Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina Toolkit

An Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy and Kansas Campus Compact Project
Overview of Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina Toolkit

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Overview of Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina Toolkit

Since August 29th 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast of the United States, many people have suggested that our American civic discourse surrounding the crisis, from our national and local leaders to our civic personalities, has reached a new low. While our nation was captivated by images, sound bites, and commentary explaining the economic, physical, and social impacts of Hurricane Katrina, our media also captured just how uncivil our civic discourse had become. Consider, for example, the wasted time and energy during the crisis devoted to assessing blame, whether to President Bush, FEMA Director Michael Brown, or among state and local politicians. Rather than focusing on discussions that could have helped hurricane victims, television and radio programs were dominated by rhetoric that was full of blaming and finger-pointing.

During the weeks of September 2005, while members of the media and government debated the faulty response to Katrina, insufficient communication was focused on planning delivery of emergency supplies, dealing with evacuees, fixing levees, or preparing for another hurricane. In the end, this blame game illustrated a clear counter-example to one important guideline of civic discourse: “Focus on what matters.” It is important to analyze mistakes and lessons learned, but not at the expense of acting to address human need during a crisis or its immediate aftermath.

Now that the post-hurricane period of recovery, restitution, and planning has begun, the need is heightened for extensive civic discourse among affected populations. One of the most important lessons learned from Katrina concerns the vulnerability of citizens being left out of critical communication on public safety that should have occurred well before the crisis. There is little doubt that Americans need to improve our civic discourse, and by doing so, we can also help prepare for the next crisis.

Civic discourse is purposeful communication carried out among citizens dedicated to sharing perspectives and constructing possible actions on issues that matter.
How can Civic Discourse Help Prepare for the Next Crisis?

Civic discourse is purposeful communication carried out among citizens dedicated to sharing perspectives and constructing possible actions on issues that matter. To be effective, the conduct of civic discourse, according to a large body of practical and scholarly literature, should demonstrate principles of inclusiveness, reflection, reciprocity, rationality, recognition of difference, and moderation.

ICDD’s Principles of Good Civic Discourse

- Provide framework for dialogue (establish ground rules; framework should recognize any cultural differences)
- Provide all with voice (create safe rhetorical space; manage inequalities of access and power)
- Focus on issues. Invite/encourage a variety of perspectives (inclusiveness)
- Value evidence variety – testimony, statistical evidence, narrative story telling
- Seek common ground and consensus when possible
- Avoid personal attacks
- Resist relying on ideological sloganeering
- Seek to understand rather than to persuade

Good civic discourse is an exercise in participatory democracy, engaging diverse citizens as well as elected officials in a shared exploration of policy, planning, or problem-solving issues. Representation through persistent dialog, not only through occasional election campaigns or opinion polls, enriches the set of ideals and choices by which citizens govern themselves. Good civic discourse can strengthen democracy, prevent mistakes, lead to better decisions, and engage more citizens in the democratic process. If good civic discourse can strengthen democracy, the reverse is also true: bad civic discourse can weaken the democratic process. If our examples of public discourse are primarily angry and intolerant of different opinions, the result is a loss of citizen involvement, reflection, and communication on which democracy is built.

This toolkit serves as an aid and a guide for student groups on campuses to organize and host a public forum aimed at understanding why our civic discourse broke down during the hurricane crisis, and learn how to prevent such breakdowns from occurring again.
Understanding the need for a national inclusive dialogue on civic discourse, the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (ICDD) and the Kansas Campus Compact (KSCC) at Kansas State University worked together to create this toolkit. The toolkit serves as an aid and a guide for student groups on campuses to organize and host a public forum aimed at understanding what our public dialog reflected during the hurricane crisis, and how to create the civic discourse that can withstand and mitigate future crises. Appropriately, this event is called Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina.

About the Partners

ICDD is a non-partisan institute dedicated to improving civic discourse on the local, state, national, and international levels. ICDD does this by focusing on improving scholarship, education, facilitation and outreach in the field of civic discourse. KSCC is a coalition of college and university presidents established to help foster and support campus engagement in the community. KSCC encourages civic discourse and debate and seeks to assist in the creation of partnerships between higher education institutions and the communities to which they belong.

