

WORLD CAFÉ

Who gets to participate in partnership?



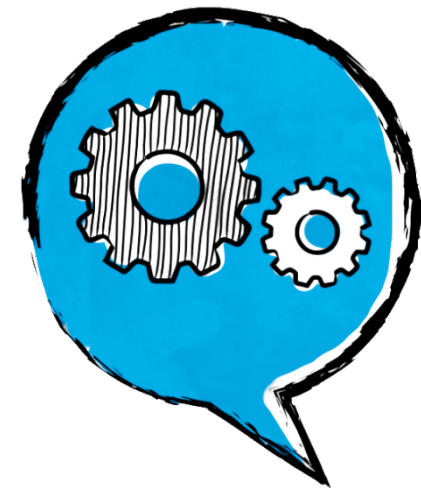
In this activity participants reflect on which students typically gets to participate in governance and decision making processes within tertiary institutions and to reflect on how we can all broaden opportunities for participation and ensure a diverse range of students can engage and are heard.

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Diverse student groups to consider:

- Historically underrepresented:
 - LGBTIQ+, Indigenous, racial, ethnic, & religious minorities
- Online/distance
- Part time
- International students
- Parents
- Mature age
- Carers
- Low socio-economic status
- People with disabilities



Questions

- What student groups typically get to participate or not and why? Why is it important that we hear from a diverse range of students? **Table 1**
- How can we create other opportunities for students to have a voice who may not want or be able to participate in established representation structures? **Table 2**
- What practical approaches best support students to feel authentically heard? **Table 3 & 9**
- How can we remove structural barriers that stop students from engaging? **Table 4**
- What approaches enable student reps and student leaders to ensure they are engaging with a diverse range of students? **Table 5 & 10**
- How can we better support the retention and autonomy of students in engaging in representative processes? **Table 6**
- What approaches can we adopt to raise awareness of and engage in conversation about existing power asymmetries which influence who gets heard (or not)? e.g. Structural oppression of racial minorities. **Table 7**
- What avenues could we explore that are not typically used for inviting diverse students to engage in student representation processes? E.g. in recruitment of reps **Table 8**

What student groups typically get to participate or not and why?

Why is it important we hear from a diverse range of students?

- Professional development
- Unintended consequences
- You can't hear or form an opinion unless you hear from a diverse range
- Domestic vs international students- different cultural experiences
- Different experiences from different faculties
- High achievers- highly engaged
- Less likely to participate if you're first in your family
- Connection to current OB's to know to run for positions
- 2nd-3rd year students (MI)
- Law and Arts students- Australian educated
- Campus students- closely located
- Limited other responsibilities
- Vocal & confident students
- English as a first language speaking students
- Parental legacy of leadership
- Popularity election skills
- Job requirement limitation – week long campaigning
- financially stable students
- Scholarships and incentives
- Introvert vs extrovert
- Dominant vs not dominant
- Lack of Indigenous representation
- Figurehead student leaders <-> Heads of Department
- Law society
- Active student groups make their message heard
- Seek active engagement
- Seek power in numbers
- Have strong issue they seek out the area/ arena that gives them a platform

What student groups typically get to participate or not and why?

Why is it important we hear from a diverse range of students?

- Online students
- R&R students- decisions are made away from rural campuses- satellite campuses,
- first year students,
- postgraduates and HDR - PG and UG conflict with issues of focus- different cultures of student representation and ideology compared to PG organisations
- First nations' students- aligning Indigenous collectives on campus with student representative structures
- Responsibility of organisation to engage students, not wait for students to come to them
- Why it's important? We are there representatives- setting up structures for participation
- Have a passion for leadership
- Separation between good student leader vs popular student leader
- Hypervisibility
- Universities should be reflective of a set of diverse views
- Low SES students
- CALD and international students
- Discomfort in being the face of change
- Gender and culture equality

How can we create other opportunities for students to have a voice who may not want or be able to participate in established representation structures?

- Awareness of how integral student partnerships are informing curriculum
- Share outcomes of partnership
- Develop recognition
- Visibility of student reps
- Volunteer rostering system (Deakin)
- Obligation free participation
- Collecting data from volunteers
- Authentic voluntary positions
- Elections
- Students do get vetted
- surveys, online polls
- Feedback/ social media
- Incentive programs
- Student disruptors
- Small time commitment
- Find out *why* students don't want to be in rep structures
- Awareness of services
- Communication platform

What practical approaches best support students to feel authentically heard?

- Monitored
- Heard -> feedback -> outcome reports
- Practical change response- options
- Responses, statistics, feedback
- Peers and avenues
- Portal for complaints -> advertised, promoted
- Process -> top down
- Awareness
- Student Assist- responsibility -> professional staff (Curtin University)
- Individual support
- Collective dissemination across cohort
- Diverse approaches
- Have to close 'case' by responding -> updates, not done yet – change reports to individuals and stakeholders

Resolution ideas

- Progress report (email)
- Personalised responses
- Student association with staff
- Casual consultation with VC
 - > student input
 - > formal release of data
 - > casual = more confident
 - > released to all students
- Action portal -> anonymous complaints
- Awareness of representatives -> what they do
- Consistent structures/ processes
- Education/ training for staff etc.
- Evaluation throughout

What practical approaches best support students to feel authentically heard?

