

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA STUDENT PARTICIPATION PROCESS HANDBOOK

JANUARY, 2015

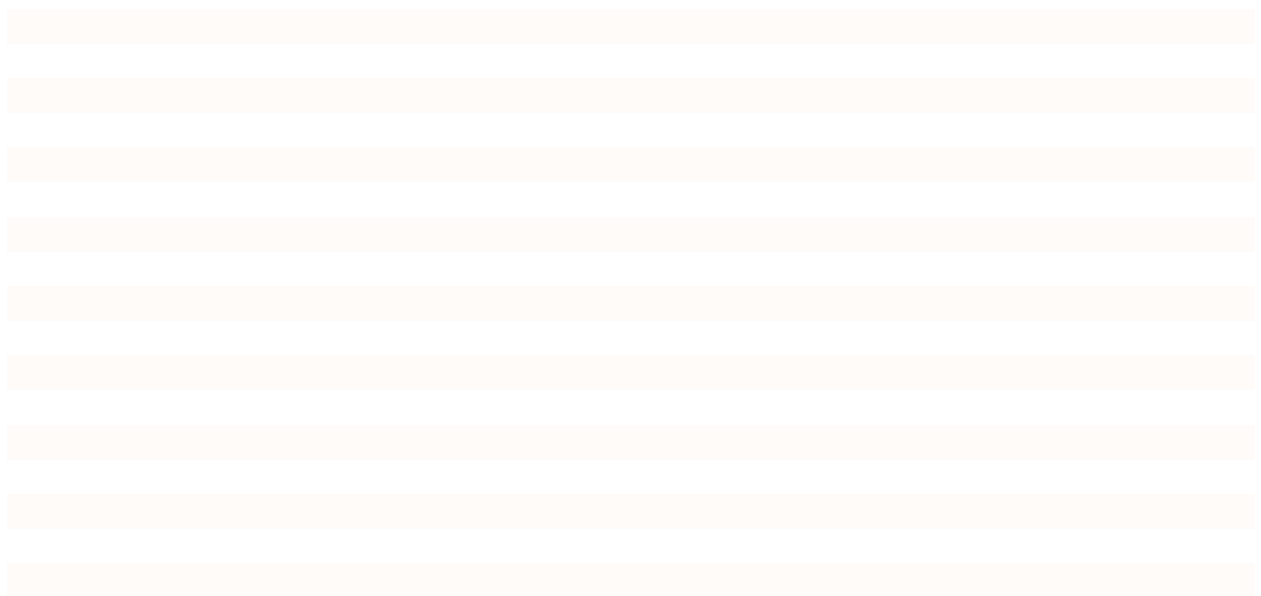


The Graduate Students' Association
of the University of Alberta

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INTRODUCTION



In 2013, the University of Alberta (U of A) committed to enter into a facilitated process with the Students' Union (SU) and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) to seek consensus with respect to the meaning and requirements of consultation - including the role, if any, for a mechanism to resolve disputes regarding consultation. In the fall of 2013 representatives of the three organizations participated in a collaborative education and development process [Appendix 1 - Participant List] which resulted in the development of guiding principles and processes for student participation at the U of A as set out in this handbook. Whenever decision-makers are considering sharing information on the decisions they are making, or making the determination to seek student input regarding such decisions, the "Continuum of Student Participation" can help decision-makers determine the most appropriate level of participation and to determine the most appropriate process for such participation. The resulting spectrum of potential participation is not about achieving consensus, convincing people, or providing any mechanism to resolve disputes regarding consultation—instead, it is intended to allow for effective and meaningful participation as one element of the University's decision making process, and the scope of that participation varies in accordance with the continuum.

This handbook is one tool that contains a participation process and delineates a methodical approach to student engagement, which can range from simple information sharing to active responsibility for a decision. It is intended to support effective conversations relevant to the student constituencies at the University of Alberta, recognizing that conversations will involve the SU and GSA as the official representative bodies of their students. Optimally, this handbook would be used at a stage where concerns are identified and proposals are being developed.

As this evolving document may be revisited and updated from time to time, it's important to note that this version is current as of January 2015.

The sections of the handbook are:

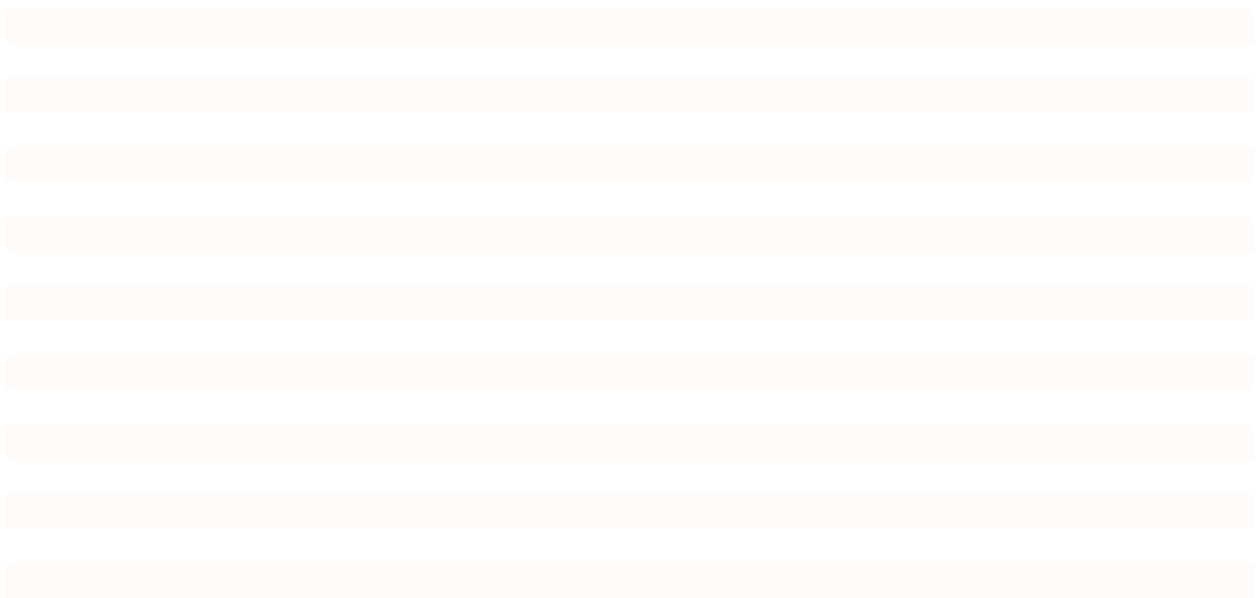
- 1 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- 2 STUDENT PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS
- 3 PROJECT FRAMING AND STRATEGY PLANNING
- 4 WORKSHEETS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT PROCESS DESIGN