Hosting Your Own Forum

This toolkit is designed to serve as a guide for people who wish to hold a public forum on civic discourse. These public forums will be centered on a 20-minute video (included in this toolkit) that should serve as the centerpiece for the event. This video will introduce main concepts, provide background information on civic discourse, and give the audience information necessary to discuss the impact of Hurricane Katrina on our national civic discourse. The forum can last anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes.

Through the ICDD and KSCC partnership, there is an opportunity to receive reimbursement (up to $100) for costs associated with hosting a Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina forum. In the appendix, you will find a reimbursement form. Eligible expenses include publicity materials, refreshments, room rental, etc. To receive reimbursement, send the...
completed reimbursement form (including receipts) and the feedback forms (both participants and planners) to Erika Mason-Imbody, ICDD Project Coordinator. Her contact information can be found at the beginning and end of the toolkit.

While this toolkit is primarily planned to focus on the civic discourse in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, most of this material can be used in planning other public forums as well. In this toolkit, you will find information and materials to help you plan and host your own public forum. This toolkit is organized into the following three sections: the planning section, materials for the day of the event, and the appendix, which includes the funding form, example public relations material, planner and participant surveys, and more.

A public forum or deliberation can help people examine critical issues in a community and often solve them.
PLANNING A PUBLIC FORUM

A public forum can help people examine issues that are important to a community. Although solutions are often sought, the primary focus of a forum should be to discuss and listen to various sides of an issue, not necessarily to develop a firm solution. The goal is to engage citizens and to be sure that all voices are heard before moving to the solution-finding phase.

This toolkit is directed toward holding a public forum in direct response to Hurricane Katrina; however, the following planning section is a general guide to organizing and holding your own public deliberation on any topic. This section will guide you through the process of planning a deliberation from the first day of planning to the very end. We begin this section by talking about the decision to plan such an event, the best strategy to organize it, a short list of necessary resources, a suggested time frame for planning such an event, and guidance on how to select a moderator and/or panel for the event. Since this is only a general guide, feel free to make any necessary changes when organizing your own event.

Deciding to Host an Event

A deliberation forum can be organized for many reasons. Forums are useful during a time of crisis, whether it is natural, social, environmental, economic, or any other type. A forum will help people and communities discuss problems that require input from all sides of the issue. People will be brought together to deliberate and debate diverse topics and issues in a civil way. Having a public forum can often open up discussion prior to a crisis and create networks of people who are comfortable talking with one another. Ultimately, this deliberation process may help to better prepare citizens for a time of crisis.

Organizing a Planning Group and the Materials You Will Need

It is necessary to have a core group of people to organize the entire event. It is possible for one person to do this, but is much easier with two or three people working together. It is the responsibility of this core group to select and invite a moderator; help choose the panel members; decide on the venue, date, and time; and take care of all logistics for the event. Every decision will go through this core group in order for the event to run smoothly.

It might also be a good idea to identify a mentor, a person the core-planning group can talk to for ideas and go to for advice. This mentor could be anyone who has experience in hosting this type of event, or a faculty member who is interested in the open forum’s topic.
Several materials will be required for a deliberation. Equipment for the actual event such as audio/video equipment, computer, projector, screen, markers, paper, etc., will be useful. The core group should make sure all equipment is available for the event ahead of time.

**Detailed Outline and Timeline for Planning**

The very first decision for the core group is to select a topic to discuss in your forum. For example, for this event, we use the crisis during Hurricane Katrina as the topic for our public forum. Once a topic is chosen, a date, time, and location can be selected. This should be done well in advance. Next, it is important to establish a “common experience” with which to begin your forum. This common experience can be a video, a panel discussion, or a specific article; the important thing is to give all participants a common ground from which to start the discussion. For a Katrina forum, we suggest you use the included video as your common experience. It will serve as a starting point for the moderated discussion that will follow.

Once the previously mentioned steps are accomplished, planning the actual event can begin. Ideally, the moderator should be selected two to four weeks before the event takes place. The same time frame is ideal for inviting panel members, if you choose this route for your common experience. This will give enough time for the moderator to get to know the panel and their views and feel comfortable with all participants. Additionally, this time frame gives the moderator time to prepare questions or discussion themes for the event.

