

Immigration and Citizenship

What Needs To Be Included in a Comprehensive Immigration Reform and What Actions We Can Take: Lessons Learned from the Past and New Ideas for Today

UTSA Downtown Campus,
Durango Building, Southwest Room (DB 1.124)
Wednesday, June 24, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) President Dr. Ricardo Romo, Dr. Harriett Romo, and the UTSA Mexico Center invite you to join other community leaders and immigration advocates for a day-long strategy session on comprehensive immigration reform Wednesday, June 24, 2009.

As the Obama Administration prepares to take up comprehensive immigration reform, the UTSA Mexico Center is bringing together community and immigration leaders to discuss what needs to be included in the effort and what actions this group can take to effectively move forward an immigration agenda.

In the recent past, individuals working on immigration issues have said:

- We need more time to strategize. . .
- We need new ideas. . .
- We need leaders not working on immigration full-time, but committed to finding solutions joining our deliberations. . .

With this in mind, the UTSA Mexico Center is convening a day-long Open Space Process.

The theme for our time together will be **Immigration and Citizenship: What Needs To Be Included in a Comprehensive Immigration Reform and What Actions We Can Take: Lessons Learned from the Past and New Ideas for Today**, a focus broad enough to capture any immigration related issue you want to pursue.

The goals for the day are four-fold. You will:

- Engage in stimulating conversations and/or presentations with other leaders about what needs to be included in comprehensive immigration reform.
- Strategize action steps to put these ideas into practice.
- Capture the essence of these small group sessions – in writing – for all to share.
- Network and connect with individuals that are committed to carrying out these immigration strategies.

What is Open Space?

If you are tired of immigration conferences, workshops, or committees where the speakers don't cover the issues you want to explore or don't give you enough time to discuss the topics with your colleagues, the Open Space Process is for you.

Open Space is a process designed to take care of the needs of every participant and to build on the many assets and talents that each of you bring into the room. The typical conference questions—who are the speakers? What is the agenda? How long do we have for each topic? Which workshops are they offering?—are irrelevant.

How does it Work?

- You identify the specific topics, issues and questions you want to explore and/or share with your colleagues that fit within the overall immigration theme.
- Together, you create the agenda and place it on a community bulletin board for all to see.
- You take the lead to

- Present what you have learned and want to share with others,
- Open a conversation on a burning question or topic you want to explore with other participants,
- Attend only those sessions that truly engage you, for which you feel some passion, and
- Capture the key themes and action steps from your small group sessions and get them typed up, resulting in a *Book of Proceedings* for all to share.

There will be different levels of knowledge and experience with immigration issues represented by each person present—some will be people that work exclusively on immigration; others will be smart, creative individuals interested in immigration who bring a different perspective.

Open Space is grounded on the principle that there are no hierarchies—all participants have equal status. Everyone is a learner and real world expert who is invited to share what he/she knows or to seek what he/she does not. And, everyone has the responsibility to do what it takes to make the most of the opportunity.

To make the Open Space Process work, we need you to bring three things:

1. **Share/Teach**—What topics would you be willing to lead where you share your experiences or help others who have a similar concern? What **lessons learned**, both successes and failures, can you share from past immigration efforts? What **new ideas** do you want to test with your colleagues?
2. **Learn/Listen**—What topics do you want to **learn** more about from other people interested in comprehensive immigration reform, which you would be willing to convene?
3. **Materials/Handouts**—Please bring any materials or handouts you wish to share with people related to the topics you will lead or co-lead. We will let you know how many people RSVP for the gathering ahead of time so you can prepare materials/handouts.

The Mechanics

At the beginning of the day, each participant who is willing to lead or convene a session will make a short public announcement about the topic; this will lead to the creation of the agenda. Participants will then sign up and join the conversations they are interested in or can offer other possible issues to the group as a whole. And then the fun begins. . .

Because the Open Space relies on the full participation of all members, **we are asking you to join us for the entire time**. We do not want people jumping in and out of the process throughout the day.

This is your chance to get exactly what you need from a talented group of individuals that will be bringing decades of cumulative experiences into the room.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact Juan Sepúlveda at 210.886.0200 work, 210.865.5870 cell, or by e-mail at juansepulveda@post.harvard.edu or Harriett Romo at 210.458.2849 office, or by e-mail at harriett.romo@utsa.edu.

To RSVP for the gathering, please respond to Olivia Lopez, UTSA Mexico Center Program Coordinator at 210.458.2923 work or by e-mail at Olivia.Lopez@utsa.edu.

Please join your colleagues for an unforgettable, exhilarating, and energizing experience created, directed, and led by all of you, together. We look forward to joining you on this journey.

Dr. Ricardo Romo
UTSA President

Dr. Harriett Romo
UTSA Mexico Center