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POLICY CONSENSUS INITIATIVE

# FINDING BETTER WAYS *to* SOLVE PUBLIC PROBLEMS:

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THE EMERGING ROLE *of* UNIVERSITIES *as*  
NEUTRAL FORUMS *for*  
COLLABORATIVE POLICYMAKING

JUNE 2005

BASED ON A PCI SURVEY OF UNIVERSITY-BASED  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING PROGRAMS.

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*PCI builds and supports networks that provide states with leadership and capacity to achieve more collaborative governance.*

Since 1997, PCI has been assisting state leaders in the use of collaborative approaches to addressing difficult policy issues. The work of PCI and its sister organization, the National Policy Consensus Center, has focused extensively on how collaborative policymaking processes are used in states, the types of programs that offer these services, and the effectiveness of such programs in helping leaders solve public problems. In the past 10 years, we have seen the role universities play as neutral forums and service providers grow significantly. Numerous universities across the country offer various kinds of public policy consensus-building service, research, and training. And more programs are emerging each year.

This report describes 42 such programs that participated in a PCI survey conducted in late 2004 by **David Kovick**. **Kovick** served as a Fellow at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. He is an independent consultant in the fields of negotiation, consensus-building and conflict resolution system design.

An electronic version of the report is available at **[www.policyconsensus.org](http://www.policyconsensus.org)**

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# FOREWORD

*William D. Ruckelshaus & Charles B. Reed*



Since the early 1980s, collaborative decision-making processes have risen spontaneously and in increasing numbers throughout the country. In some cases, the goal was to bypass long-standing deadlocks. People, it seems, want their problems solved and not merely massaged by government officials, and perpetual litigation seems to have limited appeal as a spectator sport.

In observing the many kinds of conflicts in need of resolution, I am particularly interested in the role university based programs can play as a neutral venue for assisting in the use of collaborative problem solving to address complex public issues. It is often valuable for the collaborative decision-making group to operate under the auspices of a non-governmental, neutral organization like a university.

I have been involved in the creation of university centers; one at the University of Wyoming's School for Environment and Natural Resources and the other – the Policy Consensus Center - a joint center of the University of Washington and Washington State University. Both programs assist governments at all levels and citizens in solving intractable problems through the use of collaborative processes. These universities offer scientific and technical help and knowledge about how to use collaborative methods. I know they are providing a real benefit to both states and the effort is spreading to other centers of learning nationwide.

This report of survey results by the Policy Consensus Initiative describes what is happening in more than 40 such university-based programs in 35 states across the country. Although the needs and possibilities will differ in each setting, I am convinced that every state would benefit from having at least one university offering its intellectual assets and process expertise to assist citizens and governments in resolving disputes. I recommend this report to you as an important introduction to how Universities are engaging in multi-party conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving.

**William D. Ruckelshaus**  
Strategic Director, Madrona Venture Fund and  
Two-time (and first) EPA Administrator



We are living and working in a time when the nature and complexity of the issues we face challenge us to seek better ways to solve public problems.

In my roles as a university professor, a state budget director, chief of staff to a governor, and chancellor in two of the largest states in the country, I am encouraged by the increased use of collaboration at all levels of government, and the participation by those in the private and non-profit sectors.

This report by PCI details the important role universities are playing in helping leaders and citizens find ways to collaboratively achieve solutions to public issues. Both university systems I have been associated with have strong programs of this kind.

During my tenure in Florida, the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium was formed in the state university system. Over the past 14 years, the Consortium has functioned as a unique service center with a statewide mission and regional offices.

In California, the Center for Collaborative Policy is a joint program of California State University, Sacramento and the McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific. The mission of the Center is to build the capacity of public agencies, stakeholder groups, and the public to use collaborative strategies to improve policy outcomes.

As university leaders, we need to find new ways to fulfill the university mission of serving the public and improving the lives of our citizens. The university can serve as a forum for the discussion and critical examination of ideas and issues. We can have a positive effect in important areas of public concern that overlap with our public service mission.

This report describes how universities around the country are fulfilling this mission.

**Charles B. Reed**  
Chancellor, the California State University





## INTRODUCTION

*This overview of university-based programs engaged in collaborative policymaking processes across the country offers practical guidance to university leaders who are considering establishing such programs.*

**A**cross the country, collaborative approaches to public policymaking are spreading. As policymakers confront increasingly complex issues involving an increasingly diverse array of stakeholders, consensus-based models are proving to be important tools in developing more effective forms of governance.

A growing number of university-based programs are supporting the use and diffusion of these new governance models. More than 50 such programs currently are providing consultation, convening, facilitation, training, research, and process design services for collaborative policymaking efforts. These university-based programs are actively engaged with public leaders at all levels of government and in states all across the country.

This report is an overview of existing university programs that are engaged in collaborative policymaking processes. It includes the locations of these programs within the university, how they are structured, the services they provide, and the challenges they face. By capturing some of the experiences and lessons learned from these programs, the report also hopes to provide practical guidance to university leaders that are considering establishing such programs.

The report is based on a national survey of university-based programs conducted in the fall of 2004 by the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI). PCI is a national non-profit, non-partisan organization that works with state leaders to establish and strengthen collaborative approaches to governance.





## OVERVIEW of UNIVERSITY-BASED COLLABORATIVE POLICYMAKING PROGRAMS

*University-based programs engaged in collaborative policymaking are tremendously diverse. Indeed, no two programs are alike.*

Universities have hosted programs that support collaborative policymaking for more than two decades. Some call them “mediation” or “negotiation” centers, some “dispute resolution” programs. Others are called “consensus” centers or centers for “collaboration.” From the pioneer programs at MIT and Virginia in the early 1980s, the past 15 years have seen a steady increase in the number of these programs – accounting for much of the growth in the field of public dispute resolution. Of the 42 programs surveyed by PCI, one-in-three have been active for 10 years or longer, while one-in-four were initiated in the past two years. Several others are in development, expecting to begin activities in the near future.