Advertising can begin anytime after the date, time, and location are set. Advertise your event to your university community as well as to the local community. Having more participants leads to better discussion and collaboration of ideas.
Ideally, four weeks will be allotted to organize a deliberation event, but the planning can also be done in a much shorter or longer time based on the specifics of the events. A suggested outline is listed below.

4 Weeks Before
- Select an appropriate topic for the public forum
- Choose your “common experience” (video, panel, etc.)
- Select and invite a moderator (and panel participants, if necessary)
- Choose a date, time, and venue for the event

3 Weeks Before
- Design the flyers to advertise your event (see example in appendix)
- Order refreshments
- Start advertising the event via email, posters, and networking
- Obtain short biography from the moderator (and panel participants, if appropriate) for the program

2 Weeks Before
- Flyers should be well distributed throughout campus and community
- Design the program, including moderator biography and principles of civic discourse (see example in appendix)
- Moderator should preview the “common experience” and begin developing questions for the participants.

1 Week Before
- Finalize and print programs
- Confirm refreshments
- Confirm date, time, and location with moderator
- Write a press release for coverage in your campus or local newspaper

This timeline should serve as a rough guide for your planning process. Remember, planning an event often takes longer than expected, so it is helpful to start early. This will allow plenty of time to make any necessary changes. Additionally, a checklist is included in the appendix to assist you as you plan your forum.
**Date, Time, and Location**

Selecting the appropriate day, time, and location for your event is vital in accomplishing your objectives. First, select an appropriate day and time for the event. For example, if you are targeting a community audience, choose a time when most people will be done with work, preferably in the evening. If your target audience is primarily college students, pick a weekday when most college students are on campus and a time when you would expect them to attend such an event.

Next, choose a location such as a community center or a campus room that is appropriate based on how large of an audience you expect. For example, for our initial Hurricane Katrina deliberation, approximately 40 guests were expected, so we chose a room that would hold about 50 people. Booking the location and setting the time and date should be done well in advance to avoid last-minute problems and to have sufficient time to advertise the event. Also, make sure you reserve all necessary equipment well in advance. Projectors, screens, computers, audio/video equipment, etc., should be set up and prepared the day of the event.

**Selecting and Preparing a Moderator and/or Panel**

The moderator plays a central role in the development and successful execution of the discussion. The moderator’s job includes setting the framework, running the discussion, and engaging the audience in an interactive dialogue. The moderator also creates the appropriate tone and atmosphere in order to engage all participants in a well-organized dialog where the audience feels comfortable and free to talk about sensitive issues. Lastly, the moderator synthesizes what he or she hears throughout the event so that the discussion is focused, and the main themes of the deliberation are illuminated during the wrap-up.

Having the right moderator is extremely important in organizing a successful deliberation. Conducting a well-organized and peaceful deliberation can sometimes be a challenge, so moderators have to be good leaders who are neutral, non-partisan, and open-minded. Moderators also need to be good listeners and should be able to keep a discussion flowing smoothly. People such as professors, teachers, journalists, and community leaders are typically good moderators.
Although having knowledge on the discussion topic or being a trained moderator might help, these are not as important as having the earlier mentioned qualities.

If you choose to hold a panel discussion as your “common experience,” panelists must also be selected and invited to participate in the event. If a panel will be used, we suggest that the moderator get to know the panelists and their views. By doing a pre-interview with the panel, the moderator can develop a set of questions that might help bring up interesting thoughts and comments from the audience. Picking a panel with different views will help in reducing prejudice to one side of an issue. The moderator will also explain to the panelists the format of the upcoming deliberation. The deliberations should be informal and conversational, so it is not necessary for members of the panel to have a prepared speech. With the moderator bringing up questions, the panel and audience will have adequate time to structure their comments during the deliberation. Remember to remind panelists that this is a public deliberation, not a presentation. They should be sure to leave adequate time for audience members to participate in the discussion; their role is to set the stage for such a discussion.

**Formatting Your Event**

Various formats can be utilized during the public forum. For our Hurricane Katrina forum, we chose to have a moderator run the program and used the enclosed video as our “common experience.” If you chose this format, the discussion following the video will then be based on the various clips that discuss race, poverty, and a lack of civic discourse during the crisis. After watching the video, the audience should be given a moment to reflect before discussion begins. A few select “talking points” are included at the end of this toolkit to help the moderator focus the discussion.

