

## Employing the Appreciative Education Framework to Innovatively Deliver the Virtual Appreciative Advising Institute

Alisha Nelson<sup>1</sup>, Savannah Wilkerson<sup>2</sup>, Bryan Hursh<sup>3</sup>, Lilian Barria<sup>3</sup>, Kelly Cosgrove<sup>4</sup>, Janelle Freire<sup>3</sup>, Rebecca Natalus<sup>3</sup>, Angel Nevin<sup>3</sup>, Amanda E. Propst Cuevas<sup>3</sup>, Jennifer L. Bloom<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic drastically altered the way organizations conducted operations; the Office of Appreciative Advising (OAE) at Florida Atlantic University was no exception. This essay highlights the methods employed and solutions co-created by the OAE leadership and intern team to surmount the obstacles COVID-19 presented as we planned and executed the 2020 Appreciative Advising Institutes (AAIs). Capitalizing on key tenets of both the Appreciative Advising framework and the Appreciative Mindset, we provide a step-by-step recap of crucial decisions made during the shift from the planned in-person Institutes to fully virtual Institutes for the first time. The purpose of this paper is to provide an example of how the Appreciative Advising framework can help guide teams as they innovatively navigate unexpected challenges.

### Keywords

Appreciative Advising, Appreciative Mindset, strengths-based approach, Appreciative Administration

Walking into the Office of Appreciative Education (OAE) (<http://www.fau.edu/oae>) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) mid-July 2020 for the first time since mid-March felt surreal. The sign on the door read, “Welcome Spring 2020 Intern Team! Are You Ready to Make Your Mark?” When the sign was hung in January 2020, we neither knew the mark we would be invited to make in 2020 nor the mark that 2020 would make on us. On display around the OAE were to do lists on white boards for planning the June 2020 Appreciative Advising Institute (AAI) to be held at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington as well as our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual AAI Celebration in July at FAU in Boca Raton, Florida. The two potted arrangements of succulents that somehow managed to survive in the OAE without any water since March were a reminder of the inner strength, resourcefulness, and resilience that resided within each of our team members, and that we would need to draw upon as we dealt with the uncertainty spawned by the pandemic.

While the intern team was away for Spring Break 2020, FAU’s employees and students made the transition to working and learning remotely for at least the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Our AAI planning team was faced with a critical decision concerning whether we should keep planning the in-person events, cancel them completely, or shift them to a virtual format. For two weeks, we pondered our options, inconclusively scanning the environment for clues as to which option

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<sup>1</sup> Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, United States

<sup>2</sup> Florida Southern College, FL, United States

<sup>3</sup> Florida Atlantic University, FL, United States

<sup>4</sup> Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, FL, United States

**Corresponding Author:** Alisha Nelson, Email: [an936@nova.edu](mailto:an936@nova.edu)

was the right one. By the end of March, we decided to scrap our plans for the in-person institutes and to instead offer our two AAI events virtually.

Each summer since 2011, the AAI has welcomed upward of 200 educational professionals from all over the world to participate in four days of hands-on and engaged learning about the Appreciative Advising theory-to-practice framework. A hallmark of the AAI has always been the community that is created among attendees. Our top priority became creating the same sense of belonging and community in virtual environment as we had created in our in-person institutes. To address this challenge and to make the necessary changes to the AAI format and curriculum, we came together as a planning team to unleash our collective creativity within a virtual working environment. However, the first few weeks of the pandemic were challenging because we were all adjusting both to working remotely and to the pandemic-induced isolation we were experiencing. To propel our team forward, we embraced five key mantras:

- (a) “We can do hard things.” – Glennon Doyle,
- (b) “Everything is Figureoutable.” – Marie Forleo,
- (c) “Do the best you can until you know better, and when you know better, do better.”  
–Maya Angelou,
- (d) “If you were great right now, what would great look like?” –Cy Wakeman, and
- (e) “People before process.” – Mykel Beorchia, our colleague who directs Academic Advising at Utah State University.

