Establishing Shared Understandings with Your Partner

This **Conversation Guide** and **Collaboration Agreement** are intended as a resource to support your partnership building. We strongly recommend you take the time to lay the groundwork of shared understandings through this conversation guide. Please read the whole document in advance of meeting with your collaborator/s.

Want help? Contact us at SLS—Ruthie Yow (ruth.yow@gatech.edu)

SLS Principles for Project-based Partnerships
SLS affiliated projects strive to:
1. Advance broader social change efforts addressing systemic causes.
2. Incorporate technological expertise as one of many types of expertise.
3. Highlight community expertise and assets.
4. Prioritize equity.
5. Forward community visions and solutions.
6. Enhance human capital and self-sufficiency.

SECTION 1: Conversation Guide

This is a relationship building process, not just paperwork—so begin with a conversation that allows you all to talk through hopes, expectations, and goals.

- Make time! At least one hour—and try to go _to_ your partner rather than vice versa.
- Get to know each other's goals and values by sharing experiences and relevant documents (collateral, mission statements, syllabi, etc.) with each other.
- Use the questions provided as a jumping off point to stimulate a conversation that covers all the bases in terms of communication, deliverables, and timeline, but also allows all participants to offer insight into past partnerships and perspectives on reciprocity and mutual benefit.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

OPENING: *Let's talk about why we are here and what we hope to accomplish together.**

OBSERVE	Review the project description and goals and any other materials you have shared or brought with you. Then go around the table and have each person state one thing they are interested in or excited about re: this project. *Where do we have common interests and overlap? What are some areas of different interests and goals? (no need to solve them – just get them on the table as observation)* Notes:
REFLECT	Have 2-3 people share a bit about a past collaborative experience (of any kind). *What worked well in past collaborations? What didn't? What principles have been most central to fruitful work in past collaborations? How might we reproduce the good aspects of those relationships?* Notes:
INTERPRET	Listening to each others' observations and reflections, consider what the goals of and expectations for the collaboration should be. *Why are we doing this project/working together? Specifically: What do the students need/hope to achieve? What does the partner need/hope to achieve? What specifically constitutes our shared vision for working together? What else, beyond a concrete deliverable, do we expect from this collaboration?* Notes:
DECIDE	As a group, you will now complete the Collaboration Agreement below. *What are 2-3 key points from our conversation(s) so far that we want to make sure to address in that agreement? What are other specific ways for us to engage with the community represented in this project?* Notes:

CLOSING: *Let's take a look at the **Agreement below and, using** our conversation and notes, complete it to suit our collaboration. This will help us establish parameters and goals—both in terms of logistics and values—that are feasible, clear, and mutually acceptable.*

*This conversation guide is adapted from The Institute of Cultural Affairs "Guided Conversations," available online via SLS here.

SECTION 2: Collaboration Agreement - An Agreement on How to Work Together

This agreement reflects our previous conversation/s and is intended to facilitate a smooth and fruitful path forward; it is in no way legally binding. It is however, a demonstration that we have listened to each other and laid a foundation for reciprocity, joint decision-making, and continuous communication.

Project Title, Course, Semester:

Project Description: **Briefly describe here, in writing, the project you are working on – and ensure that everyone is comfortable with the final description. Make sure to include the most important project goal and the primary deliverable. Revise it until everyone is comfortable with it.**

Communication: **Who are the primary points of contact? Include name and information to get in touch (cell phone number, email, etc.).**

Georgia Tech Student Team:

Primary:

Add'l Team Members:

Partner:

Primary:

Add'l Team Members:

Discuss and note down basic communication expectations. How quickly should we all be expected to respond? How early/late is it okay to call? And anything else you want to go over.

What will we do if we experience conflict? E.g., if we are not getting responses or if we are not feeling comfortable with how the project is proceeding? Discuss and note down mutually suitable parameters re: how we will address these types of conflicts if they arise.

Note that if major conflicts arise, students, faculty, and partners should all feel free to contact SLS for help with mediation (sooner rather than later, please).

Intellectual Property/Product Ownership:
What is our consensus on intellectual property (if relevant)? Place an X:

___ Students will cede IP to the partner.

___Students will retain the IP.

___ We have a separate IP agreement or understanding already in place that governs our course's or department's projects (example: CS Junior Capstone).

*Work Plan/Timeline***:** Our work together begins on_____and extends

through_____at which point the deliverable/project will be complete. We will have

_____check-in meetings during the_____-long duration.

Upcoming Meetings:

DATE	LOCATION	PREP REQ OF STUDENTS	PREP REQ OF PARTNER

Will you check in with each other in between meetings? If so – when and how? Discuss and note here:

Staying Safe: If you will be making a site visit of any kind, review and complete the SLS Contact Information & Off-campus Safety Tips document.

Sign and Date
Everyone involved should sign and date here. Then make sure that everyone receives an electronic copy of this full document.