

WCB Executive Committee (EC)

Strategic Summer Retreat

Background:

The WCB college's leadership team (Executive Committee - EC) holds bi-weekly meetings and is composed of chairs, deans, operation manager, executive assistant, and XLC director. The meetings are devoted to information sharing, discussion or planning of specific initiatives, and finding solutions to issues faced by the college, department, faculty, or staff.

The WCB will complete its Strategic and Societal Impact Planning by the end of the Spring semester and the members of the task force, in coordination with the dean, will propose the new mission, vision, strategic priorities, tactics, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The completion of this phase of strategic planning will provide an opportunity for the WCB EC to propose, as a group, the steps and timeline for the implementation of the various strategic priorities.

Ignatian Leadership Opportunity:

The EC Strategic Summer Retreat will be an optimal opportunity for the members of the WCB leadership to come together and design long-term strategic initiative that will rely on input from each member, meaningful exchange of diverse ideas, and communal decision-making. The implementation of strategic initiatives necessitates the allocation of limited financial resources and therefore challenging decisions may have to be taken where certain department, programs or faculty/staff will receive an uneven allocation of funds in the interest of the college's strategic decisions. Hence, it is paramount that members of the EC trust each other, understand each other's perspectives, and ultimately bring forward projects that benefit the larger institution instead of specific units or initiatives.

Some of the Ignatian Leadership tools presented during the program will be very beneficial to enhance trust within the group and center the decisions on the greater good.

Ice Breaker:

The first part of the retreat will be devoted to know each other better and cultivate the essential skills of deep listening. The following ice breaker activities are adapted from the [Amazing Faiths Dinner Dialogues](#) (Moduel 1). The method is also used by AJCU schools through the *AJCU Dialogue Seminars*.

- I will introduce the activity and explain the process to the group. Since the group is composed of 13 members, I will randomly divide the EC in two groups of four people and one group of five.
- Each table will have a time keeper that will monitor that each member's answers do not exceed 2 minutes. The time keeper will be selected by the group.
- A series of randomly selected ice braker cards will be located in each group's table and each participant draws a card only when it is their turn. A person may pass on answering a question but may not choose a different card from the stack.
- Participants who are not answering the question may not respond verbally to the speaker or interrupt them.

- At the end of each participant's two minutes, the facilitator asks if anyone has a clarifying question. If not, the next person draws a card. If so, then the question(s) are asked and answered.
- Participants must keep the focus of their comments on *personal experience*.
- Once each member at the table has drawn a card and answered a question, the facilitator invites the group to take time for comment and reflection. At this time, table members may offer any thoughts and comments to each other, clarify something they said earlier, etc. The process should last 5 minutes.
- At the end of the process each group will be asked to share their thoughts with the entire EC about questions and answers that particularly resonated with them. The process should last 10 minutes.

Ignatian Communal Discernment:

In the spirit of shared governance, many of the decisions regarding the WCB strategic initiatives will be selected, as a group, by the EC. The principles of Ignatian Communal Discernment will be very helpful to improve decision making and garner the support of the members for challenging decisions. In order to implement such process, the group will follow the steps below:

- *Begin the process in a state of Ignatian indifference:* EC members will be offered the opportunity to lead a reflection or prayer for the group. After the member's contributions, a minute of silence will be requested to prepare ourselves for the activities of the day.
- *Outline the pros and cons:* EC members will be randomly split in three groups and will list the pro and cons of each strategic tactic and proposed timeline. Each group will share with the entire EC their thoughts and the EC will create a "master" list of pros and cons.
- *Be a contributor and active listener:* I will lead the EC discussion about the pro and cons of the tactics to offer opportunities to everybody to provide input. For members who may be shy or may not have offered their opinion, I will provide an opportunity to share their input. As a group we will seek to listen to each EC member's contribution.
- *Presume good intention in the part of others:* For each tactic that may benefit disproportionately a certain unit or group of faculty/staff, the beneficiaries should seek ways in which collaborator from other units may be included to have broad representation and involvement. This active process will encourage a culture of trust and inclusivity.
- *Notice God's presence and will:* Once the tactics for a specific strategic priority have been discussed by the group and ranked for implementation and timeline, each member will be asked to reflect individually for 10 minutes to consider whether the outcomes inspire harmony and satisfaction. At the end of this time, each member will be offered the opportunity to share their feelings and the group may decide to reassess their plans.
- *Deliberate until there is a contentment with a decision:* the outcomes from the EC members will be shared with the faculty and staff and opportunities for individual and group feedback will be provided. The collected feedback will be considered by the EC before making the final decisions on the strategic initiatives.