To live out the “People before process” mantra, our team meetings started with check-ins that centered on sharing how we were feeling and how we were practicing self-care. We actively created a space for our team members both to process emotions *and* to move forward with designing and delivering a new virtual experience that would be transformative for our participants. We challenged and supported one another by dispensing ample doses of grace both to ourselves and one another, and importantly, we innovatively applied the Appreciative Education Framework (see Appendix; Bloom et al., 2008; Bloom et al., 2013) to deliver the Virtual AAIs. The purpose of this article is to document how we lived out the six phases of the Appreciative Education framework to take care of each other as a team and to transform the AAI from an in-person to a virtual format during the middle of a pandemic. Our hope is that our story will serve as a model for other teams seeking to apply the Appreciative Education approach to leading, innovating, charting uncharted territory, and trailblazing.

## The Appreciative Mindset

We began our journey by employing an Appreciative Mindset. Although navigating the unknown that accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic could have been paralyzing, the OAE team decided early on to adapt and energetically move toward the unknown together. With the unified leadership of Drs. Jenny Bloom, our founder, and Amanda Propst Cuevas, OAE director, interns were provided both space and support to reframe the pandemic from a problem into an opportunity. The Appreciative Mindset provided the OAE with the foundation to successfully navigate through the appropriately named “Oh Shift” moments during the early days of quarantine.

The Appreciative Mindset is comprised of six components (Bloom et al., 2008). The first component involves *fundamentally caring and believing in the potential of each person*. Second, the Appreciative Mindset involves *possessing an attitude of gratefulness*, even in moments of uncertainty. Third, inherent within the Appreciative Mindset is a commitment to

*continually honing one's craft* through practice and dedication, while also providing one another grace during moments of growth. *Remembering and owning the power* each individual possesses is essential and ensuring that power is used toward the wellbeing of all marks the fourth component of an Appreciative Mindset. Fifth, an Appreciative Mindset involves committing to *be insatiably curious about each other's stories* instead of being judgmental. Finally, those employing the Appreciative Mindset are committed to *becoming culturally aware and responsive*. As an unexpectedly fully virtual team, we committed to practicing living out the components of the Appreciative Mindset.

Historically, the hallmark of the OAE team has been the collaborative nature of our workspace. Before the pandemic, it was not uncommon to find interns rolling their chairs from desk to desk to work with one another, nor was it strange to find the team sharing laughter as well as deep conversations throughout the course of the day in the physical OAE workspace. Our mutual respect combined with a fun work environment fostered close relationships. Our unexpected shift to a virtual space removed many of these opportunities to easily collaborate and engage with each other. The transition to working remotely required a time of mourning and coping with the loss of these small

, yet meaningful in-person interactions. Although we allowed ourselves the opportunity to feel this loss, the team quickly realized the necessity of creating alternative ways to connect with each other.

As the OAE team transitioned to working remotely, we engaged in a near-constant state of communication—not simply out of necessity, but also as a means of creating community. Group texts and Zoom calls allowed the intern team to stay current on the status of assigned projects, yet also allowed an avenue to send memes, jokes, vent, and be vulnerable. The interns also scheduled time for virtual social hours to support each other and to ensure the teams' cohesion.

There was no *how-to* manual for operating a team during a pandemic and we learned from trial and error. An expectation of grace became apparent as an overarching commitment to excellence, but not perfection, guided each decision. This commitment to being “perfectly imperfect” as well as adopting a *can-do* attitude, set by Jenny and Amanda, reverberated throughout the intern team. By maintaining a positive, yet realistic attitude, the OAE leadership team provided motivation to continue forward, despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles awaiting ahead.

Together, the team worked to tackle the long list of to-do items. To collaboratively complete projects, Amanda met individually with each intern to assist in identifying their unique set of skills, goals, and learning objectives. Then, with a shared understanding of each person's interests, each team member navigated their experiential learning by signing up for tasks and co-creating an action plan with Amanda. This strengths-based approach benefitted both the interns individually and the OAE team collectively.