Public participation in decision-making is an important and highly relevant area of research and practice. Post-secondary institutions, government, business and the public are looking for ways to most effectively involve a broad diversity of people in making decisions that are sustainable and supported.

*U of A Centre for
Public Involvement*



**AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE PRACTICE OF
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**



In undertaking to develop a process for the University of Alberta, it is useful to have an understanding of how public participation in decision making is done generally, and to base the institutional process on contemporary best practices. In recent years, the role of participative democracy has become more prevalent, and increasingly sophisticated, as public and stakeholders engage in conversations about complex situations. Public participation has evolved into a practice that closely parallels that of qualitative (and frequently quantitative) research. As such, it requires a strategic, methodical, and rigorous approach to ensure the results of public involvement are credible to all and useful to decision makers as one element of their deliberation process.

Due in part to the proliferation of public participation, people are becoming more selective about their involvement choices. In order to be truly effective, process design requires a clear purpose, outcomes, and standards of practice or participation values, in order to elicit engagement by the community and/or stakeholders. The overarching premise in process design is that form follows function—proponents must employ a strategic and methodical approach to establish clarity of purpose, scope, and the larger context before the form of consultation and methodology is identified.

Finally, public participation is about involving the appropriate people in the appropriate way at the appropriate time. This strategic approach dispels the myth that 'one size fits all' in the practice of public participation.

Remember that public input is almost always just one factor of a multi-faceted decision.

THE CONTINUUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Continuum of Public Participation defines progressive stages of participation, and is an essential tool in understanding and designing strategic participation processes. It helps decision-makers determine the most appropriate stage of participation when they are seeking broader input, or believe they need to share information on decisions they are making. In the diagram below, each stage of public participation is explained by its stated intention and purpose.

Over time a range of tools have been developed by various organizations, practitioners, and process planners to design effective and credible public participation processes; several of which are contained in this handbook. (IAP2 (iap2.org) also provides a range of resources to educate and guide involvement processes.)

STAGES	INFORMATION SHARING	INVOLVEMENT		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
	INFORM	CONSULT	ENGAGE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
INTENTIONS	To build awareness	To build knowledge	To build commitment	To build ownership	To build responsibility
PURPOSE	To share information with your public about issues that may affect them.	Testing ideas or concepts; providing information and obtaining feedback on alternatives, or analysis of proposed decisions; and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.	Involving stakeholders throughout the process—ensuring relevant concerns and aspirations are understood and considered; co-developing solutions.	Sharing decision making by partnering with stakeholders in aspects of decision making, including developing alternatives and/or recommendations.	Delegating the decision making wherein stakeholders have responsibility for the decision.



This continuum is an adaptation of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

The stages of public participation range from basic information sharing to delegating the decision making to an appointed body. The same can be said about student participation.

It is critical to the credibility and accountability of the process for the process designers to ascertain and communicate at the beginning of any project the stage or stages of public participation being used. Not all issues or projects will involve more than one stage, and many instances will only employ one stage, if at all.

Therefore, regardless of which stage is applied, projects will need a communication strategy to ensure all participants understand what the broader decision will be on, who will make the decision, what the decision making process is, and how different inputs will be used to inform that decision. Taking the time to establish this context and clarity both within the university and with student participation participants not only supports accountability for a given project but will build trust and relationships.

In each stage special attention must be given to the design of unbiased process. In the co-design of an outreach process, it is essential to ensure that the conversation is never about agreeing with or supporting the issue. It is about clarifying the issue and designing a process in which participation is geared towards eliciting and listening to the full range of perspectives and learning more from the students. A key, and frequent, breakdown in public participation occurs when those involved in gathering information become defenders of their position, rather than effective listeners. This breakdown can happen with student participation as well.

The first two stages—information sharing and consulting—are generally considered outreach processes to larger numbers of people and the ‘involvement’ is about sharing and gathering high level information. Participation at this level is about gathering information from university and student stakeholders, and it is not about achieving consensus or convincing people.

Where possible, the U of A seeks engagement. At the engagement level, participation tends to move from broad participation to stakeholder engagement. Outreach is more focussed, and often involves representatives or individuals that are assigned a formal role in the participation process.

At this level, conversations may be contained to the specific representative groups, or the group may collaboratively design and implement broader stakeholder processes. This type of project could utilize more than one stage from the continuum as the range of participants would have different interests and need for participation.

Finally, there are times when the regulated decision making authority will actually assign decision making on a matter or a specific function to a small group. Some boards or standing committees could have this designation. This is the empower stage of public participation.



STUDENT PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES & PROCESS



The University of Alberta Student Participation Principles and Process is the product of a collaboration between representatives from University administration, the Students' Union, and the Graduate Students' Association.