Other examples of formats for public forums include:

- The first 30 minutes can be set aside for questions and comments by the panel.
- The panel can address each question in the talking points packet, with time left after each question for audience input.
- The audience can begin by asking panel questions and then have the opportunity to hear their responses one at a time.

Based on the prepared material for the deliberation, the moderator should try to adhere to the schedule as much as possible. Most events will be between 60 to 90 minutes long to give ample time to ensure all voices are given the opportunity to be heard. It is the moderator’s duty to be sure that a peaceful and civilized discussion takes place.
Day of the Event

Organizing and planning the event takes time, and with hard work and proper planning, the event can be a successful one. On the day of the event, be sure to:

• Arrive early to ensure that the room is set up properly.
• Double check that all equipment is working correctly.
• Briefly review the schedule of the event with the moderator.
• Have copies of the program available at the door as participants arrive.
• Dress appropriately and have confidence that you have worked hard to organize this event.
In this section you will find materials that will help you host the event: Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina. Specifically, you will find a suggested outline for the event, a walkthrough for the welcome to the event, a write-up of the video, a copy of the talking points packet, and a suggested list of ground rules for the open forum.

**Suggested Outline for the Event**

Below is a suggested outline for the event itself. Feel free to adjust the outline as you feel is necessary.

Outline of the open forum: Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina, estimated time 60-90 minutes

**I. Welcome ~ 5-10 minutes**
1. Why are we here: the importance of civic discourse
2. Who is sponsoring the event: your organization, ICDD and KSCC
3. Introduce moderator
4. Moderator: brief introduction to the principles of civic discourse

**II. Video ~ 20 minutes**
1. Show video (Make sure that the room is set up so that everyone can see.)
2. Moderator transitions from video into discussion
3. Review ground rules for open forum

**III. Group Discussion ~ 45-60 minutes**
1. Moderator leads group in discussion based on talking points packet
2. Moderator wraps up discussion and thanks everyone for attending
3. Volunteer passes out and collects participant surveys

VERY IMPORTANT: In order to comply with the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board, the organizers of this event CANNOT view participant surveys. They must be returned to ICDD/KSCC (in the included envelope), and a summary of the results will be returned to the planners.
Walkthrough of the Welcome to the Event

Below is an elaborated outline for the welcome.

The Welcome

1. Why are we here: the importance of civic discourse
   • Welcome everyone to the event and give them a brief explanation about the purpose of the event.
   • This would also be a good time to remind them to turn off their cell phones.
2. Who is sponsoring the event
   • Introduce your organization and other groups who are helping you to host this event.
   • Make sure to thank the key people who have helped plan the event.
   • Finally, while it is your choice, we would like you to thank ICDD and KSCC for providing you the materials for this event.
3. Introduction of Moderator
   • Provide a short introduction for your moderator.
   • Be sure to thank the moderator and then give a short biography to explain the moderator’s qualifications.
   • The key is to be brief, no more than a paragraph at most.
4. Moderator
   • Thank participants for attending.
   • Explain the ground rules for the forum.

About the Video

The video follows a simple outline.

1. Introduction
   • video clips showing the storm’s approach and landfall
   • a brief segment that summarizes what civic discourse is
2. Civic discourse used in discussing race and poverty
3. Civic discourse used in the government’s responses to Hurricane Katrina
4. The lack of civic discourse prior to the event

It is a good idea to have the moderator view the video prior to the event. This will give her or him a chance to think about and prepare possible discussion questions.
“Talking Points” Questions

Below are the talking points for the different areas of the video. You will not have time to cover all of these topics; simply select the questions that most appeal to you. The moderator can also adjust questions to best fit the flow of conversation. A separate copy of the talking points questions is located in the appendix, where it can easily be removed and given to the moderator.

Civic Discourse in Race and Poverty
- Did Kanye West help foster a good environment for discussing race?
- Why did Sean Hannity continuously bring up the “eccentricities” of Nashim Nzinga’s friend, Louis Farrakhan?
- Was Sean Hannity’s tactic of repeating questions and interrupting ultimately effective in persuading other people?
- Jesse Jackson makes the point that the media coverage of Hurricane Katrina illustrates that the media portrays blacks as “less intelligent, less patriotic, more violent, and in some sense less worthy.” Does this accurately portray Katrina coverage, and if so, how has it affected our national civic discourse?
- On the video, the NBC News report argues that “talking about race and poverty has gotten in the way of helping people in need?” Do you agree? Why or why not?

