

Mapping the “Table”

What happens at “the table”?

- Learning about issues related to the change you are making: examining current trends in higher education, reading reports that contain relevant data or arguments, becoming informed about what is happening at other universities
- Learning about what is happening at your own institution: budget shortfalls, enrollment declines or increases, retention statistics, program initiatives
- Decision-making: budget decisions, personnel decisions, curriculum decisions, strategic plans

Who is at the table? Who is standing around the outside of the room?

- *Identify the participants:* Where are the following entities positioned in relation to the “table.” As you draw them in, you may seat them AT the table, or they may be at some distance from the table. They might also be sitting at a smaller, separate table, away from the main table.
- *Draw the participants into your map.* Consider representing their power graphically by drawing larger or smaller circles around the names of each entity.

Upper administration:

- Board of Trustees
- President
- Provost
- VPs

Academic Support Units:

- Center for Teaching & Learning
- Library
- Assessment personnel
- Writing Center, Tutoring Center
- Career Services

Faculty:

- Faculty Senate & subcommittees
- Early adopter faculty
- Average tenure-track faculty
- Adjunct faculty
- TAs

- Experiential education / undergraduate research leaders
- Retention effort leaders
- Leaders focused on at-risk student populations

Mid-level administration:

- Deans of colleges /schools
- Departments & chairs

IT

- Director of Instructional Technology
- Instructional designers

Programs / Interests:

- General Education leaders
- Honors program leaders
- Specialty program leaders

Students:

- Student Senate

Third-party players:

- External educational consultants

What is the primary “table” where the most important conversations happen? (And is there more than one table? or a children’s table?)

- Board of Trustees meetings
- Deans’ council
- Academic strategic planning processes
- Curriculum committee meetings
- Financial management meetings
- A Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtable
- A “Task Force” on X (innovation, online programs, new educational paradigms)
- Hallways between faculty offices
- Faculty Senate meetings

Additional Questions to Consider

- *What is driving the change?* (Best practices in higher ed? Enrollment? Budget concerns? Institutional identity questions? Serving a student need?)
- *What are the discourse levels?* Explicit conversations vs. the backchannels (the rumors)

Adapted from “Mapping the ‘Table,’” 2014, Julie Sievers, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship at Southwestern University, and Cory Lock, Director of General Education at St. Edward’s University