University-based programs are tremendously diverse. Indeed, no two programs are alike. This diversity is reflected in all aspects of program design and experience, including how programs were established, their issue focus and activities, program funding and staffing, how programs build support within their university environments, and how programs interact with and involve public leaders in their work.

The majority of programs focus their activities on a particular substantive issue area such as environment and natural resources or inter-governmental relations. Some primarily conduct applied research or offer coursework, while others emphasize training and capacity building among state and local policymakers. A larger number of programs concentrate on direct services such as convening, facilitation, or mediation of specific policy issues. Programs target their services and activities in varying degrees toward local, state, regional, national and, increasingly, international policymakers.

Most collaborative policymaking programs operate with limited resources. One of the most persistent challenges for collaborative policymaking programs is securing the funding necessary to conduct their activities. Program budgets range in size from virtually zero to as much as \$3 million annually. The majority of programs have annual budgets of less than \$250,000, and a significant number operate on less than \$100,000 per year. More than half of the programs surveyed operate with two or fewer full-time employees.

Funding is derived from a mix of sources unique for each program. Core funding from traditional sources such as universities, foundations, and legislatures has steadily declined in recent years, and many programs are increasingly relying on earned revenue from training activities and fees-for-service to support themselves. Some are collaborating with others in diverse and creative ways to meet the demand for services when resources are limited.



For all the programs surveyed, high-level champions have proven key in their efforts to build and sustain support for programs. More than half of the programs involve university leaders as well as public officials and community leaders through some form of advisory board.

The programs surveyed contribute to the multiple missions of the university: teaching, research, and service. While some emphasize their contribution to the service mission, others have found creative ways to integrate other missions of the university into their work. Programs have sought to become ‘good citizens’ in the university community, as well as to leverage their access to high profile leaders for the benefit of the broader university community.

While the experience of each program has been unique, many have faced similar challenges in their efforts to sustain their programs. Lessons learned from their aggregate experiences are described in the following section. The subsequent sections present a more detailed picture of existing collaborative policymaking programs: how they were established, their activities and issue focus, program resources, how they built support within their universities, and how they built support with communities and public leaders.





## LESSONS LEARNED

**W**hile no two university-based programs are identical, some general trends and lessons emerge from the survey results.

These may be useful both to newly developing programs as well as existing programs facing persistent and familiar challenges.

- 1. Location and context are key considerations.**  
University programs are located in a variety of institutional settings, combining a diverse mix of activities and services. Some settings are more hospitable than others. Programs and departments with more service-oriented missions have proven to be better hosts for consensus building and conflict resolution programs. Departments that focus primarily on scholarship and research often do not place high value or priority on public service. Universities considering such programs should study existing models and contact other university program directors to better understand how and why programs developed as they did, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of different program locations and designs.
- 2. Line up champions early and enlist their active, on-going support.** Champions are vital to build and sustain support for these programs. Champions typically are university leaders themselves. In some instances, respected senior public officials with substantial stature played instrumental roles in initiating programs. Efforts to initiate this kind of program should include involvement and support by key leaders within the university who are actively engaged in planning and program promotion. Several of the programs surveyed suffered setbacks when their champions moved on, underscoring the importance of continuous efforts to cultivate new champions.
- 3. Walk the talk: Be consultative and collaborative.**  
It is particularly important for consensus building programs to ‘walk the talk’ by consulting and collaborating broadly, early, and consistently with relevant stakeholders inside and outside the university. New programs are often perceived as threats by providers outside the university, as well as by other departments within the university. Perhaps the most important strategy in building internal support is to engage diverse elements of the university community early in the program design process. Programs should build grassroots support through widespread consultation both within the university and in the surrounding community.
- 4. Serve the university’s academic mission, as well as its service mission.** While many programs provide valuable public service on behalf of their universities, programs should consider additional ways to serve the teaching and research missions. In the university setting, service often takes a back seat to research and teaching. In general, university-based program activities need to produce high-quality scholarship or they are unlikely to survive in the university environment – no matter how service-oriented that environment might be. Programs may be best served by choosing projects that can meet multiple university interests simultaneously, and by tying their own programmatic priorities to strategic university benchmarks. This may be a good area in which to pursue partnership opportunities with other programs and departments.





