Overview: Birds of a Feather

The 2010 ATE Birds of a Feather sessions feature a common structure to address a set of overarching questions that affect all projects and centers.

ATE conference participants will be divided, through a self-selection process, into groups designated by discipline.

Guided by a facilitator, each group will focus on a common set of questions centered on the conference theme, “ATE Student Success: Building a Diverse and Entrepreneurial Workforce.”

A brief synthesis of discussion outcomes will be presented on Friday morning. A more detailed report will be prepared and distributed after the conference. The sessions are structured as a scenario-based learning exercise.

Table Facilitator: Responsibilities

Responsible for:
- Welcoming participants to your table
- Moderating a 90 minute table discussion around the Topic area and questions assigned to your table (see page 10-11 for more details)
- Gathering input on the issues, successful strategies, promising practices, and success measures for your Topic area
- Working with your volunteer table scribe on what should be reported out to the full group
- Facilitating a 40 minute synthesis process – after the 90 minute discussion period – with one or two other tables assigned to the same Topic (see page 12 for more details)
Table Facilitator: General Guidelines

- Focus on the group process at the table to ensure quality and productive discussions
  - Solicit participation from all team members
  - Keep your colleagues at the table focused on task
  - Help the table to synthesize individual responses into a collective response
  - Shift conversations away from unproductive tangents back onto main topics
  - Encourage quieter group members to participate
  - Ask probing questions as necessary
  - Paraphrase what people say to make sure you understand their main points
  - Redirect the group if the discussion goes off-track
  - Encourage divergent views
  - Keep track of time

- Helpful Ground Rules for Table Discussion
  - Speak openly and honestly
  - Listen carefully to what others have to say
  - Treat everyone with respect
  - Keep comments brief and to the point
  - Stay on task

*The Room Facilitator will be “floating” during the small group sessions - please feel free to ask for assistance if any problems arise in your group.*

Other Key Roles

- **Room Facilitator:**
  - (1) leads the program in each room; (2) articulates the session agenda and the outcomes; (3) supports the table discussion process; (4) facilitates the cross-table synthesis and report out process.

- **Table Scribe**
  - A volunteer that the table facilitator solicits at the beginning of the session; this person: (1) helps you capture and track the key points throughout the discussion on flip chart; (2) assists you in the group prioritization process; (3) scribes each of your top points (key issues; promising practices; success measures) on 6” x 8” post it notes; (4) assists table facilitator during cross-table synthesis.

- **Room Scribe**
  - Works with Room Facilitator to capture the key report outs from all table groups.
## Session Groups and Room Assignments

### Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Michelle Norgren, VESTA Center, MO*
Ambassador

### Biotechnology, Section 1 (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Elaine Johnson, Bio-Link, CA*
Capitol

### Biotechnology, Section 2 (5 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Linnea Fletcher, Austin Community College, TX*
Embassy

### Chemical Processing and Refining Technologies (3 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Joan Sabourin, American Chemical Society, DC*
Senate

### Energy Production and Energy Efficiency (7 tables)
*Room Facilitators: Ellen Kabat Lensch, ATEEC, IA*
Kathy Alfano, College of the Canyons, CA
Empire and Empire Foyer

### Engineering Technology, Section 1 (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Elaine Craft, SC ATE Center, SC*
Congressional A

### Engineering Technology, Section 2 (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Mel Cossette, Edmonds Community College, WA*
Congressional B

### Geospatial Technologies (5 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Ann Johnson, Del Mar College, TX*
Calvert

### Information and Communication Technologies (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Gordon Snyder, ITC Center, MA*
Hampton
Information Assurance, Secure Logistics, and Forensics Technologies (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: John Sands, Moraine Valley Community College, IL*
Governors

Manufacturing Technologies (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Beverly Hildebrand, CARCAM, AL*
Palladian

Micro- and Nanotechnologies (6 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Deb Newberry, Dakota County Technical College, MN*
Diplomat

Research and Outreach/ Learning and Evaluation (5 tables)
*Room Facilitator: Jane Ostrander, DeAnza College, CA*
Cabinet

Teacher Preparation (4 tables)
*Room Facilitators: Christine Cunningham, Museum of Science, MA*
Martha Hass, ATLAS and BEST Projects, MA
Forum
Scenarios for Session: Blue Ribbon Task Force

[The description below is what participants will receive as background.]

In recognition of your outstanding leadership and accomplishments as an entrepreneurial educator, you have been recruited to serve on a joint AACC/NSF Blue Ribbon Task Force.

The task force has received disturbing information:

1. National surveys of employers indicate that employers want intelligent, conscientious, diverse, hard-working, responsible, ethical, and strong problem-solvers who work well in groups, communicate effectively, take charge of their own growth, and understand organizational and business contexts. Employers are dismayed that most postsecondary students currently are not getting the foundational, technical, and 21st century skills needed for the workplace.

