agency, the primary goals are to generate a larger audience for its programming and to ensure that the programming is responsive to interests of young professionals in the region.

To do this, the arts agency intends to create a network of young professional advisors from throughout a 7-county region and from public/governmental, private for-profit, and non-profit sectors. Ideally, this network of advisors would:

- Not overshadow existing YPGs but would support them by increasing awareness and encouraging involvement in each organization.
- Help develop the next generation of civic arts leaders: those who take the reigns of leadership in the communities' non-profit organizations, government, and educational system and promote the arts through their various offices.
- Help retain young professionals in the region by creating more socializing opportunities for them.

To kick things off, a young professional from the local arts agency, along with a young professional from the regional chamber of commerce have convened a gathering of their peers to develop the network. Each person involved in this initial network design meeting comes with his or her own interests, which are described below. Once together, their singular task is to design the network that will allow the local arts agency to accomplish its objectives—though additional outcomes beyond

these may be possible, and each person at the table will want to explore these options.

Characters-

The simulation includes six unique characters from across sectors. All additional students not assigned a role can play observers for later critique of the network design process or as additional consultants, ready to jump in at any time with suggestions.

Chamber President

The regional chamber of commerce has long had an interest in growing its membership and has thus been interested in expanding its own connections with young professionals, particularly in the private sector. When the chamber president learned about the arts agency initiative to develop a network of young professionals across a 7-county region, he/she jumped at the opportunity to join the process. He/she would like to see the expansion of arts and culture opportunities, as these are an attraction for professionals and businesses. He/she also wants to grow the regional chamber as an economic, social, and political force in the region.

Consultant to Chamber/Facilitator

The chamber, in working with the arts agency, has agreed to provide a consultant with familiarity of young professionals groups and who also has some facilitation experience to guide the network design discussion. The consultant/facilitator in this process has long had an interest in expanding the connections between location-specific young professionals groups and wants to create a regional entity. She/he also has a desire to build her/his own resume and maybe use this opportunity for career advancement.

President of Local City's Young Professionals Group

The president of a local young professionals group wants to use this opportunity to develop wider connections for him/herself and for his/her group. Such connections can help members for future job searches, as well as provide ample social benefits and opportunities for volunteering in the community. She/he doesn't have a strong interest in the arts but is willing to go along in this process to develop his/her own group.

Young For-Profit Professional Unaffiliated with a Young Professionals Group

A recent college grad, this young professional is eager to get involved. She/he loves the arts (was a thespian in high school) and sees this as a great opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to her/his adopted home. She/he works for a small technology company that produces digital signage and media for other businesses and organizations. Her /his boss would like for her/him to promote the business in this effort as well.

Young Non-profit Professional Unaffiliated with a Young Professionals Group

Like her/his for-profit colleague, this young professional wants to become involved with other young professionals, with the community, and with the region. He/she is three years out of college, working in her/his second non-profit job. She/he is new to the area, having moved to be closer to her/his ailing grandparents. Working for an AIDS-focused non-profit organization, she/he sees connections between the arts and serving the needs of people living with AIDS. She/he is eager to improve the arts and enhance quality of life for his/her target population.

Young Public/Government Professional Unaffiliated with a Young Professionals Group

This young professional has worked for five years in a county Office of Emergency Management. He/she works many hours during the storm season and has never taken the opportunity to engage with the young professionals' community. Through a young professionals' network, he/she wants to build relationships to assist in emergency management operations. It is possible, he/she thinks, that the arts community with its creative energy can help create outreach and educational plans to ensure citizens are not complacent when threatened with natural disaster.