Adopting an Appreciative Mindset was crucial to the OAE being able to positively pivot to a virtual workspace to successfully plan and execute two Virtual AAI's. This adoption of the Appreciative Mindset ultimately allowed for the OAE team to thrive, not just survive, during the pandemic.

## **Disarm**

After establishing our new virtual work culture, we began to innovatively apply the Appreciative Education Framework (Bloom et al., 2008; Bloom et al., 2013) by practicing the first phase. Prior to the pandemic, visitors to the physical OAE were greeted with a smile, a

warm welcome, and a cup of coffee. We committed to making the virtual environment equally hospitable. We learned how to virtually disarm together during weekly check-in meetings with the OAE team. Jenny and Amanda would demonstrate by warmly welcoming each person into the Zoom room with a personal “hello” and a question to invite this newest guest into the conversation. Little did the intern team know, they were observing how to disarm participants as they logged into the AAI’s.

A gift the pandemic provided our team was the opportunity to see each other in our respective home environments. We learned that one’s background can be a creative way to disarm others during a conversation, meeting, or advising appointment. With everyone working from home, we practiced giving and receiving grace as we laughed through “on mute” reminders, frozen screens, and ballistic dogs barking at an approaching mail carrier. These experiences successfully humanized each other and provided us greater context into the lives of our team.

We cautioned each other that there would be challenges ahead for us as we navigated this “new normal.” We intentionally practiced “people before process” by beginning each meeting with an authentic check-in. The team disclosed their difficulties, hardships, victories, and joys. By hearing each person’s highs and lows, other team members were able to decipher how to best support each other and continue to complete process-related tasks. This focus on self-care and well-being allowed all members of the team to effectively move forward with planning the virtual AAIs.

## Discover

The creativity needed to redesign the AAI from an in-person format to a virtual one had to be robust. The OAE team knew a virtual AAI would have its own strengths and limitations. Therefore, the format of the in-person Institute could not simply be plugged it into a virtual setting. Consequently, we spent time asking ourselves Discover phase questions, such as:

- What are the most important aspects of the in-person AAI that are imperative to continue in the virtual environment? Which elements can be eliminated or re-imagined?
- How can we best create a sense of community among our participants?
- What are some of the best/worst practices that we have experienced in virtual meetings and events since the start of the pandemic?
- How can we effectively leverage technology? Which virtual platform will best meet the needs of our participants?

Each Discover question assisted the OAE team in reinventing the virtual AAI by capitalizing on the strengths of the in-person AAI and the opportunities of the virtual platform. One discovery was that the virtual AAI format had the potential of reaching far more professionals than previous institutes. Thus, our marketing campaign sought to reach a diverse range of professionals. To do so, we needed to revise and reset the event schedule. Because many professionals were already experiencing Zoom-fatigue, we instinctively knew that 8-hour daily sessions would not work. Instead, the OAE team planned 4-hour sessions over four consecutive days. This schedule assisted in keeping participants engaged and accommodated most North American workday time zones.

Once we had decided when we would host the virtual AAI, we needed to decide upon the most appropriate virtual platform. We explored Zoom, Webex, and Microsoft Teams as

possible options. Although at the time, FAU held Webex and Microsoft Teams contracts which provided both free access and campus technical support, the team decided to use Zoom, as we were persuaded by the functionality of Zoom's breakout rooms and other engaging features, including the ability to enable closed captioning and live transcription for those who may be hard of hearing. To ensure that we were able to provide the best experience for our participants, we sent all registered participants a Google form to complete that provided us with more information about them including any needed accommodations. For example, some participants shared their need to turn off the camera on Zoom for periods during the AAI due to visual disabilities while others requested that closed captioning be enabled.

