

From Joseph Murray and Dr. Jess Tuck

Chapter 6, Voices from the Field: Applying Appreciative Advising

Consistent with the model, the same 6 stages can be used as a framework to identify and train other offices in the use of Appreciative Advising (AA). Depending on the target audience, the language may be broadened to Appreciative Education or Appreciative Mindset to better connect with faculty and other academic and non-academic units. All three are used below depending on the target audience.

DISARM

What offices/individuals do you already have a strong relationship to build on? How can you build new relationships with offices/individuals? Are there other individuals with connections who can advocate on your behalf? What goals, objectives or other performance outcomes do you have in common with those offices? Are there resources you can offer? Can you connect on a personal level as well as professional? For example, get out of the office for some of these conversations, treat to lunch, take a walk, go to their space, role model your efforts to apply the appreciative mindset, and take advantage of committee memberships, especially when you can influence the agenda.

DISCOVER

How can the other office/departments use the model? Anticipate the use of the AA Model may be different for each office/department. What are the goals for the unit and their students or staff? Are they open to exploring the possibilities and see the value in the model? Can they recognize “what is in it for them”? If not, help them identify those opportunities. Focus on what’s in their best interest to be successful and work to help them achieve it. In most cases, their success will be your success. Do they have the authority and leadership necessary to implement the changes? If not, who does? How far “up the chain of command” can you go?

DREAM

What could the outcomes achieve? What does “success” look like for the office and their students? Look for opportunities to align the appreciative model with institutional goals, assessment requirements, mission statements, Presidential or Dean Initiatives, and institutional/office/departmental strategic plans. It is amazing what you can find out about your own institution by looking at the web pages. Could appreciative education be used to leverage funding opportunities through grants, state metrics and development efforts? Could individual or office AA certification be used in marketing services through admissions recruitment, community engagement and staff hiring.

DESIGN

What kind of training tools would work the best given the audience; Advising syllabi, retreats, workshops, written, online, or role modeling? Can it be recorded and used multiple times? How much time is available? When during the year makes the most sense? Who would facilitate the training? Could it be done in-house or do you need to bring in an “expert” to achieve buy in? What type of location and room layout would work the best? How would it be marketed? Are you competing with

other events on campus? Who should attend? Voluntary or mandatory? Are there any political landmines that need to be taken into account? What kind of resources are available for the training? Where can additional resources be leveraged? Who sends out the invitations? Electronic or written? With or without RSVP? Is it connected or imbedded with another meeting, event or training? What kind of buy in and attendance from the upper administration is possible? Can the training be connected to promotions, raises, recognition or evaluations?

DELIVER

The training should be engaging using multiple delivery methods with a dynamic speaker. Include food or snacks whenever possible. Partner with other offices when appropriate to co-present and/or sponsor the event. Include testimonials from students and staff. Pick a location that is politically neutral, gets attendees away from their office and routine, provides easy access, comfortable and free from distractions.

DON'T SETTLE

Did the training accomplish the desired outcomes? How do you know? What kind of assessment do you need? Who wants to know and why? What kind of follow up is needed to reinforce the learning outcomes? How soon and how often? Celebrate success! Make sure key stakeholders are kept updated on the effort. Be prepared to share recognition to build trust and support. Send out acknowledgements as quickly as possible.

The entire process of building influence, delivering the training and providing follow up should be viewed as a marathon, not a sprint. The outcome becomes a campus wide effort to impact and eventually change the culture on campus. That takes time, patience and persistence. Stay the course, change what you can and don't worry about what you can't. Have fun along the way! To quote Bahram Akradi, "Think big...start small... move fast."