5. **Set a program direction and monitor progress and results.** Programs should not try to be all things to all people. Many of the programs surveyed reported institutional pressures that tended to pull them in too many directions. A mission statement and guiding principles can be helpful tools in focusing program work on particular substantive policy areas or specific types of activities or services. In developing this mission, programs should pay particular attention to the needs and priorities of the host institution. Strategic planning for these programs requires thinking in terms of systems and planning for ways to evaluate whether strategies and activities are accomplishing the objectives, or whether they need to be modified and changed over time.
6. **Establish an advisory board to help build support.** In addition to providing programmatic guidance, advisory boards are important vehicles for building support within the university community as well as with public leaders. Advisory councils can provide a mechanism for sustaining and strengthening relationships among both the university administration and across academic disciplines. Programs can cultivate champions among public leaders through involvement in advisory councils. Their presence on boards can enhance program credibility and increase access to public officials and policymaking processes. Advisory boards can provide university leaders an important forum for access to high profile political leaders, further enhancing support for their universities.
7. **Provide for a development or start-up period to reduce early pressure on programs.** Many programs reported challenges in meeting early expectations upon their initial launch and development. Early pressure to generate revenue or to demonstrate self-sufficiency can hinder efforts to develop internal capacity, conduct strategic and business planning, and build broad support within the university community and among public leaders. Planning for a start-up period can help to reduce these program pressures during ‘scale-up’ of operations. This start-up period might last a year or longer, while at least three years may be required before a strong institutional foundation and sustainable sources of self-generated revenue are established.
8. **Be a good citizen within the university community.** There are many ways for programs to add value to the university community beyond serving the mission. These include bringing in funding, generating positive publicity, providing access to political leaders, administering interdisciplinary programs, placing students in the field, volunteering services for university disputes and processes, and many more. Programs can add value to other departments by leveraging their relationships and adding a process dimension to existing university strengths.
9. **Work with partners to overcome resource constraints and other barriers.** Programs have developed creative partnerships to overcome resource constraints and other barriers. In the face of substantial bureaucratic hurdles, including university politics and overhead costs, some of the programs surveyed created independent non-profit organizations that enable them to seek support and conduct activities that do not mesh with university priorities. In response to resource constraints, programs might develop pro bono panels of mediators and facilitators, partner with community mediation centers, or work with experienced staff within government agencies.
10. **Be entrepreneurial: Seize opportunities to promote your program through outreach.** Given decreasing levels of core support, programs need to seize opportunities to promote their programs both internally and externally. Many programs described the important role of training in building program credibility, developing relationships and a consumer base for their services, and generating revenue. Some programs use publications to reach potential project partners and sources. These kinds of program outreach activities also help communicate about the program’s work with important constituencies.





## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

*For university-based programs new and old, the support of program champions is vital to their establishment and sustainability.*

This section describes how long the surveyed programs have existed, how they were established, where they are located, and the length of time required for planning and start-up.

### Growing Number of Programs

These kinds of university-based programs first emerged 25 years ago when the Public Disputes Program at MIT and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia began supporting and teaching consensus-based policymaking processes. More than one-third of the university programs surveyed have been active for 10 years or more. Recent years have seen a steady growth in the number of university-based programs supporting collaborative governance processes. One-in-five programs are in their first or second year of activity. Additional efforts at other

universities are expected to launch within the next year. Table 1 lists the ages of the surveyed programs.

At the same time, several existing programs have scaled back activities substantially (due to various constraints discussed in later sections). Others have ‘reinvented’ themselves with renewed energy and focus. For instance, the programs at Montana and Washington State that began more than a decade ago have both recently reorganized their missions and services.

### Program Initiation

The story of each program’s initiation is unique. However, for university-based programs new and old, the support of program champions has been vital to their establishment and sustainability. Within the university community, these champions have included deans, vice presidents, presidents, and chancellors. Many programs also benefited from the active support of external champions, including political leaders from the executive or legislative branches, university donors, and others. The role of champions in building



TABLE 1—PROGRAM AGE

20 years or older	15-19 years	10-14 years	6-9 years	3-5 years	1-2 years	Still in Planning
MIT	Florida State	Cal State	Indiana	IUPUI	Oklahoma	Arkansas-
UVA	Maine	–Sacramento	Boise State	Tulane	State	Little Rock
	Montana	Delaware	N. Carolina	Maryland	Penn State	UMass-Boston
	North Dakota	NC State	Alaska	Missouri	Portland State	Washington
	Rutgers	Pace			South Dakota	
	UC Davis	Texas			UNLV	
	Georgia Tech	Washington State			Utah	
		Woodbury				
		Wyoming				

This listing is currently representative but not comprehensive, due to inconsistencies in data or further follow-up required with some programs. Some surveys appeared to reflect data for larger university entities, rather than specific collaborative policymaking programs.

and maintaining support for programs is discussed in greater depth later in this report.

For the majority of programs surveyed, motivated and committed faculty members provided the initial impetus for their creation. For many, a small group of faculty members developed or proposed the idea and then gained support from higher-level university officials. Some of these founding groups benefited from the early involvement of university presidents or deans. In several cases, programs were launched at the initiative of the board of regents or the chancellor.

Elsewhere, government leaders provided early political support that helped the creation of programs. The governor's office played an important role in developing the program at Florida State University and the joint initiative between the University of Washington and Washington State. The program at Indiana University / Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) was established by the state legislature to support a bipartisan state advisory commission on intergovernmental relations.

Only one-in-five programs has a similar form of statutory authority or legislative mandate. In some instances, this statutory authority was accompanied by legislative funding. In others, the mandate helped to establish the scope of issues to be addressed by the program. Formal expressions of support from government entities no doubt played a helpful role for many of these programs by providing initial credibility with university or public leaders. However, the experience of programs as a whole suggests that more

important than any formal statutory authority is the consistent support and involvement of political leaders in program activities.

At several universities, philanthropic support played an important role in helping launch the programs. For example, several university centers gained initial support from the National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR) and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Virginia Environmental Endowment helped launch the program at the University of Virginia. At the University of Wyoming, individual donors provide support for the Institute for Environment and Natural Resources.

### Program Location

*Location does matter, although there is no generalizable experience that suggests one model is preferable over another.*

The programs surveyed are located in a variety of university settings (see Table 2), with no one setting emerging as a norm. Among the most common institutional hosts are law schools and schools of government, environment, public policy, and planning. Collectively, these constitute approximately half of all programs surveyed.