Finally, the Discover process led the team to determine how best to leverage technology to create a sense of community and belonging within a virtual space. The Institute's Participant's Handbook, for example, was a key foundational tool for establishing common language and knowledge between participants and facilitators. Because mailing a physical copy was not an option due to curriculum changes and other logistical constraints, we instead utilized Padlet.com. Padlet is a platform that allows users to create a "shelf" to post items and links to a virtual wall that can be shared with others. One Padlet board was created as a One-Stop-Shop for participants to access the Participant's Guide, PowerPoint slides from the main sessions, and other helpful materials during and following the AAI. Another Padlet board was created for the Small Group Facilitators which held lesson plans, videos, and handouts for each small group session. Finally, as a replacement for the physical mailboxes (paper bags) we had historically provided at in-person Institutes, a Padlet Kudos Wall was created for each small group where participants and facilitators could post words of encouragement, appreciation, and other meaningful notes on each other's columns. The Padlet Kudos Wall substituted for a long-standing tradition of leaving notes in other participants' mailboxes. The practice of leaving thoughtful virtual messages continued to cultivate an environment in which all members felt valued, recognized, appreciated, and respected.

## **Dream**

Once we made the initial decisions about the schedule and needed technologies, we slowed down to reflect, dream about the possibilities, and imagine what could be. To guide this process, we asked, "If we were going to create the best virtual AAI, what would it look like?"

Prior to Spring Break, the OAE team held a weekly book club in which we were reading *Strategic Doing* which inspired us to dream about the impact we could have during the virtual AAI. We considered such questions as:

- Who is our audience and how do we want to impact them during this challenging time?
- How would their lives be different because of attending the virtual AAI?
- How do we want to participants to feel and what do we want them to remember at the end of the AAI?

We first focused on the feeling and experience we were trying to create and addressed the decisions about how to use virtual platforms, communication techniques, and digital worksheets later. Our dream was to create a space in which all participants could feel welcomed and valued, where their stories and experiences mattered, and where they felt

heard. Beyond that, we wanted to create a valuable professional learning opportunity through discussion, curiosity, and building community within a virtual setting.

Crucial to meeting these expectations was empowering our Small Group Facilitators and planning team. The planning team was comprised of a professional advisor who served as chair of the planning committee, volunteer undergraduate and graduate student interns, as well as two paid staff. It was vital that each team member felt they were making a valuable and worthwhile contribution to the planning efforts. When building something brand new, team members must navigate a lot of uncertainty together. We dedicated ourselves to seeing, hearing, and valuing each member of the team. Everyone's ideas were considered, reflected upon, and fully explored. Providing appreciative and constructive feedback were all part of creating a space where people felt comfortable sharing new ideas, even if we ultimately did not implement them. It was crucial that we always challenged ourselves to think bigger and to keep the needs of our participants in the forefront of our minds as we made decisions.

## **Design**

Because we explicitly took the time to collaboratively dream about the virtual AAI, we all had a shared vision of designing a professional development experience that would cultivate community, provide meaningful content, and actively engage our participants. With nine years of experience hosting the in-person AAI, the OAE and AAI Planning Team had developed a well-established to-do list for planning and executing the event. However, with the shift to the virtual AAI, we had to completely re-work our "Run-of-Show" document that consisted of about 115 unique tasks to execute the in-person AAI. The OAE intern team met virtually to review each task and decided what additions and deletions needed to be made to the virtual "Run-of-Show" document.

## **Training**

Except for a few, most of our Small Group Facilitators had experience facilitating in-person small groups at previous AAIs. We needed to develop training for the facilitators on how to navigate our new virtual platform and deliver content effectively. Before each AAI, we held training sessions to familiarize the facilitators with both the content and the technology. We also assigned Small Group Facilitators with strong technical acumen from previous in-person Institutes to direct our virtual Solutions Station to troubleshoot any technology issues. The Small Group Facilitators were provided with training, videos, and other resources on how to use Zoom features such as polls, breakout rooms, sharing screens, and playing videos. Additionally, the Small Group Facilitators were also given access to the Padlet created for them that hosted the lesson plans, slides, handouts, and videos they needed to effectively facilitate their small groups.