- Focus groups
- Compensation/recognition
- Advertise widely
- Feedback -> outcomes & action points
- Being involved from start (not just at the end)
- Transfer control e.g. \$
- Meetings with management
- Greater transparency of how decisions are made
- Improving communication channels
- Actively seeking student involvement
- Telling students what has changed in response to feedback
- Face-to-face survey
- Telling students what was done with feedback
- Students being on the other side of surveys
- Compulsory surveys/ engagement opportunities
- Training student reps to speak professionally to staff and participate in committees
- Training student reps to gather and report on students' views

How can we remove structural barriers that stop students from engaging?

Barriers

- Knowledge
- Distance
- Structured groups
- Time (life, work, study)
- Money- students (unpaid)
- University hierarchy/ their priorities
- Student role limitations
- Student hesitation/ personalities
- Regulatory restrictions
- Funding - university
- Platform for communicating and advertising
- Student committees are very political!

Enablers

- Forums for student involvement
- Communication/ transparency
- Incentives for engagement, e.g. money, food, course credit, certificate
- Social scenarios- various times, various events
- Officers representing all people
- Automation of getting information to the right person- "triage"
- Student reps from every faculty - advertised, handpicked positions versus student voting
- Social media / online communications
- Branding -> friendly!

What approaches enable student reps and student leaders to ensure they are engaging with a diverse range of students?

- Approachable representatives
- Educating yourself on other cultures- people from other backgrounds
- Using data about demographics to target diverse groups of students – partnering with university
- Network of student reps who might have experience reaching out to other groups
- Expanding social networks and social media, e.g. wechat
- Language barrier-> support in other languages
- Collaboration -> reach out to existing student groups e.g. clubs
- Target students who need help- student rep drop-in service/ sessions to talk to students
- Thinking about locations for events run by reps
- Going to spaces where there are large amounts of students- e.g. polling at lectures
- (Online) forums particularly for online students
- Target under-represented groups of students- student rep departments

What approaches enable student reps and student leaders to ensure they are engaging with a diverse range of students?

- Visibility
- Approachability
- Adaptability
- Recognising and rewarding ability
- Relatability of student reps- e.g. recruiting diverse election candidates
- Incentivise participation e.g. paying reps including equity officers
- Different types of communication e.g. online, face-to-face, committee members wearing bright, branded clothing on campus
- Communication and transparency from elected reps to student body
 - Annual reporting back to students
 - Murdoch example: Education Council for student input
 - Bendigo example: Monthly "listening post"- ask 3 questions and free coffee to incentivise
- Clear messaging that all students can identify with
- Students as change agents- international student engagement
- Community building- e.g. BSA hoodies
- Training reps on communication and cultural sensitivity
- Access to email lists of all university
- Engagement in election process
- One-off and short term commitments for international students
- Approach students with pitch that they can leave a legacy at their university
- Opportunities at different times of day

How can we better support the retention and autonomy of students in engaging in representative processes?

- Encourage use of support available
- Unopposed elections – no competition (getting the right person)
- Positions of value for investment of time and energy
- Remuneration or form of acknowledgement
- Unit on leadership and governance- credit towards degree
- Effective communication between student leaders (online, different campuses)
- Communication re roles and expectations, e.g. do need to be HD student to represent
- Paid position in uni to look after all student representatives- cautious about level of power (student and staff evaluation of role)
- Regular check-in meetings for student representatives

What approaches can we adopt to raise awareness of and engage in conversations about existing power asymmetries which influence who gets heard or not (e.g. structural oppression of racial minorities)

- Visible allies in your community
- Part of the consent module (Queer 101?)
- All club leaders, Exchange (outgoing), Bystander training in person
- Voices and input from the wider community not just from student leaders -> building a feedback community
- One common denominator is curriculum- mandatory workshops out of academia -> tackling issues face to face
- People in higher position of power understanding their biases and power imbalances in a constructive manner
- Not relying on the universities themselves but a bottom up student led approach -> through student association makes this a bit easier -> Curtin ally network
- Further awareness of programs that exist but ensuring there is a student voice in their effectiveness -> university led initiatives don't always have the best effectiveness because student involvement has been limited
- Student reps acknowledging their advantage with their experience
- Students of diverse backgrounds not engaging because of personal safety concerns (non-welcoming university to queer students can make it hard for them to come out for example) -> social change and cultural change

What avenues could we explore that are not typically used for inviting diverse students to engage in student representation processes? E.g. in recruitment of reps

- Use Orientation Day
- Education of students around association collectives
- Work with university to support diverse students -> support leads to engagement, uni and union effort
- HR becoming student focussed as well as staff
- Diverse advertising
- Multiple languages of resources
- Cultural representation present e.g. art -> inclusive environment
- Listen to needs stated explicitly by community
- Shape roles and responsibilities around people
- 'Open floor' in meetings to allow ideas to be expressed by members of community
- Create a platform for advice to be given
- Penetrating the club space/ preventing silos
- Case by case by union/association and also by student groups that we need to reach
- Making participation accessible for everyone/ paying reps, non- financial acknowledgement (CRL)
- Having one on one dialogue
- EOI/ casual vacancy
- Reach out beyond cliques/ political groups, looking outside the box
- Multiple communication channels, not just email/social media
- Making effort to brand as inclusive/ welcoming
- Ensuring you have equity rep positions