



Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT) Exercises to Stimulate Constructive Discussion

We have found that three exercises can be helpful in beginning an environmental change process inside a unit, one that unit members can “own” and participate in effectively. This is the first of the three.

CCAU

Confronting Challenges in
Academic Units

Member edition

Functional/Dysfunctional Unit Characteristics

This is a simple, effective way to surface issues in a relatively non-threatening way.

- (1) Distribute blank index cards to all present.
- (2) Participants should not write their names on the cards.
- (3) Ask each to write, on one side of the card, three to five characteristics of a highly functioning unit that he or she would be proud to be a member of, and on the other side, three to five characteristics of a dysfunctional unit.
- (4) The question will likely come up whether this is about “our” unit. Respond that this is a thought exercise, and participants should write about “a” or “any” academic unit.
- (5) Once everyone has filled out the cards, collect and mix the cards ostentatiously.
- (6) Enlist at least two volunteer scribes (for a large group, get four, each with an easel and flip chart or space on a white board), and start calling out one written item at a time from different cards, making sure to mix them up as you go, so you are working from different cards, and different sides each time.
- (7) As you read each statement, ask the group which list it goes on: functional or dysfunctional?
- (8) If an item is a repeat of an already-noted topic, put a check mark by the already-recorded so it is clear it has come up before.
- (9) At the end, ask the group to contemplate the two lists. Ask:
 - (a) “Which unit would you rather belong to?”
 - (b) “Which one is this unit more like?” (Elicit both positive and negative features present.)

Facilitate a discussion on these topics. At some point, move to the next activity.

The AUDiT was developed by C. K. Gunsalus, and enhanced through the comments and contributions of many others over time. It is distributed under license to the University of Illinois through the Confronting Challenges for Academic Units Consortium. The AUDiT manual was created by NCPRE for development and use by the Confronting Challenges for Academic Units Consortium.