In service to the vision and values of the University of Alberta, the U of A administration, SU, and GSA have developed a collaborative approach to appropriate and effective student participation in matters that affect the student body, to support a "diverse, yet inclusive, dynamic collegial community that welcomes change and seizes opportunity with passion and creativity." (Dare to Deliver 2011-2015) As a handbook, it provides processes and templates that can enable effective and productive participation conversations, whether with a small group of stakeholders, or for a campus-wide initiative. It includes a set of core values and corresponding principles of practice, as well as a process for effective participation design and implementation.

If the three parties demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the values and principles of practice, as well as to using the participation process, the U of A will benefit by strengthening the ability to collaborate and build relationships, to learn from each other, and to develop robust and sustainable solutions to problems and challenges when they arise.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

VISION

To inspire the human spirit through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship in a creative community, building one of the world's great universities for the public good.

WE VALUE:

- 1 excellence in teaching that promotes learning, outstanding research and creative activity that fuel discovery and advance knowledge, and enlightened service that builds citizenship;*
- 2 the centrality of our students and our responsibility to provide an intellectually superior educational environment;*
- 3 integrity, fairness, and principles of ethical conduct built on the foundation of academic freedom, open inquiry, and the pursuit of truth;*
- 4 a diverse, yet inclusive, dynamic collegial community that welcomes change and seizes opportunity with passion and creativity;*
- 5 pride in our history and traditions, including contributions from Aboriginal people and other groups, that enriches and distinguishes the University.*

PARTICIPATION VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The University of Alberta Administration, Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association commit to participation in accordance with the Participation Values and Principles of Practice. These will be applied by the partners in their individual

and collective practice of participation for decisions that affect the U of A student body. Furthermore, in their leadership roles, the partners will educate and advocate for the adherence to and adoption of the Participation Values and Principles of Practice within their individual constituencies.

VALUE	PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE
<p>RESPECT OF INDIVIDUALS</p> <p>Student participation draws together persons with a diversity of opinions and positions. The cornerstone of effective student participation is to respect the right to hold individual positions, and to always demonstrate respectful behavior to the people that hold them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the individuals involved in participation processes • Seek to understand the diversity of perspectives • Not engage in or condone any form of personal attack or intimidation
<p>CONSTRUCTIVE AND SHARED LEADERSHIP</p> <p>The stakeholders recognize that they hold, and will uphold, a shared responsibility in facilitating effective participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and encourage constructive leadership • Earn trust by consistently acting in an honest and trustworthy manner • Honor and uphold agreed upon protocols • Focus on developing workable solutions that reflect the vision and values of the University
<p>THE ABILITY TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS</p> <p>We believe student participation provides perspectives and information that can make a significant contribution to the quality and sustainability of decisions. We are committed to strategic and methodical processes that support our ability to make informed decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively develop a participation strategy to help guide each participation initiative • Design participation to elicit a full range of opinions and perspectives • Ensure decision making processes reflect the consideration of student input
<p>CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY</p> <p>Informed participation means that students will understand and are fully able to participate in the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide timely notice and information that is accessible to enable full participation • Use the participation process to ensure participants receive all pertinent participation process information including but not limited to context, scope, and use of information • Ensure participants are aware of interim decisions
<p>AN OPEN-MINDED APPROACH</p> <p>A creative, collaborative and collegial approach to participation will support inclusive and strategic participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to new, innovative, participation practices • Treat each process as a separate process • Use creativity to manage design challenges

PARTICIPATION PLANNING PROCESS

INITIAL ASSESSMENT — ESTABLISHING CLARITY

This assessment is about answering the following questions—ensure you have the appropriate people at the table.

- What is the overall project? What is the decision being made and by whom? By when?
- What other factors will inform the decision? Remember: student participation is just one input into the decision.
- Is there clarity and a common understanding about the issue?

INITIAL ASSESSMENT — THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION INTENTION

- Why would you involve students in this discussion? What exactly do you want to achieve or learn?
- What information are decision makers seeking to assist them in this decision? How has this been verified?
- What is the commitment about how information will be used—factored in or considered in the decision making process?
- What factors will influence the decision about level and scope of consultation? (Time, resources, etc.) How?
- Can you identify the specific information are you seeking?

THE PARTICIPATION DECISION

- Will/how will student participation add value to this decision?
- Where will it fit on the continuum?

PROCESS AND RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Identification of participants and levels of engagement
- Timelines including key decision points
- Budget and human resources available
- Confirm outcomes and information required by decision makers
- Risk assessment, communication plan, values alignment

DESIGNING A STUDENT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY AND PLAN

- Collaborative design of process/methods with stakeholders
- Implementation plan
- Data management strategy
- Communication strategy
- Evaluation Framework (including values alignment)

CONTINUUM OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

STAGES OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION	INFORMATION SHARING	CONSULTATION		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
	INFORM	CONSULT	ENGAGE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
INTENTIONS	To build awareness	To build knowledge	To build commitment	To build ownership	To build responsibility
PURPOSE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION	To share information with students about issues that may affect them.	Gathering information, testing ideas or concepts by providing information and obtaining feedback on alternatives, and/or analysis of proposed decisions.	Involving students in the development of solutions throughout the process to ensure that relevant concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	Sharing decision making by partnering with students in aspects of decision making, including the development of alternatives and/or recommendations.	Delegating decision making wherein students have responsibility for the decision.
STUDENT PARTICIPATION COMMITMENT	To keep students informed - about the project, the decision making process, the larger scope, and the ongoing developments.	To keep students informed, to listen, acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how student input influenced the decision.	To work with students to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are reflected in alternatives developed and provide feedback on how student input influenced the decision.	To look to students for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate student advice and/or recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	To implement what the participants decide.
RESPONSIBILITY OR ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DECISION MAKER	Provide complete, objective, reliable, timely and easy to access information.	Define the goals and processes, clearly state the purpose and scope of the exercise, and articulate the decision-maker's commitment to the utilization of student input.		Facilitate an effective process by providing time, information, and flexibility for consultation, and by clarifying the process for integrating decisions into the larger context.	