University-based research institutes, particularly institutes of government or public policy, provide institutional homes for one-in-six collaborative policy-making programs, including programs at Hawaii and Utah, among others. Another one-in-six programs are



TABLE 2—PROGRAM LOCATION (INSTITUTIONAL HOSTS)\*

Law Schools	Schools of Government	**Other Academic Departments	University / Research Institutes	Independent Entities	Extension Programs	Collaborations
Maryland	Delaware	Cal State - Sacramento	Alaska	Boise State	Missouri	IUPUI
Pace	Kansas	Georgia Tech	Arkansas - Little Rock	Clemson	NC State	MIT
Penn State	UNC	Indiana	Florida State	Maine	Washington State	Washington / Washington St.
Texas	NYU	Rutgers	Hawaii	Montana	North Dakota	
Tulane	Portland State	UC Davis	Tennessee	Oklahoma State		
UNLV	South Dakota	Virginia	Utah			
	Wichita State	Woodbury College		UMass-Boston		
				Wyoming		

\* Not all programs are listed

\*\* These include Schools of Public Policy, Planning, Environment, Liberal Arts, Interdisciplinary Studies, and others

independent university entities that report directly to the university president, vice president for research, or vice president for public service. These include programs at the universities of Montana, Wyoming, Maine and North Dakota. A smaller number of programs are based in cooperative extension units, including North Carolina State University and the University of Missouri. Another small group could be considered collaborations that do not fit neatly within any single location category. For example, the Washington Policy Consensus Center is a joint initiative of the University of Washington's School of Public Affairs and Washington State University's extension program.

Overall, location does matter, although there is no generalizable experience that suggests one model is preferable over another. Not surprisingly, many programs that focus on specific issue areas are often located within relevant graduate schools or departments, such as the University of Alaska's environmentally focused Institute for Applied Environmental Research.

### **Program Planning and Start-Up**

The majority of programs surveyed spent one or two years in a planning or start-up phase, developing mission statements and guiding principles, conducting strategic and business planning, assessing demand, and consulting widely within the university community. Several programs reported spending as many as three to four years involved in this activity. The Policy Consensus Center in Washington, for example, conducted a feasibility study in 2001, entered a pilot phase in 2003, and expects a full launch in 2005. A smaller number of programs reported shorter planning periods or no planning stage at all.

Many programs highlighted the importance of spending adequate time on preparation and planning, and involving potential stakeholders from within and outside the university early on in the design process. Several programs noted the challenge of meeting early demand for services while still working to firm up institutional support, organizational structure, and capacity. In many cases, the need to raise revenue through service delivery impaired efforts to build important relationships and broad support across the university community during the critical stages of program development. These programs recommended securing adequate funding for the program design process and delaying service delivery until operations are underway.

Once established, many programs face challenges in transitioning to the next level of organizational growth and sustainability – particularly programs with smaller budgets, limited staffs, and revenue dependent upon project support. Some programs struggled to adjust to rapid growth. Programs that involve students heavily in their projects note the challenge of maintaining organizational continuity; as students graduate, their programs are constantly rebuilding.





## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

*Most programs choose to focus their work on one or more specific policy areas.*

This section describes survey results about the types of work undertaken by university-based programs and the different ways in which they support policymaking processes. Topics include the substantive issues upon which programs focus, the activities and services provided, and the different constituencies the programs serve.

### Policy Focus

Most of the programs surveyed focus on one or more specific policy areas. Three-in-four programs emphasize at least one substantive issue area, and many programs listed more than one policy focus. The most common areas of focus are intergovernmental relations and environment and natural resources. Half of the programs surveyed noted a special emphasis on one or both of these issues. One-in-three programs focus on transportation policy, urban issues, and/or education. A smaller number of programs focus on health policy. Several listed special interests in agriculture policy, housing issues, or civic engagement.

A small number of programs focus on international issues, including trade policy and international development. Some suggested that the number of programs addressing international issues is likely to increase in the near future. One-in-four programs do not specialize in any specific substantive issue area. Figure 1 includes the specific breakdown for programs' substantive issue focus.

### Activities and Services

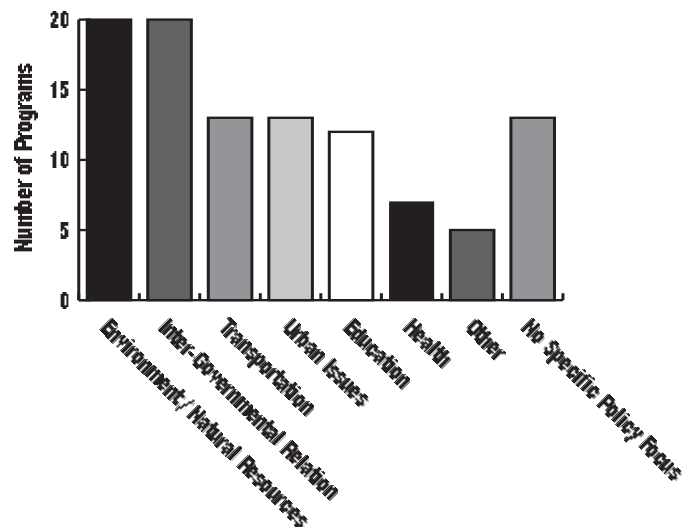
University-based programs play a wide variety of roles in collaborative policymaking processes, from more traditional academic activities such as research and coursework, to training and capacity-building among public officials, to consultation and conflict

assessment, to providing more direct intervention services such as facilitation, mediation, and convening. As Figure 2 illustrates, each program reflects a unique balance of these activities within their workload. Most programs balance their workload among several of these functions, while others focus more intensively on one or more of these activities.