Civic Discourse in Response to the Crisis
- Do ideological opportunists sour America’s discourse in responding to a crisis? What can be done to address this issue?
- Is the criticism that President Bush received over the government’s reaction to Hurricane Katrina the work of opportunists using current affairs to muster political support or is it a genuine, heartfelt criticism?
- Did the “blame game” that occurred actually change the outcome of the crisis?
- Is there any good way to help prevent breakdown in communication that occurred within FEMA (ie Superdome, levee break, etc.) from occurring again?
- Were Sen. Ted Stevens’ remarks (such as threatening to leave the Senate if Alaska lost funding) counterproductive to helping foster positive discourse?

Civic Discourse’s Failure in Preventing this Crisis
- If there was ample information that New Orleans was in such danger, why wasn’t more concrete action taken?
- Whose responsibility was it to see that action was taken? Citizens? Politicians? Scientists? Journalists? Everyone?
- Once funding was cut, what are possible explanations as to why there wasn’t more of a fight to get it reinstated? If you were to try and get something like that reinstated, what strategy would you use?
Ground Rules for the Forum

Included below is a suggested list of ground rules for the open forum part of the event. The moderator should review these ground rules before the video, and then quickly remind the audience of them before transitioning into the open forum. It might also be a good idea to include these rules in your program. (See sample program in the appendix.)

Suggested Ground Rules:

• Provide a framework for dialogue
• Establish ground rules, and recognize cultural differences
• Provide all with a voice (create safe rhetorical space; manage inequalities of access and power)
• Focus on the issues. Invite/encourage a variety of perspectives, and try to be inclusive
• Value evidence of variety – testimony, statistical evidence, and narrative story telling
• Seek common ground and consensus whenever possible
• Avoid personal attacks
• Resist relying on ideological sloganeering
• Seek to understand, rather than to persuade
INCLUDED IN THE APPENDIX

- Form for Reimbursement of Expenditures
- Participant Survey
- Event Planner Survey
- Sample program and flyer to advertise the forum
- Event Planning Checklist
- Pre-addressed, stamped envelopes to return surveys

Photograph Credits:


Page 3: Fudan University (2005), ICDD (2005), ICDD (2005)


Page 8: ICDD (2005)


Page 10: ICDD (2005)


Page 12: Still from video, Still from video, forkedexpressions.com (2005), Still from video


Page 14: ICDD (2005)

Inside Back Cover: Cooperative Institute for Meteorological Satellite Studies (2005)

Back Cover: Unknown (2005), Still from video, Still from video
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Civic Discourse in a Crisis:
Lessons from Katrina Toolkit
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ICDD/KSCC Appendix for the
Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina
Toolkit

Appendix Contents:
- ICDD’s Hosting a Public Forum Checklist
- Updating Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina
- Sample Press Relations Materials, including sample Flyer and Brochure
- “Talking Points” Packet for the Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina Video
- Public Forum Participant survey
- Event Planner Feedback Survey
- ICDD Reimbursement Form
ICDD’s
Checklist for holding a Public Forum Event

Four Weeks before the Event…
Select a Topic……………………………………………………………………………………………………… □
Choose your “Common Experience” (video, panel, etc.)………………………………………… □
Select and Invite your moderator, or panel participants…………………………………………………… □
Choose a Date, Time, and Venue…………………………………………………………………………….. □

Three Weeks before the Event…
Start designing Publicity materials…………………………………………………………………………… □
Order Refreshments……………………………………………………………………………………………… □
Start advertising the event……………………………………………………………………………………… □
Obtain short biography of Moderator or Panel Participants……………………………………………… □

Two Weeks before the Event…
Flyers should be well distributed…………………………………………………………………………… □
Design the Program……………………………………………………………………………………………… □
Have moderator preview “Common Experience”…………………………………………………………… □
Work with moderator to develop some sample questions to help guide the open forum…………………………………………………………………………………………………………… □