A DISCUSSION ON THE PROCESS AND CONTINUUM

In almost all instances, the initial assessment is absolutely the most critical element of effective process. The initial assessment is about establishing clarity and scoping out the nature of the issue or project, which is further discussed in detail on page 16. It is important to remember and worth reiterating that at its essence, effective participation of students is about involving the appropriate people in the appropriate way at the appropriate time.

The relationship between the U of A, the SU, and the GSA will sometimes fall into the engagement or collaboration levels, in that the University turns to one or both of these elected and representative bodies as the gateway to the U of A student body interests. The process tends to become about a set of peers engaging in conversations (and potentially seeking solutions) about matters that affect their constituencies.

This chart also acknowledges that bringing in a broader range of stakeholders does not assume that students are involved in the decision making. The evaluation of input would generally be the mandate of the SU, GSA, or the group with the delegated authority. This is a key point to understand.

At the U of A, other stakeholders could include some of the many formal bodies that act as representatives of U of A interest groups, or in some cases the broader student body.



PROJECT FRAMING AND STRATEGY PLANNING



INITIAL ASSESSMENT – ESTABLISHING CLARITY AND PROJECT SCOPING

This section addresses the initial assessment, through the Student Participation Decision and some of the initial scoping process.

The purpose of the initial assessment is:

- To clarify and develop an internal understanding of the overarching issue, project or process.
- **Note:** You cannot decide if student participation will add value as one of the inputs to the decision, or if it is necessary, until there is clarity on the decision being made.

The importance of establishing clarity about the context, the scope, the background, and the purpose of participation, for any participation process along the continuum, cannot be overstated. Jumping to action before having the initial assessment can create a myriad of problems for everyone involved.

The initial assessment is generally initiated by the decision-maker, who identifies the potential need for a broader conversation or information-sharing about an issue or specific topic (i.e. we need a strategy/ a policy/ more information about the topic/ a broader range of perspectives on the topic.) The person or office that will be responsible for the participation outreach should begin the initial assessment, and should involve the appropriate key stakeholders in the conversation. When deciding who should participate in this assessment, it is helpful to consider who will be most impacted or affected by this decision.

The intention of the participation project is to gain clarity, focus, and definition as you work through the conversation process. What follows are guidelines to consider when determining if student participation could be helpful and and to what end.

The intention of the questions and worksheets is to stimulate thoughts and inform the approach. It is not necessary to answer each question in sequence. Begin by reading all the questions in a worksheet, and then use them to inform and develop the approach.

CREATING CLARITY ABOUT THE OVERARCHING DECISION OR PROJECT

Before even thinking about the student participation process clarity and consensus is needed on the decision that student input may inform.

What is the decision being made? Who is the decision maker? When is the decision being made?

How complex is this decision? Is it part of a larger initiative; or is a single issue? What is the larger context? (i.e. the policy is part of an overall suite of policies, or a focussed, single decision project)

What factors will influence the decision? (Remember student input is just one factor in the decision process.)

Are there any parts of the decision that have already been made? What is on the table for discussion and what isn't?

Who will be affected by this decision? (directly and indirectly)

CREATING CLARITY ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION INTENTION

The initial assessment is never about whether students agree with, or support, the issue. It is about clarifying the purpose and focus of student participation and ensuring the conversation or information is geared towards the real desired outcome—learning more about the issue from a broader population. Creating clarity up front will ensure that you are asking the right questions, gathering the right type and amount of information, and that all participants are made clear about how the information will contribute to the process.

Why do you think you want to involve the students (or stakeholders) in this discussion?

What do you want to learn from or discuss with the stakeholders? Or, what information are you trying to communicate? (NOTE: It usually takes an exploratory conversation –or two—to achieve clarity on what you are really seeking from the students or stakeholders--make sure you move past the decision and focus on what you want to learn from a specific group to inform the decision.

How would this information add value to the decision being made?
Are there historical factors or previous decisions that will affect this process/discussion?

What factors will influence the decision about level and scope of consultation? (Time, resources, etc.) How?

What are some shared values that could inform the approach to this conversation? (These will need to be validated with participants in the process design.)

What will happen with any information you generate?

THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION INVITATION

Please take time to incorporate the information above and ask yourselves again: why would you involve the students in this discussion?

What exactly do you want to achieve or learn about? Note: This is the crux of any student participation process. Take the time to ensure that you are clear and focussed on what you want to learn or the information you need to add value to the decision being made. Also work with your consultation question to ensure it is sincere, open-ended, and unbiased.

Where does this involvement fit on the continuum? Can you rationalize this placement?

STAGES	INFORMATION SHARING	INVOLVEMENT		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
	INFORM	CONSULT	ENGAGE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER

What information do decision makers need to assist them in this decision? How has this been verified?

What specific information are you seeking from the students or stakeholders?



At this point the group you have convened should be able to prepare a Student Participation Invitation that states 1) the intention of the conversation (we want to learn..., or we are going to inform...), 2) the values that will guide the process, 3) the larger context, 4) key considerations or factors that will affect the discussion, 5) where it fits

on the continuum, and 6) how the information will be used.

Note: In the spirit of transparency, it may be important to share this information with student stakeholders.

PROCESS DESIGN

This stage could be described as laying out the pieces of a puzzle before you put it together. The Assessment will help you to ensure you have “covered the bases” before you proceed with design. It is important to review and consider each of the elements before you design your process. Each element provides valuable information that will ensure an effective design. Section IV (pg 23) contains a tool box of relevant worksheets that you might find helpful in a conducting a strategic and methodical approach to planning a participation project.

IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

Deciding who could provide valuable insights to the conversation, or who would be interested in knowing about the initiative should be a first order of business.