In general, programs tend to allocate substantially less time to traditional academic functions such as research and coursework than they do to other types of activities. Nearly half of the programs surveyed spend less than 10% of their time on research and less than 10% on coursework. Conversely, research constitutes more than 40% of the workload for programs at MIT, Maine, and Georgia Tech, while the Indiana Conflict Resolution Institute at Indiana University dedicates 80% of its work to research and evaluation.

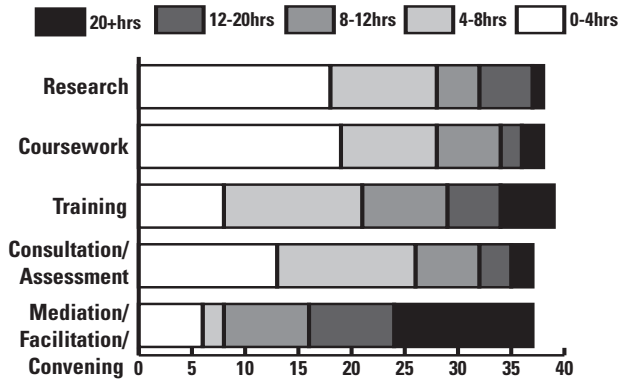
Increasingly, programs are offering some form of certificate- or degree-granting program. Half the programs surveyed currently offer a certificate or courses that are part of a larger graduate degree curriculum. Some programs have found that these

FIGURE 1—PROGRAM WORK: SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE FOCUS



**FIGURE 2—PROGRAM WORKLOAD:  
BALANCE OF ACTIVITIES.**

*Number of hours spent on each activity in a 40-hour work week*



certificate- and degree-granting programs help to raise their academic profile, while others note such programs can help to generate additional revenue.

Nearly all programs include some form of training or capacity building for public officials. These training activities primarily target elected and non-elected policymakers at all levels of government. One-in-five programs spend more than 30% of their time on training. Programs at Washington State, North Dakota, Kansas, and North Carolina State devote 55% to 70% of their work to training. These training programs are valuable not only for their direct capacity-building effects, but also as vehicles for promoting collaborative problem-solving more generally and developing an informed consumer base.

Half of the programs surveyed provide some level of direct intervention services in specific policy disputes, including mediation, facilitation, and convening dialogues or agreement-seeking processes. Among these programs, direct intervention services often constitute more than 50% of total workload. Among the half that do not offer direct dispute intervention services, respondents noted challenges arising from university policies and procedures that complicate hiring outside facilitators. Others describe a lack of resources for such activities and the challenge of oversight and monitoring of field-based work. Instead of direct service, some programs make referrals to other service providers on an ad hoc basis through panels established by the programs or through partnerships with state practitioner associations. At least two programs created spin-off partner organizations

independent of the university, which conduct all direct services. An example is the MIT program's partnership with the independent non-profit Consensus Building Institute (CBI).

In addition to the activities described above, programs spend significant time conducting general outreach and promoting the use of these processes among local, state, tribal, and national leaders, as well as their local communities. For many programs, this is an integral part of their programmatic mission. These efforts are discussed in greater detail later in the report.

**Serving State and Local Government, Communities, and the Public**

The majority of programs surveyed serve a combination of state and local government officials and agencies. The most frequent sources of projects include state and local agencies (particularly those focused on resource management issues), agriculture boards, regional planning commissions, school districts, cities, and counties. Many also provide collaborative problem-solving services to groups in their local communities. Federal agencies are less frequent project sponsors for the university programs surveyed. One-in-four programs provide services for federal agencies, such as the departments of Interior, Transportation, Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency. For half of the programs, local and statewide non-profit organizations active in public policymaking processes also provide some portion of their project work.

A smaller number of programs provide services to private sector organizations. For instance, the North Carolina State program, which focuses on natural resource management issues, works with resource-related industries such as timber and power. The North Dakota program works with regional businesses, while the program at MIT serves a national private sector audience through its affiliation with the Harvard Program on Negotiation. Several programs partner with international non-profits and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and others.



## PROGRAM RESOURCES: FUNDING *and* STAFFING

This section reports on survey results about funding and staffing of university-based programs. Topics include the levels of funding in terms of annual program budgets, common sources of funding, and trends in funding. The section also describes how programs are staffed, as well as how they engage outside consultants and partners in their work.

### Funding Levels

Most programs surveyed operate with very limited resources. Three of every five programs have annual budgets of less than \$250,000. One-in-three operate on less than \$100,000 per year, including several programs that reported budgets of virtually zero. Most common, however, are programs with annual budgets between \$100,000 and \$250,000. At the far end of the spectrum, the Center for Collaborative Policy at California State-Sacramento operates with an annual

budget of \$3 million<sup>1</sup>. Table 3 lists the annual budgets of some of the key programs surveyed.

### Funding Sources

*Fee-for-service contracts represent the largest source of funding for programs of all sizes.*

The programs surveyed derive funding from a mix of sources, including university support, legislative appropriations, state and federal grants, foundation grants, and fee-for-service contracts. Half of the programs surveyed receive some form of university appropriation, ranging from 10% to 100% of the program's overall budget. For most of these, university funding accounts for one-third to one-half of all resources. Only one-in-five programs receive direct funding from their state legislatures. These are often,



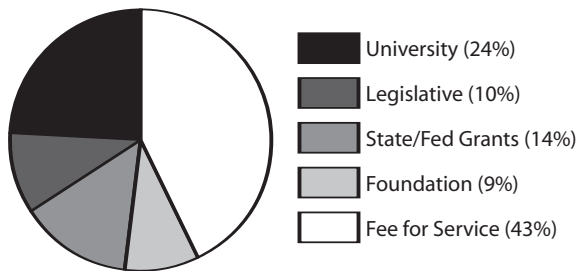
**TABLE 3—PROGRAM FUNDING: ANNUAL BUDGETS \***

