



Facilitating Panel Sessions

Before the Session

This document contains information to help you plan your panel session. It is very important that care, thought, and planning happen before your panel session.

Address Issues of Diversity and Inclusion

- Remind panelists to consider the topic through a diversity lens. Explicitly request that panelists address diversity in their remarks. Potential options include providing a data point or a statistic about their own department, or an anecdote about a differential experience caused by an underrepresented social identity.
- Become familiar with relevant diversity research and share findings during the discussion.
- Prepare follow-up questions that specifically address diversity issues associated with the panel topic.

Develop a Questioning Strategy & Choreograph Group Dynamics

- Review the panel question prompts shared with panelists to help frame their remarks.
- Develop additional questions, which reflect the session goals, that could be used to initiate group discussion following the panel presentations.
- Identify and review diverse group engagement techniques to encourage audience engagement.

Reflect on the Session

- Identify the overarching goals for the session and communicate these goals with the panelists
- Create an evaluation tool and plan time in the session for collecting participant feedback.





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During the Session

These facilitation tips will help you during your session. It is recommended that you read over these tips the night before the session, and review them as needed while you are facilitating panel sessions.

Address Issues of Diversity and Inclusion

- Remind the audience to consider the topic through a diversity lens.
- Share findings about relevant diversity research during discussion.
- Pose follow-up questions that specifically address diversity issues, such as how a topic might be experienced differently through different social identities.

Develop a Questioning Strategy

- Provide the panelists with a copy of session prompts used in their original invitation and use these prompts to start discussion whenever possible.

Choreograph Group Dynamics

- Actively solicit a variety of contributing voices (e.g., different individuals, different parts of the room).
- Break up the conversation if some individual(s) are dominating. Moderate who asks questions and from which part of the room. Get a mix of voices (e.g., junior and senior faculty, men and women).
- If brainstorming during the session, encourage small group brainstorming discussions before large group sharing to encourage more engagement and allow everyone a chance to contribute to the conversation.

Reflect on the Session

- Pay attention to what is working well and what is not. Make notes for things to change and things to keep the same.
- Ask the audience for final takeaways from the session.
- Pay attention to which issues from the panel discussion and presentations receive the most attention/feedback; quickly summarize and share these observations at the end of the session.
- Remember to ask participants to complete the evaluation.
- Review participant evaluation feedback.
- Review session notes.