It’s important to note, the scope of participants generally narrows as you move along the Continuum of Student Participation with “information sharing” being quite broad with general information and (for example) “engagement” being much more defined and selective, generally involving identified stakeholders. At the far end of the continuum, participation tends to be more formal and deal with mandated participants.

In addition to determining the scope of outreach, it is important to define the level of involvement to ensure your resources are strategically invested. Worksheets I and II (pg 25/26) support the participant identification process.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Student participation (even very limited or focussed conversations) can be a time-and-labour intensive undertaking, particularly when added on to current responsibilities rather than being a specific job duty. It is important to include the requirements of supporting staff in your project strategy. An accurate assessment of the resources required for student participation processes is necessary to ensure that processes are adequately resourced; inaccurate assessments and inadequate resourcing can often hinder the success of

a participation project. Some usual resource considerations include:

- 1 Staff and Contractors: There are internal requirements for staff on the project that need to be planned for, and if it’s a very large project a contractor may be required.
- 2 Technical information and materials: Web site development and maintenance, displays, etc.
- 3 Communications: Promotion, advertising, newsletters, brochures, information gathering expenses, surveys, etc.
- 4 Logistics: Facility rental, refreshments, committee expenses, signage, etc.
- 5 Participant funding and outreach: A part of inclusive participation is ensuring your process is accessible. For larger initiatives this could include investments in interpretation/translation, transportation, or child care.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS

Effective information sharing is critical to any student participation program. Basically, it’s a matter of strategic thinking and common sense. In process communication or information sharing, the “keep it simple” rule is paramount. Decide which communication methods best fit your needs once you have decided whom you need to share information with, when it is best to share it, and what the key messages are. The worksheet on page 28 provides a useful tool.

PROCESS EVALUATION STRATEGY

Process evaluation is not the same as evaluating the project; nor is it about whether the recommendations were accepted by decision makers, although that may be one indicator of success. The key point of a process evaluation is to identify your indicators of success before you start the process and then measure your process against them. The number of participants is a poor evaluation factor. The purpose of this type of evaluation is to determine if the process was effective.

Evaluation is often the step that doesn't get done, for a variety of reasons: timing, other demands, assumptions—if it wasn't a train wreck it must have been a good process. It is important to ask what worked, what didn't, and how it could have been better...AND make changes the next time around.

Interim evaluation should be used as a tool for ensuring meaningful results through process adaptations or course correction. Use Worksheet V: Evaluation Strategy (pg 29).

DATA TRACKING

Depending on the complexity of the project, data tracking can be a critical accountability tool. In some cases every telephone call might need to be tracked, in others summaries of activity will suffice. It is important to scope the amount of data that will be gathered and ensure you have decided on tools or process at the beginning of the Stakeholder Engagement process. Use Worksheet VI: Data Tracking (pg 30).

RISK MANAGEMENT

In the beginning of the assessment, you took the time to identify the scope of the project and determine if there were any complexities or historical factors that might influence the tone or the way in which the student participation process is approached. If the preliminary assessment suggested there might be complications, it would be wise to conduct a full risk assessment. Use Worksheet VII: Risk assessment (pg 31).

PARTICIPATION METHODOLOGY

Once you have defined the scope of the student participation process, where it fits on the continuum, and identified the potential participants, you are better able to decide what process tools or methods can be used at what stage to implement your participation strategy. There are several websites that provide information on matching the appropriate method with the target audience or gathering the required information (see page 24) Use Worksheet VII: Methods Strategy (pg 32).

STUDENT PARTICIPATION READINESS ASSESSMENT

Addressing these elements will enable an effective design for your student participation process.

READINESS STATEMENT

VALUING

- We are utilizing our Student Participation Values and Guiding Principles in considering our approach

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We can confirm that the decision we are discussing has not been made. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have a clear understanding of the overall project decision, or the conversation being held, and the purpose for an involvement process. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We know what information the decision makers are looking for, and how they will use it in their reflection process. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have a clear understanding of what we want to know, or the conversations we want to have with the public. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have identified where this initiative fits on the continuum. | |

EXPLORING: PROCESS SCOPING

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have identified potential participants, and their sphere of interest or engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have tested and assessed the student participation climate--we have identified any historical aspects that might affect the involvement process; we know who 'was out there last' and how that might affect the public response to us. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Our strategy has been creatively designed to accommodate project timelines. | |

ORGANIZING AND DOING

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have assessed the timing of our project (in the context of other events or projects) to enable active participation. Or, we have coordinated our process with other relevant processes so we don't overwhelm the stakeholders and to increase our ability to get quality feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have addressed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk identification and assessment • Project spokespersons identified • Communication strategy • Resource strategy • Formative and summative evaluations that provide for amending the process if it isn't working |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have developed a process strategy. | |

Summaries of the information above should be drafted into a Student Participation Strategy. Depending on the scope and complexity of the initiative it could be simple and informal, but might need to be complex. The Student Participation Process Strategy is a key accountability tool to your participants and the decision makers.

A large, stylized number '4' is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. It is rendered in a light orange color against a darker orange background. The '4' is composed of thick, rounded strokes, with a vertical stem on the right and a horizontal bar that extends to the left and then curves upwards to form the top of the digit.

WORKSHEETS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT PROCESS DESIGN

The Worksheets and Tip Sheets contained in this section are intended to support process designers in a methodical and strategic approach in process design.

The toolbox does not include an exhaustive list of student involvement methods, but there are a number of websites available that provide a comprehensive compendium of methods. New methods are continually evolving, especially with the use of technology.

Some resources can be found at:

http://www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/PublicParticipation/pdf/IAP2_public_participationToolbox.pdf

http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/Involving_Edmonton_2008.pdf

<http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=46425CAF-1&offset=9&toc=show>

WORKSHEET I: PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION TEMPLATE

PROJECT /PROCESS:

Addressing the points below will help to establish context for your thinking about potential participants.