Under \$100k	\$100k-\$250k	\$250k-\$500k	\$500k-\$1million	More than \$1million **
Arkansas-Little Rock	Alaska	Maine	Florida State	Washington / Washington State
Boise State	Delaware	Pace		Cal State–Sacramento
Georgia Tech	Hawaii	Texas		
Missouri	Indiana	Tulane		
NYU	IUPUI	UC-Davis		
Penn State	MIT	UMass-Boston		
Oklahoma State	Montana	Utah		
South Dakota	NC State	Virginia		
	North Dakota			
	Portland State			
	Rutgers			
	UNC			
	UNLV			
	Washington State			
	Woodbury			

\* Not all programs are listed

\*\* Several additional schools reported budgets exceeding \$1million annually; however, it was not clear whether these budgets referred to the activities of collaborative policymaking programs or the activities of larger university entities.

**FIGURE 3—FUNDING BY SOURCE**  
Average per program



though not always, programs with some form of statutory authority. State or federal grants contribute to the budgets of one-in-three programs. Such funding is most common among programs with mid-size budgets, between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annually. Two-in-five programs receive support from private philanthropic sources, including national and community foundations, as well as private donations.

Fee-for-service contracts represent the largest source of funding for programs of all sizes. Three-fourths of programs surveyed derive some level of funding in this way, often representing substantial proportions of their total annual budgets. For half of these programs, more than 50% of their resources are generated through fee-for-service contracts. Several programs raise 100% of their annual program budgets through fee-for-service contracts. Figure 3 illustrates the breakdown of program funding sources.

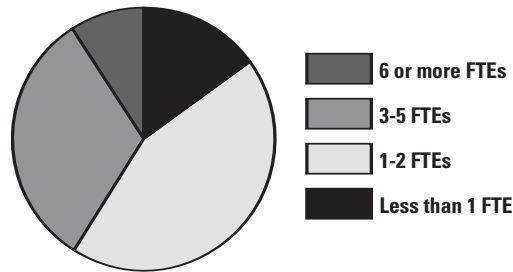
Recent years have seen sharp declines in historical sources of core funding for these programs. Across the country, universities and legislatures have cut appropriations, foundations have pursued other interests, and state and federal grant programs have reduced budgets.

### Staffing

Most university-based programs operate with very small staffs. Three-in-five programs have fewer than two full-time staff members, and several have less than one full-time staff person. Several programs have much larger staffs, including the California State Center for Collaborative Policy (with 15 full-time employees), and Florida State University (with 8 full-time employees). Figure 4 breaks down staff size of the programs surveyed.

In general, positions at these programs are not likely to be tenure-track faculty positions. Only one-in-five small programs (0 to 2 full-time staff) include a tenure-track

**FIGURE 4—PROGRAM STAFF SIZE**  
Number of full-time employees



position, whereas two-in-three programs with more than 3 staff have at least one tenure-track position.

### Consultants and Partners

In their efforts to meet demand for program services with limited resources, programs engage consultants and other partner organizations in a variety of creative ways. Many programs use outside consultants as service providers, particularly as facilitators or mediators, and less frequently as trainers. Several programs supplement limited staff capacity with less expensive appointments to graduate student or recent alumni, particularly for research projects. Several programs use university faculty outside of the program. At the same time, other programs report that they rarely, if ever, engage outside consultants due to university hiring or salary procedures.

Programs also partner with a diverse array of outside organizations in their project work to supplement technical expertise or to provide services that the programs themselves do not provide. Many cooperate on projects with other centers and programs within their universities, including programs on civic leadership, public policy, community development, transportation, energy and government services, as well as programs at other universities. They also work jointly with other dispute resolution providers, including state dispute resolution agencies, associations of practitioners, community mediation centers, and pro bono panels of providers. Several programs, as noted previously, have formed partnerships with independent non-profit organizations that jointly implement projects, providing direct intervention services not provided by the university-based program.

<sup>1</sup>Several programs reported budgets and staffing numbers that require further follow-up, as they may or may not reflect activities focused on collaborative governance: Tennessee (\$20 million, 175 staff); Clemson (\$2 million, 20 staff), South Carolina (between \$1-2 million, 24 staff), Wichita State (between \$1-2 million, 18 staff).





## BUILDING SUPPORT *in the* UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

This section addresses some of the issues programs face in building support with their universities—including how programs serve the university’s mission, engage champions, and other strategies for building and maintaining support.

### **Serving the University Mission**

*Programs have found creative and purposeful ways to integrate the teaching, research, and service missions of their universities.*

Generally, university-based programs seek to build support by serving the teaching, research, and service missions of their universities. Many programs emphasize the service role they fulfill through the collaborative policymaking processes in which they are serving state and local governments and communities. Others also serve the school’s extension or outreach mission by engaging citizens and conducting public education on policy-related issues. However, many programs note that, in practice, the service mission of the university takes a back seat to the university’s teaching and research functions. One respondent noted that no matter how service-oriented an academic institution may be, high quality scholarship must be the primary university currency.

Given this, programs have found creative and purposeful ways to integrate the teaching, research, and service missions of their universities. Courses taught or co-taught by program staff can enhance the university curriculum by bringing examples of high profile public policy issues into the classroom, while field projects provide opportunities for students to engage in more experiential forms of learning. Project work often yields rich case study material for courses offered by the program and those offered by other

departments. Research on public policy processes enhances the research profile of the school or university and helps to connect the worlds of theory and practice. Even where the program itself does not conduct research, outside faculty often benefit from research opportunities provided by increased university access to the state’s policymaking processes, enhancing the research profile of the school.