One Week before the Event…
Finalize and copy Programs…………………………………………………………………………………… □
Confirm refreshments……………………………………………………………………………………………… □
Confirm Date, Time, and location with Moderator………………………………………………………… □
Write a press release for coverage in your local news outlets………………………………………… □

Day of the Event…
Arrive about an hour early……………………………………………………………………………………… □
Check sound, video, and other electronic equipment……………………………………………………… □
Make sure room is arranged as you want it………………………………………………………………… □
Make sure refreshments are in order………………………………………………………………………… □
Updating Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina

Since this toolkit was put together, there have been several noteworthy stories that have been published regarding America’s civic discourse about Hurricane Katrina. Included on this page are a few resources that one might find useful in incorporating these new stories. This page contains suggestions for incorporating new information, advice for explaining the new stories, and a short list of stories pertaining to civic discourse and Katrina.

Suggestions for Incorporating New Information: There are many effective ways to incorporate new information into a forum. The easiest way is to have the same person who did the “Welcoming” take about five minutes to quickly overview, explain, and provide the significant details of a handful of the most important new stories.

The best time to do this is immediately after the video. It is important that the moderator does not provide this background information because he or she should remain as neutral as possible.

Additional “Talking Points” questions have been provided to incorporate these new stories. They are included in your “Talking Points” Packet and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Advice for Explaining the New Stories: As mentioned above, it is a good idea to try and keep the explanations short and concise. Here are a few suggestions:

- Plan on only covering three or four of the most significant stories. A good time frame is about 90 seconds per story.
- In explaining a new story, try to use the following format: describe what happened and when it happened, who was involved, and what peoples’ reactions to this event were.
- To help explain these new stories, prepare an outline of each of the stories you plan to cover, and practice explaining them. Time yourself so you can get a good idea if you are providing too much or not enough information. And finally, practice in front of other people to see if they can follow and understand what you are trying to communicate, and to see if you need to add or remove some details.

Possible New Stories to Incorporate:

“High Tech, State of the Art Web Portal as 'First Stop on the Way Home' For Displaced Louisiana Residents and Businesses.” PR Newswire. 3/8/06
Ronald Brownstein and Peter Wallsten “Critics See a White House Failure to Communicate.” Los Angeles Times. 2/16/06
Eric Deggans. “Katrina has Failed to Kindle Dialogue on Race and Class.” St. Petersburg Times. 3/1/06
Open Forum on Public Issues

“Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina”

December 1, 2005
4:00 P.M.
UMB Theater
Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art

Sponsored by:

Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy
Kansas Campus Compact
What is ICDD?
Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, or ICDD, is a non-partisan institute dedicated to improving civic discourse on the local, state, national, and international levels. ICDD does this by focusing on improving education, outreach, and research in the field of civic discourse.

What is KSCC?
Kansas Campus Compact, or KSCC, is a coalition of college and university presidents established to foster and support campus engagement in the community. KSCC encourages civic discourse and debate and seeks to assist in the creation of partnerships between higher education institutions and communities.

ICDD's Principles of Civic Discourse:
- Provide a framework for dialogue: establish ground rules and a framework that recognizes cultural differences
- Provide everyone at the meeting the opportunity to speak: manage inequalities of access and power
- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Avoid personal attacks
- Invite and encourage a variety of perspectives
- Recognize and value different forms of evidence ranging from testimony to statistical evidence to story telling
- Seek common ground and consensus whenever possible
- Resist relying on sound bites and buzz words heard from political pundits or politicians
- Make your goal to understand rather than persuade

Program

Welcoming
- Introduction of the Moderator, Dr. David Procter

Presentation of the Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons From Katrina video
- Video Outline
  - Introduction
  - Background Knowledge
  - Main Points

Open Forum to Follow

Points to Remember during the forum:
- Seek to understand rather than persuade
- Resist communicating rigid ideologies
- Avoid personal attacks on people inside or outside of the discussion
- Focus on what matters
- We expect it to be messy at times

Information on the moderator:
Dr. David E. Procter is the Head of the Speech Communication, Theatre and Dance Department at Kansas State University, as well as the Director of the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy.
Open Forum on Public Issues

Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina

Sponsored by:

Thursday, December 1, 2005
4:00 P.M.
UMB Theatre
Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art
ICDD’s and KSCC’s
“Talking Points” for the
Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina Video

As mentioned in the toolkit, the following questions are possible prompts for the moderator or panel to consider for the public forum following the showing of the video. Feel free to use any of these, or simply use the ones that are most appropriate.