During the training for the June Virtual AAI a few weeks prior to launch, it became clear that facilitators could benefit from technology support during their sessions. Because we desired for the Small Group Facilitators to focus on delivering meaningful content and building a strong sense of community among their small group members, we assigned a Facilitator Assistant(s) (FAs) to each small group. The FAs included members of our OAE intern team, master's degree and undergraduate students interested in gaining hands-on facilitation experience, as well as one talented high school student. The FAs were integral to creating a meaningful experience for the Small Group Facilitators and participants as they were able to manage technical issues, breakout rooms and polls, as well as to answer questions that emerged in the chat. Importantly, the FAs were able to actively participate and contribute their student perspectives as students and/or new professionals in the field, which

participants noted deeply enriched their sessions. The addition of the FAs was one of the most successful elements of the entire Virtual AAI.

### ***Technology***

The Small Group Facilitators were not the only ones who needed help learning technology. We quickly realized that the level of preparedness to engage in a virtual setting among our participants greatly varied. One innovation we implemented was hosting a pre-Institute technology check-in four days before the Institute. Participants were encouraged to log into a Zoom room we created for a tutorial on Zoom's features and to have any questions answered. In addition, we set up a Technology Solution Station during the Institute for participants and faculty if they had trouble accessing their small group's Zoom room or experienced other technical difficulties. These proactive steps help to reduce participants' anxiety about the technology being used during the Institute.

### ***Human Element***

One of our favorite traditions at the in-person AAI involved Jenny's Mom, Ada Bloom, passing out her famous chocolate chip cookies to participants prior to the opening session. Unfortunately, Ada passed away from ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) in November 2018, but at the 2019 Institute her husband, Ed Morrison, distributed the chocolate chip cookies to continue the tradition in memory of Ada. The intern team was determined to keep Ada's chocolate chip cookie tradition going, even in a virtual setting. So, they created a chocolate chip cookie recipe card that included a note from Jenny explaining her Mom's chocolate chip cookie tradition and encouraging them to make a batch of cookies in her honor. Providing this human element of sharing Ada Bloom's famous chocolate chip cookies offered a connection that bridged the gap of an in-person experience and the virtual one.

### ***Deliver***

The Deliver phase is the "make it happen" phase. The planning committee worked diligently to complete their pre-Institute duties and now it was showtime and our attention turned to optimizing the experiences of both the facilitators and the participants.

### ***Facilitator Experience***

The Small Group Facilitators were critical to the success of the AAI: they had the opportunity to brainstorm what the small group sessions could look like, they thought through what activities could translate into the virtual realm, and they collaborated with their assigned Facilitator Assistant to give participants an unforgettable experience.

The facilitators were higher education professionals who possess extensive experience in Appreciative Advising, Appreciative Education, Positive Psychology, and Strength-Based Approaches. The facilitators' experience throughout the Institute is worthy of attention. These facilitators represented different institutions from across North America and participated in multiple meetings to interact with other facilitators in preparation for the Virtual AAI. The facilitators and FAs also began collaborating to prepare for each session by reviewing materials and deciding jointly how to conduct each the session. The facilitator and FA teams also met virtually each morning of the Institute to review the activities of the day and make last minute adjustments to the plans for the day.

The facilitators and FAs were equipped with the tools and guidelines they needed to properly facilitate their respective small groups. They had access to lesson plans, which included several exercises and discussions that could be incorporated into each session. The lesson plans also included a list of supplies and stated learning outcomes for each activity.

In order to continue to develop as individuals and create a cohesive team, the OAE planning team held after-hours sessions with small group facilitators and FAs to talk about both our struggles and challenges, as well as our triumphs and laughs. Connecting in this way created a bond of trust that was irreplaceable and crucial to the process of creating something new.