Some programs help to serve specific school or university goals distinctive to their institutions. Programs located in public policy institutes or schools of government, for example, can meet the specific goals of promoting more effective governance processes, service to government entities, improving leadership and governance, or more broadly, addressing contemporary problems. The same is true for environmentally focused programs housed in schools of environment or natural resources, whose missions may include more effective management of environmental resources or the development of new, more effective methods for doing so. The program at Hawaii helps the university meet its strategic goal of engaging a diverse university population in interdisciplinary approaches to addressing social, economic, and policy problems in Hawaii. Some programs emphasize the importance of tying their activities directly to specific university benchmarks – those by which other programs are measured – rather than seeking special status as some kind of distinctive service entity.





## **Champions are Key to Building and Sustaining Support**

*Raising visibility within the campus community and cultivating champions is an on-going effort that requires substantial energy.*

As discussed previously, many programs have cultivated and benefited from high-level champions within the university. Most often, this is the dean or director of the host institution. For several programs, university presidents, vice-presidents and chancellors also have played this role. Some programs report few champions outside of their department or program. This can leave the program vulnerable to shifting priorities within the university.

Often, transitions among university presidents, deans, and heads of institutes can have substantial consequences for collaborative policymaking programs that depend on these leaders for support. Under new leadership, host institutions may be reluctant to promote certain past activities, may shift to other priorities, or may choose to move the host institution in an altogether different direction. The programs surveyed have experienced all of these factors.

University-based collaborative policymaking programs are distinctive in their ability to generate positive visibility for the university through engagement in high profile policymaking processes. More specifically, programs can leverage their relationships with – and access to – senior government leaders and policy decisions to the benefit of the broader university community. For instance, programs at the universities of Texas and Washington, and the Indiana University - Purdue University-Indianapolis program, all point to strong relationships with state legislatures as important sources of internal support within the university. Faculty in other departments often find this access to policymaking processes beneficial to their own research and programs.

Raising visibility within the campus community and cultivating champions is an ongoing effort that requires substantial energy. Some programs regularly forward testimonials and favorable reviews from participants in program activities to university leaders – particularly when those participants include high-

level public officials. The program at Penn State is featured regularly on the university president's weekly radio and television programs. The Florida State program partnered with its president to organize a campus-wide mediation day. The North Carolina State program organized a formal university evaluation and review of itself, focusing the attention of more senior university officials on the program and raising its profile among university leaders.

## **Collaborating within the University Community**

Perhaps the most important strategy in building internal support is to engage diverse elements of the university community early in the program design process. This includes consulting widely with stakeholders, addressing concerns, and gaining buy-in. One of the programs surveyed faced early concerns that their new center would siphon off projects from other university departments. In response, they developed extensive protocols regarding consultations that will occur before the center takes on any particular project.

Once programs are established, they use a variety of strategies to sustain relationships with champions over time. Many use program advisory boards as a vehicle for building and maintaining support within the university community. The program at the University of Montana, for example, has two advisory boards—an Academic Oversight Board consisting of deans from several university schools, and a Faculty Advisory Board that brings together interdisciplinary faculty. In addition, many programs regularly engage faculty from other departments in their project work, or provide faculty with access to public policymaking processes for their own research. Programs also have helped teach interdisciplinary courses and administer interdisciplinary degree programs. The program at Rutgers provides service within and for the university community, offering training to university staff and pro bono consulting for university leaders on various projects.





## BUILDING SUPPORT *in the STATE, the COMMUNITY, and AMONG LEADERS*

This section discusses ways in which university-based programs communicate with and involve public leaders in their work. Topics include how they promote collaborative governance models and involve leaders in projects, activities, and program advisory boards.

### **Promoting Collaborative Problem-Solving Approaches**

*Training programs that expose public officials to collaborative policymaking approaches help build capacity among policymakers and create a base for future services.*

An important mission of many programs is outreach to raise awareness and build support for collaborative policymaking processes generally. Many programs communicate regularly with leaders at all levels of government, from the local community, to local elected officials and agencies, to statewide leaders such as agency directors, legislators, and governors. Others reach out to federal government agencies, private sector representatives, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations.

Much of their message focuses on the general benefits of collaborative approaches, including the efficiencies in cost and time, the better outcomes that often result, the preservation and strengthening of relationships, and the way collaborative processes serve the interests of multiple parties. Programs promote collaborative models as more effective vehicles to broaden participation in policy formulation, because they accommodate an increasingly diverse array of stakeholders addressing increasingly complex social and political issues.

Many programs view their training activities as important (and particularly effective) components of their outreach efforts. Training programs that expose public officials to collaborative policymaking approaches help build capacity among policymakers and create a base for future services. The MIT program conducts Executive Briefing Sessions for leaders in the public and private sectors and develops publications designed to make collaborative governance approaches less theoretical and more accessible to leaders. Similarly, the program at Alaska regularly reaches out to state and federal agencies with publications, case studies, and other resources that might be helpful to their work.

As service providers, university-based programs also point to the unique advantages of their university setting. Universities are widely perceived as neutral conveners and service providers, with access to a tremendous array of university resources, including cutting-edge theory and research, interdisciplinary faculty expertise, and current databases. Some programs are able to bring independent financial resources to the table, or to offer free consultation, assessment, or orientation.



## **Involving Leaders in Program Work**

While public leaders often receive services from these programs, they can also be important and effective project partners. Almost two-thirds of programs surveyed engage leaders as hosts or co-sponsors of public forums and discussions, helping to add credibility to their activities. Most university programs rely on public leaders to be external champions for their work. Half of the programs call on leaders to assist them with their outreach efforts, including peer education of other leaders, while one-in-four programs involve leaders in fundraising efforts. Others seek specific technical, policy, or political advice from leaders on particular projects.