Civic Discourse in Race and Poverty
- Did Kanye West help foster a good environment for discussing race?

- Why did Sean Hannity continuously bring up the “eccentricities” of Nashim Nzinga’s friend, Louis Farakhan?

- Was Sean Hannity’s tactic of repeating questions and interrupting ultimately effective in persuading other people?

- Jesse Jackson makes the point that the media coverage of Hurricane Katrina illustrates that the media portrays blacks as “less intelligent, less patriotic, more violent, and in some sense less worthy.” Does this accurately portray Katrina coverage, and if so, how has it affected our national civic discourse?

- On the video, the NBC News report argues that “talking about race and poverty has gotten in the way of helping people in need?” Do you agree? Why or why not?

- * Has Hurricane Katrina failed to spark wider, “soul-searching” national discussions on poverty, class, or race? If not, should it have?

- * If Hurricane Katrina should have sparked wider discussion, and did not, how can we change this?
Civic Discourse in Response to the Crisis

- Do ideological opportunists sour America’s discourse in responding to a crisis? What can be done to address this issue?

- Is the criticism that President Bush received over the government’s reaction to Hurricane Katrina the work of opportunists using current affairs to muster political support or is it a genuine, heartfelt criticism?

- Did the “blame game” that occurred actually change the outcome of the crisis?

- Is there any good way to help prevent breakdown in communication that occurred within FEMA (ie Superdome, levee break, etc.) from occurring again?

- Were Sen. Ted Stevens’ remarks (such as threatening to leave the Senate if Alaska lost funding) counterproductive to helping foster positive discourse?

- * In what ways can constituents improve their communication with elected officials (local, regional, and federal)?

- * Were the problems that President Bush’s administration faced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina evidence of larger problems this administration has had with communicating with their constituents? If so, in what ways can future administrations improve communication?
Civic Discourse’s Failure in Preventing this Crisis

- If there was ample information that New Orleans was in such danger, why wasn’t more concrete action taken?

- Whose responsibility was it to see that action was taken? Citizens? Politicians? Scientists? Journalists? Everyone?

- Once funding was cut, what are possible explanations as to why there wasn’t more of a fight to get it reinstated? If you were to try and get something like that reinstated, what strategy would you use?

- Was Newt Gingrich right in assessing blame to the fact that our government failed to communicate within itself sufficiently?

- * It was reported that prior to Hurricane Katrina, experts’ advice that the levees were insufficient had been ignored. Is New Orleans only setting itself up for the same problem again because of questionable construction practices? If so, does civic discourse play a role in mediating or fixing this problem?

- * In a situation where experts say the levees are not strong enough, and the corps of engineers claims they are sufficient, what should citizens do to help protect their community?
Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina
Participant Feedback Survey

The following survey is your evaluation of this event. Your individual responses will be kept completely confidential and only a summary of the responses from the participants will be provided to the event organizers. Your responses are important as they will be used to improve future forum events and refine a Toolkit which will be made available to other campus groups planning to host a civic discourse event. By completing this survey, you are acknowledging your informed consent to participate in this evaluation. If you feel any question unduly invades your privacy, please feel free to omit it.

Below are a series of statements. Please indicate your level of agreement by circling one number for each statement. Key for the 4-point numeric scale: 1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The civic discourse event, Lessons from Katrina, increased my knowledge about this crisis.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The moderated discussion increased my understanding of good civic discourse.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I was given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Many different perspectives were presented during the discussion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I believe the moderator valued the comments of all participants.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Participants were treated with respect.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The moderator encouraged diverse viewpoints in the discussion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The discussion focused on the issues rather than personalities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I felt comfortable making comments during the discussion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>As a result of this experience, I would be willing to participate in a similar event.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The video provided a good focus for the moderated discussion that followed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>As a result of the forum, I have a deeper understanding of the importance of civic discourse in resolving a crisis.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

13. Please take a few minutes to reflect on other challenging issues of our time—issues you hear and read about in the news. Which issues would you like to have addressed in a future forum?

