

From: [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)
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Subject: New submission from Campus Climate Proposals
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016 9:29:50 PM

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What is your affiliation with UW-Madison? For group submissions, please respond for main contact.

- Faculty

Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate this.

Engaging Campus Diversity through Dialogue

Introduction

Dialogues have been used across the globe to promote healing and bringing together different groups even in the context of intractable conflict (e.g., South Africa, Rwanda, and Middle East). Research and community practices reveal that fostering dialogue in small, personal groups has been effective in increasing positive intergroup relations and understanding. More generally, research has revealed that traditional diversity or multicultural trainings are often mildly effective, at best, and can be counterproductive for those who most need the diversity training. Conversely, nearly 70 years of research confirms that intergroup contact (Allport, 1954) with four essential ingredients in which there is personal interactions and exposure to personal stories have been effective in promoting positive intergroup relations. It is time for UW to make a broader commitment to engage its students, staff, and faculty in dialogues to promote a more positive campus climate, respectful relationships, and to realize the potential learning that is possible on a diverse campus.

For the decade, Prof. Quintana and the Department of Counseling Psychology have adapted the dialogue method to be responsive to the unique context of the UW campus. The Diversity Dialogue Initiative has been one of the few areas of diversity programming on campus that engages students in constructive ways those students who are not volunteering for diversity experiences. Its highlights include:

- a) proven method of benefit to participants over course of 10 years,
- b) outreach to those who do not seek out diversity experiences,
- c) efficient use of resources engaging as many as 700 - 1000 participants each academic year for the costs of 0.5 Teaching Assistant,
- d) provides unique training to facilitators to help build the capacity on UW campus to not only participate but facilitate and organize dialogues,
- e) adapted to many different kinds of intergroup conflict and diversity including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual diversity, political diversity, and disability
- f) has capacity to respond quickly to current events such as shooting of Tony Robinson, Black Lives Matter, and recent incidents of intergroup conflict on campus.

History:

Diversity Dialogues (DD) is completing its 10th year during which time more than 5,500 undergraduate

students have been engaged in small group (8 – 12 members) dialogue about diversity. Because it draws from different classes and has an online registration, the DDs bring together students who wouldn't otherwise have contact, breaking the tendency to discuss diversity with 'like minded' friends and acquaintances. The DDs are required extracurricular activities in required coursework—it is, therefore, one of the few forms of diversity programming on campus that is drawn from the general student body, rather than drawing from those who volunteer, sometimes over and over again, for diversity programming. The DDs are structured with a well-tested progression of 'warm-up' activities designed to promote honest and heartfelt dialogue and 'to listen closely enough to be changed by what [students] hear.' The progression from dyad to group activities builds comfort and trust among individuals and then with the larger dialogue group. The central organizing focus of DDs is students' sharing and listening to each other's difficult or awkward interactions related to diversity and reflecting on how these interactions might have been handled differently. It is not uncommon for students to disclose experiences they hadn't shared with others, even with close friends. Participants hear perspectives and viewpoints—in a context of mutual respect—to which they have rarely or never been exposed. Despite the DDs being required, conducted outside of class time, focusing on difficult and controversial topics, integrating segments of student body that often do not commune, participants have consistently rated the experience favorably.

How would this affect cultural change on campus?

Broad Reach: Diversity Dialogues reaches beyond the proverbial choir by being one of the few initiatives on campus that includes nonvolunteers and those students who would not choose to participate in diversity programming. That is, it reaches the broader campus because it is included in required 'e' classes, it engages students who do not volunteer for diversity programming.

Breadth:

Over the years, the DDs have been adapted for myriad contexts, purposes, and audiences.

Inter-group Dialogues are structured so that two different communities come together and learn from each other, including Students of Color and White Students, LGBTQ and Allies, and 'Sconnies and Coasties as well across gender and social class orientations, among males, and new this year: political orientation or liberals and conservatives dialogue.

Organizational Dialogues: Dialogues have been useful as TA training, faculty training, specialization training (nursing, psychology interns, teacher education, veterinary science, pharmacy, Engineering, Chicana/Latina Studies, SCE program, Bridge program)

Community Dialogues: Dialogues conducted in the community include 5th graders at bilingual schools, many middle and high school student groups, parents of mixed race families, professional organizations. Religious groups, and other community agencies such as YWCA.