2. Additional research shows that both technical educational programs and the U.S. technical workforce do not reflect the overall demographics of the U.S. population. Organizations representing women, various ethnic and racial groups, older students, low-income populations, and people with disabilities or different learning styles are voicing concerns about how poorly our current educational systems serves them.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force must:

1. Design pedagogical systems to provide relevant knowledge, skills, and experiences to enable graduates to hit the ground running and be successful quickly as members of the technical workforce in real-world, global organizations. To meet this effort, the following questions must be addressed. (corresponds to Topic 1 in actual session)

   a. What are the key issues, concepts, and constraints involved in preparing technicians with workplace and entrepreneurial skills?
   b. What are the promising strategies, quality practices, and resources being used to optimally prepare technicians with these skills?
   c. How do we measure success in preparing technicians with workplace and entrepreneurial skills?
2. Design solutions to successfully attract, serve, and develop people for the U.S. technical workforce from traditionally underrepresented groups and the underserved populations, described above. To meet this effort, the following questions must be addressed. *(corresponds to Topic 2 in actual session)*

   a. *What are the key issues, concepts, and constraints involved in attracting and serving traditionally underrepresented and diverse student populations in preparing them for the workforce?*
   
   b. *What are the promising strategies, quality practices, and resources being used to meet the needs of underrepresented and diverse student populations in preparing them for the workforce?*
   
   c. *How do we measure success in attracting and serving underrepresented and diverse student populations in preparing them for the workforce?*

Please choose to attend one of the following Birds of a Feather disciplinary groups that most closely aligns with the focus of your ATE project or center. For projects and centers that are multidisciplinary in scope, team members are encouraged to split up among the different disciplinary groups to maximize networking and contribute to discussion within a broader section of the ATE community.

On behalf of AACC and NSF, it is an honor to have you as part of this very high visibility, high quality, and high stakes effort!
Definitions for the Two Topic Areas

Definitions for Topic #1 - Preparing for Workforce/Entrepreneurial Skills
Community college STEM programs need to prepare technicians with workplace and entrepreneurial skills to meet employer needs/expectations and ensure success in the workforce. For the purpose of discussion, some examples of workplace and entrepreneurial skills include:

**Workplace/Soft Skills**
- Strong work ethic
- Positive attitude
- Good communication skills (verbal, listening, and writing)
- Time management skills and abilities
- Problem-solving skills
- Be able to work with others, team-player
- Self-confidence
- Ability to accept and learn from criticism
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Working well under pressure

**Entrepreneurial Skills**
- Vision and leadership
- Sales and marketing
- Financial/budgeting ability
- Self-motivation skills
- Administration skills
- Systems management
- Knowledge and/or ability to research legal, tax, and licensing requirements to start a business

Definition Topic #2 – Serving Diverse and Underrepresented Student Populations
Community college STEM programs are focused on issues of student access, retention, and success—particularly for student populations that are traditionally underrepresented and have faced significant barriers to success. For the purpose of discussion, some examples of underrepresented populations may be classified by:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-economic
- Geographic
- Disability

- Educational level
- Age
- Learning styles (i.e. visual learners, auditory learners, etc.)
Birds of a Feather: Session Agenda Overview

1:45 p.m.  Participants Begin Arriving

2:00 p.m.  Session Opens / Introductions

2:15 p.m.  Table Discussions
            Participants choose their table (labeled with the Topic title) based on which of
            the two topics they want to discuss:
            • Topic #1: Preparing Technicians with Workplace and Entrepreneurial Skills
              (Tables are labeled “Workplace Skills”)
            • Topic #2: Attracting and Serving Traditionally Underserved and Diverse
              Student Populations in Preparing them for the Workforce (Tables are labeled
              “Diverse Learners”)

3:45 p.m.  Topic #1 and Topic #2 Group Synthesis

4:25 p.m.  Topic 1 Report Outs to the Room

4:40 p.m.  Topic 2 Report Outs to the Room

4:55 p.m.  Summary/Adjourn

Desired Outputs for Session

• A synthesis of Topic 1 that includes key findings and recommendations about:
  o The key issues, concepts, and constraints
  o The most promising strategies and practices
  o Recommended success measures
    Each table will develop their top five for each of the above

• A synthesis of Topic 2 that includes key findings and recommendations about:
  o The key issues, concepts, and constraints
  o The most promising strategies and practices
  o Recommended success measures
    Each table will develop their top five for each of the above
## Detailed Table Facilitator Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Important to Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:45pm</td>
<td>Room Facilitators Arrive</td>
<td>As soon as you arrive in your room, you should get seated at table and make sure no other table facilitator is already sitting there. There will be table tents identifying which topic has been assigned to each table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50pm</td>
<td>Table Facilitators arrive as close to 1:45pm as possible</td>
<td>Make sure there are handouts for each person at the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:55pm</td>
<td>Participants arrive</td>
<td>Greet people as they arrive at your table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>The Room Facilitator (RF) will introduce the session agenda, objectives, and questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RF will provide clarity about objective and outcomes for the session
- Objective 1: Conduct in-depth focus on two critical topics – entrepreneurial/workforce skills and underrepresented/diverse students
- Objective 2: Develop recommendations on promising strategies and success measures for both topics
- Outcomes: Recommendations on both topics that will ultimately lead to a published report in 2011

RF will walk people through the agenda for the 3 hour session:
- Table discussions (time will vary, with discussions slightly longer for smaller rooms)
- Cross-table synthesis for groups focused on the same Topic (smaller rooms won’t do this synthesis)
- Table or cross-table reports on Topics
- Discussion about reports and recommendations

RF will let people know how the tables will work
- Discussion moderated by the Table Facilitator
- Supported by Table Scribe capturing the discussion on flip chart
- Top ideas/recommendations captured on large post its – 5 for each of issues, strategies, measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2:15pm</th>
<th>Table Discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Tables should start with quick introductions – name, organization, position.