### *Participant Experience*

When delivering the Institute, there was a bit of ‘magic’ involved, or at least that is how we wanted our participants to experience it. We aspired to be just like employees at Disney who work hard behind the scenes so that their guests can have a magical experience. We worked diligently to ensure that the participant experience would be as seamless as possible. We did not want the participants to miss out on the experience because of technological issues. Simplicity was key. Each day participants received an email with a link to the Zoom meeting they would need to join next that day.

To personalize the virtual experience, the Facilitators and FAs wrote a welcome message to each small group participant welcoming them to the Institute on their small group Kudos wall. The participants, in turn, were encouraged to send supportive and inspirational messages to each other via the Kudos Wall throughout the Institute.

**Opening Session.** The Opening Session was our first opportunity to live out the Disarm phase by warmly greeting our participants to the Institute. We were committed to making the Institute a memorable experience and knew that the Opening Session would set the tone for the entire Institute. At the Opening Session, the participants were welcomed by the Small Group Facilitators and intern team. We employed fun poll questions in Zoom to engage people and give them an opportunity to learn more about their fellow participants. We also assigned participants to breakout rooms to engage with each other by asking pre-determined Discover questions to build rapport. Finally, Jenny provided a quick overview of the Appreciative Advising model to give participants a preview of the six phases they would spend the next few days learning. We then sent participants the direct link to join their respective small group Zoom sessions.

**Small Group Sessions.** We divided the nearly 100 participants into six small groups of 15-18 participants, each representing different colleges or universities and holding various job responsibilities. The small groups are where the real magic and learning happened. After the Opening Sessions, each of the small groups started with participants introducing themselves before engaging in a Mutual Expectations Exercise in which they shared their expectations for the Small Group Facilitator as well as their fellow small group members. Without fail, each group agreed to keep on their cameras during the small group sessions to create a sense of community among participants.

The typical format for the subsequent small group sessions involved starting with an introductory 10-minute overview video for the phase being discussed during that session. In the videos, Jenny provided an overview of the key concepts for each respective phase and then the group debriefed the take-home lessons ascertained from the video. Afterward, the Small Group Facilitators engaged participants in a diverse set of active learning activities, which further built rapport and cohesion among participants as well as facilitated the application of key concepts related to each phase of the Appreciative Advising framework. Participants experienced ample opportunities to learn from the facilitator as well as from each other.

**Closing Ceremony.** On the fourth and final day of the Institute, all the participants came together once again to share their small group's main takeaway from the Institute and to celebrate their accomplishments. The Closing Ceremony provided participants with one last opportunity to come together as a large group to reflect on and celebrate all they had accomplished throughout the Institute.

## **Don't Settle**

The Don't Settle phase of the Appreciative Advising framework emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement. As a planning committee, we challenged ourselves to proactively raise our own bar of expectations for ourselves and our team. We applied the Don't Settle phase during the Virtual AAI by daily surveying participants on what they were learning and enjoying at the AAI as well as what improvements could be made to enhance their AAI experience. These daily assessments were shared with the Small Group Facilitators to help them better meet the needs of their small group. This feedback helped challenge facilitators to support participants' learning and better customize the experience to best meet their needs.

We also hosted daily debriefing sessions with the Small Group Facilitators and FAs which gave our planning team the opportunity to learn from the faculty about their challenges, accomplishments, thoughts, and perspectives each day. These daily debriefing sessions were invaluable because the entire group was able to brainstorm about possible solutions to issues that other members of the team were facing.

We then challenged participants to not settle. During the Don't Settle small group session, participants created an "I Commit" statement on their small group Padlet that described how they planned to intentionally infuse Appreciative Advising into their work. After participants posted their "I Commit" statements, they received feedback and encouragement from their fellow small group members.