- 1 Scope of consultation: how broad is the outreach on this project—the entire campus or one segment?
- 2 Impact of decision: who will be impacted by this initiative?
- 3 History of the issue: how might this affect who wants to be involved?

IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC PARTICIPANTS

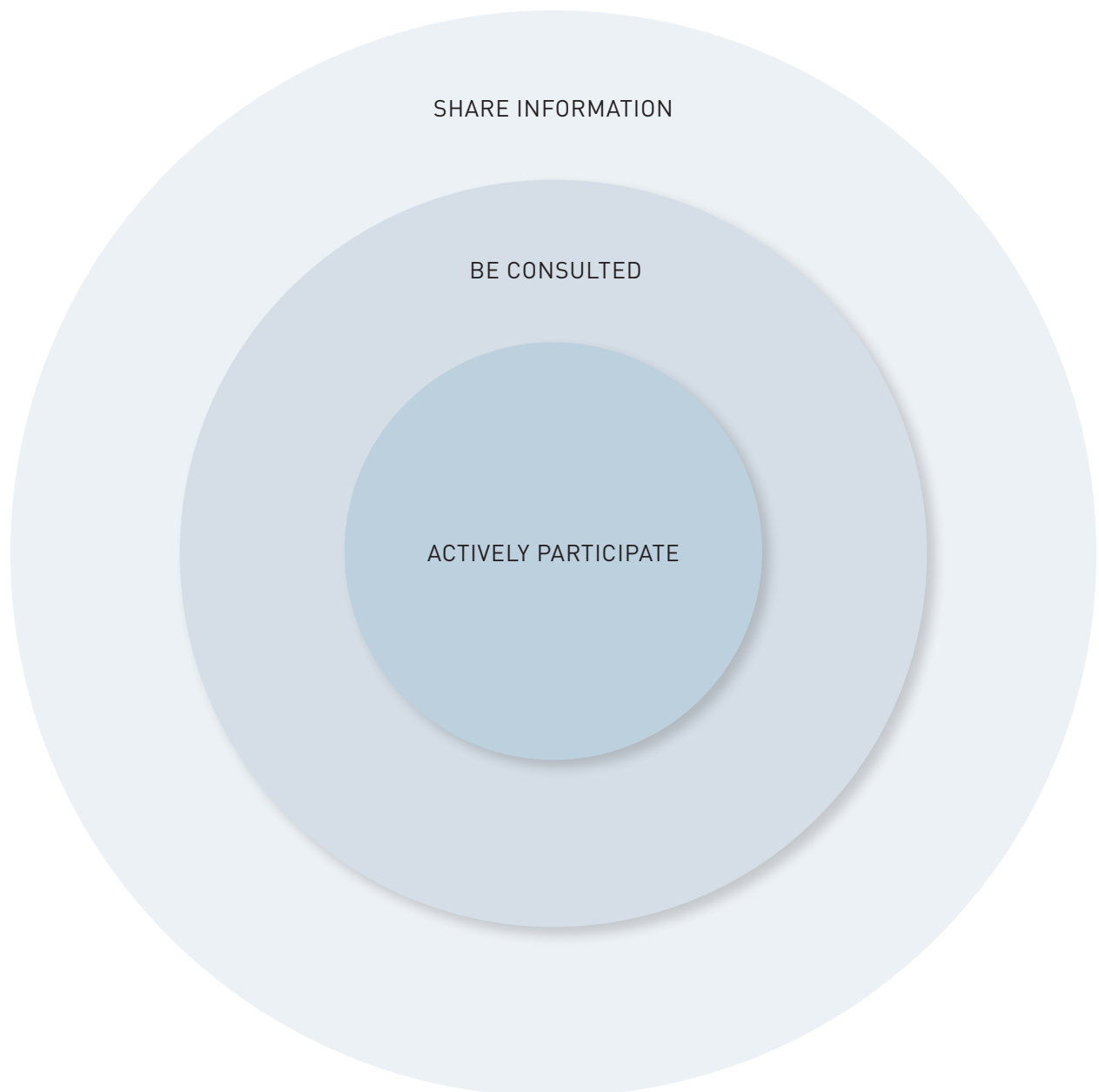
Use the table below to create your initial list of participants.

Who specifically might want to be involved?	What is their level of interest? What issues would they be interested in?	What method will we use to communicate with this participant group?

WORKSHEET II: PARTICIPATION SPHERE OF INTEREST

Since there are seldom resources to cover every base that is identified; sometimes it is helpful to map out the sphere of interest on identified stakeholders. The Sphere of Interest enables you to identify where to target your

resources and where to expect the most interaction. We have correlated the sphere of interests with the continuum.



WORKSHEET III: RESOURCE PLAN

Hard Costs	Proposed Costs	Final Costs	Variance
External Consultants: Stakeholder Engagement consultants, Communications consultants, Lawyers			
Data gathering: Public opinion polls/surveys, on-line surveys, data analysis, data tracking			
Technical Requirements: Computer analysis processes, equipment, etc			
Logistics: Facilities, Refreshments, etc.			
Communication: Advertising, Web development and maintenance, print materials, presentation materials			
Participant Costs: travel, translation, interpretation, subsidies			
TOTAL			
Soft Costs	Proposed Costs	Final Costs	Variance
Project team costs			
Special event HR costs			
Additional internal consulting costs			
FINANCIAL TOTAL			

WORKSHEET V: EVALUATION STRATEGY

Evaluation criteria/indicators of success for the process. (Tip: Ask decision makers and stakeholders about their indicators of success.)	
Are the criteria: relevant and meaningful to the project? tied to the project objectives and outcomes? tied to the Core Commitments and Standards of Practice?	
What specifically are you evaluating about the process?	
What methods will you use? Are you using quantitative or qualitative evaluation methods? Ensure that the methods used match the types of information you are gathering and are appropriate to the people you are talking with.	
Who would best provide the required information?	
How information will be used, recorded, tracked and analyzed? And by whom?	
How will the interim and final evaluation results be used?	
How will you communicate evaluation results?	
How will you take action on improving this or other processes?	