Encourage participants to:
- Note the Ground Rules for the discussion (see page 2 above)
- Use worksheets to jot down their ideas and track the conversation

Each table’s scribe will keep track of the conversation by either capturing the key ideas generated at the table’s flip chart. Table facilitator can feel free to capture ideas as well on their own worksheet as a parallel way of tracking key points.

The scribe will work with the table facilitator to track the conversation throughout and capture the table’s final recommendations, ultimately by writing down, on large post it (8” x 6”) notes, the final recommendations of the table.

Discussion Questions are as follows:

**Topic #1**
- **Issues:** What are the key issues, concepts, and constraints involved in preparing technicians with workplace and entrepreneurial skills?
- **Strategies/Practices:** What are the promising strategies, quality practices, and resources being used to optimally prepare technicians with these skills?
- **Success Measures:** How do we measure success in preparing technicians with workplace and entrepreneurial skills?

**Topic #2**
- **Issues:** What are the key issues, concepts, and constraints involved in attracting and serving traditionally underserved and diverse student populations?
- **Strategies/Practices:** What are the promising strategies, quality practices, and resources being used to meet the needs of underserved populations and diverse learners?
- **Success Measures:** How do we measure success in attracting and serving underrepresented and diverse student populations?

Organize your time so that you ensure sufficient time to address all 3 of your questions. Although the first question sets the context so it is critical to surfacing important background to answer the 2nd and 3rd questions, we recommend not investing too much time on it, on the front end. Conduct it as a quick scan and then continue to surface issues, as need be, as you address the strategies and measures question.
Be sure to save time in your last 10-15 minutes to prioritize your recommendations. You ultimately want your table to prioritize:

- The key issues (no more than 5)
- The most promising strategies (no more than 5)
- The most promising measures (no more than 5)

**NOTE:** The smallest room - with 3 tables only – can let their groups meet until 4:05pm or 4:10pm. See page 12 for more details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:45pm</td>
<td>Group Synthesis</td>
<td>For larger rooms of 4-6 tables, see page 10 for greater detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For smaller groups see page 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:25pm</td>
<td>Report Outs</td>
<td>For larger rooms of 4-6 tables, see page 11 for greater detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For smaller groups see page 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:55pm</td>
<td>Summary and Thanks</td>
<td>Summarize what the room has accomplished during the session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thank people for their participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remind them that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- an oral summary of the session will be provided at the Friday morning plenary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- a written summary of the session will also be available at the plenary and emailed to participants after the conference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- all of the recommendations will be folded into a final, published report in 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00pm</td>
<td>Session Adjourns</td>
<td>Thank participants from your table for their good work.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>And, thank you !!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3:45-4:25pm SYNTHESIS Process for MEDIUM and LARGE Size Rooms (4-6 Tables)

At this point, the Room Facilitator will ask like table groups (entrepreneurial; underserved) to convene around two different wall “stations” in the room. Both of these walls will have a fairly sizable area on which large sheets of paper will be hung in three panels: 1) key issues; 2) most promising strategies; 3) most promising measures.

From 3:45pm-3:50pm the Room Facilitator will provide instructions for the 40 minute task:

First 5 minutes (3:50pm-3:55pm)
- Table facilitators focused on the same Topic will join forces (combining 2-3 tables total) at the wall station for your Topic
- Tables scribes from each of the 2-3 tables should hang their large Post-its on the paper at each of the three panels

Next 20 minutes (3:55pm-4:15pm)
- With the help of the 2-3 table facilitators (including yourself), the joint group should quickly organize into three different sub-groups at your wall station, with representatives from each table at each of the three panels, and one table facilitator at each panel
- Table facilitators (including yourself) should distribute themselves across the panels to help the sub groups facilitate a synthesis of the post-it notes, looking for:
  - The common ideas/themes
  - The unique ideas
- Sub-groups should capture their synthesis on a new flip chart page (or two) that summarize the common and unique ideas

Final 10 minutes – (4:15pm-4:25pm)
- In the final 10 minutes, the two sub-groups should join into one larger group to share their synthesis and figure out any final touches they want to make for what gets presented to the whole room. This should be facilitated by one or two of the table facilitators from this Topic area
- Table facilitators should appoint a spokesperson or spokespersons who will present the overall cross-team report

At 4:25pm, the Room Facilitator will lead the reporting process, asking for reports from each of the two joint Topic groups. For the one room that is only 3 tables, there will be no small group synthesis process. The Room Facilitator will lead the joint report out/synthesis process for this room.