

Tips for Calling Your First Team Meeting and Establishing Team Expectations

Good meetings don't just happen, they take thoughtfulness and planning to be successful. Here are some tips that will make your first team meeting a blockbuster!

- » Choose a time that coordinates with the academic and research schedules of faculty and advisors. Keep the meeting as short as possible.
- » Choose a place equidistant from your institutions (a proverbial neutral location), if there is any history of territoriality; or pull out all the stops, and invite the representatives from your partner institution to a nice lunch and tour of your own campus.
- » Yes, food. Yes, nametags. Yes, introductions (name, title, institution, department, role, why interested, etc.).
- » In advance of the meeting, provide a list of names, roles, contact information, an agenda, and expectations for who needs to bring what information to the meeting.
- » Make sure that the designated “squad leaders” from each institution have had at least one face-to-face or phone call meeting before the team-building meeting. The team building meeting should be a co-lead meeting, with one leader from each institution, to set the stage for a partnership from the very beginning.
- » Ask team members to identify any pre-conceived notions about the partner institution ahead of time. You might or might not decide to share these in a public meeting, but personally acknowledging any prejudicial baggage can go a long way toward a successful meeting.
- » Assume that the representatives of your partner institution have good intentions, for both institutions and for your collective students.
- » Plan activities, discussions, or breaks that encourage (or force!) cross-institutional networking and brainstorming on an individual and whole-group level.

When establishing the team's norms and expectations, allow the team to articulate its common purpose and goals: What goals does the team want to accomplish, and how will it accomplish them? What roles will team members play—and when will roles change? What does success look like for the team, and how will you measure it? Other expectations to establish ahead of time:

- » How will decisions be made?
- » How will meetings be managed (agenda, minutes, start time/end time)?
- » How will the team communicate between meetings?
- » How will conflict be resolved? Discuss communication methods, types of appropriate feedback, ground rules for giving constructive feedback, and how to handle an impasse.
- » How will you handle members who do not contribute?