WORKSHEET VI: DATA TRACKING TEMPLATE

Project Name: _____ Project Manager: _____

Date recorded	Source of information (individual, organization submission, event, website, etc.	Key points or messages	Where is the information? stored or recorded?	How was input used? Why or why not?

WORKSHEET VII: RISK ASSESSMENT

ID #	Statement of Risk	Risk Effect	Risk Probability (0-5)	Risk Severity (0-5)	Risk Ownership	Indicators of Risk Situation	Mitigation Strategies
Sample:	Short time line for consultation	Alienates the stakeholder body	4	5	U of A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate feedback • Public input not included in recommendation 	With short timelines, work with stakeholders to design quick turnaround process by having them outline what would be acceptable in the context.

WORKSHEET VIII: ENGAGEMENT METHODS STRATEGY

Project Name: _____

Purpose: Identify appropriate involvement tools to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

Participant (from Participant Identification Tool)	Level of interest	Level of involvement from the continuum	Potential size of group or numbers of participants recorded?	Involvement tools that match needs
Sample: Student Groups	High—want active participation	Information sharing and consultation – collaborating to develop solutions	Representative group –15 members	Attend student group meetings, newsletters, web site, advisory committee

U of A Student Participation Process Handbook — Summary

This summary refers to University of Alberta Student Participation Process Handbook, which was the product of a collaboration between representatives from University administration, the Students' Union (SU), and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA).

In service to the Vision and Values of the University of Alberta, the administration, SU, and GSA have developed a collaborative approach to appropriate and effective student participation in matters that affect the student body to support a “diverse, yet

inclusive, dynamic collegial community that welcomes change and seizes opportunity with passion and creativity.”

The handbook is one tool that contains a participation process and delineates a methodical approach to student engagement, and is intended to support effective conversations relevant to the student constituencies at the University of Alberta.

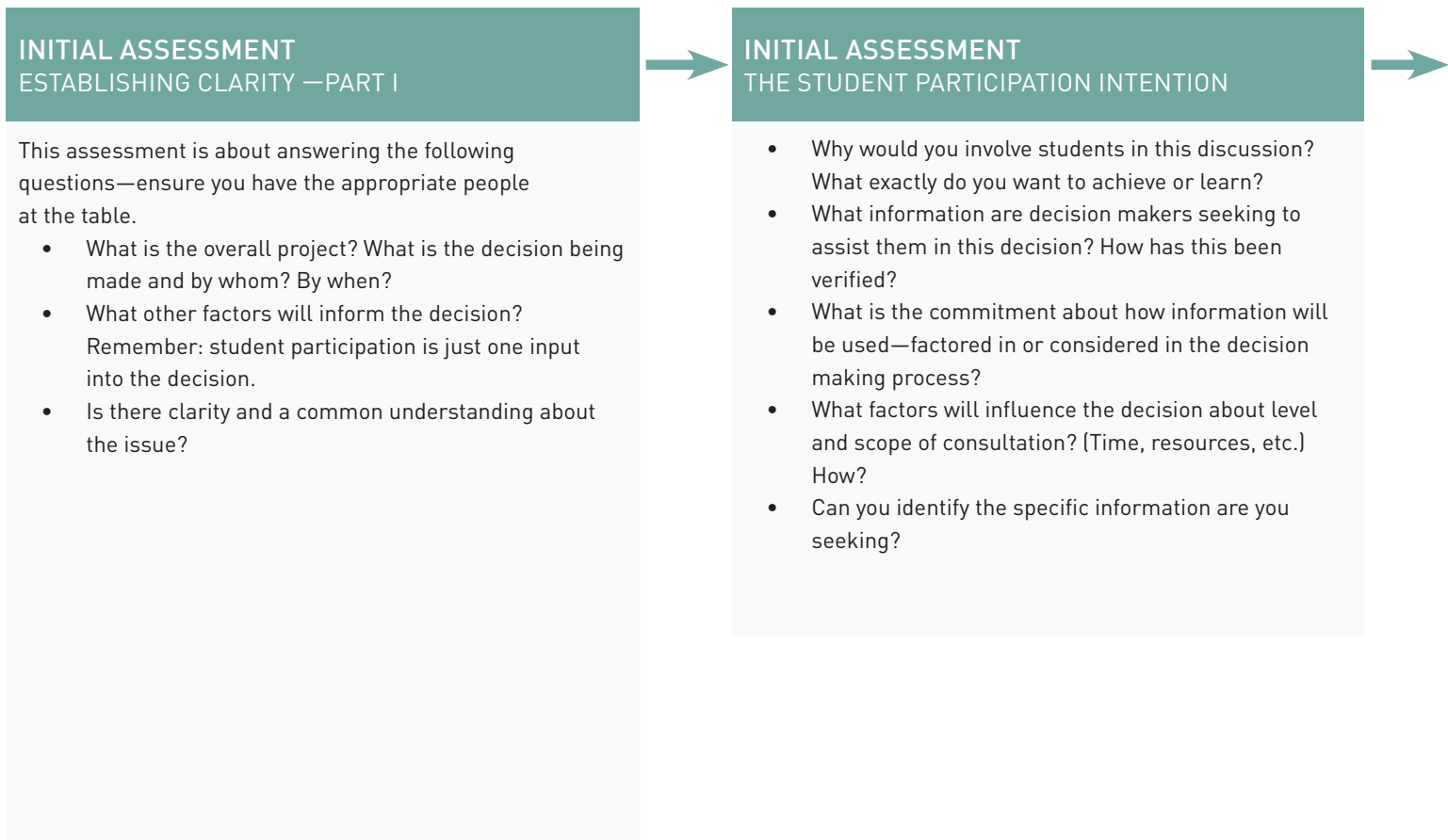
Participation Values and Guiding Principles