On the last day of the AAI, we invited participants to fill out an in-depth survey about their Institute experience that took into account the virtual experience. Combined with the daily assessments and facilitator debriefs, we were able to use the feedback we received at the June Institute to immediately make changes to the July Institute and to consider when planning for the next AAI. Feedback from participants and facilitators is a critical component to reevaluating our assessment processes and reimagining what could be moving forward as we continuously strive to apply the "Don't Settle" phase to "get better" and improve the AAI. For example, several participants felt they were unable to eat lunch or take a substantial break because of the amount of information and activities we covered in four hours. Although these participants noted they were positively impacted by the AAI, they often left feeling tired and drained. Another aspect a few participants missed from the in-person AAI were the organic networking opportunities with people from other small groups. Although we attempted to mimic this exposure to other professionals with breakout rooms during the opening and closing ceremonies, that experience left others feeling awkward. Even so, we are happy with the success of the Virtual AAI's as our data show several highlights.

Celebrating successes is also a part of the Don't Settle process. From the data in our in-depth survey, we received our highest satisfaction rating ever in our 10-year history! One reason for this finding was the significance of offering an interactive professional development opportunity during the pandemic. Specifically, participants noted the importance of creating a sense of community and belonging. As one participant reflected, "The last couple months have been difficult for everyone. This experience is a reminder of our humanity and the many things we have in common as educators." The magic, then, was

not some highly researched, thought-out plan. Instead, it was the work of a small team of interns and staff, focusing on the six phases of the Appreciative Education framework that provided a vision for designing and delivering a virtual professional development opportunity for educators from across the globe to learn and grow.

## Conclusion

Although there is no how-to manual for navigating a pandemic, operating with a shared Appreciative Mindset assisted our team in successfully creating and launching two Virtual AAIs in 2020. By following and living out the six phases of Appreciative Advising (Disarm, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, and Don't Settle), we put into practice a framework that we hope will help other teams as they face challenges. Our desire is that this specific example will inspire other teams to creatively and innovatively apply the Appreciative Advising framework buttressed by principles of an Appreciative Mindset to navigate the unexpected challenges that they encounter.

As an OAE team, we learned a number of valuable lessons that are apropos for other teams, including the importance of intentionally establishing an environment in which all were heard, valued, and appreciated, even in a virtual setting. Although it was tempting to focus all of our attention on the various tasks and lists that needed to be completed, the OAE team continuously reminded each other, *people before process*. Together, the OAE team innovatively left their mark by choosing to believe that *everything is figureoutable*, even in the middle of a pandemic and also during a time of intense civic unrest both nationally and internationally, which provided an even greater need to build community and connect with each other. The Appreciative Advising/Education framework provided a fertile foundation to both produce a successful institute and an adaptive environment in which members of the OAE team could grow and develop. By living out the Appreciative Education framework, we were able to innovate to meet the needs of our attendees in the middle of a global pandemic.

To learn more about the Office of Appreciative Education and the Appreciative Advising Institutes, please visit [www.fau.edu/oe](http://www.fau.edu/oe).

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## Appendix

## Six Phases of Appreciative Education

Phase	Definition
Disarm	Create “safe environments where all members feel their voice is valued and respected...and will be heard” (p. 8)
Discover	Use “positive open-ended questions focused on learning other people’s perceptions of their own personal strengths and the strengths of the organization of which they are a member” (p. 8)
Dream	Highlight “the importance of uncovering personal and organizational visions...and create shared visions for the organization that can guide positive changes” (p. 9).
Design	Design an “action plan where individual strengths are aligned to achieve both individual and shared dreams; the process is socially constructed and self-evolving” (p. 9).
Deliver	Take thoughtful action “to carry out the individual and organizational plans created during the Design phase” (p. 9).
Don’t Settle	Refine and “revisit the process...[to] revisit their assumptions, rediscover strengths and passions, create bigger dreams and shared visions, chart future steps, and keep seeking creative ways to accomplish goals” (p. 9).

*Note.* Bloom et al. (2013)