

Structuring a Conversation

Template for the Dakota Project

The Dakota Project provides specific focus on emerging developments in North Dakota, but does so with consideration of the big picture. On any particular development, the event precipitating conversation is a keynote lecture by a distinguished, visionary authority. The intent of the keynote is to bring us new information or new perspectives on the development in question. It is important to frame the keynote--first with preliminary conversation and careful preparations, and subsequently with reflective follow-up and dissemination.

Scholars of the Humanities do this work of framing. Consulting with the people of North Dakota, and using their skills as Humanities scholars to form up the questions and concerns percolating up from the people, the scholars build the platform from which the keynoter on a given subject speaks. After that the scholars lead the people of North Dakota in reflection and conversation about the implications and possibilities raised. Why use Humanities scholars in this role? Because this is the sort of thing they do best. They listen, hear, read, form questions, assess arguments, and seek meaning in texts and issues.

This document, then, sketches a structure for the conversation on any particular development taken as a focus for the Dakota Project. It is a template.

Preliminary	Focus	Identification of topic
		Identification of keynoter
	Conversation	Humanities scholars gather material and listen to the people
	Framing	Humanities scholars form up questions and concerns for consideration of keynoter
	Publicity	Full-court press, all media, as well as informal dissemination
Keynote	Lecture	Public lecture in an appropriate site, with public dialog
	Seminar	With team of humanities scholars and invited others
	Media Appearances	Prairie Public, as well as commercial media

Follow-Up	Broadcast & Webcast	Lecture and dialog on Prairie Public, also mounted on PP website
	Response Pieces	By team of humanities scholars and others, published in state humanities magazine and uploaded to YouTube
	Public Discussion	Via Facebook page
Consolidation	Book Publication	Incorporating introduction to the project; keynotes; framing pieces by Humanities scholars; epilogue.

Four Developments to Be Treated

1. Agriculture
2. Energy
3. Knowledge Industry
4. Positive Brand