VALUE	PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE
RESPECT OF INDIVIDUALS Student participation draws together persons with a diversity of opinions and positions. The cornerstone of effective student participation is to respect the right to hold individual positions, and to always demonstrate respectful behavior to the people that hold them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect the individuals involved in participation processes• Seek to understand the diversity of perspectives• Not engage in or condone any form of personal attack or intimidation
CONSTRUCTIVE AND SHARED LEADERSHIP The stakeholders recognize that they hold, and will uphold, a shared responsibility in facilitating effective participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model and encourage constructive leadership• Earn trust by consistently acting in an honest and trustworthy manner• Honor and uphold agreed upon protocols• Focus on developing workable solutions that reflect the vision and values of the University
THE ABILITY TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS We believe student participation provides perspectives and information that can make a significant contribution to the quality and sustainability of decisions. We are committed to strategic and methodical processes that support our ability to make informed decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboratively develop a participation strategy to help guide each participation initiative• Design participation to elicit a full range of opinions and perspectives• Ensure decision making processes reflect the consideration of student input
CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY Informed participation means that students will understand and are fully able to participate in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide timely notice and information that is accessible to enable full participation• Use the participation process to ensure participants receive all pertinent participation process information including but not limited to context, scope, and use of information• Ensure participants are aware of interim decisions
AN OPEN-MINDED APPROACH A creative, collaborative and collegial approach to participation will support inclusive and strategic participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be open to new, innovative, participation practices• Treat each process as a separate process• Use creativity to manage design challenges

Continuum of Student Participation

STAGES OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION	INFORMATION SHARING	CONSULTATION
	INFORM	CONSULT
THE INTENTIONS	To build awareness	To build knowledge
PURPOSE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION	To share information with students about issues that may affect them.	Gathering information, testing ideas or concepts by providing information and obtaining feedback on alternatives, and/or analysis of proposed decisions.
STUDENT PARTICIPATION COMMITMENT	To keep students informed — about the project, the decision making process, the larger scope, and the ongoing developments.	To keep students informed, to listen, acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how student input influenced the decision.
RESPONSIBILITY OR ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DECISION MAKER	Provide complete, objective, reliable, timely and easy to access information.	Define the goals and processes, clearly state and articulate the decision-maker's commitment.

Participation Planning Process



PARTICIPATION	ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
ENGAGE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
To build commitment	To build ownership	To build responsibility
Involving students in the development of solutions throughout the process to ensure that relevant concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	Sharing decision making by partnering with students in aspects of decision making, including the development of alternatives and/or recommendations.	Delegating decision making wherein the participants have responsibility for the decision.
To work with students to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are reflected in alternatives developed and provide feedback on how student input influenced the decision.	To look to students for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate student advice and/or recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	To implement what the participants decide.
To define the purpose and scope of the exercise, and to the utilization of student input.	Facilitate an effective process by providing time, information, and flexibility for consultation, and by clarifying the process for integrating decisions into the larger context.	



At this point the group that is convened should be able to prepare a Student Participation Invitation that states the intention of the conversation (we want to learn..., or we are going to inform...), the values that will guide the process, the larger context, key considerations or factors that will affect the discussion, and where it fits on the continuum and how the information will be used. NOTE: In the spirit of transparency, it may be important to share this information more broadly.

Student Participation Readiness Assessment

Addressing these elements will enable an effective design for your student participation process.

READINESS STATEMENT

VALUING

- We are utilizing our Student Participation Values and Guiding Principles in considering our approach

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

- We can confirm that the decision we are discussing has not been made.
- We know what information the decision makers are looking for, and how they will use it in their reflection process.
- We have identified where this initiative fits on the continuum.
- We have a clear understanding of the overall project decision, or the conversation being held, and the purpose for an involvement process.
- We have a clear understanding of what we want to know, or the conversations we want to have with the public.

EXPLORING: PROCESS SCOPING

- We have identified potential participants, and their sphere of interest or engagement.
- Our strategy has been creatively designed to accommodate project timelines.
- We have tested and assessed the student participation climate--we have identified any historical aspects that might affect the involvement process; we know who 'was out there last' and how that might affect the public response to us.

ORGANIZING AND DOING

- We have assessed the timing of our project (in the context of other events or projects) to enable active participation. Or, we have coordinated our process with other relevant processes so we don't overwhelm the stakeholders and to increase our ability to get quality feedback.
- We have developed a process strategy.
- We have addressed the following:
 - Risk identification and assessment
 - Project spokespersons identified
 - Communication strategy
 - Resource strategy
 - Formative and summative evaluations that provide for amending the process if it isn't working

Depending on the scope and complexity of the initiative the participation process could be simple and informal, but might need to be complex. Summaries of the previous information could be included into a student participation strategy. The student participation process strategy is tool for accountability to your participants and the decision makers.

This summary outlines some of the key aspects of a framework designed to support the three U of A process partners in their individual and collective student participation initiatives. It is only a summary of the more in-depth Handbook that is intended to serve as a reference guide to support and enhance but not replace existing U of A governance processes. Please refer to the full Handbook for expanded information on the topics and process outlined in this summary.

The Handbook is one tool and contains more detail on the participation process and delineates a methodical approach to student engagement, which can range from simple information sharing to active responsibility for a decision. Whether in this summary or the full report, the intent is to support effective conversations relevant to the student constituencies at the University of Alberta, recognizing that conversations will often involve the SU and GSA as the representative bodies of their students.