Deliberative Forums in Academic Libraries: An Innovative Approach to Reaching Your Audience

Observations of Past Forums & Evolving Models for Participatory Engagement

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Deliberative Discussions

• Forum on Lobbying
  – Small group participating
  – Diverse participants: community members, students, faculty
  – Some participants with experience in the field

• Forum on Health Care
  – Larger group
  – Diversity continued: community members, health care professionals, faculty, students
  – Majority opinion but divergent views represented
Successes

• New audiences in the library
• Paving the way for future engagement
• Leading in national forum discussions
Challenges

• Making the library connection clear and meaningful
• Taking the lead without dominating
• Building sustainable faculty, student, and community partnerships
• Generating use and interaction out of discussion
Reciprocal Engagement

- What do we have to offer the community?
- What can the community bring to us?
- Using outreach and engagement for strategic building of collections.
- Understanding curriculum and scholarship through discussion
- Building connections to constituencies
Innovating Outreach

• Outreach as an ongoing conversation
• Delivering ideas, resources, and possibilities
• Flexibility in our understanding of outreach
• Looking beyond traditional constituents
• Leaving perception behind
• Knowing when to step aside and let others speak for you