14. What three things would you tell a friend about participating in this event? Please list them below. (Feel free to use the back of the paper if needed.)

1. 

2. 

3. 

Thank you for taking time to provide us with feedback.

Please return all evaluation forms to:
Erika Imbody, ICDD Project Coordinator, 129 Nichols Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506
Civic Discourse in a Crisis: Lessons from Katrina
Event Planner Feedback Survey

The following survey is your evaluation of the Lessons from Katrina Toolkit and the event planning process. Your individual survey responses will be kept completely confidential; your responses, along with those of others, will be aggregated and reported in summary only. Your responses are important to us. They will be used to improve future forum events and to refine the Toolkit which will be made available to other campus groups planning to host a public forum. By completing this survey, you are acknowledging your informed consent to participate in this evaluation. If you feel any question unduly invades your privacy, please feel free to omit it.

1. Have you ever planned or participated as part of a planning team for a public forum? (Please circle the letter of the response that is most accurate.)
   a) Yes  b) No

If the response is NO, please skip to Question 5.

2. If YES, how many times have you planned or participated as part of a planning team for a public forum? (Please circle the letter of the response that is most accurate).
   a) I have planned/participated in planning at least one other public forum in the past.
   b) I have planned/participated in planning 2-5 public forums in the past.
   c) I have planned/participated in planning 6 or more public forums in the past.

3. If YES, did you use a public forum planning Toolkit? (Please circle the letter of the response that is most accurate).
   a) Yes  b) No  c) Don’t know

4. If YES, please tell us what Toolkit you used.

Below are some statements related to the Toolkit. (Please indicate your level of agreement by circling one number for each statement.)

Key for the 4-point numeric scale: 1 = strongly agree (SA); 4 = strongly disagree (SD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In General…</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. the Toolkit was helpful.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. the Toolkit gave me confidence to plan a public deliberation forum event.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. the Toolkit is useful for bringing difficult issues into civic discussion.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Video…</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>8. was helpful for starting discussion.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. is a good tool for sparking comments from the participants.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. illustrated economic, social, and racial divides in American society.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. showed how blame games are counterproductive to problem solving.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. held the attention of the participants.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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--Please turn the page over for additional questions--
13. explained what civic discourse is.
14. explained why civic discourse is important.
15. brought to the forefront the role of the media in our national civic discourse.
16. explained why poor quality civic discourse impacts our Democracy.
17. compelled me to hold an event to increase civic discourse.

18. explained the purpose for a public forum or deliberation.
19. helped me understand my duties as an public forum event planner.
20. needed more specific “how to’s” to plan a public forum.
21. clearly explained the role of the moderator.
22. timeline was appropriate for planning the public forum.
23. clearly explained how a panel could be used with a public forum.

24. provided an outline with adequate detail for planning a civic discourse event.
25. clearly explained the purpose of the Welcome.
26. provided “talking points” that were useful for framing the discussion.
27. provided “ground rules” that helped ensure civility of the discussion.
28. provided a helpful checklist.

29. provided all the forms needed for implementing a forum event.
30. explained how to request reimbursements for expenditures.

31. What was the most useful part of the Toolkit for helping you plan a public forum event?

32. What two (2) things could be done to make the Toolkit easier or better for your use?
   1.
   2.

33. What two (2) topics would you like to see addressed in future ICDD/KSCC Toolkits?
   1.
   2.

34. As a result of using this Toolkit, I would be willing to plan a similar civic deliberation event.
   (Please circle the letter of the response that is most accurate.)
   a) Yes  b) No  c) Maybe

   Thank you for taking time to provide us with feedback.

Please return all evaluation forms to:
Erika Imbody, ICDD Project Coordinator, 129 Nichols Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506
REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy                         129 Nichols Hall
Kansas State University                                             Manhattan, KS 66506
Public Forum Expense Report                                          Telephone: 785-532-6858
                              Fax: 785-532-3714

EXPENDITURES

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<tr>
<th>DATE OF EXPENSE</th>
<th>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EXPENSE</th>
<th>COST</th>
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DATE OF TRAVEL  | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TRAVEL/DESTINATION | MILES | COST

TOTAL FOR THIS SHEET

RECIPIENT __________________________   SIGNATURE __________________________