Training through Service:

DD initiative represents one of the few ways of explicitly cultivating student skills in how to engage others in conversation and dialogue about diversity. Each year 30 - 40 students are trained to be facilitators gaining experience in at least 3 different dialogues with co-facilitators. Recently, students who have completed SEED classes have enrolled in 1-credit course to learn how to facilitate DD, building their capacity to dialogue in formal and informal settings. To date, only small cohorts of undergraduate students (8 - 9 undergraduate students) have been trained. Each student facilitates 4 dialogues reaching 40 – 45 dialogue participants while gaining invaluable training.

For new ideas, how would you propose piloting this idea to see if it would work? If the idea is already in use at UW-Madison, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?

Proposal:

To date, [REDACTED] 30 – 35 dialogues per semester, ensuring that participants from the different class receive credit for participating, while also training new cohorts of facilitators and general trouble-shooting. The [REDACTED] that arise when an organization is confronting difficult situation involving diversity or some new expansion or application of the DD method.

Expansion of the DD initiative to 350% TA would allow the DD to increase its reach three or four fold (2,000 – 2,500 students per year and train 50 undergraduate House Fellows and graduates of SEED and Intercultural Dialogue courses as well as another 30 graduate student facilitators from ELPA,

SoHE's Civil Society and Community Studies). Increasing numbers of 'e' courses would include DD as an extracurricular activity. Moreover, specific programs or majors could be identified as wanting to promote more diversity. DD could be regular offerings in Residence Halls, mentoring House Fellows in the dialogue method. With this expansion, this initiative would allow dialogue facilitators to be called to address recent incidents and challenges in particular residence halls and departments.

What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

3 50% TA positions over the academic year
Buyout of 1 course per year for Diversity Dialogue Coordinator

If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.

There have been many partners and units served by the Diversity Dialogue Initiatives including School of Pharmacy, School of Engineering, School of Social Work, School of Education, School of Human Ecology and numerous L&S departments: Department of Sociology, Chican@ and Latin@ Studies Program, Communication Arts, African American Studies. I am actively working with Multicultural Student Center, Committee on Mandatory Diversity Training, ELPA and SoHE's Civil Society and Community Studies.

Please use this space for any additional information about your proposal that you wish to share:

Background:

What are diversity dialogues? Diversity Dialogues (DD) are 90-minute discussions in small groups of approximately 8 - 10 students. Each dialogue group meets only once. The dialogues focus on students' personal experiences/reactions related to diversity, challenges associated with diversity, and opportunities for future involvement in diversity.. The dialogues are facilitated by graduate students who are there to promote an open and respectful atmosphere for exploring, expressing, and learning about diversity issues. The facilitators are not there to teach or preach to students. Previous students have found that the dialogues were open, honest, and engaging discussions. The goal of this initiative is to increase students' awareness and skills in relationship to campus diversity and provide an opportunity to share experiences about diversity with other students. Each year, the DD initiative serves approximately 500 – 600 students and other participants in dialogues with 5,500 students served since the DD inception.

Who participates? Instructors of undergraduate courses, usually 'e' courses, participate by either requiring or providing extra credit to their students for attending one DD session per semester. Students register for their sessions using web-based system. Because each dialogue is comprised of students from across the participating courses, most dialogue participants are meeting each other for the first time.

Variations of diversity dialogues

Intergroup Dialogues on campus:

Race Sexual Orientation Religious Diversity

Gender 'Sconnies and Coasties Political Diversity

Bridge Program, pairing domestic with international students

Schools of Engineering, Pharmacy, Nursing

Local schools: 5th grade through 12th grade

Ethnic organizations

Church groups and community agencies

Diversity Training of professionals

Teaching Assistantship trainings

Effectiveness How have students evaluated diversity dialogues? (ratings with 5.0=Strongly Agree)

1. Overall was dialogue worthwhile? 4.7
2. Could you express your views? 4.7
3. Gained new insight into diversity issues? 4.2
4. Would take part in dialogues again? 4.3
5. Would recommend dialogues to a friend? 4.6

Research across 4 years and 9 universities has documented that dialogues are effective on campus climate to increase students intergroup skills and understanding (see Gurin, Nagda, & Zuñiga, 2013).