## **Advisory Boards**

*More than half of the programs surveyed have an advisory board made up of influential leaders.*

As mentioned in previously, many programs use advisory boards as a vehicle for regular involvement of leaders in supporting their work. More than half of the programs have some form of advisory board. The majority of these are composed of a combination of internal university leaders, senior public officials, and community leaders. Many include university presidents or vice-presidents, deans of host and non-host institutions or colleges, interdisciplinary faculty representatives, and other university staff or personnel. Outside leaders often include members of the state legislature, heads of state agencies, representatives from the governor's office, local government leaders, local community leaders, judges, business interests, and sometimes the alternative dispute resolution community.

Generally, these boards help cultivate public leaders as champions of collaborative governance approaches. At the same time, their involvement helps increase access to other public agencies and leaders, and helps build the profile of the program. The Utah program includes the chairs of relevant state legislative committees that govern key policy areas. At North Carolina State, the board includes one representative from each of the following: a state natural resource agency, a state environment or conservation organization, state business and industry, the forest products industry, the

North Carolina House of Representatives, the North Carolina Senate, local government, the state university system, and two fellows from the leadership program – one current and one alumnus.

Advisory boards also have proven to be effective vehicles for building internal support within the university community. Such boards often provide a forum for university leaders to interact with leading politicians and public policymakers, increasing the value of such programs to the university administration.





## CONCLUSION

Universities are uniquely positioned to serve political and civil leaders in addressing and solving today's complex public problems. As neutral forums, university-based consensus building programs can take action without taking sides. And as institutions with public credibility, they can provide both the place and the necessary expertise to assist governments, business groups, community members, and other decision makers to collaboratively improve the design and implementation of public policies.

For newly developing programs, there are a number of important design decisions that may be critical to success. These include choosing the appropriate location and context for the program, finding active and engaged champions, determining strategies for serving both the academic and service missions of the university, and setting a strategic program direction and a method for measuring results. In addition, program developers should consider working with partners both within and outside the university to overcome resource constraints and other barriers. They should devise outreach and promotional strategies to increase awareness and use of collaborative governance practices, enhance funding opportunities, and grow the number of advocates working toward the program's success.

In 1999, more than 300 college and university presidents signed a "President's Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education." It concludes:

*We believe that the challenge of the next millennium is the renewal of our own democratic life and reassertion of social stewardship. In celebrating the birth of our democracy, we can think of no nobler task than committing ourselves to helping catalyze and lead a national movement to reinvigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education. We believe that now and through the next century, our institutions must be vital agents and architects of a flourishing democracy. We urge all of higher education to join us.*

University-based consensus building programs make an important contribution to this movement. With service, research, and teaching agendas that promote and encourage collaborative policymaking, university-based programs can help all sectors – public, private, and civic—develop effective, lasting solutions that go beyond what any one sector could do on its own.





## APPENDIX A: LIST of UNIVERSITIES INCLUDED *in the* SURVEY

University of Alaska - Anchorage	Rutgers University
University of Arkansas - Little Rock	New York University
California State University - Sacramento	Pace University
University of California - Davis	University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
University of Delaware	North Carolina State University
Florida State University	University of North Dakota
Georgia Institute of Technology	Oklahoma State University
University of Hawaii	Pennsylvania State University
Boise State University	Portland State University
Indiana University	Clemson University
Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis	University of South Carolina
Kansas University	University of South Dakota
Wichita State University	University of Tennessee
Tulane University	University of Texas - Austin
University of Maine	University of Utah
University of Maryland	University of Virginia
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Washington
University of Massachusetts - Boston	Washington State University
University of Michigan	University of Wyoming
University of Missouri	Woodbury College
University of Montana	
University of Nevada - Las Vegas	





## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a national survey of university-based programs that are in some way supporting consensus-based governance processes. The project was undertaken in the fall of 2004 by the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI), a national non-profit, non-partisan organization that works with state leaders to establish and strengthen collaborative approaches in governance. PCI was primarily interested in surveying programs that are actively engaged in collaborative policymaking processes, rather than purely academic programs.

PCI contacted and interviewed more than 65 programs in 44 states. This report reflects the responses of 42 such programs located at universities in 35 states. Despite our best efforts to be comprehensive in reaching out to programs, we likely have missed other existing programs. We know of several that were unable to complete the survey within the limited time constraints. In the responses we did receive, some appeared to respond on behalf of larger university entities, of which only a portion of their work focuses on collaborative policymaking and the loosely defined set of services and activities that are the subject of this report<sup>2</sup>.

Survey questions addressed when and how these programs were initiated, their focus and activities, their funding and staffing structures, their relationships within the university community, and the ways in which they involve public leaders in their work. The survey also sought to capture some of the challenges these programs face, lessons they have learned, and specific advice they would offer to universities considering the establishment of similar programs. In some instances, the survey tool may have failed to capture important contextual factors that would provide greater understanding for examples provided in the report.

PCI plans to conduct a series of follow-up interviews with programs for a future version of this report.

Our methodology was not rigidly scientific, nor is this report an attempt to provide a definitive picture of a field that is itself not rigidly defined. Rather, it provides a snapshot of the landscape for university-based programs engaged in collaborative policymaking processes and a distillation of some of the lessons learned from their experiences.

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<sup>2</sup>These include programs based at the University of Tennessee, University of South Carolina, Clemson University and Wichita State University. Information from these programs was included in the report; however, specific data was not included where responses suggested they would not provide a reliable basis for comparison.





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